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1-1-2005

A Descriptive Analysis of the Quality of Staff Development Experiences as Perceived by West Virginia Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Teaching is an ever-changing profession. The field of education is expanding each year as advancements are made in technology and brain-based research. To keep pace with the changing world, teachers must stay abreast of current pedagogical knowledge and skills, a task accomplished through participation in professional growth opportunities.

The professional growth of the teacher has become a vital component of national and state reform efforts. Great investments are being made by federal and state organizations to ensure the quality of professional growth experiences in which teachers participate. This study examined the quality of staff development experiences in which teachers in West Virginia participated during the 2003-2004 school year.

Characteristics of quality staff development have been defined by national, regional, and state entities. Six characteristics identified in the literature and within various educational organizations were used in this study to define quality staff development. This quantitative study surveyed P – 12 teachers in West Virginia about their perceptions of the quality of their staff development and its impact on their professionalism.

This study found that teachers were ambivalent as to whether their staff development exemplified a quality experience. Further, the study found that teacher perceptions of quality staff development varied according to the grade level(s) in which they taught, the number of hours they participated in staff development experiences, and the type of school in relation to federal funding in which they taught.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The road traveled toward completion of a dissertation is paved with unexpected bumps and curves. Many life lessons are discovered and learned along the way, one of which being a greater sense of respect and appreciation for those special people who contribute to the completion of one's journey. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank those people without whom this work would not be possible.

First, and foremost, to my husband, Jim, who put his life on hold to support and encourage me to complete a terminal degree. For the countless number of evenings he endured alone while I fervently worked away at the computer, I thank him with all my heart. He is truly my best friend.

To my parents, Bob and Nancy Force, who instilled within me the knowledge that I can do whatever I set my mind to do. Through their parental guidance and modeled lives, I developed priceless life skills that I found to be vital to the completion of this work: dedication, determination, and the value of learning.

To the Chair of my committee, Dr. Rudy Pauley, who pushed me to strive for excellence in my work. For the innumerable hours he spent reading and rereading my work and offering suggestions, words cannot express my thanks. Throughout this process, I came to see Dr. Pauley not just as my advisor, but as my mentor, my guide, my cheerleader, and my friend.

To my family and friends, who provided a constant stream of support and encouragement. It was their belief in me that helped me move forward when unexpected bumps arose and accept the challenge at hand.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

CHAPTER 1

"A profession is never mastered" (Duke, 1993, p. 702). It can only be developed.

Investing in one's development is important.

To develop is to come into being—to grow. Good teachers grow. Good teachers

develop and grow professionally through a journey of lifelong learning. The growth and

development of the effective teacher ultimately drives the improvement of student

achievement and school success. In an educational system propelled by performance-

based accountability, the development and practice of continuous school improvement

that reflects an increase in the quality of instructional practice and promotes student

learning on a large scale has the professional development of the teacher at its core. The

goal of performance-based accountability is to improve the quality of education for

students and to increase the performance of schools. The improvement of education

requires an investment in the growth and development of the educator. "Any significant

improvement in schooling must have the teacher at its heart" (Stonge, 1997, p. xi).

Teacher learning must be "at the heart of any effort to improve education in our society"

(Sykes, 1996, ¶2).

Investing in the growth of teachers has become a major facet of current federal

and state reform initiatives. While the success of our nation's schools is currently driven

by federal and state efforts that underscore performance-based accountability, a human

element of reform does exist. Shahan (1976) refers to the human face of reform as that

which embraces the emotions, feelings, needs, and perceptions of teachers and leaders in

relation to their pedagogical roles and beliefs. School improvement is generated and

maintained by the people who are responsible for implementing proposed changes. The

individuals *within* the reform movement develop and carry out the plans for change and

improvement (Norman, n.d.). These are the individuals who initiate change, and these are

the individuals for whom investments must be made.

Investing in the professional growth of teachers is a valuable tool in school

improvement. The most effective way to improve student achievement and advance

school success is to increase the quality of teaching occurring in the school through

quality professional growth activities. According to research, increasing the education of

teachers is the investment that yields the greatest increase in student achievement (31st

Annual Phi Delta Kappa, 1999). Schools and students benefit from having quality

educators, as teachers acquire new skills and knowledge and "reconnect with what it

means to learn and grow" (Duke, 1993, p. 712).

An integral component in the improvement of student achievement is an increase

in teacher effectiveness (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2003). Educational

entities recognize a connection between teacher improvement and student achievement

(Cook & Fine, 1996; National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996;

National Education Association [NEA], 1998; National Staff Development Council

[NSDC], 2003c; USDE, 2003). The most productive and beneficial way to increase the

effectiveness of the teacher is through quality professional growth activities that carry the

participant through a journey of lifelong learning. According to research by Ferguson

(1991), the qualifications of the teacher constitute 44% of the impact on student learning.

With the teacher's ability playing such a crucial role in student achievement, staff

development that improves the qualifications of the teacher can have a direct impact on

the improvement of student learning.

The public demands effective teachers for the nation's schools. With this demand comes the quest for evidence of high quality teaching and education. According to a national survey performed by Hasselkorn and Harris (1998), the public feels that the most important characteristic for teachers to possess is to be well-trained and knowledgeable about how to teach effectively. The public further believes that the strategy with the greatest potential for improving schools and creating high quality education is to recruit and retain better teachers (Russonelio & Stewart, 1999). According to the 31st Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools (1999), 85% of the public supports school-financed professional development opportunities as a means of attracting and retaining public school teachers.

The most valued product of high quality education is an increase in student achievement. The ultimate goal of the professional growth of the teacher is to foster student success. According to teachers, the number one reason for professional growth is to improve student achievement (National Foundation for the Improvement of Education [NFIE], 1996). Students become recipients of the professional growth of the teacher through an improvement in teacher knowledge and practice. The teacher becomes the linking factor between school improvement and student success.

Background

The professional growth of the teacher is paramount in school reform efforts today. In December of 2001, Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (National Association of Secondary Principals, 2004). Three years in the making, the NCLB federal legislation reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (National Association of Secondary School Principals). The ESEA, originally

passed in 1965 during the Johnson Administration, endorsed most federal elementary and secondary education programs. Embedded within Title II (Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals) of ESEA was state and local support for ongoing professional development. Yet, the professional growth of the teacher was not viewed as vital to the improvement of student achievement and school success. Originally praised for its groundbreaking attempt to equalize education for at-risk and low poverty students, the ESEA, in many educators' eyes, did not meet its goal (National Association of Secondary School Principals). Professional development has received similar criticism for its lack of impact on student success.

After the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, policy researchers began to look carefully at the link between public policy and improvement in teaching (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory [NCREL], n.d.). Student outcomes, with little thought to the improvement of teaching and teacher growth, became the focus of many state policies. The key to success focused on the output, with little attention to input. State policymakers adopted this view of success, linking funding to outcomes through accountability (NCREL).While the professional development of the teacher maintained support from the ESEA, it was ultimately viewed as an add-on activity to the teacher's normal working day. For most teachers, the traditional view of professional growth illustrated a meaningless activity that made little contribution to the achievement of students. Effective or ineffective, during the 1980s, professional development did become the focus of countless conferences, articles, workshops, and research studies (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). Professional development was beginning to come of age.

Throughout the 1990s, the professional development of teachers began to gain new credence. The idea of linking professional development to educational outcomes emerged in reform efforts, mainly due to the rising awareness that teachers were at the heart of school improvement. The early 1990s saw the federally-funded Title I programs (Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged) include a school-wide option for professional development for all teachers. The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program also provided support for school-wide professional development for school improvement (NCREL, n.d.).

With a new decade and century came the NCLB Act of 2001 and a more prominent emphasis on the professional growth of the teacher. Today, the professional growth of the teacher is viewed as a vital factor in student and school success (Hirsh, 2003b; Kelleher, 2003; National Commission on Education and America's Future, 1996; Publishers Look for NCLB, 2002; Richardson, 2002; USDE, 2003). Success under the NCLB legislation is depicted through increments of adequate yearly progress. As one indicator of adequate yearly progress, schools must provide evidence of an increase in the number of teachers experiencing high quality professional development (Hirsh, 2003b; Richardson, 2002). To assist schools in meeting the incremental goal, the NCLB legislation authorized $2.9 billion of Title II funds in 2003 to help schools produce highly qualified teachers through the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program (USDE). Additionally, Title II includes funding for other teacher quality programs, such as the Transition to Teaching program, of which $42 million dollars has been allocated to states, school districts, and nonprofit groups since the passage of NCLB, Troops to Teachers, which received almost $29 million in funding in 2003, and Teaching of Traditional

American History programs, of which almost $100 million was allocated in 2003 (USDE). School districts are also required to spend Title I funds to improve teacher quality. In 2003, funding for Title I was $11.7 billion, an increase of 33% since the passage of NCLB in 2001, and President Bush has requested an increase of 48% for the 2004 fiscal year (USDE). One of the ways in which the federal funding is allocated to achieve a level of highly qualified teaching is through investing in the professional development of the teacher (Richardson, 2002). Investments under NCLB include 5% of a Local Education Agency's allocation to be spent for staff development to insure that all teachers are highly qualified. Additionally, Title I of NCLB indicates that 10% of Title I funds identified for school improvement must be spent for professional development. With the vast amount of funding allocated for the professional growth of the teacher, it becomes imperative that professional development designed to produce highly qualified teachers exemplifies a high quality experience.

Professional Growth of the Teacher

While there are many definitions of professional growth, from continuing education to in-service training to staff development, there is one commonality found within all: professional development is created to enhance teacher performance and improve student achievement. The type of professional development in which a teacher participates not only has an influence on teacher quality, but it also has an impact on a teacher's motivation to grow professionally. When teachers are involved in quality professional development experiences, their motivation to further their involvement in such growth activities and continue to grow in their profession is increased. Teachers have a need to feel competent, accomplished in their profession, and achieve self-worth

and respect in their workplace (Owens, 1991). When a teacher's professional growth needs are met, he/she experiences an increase in efficacy and competency in his/her teaching abilities. These needs can be met through quality professional growth opportunities (Miller, Smith, & Tilstone, 1998).

Quality Professional Development

Investing in professional development is a critical element in the improvement of student and school success. In order to be effective, professional growth practices must be in agreement with the vision of teacher learning that present reform efforts endorse. The vision of practice that underlies the nation's reform efforts calls for teachers to teach in new and innovative ways. The success of this task ultimately lies in the teacher's ability to gain and apply new knowledge and skills. The teacher's ability to gain and maintain new knowledge and skills is dependent upon the quality of professional growth opportunities in which he/she participates. Key elements of quality professional development have been identified by many educational entities: No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), the U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team, the National Education Association (NEA), the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE), the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), the Appalachian Educational Laboratory (AEL), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE). Each of the above entities agrees that quality staff development should be a targeted, collaborative experience that is ongoing, time-friendly and job-embedded, and includes elements of reflection and evaluation.

Quality professional development is valuable to teachers and educational leaders. Teachers reap the benefits of quality professional growth through increased competency, motivation, and efficacy. Administrators want good teachers to improve the quality of education in their schools. Principals reap benefits when teachers grow professionally through the improvement of teacher practices and student achievement. Directors of professional development reap benefits of teacher growth through the increase in teacher effectiveness and individual school and school system success. Known as reciprocity of accountability for capacity, all involved in the professional growth of the teacher can benefit from quality growth activities (Elmore, 2002). The administrators have the responsibility of providing teachers with the capacity to increase the quality of the performance that they demand from the teacher; and, for the administrator and director's investment in the teacher's skill, the teacher has the responsibility to demonstrate an increase in performance. The practice of improvement becomes the ability to move individuals as well as whole organizations toward the structures that support quality professional development in the service of student learning (Elmore).

Student learning is the ultimate goal of professional development, and quality professional development is valuable to students. When teachers participate in quality growth experiences, they set high expectations for their own learning, which transfers to higher expectations for their students. Positive attitudes toward teaching are enhanced when teachers utilize newly gained knowledge and practices. When teachers exhibit more positive attitudes toward their own teaching, they experience an increased personal responsibility for their students' learning (Guskey, 1989). A teacher's positive attitude and feelings of effectiveness, which are often brought about by professional growth, have

been found to be contributing factors in student achievement (Rosenholtz & Smylie, 1984).

Students not only benefit from the teacher's attitude toward his/her profession, but they also profit from the teacher's newly gained knowledge and skills. Reform movements and ongoing educational research, particularly brain-based research, are continually producing new instructional theories, practices, and applications related to student learning. Teachers transfer newly learned information into their practice, keeping students abreast of current knowledge and theories. Teachers also transfer into their practice newly gained skills that reflect current theories on student learning. Students benefit from teacher practices that allow for maximum student growth, development, and achievement.

Characteristics of quality professional development have been identified by a number of educational entities. Common characteristics of quality professional growth found within the various entities illustrate what components of quality staff development should be implemented.

Statement of the Problem

The professional growth of the teacher is a key element in current educational reform efforts (Hirsh, 2003b; Kelleher, 2003; NSDC, 2003c; Publishers Look for NCLB, 2002; Richardson, 2002; USDE, 2003). The teacher is the link between reform initiatives and student achievement. It is therefore imperative that teachers receive quality professional growth opportunities. Identifying quality staff development and the perceptions of those charged with implementing and participating in it is important to reform efforts. The purpose of this study is to determine to what degree teachers perceive

their staff development to be a quality experience and to what degree staff development impacts four areas of professionalism: benefit to student learning, a teacher's professional growth needs, a teacher's motivation to grow, and a teacher's feelings of competency. The literature suggests that high quality staff development consists of experiences that are targeted, collaborative, sustained, time-friendly and job-embedded, reflective, and evaluated. The following research questions are addressed.

Research Questions

1. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be targeted?

2. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be collaborative?

3. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be sustained?

4. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be time-friendly and job-embedded?

5. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be reflective?

6. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be evaluated?

7. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be beneficial to student learning?

8. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be effective in meeting their professional growth needs?

9. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be effective in increasing their motivation to grow professionally?

10. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be effective in increasing their teaching competency?

Definition of Staff Development Concepts

A careful review of literature surrounding staff development has provided a

consensus of specific practices indicative of quality professional growth experiences. The

following concepts represent a consensus of quality staff development practices

delineated by the literature.

1. Targeted staff development — professional growth activities and opportunities that

are directly related to the needs of the individual teacher and his/her school environment;

based on teacher and/or school needs, activities and experiences that are directly related

to a teacher's particular concerns or interests and pertinent to his/her educational

environment

2. Collaborative staff development — professional growth activities and opportunities

that allow teachers to engage in collegial interactions and support to establish sustained

learning communities; activities and experiences in which teachers interact with peers

and create learning opportunities that establish equal and supportive relationships among

developers, presenters, and participants of professional growth experiences

3. Sustained, ongoing staff development — professional growth activities and

opportunities that reflect a long-term plan that is focused and allows for a continuous

form of application; activities and experiences that are conducted in a long-term,

sustained manner that allow for continual, follow-up assistance and re-examination

beyond the initial professional growth opportunity

4. Time-friendly, job-embedded staff development — professional growth activities and

opportunities that are embedded within the teacher's normal working day and are site

specific; activities and experiences that are created as one component of the teacher's

work schedule during normal school hours and are viewed as an essential part of the teacher's everyday responsibilities

5. Reflective staff development — professional growth activities and opportunities that allow for deep reflection by the participant and developer of staff development experiences as a part of the professional growth activity; activities and experiences that provide time for teachers to analyze their use of knowledge and skills gained through staff development experiences and reflect upon their practice in order to initiate subsequent professional growth opportunities

6. Evaluated staff development — professional growth activities and opportunities that provide an ongoing, systematic evaluation process to determine the effectiveness and impact of staff development on teaching and student learning; activities and experiences that allow for the collection of data throughout each stage of the staff development experience, from the teacher's acquisition of new knowledge and skills, to how the newly gained knowledge and skills affect teaching, to how the changes in teacher practices as a result of newly gained knowledge and skills affect student learning

Operational Definitions

1. Teacher — all full-time P-12 public school educators of elementary, middle/junior, or high schools in West Virginia participating in the study.

2. Staff Development — those processes and activities offered to teachers that improve job-related knowledge, skills, or attitudes of teachers as reported by respondents on the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences* (See Appendix A for survey); synonymous with professional development and professional growth.

3. Targeted staff development — the respondent's score on the targeted staff development component of the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences.*

4. Collaborative staff development — the respondent's score on the collaborative staff development component of the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences.*

5. Sustained, ongoing staff development — the respondent's score on the sustained, ongoing staff development component of the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*.

6. Time-friendly, job-embedded staff development — the respondent's score on the time-friendly, job-embedded staff development component of the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*.

7. Reflective staff development — the respondent's score on the reflective staff development component of the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*.

8. Evaluated staff development — the respondent's score on the evaluated staff development component of the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences.*

9. Professional growth needs — the respondent's score on the professional growth needs component of the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*.

10. Teacher motivation — the respondent's score on the teacher motivation component of the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*.

11. Teacher competency — the respondent's score on the teacher competency component of the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*.

Significance of the Study

The teacher is at the heart of school improvement and student success, and professional growth is at the heart of quality teaching. The professional growth of the

teacher is replicated in student achievement through the teacher's application of newly gained knowledge and skills. This study will inform those involved in the process of developing, implementing, and participating in professional growth opportunities in West Virginia of the teachers' perception of the degree of implementation of characteristics of quality staff development.

Accountability for student achievement is paramount throughout the country. Data regarding highly qualified teachers must be reported to the public and to the government. With the implementation of the NCLB Act, the professional growth of the teacher has become an increasingly vital factor in school success. This study will aid school systems in their attainment of the NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress indicator of an increase in the number of teachers experiencing high quality staff development. Along with achieving an increase in the number of teachers participating in quality professional growth experiences, this study will provide school systems with information on how to increase the number of teachers defined as highly qualified by the NCLB legislation through the recognition and implementation of quality professional growth experiences.

The study will inform county or district staff development directors of the degree to which the types of activities and resources that should be provided to teachers in order to aid them in their professional growth are occurring in staff development opportunities in West Virginia. With this knowledge, county or district directors may, in the future, provide teachers with opportunities to participate in quality growth experiences that will be applied in their practices with their students. The improvement in student achievement transmits to school success. School success is transmitted to county or district

achievement. This study will contribute to the overall effectiveness of the county or school district.

A large amount of federal funding is allocated for the professional growth of the nation's teachers. Under NCLB, states and local school districts are currently receiving more federal funding than ever before, with an increase of 59.8% from 2000 to 2003 (USDE, 2003). In fact, Part A of West Virginia's Title II currently amounts to approximately $23 million that is allocated directly to counties. Investing more money in professional development experiences with incoherent systems of delivery is simply putting more money into an infrastructure that is not effectively prepared to use it (Elmore, 2002). Directors of staff development and principals of public schools are charged with utilizing federal funds in the most beneficial manner to increase student achievement. This study will inform the county directors and/or principals of how to wisely use the federal funds to increase teacher participation and ultimately student success. By recognizing quality staff development, directors and principals will be able to adequately fund activities that provide the greatest growth and improvement for the teachers and students under their charge.

Effective and lasting change requires strong leadership (Fullan, 1992). The principal plays a crucial role in a teacher's professional development (Clement & Vandenberghe, 2001). Principals contribute to teacher growth through the establishment and maintenance of workplace conditions and learning opportunities. A principal's primary focus is to create a working context that encourages teachers to develop and enhance their knowledge and skills. Principals believe their most important role is to create a supportive environment for teaching and learning (Markow, Fauth, & Gravitch,

2001). This study will help principals recognize the degree to which the types of professional growth experiences that aid in a teacher's development and improve his/her skills are provided to teachers in West Virginia. The growth and improvement of the teacher will in turn aid the principal in his/her challenge to create a workplace reflective of lifelong learning.

The teacher's perception of growth and change and his/her voluntary participation in growth opportunities are crucial to success. Change required through reform efforts should be approached from a teacher's perspective because what the teacher does and thinks are essential to reform plans (Norman, n.d.). Staff development must be meaningful in order to be effective. Quality staff development becomes meaningful to the participant when his/her professional needs are met. When a teacher's professional needs are met, he/she feels more competent in his/her profession and is motivated to participate in further professional growth opportunities. This study will provide teachers with information concerning the degree to which the types of activities and experiences provided to them are quality, meaningful opportunities that aid in their competency, motivation, student learning, and overall growth and development.

Schools are communities of learners. The professional growth of the teacher cannot achieve maximum effectiveness if the members of a community of learners — directors of staff development, principals, and teachers — do not design, develop, implement, and participate in quality staff development practices. Quality staff development experiences are valuable to the above mentioned members of a community of learners, but one must not forget a vital member of this educational society and ultimate recipient of professional growth experiences: the student. The absolute, final

goal of any educational endeavor is to increase the quality of education. The professional

growth of the teacher is no exception. While reform efforts have approached the task of

improving the quality of education in a multitude of ways, staff development initiates an

increase in the quality of education through an increase in the quality of the teacher. The

present NCLB reform initiative emphasizes the relationship of quality teaching to an

increase in student and school success. Quality teaching can be produced through

meaningful professional growth experiences. Good teachers grow professionally, and the

success of any student and/or school endeavor begins with a good teacher.

Limitations of the Study

While efforts will be made to avoid limitations within this study, the following

assumptions and potential limiting factors are worth noting. Based on an extensive

review of literature, the assumption is being made that quality professional growth of the

teacher will improve teacher knowledge, skills, and practices and have a positive impact

on student achievement and school success. Further, the assumption is made that

improvement in teacher practices, and subsequent improvement in student achievement,

will be greater if teachers are provided with and participate in high quality staff

development opportunities. Lastly, the assumption is made that respondents will report

honestly and without bias on the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*.

A potential limitation of this study is in its generalizability. Data will be provided

by P-12 teachers in West Virginia. Data may not be generalized to teachers in other states

across the nation (Johnson & Christensen, 2000).

A second potential limitation of this study is in the validity and reliability of the

data. A single instrument for data collection will be utilized to analyze participants'

responses regarding the research questions. The single instrument is a survey developed by the researcher, which poses an additional potential risk to validity and reliability. In addition, the survey calls for self-reported information and is thus limited to the accuracy of the participants' responses (Kerlinger, 1986). The nature of a self-report survey allows for variation in the number of participant responses per survey item, which can complicate statistical analyses.

A further potential limitation of this study is in the replication of the instrument. Many survey reports based on a single data set are difficult to replicate due to sampling error (Schuman & Presser, 1981). A second reason for difficulty of replication is reactivity, or the tendency of respondents to alter their responses to conform to the purpose of the study or to portray themselves or their institution in a better light (Smith & Glass, 1987).

A final potential limitation of this study is in the data collection process. Two defects of survey research are the possible lack of response and the inability to check the responses given (Schuman & Presser, 1981). For most surveys, the failure to interview all members of the target sample constitutes a potentially serious bias and lack of generalizability. The implications of this study are dependent upon the return of the surveys to the researcher. Efforts will be made by the researcher to receive a sufficient number of surveys to deem the study valid.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Upon the implementation of PL 101-476 in 1990, the public school system has

been held responsible for providing effective staff development for its educators (Alber &

Nelson, 2002). This public law requires states to develop personnel preparation programs

that facilitate teacher utilization of current best practices (Alber & Nelson). Under the

legislative act identified as 18-2-23a, the West Virginia Department of Education sets

annual goals for staff development for the 55 county school systems (K. K. Larry,

personal communication, January 27, 2004). The state also has guidelines for establishing

a general implementation process for staff development that is depicted under West

Virginia Department of Education Policy 5500 (WVDE, 1997). Presently there is no

mandatory legislation that says that the guidelines set forth by Policy 5500 be related to

the state's annual professional development goals (K. K. Larry, personal communication,

January 27, 2004).

Staff development goals and guidelines are not only a key component of each

state's policies and legislative acts, but they are also a critical factor in the current federal

legislative reform movement. The NCLB Act of 2001 has mandated staff development

requirements as one component of the national reform effort. Reflecting the requirements

of NCLB, the NSDC has issued a goal that all teachers in all schools will experience

high-quality learning by 2007 as a part of their daily work (NSDC, 2003c). With the

aforementioned goals, policies, and laws in mind, it is apparent that the concept of staff

development for today's teacher is moving to the forefront of educational reform,

revealing a different perception from the traditional view of staff development.

Staff development has not historically been widely viewed as an intrinsic component of creating more adept and productive teachers in the classroom (Watts & Castle, 1993). Thus, it has not typically been seen as a high priority activity that is imperative to school success. This is due in part to the fact that improving the quality of teachers has not been viewed as a critical component of the improvement in the quality of education. With the implementation of NCLB policies, the improvement of teacher quality is now officially recognized as one of the contributing factors in the improvement of education. Several state and national reports, as well as research reports on school restructuring, illustrate the awareness of the value of professional development in enhancing school improvement (Abdal-Haqq, 1996). Research on effective teaching over the past 15 years has shown that effective practice is linked to teacher growth and improvement through staff development and professional growth opportunities (Ferraro, 2000; Stronge, 1997). Change in classroom practice and the resulting student achievement cannot be attained without intensive, quality professional development where teachers translate best-researched strategies and programs into practice (Stronge, 1997). Research findings do support the connection between teacher learning and student performance (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Druva & Anderson, 1983; LeMahieu & Sterling, 1991; NFIE, 1995; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). The importance of the relationship between high-quality staff development and improved performance at the individual teacher, school, and organizational level has been documented in research and best practice literature (Hirsh, 2003a). Effective staff development is crucial to the full implementation of the present NCLB reform initiative.

Role of Staff Development in National Reform

Under NCLB, schools must provide evidence that the number of teachers experiencing high quality staff development is increased each year as an indicator of adequate yearly progress (AYP) (Hirsh, 2003b; Richardson, 2002). As one component of NCLB, the primary goal of Title II is to prepare, train, and recruit high-quality teachers and principals. To ensure that these preparation, training, and recruiting practices are occurring in schools across the country, NCLB legislation authorized $2.9 billion to help schools produce highly qualified teachers. By the 2005-2006 school year, all states must ensure that all teachers of core subjects are highly qualified. The term "highly qualified" is based on the assumption that a teacher is adequately prepared to teach all students if he/she demonstrates proficient knowledge of his/her content area. As defined by NCLB, a highly qualified teacher must hold a bachelor's degree; be licensed/certified by the state; pass a rigorous state academic test or complete an advanced degree or coursework equivalent to a major; or, meet a uniform state standard of evaluation (USDE, 2003). One of the ways in which Title II funding is allocated to achieve a level of highly qualified teaching is through in-service staff development (Richardson, 2002). If a school receiving federal funds does not meet the AYP objective of increasing the number of teachers participating in staff development opportunities, at least 10% of the school's federal funds must be spent on providing the school's teachers with high quality professional development (USDE). The federal funds must be used for staff development that targets the academic achievement problem that caused the school to be identified for school improvement as well as enabling teachers to become highly qualified. In like manner, the

NSDC has recommended that 10% of the school budget and 25% of teacher time be devoted to professional opportunities (Kelleher, 2003).

With the advent of the term "highly qualified teacher", today's federal reform effort has an explicit link to the professional development of the nation's teachers. Quality teaching is the subject of the NSDC's second content standard. As defined by the NSDC, quality teaching is promoted through staff development that improves the learning of all students by deepening the educators' content knowledge, providing them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and preparing them to appropriately use various types of classroom assessments (NSDC, 2003c).

Role of Staff Development in State Reform

Under legislative act 18-2-23a (WVDE, 2004), West Virginia must develop annual goals for professional development experiences. The professional development goals reflect the consensus of three entities: the eight Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) of West Virginia, the West Virginia Department of Education, and the West Virginia Center for Professional Development. The creation of the state's goals is a product of reviews from the Center of Professional Development, the Office of Educational Performance Audits (OEPA), and the eight RESAs in West Virginia. The Center for Professional Development carries out an annual needs assessment of teachers and administrators through the Governor's Summer Institute. The state also receives an annual review from the OEPA describing the number of acts of noncompliance of the state's school systems. The eight RESAs submit student performance data conducted through test analyses, and the state department of education compares this data to

analyses of state performance. The annual goals are then created from a review of the aforementioned information. While each of the ten entities has input into the state goals for professional development, the Center for Professional Development is ultimately responsible for designing the professional development plan for the state (K. K. Larry, personal communication, January 27, 2004).

The West Virginia Goals for Professional Development are accompanied by a statement of rationale. "The West Virginia Board of Education believes in the importance of quality professional development to improve the overall effectiveness of West Virginia public schools and meet the mandate defined by The No Child Left Behind Legislation" (WVDE, 2004, ¶1). In order to meet the NCLB accountability target year of 2014, the WVDE recognizes that professional development enhances the county school systems' abilities to implement widespread change. The following four goals are to be met through "sustained, continuous, and school-embedded professional development models" (WVDE, ¶2):

- All county school systems will implement the components of a standards-based curriculum model built on the WV Content Standards and Objectives.

- All county school systems will improve student achievement in reading and writing by implementing a research-based approach to the teaching of the West Virginia Reading Language Arts Content Standards and Objectives.

- All county school systems will improve student achievement in mathematics by implementing a research-based approach to the teaching of the West Virginia Mathematics Content Standards and Objectives.

- All county school systems will ensure all educators have the technological skills necessary to effectively perform their professional responsibilities and enhance student learning. (WVDE)

While the West Virginia Board of Education Professional Development Goals address the content of professional development experiences, they do not attend to the actual process of how staff development will be implemented in the county school systems. According to the NSDC, professional development criteria that address content represent only one third of the total picture of staff development. The other two-thirds reflect process and contextual factors. While West Virginia Policy 5500 sets forth guidelines for implementation of staff development activities, such guidelines do not have to reflect the state's professional development goals. Implementation ultimately falls upon individual school systems.

Role of Staff Development in Student Learning

National and state reform efforts recognize the improvement of student achievement as the definitive goal of staff development opportunities. While student achievement is the ultimate goal of professional growth experiences, the link between student achievement and staff development is not a direct one. Students become the recipients of professional development opportunities through teacher transference of newly gained knowledge and skills acquired during professional growth experiences to their educational practices.

An important component of the professional growth of the teacher is the teacher's willingness to participate in an activity. This type of willingness often stems from self-confidence in one's ability. Often, one's motivation, or willingness to participate in an

activity, relies heavily on the outcome or the evaluation of that activity. Maslow contends that human needs are innate and intrinsic and have a motivational influence on what one learns (Wlodkowski, 1982). Yet, intrinsic motivation appears to be enhanced when some type of external reward system that provides feedback about an individual's competence and self-determination is put into play. For teachers, this external system is often the demonstrated achievement of their students. The NFIE, the NEA, and The Feldman Group conducted a study of how teachers view career-long learning. When asked what provided a teacher's motivation to grow as a professional, 73% of teachers replied their motivation came from the desire to improve student achievement (NFIE, 1996).

A key component of the practice of improvement should be to make the connection between student learning and teaching practice more direct and clear (Elmore, 2002). One of the key elements of quality staff development as set forth by NCLB is that all activities must be referenced to student learning (USDE, 2003). WVDE's Policy 5500 recognizes staff development as essential to enhancing improved teaching and student learning (WVDE, 1997). Similarly, one of the NSDC's content standards for professional development calls for staff development that prepares teachers to hold high expectations for their students' academic achievement (NSDC, 2003c). To maintain high expectations for student achievement, teachers must be willing to continually grow in their professional knowledge and abilities.

In order to grow, a teacher must see and acknowledge the need for change. Knowles (1980) identified basic assumptions of the adult learner, one of which is the need to know why he/she needs to learn something. Another is the individual's orientation to learning, which illustrates adults' motivation to learn as having the

perception that the learning activity will help them better perform tasks in their professional situations. A look into adult education programs illustrates that adult learners "rely on practical applications with immediate transparent benefits to ensure training outcomes are embedded in future practice" (Pye, 1999, p. 2). Those practices that are found to be effective are retained, while those that do not lead to desired learning outcomes are abandoned. Thus, a key determinant for teachers to change instructional practices is a demonstrated result in students' performance (Elmore, 2002).

Teachers have an obligation to remain current in their profession (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). This involves a continual process of growth and improvement. In order to effectively change or improve the behavior of an individual, one must provide guidance on the stages of improvement while also enlisting the cooperation and motivation of that person. Decisions about what will motivate a person to grow must reflect a balance between organizational and individual needs (Cresap, McCormick, & Paget, 1984). At the individual level, change relies on a sense of empowerment or efficacy and the perception that the change is worthwhile and possible (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Pease, 1983). In the teacher's case, the change sought is ultimately the improvement of student learning. A teacher's feeling of effectiveness has repeatedly appeared as a contributing factor to student achievement (Rosenholtz & Smylie, 1984). Joyce and Showers (1998) acknowledged the link between teacher beliefs and practices. While Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) asserted that a causal relationship between teacher behaviors and student outcomes has not yet been established, they did find that as teachers become empowered, they become more involved and satisfied with their job, which in turn has a positive impact on student outcomes. Guskey (1989) found similar

results, asserting that teachers who successfully utilized new practices expressed more positive attitudes toward teaching which led to increased personal responsibility for their students' learning.

The credence of a link between professional development and student learning is reflected in one of the NCREL goals for staff development: "Professional development enriches teaching and improves learning for all students. It is an essential link to higher student achievement" (Cook & Fine, 1996, ¶15). Likewise, the NFIE set one of its criteria for quality staff development as that which contains experiences that have "the goal of improving student learning at the heart of every school endeavor" (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996, p. 84). In 1999 the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching established that one feature of effective professional development is that professional growth experiences are "connected to a comprehensive change process focused on improving student learning" (Elmore, 2002, p. 40). Similarly, one of the guidelines for professional development espoused by the AFT is that professional development experiences should contribute to measurable improvement in student achievement (AFT, 2002). It is apparent that if the current reform movement is to be effective, the link between professional development and student achievement must be acknowledged by those involved in the reform process.

Current Status of Staff Development

Danielson & McGreal (2000) contend that factors which influence a teacher to move toward professional growth are not only found in the teacher's motivation, responsiveness, and feelings of responsibility toward student learning, but also in the policies and practices of the school in which he/she teaches. Such policies and practices

are reflected in the staff development activities provided to teachers. The key to the

effectiveness of the staff development activity, as defined by present reform efforts, lies

in the description and interpretation of quality.

Definition of Quality Staff Development

The NCLB legislation employs the term "quality" to not only describe the

satisfactory level of proficient teaching (high quality teaching) and the acceptable level of

teacher qualification (highly qualified teacher), but also to describe the desired level of

staff development (high quality staff development). As defined by NCLB, staff

development should consist of activities that are: 1) high quality, sustained, intensive and

classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction

and teacher's performance in the classroom; 2) aligned with and directly related to state

academic content standards and student achievement; 3) developed with extensive

participation of teachers, principals, and parents; 4) regularly evaluated for their impact

on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement; 5)

embedded in the NSDC's standards; and, 6) provide a set of activities that produces a

demonstrable and measurable effect on student academic achievement (USDE, 2003).

While there exists specific criteria for quality staff development at the national level,

herein lies the challenge, for much of today's literature of staff development attests to its

ineffectiveness as related to the quality and improvement of performance, as perceived by

teachers (Bull, Buechler, Didley, & Krehbiel, 1994; Corcoran, 1995; Darling-Hammond

& McLaughlin, 1995; Gibbons & Kimmell, 1997; Kelleher, 2003; Lieberman, 1995;

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996; Richardson, 2002;

Sykes, 1996).

Traditional Staff Development Practices

While teacher practices have changed over the past few decades, staff development activities have remained stagnant (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Lieberman, 1995). While educational reform movements have produced varying learning and instructional theories, practices, and applications, staff development experiences have ultimately remained quiescent, reflecting traditional theories of learning and practice, such as the dominance of directed learning theories and the concept of passive, isolated learning. Many of the current staff development experiences for teachers do not concur with current learning theories.

> There is a mismatch between the kind of teaching and learning teachers are now expected to pursue with their students and the teaching they experience in their own professional education. Teachers are urged to engage their students in actively building their understanding of new ideas; to provide opportunities for practice and feedback as well as for inquiry, problem solving, collaboration, and critical reflection; to connect knowledge to students' developmental stages and personal experiences; and, to carefully assess student learning over time. These desirable characteristics of teaching are usually absent in the learning afforded to teachers. There are few parallels between how teachers are expected to teach and how they are encouraged to learn.
>
> (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, p. 84)

Many staff development activities are relatively meaningless for the vast number of competent teachers (Duke & Stiggins, 1990). A large amount of professional funds allocated for staff development activities are used for either reimbursement for courses

teachers take that may not be directly related to school needs or for teachers' classroom responsibilities, or for district-determined workshops that have little connection to teachers' own practices (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) provides a view of the disconnected nature of current staff development practices for teacher growth and improvement. "In short, it's [staff development] pedagogically naïve, a demeaning exercise that often leaves its participants more cynical and no more knowledgeable, skilled, or committed than before" (p. 42). A historical view of traditional staff development illustrates the traditional top-down model of learning. Staff development is generated by experts who pass down their knowledge to teachers, who in turn work alone to implement the newly gained knowledge into their classrooms. Thus, instead of participating in meaningful, ongoing learning opportunities, educators are provided with packaged prescriptions from outside consultants during brief workshops that make little contribution to the growth of the professional educator and the growth and achievement of his/her students. The one-shot workshop has become synonymous with traditional staff development activities.

The deskilling of the professional intellectual, as termed by Giroux (1988), into a technical, managerial, or practitioner position is perpetuated through many current staff development practices. Traditional staff development activities lack connection and tend to objectify the educator as a technician or manager, furthering the gap between theory and practice. Most one-shot workshops are not tied to specific subject areas or problems of practice. Little, if any, follow-up help for implementation is provided, and future workshops rarely build upon previous opportunities. Instead, future workshops consist of

the new buzz word of the year/decade, offering no continuity in building practice. "These offerings bear little relation to what teachers want to study. Two-thirds of teachers report that they have no say in what or how they learn on the job" (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, p. 41). "It's [staff development] everything that a learning environment shouldn't be: radically under-resourced, brief, not sustained, designed for 'one-size-fits-all', imposed rather than owned, lacking intellectual coherence, treated as a special add-on event rather than as part of a natural process, and trapped in the constraints of the bureaucratic system we have come to call 'school'" (p.42).

Each person has a unique set of experiences that are treated as truth and serve to determine the individual's behavior (McPhail, 1995). In light of this view, each educator has a unique connection with his/her experiences, and such experiences form the educator's sense of truth about education and children and shape his/her behaviors with them. This being the case, the one-shot, packaged prescriptions of many current staff development practices cannot possibly reflect the needs and wants of each individual educator and his/her students.

Quality staff development, in order to be considered effective, must address the flaws of traditional approaches. It must go beyond the term "training" and include both formal and informal means of helping teachers develop new insights into pedagogy beyond the acquisition of new skills (Grant, n.d.). Little (1994) stated:

...the dominant 'training' model of teachers' professional development—a model focused primarily on expanding an individual's repertoire of well-defined and skillful classroom practice—is not adequate to the ambitious visions of teaching

and schooling embedded in present reform initiatives. Emerging alternatives to

the training model, though small in scale, embody assumptions about teacher

learning and the transformation of schooling that appear more fully compatible

with the complex demands of reform and the equally complex contexts of

teaching. (p. 1)

In order to effectively implement alternative staff development activities that are

compatible with reform efforts and do not adhere to traditional approaches, a look into

what constitutes quality professional growth of teachers that reflects principles of adult

learning as well as standards, goals, principles, and recommendations of the national

reform movement and national, regional, and state educational organizations is

warranted.

Role of Staff Development in the Professional Growth Needs of Teachers

New theories and practices that address the achievement of students are

introduced to the field of education on a continual basis. Research on brain-based

learning and theories of academic development are profuse. Current reform efforts call

for teachers to teach in new ways—ways that are often very different from how they were

taught and how they learned to teach. Postmodernistic views of education have changed

the way the field of education, as well as the public, regard teaching practices. In order

for teachers to remain current with new theories and practices based on present literature

and research, they must become students of education themselves. Often, this requires

teachers to change behaviors, alter pedagogical beliefs, and/or increase their willingness

to step out of their comfort zones and take risks in their practice. Fullan (1990) and Joyce

and Showers (1980) assert that teacher behavior can be changed through staff

development in which new knowledge, concepts, strategies, teaching approaches, and skills are introduced and implemented.

The professional development of teachers not only has an influence on teacher quality by enhancing pedagogical proficiency, but it can also have a great impact on teacher motivation to grow professionally, with the assumption that such growth will lead to quality teaching. "School boards recognize the connection between well-prepared and supported teachers, teacher competency, teacher efficacy, and student success" (Hirsh, 2003b, ¶3). According to Hirsh, 50% of new teachers leave a district in the first three to five years of their career. Yet, those districts that successfully retain a higher percentage of new teachers are cognizant of the support that new teachers require. Ongoing staff development throughout a teacher's career can provide knowledge, skills, and the support necessary to produce competency. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) found that teachers who feel more empowered to succeed with students are more successful and dedicated than those who feel unsupported in their learning and in their practices within the classroom. "Those who have access to new knowledge, enriched professional roles, and ongoing, collegial work feel more efficacious in gaining the knowledge they need to teach their students and more positive about staying in the profession" (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, p. 82).

John Dewey, one of education's most prominent philosophers and theorists, once asked an interview question of an applicant that has become famous in its own right. "Have you taught ten years or one year ten times?" (Thies-Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1987, p. 66) This simple question addresses a crucial issue in today's view of staff

development: a teacher's motivation to grow professionally. Under NCLB legislation, all teachers must become highly qualified through the attainment of content knowledge. But what happens after that? What motivates an educator to grow professionally year after year? One answer is quality staff development that produces feelings of efficacy, empowerment, and competence.

Owens (1991) claimed that a motivational need greater than pay, security, and advancement for teachers is to "achieve feelings of professional self-worth, competence, and respect; to be seen…as people of achievement, professionals who are influential in their workplaces, growing persons with opportunities ahead to develop even greater competence and sense of accomplishment" (p. 113). These feelings of competency and self-worth are reflective of relevant professional growth opportunities. Miller, Smith & Tilstone (1998) identify three types of needs that are met through quality staff development: the felt, the normative, and the comparative needs.

Felt need. The felt need is recognized by teachers "who are aware that they lack some knowledge or skills" (Miller, Smith, & Tilstone, 1998, p. 2). Teachers feel as if they are lacking in a certain area of knowledge or practice. An awareness of a teacher's need for improvement through the acknowledgment of a deficiency in a certain area is a beginning step toward professional growth, for once teachers feel the need for improvement, they often convert this need into an expressed desire for growth opportunities. Teachers who recognize that they lack knowledge of a concept or of a particular skill often are motivated to enhance their understanding of the concept and/or skill through professional growth experiences.

Normative need. Normative needs are identified as "a result of recognition of an imbalance (of knowledge or skill) which must be rectified before the person achieves a desirable standard" (Miller, Smith, & Tilstone, 1998, p. 2). The recognition of this need often occurs through reflection or follow-up interviews following a professional growth experience. The normative need may also be recognized by an expert or more experienced professional who recognizes an imbalance in a teacher's knowledge and/or practice.

Comparative need. "Comparative needs are those identified by professionals working in teams, and awareness of the knowledge and competencies of others will lead to identification of training needs" (Miller, Smith, & Tilstone, 1998, p.2). Teachers' work with other professionals may provide insight into alternative methods of practice. The sharing of knowledge and skills and the observation of another's practice often leads to the recognition of the need for training in a particular area.

Role of Staff Development in Teacher Achievement Motivation

One of the goals of professional growth is to stimulate the achievement motivation of the participant and increase his/her motivation to participate in future growth experiences. Psychologists and educators believe motivation can "arouse and instigate behavior, give direction and purpose to behavior, continue to allow behavior to persist, and lead to choosing or preferring a particular behavior" (Wlodkowski, 1984, p. 12). A person is often said to be motivated if he/she accomplishes a certain objective. For teachers, accomplishing a certain objective often means acquiring some type of educational achievement. There is evidence that establishes that educational achievement is consistently positively related to motivation (Wlodkowski, 1982).

Individuals who participate in growth opportunities often capitalize on their own mistakes and welcome advice from others on how to improve (Duke & Stiggins, 1990). Utilizing one's mistakes as a source for improvement and accepting advice from others requires a certain type of attitude toward professional growth. Wlodkowski (1984) noted the important role of attitude in adult motivation. Wlodkowski (1984) divided motivation into four categories, beginning with attitude. While participating in the growth process, one begins with a basic attitude toward the general learning environment. One's attitude toward the learning environment affects the level of motivation experienced by the participant during the growth process. Attitude also has an influence on the second category of motivation—one's basic needs at the time of instruction. Motivation to participate in a growth experience is affected by the perceived needs of the participant and the relevance of the growth experience to those needs. The third category of motivation is related to the stimulation of the environment and learning situation and the affective or emotional experiences obtained while learning. The affective and emotional experiences of the participant are dependent upon the quality of the growth experience. The fourth category of motivation occurs after participation in the growth experience. Upon completion of the growth activity, motivation results from the acquisition of competence as a result of new knowledge or skills gained and reinforcement provided for one's efforts (Wlodkowski, 1984). Motivation is thus enhanced in different ways at various stages of the growth process and by the quality of the growth activity.

Achievement motivation is defined as a person's "functional display of a concern for excellence in work that one values, and, in a sense, it is also a desire for competence over a body of subject matter, a specific skill, or a designated task" (Wlodkowski, 1984,

p. 135). To acquire achievement motivation, one must be involved in the process of planning and striving for excellence along with a progression toward improvement. If a teacher's successful learning can be attributed to his/her ability and effort, he/she will experience pride and reward for his/her performance and behaviors (Wlodkowski, 1982). Often, achievement motivation leads to a sense of accomplishment and competence.

Role of Staff Development in Teacher Competency

Another goal of professional growth is to increase the competency of each individual teacher (Cook & Fine, 1996). Teacher competency refers to "any single knowledge, skills, or professional value position held by the individual teacher, which is relevant to successful teaching" (Cresap, McCormick, & Paget, 1984, p. 31). Such competency refers to the specific knowledge, actions, or beliefs of the individual teacher. Competence describes a person's ability to "take the initiative and capably act upon his/her environment rather than remaining passive and allowing the environment to control and determine his/her behavior" (Wlodkowski, 1984, p. 134). Competency can occur within two dimensions. The first occurs when a person realizes that a specified degree of knowledge or level of performance that is acceptable by personal and/or social standards has been attained. This is known as awareness of mastery (Wlodkowski, 1984). The second is the self-perception that one is capable and proficient, known as gaining a sense of self-confidence (Wlodkowski, 1984). These two dimensions can be acquired through quality growth opportunities.

Role of Staff Development in Teacher Efficacy

A third goal of professional growth is to instill a sense of self-efficacy in the participant. The acquisition of new knowledge and mastery of a set of objectives, which

provide the foundation for staff development activities, lead to the development of confidence in one's ability and skill level, known as efficacy. Bandura (1993) asserts that a teacher's belief in his/her own efficacy to support student learning affects the types of teaching and learning environments created as well as the level of academic progress made by his/her students. Thus, confidence in one's ability supports the efforts to acquire and master new knowledge and skills, the mastery of which, in turn, promotes confidence (Wlodkowski, 1984). The attainment of self-confidence is a product of competence growth, providing the basis for taking risks and expanding one's level of skill and performance into new areas (Sparks, 1988; Wlodkowski, 1984). Experimental research has indicated that people strive to behave in manners consistent with their view of themselves (Wlodkowski, 1982). Teachers who hold a commanding sense of self-efficacy tend to have higher levels of commitments and confidence in their teaching abilities than those teachers with a weak sense of self-efficacy (Norman, n.d.) Therefore, self-confidence and achievement motivation are crucial to the professional growth of the individual teacher.

Role of Staff Development in Andragogy

Traditional staff development activities are often not only disconnected from teachers' individual and organizational needs, but they also lack an understanding of the adult learner. Coined by Malcolm Knowles, the term "andragogy" has become the accepted terminology for explaining the principles of the adult learner. Initially introduced in 1833 by Kapp, andragogy (the art of teaching adults) now parallels pedagogy (the art of teaching children) (Kaminsky, n.d).

Knowles (1980) recognized characteristics of the adult learner and his/her

learning experiences. The first characteristic is the need to know. Adult learners need to

know why they need to learn something. What is the purpose of this activity, and what

relevance does it have? Another characteristic is self-direction. Adult learners should be

given the responsibility for making their own decisions and be treated as capable of self-

direction. A third characteristic of the adult learner is the acquisition of a variety of

experiences. The adult learner should be allowed to use his/her experiences as resources

for learning. Readiness to learn is another characteristic of the adult learner. Adults are

ready to learn concepts and skills that are relevant to their personal and professional lives.

A fifth characteristic involves the adult learner's orientation to learning. Adult learners

desire immediate application of learned knowledge, shifting their focus from subject-

centered to problem-centered learning. A last characteristic reflects the adult learner's

motivation to learn. The adult learner's motivation to learn becomes more intrinsic than

extrinsic as he/she matures. In order to capitalize on these characteristics, Knowles

offered recommendations for adult education programs and learning environments. Adult

education programs should: 1) be conducted in a collaborative mode; 2) help learners

achieve self-direction and empowerment; 3) capitalize on learners' experiences; 4) foster

participation; 5) foster critical, reflective thinking; 6) foster learning for action; 7) have a

climate of respect; and, 8) foster problem posing and problem solving.

Quality staff development activities should reflect the recommendations of adult

education programs in order to encompass the learning needs and strategies of the adult

learner as well as to provide the types of activities that motivate teachers to continually

grow and experience feelings of competency and efficacy. Unfortunately, these recommendations are often missing from traditional staff development experiences.

Models of Staff Development

   While a wide range of staff development activities exists, staff development opportunities can be categorized into several models that direct the type of activities in which teachers will participate. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) and the authors of The Professional Growth Cycle: The Process for Teacher Evaluation (n.d.) recognize several models of staff development that have emerged from research: independent study/individually guided staff development, observation and assessment, involvement in a development or improvement process, training, and inquiry. Within each model, numerous activities may occur. Professional activities may include peer reflection, peer visits, professional visits, action research, participation in study groups, audio/videotaping of practice, participation in or delivery of workshops and conferences, development of instructional materials, journal writing, networking, curriculum development, participation or delivery of a course, participation in teacher exchange programs, and team teaching.

   Independent study/individually guided development model. One model of professional development is the Independent Study, or Individually Guided Development Model (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989; The Professional Growth Cycle, n.d.). The purpose of this model is to empower teachers through self-direction. Knowles (1980) identified self-direction as one of the key characteristics of adult learner behavior. Similarly, one of the guiding principles of andragogy is that learners should be able to relate what is being learned to their personal or professional experiences. The NFIE

defines high-quality professional development as that which "is teacher designed and directed, incorporates the best principles of adult learning, and involves shared decisions designed to improve the school" (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996, p. 84).

In the Independent Study model, teachers select an identified objective to study and design their own learning activities. Through the selection of their own learning goals and means of accomplishing these goals, teachers become more motivated to participate in the professional activity. Individual experiences may include taking a course in which teachers apply strategies learned to current instructional practice or participating in action research through which teachers study their own practices to make formal decisions on ways to improve teaching (Professional Growth System Handbook, 2002-2003). Other activities might involve the teacher as the planner and presenter of a workshop, conference, or course, as a developer of instructional materials or of a new curriculum, or as a journal writer reflecting on or synthesizing professional readings, analyzing trends, or reflecting on his/her own teaching. By empowering teachers through self-directed development, teachers develop a sense of professionalism.

Peer observation and assessment model. A second model of professional development is the Peer Observation and Assessment Model (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989; The Professional Growth Cycle, n.d.). The purpose of this model is to provide the teacher being evaluated with collegial support. Reflecting a constructivist view of adult learning, this model allows teachers to see themselves as facilitators and co-learners. Teachers participate in a number of observations with peers to address a particular objective. Activities might include peer reflective conversations based upon a peer visit

to the classroom or a professional visit in which the teacher observes a peer or program and participates in planning and reflective conversations to discuss areas of observation. The assumption behind this growth program is that instructional practices are improved if a peer observes a teacher's classroom procedures and provides appropriate feedback. In turn, observers also learn as they watch their peers in action.

Involvement in a development/improvement process model. A third model of professional development is the Involvement in a Development or Improvement Process Model (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). The purpose of this model is to provide teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to improve practice in a specific area of need. Teachers participate in activities designed to address a certain issue that has been assessed as a problem area in the teacher's practice. One of the qualities of an effective professional development activity is that it is targeted toward a specific goal or objective. Activities typically include the acquisition of new skills, attitudes, and/or behaviors through workshops, conferences, and collaboration with colleagues. One common professional activity found within this model is the use of audio/videotaping for reflective conversations with peers.

Training model. A fourth model of professional development is the Training Model (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). The purpose of the training model reflects two of the U.S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team's principles of professional development for practitioners and policymakers: professional development enables teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards, and it reflects best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership (Cook & Fine,

1996). The training model thus utilizes an expert presenter who selects objectives, activities, and products. Often, the outcome includes skill development or knowledge acquisition through the improvement of teaching knowledge and practices. The most effective training programs include exploration of theory, demonstrations of practice, supervised trial of new skills with feedback on performance, and coaching within the workplace (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989).

Action research/inquiry model. A fifth model of professional development is the Action Research, or Inquiry, Model (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989; The Professional Growth Cycle, n.d.). The purpose of this model reflects two principles of andragogy: instruction should be problem-centered, and learners should be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction (Andragogy, n.d.) This model also illustrates one of the U.S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team's principles of professional development for practitioners and policymakers involved in professional development activities: professional development promotes continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools (U.S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team, 1994). Within this model, teachers or teams of teachers formulate a topic of study related to instructional practice, implement and study the impact of various strategies on the topic, and then measure the difference in student results. The process typically includes identification of a problem, data collection, data analysis, and changes in practice through the analysis of data (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). The philosophical assumption underlying this model is the belief that teachers grow professionally through reflective action.

Collaboration model. The authors of The Professional Growth Cycle: The Process for Teacher Evaluation (n.d.) add an additional staff development model, the Collaboration Model, to those discussed above. The purpose of this model is to allow teachers to engage in collegial interactions. Collaboration activities might include participation in study groups, grade-level or departmental meetings, team teaching, action research, networking, and teacher exchange programs. Study groups consist of small groups of teachers who meet to study and experiment with topics of interest that will increase the professional repertoire of each teacher (Professional Growth System Handbook, 2002-2003). Through team teaching, teachers collaboratively plan, teach, and evaluate lessons and units. Participating in a teacher exchange program allows the educator to teach and share insights with staff at another school. Through networking, teachers participate in collegial dialogue with educators from other schools. This type of dialogue is focused on school improvement through educational change.

Criteria of Quality Staff Development

While there are various definitions of staff development, there is one commonality found within all. Staff development, however designed, is created for the improvement of teacher performance and the enhancement of teacher growth to ultimately improve student achievement. Effective staff development is crucial to the present reform process. The literature consists of many definitions of staff development. As previously mentioned, the NCLB reform movement has issued a definition of high quality staff development. The U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team describes high quality staff development as "rigorous and relevant content, strategies and organizational supports" (1994, ¶2) that support the preparation

and career development of teachers whose competence, expectations, and actions influence the teaching and learning environments and serve as the bridge that takes educators from where they are to where they need to be to guide the development of each student. The NCREL views staff development as a "key tool that keeps teachers abreast of current issues in education, helps them implement innovations, refine their practice, and broaden themselves both as educators and as individuals" (Cook & Fine, 1996, ¶4). According to the thesaurus of the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) database, staff development refers to "activities to enhance professional career growth" (NCREL, 2000, ¶1). Whatever the specific definition, staff development is viewed today as a vital link toward to the improvement of the nation's schools through the enhancement of teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills and the subsequent improvement in student achievement.

No Child Left Behind Criteria of Quality Staff Development

The establishment of a national concept of staff development is critical to a coherent definition of staff development. Under Title IX of NCLB, specific guidelines for staff development that reflect the standards set forth by the NSDC have been established. Criteria for quality staff development under NCLB are depicted in eight key elements:

- All activities are referenced to student learning.

- Schools use data to make decisions about the content and type of activities.

- Activities are based on research-validated practices.

- Subject matter mastery for all teachers is a top priority.

- A long-term plan exists that provides focused and ongoing development with time well allocated.

- Activities match the content that is being instructed.

- All activities are fully evaluated.

- Development is aligned with state standards, assessment, and local school curriculum. (USDE, 2003)

The above criteria underscore a critical premise of quality staff development under NCLB: The traditional one-day or short-term workshops or conferences are no longer considered acceptable experiences (USDE, 2003).

USDE's Professional Development Team's Principles of Quality Staff Development

The U.S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team was established in 1994 by Education Secretary Richard W. Riley to examine exemplary practices and research related to staff development, and with this knowledge to create guiding principles for practitioners and policymakers involved in staff development activities across the country (U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team, 1994). The ensuing principles of high-quality staff development became a part of the nation's Goals 2000 and provided a foundation for the criteria set forth by NCLB. The U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team's principles for staff development are as follows:

- focuses on teachers as central to student learning, yet includes all other members of the school community

- focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement

- respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the school community

- reflects best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership

- enables teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards

- promotes continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools

- requires substantial time and other resources

- is driven by a coherent long-term plan

- is evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning; and, this assessment guides subsequent efforts. (U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team, 1994)

Recognizing that professional development plays a critical role in successful education reform, the U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team asserted that addressing each of the above principles is necessary for individual as well as organizational improvement.

National Staff Development Council's Standards for Quality Staff Development

Along with the principles set forth by Goals 2000, the NSDC has established standards for staff development. The NSDC Standards for staff development are divided into three categories: context, process, and content. Context standards include the organization of learning communities, the development of leadership skills, and the support of adult learning through appropriate resources. Process standards include the creation of data-driven activities, the use of multiple sources for evaluation, the application of research-based knowledge, the use of learning strategies appropriate for design and knowledge of human learning, and opportunities for collaboration. Content

standards consist of the understanding and appreciation of student equity, the components

of quality teaching, and the knowledge of family involvement (NSDC, 2003c). The

NSDC's standards for staff development that improves the learning of all students are as

follows:

- Context standards
    - organize adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.
    - require skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.
    - require resources to support adult learning and collaboration.
- Process standards
    - use disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.
    - use multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.
    - prepare educators to apply research to decision making.
    - use learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.
    - apply knowledge about human learning and change.
    - provide educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.
- Content standards
    - prepare educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.

o deepen educators' content knowledge, provide them with research-based

instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic

standards, and prepare them to use various types of classroom assessments

appropriately.

o provide educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other

stakeholders appropriately. (NSDC, 2003c)

National Education Association's Criteria for Quality Staff Development

The NEA has also set forth criteria in the form of resolutions that will provide

educators with the highest standards of professional practice (NEA, 1998). The criteria

reflect the standards proposed by the NSDC. The NEA believes that staff development

should:

- be based upon clearly articulated goals.

- be designed and directed by the affected professionals at each site.

- assist teachers in meeting the needs of students.

- be incorporated into the teaching profession as an essential component of the

work schedule.

- provide training for the implementation of new and expanded programs.

- provide time for inquiry, research, reflection, and collaboration.

- provide opportunities for mentoring with colleagues.

- be standards referenced and incorporate the best principles of teaching and

learning.

- be career long, rigorous, and sustained.

- stimulate intellectual development and leadership capacity.

- balance individual priorities with the needs of the school and the district.

- provide a depth of subject matter knowledge and a greater understanding of learning styles.

- provide opportunities to apply new learning and changes in practice.

- provide opportunities to assume new roles, including leadership positions.

- include an ongoing assessment and evaluation component to determine effectiveness.

- provide flexibility for the use of a variety of resources such as university-school partnerships, professional development schools, exchange programs, professional development resource centers, and cultural and business resources. (NEA, n.d.)

The NEA contends that continuous professional development that reflects the above criteria is required for teachers and administrators alike in order to attain the highest standards of professional practice and to transfer this practice into the highest levels of student achievement.

American Federation of Teachers' Guidelines for Quality Professional Development

The AFT has developed guidelines for professional development. Recognizing that professional development should be a continuous process that empowers educators and connects theory, practice, and student outcomes, the AFT proposes eleven guidelines. According to the AFT guidelines, professional development should:

- deepen and broaden knowledge of content.

- provide a strong foundation in the pedagogy of particular disciplines.

- provide knowledge about the teaching and learning process.

- be rooted in and reflect the best available research.

- be aligned with the standards and curriculum teachers use.

- contribute to measurable improvement in student achievement.

- be intellectually engaging and address the complexity of teaching.

- provide sufficient time, support, and resources to enable teachers to master new content and pedagogy and to integrate this knowledge and skill into their practice.

- be designed by teachers in cooperation with experts in the field.

- take a variety of forms, including some we have not typically considered.

- be job-embedded and site specific.

    (AFT, 2002)

The AFT contends that the above guidelines are an essential factor in the empowerment of individual educators to identify and solve problems and offer students quality learning experiences that will prepare them for national standards and responsibilities of work and citizenship.

National Foundation for the Improvement of Education's Criteria

The NFIE has identified features of high quality staff development opportunities that are in accordance with the aforementioned goals and principles (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). The NFIE criteria specify that quality staff development:

- has the goal of improving student learning at the heart of every school endeavor.

- provides adequate time for inquiry, reflection, and mentoring, and is an important part of the normal working day.

- is rigorous, sustained, and adequate to the long-term change of practice.

- is teacher designed and directed, incorporates the best principles of adult learning, and involves shared decisions designed to improve the school.

- makes best use of new technologies.

- is site-based and supportive of a clearly articulated vision for students.

- fosters a deepening of subject matter knowledge, a greater understanding of learning, and a greater appreciation of students' needs.

- helps teachers and other staff meet the needs of students who learn in different ways and who come from diverse cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

- balances individual priorities with school and district needs.

    (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996)

Through the inclusion of the above criteria in staff development opportunities, the NFIE contends that the needs and achievement of students as well as the attainment of professional teaching standards for educators can be met.

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory's Goals

Regional organizations that influence a state's performance also propose goals for effective staff development as well as characteristics of quality teaching and development. The NCREL has developed goals for effective staff development in concurrence with the U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team's principles, the NSDC's standards, and the NEA's criteria for effective staff development (Cook & Fine, 1996). The NCREL goals indicate that professional development:

- enriches teaching and improves learning for all students. It is an essential link to higher student achievement.

- supports teacher development, both as individuals and as educators.

- is considered a central part of teaching—as vital as classroom instruction.

- is considered an ongoing process and is conducted in a long-term, sustained

  manner.

- is job-embedded and inquiry-based.

- supports current beliefs about teaching and learning.

- is based on a growth model rather than a deficit model.

- addresses goals for school improvement and is clearly related to reform efforts.

- is modeled after learning experiences considered valuable for adults.

- supports systemic change.

  (Cook & Fine, 1996)

The NCREL recognizes the above goals as essential elements in the creation of a

comprehensive framework that provides continual improvement and refinement for the

individual educator and the school organizational system.

Southern Regional Education Board's Definition of Quality Teaching

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) sets requirements for becoming

a highly qualified teacher for each of its sixteen states. Goal ten of the SREB's Goals for

Education states that every student must be taught by a qualified teacher as defined by

NCLB (Southern Regional Education Board [SREB], 2002). In order to meet this goal,

the SREB is considering one of three options under the state-developed evaluation known

as HOUSSE, a high, objective, uniform state standard of evaluation (SREB, 2002). One

of the options is professional development, in which the teacher must complete a specific

number of state-approved "continuing learning units" (SREB, 2002, ¶6).

Appalachian Educational Laboratory's Support for Quality Teaching

The Appalachian Educational Laboratory (AEL), a research and development organization, offers professional development and program improvement services for schools and school districts in West Virginia (Appalachian Educational Laboratory [AEL], 2004). Through the establishment of a new center for professional development, the AEL offers support to schools and districts to meet the requirements set forth by NCLB. "AEL's commitment is to help educators understand and meet the demands of NCLB by delivering high quality, research-based professional development and technical assistance that is competitively priced" (AEL, 2004, ¶4).

West Virginia Department of Education's Guidelines

Standards, goals, and guidelines have not only been set by national and regional organizations but are also developed at the state levels. West Virginia recently adopted a new set of goals for professional development (WVDE, 2004). Presently, the WVDE has not developed standards for staff development and has not adopted the standards set forth by the NSDC (NSDC, 2003b). While West Virginia's Policy 5500 sets principles of operation for professional development, those principles are not mandated to be in accordance with the state's goals. The principles of operation of West Virginia's Policy 5500 encompass the following guidelines concerning staff development:

- utilize individual school, county, regional, state, national and international priorities

- utilize multiple input sources to identify program needs

- utilize needs based objectives

- create activities that provide for individual needs as well as group/organizational needs

- provide a systematic evaluation process for delivery, quality, and impact

- provide provisions for follow-up activities when objectives are beyond awareness levels. (WVDE, 1997)

Although West Virginia has not adopted the NSDC standards for staff development, each of the above guidelines is reflective of the national standards and criteria of reform. The goals established by the WVDE, however, only address the content of staff development opportunities. The design of the state's professional development plan is constructed by the West Virginia Center for Professional Development. Established in 1991 to ensure that West Virginia teachers and administrators receive the knowledge and information needed to provide students with the means for effective learning, the West Virginia Center for Professional Development established the mission of advancing quality teaching in West Virginia through the implementation of statewide training, professional staff development, and technical assistance programs (West Virginia Center for Professional Development, 2002).

Each of the above entities has a direct impact on the type of staff development that is occurring and will occur in the future in West Virginia. In order to maximize the recommendations made by each group, a look into the common characteristics found within the standards, principles, goals, and criteria of each entity and how these characteristics are integrated into the various models of staff development is warranted.

Common Characteristics of Quality Staff Development

Taking an in-depth look at the preceding models of staff development, as well as the standards, goals, principles, criteria, and recommendations for quality staff development, and comparing them to current literature about professional growth, it becomes evident that several characteristics are commonly found throughout the literature and in the aforementioned criteria. Embedded within the five prominent models, high quality staff development consists of activities that are 1) targeted to the specific needs of the individual teacher and the school/organization; 2) collaborative in nature; 3) considered an ongoing process that is conducted in a long-term sustained manner; 4) "time-friendly" and job-embedded in the daily experiences of the teacher; 5) opportunities for reflective thinking; and 6) systematically evaluated for their impact on teacher effectiveness and student achievement (See Appendix B for matrix).

Targeted Staff Development

Quality staff development encompasses activities that are targeted toward the needs of the individual teacher as well as the school and/or organization. Teachers must participate in learning experiences that are pertinent to their educational situations. Teachers find value in information that is directly applicable to their everyday classroom experiences and linked to specific instructional objectives and learning concepts (NFIE, 2003). Brown (1992) recognized that educators have a hard time connecting what is presented through staff development activities to their day-to-day practices. The perceived usefulness of staff development is critical to the validity of such experiences and to the motivation of teachers to participate in such experiences, as illustrated by high

school French teacher, Alvarez Anderson:

> I appreciate staff development, but sometimes it doesn't seem well-planned. For
> example, we have designed workdays without students, but along comes a
> consultant with an instructional game that we already know, but we have to spend
> time learning it again. (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future,
> 1996, p. 41)

An opportunity that is created by an organization or an individual unconnected to
the school system is not likely to be sufficiently aligned with the goals and expectations
of the recipients of such an experience. Quality staff development must be targeted in
nature with activities and opportunities that are directly related to the needs of the
individual teacher and his/her school environment. One of the guidelines for professional
development set forth by the AFT is to align the content of professional development
with standards and curriculum that teachers actually use (AFT, 2002). In order to target
the needs of the individual educator and the corresponding school environment, one of
the key elements of NCLB is for schools to use data to make decisions about the content
and type of activities needed in order to create pertinent opportunities with the ultimate
goal of improving student achievement (USDE, 2003). Teachers use data to set specific,
measurable targets for student improvement, such as self-assessment questions, which
can provide a starting place to "collect data on teachers' needs in relation to the
knowledge and skills that research has shown are connected with results for students"
(Hirsh, 2001, p. 2). Gathering and analyzing school data from several sources is an
effective way to identify trends in student achievement and clarify school and/or student
needs. For greatest impact, professional development is based on identified needs.

According to principles of high quality staff development as set forth by the U. S

Department of Education's Professional Development Team in Goals 2000, staff

development opportunities must focus on individual and organizational improvement that

is embedded in the daily life of the school (U. S. Department of Education's Professional

Development Team, 1994). "Research has shown unequivocally that professional

development is most effective when it is embedded in teachers' work" (Kelleher, 2003,

p. 754).

Before designing staff development opportunities, developers must first

recognize the needs of the participants and the corresponding organization. The NEA

recommends that staff development balance individual priorities with the needs of the

school and the district (NEA, 1998). In accordance with the preceding recommendation,

The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (1996) has also

recommended that staff development be "better balanced between meeting the needs of

individual teachers and advancing the organizational goals of their schools and districts"

(Professional Development, 2002, p. 2).

WVDE Policy 5500 reflects a targeted nature in its statement of purpose for

ongoing professional staff development. "Professional staff development should be a

continuous, developmental process ultimately based on staff needs" (WVDE, 1997, ¶2).

This statement of purpose is reflected in one of the principles of operation of Policy 5500,

calling for activities that provide for individual as well as organizational needs (WVDE).

A targeted nature can be found within the design of each of the models of staff

development. In Individually Guided development activities, or Independent Study, the

teacher designs his/her own learning activities. With the goal of empowering teachers

through self-direction, teachers participate in development activities, chosen by themselves, that are directly related to their particular concerns or interests. The NFIE defines high quality staff development as that which is teacher designed and directed, incorporates the best principles of adult learning, and involves shared decision designed to improve the school by creating a balance between the needs of the teacher, school, and district (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

Knowles (1980) identifies self-direction, as well as the need to know why the learner needs to learn something, as one of the key characteristics of adult learner behavior. Similarly, one of the guiding principles of andragogy is that learners should be able to relate what is being learned to their personal or professional experiences. Adults are motivated to learn if they have the perception that the learning activity will help them better perform tasks in their professional situations (Knowles, 1980). This reflects one of the needs that must be met through staff development activities as recognized by Miller, Smith & Tilstone (1998)—the felt need. Stage theorists and learning style researchers assert that individuals have different professional needs based upon their developmental stages and the ways they perceive and process information (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). The Individually-guided staff development model allows teachers to solve self-selected professional problems using their preferred modes of learning (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989).

The Peer Observation and Assessment model can reflect a targeted nature through the observance of a specific practice. Teachers observe specific practices and/or skills of their peers and evaluate the effectiveness of these activities.

The Involvement in a Development or Process model can reflect a targeted staff development program through the process of assessing current practices and determining a problem whose solution will improve student outcomes (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). Through the identification of a problem or need by an individual teacher or a group of teachers or professionals, the outcome of the staff development activity is dependent upon its targeted nature. As one component of the NSDC's process standards, the use of disaggregated data and multiple sources of information are to be used to determine learning priorities for teachers and schools (NSDC, 2003c).

The Training model of staff development, which is the most widely used form and most thoroughly researched, can also illustrate a targeted nature of staff development (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). Teachers receive training in areas of concern or interest by an expert in the field. The impact on teachers is dependent upon the targeted objectives and the quality of the training program (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989).

Likewise, a targeted nature can also be found within the design of the Inquiry, or Action Research model. "Inquiry reflects a basic belief in teachers' ability to formulate valid questions about their own practice and to pursue objective answers to those questions" (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989, ¶96). One of the NCREL's goals for staff development is that such experiences must be job-embedded and inquiry-based (Cook & Fine, 1996). The first step in this model is to identify a problem of interest related to an individual or group of teachers' educational situation. Action research is developed based upon the problem of interest.

For staff development to be effective, it should be targeted toward the needs of the individual participants as well as the corresponding organization and/or school.

Without activities and opportunities that are directly related to the needs of the participants, staff development becomes the meaningless experience associated with traditional staff development opportunities.

Collaborative Staff Development

"Professional development must shift its emphasis from working *on* teachers to working *with* teachers toward improvement of teaching and learning for all students" (Cook & Fine, 1996, p. 6). Staff development must be organized to create effective learning communities. The underlying premise of establishing learning communities is that "members learn best from one another and grow through interaction with other members" (Newell, Wilsman, Langefeld, & McIntosh, 2002, p. 2). One of the recommendations of The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (1996) is to link teachers to larger learning communities so they can bring in expertise and ideas to complement their work. Likewise, two of the context standards and one of the process standards of the NSDC's standards for staff development call for the organization of adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and/or district, for the support of collaboration through resources, and for the acquisition of knowledge and skills needed to collaborate (NSDC, 2003c). Bowskill, Foster, Lally, and McConnell (2000) have found a growing trend of collaboration among individuals, departments and universities in staff development experiences.

Collaborative decision making and opportunities to learn from and with colleagues are tools that teachers find most helpful (NFIE, 1996). Lieberman (1995) found that the act of teachers sharing work of their own professional improvement with colleagues has gained credibility in the education arena. According to a U.S. Department

of Education survey on professional development and training (1998), 82% of teachers believe that weekly scheduled collaboration with other teachers improves their classroom teaching. Experience has shown that problem posing is greatly enhanced when educators communicate with other educators who are familiar with the particular problem under study (Kuhne & Quigley, 1997). In 1996, the NEA (as cited in NFIE, 2003) published the results of a two-year nationwide study on high quality professional development. The report concluded that "when teachers analyze and discuss instructional practice and the resulting samples of student work, they experience some of the highest caliber professional development available" (¶9). Thus, one of the recommendations for quality staff development suggested by the NEA is to provide teachers with opportunities to mentor with colleagues (NEA, 1998). There is evidence that supports the idea that professional growth is enhanced when a teacher is assisted by others to become more aware of his/her daily practices and activities (Hawley & Valli, 1999). The U. S. Department of Education survey on professional development and training (1998) showed that 88% of public school teachers believe that being formally mentored by another teacher at least once a week improves their classroom teaching.

Borgia and Schuler (1996) describe several elements that are essential to staff development, with one element being collaboration. Relations among developers, presenters, and participants must be equal and supportive. The best way to bridge the gap between theory and practice is to involve educators in research and their own professional growth (Alber & Nelson, 2002). Teachers blame researchers for the gap between theory and practice because much of the research is performed outside the educator's everyday experiences and therefore lacks meaning and serves to perpetuate the

practice of lack of teacher involvement in planning and implementing research (Alber & Nelson, 2002). People who participate in creating something feel more ownership of what they have created and make more use of it. The feeling of ownership moves teachers beyond simply hearing about new ideas and strategies to being actively involved in decisions about the content and process (Lieberman, 1995). When teachers take an active role, they become more empowered as professionals instead of remaining in a technician/managerial position. This is reflected in one of the principles of quality staff development set forth by the U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team in Goals 2000, stating that staff development is planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate that development (U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team, 1994). Empowerment through collaboration can also be found as one of AFT's guidelines for professional development, stating that development opportunities should be designed by teachers in cooperation with experts in the field (AFT, 2002).

Within the process standards of the NSDC's standards for staff development, collaboration is acknowledged as a means of providing educators with knowledge and skills. Quality staff development provides time for teachers to interact with peers, to share views and experiences, and offers mentoring opportunities (Abdal-Haqq, 1996; Gibbons & Kimmell, 1997; Kelleher, 2003; NEA, n.d.; NFIE, 1996). Through the use of collaborative staff development, teachers can "develop stronger voices to represent their perspectives, learn to exercise leadership with their peers, use their firsthand experience to create new possibilities for students through collaborative work, and develop a community of shared understanding that enriches their teaching and provides intellectual

and emotional stimulation" (Lieberman, 1995, p. 595). Through the process of collaboration, teachers become sensitive to their contexts and concerns and are more empowered to be leaders as well as learners (Lieberman, 1995).

The importance of collaboration is reflected in several models of staff development. One model is labeled the Collaboration model (The Professional Growth Cycle, n.d.). The purpose of this model is to allow teachers to engage in collegial interactions. One of the U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team's guiding principles for practitioners and policymakers involved in staff development activities is to focus on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement. A second principle calls for staff development to respect and nurture the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers (U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team, 1994). Both of these principles are illustrated in the Collaboration model as teachers are actively involved with colleagues in the examination of a particular aspect of their teaching. Similar activities also occur within the Involvement in a development/Improvement process model.

Another staff development model that can reflect a collaborative nature is Peer Observation and Assessment (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989; The Professional Growth Cycle, n.d.). The purpose of this model is to provide the teacher being evaluated with collegial support. Reflecting a constructivist view of adult learning, this model allows teachers to see themselves as facilitators and co-learners. Reflecting Miller, Smith and Tilstone's (1998) comparative need that must be met in quality staff development, the assumption behind this growth program is that instructional practices are improved if a peer observes a teacher's classroom procedures and provides appropriate feedback. In

turn, observers also learn as they watch their peers in action. Joyce & Showers (1995) found that substantial improvements in student learning have occurred when training of teachers in instructional skills and practices is followed by observations and coaching from peers.

Similarly, collaborative staff development efforts reflect achievement motivation of adults, in which the desire to achieve is enhanced by involvement in the process of planning and striving for the achieved goal. One of the principles of andragogy is that adult learners should be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction (Andragogy, n.d.). Research on individual and organizational change indicates the critical role that autonomy in the implementation process of one's learning plays in the success of a change effort (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Pease, 1983; Lieberman & Miller, 1979).

Within the Training model of staff development, quality sessions can be spaced one or more weeks apart so teachers can have the opportunity to share applications of gained knowledge and participate in peer coaching activities (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). While the Training model utilizes the expertise of a staff development presenter, teachers prefer their peers as trainers as opposed to outside consultants (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). When peers are trainers, "teachers feel more comfortable exchanging ideas, play a more active role in workshops, and report that they receive more practical suggestions" (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989, ¶78). Fullan (1982) found that a teacher's change in behavior is strongly related to the extent to which teachers interact with each other and provide professional assistance to one another. In terms of willingness to participate in professional growth activities, teachers are more likely to try

new strategies and take risks in their practice if they feel they have the support of

colleagues (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989).

Quality staff development should include a collaborative component in which

teachers are directly involved in the planning and implementation of staff development

opportunities as well as in the establishment and participation of learning communities.

Collaboration is a key process in quality staff development (Lambert, 1984; McLaughlin

& Marsh, 1978; Wood & Thompson, 1993). Through leadership opportunities, teachers

are motivated to participate in and are empowered to continue professional growth

experiences.

Sustained, Ongoing Staff Development

Quality staff development must go beyond the traditional one-shot events and

contain a more continuous form of application, communication, and reflection. In the

words of Michael Rutherford, executor director of Cincinnati's Mayerson Academy (a

staff development center), "One thing we know about professional development is that

it's not worth anything if there isn't ongoing follow-up and support all the time. It can't

be inconsistent and it can't be one-shot programs" (National Commission on Teaching

and America's Future, 1996, p. 85). A long-term plan that is focused and ongoing is one

of the key elements of quality staff development as set forth by NCLB (USDE, 2003).

Likewise, the U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team calls for

leaders to guide continuous instructional improvement for teachers (NSDC, 2003c).

Support for teachers is critical to teacher growth and the reduction of attrition (Hirsh,

2003b). This support arises from staff development opportunities that are sustained

throughout the teacher's career. As described in recommendations made by the NEA, quality staff development should be career long, rigorous, and sustained (NEA, 1998).

Another element of staff development as described by Borgia & Schuler (1996) as critical to quality staff development opportunities is commitment. Those involved in quality staff development must understand that they are involved in activities and experiences that are a part of an ongoing process of learning. In a study of people who had been able to use staff development to build excellent teaching and learning environments, Hilliard (1997) found that one of the key elements to successful staff development by all people studied is the provision of ongoing, focused feedback to participants. One of the NFIE's criteria for staff development is that it must be "rigorous, sustained, and adequate to the long-term change of practice" (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996, p. 84). Likewise, Sparks & Loucks-Horsley (1989) contend that in study after study, appropriate staff development experiences with continual, follow-up assistance that allows time for new behaviors to be integrated into a teacher's everyday practice are a part of effective staff development. One of the NCREL's goals for staff development is that experiences are "considered an ongoing process and are conducted in a long-term, sustained manner" (Cook & Fine, 1996, ¶10). Sustained, ongoing staff development can be incorporated into each of the five models of staff development, yet combining models is a highly effective means of providing professional growth that is ongoing and systematic (WVDE, 2003-2004).

For quality staff development to occur, one-shot workshops should become a learning experience of the past. Staff development, in many current models, resembles "a series of boats floating in different directions. To the outside observer, there does not

seem to be a connection between many of the activities" (Kelleher, 2003, p. 754). Such

experiences do not allow for the sustained support adult learners require. If teaching is to

be viewed as a continually emerging profession, the activities and experiences offered to

teachers to keep them abreast of changing theories and practices must also reflect a

continual, sustained atmosphere. This perception is reflected in the 2004 West Virginia

Department of Education Professional Development Goals, in which the four goals are to

be met through "sustained, continuous, and school-embedded professional development

models" (WVDE, 2004, ¶3). The one-shot workshop must be replaced with consistent,

ongoing professional collaborations among educators that illustrate consistency in

process and application. Champion (2001) recommends planning professional

development experiences for a three to four year period.

Time-friendly, Job-embedded Staff Development

Finding time for staff development is a critical issue for most schools (Raack,

2000). Staff development is often treated as time added to a teacher's already busy

workday. In relation to student learning opportunities, present staff development

activities for adults have been referred to as "adult pull-out programs" (Kelleher, 2003,

p. 751). "In many schools, ongoing professional development disrupts the regular

schedule. In-service meetings may require extra days off for students. Meetings held after

school add extra time to the already long school day" (Cook & Fine, 1996, ¶25). One of

the principles of high quality staff development offered by the U. S. Department of

Education's Professional Development Team is the implementation of staff development

experiences that are "embedded in the daily life of schools" (U.S. Department of

Education's Professional Development Team, 1994, ¶5). In like manner, one of the

guidelines set forth by the AFT is that professional development should be job-embedded and site specific (AFT, 2002). If staff development is to be considered essential to school reform, it cannot be viewed as an add-on activity but must instead be seen as an essential part of the working day. Issues such as workload and compensation then arise to create negative connotations of staff development for both the participants and the developers. Many teachers want staff development experiences to be "over and done with". They feel torn between their classroom responsibilities and their desire and/or need for professional development opportunities. The prevailing school culture which considers a teacher's place during school hours to be in front of a class of students actually isolates teachers from one another and discourages staff development opportunities other than those outside the teacher's work day. It is recommended that teachers' time for learning, as well as ongoing collaboration and joint planning, be supported by redesigned school schedules, structures, and staffing that reflect a new school culture of continual learning (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). The NFIE supports making staff development a part of the working day, as one of the criteria of quality staff development offered by the NFIE is to provide adequate time for inquiry, reflection, and mentoring as an important part of the normal working day (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future). The inclusion of staff development within the work day will require more flexible school schedules. Allowing for flexibility in scheduling the work day promotes student achievement by utilizing teachers' time more efficiently and allowing teachers to perform the various duties expected of them in more efficient manners (NFIE, 1996).

According to the recommendations for staff development asserted by the NEA, staff development should be incorporated into the teaching profession as an essential component of the work schedule (NEA, 1998). Teachers and researchers indicate that the greatest challenge to implementing quality staff development is lack of time (Cambone, 1995; Corcoran, 1995; Troen & Bolles, 1994; Watts & Castle, 1993). One of the NCREL's goals for staff development is to ensure that professional development is job-embedded (Cook & Fine, 1996). Several reports by national organizations have called for the need for a more adequate utilization of time for professional development. In 1994, the National Education Commission on Time and Learning (NECTL) published a report entitled *Prisoners of Time* in which it strongly urged that a total change in how time is utilized in public schools to improve learning be implemented. In the same year, the NEA recommended that schools move toward extended-year contracts for teachers to allow additional time for instructional planning, individual study, and group work (NFIE, 1996). The NECTL concurred, stating that teachers should be afforded time to grow professionally; such time should not be viewed as a frill or add-on component to the teacher's normal working day but should be seen as a major aspect of the agreement between teachers and districts concerning their work priorities (NFIE).

Quality staff development should be viewed as an integral part of the teacher's work day rather than as an add-on activity to the teacher's already busy schedule. Current research has shown that in order to improve student learning, professional growth activities must be embedded in teachers' daily work (Kelleher, 2003). If staff development is seen as a critical component of the national reform effort to improve

teacher quality and student achievement, then it should become an accepted component of the teacher's work day.

Reflective Staff Development

Reflection of one's practice is recognized as a key element of quality staff development (Abdal-Haqq, 1996; Gibbons & Kimmell, 1997; Hilliard, 1997; NEA, 1998). In Hilliard's study of effective staff development practices, one commonality found was time set aside for deep reflection by the participant and the developer of the staff development experience (Hilliard, 1997). Staff development should begin with the targeting of specific goals and end with reflection on how the goals have been met (Kelleher, 2003).

One recommendation for adult education programs is that they should foster critical, reflective thinking (Knowles, 1980). "Good teachers are by nature reflective learners" (Kelleher, 2003, p.755). In a review of adult learning theory, self-directedness, including self-learning from experiences in natural settings, has been found to be an important component (Ferraro, 2000). Standards set forth by the NSDC, as well as professional development recommendations and goals of the NEA and the NCERL, call for staff development activities to be modeled after learning experiences considered valuable to adults and which support adult learning theories (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996; NEA, 1998; NSDC, 2003c). Likewise, the NFIE defines one characteristic of high-quality staff development as that which "provides adequate time for inquiry, reflection, and mentoring, and is an important part of the normal working day" (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, p. 84). Literature on teachers' use of reflective practices seems to concur with the above

recommendations. "The primary benefit of reflective practice for the teachers is a deep understanding of their own teaching style, and ultimately, greater effectiveness as teachers. Other specific benefits include the validation of a teacher's ideals, beneficial challenges to tradition, and respect for diversity in applying theory to classroom practice" (Ferraro, 2000, ¶13).

According to Denzin & Lincoln (2000), the mark of a professional teacher is the ability to take reflective action. Teachers who use cases written as self-reports of personal experiences suggest that they are a great tool to develop habits and techniques of self-reflection, as well as a stimulus to analytical thinking (Kleinfeld, 1992). Therefore, staff development practices that allow teachers to study their unique situations cause them to step back and critically reflect how and why they teach in a particular way. Much of this staff development takes place through the Inquiry, or Action Research, model. According to the Teacher Survey on Professional Development and Training sponsored by the U. S. Department of Education (1998), the professional development activity in which most teachers feel improves their teaching consists of an in-depth study of their teaching in their main subject area.

Dewey emphasized the importance of reflective thinking and the educator's ability to reflect on his/her practice and integrate such observations into his/her emerging theories of teaching and learning (Dewey, 1916). The educator thus becomes both teacher and student of the classroom environment, an important concept of effective staff development. Teaching is improved as teachers begin to look beyond the immediate, concrete environment and delve into the deeper meaning of the situation. Through such practices, educators begin to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

As educators become aware of their own practices and inner voices, they become empowered as professionals. According to NFIE, high quality staff development should be directed toward teachers' intellectual development and leadership (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future maintains that:

> it is more important than ever that teachers have the capacity to appraise their actions, evaluate their work, anticipate and control consequences, incorporate new theory and research into practice, and possess the skills and understanding needed to explain their work to other teachers, and to students and their parents….They [reflective capacities] are, rather, the outcome of sustained and rigorous study, and of dialogue and exchange with master teacher educators. (p. 42)

When educators are in charge of their own staff development learning activity, they are able to adopt a more self-directed model that gives them ownership and control over their instruction. One recommendation for adult education programs is to help learners achieve self-direction and empowerment (Knowles, 1980). One way to do this is to directly involve educators in their own learning experiences. "When teachers focus on their own concerns, they solve pressing problems without depending on the bureaucracy, and students benefit at once" (Evans, 1991, p. 11).

Within the Observation and Assessment staff development model, teachers are provided with data for reflection that can be analyzed to improve student learning. One assumption of this model is that reflection on one's practice can be enhanced by observations of another (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989). The advantage of having input

from another provides the teacher with a perspective that may be different from his/her own.

Another element recognized by Borgia and Schuler (1996) as critical to effective staff development is consideration. Reflection is a challenging, critical consideration of an educator's own behavior as a means of developing his/her knowledge and skills. Literature on adult learning proposes that two stages necessary for improvement are "recognition of potential areas of growth through a process of reflection and motivation to change or engage in learning activities" (McLaughlin & Pfeifer, 1988, p. 26). This reflects Miller, Smith, & Tilstone's (1998) felt need of staff development, which is recognized by teachers who become aware that they lack some knowledge or skill.

Quality staff development should employ the use of reflection to create staff development experiences, as well as to promote future opportunities. Reflection becomes the means by which teachers recognize the need for staff development and the means by which teachers analyze their use of knowledge and skills gained through staff development in order to initiate consequent professional growth opportunities.

Evaluated Staff Development

Teacher knowledge and practice are the most immediate outcomes of staff development opportunities. While these represent the immediate outcomes, they are ultimately the bridge between staff development and improvements in student learning, which is the ultimate goal of any staff development effort. The underlying assumption is that if staff development opportunities do not alter teachers' professional knowledge, skills, and/or practices, little improvement is expected in student learning (Gusky & Sparks, 1996). "For professional development to make a difference in instruction,

teachers and administrators need to be thinking continually about the nexus between teacher learning and classroom learning" (Kelleher, 2003, p.756). The effectiveness of staff development opportunities must therefore be considered within all stages of development, from the planning to the design, and finally to the implementation stages. For this to occur, Guskey (2000) offered five levels of professional development evaluation that provide a continuum from impact on participants to an increase in student learning.

Guskey and Sparks (1996) contend that present accountability demands that the improvement of student learning be the main focus in evaluating staff development programs. This becomes apparent through NCLB reform efforts, for one of the key elements of staff development as set forth by NCLB is that all professional activities are fully evaluated (USDE, 2003). Likewise, the NEA, along with the principles of operation of West Virginia's Policy 5500, calls for an ongoing, systematic evaluation process to determine effectiveness and impact of staff development (NEA, 1998; WVDE, 1997). "We can only be accountable for our professional development and we can only look at its impact on teaching and learning if we collect and examine data and know how to use it in our planning and implementation of professional development" (Raack, 2003, ¶9). Unfortunately, many staff development evaluation practices either contain no mechanism to measure the results of the activity or end with the assessment of participants' immediate reactions to the particular experience (Kelleher, 2003; NSDC, 2003a).

A variety of factors and multiple measures of student and adult learning are employed in quality staff development experiences (Kelleher, 2003). Beyond initial collection of data on participant reactions, the NSDC suggests that evaluation should

focus on teachers' acquisition of new knowledge and skills, how the newly gained knowledge affects teaching, and how changes in practice affect student learning. As one of the NSDC's process standards, multiple sources of information for evaluation should be used to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact (Gibbons & Kimmell, 1997; NSDC, 2003c). Joyce & Showers (1998) suggested that multiple sources of data collection include interviews, observations, document analysis, and tests of student learning. Stanley & Popham (1988) suggested that an evaluation process that measures the outcome of staff development "in terms of performance behavior, rather than paper and pencil knowledge, needs to be developed" (p. 37).

While tests of student learning are recognized by NCLB as the ultimate evaluation of school success, many professionals have argued against the use of standardized tests. According to Raack (2003), if schools have performed a needs assessment and identified priorities, then change can be evaluated through the use of standardized testing. Evaluation can also occur through the collection of data throughout each stage of the staff development cycle. Data collected from staff development evaluation can then be used to guide subsequent staff development efforts, which reflects one of the principles of high quality professional development as described by the U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team (1994).

Incorporating an evaluation process into staff development opportunities not only allows for documentation of teacher and/or student change, but it also provides motivation for participating in growth opportunities. A crucial trait to the professional growth of the teacher is the willingness to participate in an activity, which often stems from self-confidence in one's ability. This type of motivation relies heavily on the

outcome or the evaluation of that activity. One of the underlying assumptions of the Observation and Assessment model is that "when teachers see positive results from their efforts to change, they are more apt to continue to engage in improvement" (Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1989, ¶38). Teachers want to know if their staff development activities are making an effective and efficient change, particularly in student learning, in order to justify the added time and work put into participating in such activities (NSDC, 2003a).

A key characteristic in quality staff development is an ongoing, systematic process of evaluation of staff development activities. The evaluation process should be implemented during all phases of staff development experiences and should take into consideration individual and group needs in regard to data collection. Teachers need to see results of their efforts, and a quality evaluation process is a beginning step toward their motivation to continue growing as professionals.

Roles of Educational Personnel in Staff Development Opportunities

The individuals in charge of providing staff development experiences as well as the individuals who participate in said experiences are numerous and vary in title and responsibility. Their positions and degree of participation depend largely upon the level of importance placed on the concept of staff development. One group of individuals, usually the county or district staff development directors, has a fully defined position as director of staff development opportunities for an organization. A second group of individuals, the administrators or principals of each school, bear the responsibility of providing staff development experiences to teachers as one facet of their role as an administrator or principal. A third group of individuals involved in the staff development process is made up of the participants and recipients of growth experiences, or the

individual teachers. Each group plays a vital role in the design, development, and delivery of staff development experiences.

The Role of the County or District Director of Staff Development

The primary function of the county or district director is to plan and organize the continuous learning program for the people within the particular organization. The way in which the county or district staff development director is utilized in professional growth experiences is affected by district or county role descriptions and supervisory practices (Glatthorn & Fox, 1996). The county director of staff development is typically responsible for providing coordination and leadership necessary to implement legislation. The director often possesses the power of funding, accreditation, and mandated legislation. Some services rendered by the county or district staff development director include: 1) identifying promising programs and practices; 2) conducting research on best practices; 3) inventing, designing, or developing new programs; 4) creating an awareness of the availability of programs and practices; 5) apprising personnel of pilot testing of programs and practices; 6) aiding personnel in the process of maintaining the quality of new and/or established programs and practices; and, 7) conducting evaluations of programs and practices (Miller & Verduin, 1979). Glatthorn and Fox (1996) noted that teachers tend to perceive the district or county director as a "remote and relatively unhelpful professional who gives most attention to maintaining the system as it is, rather than reforming it" (p. 117). In West Virginia, the role of the staff development director in each of the fifty-five counties may be filled by an individual at the county central office who is assigned the responsibility of staff development coordination for the county as one

of his/her job priorities, or by the individual administrator at each school (K. K. Larry,

personal communication, February 18, 2004).

The Role of the Principal in Staff Development

It is the job of the principal or building administrator to develop the atmosphere,

support, guidance, and opportunities needed for effective staff development experiences

(Miller & Verduin, 1979). The principal becomes the facilitator who sets and maintains

the stage for continuous staff learning and improvement. He/she also acts as resource

provider for sound instructional professional growth that supports student achievement.

In order to accomplish this, the principal must seek improvement and renewal

simultaneously with his/her teachers (Foster, Loving, & Shumate, 2000). An analysis of

interview data of teachers and principals in selected urban and suburban school districts

in the United States indicated that teachers felt that a principal's involvement in staff

development opportunities should be limited to a supportive role and that of a participant,

for a principal's participation communicates that he/she values the experience

(Washington, 1993).

Miller and Verduin (1979) describe several attributes of the principal's role in

staff development. First, it is the role of the principal or administrator to advance the

purpose of his/her teachers and inspire greater professional growth. The principal must

keep personal and organizational needs in mind at all times. Secondly, the principal or

administrator must attend to administrative details such as securing appropriate materials

and resources, arranging the details of the staff development opportunity, budgeting

funds, providing for suitable working conditions, and fostering social affairs for the

planners, presenters, and participants (Miller & Verduin, 1979). Thirdly, the principal or

administrator must provide support to all participants and help them feel secure and

worthwhile in their endeavors to enhance the importance of the particular activity or

experience. Lastly, the principal or administrator must balance organizational needs with

needs of the individual teacher to foster the growth process. According to Foster, Loving,

& Shumate (2000), the principal should be a leader, model, teacher, cheerleader, and one

who is "down in the trenches" (p. 90) with the teachers and staff members. Research on

effective schools maintains that the single greatest predictor of teachers' perceptions of

the quality of their workplace is their perception of the quality of their principal (Levine,

1989).

The Role of the Teacher in Staff Development

   Teachers do have an obligation to remain current in their profession. The growth

of the individual teacher and/or school organization depends upon continual professional

growth experiences. While the teacher is generally seen as the recipient of staff

development experiences, literature and research findings suggest that teachers should be

actively involved in initiating, planning, and implementing staff development programs

(Alber & Nelson, 2002; Auger & Wideman, 2000; Borgia & Schuler, 1996; Evans, 1991;

Ferraro, 2000; Gennaoui & Kretschmer, 1996; Knowles, 1980; Kuhne & Quigley, 1997;

NFIE, 1996; Washington, 1993). When teachers are involved in all aspects of the staff

development program, they become more empowered to utilize the knowledge and skills

gained from the program activities and more motivated to continue to participate in

growth experiences.

   In relation to professional growth, the first function of the teacher is to recognize

the need for professional growth experiences. This is often the result of analyses of

student outcomes, teacher evaluations, and/or peer communications. Next, teachers should involve themselves in the staff development program through planning, implementing, and/or participation. Finally, teachers should implement the newly gained knowledge and/or skills and evaluate their impact on student achievement. Yet, this is not the end. The professional growth of a teacher is a continuous cycle that provides a forum for lifelong learning.

Summary

A review of the literature has shown that staff development is a critical component of the national educational reform effort (Hirsh, 2003b; Kelleher, 2003; NSDC, 2003c; Publishers Look for NCLB, 2002; Richardson, 2002; USDE, 2003) as well as being an essential building block of quality education found within West Virginia's policies and legislative acts (K. K. Larry, personal communication, 2004; WVDE, 1997; WVDE, 2004). With the widespread practice of utilizing standardized achievement tests to report the status of our nation's schools, the word "accountability" has become a part of the everyday terminology that describes the school entity. The public demands evidence of high quality education in the public school system. Until recently, staff development has not been viewed as a critical component of the status of a school system and has thus not warranted consideration for accountability. This view is now changing. National educational organizations are supporting the theory of a connection among staff development and teacher improvement and student achievement (Cook & Fine, 1996; National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996; NEA, 1998; NSDC, 2003c; USDE, 2003).

In light of the present impetus on the role of quality staff development in the educational reform process, a look into what constitutes current staff development practices is critical to the creation of quality professional growth experiences. Several educational entities have generated criteria for quality staff development practices. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), the U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team, the National Education Association (NEA), the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), the Appalachian Educational Laboratory (AEL), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) have each set forth a form of standards, goals, recommendations, or key elements for accomplishing the implementation of quality staff development experiences. An in-depth look into each of the above criteria, along with a study of research and literature into effective staff development practices, reveals common characteristics that are found within the literature and criteria alike. Characteristics of quality staff development include: (1) the targeting of needs of the participants and school environment; (2) a collaborative design; (3) a sustained, ongoing process of improvement and feedback; (4) a time-friendly process that is embedded within the daily work experience of the participants; (5) the inclusion of reflective action by the participants; and, (6) provisions for a systematic process of evaluating the impact of professional growth activities. In order to be of value to the educational process, a concurrence in the recognition of the above characteristics in professional growth

experiences should exist among those involved in the development, design,

implementation, participation, and review of staff development opportunities.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methods

Methods include the means by which the participants are selected and the data are analyzed (Smith & Glass, 1987). This chapter provides a description of the research procedures that were utilized for this non-experimental study. Although weaknesses associated with control over independent variables are often cited with the use of non-experimental research, Kerlinger (1986) contends that this type of research is often implemented due to the problematic nature of experimental inquiry in an educational setting. Included in this chapter are descriptions of the study's research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and statistical analyses of the data.

Research Design

A research design provides the foundation for a study by specifying the type of inquiry and the procedures for selection of subjects and measurement of the variables (Smith & Glass, 1987). This study was descriptive in nature and was designed to examine teachers' perceptions of staff development. The purpose of this study was to determine to what degree teachers perceive their staff development to be a quality experience and to what degree staff development impacts student learning, a teacher's professional growth needs, a teacher's motivation to grow, and a teacher's feelings of competency. Data collection and establishment of this degree were derived from survey responses in relation to six variables of quality staff development and four areas of impact gathered from a sample population. These variables were operationally defined as scores on the researcher developed *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*.

Demographic data were also utilized to examine the quality of staff development. Once data were collected, the degree to which staff development exemplified a quality experience was compared to demographic data for analysis. The procedures for participant selection and measurement of variables will be discussed further in the following sections.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was P-12 teachers in public schools in West Virginia. The number of P-12 teachers for the 2003-2004 school year was approximately 20,000 (West Virginia: Facts at a glance, 2004). With a 95% confidence level and 4.5% margin of error, an appropriate sampling size for a population of 20,000 is 464 (The Survey System, 2003).

Once the representative population was identified, a random sample of 464 P-12 teachers was selected. A random selection process is one in which each participant has an equal chance of selection independent of any other variables in the selection procedure (Babbie, 1973). Random selection eliminates the danger of researcher bias and allows for the possibility of alternative explanations to be discounted, increasing the internal validity of the study. Additionally, the process of random sampling allowed for estimation and control of sampling error (Smith & Glass, 1987).

Instrumentation

Data utilized in this study was gathered through the use of a cross-sectional survey questionnaire that asked P-12 teachers about their perception of the degree to which staff development in which they participated was indicative of a quality experience. A cross-sectional survey utilizes data that are collected at one point in time

from a selected sample and are used to describe a larger population at that time, as well as for determining relationships among variables at the time of the study (Babbie, 1973). According to Babbie, "survey research is probably the best known and most widely used research method in the social sciences today" (preface). It is logical, deterministic, general, parsimonious, and specific. Survey research focuses on people's beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and behaviors (Kerlinger, 1986). The purpose of survey research, according to Smith and Glass (1987), is "to describe the characteristics or variables in populations by directly examining samples" (p. 226). The ability to utilize random sampling procedures to allow a small number of participants to represent a larger population is one of the advantages of utilizing survey research (Schuman, 1981).

The survey questionnaire utilized in this study was designed in the form of a Likert scale. According to Smith and Glass (1987), scales have the advantage of increased reliability over separate questionnaire items. The *Survey of Staff Development Experiences* consisted of 22 close-ended items with ordered choices. Teachers were asked to indicate the degree to which the staff development in which they participated exemplified a quality experience as defined by six characteristics of quality professional development as well as the impact of staff development on student learning, their professional growth, motivation, and competency by using a 5-point Likert scale (5 = "Strongly Agree", 4 = "Agree", 3 = "Neither Agree nor Disagree", 2 = "Disagree", and 1 = "Strongly Disagree"). According to Kerlinger (1964), a 5- or 7-point scale has the advantage of a greater response variance over 2- or 3-point response categories. Requests for additional data consisting of four items reflecting demographic data were placed at the end of the self-administered questionnaire. "Placing these [duller

demographic data] items at the beginning gives the questionnaire the initial appearance of a routine form, and the person receiving it may not be motivated to complete it" (Babbie, 1973, p. 150).

The design specified that each participant be given a survey. The *Survey of Staff Development Experiences* was based on an in-depth literature review of quality staff development practices. Six characteristics (targeted, collaborative, sustained, time-friendly and job-embedded, reflective, and evaluated staff development) were selected because of their appearance in the literature and in eight educational entities: NCLB, U.S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team, NSDC, NEA, AFT, NFIE, NCREL, and WV Policy 5500 and Professional Development Goals. Appendix B provides a matrix of these characteristics and the appearance of each characteristic in each entity.

The *Survey of Staff Development Experiences* was initially pre-tested for content, style, and validity with a group of seven staff development experts, including three university faculty members, two members of the West Virginia Department of Education, the coordinator of the Appalachian Rural Systemic Initiative (ARSI), and one county director of instruction, all of whom provide staff development opportunities to public school teachers. The members of the panel are listed in Appendix C.

Pre-tests represent initial examination of one or more facets of the research design (Babbie, 1973). Since the instrument was developed by the researcher, validity may be determined by a panel of experts in the subject addressed in the survey (Johnson & Christenson, 2000). The experts were provided with a list of questions to guide their

review of the readability of the survey questionnaire. Appendix D provides a list of the questions utilized by the panel.

Content validity describes the degree to which an instrument actually measures the entirety of the concept it is designed to measure (Babbie, 1973). After suggested revisions from the experts were made, the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences* was piloted with a group of 15 P-12 public school teachers to determine test reliability. The teachers were asked to complete the survey based on the staff development in which they had participated within the past year. Reliability coefficients were established by using Cronbach's alpha. Statistical analysis revealed an alpha score of .9485, indicating a high level of reliability.

Data Collection Procedures

This study utilized a self-reported survey questionnaire in which participants were asked to report on the status of their own beliefs and opinions (Smith & Glass, 1987). Each teacher in the sample was mailed a packet of information compiled by the researcher. A cover letter (Appendix E) explaining the nature of the research, the intent of the survey, how the participant was selected for the study, the importance of each respondent's response, promised confidentiality, approval by the Office of Research Integrity at Marshall University, and a telephone number for those respondents who would like to have additional information about the study was included in the packet. In addition, the packet contained one copy of the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences* with directions for completion, and an addressed and stamped reply envelope. Teachers were asked to complete the survey and return it to the researcher within two weeks.

A return rate graph was constructed to track returned surveys. As completed surveys were returned, each was assigned an identification number and logged on a graph illustrating the number of surveys returned each day. A follow-up letter (Appendix F) and another packet of information were sent two weeks after the initial mailing in an effort to increase the return rate. Providing follow-up letters is an effective method for increasing the rate of return in mail surveys (Babbie, 1973; Smith & Glass, 1987). A rate of 50% plus 1 was sought prior to analysis of the data (Babbie, 1973; Cochran, 1977). This percentage provided a rough guide with no statistical basis (Babbie, 1973). According to Babbie (1973), a lack of response bias is much more important than a high response rate. For this reason, nonrespondent bias checks were prepared in case of low response rates.

Data Analysis

Upon receiving the completed surveys, data were analyzed to determine the degree to which teachers perceived staff development to exemplify a quality experience as defined by the six characteristics of quality professional development and the four areas of professional impact. The data were then compared to the demographic data for analysis. Descriptive statistics and tests of significance were conducted as appropriate.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The procedures presented in this chapter describe the researcher's methods of assuring that the study presents facts of empirical significance. The methods were designed to determine the degree to which P-12 teachers perceived staff development in which they participated to exemplify a quality experience. Descriptive data considered in this study were collected from a cross-sectional, self-reported survey questionnaire titled the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*. A random sample of 464 P-12 teachers in

West Virginia was surveyed. Tests of association and statistical significance were performed. The following chapter presents the results of the data analysis.

CHAPTER 4

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This chapter presents statistical analyses of the data ascertained in the study in both narrative and numerical form. The study was designed to determine the degree to which teachers perceive their staff development to be a quality experience and the degree to which staff development impacts four areas of teacher professionalism: the impact on student learning, the impact on professional growth needs, the impact on motivation to grow in one's profession, and the impact on one's teaching competency. An in-depth review of the literature indicated that high quality staff development consists of six characteristics: experiences that are targeted, collaborative, sustained, time-friendly and job-embedded, reflective, and evaluated. The four areas of impact and the six characteristics of quality staff development were addressed in ten research questions:

1. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be targeted?

2. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be collaborative?

3. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be sustained?

4. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be time-friendly and job-embedded?

5. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be reflective?

6. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be evaluated?

7. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be beneficial to student learning?

8. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be effective in meeting their professional growth needs?

9. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be effective in increasing their motivation to grow professionally?

10. To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be effective in increasing their teaching competency?

The study was quantitative in nature, utilizing a researcher-designed survey of a random sample of West Virginia P-12 teachers. The instrument, *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*, included twenty-two statements with a rating scale response section for teacher perceptions of quality staff development and four closed questions to ascertain demographic data (See Appendix A). All participants of the random sample were asked to complete the survey. Descriptive statistics and tests of significance were used for analysis of the data.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of the approximately 20,000 P-12 teachers in public schools in West Virginia. A sample size of 464 teachers yielded a 95% confidence level with a 4.5% margin of error. The sample was provided by the West Virginia Department of Education databank. Of the 464 teachers randomly selected to participate in the study, 177 returned the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences* on the first mailing, representing 38% of the sample population. A second mailing resulted in 106 additional responses for a total of 283, representing a 61% response rate of the sample population. While the mailings resulted in 283 returned surveys, the number of responses for each statement on the survey varied due to the nature of a self-report survey.

Demographic Data

The *Survey of Staff Development Experiences* collected demographic data from respondents, including grade level(s) taught by respondents, years of professional teaching experience, number of hours of participation in staff development experiences, and type of school in relation to federal funding. This section provides a descriptive analysis of the demographic data gathered by the survey.

Grade Level

Participants were asked to identify the grade level(s) in which they taught during the 2003-2004 school year. Responses were then stratified into three categories, or groups: grades P – 5, 6 – 8, and 9 – 12. A majority of respondents taught in grades P – 5. Of the 283 participants, 144 respondents (50.9%) taught in grades preschool through 5; 61 respondents (21.6%) taught in grades 6 through 8; and, 62 respondents (21.9%) taught in grades 9 through 12, for a total of 267 respondents. Sixteen respondents (5.7%) did not indicate a grade level. Table 1 provides descriptive analysis of respondent grade levels.

Table 1

Frequency of Grade Levels Taught by Participants

Stratified Grade Levels	Number of Respondents	%
P - 5	144	50.9
6 - 8	61	21.6
9 - 12	62	21.9
Total Participants	267	94.3
Non-responses	16	5.7
Total Participants	283	100.0

Years of Professional Teaching Experience

Respondents were asked to indicate how many years of professional teaching experience they have had in the public school system as of the 2003-2004 school year.

Respondent years of experience were stratified into four categories: 0 – 10 years, 11 – 20

years, 21 – 30 years, and 31 or more years of experience. The number of years of

experience indicated by the respondents was fairly evenly distributed among the four

groups. Of the 283 participants, 64 respondents (22.6%) had 0 – 10 years of professional

teaching experience; 83 respondents (29.3%) had 11 – 20 years of professional teaching

experience; 83 respondents (29.3%) had 21 – 30 years of professional teaching

experience; and, 40 respondents (14.1%) had 31 or more years of professional teaching

experience, for a total of 270 respondents. Thirteen participants (4.6%) did not specify

their years of professional teaching experience. Displayed in Table 2 is the descriptive

analysis of participant years of teaching experience.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution of Number of Years of Professional Teaching Experience

Stratified Years of Experience	Number of Respondents	%
0 - 10	64	22.6
11 - 20	83	29.3
21 - 30	83	29.3
31+	40	14.1
Total Respondents	270	95.4
Non-Responses	13	4.6
Total Participants	283	100.0

Hours of Participation in Staff Development Experiences

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of staff development hours in

which they participated during the 2003-2004 school year. Hours of participation in staff

development experiences were stratified into five categories: 0 – 20 hours, 21 – 40 hours,

41 – 60 hours, 61 – 80 hours, and 81 or more hours. Approximately one-half of all

respondents (141 or 49.8%) participated in 0 – 20 hours of staff development. In general,

as the number of hours of participation increased, the number of respondents

participating in these hours decreased. Of the remaining 142 respondents, 80 respondents

(28.3%) participated in 21 – 40 hours of staff development; 15 respondents (5.3%)

participated in 41 – 60 hours of staff development; 4 respondents (1.4%) participated in

61 – 80 hours of staff development; and, 10 respondents (3.5%) participated in more than

80 hours of staff development, for a total of 250 respondents. Thirty-three respondents

(11.7%) did not record the number of hours of participation in staff development

experiences. Table 3 presents descriptive data of the number of hours teachers

participated in staff development experiences in the 2003-2004 school year.

Table 3

Frequency of Number of Hours of Participation in Staff Development

Stratified Number of Participation Hours in Staff Development	Number of Respondents	%
0 - 20	141	49.8
21 - 40	80	28.3
41 - 60	15	5.3
61 - 80	4	1.4
81+	10	3.5
Total Respondents	250	88.3
Non-respondents	33	11.7
Total Participants	283	100.0

Type of School

The *Survey of Staff Development Experiences* asked participants to indicate if

they taught in a Title I, Non-Title I, or Reading First School during the 2003-2004 school

year. Almost one-half of all respondents (136 or 48.1%) taught in a Title I school. Of the

remaining 147 participants, 102 respondents (36%) taught in a Non-Title I school, and 11

respondents (3.9%) taught in a Reading First School, for a total of 249 respondents.

Thirty-four respondents (12.0%) did not indicate the type of school in which they taught.

While the number of respondents teaching in a Reading First School was low, it was

representative of the small number of Reading First Schools in West Virginia in the

2003-2004 school year (n = 37 schools). Displayed in Table 4 are descriptive data for the

type of school in which participants taught during the 2003-2004 school year.

Table 4

Descriptive Data of Respondent Type of School

Type of School	Number of Respondents	%
Title 1	136	48.1
Non Title 1	102	36.0
Reading First	11	3.9
Total Respondents	249	88.0
Non-Respondents	34	12.0
Total Participants	283	100.0

Major Findings

This section presents major findings organized to correspond with each research

question. All research questions were answered by utilizing the quantitative instrument,

the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences.* The survey contained twenty-two

statements that embodied the six characteristics of quality staff development and the four

areas of professional impact. Each of the six characteristics of quality staff development

was represented by three statements per characteristic, while the remaining four

statements covered the areas of professional impact. Table 5 provides a descriptive

display of the research questions depicted through the survey statements.

Table 5

Survey Statements Representative of Research Questions

Research Questions	Statements (Numbered Order)		
1. To what degree do teachers perceive their staff development to be targeted?	1	9	17
2. To what degree do teachers perceive their staff development to be collaborative?	2	10	14
3. To what degree do teachers perceive their staff development to be sustained?	3	7	20
4. To what degree do teachers perceive their staff development to be time-friendly and job-embedded?	4	11	22
5. To what degree do teachers perceive their staff development to be reflective?	5	16	19
6. To what degree do teachers perceive their staff development to be evaluated?	12	15	21
7. To what degree do teachers perceive their staff development to be beneficial to student learning?	6		
8. To what degree do teachers perceive their staff development to be effective in meeting their professional growth needs?	8		
9. To what degree do teachers perceive their staff development to be effective in increasing their motivation to grow professionally?	13		
10.To what degree do teachers perceive their staff development to be effective in increasing their teaching competency?	18		

The *Survey of Staff Development Experiences* utilized a Likert scale to obtain

teacher perceptions of staff development experiences. The rating scale for this instrument

was as follows: 5 = "Strongly Agree", 4 = "Agree", 3 = "Neither Agree nor Disagree",

2 = "Disagree", and 1 = "Strongly Disagree". For ease of interpretation and discussion,

response options were collapsed into three categories and analyzed. The "Agree" and

"Strongly Agree" response options were merged to create a response of "Agree". The

"Neither Agree nor Disagree" response option remained unchanged. The "Disagree" and

"Strongly Disagree" response options were combined to create a response of "Disagree".

The data were analyzed using SPSS 12.0. A mean score was obtained for each

statement on the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*. Upon calculating the mean

score for each statement on the survey, statements representing each research question

(See Table 5) were then collapsed into one variable. A mean score was identified for each

variable to answer each research question. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each

statement on the survey as well as for each staff development variable and area of impact.

The following segments illustrate the major findings of the study through analyses of

each research question.

Research Question One: To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be

targeted?

Participants were asked to describe their participation in targeted staff

development experiences by indicating a number on the Likert scale that was most

representative of their perceptions. Table 6 shows the mean scores for each of the three

targeted statements on the survey. With 276 responses, statement 1 had a mean score of

3.66, statement 9 had a mean score of 3.13 with 274 responses, and 275 responses were

obtained from statement 17 for a mean score of 3.31.Two hundred seventy-three

respondents answered all three statements for a mean score of 3.37 for the targeted staff

development variable. Table 7 presents descriptive data of the targeted variable.

Table 6

Descriptive Data for Individual Statements Representing Targeted Staff Development

Statements	Number of Respondents	M	SD
1. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were directly related to my teaching and learning needs.	276	3.66	1.10
9. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were directly related to my students' needs.	274	3.13	1.04
17. My staff development experiences within the past academic year provided a balance between my individual priorities and needs and the needs and priorities of my school.	275	3.31	1.17

Table 7

Descriptive Data for Targeted Staff Development Variable

Characteristic	Number of Respondents	M	SD
Targeted	273	3.37	.96

Response options from the Likert scale were calculated for the targeted variable. While the mean score for the targeted staff development variable (3.37) indicated that teachers were undecided as to whether staff development was targeted or not, more respondents (101 or 37%) recorded that they agreed that their staff development experiences were targeted, compared to the 74 respondents (27.1%) who disagreed with the targeted nature of their staff development experiences. The largest *single* number of responses (98 or 35.9%) was found within the "Neither Agree nor Disagree" response option. Table 8 illustrates descriptive data for the merged response options for the targeted staff development variable.

Table 8

Merged Responses for the Targeted Staff Development Variable

Response	Number of Respondents	%
Agree	101	37.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	98	35.9
Disagree	74	27.1

Research Question Two: To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be collaborative?

Participants were asked to indicate their participation in staff development experiences that allowed for collaboration with colleagues by indicating a number on the

Likert scale that was most representative of their perceptions. Table 9 displays the mean

scores for each of the three statements on the survey regarding collaboration. With 276

responses, statement 2 had a mean score of 3.51, statement 10 had a mean score of 3.03

with 275 responses, and 275 responses were also obtained from statement 14 for a mean

score of 3.12. Two hundred seventy-four respondents answered all three statements for a

mean score of 3.22 for the collaborative staff development variable. Descriptive data for

the collaborative variable are displayed in Table 10.

Table 9

*Descriptive Data for Individual Statements Representing Collaborative Staff
Development*

Statements	Number of Respondents	M	SD
2. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were opportunities for me to collaboratively develop professional growth activities with peers and facilitators.	276	3.51	1.08
10. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were designed to provide opportunities to share my own professional needs and improvement with colleagues.	275	3.03	1.12
14. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were designed to link me to larger learning communities.	275	3.12	1.10

Table 10

Descriptive Data for Collaborative Staff Development Variable

Characteristic	Number of Respondents	M	SD
Collaborative	274	3.22	.93

Response options from the Likert scale were calculated for the collaborative

variable. While the mean score for the collaborative staff development variable (3.22)

indicated that teachers were ambivalent as to whether staff development was

collaborative, more respondents (88 or 32.1%) recorded that they disagreed that their

staff development experiences were collaborative, compared to the 78 respondents

(28.5%) who agreed with the collaborative nature of their staff development experiences.

The largest single number of responses (108 or 39.4%) was once again found within the

"Neither Agree nor Disagree" response option. Table 11 illustrates descriptive data of the

merged response options for the collaborative staff development variable.

Table 11

Merged Responses for the Collaborative Staff Development Variable

Response	Number of Respondents	%
Agree	78	28.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	108	39.4
Disagree	88	32.1

Research Question Three: To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be

sustained?

Participants were asked to depict their participation in staff development

experiences that were ongoing and sustained beyond the initial experience by indicating a

number on the Likert scale that was most representative of their perceptions. Table 12

presents the mean scores for each of the three statements on the survey pertaining to

ongoing, sustained staff development. With 275 responses, statement 3 had a mean score

of 3.41, statement 7 had a mean score of 3.14 with 274 responses, and 275 responses

were obtained from statement 20 for a mean score of 2.91. Two hundred seventy-two

respondents answered all three statements for a mean score of 3.15 for the ongoing,

sustained staff development variable. Descriptive data for the ongoing, sustained variable

are displayed in Table 13.

Table 12

Descriptive Data for Individual Statements Representing Ongoing, Sustained Staff Development

Statements	Number of Respondents	M	SD
3. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were part of a long-term plan that allowed for ongoing participation in growth activities throughout the school year.	275	3.41	1.13
7. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were opportunities that provided follow-up beyond the initial staff development experience.	274	3.14	1.14
20. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were one-session activities with no follow-up assistance provided beyond the initial staff development experience.	275	3.09	1.17

Table 13

Descriptive Data for Ongoing, Sustained Staff Development Variable

Characteristic	Number of Respondents	M	SD
Ongoing/Sustained	272	3.15	.64

Response options from the Likert scale were calculated for the ongoing, sustained

variable. With a mean score of 3.15, respondents were undecided as to whether staff

development was ongoing and sustained, as depicted in the high frequency of the

"Neither Agree nor Disagree" response option (167 or 61.4%). While the majority of

responses fell in the "Neither Agree nor Disagree" response option, a greater number of

respondents (73 or 26.8%) disagreed with the ongoing nature of staff development than

those who agreed that staff development experiences were sustained

(32 or 11.7%). Table 14 illustrates descriptive data of the merged response options for the

ongoing, sustained staff development variable.

Table 14

Merged Responses for the Ongoing, Sustained Staff Development Variable

Response	Number of Respondents	%
Agree	32	11.7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	167	61.4
Disagree	73	26.8

Research Question Four: To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be

time-friendly and job-embedded?

Participants were asked to describe their participation in staff development

experiences that were time-friendly and job-embedded by indicating a number on the

Likert scale that was most representative of their perceptions. Table 15 presents the mean

scores for each of the three time-friendly, job-embedded statements on the survey. With

275 responses, statement 4 had a mean score of 2.99, statement 11 had a mean score of

3.34 with 276 responses, and 273 responses were obtained from statement 22 for a mean

score of 3.12. Two hundred seventy-two respondents answered all three statements for a

mean score of 3.15 for the time-friendly, job-embedded staff development variable. Table

16 presents descriptive data for the time-friendly, job-embedded variable.

Table 15

Descriptive Data for Individual Statements Representing Time-friendly, Job-embedded Staff Development

Statements	Number of Respondents	M	SD
4. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were embedded within my daily work schedule.	275	2.99	1.13
11. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were a part of my everyday responsibilities as a teacher.	276	3.34	1.10
22. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were incorporated into my teaching profession as an essential part of my regular teaching day.	273	3.12	1.14

Table 16

Descriptive Data for Time-friendly, Job-embedded Staff Development Variable

Category	Number of Respondents	M	SD
Time-friendly/Job-embedded	272	3.15	.96

Response options from the Likert scale were calculated for the time-friendly, job-embedded variable. While the mean score for the time-friendly, job-embedded staff development variable (3.15) indicated that teachers were indecisive as to whether staff development was time-friendly and job-embedded, more respondents (102 or 37.5%) recorded that they disagreed that their staff development experiences were time-friendly and job-embedded, compared to the 74 respondents (27.2%) who agreed that staff development experiences were time-friendly and job-embedded. Ninety-six respondents (35.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements pertaining to a time-friendly, job-embedded component of staff development. Table 17 illustrates descriptive data of

the merged response options for the time-friendly, job-embedded staff development variable.

Table 17

Merged Responses for the Time-friendly, Job-embedded Staff Development Variable

Response	Number of Respondents	%
Agree	74	27.2
Neither Agree nor Disagree	96	35.3
Disagree	102	37.5

Research Question Five: To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be reflective?

Participants were asked to indicate their participation in staff development experiences that allowed for reflective thinking by indicating a number on the Likert scale that was most representative of their perceptions. Table 18 displays the mean scores for each of the three statements on the survey regarding reflective thinking. With 274 responses, statement 5 had a mean score of 3.34, statement 16 had a mean score of 3.23 with 275 responses, and 274 responses were obtained from statement 19 for a mean score of 3.15. Two hundred seventy-two respondents answered all three statements for a mean score of 3.24 for the reflective staff development variable. Descriptive data for the reflective variable are displayed in Table 19.

Table 18

Descriptive Data for Individual Statements Representing Reflective Staff Development

Statements	Number of Respondents	M	SD
5. My staff development experiences within the past academic year required me to analyze the use of knowledge and skills gained through the staff development experience.	274	3.34	1.04
16. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were designed to require reflection on how the goals and content of the staff development experience were met in my classroom.	275	3.23	1.11
19. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were opportunities to analyze data on my own teaching to improve student learning.	274	3.15	1.17

Table 19

Descriptive Data for Reflective Staff Development Variable

Category	Number of Respondents	M	SD
Reflective	272	3.24	.92

Response options from the Likert scale were calculated for the reflective variable.

Response options were rather evenly distributed, with 85 respondents (31.2%) agreeing

that staff development experiences included reflection, 86 respondents (31.6%)

disagreeing with the reflective nature of their staff development experiences, and 101

respondents (37.1%) indicating that they neither agreed nor disagreed that staff

development experiences allowed for reflection. The even distribution of the respondent

perceptions was exemplified in the mean score of the reflective variable (3.24). Table 20

illustrates descriptive data of the merged response options for the reflective staff

development variable.

Table 20

Merged Responses for the Reflective Staff Development Variable

Response	Number of Respondents	%
Agree	85	31.2
Neither Agree nor Disagree	101	37.1
Disagree	86	31.6

Research Question Six: To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be

evaluated?

Participants were asked to depict their participation in staff development

opportunities that were evaluated beyond the initial experience by indicating a number on

the Likert scale that was most representative of their perceptions. Table 21 presents the

mean scores for each of the three statements on the survey pertaining to evaluated staff

development. With 276 responses, statement 12 had a mean score of 3.16, statement 15

had a mean score of 2.99 with 274 responses, and 274 responses were also obtained from

statement 21 for a mean score of 2.86. Two hundred seventy-three respondents answered

all three statements for a mean score of 2.99 for the evaluated staff development variable.

Descriptive data for the evaluated variable are displayed in Table 22.

Table 21

Descriptive Data for Individual Statements Representing Evaluated Staff Development

Statements	Number of Respondents	M	SD
12. My staff development experiences within the past academic year utilized multiple sources of information to evaluate the impact of the staff development experience on teaching and learning.	276	3.16	1.08
15. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were evaluated based upon how changes in my teaching practices made improvements in my students' learning.	274	2.99	1.10
21. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were designed around an ongoing, systematic evaluation process to determine the impact of the staff development experience on my teaching.	274	2.86	1.05

Table 22

Descriptive Data for Evaluated Staff Development Variable

Category	Number of Respondents	M	SD
Evaluated	273	2.99	.92

Response options from the Likert scale were calculated for the evaluated variable. While a large number of respondents (113 or 41.4%) neither agreed nor disagreed that their staff development opportunities were evaluated beyond the initial experience, a number of respondents almost as great (107 or 40.3%) disagreed that staff development experiences were evaluated. Respondents who agreed that their staff development was evaluated beyond the initial experience (50 or 18.3%) represented a little less than one-half the number of respondents who disagreed with the evaluated component of staff

development. Table 23 illustrates descriptive data of the merged response options for the evaluated staff development variable.

Table 23

Merged Responses for the Evaluated Staff Development Variable

Response	Number of Respondents	%
Agree	50	18.3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	113	41.4
Disagree	107	40.3

Research Question Seven: To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be beneficial to student learning?

Participants were asked to indicate the impact their staff development experiences had on student learning by choosing a number on the Likert scale that was most representative of their perceptions of the value of staff development. Table 24 shows the descriptive data for the statement on the survey representing value to student learning. With 276 responses, statement 6 had a mean score of 3.51.

Table 24

Descriptive Data for Value of Staff Development to Student Learning

Statement	Number of Respondents	M	SD
6. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were valuable to student learning.	276	3.51	1.08

Response options from the Likert scale were calculated for the statement representing the value of staff development experiences to student learning. While the

mean score for statement 6 (3.51) indicated that teachers were undecided as to whether their staff development experiences were of value to student learning, more than one-half of the respondents (170 or 60.1%) agreed that their staff development experiences were of value to student learning. Fifty-eight respondents (21%) disagreed with the statement that their staff development experiences were of value to student learning, representing approximately one-third of the respondents who agreed with staff development's value to student learning. Forty-eight respondents (17.4%) neither agreed nor disagreed that staff development was of value to student learning. Table 25 provides the response frequencies of the value of staff development to student learning.

Table 25

Responses for Value of Staff Development to Student Learning

Response	Number of Respondents	%
Agree	170	60.1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	48	17.4
Disagree	58	21.0

Research Question Eight: To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be effective in meeting their professional growth needs?

Participants were asked to describe their participation in staff development experiences that met their professional growth needs by indicating a number on the Likert scale that was most representative of their perceptions. Table 26 displays the descriptive data for the statement on the survey representing the respondents' fulfillment of professional growth needs. With 275 responses, statement 8 had a mean score of 3.24.

Table 26

Descriptive Data for Professional Growth Needs Met

Statement	Number of Respondents	M	SD
8. My staff development experiences within the past academic year met my professional growth needs.	275	3.24	1.14

Response options from the Likert scale were calculated for the statement representing the fulfillment of professional growth needs through staff development experiences. One-half of respondents (140 or 50.9%) agreed that their staff development experiences met their professional growth needs, representing almost twice as many respondents as those who disagreed with statement 8 (77 or 28%). Fifty-eight respondents (21.2%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that staff development experiences met their professional growth needs. Table 27 provides the response rates for fulfillment of professional growth needs.

Table 27

Responses for Professional Growth Needs Met

Response	Number of Respondents	%
Agree	140	50.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	58	21.1
Disagree	77	28.0

Research Question Nine: To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be effective in increasing their motivation to grow professionally?

Participants were asked to depict their participation in staff development experiences that increased their motivation to grow professionally by indicating a number on the Likert scale that was most representative of their perceptions. Table 28 presents the descriptive data for the statement on the survey representing the influence of staff development on respondents' motivation to grow professionally. With 276 responses, statement 13 had a mean score of 3.05.

Table 28

Descriptive Data for Motivation to Grow Professionally

Statement	Number of Respondents	M	SD
13. My staff development experiences within the past academic year increased my motivation to participate in professional growth activities.	276	3.05	1.12

Response options from the Likert scale were calculated for the statement representing the influence of staff development experiences on respondents' motivation to grow professionally. One hundred ten respondents (39.9%) agreed with the statement that their staff development experiences had motivated them to grow professionally. The remaining two response options were rather evenly distributed, with 86 respondents (31.2%) disagreeing with the statement that staff development experiences had motivated them to grow professionally, and 80 respondents (29%) choosing to neither agree nor disagree with statement 13. Table 29 presents the rates of frequency for the role of staff development in respondents' motivation to grow professionally.

Table 29

Responses for Motivation to Grow Professionally

Response	Number of Respondents	%
Agree	110	39.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	80	29.0
Disagree	86	31.2

Research Question Ten: To what degree do teachers perceive staff development to be effective in increasing their teaching competency?

      Participants were asked to rate their participation in staff development experiences that increased their teaching competency. Respondents signified the degree to which staff development had an impact on their teaching abilities by indicating a number on the Likert scale that was most representative of their opinion. Table 30 shows the descriptive data for the statement on the survey representing the impact of staff development on respondents' teaching competency. With 274 responses, statement 18 had a mean score of 3.22.

Table 30

Descriptive Data for Increase in Teaching Competency

Statement	Number of Respondents	M	SD
18. My staff development experiences within the past academic year increased my teaching competency.	274	3.22	1.13

      Response options from the Likert scale were calculated for the statement representing the impact of staff development experiences on respondents' teaching

competency. Almost one-half of the respondents (135 or 49.3%) agreed with the

statement that staff development experiences had increased their teaching competency.

While 76 respondents (27.8%) disagreed with statement 18, 63 respondents (23%) neither

agreed nor disagreed with the statement that staff development had increased their

teaching competency. Response rates for statement 18 are displayed in Table 31.

Table 31

Responses for Increasing Teaching Competency

Response	Number of Respondents	%
Agree	135	49.3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	63	23.0
Disagree	76	27.8

Ancillary Findings

Through an analysis of the mean scores of each staff development variable, the

data revealed that the perceptions of staff development of teachers in West Virginia show

some uniformity as well as diversity. A further analysis of the data utilizing the

demographic data revealed possible explanations for the consistency within the mean

scores of each variable and the variation within the actual teacher responses.

Demographic data were analyzed in two ways: across all groups (i.e. grade level =

P – 12) and stratified between groups (i.e. grade level = P – 5, 6 – 8, and 9 – 12). An

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if a correlation existed between

the staff development variables and the demographic data when analyzing data across all

groups. Independent t-tests were utilized to determine if significant relationships between

the staff development variables and the stratified groups of demographic data existed. In

order to do this, the stratified groups within each demographic category were compared

using a two-tailed test at a .05 level of significance. This section provides a descriptive analysis of the relationships discovered in the data between teacher perceptions of quality staff development and demographics.

Grade Levels Across All Groups

Utilizing a One-way ANOVA, the data revealed that significant relationships existed between respondent perceptions of staff development and the grade level(s) in which respondents taught across all groups (P – 12) for the following staff development variables and areas of impact: ongoing and sustained ($p = .040$), a value to student learning ($p = .008$), met the professional growth needs of the respondent ($p = .018$), and increased one's motivation to grow professionally ($p = .042$). The data revealed that the grade level(s) in which respondents taught across all groups (P – 12) had no correlation to their participation in staff development that was targeted, collaborative, embedded, reflective, evaluated, and had the capacity to increase teaching competency. Table 32 displays the correlations between the respondents' perceptions of quality staff development and grade level(s) across all groups.

Table 32

Correlation of Quality Staff Development Variables and Grade Level(s) Across All Groups (P – 12)

Staff Development Variable	Correlation to Grade Level(s) Taught
Targeted	.064
Collaborative	.101
Ongoing/Sustained	.040*
Time-friendly/Job-embedded	.089
Reflective	.150
Evaluated	.291
Value to Student Learning	.008*
Met Professional Growth Needs	.018*
Increased Motivation to Grow Professionally	.042*
Increased Teaching Competency	.328

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Grade Levels Between Groups

Utilizing independent t-tests, the correlations were analyzed to compare each staff development variable and area of impact to the stratified groups of grade(s) taught by respondents. A two-tailed test of significance at the .05 level compared the mean scores of the stratified groups to identify areas of significance in respondents' perceptions of quality staff development. When comparing perceptions of respondents teaching in grades P – 5 with those teaching in grades 6 – 8, no significant relationships were found among any of the staff development variables. When comparing perceptions of respondents teaching in grades 6 – 8 and those teaching in grades 9 – 12, two variables showed a significant difference at the 0.05 level: met professional growth needs (p = .016) and value to students (p = .023). Areas of significance were also found in the perceptions of respondents teaching in grades P – 5 compared to those teaching in grades 9 – 12. At the 0.05 level, a significant difference appeared in the responses of teachers in grades P – 5 and teachers in grades 9 – 12 for the following staff development variables: targeted (p = .023), collaborative (p = .032), ongoing/sustained (p = .014), time-friendly/job-embedded (p = .024), motivation to grow professionally (p = .014), met professional growth needs (p = .010), and value to student learning (p = .003). Table 33 displays the mean scores of the stratified groups and the significant relationships of the mean comparisons revealed through the two-tailed tests.

Table 33

Correlation—Staff Development Variables and Stratified Categories of Grade Level Between Groups

Staff Development Variable	M (P – 5)	M (6 – 8)	M (9 – 12)	p
Targeted	3.46*	3.43	3.12*	.023
Collaborative	3.29*	3.25	2.99*	.032
Ongoing/Sustained	3.21*	3.18	2.97*	.014
Time-friendly/ Job-embedded	3.24*	3.13	2.91*	.024
Reflective	3.31	3.32	3.05	No Significance
Evaluated	3.06	3.02	2.84	No Significance
Value to Students	3.62*	3.61*	3.13*	.003 (P – 5, 9 – 12) .023 (6 – 8, 9 – 12)
Met Professional Growth Needs	3.34*	3.39*	2.89*	.010 (P – 5, 9 – 12) .016 (6 – 8, 9 – 12)
Increased Motivation to Grow Professionally	3.15*	3.10	2.73*	.014
Increased Teaching Competency	3.28	3.28	3.03	No Significance

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Years of Teaching Experience Across and Between Groups

An analysis of the data using a One-way ANOVA yielded no significant relationships between the respondents' years of teaching experience across all categories (0 – 31+ years) and any of the staff development variables and areas of impact. Likewise, no significant relationships were found with any of the staff development variables and areas of impact when comparing years of teaching experience between groups through independent t-tests.

Number of Hours of Participation in Staff Development Experiences Across All Groups

Utilizing a One-way ANOVA, the data revealed that significant relationships existed between teacher perceptions of staff development experiences and the number of hours in which respondents participated in staff development across all groups (0 – 81+

hours) for all staff development variables and areas of impact: targeted (p = .000),

collaborative (p = .032), ongoing/sustained (p = .049), time-friendly/job-embedded

(p = .001), reflective (p = .011), evaluated (p = .008), a value to student learning

(p = .000), met the professional growth needs of the respondent (p = .006), increased

one's motivation to grow professionally (p = .005), and increased teaching competency

(p = .010). Table 34 displays the correlations between the respondents' perceptions of

quality staff development and the number of hours in which they participated in staff

development experiences across all groups.

Table 34

Correlation of Quality Staff Development Variables and Number of Hours of Staff
Development Participation Across All Groups (0 – 81+)

Staff Development Variable	Correlation to Participation Hours
Targeted	.000*
Collaborative	.032*
Ongoing/Sustained	.049*
Time-friendly/Job-embedded	.001*
Reflective	.011*
Evaluated	.008*
Value to Student Learning	.000*
Met Professional Growth Needs	.006*
Increased Motivation to Grow Professionally	.005*
Increased Teaching Competency	.010*

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Number of Hours of Participation in Staff Development Experiences Between Groups

Utilizing independent t-tests, the correlations were analyzed to compare each staff

development variable and area of impact with the stratified groups of number of hours in

which respondents participated in staff development between categories. A two-tailed test

of significance at the .05 level compared the mean scores of the stratified groups to

identify areas of significance in respondents' perceptions of quality staff development.

Significant relationships depicting differences in the perceptions of respondents who

participated in 0 – 20 hours of staff development and respondents who participated in

21 – 40 staff development hours were revealed for the following staff development variables and areas of impact: targeted (p = .003), ongoing/sustained (p = .027), time-friendly/job-embedded (p = .002), reflective (p = .022), evaluated (p = .017), value to students (p = .006), met professional growth needs (p = .034), and increased motivation to grow professionally (p = .020). Significant differences in respondent perceptions were also found between respondents who participated in 0 – 20 hours of staff development and respondents who participated in 41 – 60 staff development hours for the following variables and areas of impact: targeted (p = .001), collaborative (p = .009), time-friendly/job-embedded (p = .003), reflective (p = .007), evaluated (p = .002), value to students (p = .001), met professional growth needs (p = .009), increased motivation to grow professionally (p = .013), and increased teaching competency (p = .011).

Significant differences in respondent perceptions of quality staff development were further revealed between respondents who participated in 0 – 20 hours of staff development and respondents who participated in 81 or more hours in the following staff development variables and areas of impact: targeted (p = .012), collaborative (p = .035), time-friendly/job-embedded (p = .003), reflective (p = .022), value to student learning (p = .005), met professional growth needs (p = .044), increased motivation to grow professionally (p = .017), and increased teaching competency (p = .018). Lastly, one significant relationship was revealed between perceptions of respondents who participated in 21 – 40 hours of staff development and respondents who participated in 41 – 60 hours for the statement pertaining to the impact of staff development on student learning (p = .033). Table 35 displays the mean scores of the stratified groups and the

significant relationships of the mean comparisons of participation hours in staff

development experiences revealed through the two-tailed tests.

Table 35

Correlation—Staff Development Variables and Stratified Categories of Participation Hours in Staff Development Experiences Between Groups

Staff Development Variable	M (0 – 20)	M (21 – 40)	M (41 – 60)	M (61 – 80)	M (81+)	p
Targeted	3.16*	3.56*	4.00*	3.58	3.93*	.003 (0-20, 21-40) .001 (0-20, 41-60) .012 (0-20, 81+)
Collaborative	3.09*	3.31	3.76*	3.58	3.73*	.009 (0-20, 41-60) .035 (0-20, 81+)
Ongoing/ Sustained	3.05*	3.25*	3.29	3.42	3.47	.027 (0-20, 21-40)
Time-friendly/ Job-embedded	2.95*	3.35*	3.71*	3.17	3.83*	.002 (0-20, 21-40) .003 (0-20, 41-60) .003 (0-20, 81+)
Reflective	3.09	3.39	3.76	3.67	3.77	.022 (0-20, 21-40) .007 (0-20, 41-60) .022 (0-20, 81+)
Evaluated	2.84*	3.15*	3.60*	3.50	3.33	.017 (0-20, 21-40) .002 (0-20, 41-60)
Value to Students	3.27*	3.69*	4.27*	4.00	4.30*	.006 (0-20, 21-40) .001 (0-20, 41-60) .005 (0-20, 81+) .033 (21-40, 41-60)
Met Professional Growth Needs	3.06*	3.39*	3.87*	4.00	3.80*	.034 (0-20, 21-40) .009 (0-20, 41-60) .044 (0-20, 81+)
Increased Motivation to Grow Professionally	2.87*	3.23*	3.60*	3.25	3.70	.020 (0-20, 21-40) .013 (0-20, 41-60) .017 (0-20, 81+)
Increased Teaching Competency	3.04*	3.33	3.80*	4.00	3.90*	.011 (0-20, 41-60) .018 (0-20, 81+)

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Type of School Across All Groups

Utilizing a One-way ANOVA, the data revealed that significant relationships

existed between respondent perceptions of staff development experiences and the type of

school in which the respondents taught across all groups (Title I, Non-Title I, and

Reading First) for all staff development variables and areas of impact except the

ongoing/sustained variable and the increased teaching competency area of impact. Areas

of significance were as follows: targeted ($p = .004$), collaborative ($p = .016$), time-

friendly/job-embedded ($p = .026$), reflective ($p = .012$), evaluated ($p = .022$), a value to

student learning ($p = .002$), met the professional growth needs of the respondent

($p = .010$), and increased one's motivation to grow professionally ($p = .002$). Table 36

displays the correlations between the respondents' perceptions of quality staff

development and the type of school in which they taught across all groups.

Table 36

Correlation of Quality Staff Development Variables and Type of School Across All Groups (Title I, Non-Title I, Reading First)

Staff Development Variable	Correlation to Type of School
Targeted	.004*
Collaborative	.016*
Ongoing/Sustained	.198
Time-friendly/Job-embedded	.026*
Reflective	.012*
Evaluated	.022*
Value to Student Learning	.002*
Met Professional Growth Needs	.010*
Increased Motivation to Grow Professionally	.002*
Increased Teaching Competency	.251

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Type of School Between Groups

Utilizing independent t-tests, the correlations were analyzed to compare each staff

development variable and area of impact with the stratified groups of type of school in

which respondents taught between categories. A two-tailed test of significance at the .05

level compared the mean scores of the stratified groups to identify areas of significance in

respondents' perceptions of quality staff development. Significant differences in

respondent perceptions of participation in quality staff development were revealed

between respondents who taught in Title I schools and those who taught in a Non-Title I

school in all staff development variables and areas of impact except the

ongoing/sustained variable and the increased teaching competency area of impact. Areas

of significance were as follows: targeted ($p = .001$), collaborative ($p = .005$), time-

friendly/job-embedded ($p = .007$), reflective ($p = .005$), evaluated ($p = .008$), value to

student learning ($p = .000$), met professional growth needs ($p = .005$), and increased

motivation to grow professionally ($p = .000$). No significant differences in respondent

perceptions were revealed between respondents teaching in Reading First schools and

either Title I or Non-Title I schools. Table 37 displays the mean scores of the stratified

groups and the significant relationships of the mean comparisons of the type of school in

which respondents taught revealed through the two-tailed tests.

Table 37

Correlation—Staff Development Variables and Stratified Categories of Types of School Between Groups

Staff Development Variable	M Title I	M Non-Title I	M Reading First	*p*
Targeted	3.55*	3.15*	3.52	.001
Collaborative	3.35*	3.01*	3.42	.005
Ongoing/ Sustained	3.23	3.08	3.09	No Significance
Time-friendly/Job-embedded	3.30*	2.97*	3.30	.007
Reflective	3.39*	3.05*	3.49	.005
Evaluated	3.14*	2.82*	3.21	.008
Value to Students	3.72*	3.23*	3.64	.000
Met Professional Growth Needs	3.42*	3.00*	3.64	.005
Increased Motivation to Grow Professionally	3.26*	2.75*	3.27	.000
Increased Teaching Competency	3.33	3.09	3.18	No Significance

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Additional Findings of Demographic Data

Upon analyzing relationships between the demographic data and the quality staff

development variables and areas of impact, cross-tabulations utilizing the stratified

groups of demographics were computed to further explicate correlations between quality

staff development and the demographics identified in the study. Additional findings

indicated further relationships among the number of hours of participation in staff

development, the type of school, and the grade level(s) in which the respondent taught as

well as elucidating the correlation between ongoing/sustained staff development and the type of school in relation to federal funding.

Independent t-tests revealed a significant relationship between quality staff development and the number of participation hours in staff development experiences. Cross-tabulation of the number of hours of participation in staff development and the type of school in which the respondent taught indicated that the majority of teachers in Title I schools (65 or 52%) and Non-Title I schools (58 or 62%) only participated in the state mandated staff development experiences. While just one teacher (10%) in a Reading First school participated in 0 – 20 hours of staff development, only two of the respondents in a Reading First school (20%) participated in more than 60 hours. Table 38 shows the relationships between type of school in relation to federal funding and the number of participation hours in staff development.

Table 38

Cross-tabulation of Type of School and Number of Staff Development Hours

Type of School	Number of Hours of Staff Development				
	0 – 20	21 – 40	41 – 60	61 – 80	81+
Title I	65	46	8	2	5
Non-Title I	56	28	2	2	3
Reading First	1	4	3	0	2

Ancillary findings revealed a correlation between quality staff development and grade level(s) and quality staff development and type of school. Cross-tabulation of grade level(s) and type of school in which the respondents taught showed that 98 (70%) of respondents teaching in grades P – 5 also taught in Title I schools, while only 13 (27%)

of respondents teaching in grades 9 – 12 taught in a Title I school. Table 39 provides the cross-tabulation data for grade level(s) and type of school in which respondents taught.

Table 39

Cross-tabulation of Grade Levels and Type of School

Grade Level	Type of School		
	Title I	Non-Title I	Reading First
P – 5	98	34	9
6 – 8	21	31	2
9 – 12	13	35	0

Independent t-tests showed no significant relationship between ongoing/sustained staff development and the type of school in which respondents taught. Due to the acknowledgment of more rigorous guidelines for staff development in Title I and Reading First schools, this finding was unanticipated. Cross-tabulation of the ongoing/sustained staff development variable and the stratified groups of type of school in which the respondents taught revealed that while 10 out of 100 respondents teaching in Non-Title I schools (10%) agreed with the ongoing/sustained nature of their staff development, only 18 out of 136 respondents teaching in a Title I school (13%) and 1 out of 11 respondents teaching in a Reading First school (9%) perceived their staff development to be ongoing and sustained. Table 40 presents the cross-tabulation data for type of school and ongoing/sustained staff development.

Table 40

Cross-tabulation of Type of School and Ongoing/Sustained Staff Development

Type of School	Ongoing/Sustained Staff Development Variable		
	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
Title I	18	86	32
Non-Title I	10	59	31
Reading First	1	7	3

Summary

This chapter presented the statistical analyses of the data collected from the

Survey of Staff Development Experiences, a researcher-designed survey of a random

sample of West Virginia P – 12 teachers. The quantitative instrument was created through

an in-depth review of the literature on quality staff development practices and was

designed to determine the degree to which teachers perceive their staff development to be

a quality experience that impacts four areas of professionalism: student learning,

professional growth needs, motivation to grow professionally, and teaching competency.

Two hundred eighty-three respondents participated in the study, representing a 61%

response rate of the sample population.

The *Survey of Staff Development Experiences* utilized a Likert scale to ascertain

teacher perceptions of staff development experiences. While the survey provided

respondents with a five-point rating scale, response options were collapsed into three

categories for ease of interpretation and discussion: "Agree", "Neither Agree nor

Disagree", and "Disagree". Mean scores were obtained for each quality staff

development variable and area of impact, and descriptive statistics, tests of significance,

and cross-tabulations were calculated to reveal relationships among the variables and areas of impact and the demographic data.

Each quality staff development variable and area of impact, with the exception of the evaluated variable, had a mean score of between 3 and 4, indicating that teachers were indecisive as to whether their staff development was a quality experience. The lowest mean score (2.99) illustrated teachers' negative perceptions of the evaluation element of staff development. Although the mean scores of each quality staff development variable and area of impact indicated that teachers were undecided as to their participation in quality staff development experiences, overall more respondents disagreed than agreed with the statements on the survey pertaining to the six quality staff development variables when the "Neither Agree nor Disagree" response option was excluded from analysis. More respondents did agree than disagree that their staff development experiences were targeted, and a fairly even number of respondents agreed and disagreed that their staff development allowed for reflection. Analysis of the data on areas of professional impact revealed a contrasting view of staff development to the data representing the quality staff development variables. For each area of professional impact, more respondents agreed than disagreed that their staff development experiences had a positive influence on different areas of professionalism.

Ancillary findings of this study indicated that participation in quality staff development experiences varied according to the demographics of the respondents. Significant differences were found in the perceptions of respondents who taught in a P – 5 setting and those who taught in a 9 – 12 school setting for each of the quality staff development variables, except reflective and evaluated variables, and for each area of

impact, with the exception of teaching competency. Differences in perception were also noted in two areas of impact, value to student learning and met professional growth needs, between respondents teaching in a 6 – 8 setting and respondents teaching in a 9 – 12 school setting. The data also revealed that the number of years of teaching experience had no impact on the respondent's perception of participation in quality staff development experiences or its impact on teaching professionalism.

Perceptions of quality staff development also varied according to the number of hours in which respondents participated in staff development experiences. Significant differences were revealed in the perceptions of respondents who participated in the state mandated staff development hours only (0 – 20 hours) and respondents who participated in more than 20 hours of staff development. These differences were noted for each of the quality staff development variables as well as each area of impact.

In addition, perceptions of respondents concerning quality staff development varied according to the type of school in which the respondent taught. Significant differences in perceptions were found between respondents teaching in a Title I school and respondents teaching in a Non-Title I school for every quality staff development variable, except the ongoing/sustained variable, and every area of impact, with the exception of teaching competency. No significant relationships were revealed between respondents teaching in a Reading First school and respondents in either Title I or Non-Title I schools.

Additional findings utilizing cross-tabulations of demographic data rendered further relationships among quality staff development and demographics. Relationships among the number of hours of participation in staff development, the type of school, and

the grade level(s) in which the respondent taught were revealed as well as further insight

on the correlation between ongoing/sustained staff development and the type of school in

relation to federal funding.

CHAPTER 5

Introduction

The professional growth of the teacher is espoused in current literature as a

critical factor in student and school success (Hirsh, 2003b; Kelleher, 2003; National

Commission on Education and America's Future, 1996; Publisher Look for NCLB, 2002;

Richardson, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Crucial to the present reform

process, the professional growth of the teacher must not only be viewed by researchers

and theorists as vital to school and student success, but it must also be seen as critical and

deemed a worthy activity by its recipients—the classroom teachers. The purpose of this

chapter is to present the conclusions regarding P – 12 teacher perceptions of the quality

of their staff development based upon the administration of the *Survey of Staff

Development Experiences*. Recommendations for further study derived from the findings

and conclusions of the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences* are also presented.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which P – 12 teachers

perceive their staff development to be a quality experience and the degree to which staff

development impacts four areas of teaching professionalism: the impact on student

learning, the impact on professional growth needs, the impact on motivation to grow in

one's profession, and the impact on one's teaching competency. The study also

investigated the differences in perceptions of P – 12 teachers concerning staff

development based on the following demographic variables: grade level(s) taught,

number of years of professional teaching experience, number of hours of participation in

staff development experiences, and the type of school in which one taught based upon federal funding.

Methods

This study utilized a non-experimental, quantitative design method to examine teacher perceptions of staff development. Descriptive in nature, the study utilized a researcher-designed survey of a random sample of West Virginia P – 12 teachers.

The instrument in this study, a cross-sectional survey titled the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences,* asked participants to indicate the degree to which the staff development in which they participated exemplified a quality experience as defined by the six characteristics of quality professional development as well as the four areas of impact on teacher professionalism. Participant perceptions were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale (5 = "Strongly Agree", 4 = "Agree", 3 = "Neither Agree nor Disagree", 2 = "Disagree", and 1 = "Strongly Disagree"). Demographic data including grade level(s) in which the participant taught, number of years of professional teaching experience, number of hours of participation in staff development experiences, and type of school in relation to federal funding were also obtained from the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences.*

Analyses of data collected from the study consisted of the use of descriptive statistics for measures of central tendency and both individual and joint testing of hypotheses. Measures of central tendency, including mean and standard deviation, were obtained for each research question to provide an overall picture of the degree to which teachers perceived the staff development in which they participated to exemplify a quality experience.

Individual and joint measures of relationships were utilized to determine if correlations existed between teacher perceptions of quality staff development and demographic data. An Analysis of Variance model (ANOVA) was utilized to determine the existence of a correlation between the characteristics of quality staff development found within each research question and each piece of demographic data. Two-tailed t-tests were utilized to determine if correlations existed between the characteristics of quality staff development within each research question and the stratified categories of each demographic data. A *p* value, or probability value, was obtained for each individual t-test, indicating the observed or exact level of significance of the relationship between quality staff development and stratified groups of demographic data. An alpha level of 0.05 was used as the level of significance for this study. Cross-tabulations of the stratified groups of demographic data were also computed to further explicate the correlations between quality staff development and the demographic data.

<div align="center">Demographics</div>

The population of this study consisted of approximately 20,000 P – 12 public school teachers in West Virginia. A random sample of 464 was used to obtain a 95% confidence level and a 4.5% margin of error (The Survey System, 2003). The random sample was provided by the West Virginia Department of Education databank. All 464 participants were asked to complete and return the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*. Of the total number of participants, 177 returned the survey on the first mailing, and 106 returned the survey on the second mailing for a total of 283 respondents. The response rate was 61% of the overall number of participants.

In terms of grade level(s) taught, one-half of the respondents (144 or 50.9%) indicated that they taught in grades P – 5, 61 respondents (21.6%) taught in grades 6 – 8, and 62 respondents (21.9%) taught in grades 9 – 12. Sixteen respondents (5.7%) did not indicate a grade level.

Respondent years of professional teaching experience were rather evenly distributed: 64 respondents (22.6%) had 0 – 10 years of teaching experience; 83 respondents (29.3%) had 11 – 20 years of teaching experience; 83 respondents (29.3%) had 21 – 30 years of teaching experience; and, 40 respondents (14.1%) had 31 or more years of professional teaching experience. Thirteen respondents (4.6%) did not specify the number of years of professional teaching experience.

Approximately one-half of all respondents (141 or 49.8%) participated in 0 – 20 hours of staff development. Of the remaining respondents, 80 (28.3%) participated in 21 – 40 hours of staff development; 15 respondents (5.3%) participated in 41 – 60 hours of staff development; 4 respondents (1.4%) participated in 61 – 80 hours of staff development; and, 10 respondents (3.5%) participated in more than 80 hours. Thirty-three respondents (11.7%) did not record the number of hours of participation in staff development experiences.

Almost one-half of all respondents (136 or 48.1%) taught in a Title I school. Of the remaining respondents, 102 (36%) taught in a Non-Title I school, and 11 respondents (3.9%) taught in a Reading First school. Thirty-four respondents (12%) did not indicate the type of school in which they taught.

Findings

Overall, the survey revealed that teachers were undecided as to whether they perceived their staff development to be a quality experience as defined by the six characteristics of quality staff development. Each quality staff development variable, with the exception of the evaluated variable, had a mean score of between 3 and 4, ranging from 3.15 to 3.37. The mean score of the evaluated variable was 2.99. Of the three collapsed response options ("Agree", "Neither Agree nor Disagree", "Disagree"), more respondents indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the quality of their staff development for each staff development variable, with the exception of the targeted and time-friendly/job-embedded variables, than those who agreed or disagreed. Likewise, each area of impact had a mean score of between 3 and 4, ranging from 3.05 to 3.51. But in contrast to the quality staff development variables, of the three response options, fewer respondents indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the quality of their staff development than those who either agreed or disagreed with the staff development variables.

While the mean scores representing teacher perceptions of quality staff development reveal ambivalence, more respondents disagreed than agreed with the aggregated statements on the survey representing each characteristic of quality staff development, with the exception of targeted staff development, when the "Neither nor Disagree" response option was excluded. In contrast, more respondents agreed than disagreed with the statements representing the impact of staff development on all areas of teacher professionalism when the "Neither Agree nor Disagree" response option was excluded from analysis.

Ancillary findings revealed that teacher perceptions of quality staff development were significantly correlated at the .05 level with demographic data, with the exception of years of professional teaching experience. The data revealed no significant correlation between any of the staff development variables and areas of impact and years of professional teaching experience.

Analysis of the grade level(s) in which respondents taught revealed a significant difference in the perceptions of respondents teaching in grades P – 5 and those teaching in grades 9 – 12 for the following staff development variables and areas of impact: targeted ($p = .023$), collaborative ($p = .032$), ongoing/sustained ($p = .014$), time-friendly/job-embedded ($p = .024$), value to students ($p = .003$), met professional growth needs ($p = .010$), and increased motivation to grow professionally ($p = .014$). The mean scores of respondents teaching in grades P – 5 were significantly higher than the mean scores of the respondents teaching in grades 9 – 12.

Findings further showed significant differences in mean scores of respondents teaching in grades 6 – 8 and respondents who taught in grades 9 – 12 for two areas of impact: value to students and met professional growth needs. The mean scores of respondents teaching in grades 6 – 8 were significantly higher than the mean scores of respondents who taught in grades 9 – 12.

An analysis of participation hours in staff development experiences revealed a significant correlation between the number of hours of participation in staff development and each quality staff development variable and area of impact: targeted ($p = .000$), collaborative ($p = .032$), ongoing/sustained ($p = .049$), time-friendly/job-embedded ($p = .001$), reflective ($p = .011$), evaluated ($p = .008$), value to student learning ($p = .000$),

met professional growth needs ($p = .006$), increased motivation to grow professionally ($p = .005$), and increased teaching competency ($p = .010$).

Independent t-tests revealed further significant correlations between quality staff development and the stratified numbers of participation hours in staff development. A significant difference in perceptions of respondents participating in 0 – 20 hours of staff development and one or more of the other stratified categories of participation hours was noted for each staff development variable and area of impact. The mean scores of respondents participating in 21 or more hours of staff development were significantly higher than the mean scores of respondents participating in 0 – 20 hours of staff development experiences.

An analysis of the demographic data representing the type of school in which the respondent taught revealed a significant correlation between quality staff development and the type of school in which the respondent taught in relation to federal funding for each quality staff development variable, with the exception of ongoing/sustained staff development, and each area of impact, with the exception of increased teaching competency.

Independent t-tests showed further significant relationships between quality staff development and type of school. Survey data revealed a significant difference in mean scores of respondents teaching in a Title I school and respondents teaching in a Non-Title I school for each quality staff development variable, with the exception of ongoing/sustained staff development, and each area of impact, with the exception of teaching competency. Mean scores of respondents teaching in Title I schools were significantly higher than the mean scores of respondents teaching in Non-Title I schools.

The data revealed no significant relationship among respondents teaching in a Reading First school and respondents in either a Title I or Non-Title I school.

Cross-tabulations of demographic data provided further insight into the correlations between quality staff development and demographics. The majority of respondents teaching in grades P – 5 (70%) also taught in a Title I school, while the majority of respondents teaching in grades 9 – 12 (73%) taught in Non-Title I schools. The majority of respondents (56%), regardless of a Title I or Non-Title I setting, only participated in 0 – 20 hours of staff development. The majority of respondents teaching in Reading First schools (80%) participated in less than 61 hours of staff development. While a correlation between ongoing/sustained staff development and type of school was anticipated, no significant difference in respondent perceptions was revealed among teachers in Title I, Non-Title I, and Reading First schools, with only a minority of respondents (11%) agreeing that their staff development experiences were ongoing and sustained.

Conclusions

The analysis of the data collected in this study provided reasonable evidence to warrant several conclusions about teachers' perceptions of the quality of their staff development experiences. First, P – 12 teachers were undecided as to whether their staff development exemplified a quality experience. Analyses of the staff development variables indicated that most respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the quality of their staff development. Overall, more respondents disagreed than agreed with the combined statements on the survey representing the six quality staff development variables.

Second, the data revealed that teachers were also ambivalent as to whether their staff development had a positive impact on four areas of teaching professionalism: benefit to student learning, ability to meet professional growth needs, motivation to grow professionally, and teaching competency. Yet, unlike the data representing the quality staff development variables, the most frequently chosen response for the questions pertaining to areas of impact was "Agree". A discussion of the demographic data will give explanation to the disparity.

Grade Level(s)

The grade level(s) in which respondents taught had a significant correlation to their perceptions of the quality of their staff development experiences, with the exception of reflective staff development, evaluated staff development, and teaching competency. Respondents teaching in grades P – 5 perceived their staff development to be more inclusive of the characteristics of quality staff development than did the respondents teaching in grades 9 – 12. Respondents teaching in grades P – 5 as well as respondents teaching in grades 6 – 8 perceived their staff development to be of more value to student learning and more often acceptable to their professional growth needs than did respondents teaching in grades 9 – 12. These conclusions are supported by the relationship between mode scores of four, or "Agree", on many of the individual statements on the survey, disaggregated from the staff development variables, and the high number of respondents teaching in grades P – 5 (144 or 50.9%).

Number of Hours of Participation in Staff Development

The number of hours in which respondents participated in staff development experiences was significantly related to their perceptions of quality staff development and

its impact on areas of professionalism. As the number of participation hours increased

beyond the state mandatory hours of participation in staff development, respondents

perceived their staff development to be more inclusive of the characteristics of quality

staff development as well as having a more frequent impact on all four areas of teaching

professionalism.

Type of School

       The type of school in relation to federal funding in which respondents taught had

a significant relationship to perceptions of the quality of their staff development

experiences, with the exception of ongoing/sustained staff development, and to

perceptions of the areas of professional impact, with the exception of teaching

competency. Respondents teaching in Title I schools perceived their staff development to

be more inclusive of all characteristics of quality staff development, except

ongoing/sustained staff development, than did respondents teaching in Non-Title I

schools. Likewise, respondents teaching in Title I schools perceived their staff

development to impact each area of teaching professionalism, except teaching

competency, more often than did respondents teaching in Non-Title I schools. While no

significant relationships were revealed between quality staff development and Reading

First schools, the small number of respondents in this category may have skewed the

findings (11 or 3.9%).

<div align="center">Implications and Discussion</div>

       The purpose of staff development is to improve the knowledge, skills, practices,

and professionalism of the individual teacher, ultimately improving the success of the

individual student (31st Annual Phi Delta Kappa, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1990; Druva

& Anderson, 1983; LeMahieu & Sterling, 1991; NFIE, 1995; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; WVDE, 1997). If staff development is to have an impact on teaching practice, it must be viewed as a vital component of the duties and practices of the individual teacher (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). In order to be viewed as a vital component of one's career, staff development must prove to be a worthy and valuable experience; such experiences have been termed "quality experiences" for the purpose of this study. While results from this study have concluded that teachers were undecided as to whether their staff development exemplified a quality experience, study findings offer several implications for staff development in the areas of policy and practice, research and theory, national reform, and state reform.

Implications of this Study on Policy and Practice

Staff development is currently viewed by policymakers as an essential component of a teacher's professional responsibilities (Hirsh, 2003b; Kelleher, 2003, National Commission on Education and America's Future, 1996; Publishers Look for NCLB, 2002; Richardson, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2003). States, districts, and independent school systems have created policies regarding the number of hours in which teachers must participate in staff development. In West Virginia, the mandatory number of staff development hours is eighteen; these hours are typically provided by the individual counties (WVDE, 1997). Twelve of the eighteen hours must be directly relevant to several concepts, one of which is the area of study in which teachers are currently teaching (WVDE). Indicative of the respondents on the survey (141 or 49.8%), the mandatory staff development experiences for many teachers were the only professional growth opportunities in which they participated. As the number of hours of

participation in staff development experiences increased, the number of respondents participating in such opportunities decreased. Consequently, most teachers were not participating in ongoing/sustained staff development, which clearly contrasts the criteria and guidelines of the following educational entities that call for staff development that is continuous, ongoing and sustained: NCLB, U. S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team, NSDC, NEA, NFIE, NCREL, and WVDE Policy 5500 and Professional Development Goals.

Results of a One-way ANOVA and independent t-tests showed a positive correlation between the number of hours in which teachers participated in staff development experiences and their perceptions of the quality of those experiences. Correlations were consistent among all characteristics of quality staff development and areas of professional impact. As teachers participated in staff development experiences beyond the hours required by the state, their perceptions of the quality of staff development increased. This suggests that the state mandatory staff development hours do not encompass, or are less inclusive of, the characteristics of quality staff development. This finding was supported by comments on the survey made by several respondents:

> This is an evaluation of county provided, mandatory staff development. My own choice of personal professional development would have much different scores. (Comment 1, *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*) Our local training is often at the whim of administrators who think we all need to learn one program or another, or refresh our understanding of one pedagogical principle or another. It often does not reflect our needs as

professionals or the needs of our students….I have marked your survey in

two ways. The black ink marks indicate my attitudes about in-county

mandatory staff development experiences. The red indicated my attitudes

about the training provided by the College Board, the WVDE, and my

reading of the professional literature. (Comment 2, *Survey of Staff*

Development Experiences)

These comments, along with statistical findings, suggest that state mandatory staff

development, which was the only type of professional training in which many teachers

participated, is less inclusive of quality staff development practices than opportunities

beyond the state mandatory participation hours. This finding validates a possible

disconnection between the goals set forth by the WVDE, which address the content of

staff development, and the process by which the county school systems choose to

implement staff development. Additionally, this research questions the fact that the

WVDE has not adopted the standards of the NSDC (NSDC, 2003b).

According to policymakers, participation in staff development experiences is

important for all public school teachers in grades P – 12 (U.S. Department of Education's

Professional Development Team, 1994; WVDE, 1997). Results of a One-way ANOVA

and independent t-tests showed that more respondents teaching in grades P – 5 perceived

their staff development to exemplify a quality experience than did respondents teaching

in grades 9 – 12. When comparing perceptions of teachers in grades P – 5 with the

perceptions of teachers in grades 9 – 12, a significant correlation between grade level(s)

taught and perceptions of quality staff development was revealed for every characteristic

of quality staff development, except the reflective and evaluated variables, and each area

of impact, with the exception of teaching competency. This implies that the staff

development in which teachers in grades P – 5 participate is more inclusive of the

characteristics of quality staff development than is the staff development in which

teachers in grades 9 – 12 participate. One-half of the respondents (144 or 50.9%) taught

in grades P – 5 and would in all probability have chosen to agree with the statements on

the quality of their staff development, giving many individual survey statements,

disaggregated from the variables, modes of four. Due to the difference in perceptions of

teachers in grades P – 5 and those in grades 9 – 12, the mean scores for each staff

development variables, however, were between 2.99 and 3.37.

The difference in perceptions of teachers in grades P – 5 and teachers in grades

9 – 12 was further supported by several comments made on the surveys by teachers in

grades 9 – 12. Several comments were made by respondents teaching in the related arts

in grades 9 – 12 in relation to targeted staff development:

I teach in the fine arts. We are ignored. Our students are ignored.

(Comment 3, *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*)

In my 7 years as a Band Director in West Virginia, I have not had one staff

development session, in any way, be of any value to me. I have not had one

session, in any way, relate to the field in which I teach. (Comment 4, *Survey of

Staff Development Experiences*)

I am a specialist so most of the staff development is unrelated to my subject

matter and my classroom. (Comment 5, *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*)

My responses are all disagree because our staff development is not subject

specific and focuses on educational trends rather than student achievement based

on research. (Comment 6, *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*)

These comments, along with the statistical findings, suggest that staff development is not

content-specific and therefore not targeted toward individual fields. This finding further

supports the difference in perceptions of teachers in grades P – 5 and those in grades

9 – 12 since teachers in grades P – 5 teach basic knowledge in all content areas and are

generally not content-specific. This research contrasts the importance of targeted staff

development proposed by the following educational entities: NCLB, NSDC, NEA, AFT,

NFIE, NCREL, and WVDE Policy 5500 and Professional Development Goals.

Policies on staff development vary with the type of federal funding provided to

schools. Counties, districts, and independent school systems are required to spend Title I

funds to improve teacher quality through staff development activities. Study findings

revealed significant differences in teacher perceptions of quality staff development

between Title I and Non-Title I schools for all quality staff development variables, with

the exception of ongoing staff development, and each area of impact, except teaching

competency. This implies that teachers in Title I schools are receiving more quality staff

development experiences than those teachers in Non-Title I schools. This finding

supports literature regarding the large allocation of federal dollars to be spent on staff

development for Title I schools to insure highly qualified teachers (USDE, 2003). Cross-

tabulation of type of school in relation to federal funding and number of hours in which

teachers participated in staff development revealed that the majority of teachers in Title I

schools (65 or 52%) and Non-Title I schools (58 or 62%) only participated in the state

mandatory staff development hours. This finding suggests that the state mandatory staff development provided to Title I schools is of higher quality than the mandatory staff development provided to Non-Title I schools. One possible reason for this difference might be the dollar value spent on staff development in Title I versus Non-Title I schools. This finding offers further insight into the different perceptions of teachers in grades P – 5 and 9 – 12, for the majority of respondents teaching in grades P – 5 (70%) taught in Title I schools while the majority of respondents teaching in grades 9 – 12 (73%) taught in Non-Title I schools. This raises the following question: Is the difference in the quality of staff development related to the grade level(s) or the type of school in which respondents taught, or both? Perceptions of teachers in Reading First schools will be discussed in the section on state reform.

Overall, study findings suggest a gap between policy governing staff development and the actual practice of staff development. Adherence to policy appears to depend on several factors, including the type of school and grade level(s) in which one teaches and participation in staff development experiences beyond state requirements. Furthermore, comments made on the survey by respondents suggest that the traditional view of staff development, the one-shot workshop that makes little contribution to the growth of the educator and the growth and achievement of his/her students, has not been eradicated by current policies and practices.

Implications of this Study on Research and Theory

The ultimate goal of staff development is to improve student achievement (Cook & Fine, 1996; National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996; NEA, 1998; NSDC, 2003c; USDE, 2003). While the teacher is the immediate recipient of staff

development experiences, the ultimate beneficiary of such experiences is the student. Study findings revealed that teacher perceptions of the value of staff development to student learning varied according to the grade level(s) in which the teacher taught, the number of hours the teacher participated in staff development experiences, and the type of school in which the teacher taught. Findings imply that teachers in grades 9 – 12 and teachers in Non-Title I schools are participating in staff development experiences that are of less value to their students than the staff development experienced by teachers in grades P – 5 and in Title I schools. This finding has direct implications on teachers' motivation to grow professionally. According to the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (1996), 73% of teachers indicated that their motivation to grow as a professional came from the desire to improve student achievement.

Study results further imply that the state mandated staff development experiences are not as valuable to student learning as is participation in staff development experiences beyond the mandatory hours. One of the principles of operation of Policy 5500 calls for counties to seek ways to provide additional opportunities for staff development above and beyond the minimal number of eighteen hours to meet the growing demands of school, county, state, and national priorities (WVDE, 1997). This does not appear to be occurring for many teachers.

Research has concluded that an increase in the qualifications of a teacher is directly related to an increase in student success (31st Annual Phi Delta Kappa, 1999; Ferguson, 1991). To increase a teacher's qualifications, the professional growth needs of the teacher must be met. When individuals have their needs fulfilled, they are typically motivated to continue growth experiences (Wlodkowski, 1982). Study findings revealed

that some teachers felt as if their professional growth needs had been met by staff development experiences, and some teachers felt as if their staff development had not met their needs. This finding has direct implications for literature pertaining to the types of needs identified by Miller, Smith, & Tilstone (1998) that are met through quality staff development.

Likewise, some teachers felt as if their staff development activities motivated them to continue to grow professionally, while other teachers were unmotivated by staff development experiences. Wlodkowski (1982) found that educational achievement is consistently positively related to motivation. Once again, teacher perceptions varied according to the grade level(s) and type of school in which respondents taught and the number of staff development hours in which they participated. Findings of the study suggest that staff development provided to teachers in grades 9 – 12 is not directed toward their needs and does not motivate them to continue growth opportunities as effectively as does staff development for teachers in grades P - 5. Findings further imply that state mandatory staff development is not meeting the needs of its recipients and does not include information and activities that motivate teachers to continue to grow professionally as effectively as does participation in staff development beyond state mandated hours. Respondent comments on the survey illustrate perceptions of a lack of motivation to grow professionally as a result of staff development experiences:

> I feel that the most recent staff development sessions in my county have left negative impressions on many of our teachers. (Comment 7, *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*)

This pertains to <u>only</u> the Thinking Math classes last year. Other staff development

has <u>not</u> been helpful. (Comment 8, Survey of Staff Development Experiences)

Experimental research confirms a connection between a high sense of self-efficacy and high levels of confidence and commitment in one's career (Norman, n.d.). Quality staff development can increase one's teaching competency. Study findings revealed that while teachers were indecisive as to whether their staff development increased their teaching competency, the only area of significance in teacher perceptions was related to the number of staff development hours in which they participated. As teachers participated in staff development experiences beyond the state mandated hours, perceptions of their teaching competency increased. One possible reason for this finding may be the fact that teachers who are more motivated to increase their teaching competency will continually participate in staff development experiences designed to enhance pedagogical knowledge and skills. Rosenholtz & Smylie (1984) found that a teacher's belief in his/her effectiveness, often brought about by professional growth, is a contributing factor in student achievement. Findings from this study suggest that the state mandated staff development does not include information and/or activities that increase the teaching competency of its recipients as effectively as does staff development offered beyond the state mandatory hours. Although teacher perceptions of most of the characteristics of quality staff development and areas of professional impact were influenced by the grade level(s) and type of school in relation to federal funding in which respondents taught, neither of these areas had a significant correlation to teacher perceptions of competency. This implies that there are other factors besides the variables in the study that affect how competent teachers feel in their profession.

Implications of this Study on National Reform

One of the major themes of the current national reform initiative, NCLB, is teacher quality. Under the new legislation, teachers must be defined as "highly qualified" (USDE, 2003). To aid states in recruiting and maintaining highly qualified teachers, one of the requirements under NCLB is for states and counties to establish an annual measurable objective for increasing the percentage of teachers receiving high quality staff development (USDE). This goal is one component of each state's adequate yearly progress, AYP, which represents the amount of annual progress needed in order for 100% of the state's students to reach the proficient level by the 2013-2014 school year. Results from the study suggest that due to significant differences in teacher perceptions based on demographic data, meeting the AYP goal for high quality staff development may be a challenge for many schools, particularly secondary schools and schools receiving no extra federal funding beyond that of NCLB.

Criteria for quality staff development under NCLB calls for targeted, collaborative, sustained, and evaluated staff development (USDE, 2003). Study findings revealed that some teachers are experiencing these characteristics of quality in their staff development experiences, and some teachers are not. Yet, the legislation and consequent AYP is for all teachers in all schools. One component of NCLB's definition of highly qualified teacher is worth noting. According to the reform legislation, all teachers of *core* subjects must be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. Study findings revealed that teachers in grades 9 – 12, who must be content-specific in their teaching, viewed their staff development to be of less quality than did teachers in grades P – 5. Several respondents teaching in grades 9 – 12 who did not perceive their staff

development to exemplify a quality experience indicated through comments that staff development was not directed toward teachers in the related arts. A possible reason for this might be the large amount of mandatory staff development time devoted to test analysis, in which teachers analyze the previous year's achievement test scores of incoming students. Since the related arts are not included in the state achievement test, teachers in these fields may find no benefit to this type of staff development. This prompts the question: Are the related arts ignored, as reported by one respondent, because teachers in these fields do not have to meet the definition of "highly qualified teacher" as defined by NCLB and/or are not subject to evaluation based on standardized test scores?

Implications of this Study on State Reform

While federal legislation provides over-arching goals and requirements for professional development, each state sets forth policies regarding how such goals and requirements will be administered and accomplished. In West Virginia, Policy 5500 sets forth guidelines for implementation of staff development activities. The guidelines call for utilization of multiple sources of input to identify program needs; utilization of needs-based objectives; creation of activities that provide for individual as well as organizational needs; provisions for a systematic evaluation process for delivery, quality, and impact; and, provisions for follow-up activities (WVDE, 1997). In relation to the study's terminology, these guidelines call for targeted, ongoing, and evaluated staff development. Study findings revealed that teachers were uncertain as to whether their staff development included the above three variables. While results of independent t-tests showed that teachers in grades P – 5 perceived their staff development to be more

inclusive of the targeted and ongoing variables, there was no significant difference among teacher perceptions across all grade levels for the evaluated variable. There were, however, significant differences in teacher perceptions of evaluated staff development when comparing the number of hours in which teachers participated in staff development and between Title I and Non-Title I schools. These findings support the literature by Kelleher (2003) and the NSDC (2003a) that states that many staff development evaluation practices either end with the assessment of participants' immediate reactions to the particular experience or contain no mechanism at all to measure the results of the activity. Furthermore, no significant differences were found in teacher perceptions of ongoing staff development among Title I, Non-Title I, and Reading First schools. This finding will be discussed in more detail in the next section. These findings imply that the guidelines set forth by Policy 5500 are being somewhat implemented for teachers in Title I schools and teachers in grades P – 5. The study results suggest that the principles of operation of Policy 5500 are not as effective for teachers in Non-Title I schools and teachers in grades 9 – 12.

To aid in the national goal for all students to be proficient by the 2013-2014 school year, West Virginia has implemented Reading First, a national initiative to support states in reaching the goal of every child reading on grade level by the end of third grade. To accomplish this goal, the Reading First initiative provides federal funds to assist states, districts, and schools in establishing reading programs in which reading instruction is informed by scientifically based reading research (Kingery, 2004). Beginning in the 2003-2004 school year, West Virginia's Reading First initiative was allotted $43.8 million to be dispensed over the next six years (Kingery). Professional development is a

crucial piece of the Reading First program, with 50% of Reading First funds directed toward the professional development of the teacher. Each teacher in a Reading First school must participate in a minimum of 100 hours of professional development each year his/her school is under the Reading First program. Professional development under the Reading First program must be ongoing, sustained, and designed to provide classroom teachers with essential knowledge and skills (Kingery). Independent t-tests showed no significant differences in perceptions of the quality of staff development among teachers in Reading First Schools and those in Title I and/or Non-Title I schools. Statistical analysis may be hindered by the small number of respondents teaching in Reading First schools. Yet, cross-tabulation of type of school in relation to federal funding and the ongoing/sustained staff development variable revealed that only 1 out of 11 (9%) respondents teaching in a Reading First School agreed that their staff development was ongoing and sustained. This finding refutes both the West Virginia Goals for Professional Development and the Reading First descriptions of staff development, both of which call for continuous, sustained staff development.

Furthermore, cross-tabulation of type of school in relation to federal funding and number of hours of participation in staff development experiences revealed that only two out of ten respondents (20%) teaching in a Reading First school participated in more than 60 hours of staff development. Results of the study imply that a crucial component of the Reading First program, teacher participation in at least 100 hours of quality professional development, was not implemented during the 2003-2004 school year. One possible reason for this weakness is that the Reading First program was in the initial stages of implementation during this school year.

Summary

Investing in a teacher's professional growth is important. Staff development is not only crucial to the individual teacher and student, but it is a critical component of the state and national reform movement. While policymakers are placing a more prominent emphasis on the professional growth of the teacher and the implementation of quality staff development, the recipients of such experiences, the classroom teachers, are not as optimistic about the merit of present staff development opportunities. The traditional view of staff development—the one-size-fits-all packaged prescription—still seems to be the valid perception for many of today's educators. This perception, if unchanged, will more than likely impede the success of the national reform movement.

If teachers are to continue to grow in their profession and meet the requirements of national reform, they must view growth opportunities as an integral part of their vocation. One-half of the teachers in this study (49.8%) only participated in the state required eighteen clock hours of staff development, indicating that professional growth is not viewed as a vital component of many teachers' job description. Moreover, this study found that the state mandated staff development experiences were less inclusive of the characteristics of quality staff development than were professional growth opportunities beyond the mandated hours. Many teachers are unmotivated to continue growth opportunities and do not see the value in them. This further complicates the success of the national reform movement.

A large increase in federal funding allocated for staff development is accompanying the national reform movement. State and local school districts are receiving more federal funding than ever before to aid in the professional growth of the

teacher and subsequent improvement of student and school success. This study found that teachers in Title I schools do perceive their staff development to be more inclusive of the characteristics of quality staff development than do teachers in Non-Title I schools; but, is the difference in perceptions sufficient enough to warrant the great amount of federal dollars allocated for staff development for Title I schools? The same question can be applied to Reading First schools. Elmore (2002) acknowledged that investing more money in professional development that has incoherent systems of delivery is simply putting more money into a system that is not prepared to effectively use it. While the mean scores of teachers in Title I and Reading First schools were higher than the mean scores of teachers in Non-Title I schools, the scores were still within the "Neither Agree nor Disagree" range. This finding leads to the question: Are federal funds for staff development being utilized effectively in West Virginia? Further study may help to answer these questions.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Further Study</div>

While the concept of staff development is not a novel one, the notion that staff development is a crucial component of national and state reform is relatively new to the educational scene. With such importance placed upon today's staff development activities, research on its effectiveness is vital. This study provides insight into current staff development practices, and, like any research, raises questions that can only be answered through more research. Recommendations for further research are as follows:

1. All teachers in West Virginia are required to participate in a minimum of eighteen hours of staff development. For many teachers, this is the only staff development in which they participate each year. The study suggests that state

mandatory staff development activities are less inclusive of quality characteristics than are opportunities offered beyond the state mandated experiences. Further study should be conducted on the information, activities, and implementation procedures of staff development administered to satisfy the state mandated number of participation hours. Future studies should include comparisons of the state mandated staff development experiences and staff development experiences offered beyond the state minimum requirement.

2. An increase in the number of teachers receiving quality staff development is an AYP goal for every school. Results of the study suggest that teachers in grades 9 – 12 are receiving staff development that is of less quality than teachers in other grades, particularly grades P – 5. Further studies should investigate the knowledge, activities, and implementation of staff development provided to teachers in grades 9 – 12. Future studies should include comparisons of the types of staff development in which teachers in grades P – 5 participate and the types of staff development in which teachers in grades 9 – 12 participate.

3. Staff development is for all teachers. One characteristic of quality staff development is that it must be targeted toward the individual needs of the teacher. Findings from this study suggest that teachers in the related arts are not receiving quality staff development experiences that meet their needs and the needs of their students. Further studies should examine the types of staff development offered to teachers in the related arts.

4. A great financial investment is currently being made to ensure that teachers receive quality staff development. Millions of dollars are allocated each year to

fund staff development for Title I schools. Results of this study suggest that
teachers in Title I schools are participating in staff development experiences that
are more inclusive of the characteristics of quality staff development than teachers
in Non-Title I schools. Further study should explore the information, activities,
and implementation of staff development provided to teachers in Title I schools to
determine if such experiences can be replicated for teachers in Non-Title I
schools. Future studies should include comparisons of staff development provided
to teachers in Title I schools and staff development in which teachers in Non-Title
I schools participate. Future studies should also explore the funding used for staff
development in comparison to the funding allocated for staff development to
determine if the difference in the quality of staff development experiences is a
monetary issue.

5. One of the goals of professional growth is to increase a teacher's competency
in his/her field. Study findings revealed that teachers were indecisive as to
whether their staff development increased their teaching competency, and only
the number of hours of participation in staff development had a significant impact
on their perceptions. Further studies should be conducted in the area of teaching
competency to determine the reason for differences in teacher perceptions and to
examine factors that contribute to a teacher's sense of competency.

6. One component of quality staff development is an ongoing, sustained system
of activities and follow-up experiences. While teachers wavered in perceptions of
whether their staff development experiences were ongoing and sustained, an
anticipated difference in perceptions was the type of school in which the

respondents taught. With large amounts of federal funding allocated for staff

development for Title I schools, the number of hours of participation in staff

development experiences, implying ongoing and sustained activities, should be

greater than the participation hours of teachers in schools that do not receive extra

federal funding. Study findings revealed that teachers' perceptions of

ongoing/sustained staff development were not significantly different when

comparing Title I and Non-Title I schools. Further studies should be conducted in

this area to determine the reason for the difference in the anticipated and actual

responses. Future studies should also investigate the distribution of funding for

staff development to determine if it is dispensed throughout the entire school year.

7. West Virginia has implemented the Reading First program in response to

NCLB's goal of proficient readers. Reading First schools receive additional

federal funding for staff development, and every teacher in the Reading First

program must participate in a minimum of 100 hours of staff development. Phase

I of the Reading First program was initiated in West Virginia during the 2003-

2004 school year. Phase II of the program includes the goal of broadening the

professional development opportunities for teachers (Kingery, 2004). Findings

from the study revealed that teachers in Reading First schools did not participate

in a minimum of 100 hours of staff development, and their perceptions of the

ongoing/sustained nature of their staff development were not significantly

different than those of teachers in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Further study

should be conducted on the quality of staff development experienced by teachers

in Reading First schools, particularly the number of hours of participation and the

ongoing nature of the experiences, to prove or disprove the effectiveness of the

program beyond the initial year of implementation.

8. One characteristic of quality staff development is a system of evaluation. Both

NCLB and Policy 5500 call for a systematic evaluation process of staff

development. Study findings suggest that teachers do not perceive their staff

development to include a quality evaluation system. Further studies, particularly

experimental research, should investigate an effective system of evaluation for

staff development.

9. This study did not address the models of staff development in which teachers

participated: independent study, peer observation, involvement in a

development/improvement process, training, action research, and collaboration.

Further study should explore quality staff development in relation to the different

models to determine if one model is more inclusive of the characteristics of

quality staff development than another.

10. With full implementation of NCLB underway across the nation, schools are

beginning to feel the impact of not meeting AYP goals. Future studies should

examine the relationship of schools that do not meet the AYP goal of increasing

the number of teachers participating in quality staff development experiences and

the quality of the staff development provided to those schools. A re-examination

of this study for sanctioned schools might prove beneficial.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Survey of Staff Development Experiences

Survey of Staff Development Experiences

Part I. Please indicate the degree to which your staff development experiences within the past academic year (August 2003 – August 2004) were indicative of the following statements by checking the box that best matches your opinion.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were directly related to my teaching and learning needs.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
2. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were opportunities for me to collaboratively develop professional growth activities with peers and facilitators.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
3. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were part of a long-term plan that allowed for ongoing participation in growth activities throughout the school year.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
4. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were embedded within my daily work schedule.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
5. My staff development experiences within the past academic year required me to analyze the use of knowledge and skills gained through the staff development experience.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
6. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were valuable to student learning.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
7. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were opportunities that provided follow-up beyond the initial staff development experience.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
8. My staff development experiences within the past academic year met my professional growth needs.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
9. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were directly related to my students' needs.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
10. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were designed to provide opportunities to share my own professional needs and improvement with colleagues.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
11. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were a part of my everyday responsibilities as a teacher.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
12. My staff development experiences within the past academic year utilized multiple sources of information to evaluate the impact of the staff development experience on teaching and learning.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
13. My staff development experiences within the past academic year increased my motivation to participate in professional growth activities.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
14. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were designed to link me to larger learning communities.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please continue on the back of this page.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were evaluated based upon how changes in my teaching practices made improvements in my students' learning.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
16. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were designed to require reflection on how the goals and content of the staff development experience were met in my classroom.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
17. My staff development experiences within the past academic year provided a balance between my individual priorities and needs and the needs and priorities of my school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
18. My staff development experiences within the past academic year increased my teaching competency.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
19. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were opportunities to analyze data on my own teaching to improve student learning.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
20. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were one-session activities with no follow-up assistance provided beyond the initial staff development experience.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
21. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were designed around an ongoing, systematic evaluation process to determine the impact of the staff development experience on my teaching.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
22. My staff development experiences within the past academic year were incorporated into my teaching profession as an essential part of my regular teaching day.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Part II. Please provide an answer on the blank beside each question or place a checkmark beside the appropriate response.

1. What grade level(s) do you teach? _____

2. How many years have you been teaching in a public school system? _____

3. In how many hours of staff development did you participate during the past academic year? _____

4. In which type of school do you teach? Check all that apply.
   _____ Title I School
   _____ Non-Title I School
   _____ Reading First School

Thank you for participating in this survey.

If you cannot locate the return envelope, please mail this survey to:
Melinda Backus
129 Larkspur Drive
Huntington, WV 25705

APPENDIX B

Common Characteristics of Quality Staff Development

Common Characteristics of Quality Staff Development

	Targeted	Collaborative Environment	Sustained	Time-friendly	Reflective	Evaluated
NCLB	x	x	x			x
U.S.D.E Professional Development Team		x	x	x		x
NSDC	x	x	x		x	
NEA	x	x	x	x	x	x
AFT	x	x		x		
NFIE	x	x	x	x	x	
NCREL	x	x	x	x	x	
WVDE Policy 5500 and Professional Development Goals	x		x	x		x

APPENDIX C

Panel of Experts

Panel of Experts

The Following individuals served as a panel of experts to establish content validity for the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences*.

Mrs. Mary Campbell
Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Cabell County Schools
Huntington, West Virginia

Mr. Carter Chambers
Coordinator of Appalachian Rural Systemic Initiative (ARSI)
Marshall University
Huntington, West Virginia

Dr. Thelma Isaacs
Associate Professor
Marshall University
Huntington, West Virginia

Mrs. Beverly Kingery
Coordinator of Reading/Language Arts Program
West Virginia Department of Education
Charleston, West Virginia

Mrs. Karen Larry
Executive Assistant to the State Superintendent
West Virginia Department of Education
Charleston, West Virginia

Dr. Paula Lucas
Coordinator of Elementary and Secondary Programs
Marshall University
Huntington, West Virginia

Dr. Stan Maynard
Executive Director of the June Harless Center
Marshall University
Huntington, West Virginia

APPENDIX D

Content Validity Questions for Panel of Experts

Content Validity Questions for Panel of Experts

1. Are the questions written as to be uniformly understood?

2.   Do the questions contain abbreviations or unconventional phrases?

3. Are the questions too vague?

4. Are the questions biased?

5. Are the questions objectionable?

6. Are the questions too demanding?

7. Do any questions embody a double question?

8. Do the questions contain a double negative?

9. Are the answer choices mutually exclusive?

10. Do the questions assume too much knowledge on the respondent's part?

(From Smith & Glass, 1987, p. 248)

APPENDIX E

Cover Letter to Teachers

November 5, 2004

Dear Teacher,

You have been selected to participate in this doctoral research study as a part of a random sampling of West Virginia teachers. The purpose of this study is to determine the degree to which staff development opportunities for West Virginia teachers exemplify quality experiences. Recognizing quality staff development is an important concept in current reform initiatives and for the field of education in general. Possible benefits of this research include informing administrative decisions and practices on the development and implementation of quality staff development experiences and extending our knowledge of how to best utilize our state and federal dollars for staff development opportunities.

I realize that your time is precious. The attached questionnaire will only take a few minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary, and your responses are confidential. Data will be securely stored and will be reported in aggregate form only with no identification of individual teachers. Your responses are very important, and your timely participation will greatly strengthen my research. However, there is no penalty for declining to participate in this study.

Please answer the questions as honestly and accurately as possible. I am requesting that all responses be returned by **November 24, 2004**. Enclosed you will find a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your mailing convenience.

Please keep this letter for your records. If you have any questions or would like further information on this study, you may contact me at 304-696-2877. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Dr. Stephen Cooper, IRB#2 Chair, at the Office of Research Integrity at Marshall University at 304-696-7320. Please accept my gratitude in advance for your cooperation and timely participation in this research study.

Appreciatively,

Melinda Backus

APPENDIX F

Follow-up Letter to Teachers

Follow-up Letter to Teachers

Approved by the Office of Research
and Integrity at Marshall University

Date

Dear Teacher,

You were recently mailed the *Survey of Staff Development Experiences,* a research study aimed at describing the degree to which staff development opportunities for West Virginia teachers exemplify quality professional growth experiences. Your name was selected to participate in this study from a random sampling of public school teachers across West Virginia.

While participation is voluntary, your participation will greatly increase the strength of the study. I realize your time is precious. The attached questionnaire will only take a few minutes to complete. Your responses are very important. Strictest confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study. Data will be securely stored and reported in aggregate form only with no identification of individual teachers.

As previously mentioned, benefits of this study include informing administrative decisions and practices on the development and implementation of staff development experiences and extending our knowledge of how to best utilize our federal and state dollars for staff development opportunities.

I am enclosing another survey along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your convenience. I would greatly appreciate it if this survey were returned by December 15. If you have already mailed the previously received survey, please disregard this letter. Thank you so much for your participation and timely response in this research study. If you have any questions or would like further information on this study, please contact me at Marshall University at (304) 696-2877. If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Dr. Stephen Cooper, IRB#2 Chair, at the Office of Research Integrity at Marshall University at 304-696-7320.

Respectfully,

Melinda Backus

CURRICULUM VITA

Melinda B. Backus
Marshall University
Assistant Professor, Teacher Education

<u>Academic Degrees</u>

Ed.D.	2005	Marshall University
		Major Area: Curriculum and Instruction
		Minor Area: Reading/Literacy
Ed.S.	2003	Marshall University
		Curriculum and Instruction
M.A.	1994	Marshall University
		Reading Specialist, K-12
B.A.	1989	Marshall University
		Multi-Subject, K-8

<u>Certification</u>

Curriculum and Instruction
Reading Specialist, K-12
Math Authorization by state of WV through Algebra I (9 hours beyond M.A.)
36 hours beyond M.A. in computer technology software
Multi-Subject K-8

<u>Professional Experience</u>

2000-Present	Assistant Professor, Teacher Education
	Marshall University
	Huntington, WV
1997-2000	Part-time faculty, Teacher Education
	Marshall University
	Huntington, WV
1991-2000	6th/7th/8th Grade Teacher, Math and Language Arts
	Wayne Middle School
	Wayne, WV
1989-1991	3rd/4th Grade Teacher
	East Lynn Elementary School
	Wayne, WV

Professional and Academic Association Memberships
      Member: Phi Delta Kappa
                            Kappa Delta Pi
                            WV Council of Teachers of Mathematics (WVCTM)
                            WV Reading Association (WVRA)

Professional Development Activities

2005	SAS in Schools Training (Attended)
	March 11, 2005
	Marshall University
2004	Reinventing Education-Teacher Education (Attended)
	September 9, 2004
	MUGC, South Charleston
2004	Prioritized Curriculum (Attended)
	May 12, 2005
	Ramada Inn, Huntington, WV
2004	Reading Higher Education Summit (Attended)
	April 27, 2004
	Stonewall Jackson State Resort, WV
2004	Understanding by Design (Attended)
	April 24, 2004
	Marshall University
2004	Visual Impairment Workshop (Attended)
	January 8, 2004
	Marshall University
2004	A Framework for the Understanding of Poverty (Attended)
	February 20, 2004
	Marshall University
2003	Professional Development School (Co-presenter with Karen Lucas)
	October 3, 2003
	Kellogg Elementary
2003	School Partnership Project (Attended)
	August 19, 2003
	Marshall University
2003	School Partnership Project (Attended)
	June 10, 2003
	Kellogg Elementary School
2003	RE3 Administrator Training (Attended)
	May 2, 2003
	WVDE
2003	Completion of Ed.S .degree in Curriculum and Instruction
	May, 2003
	Marshall University

2003	PT3 Winter Conference (Co-presenter with Karen Lucas) "Down on the Farm" April 5, 2003 Charleston, WV
2003	WVCTM Annual Conference (Co-Presenter with Paula Lucas) "Using Hands-on Activities to Teach Middle School Concepts" March 21-22, 2003 Flatwoods, WV
2003	Charlotte Danielson Training (Attended) March 3, 2003 Marshall University
2002-2003	RE3 Meetings (Attended) Dec. 11, Jan. 8, 20, 24, 27 Huntington and Charleston, WV
2002	Teaching All Students Through Inquiry (Attended) October 17, 2002 Marshall University
2002	WVRA Reading Best Practices (Attended) October 5, 2002 Huntington, WV
2002	WVCTM Annual Conference (Co-presenter with Ruth Ann Murphy) "Finding Patterns in Palindromes" March 15-16, 2002 Flatwoods, WV
2002	Advising Workshop (Attended) February 14, 2002 Marshall University
2002	Graduate Proposal (Attended) February 12, 2002 Marshall University
2002	No Child Left Behind (Attended) January 31, 2002 Marshall University
2001-Present	Working on terminal degree in Curriculum and Instruction WVU-Marshall Co-op Program
2001	Graduate Proposal (Attended) November 29, 2001 Marshall University
2001	Distance Learning (Attended) November 9, 2001 Marshall University

2001	PDK International (Attended)
	October 19, 2001
	Marshall University
2001	Advising Workshop (Attended)
	October 8,2001
	Marshall University
2001	2001 2nd Annual Effective Partnership Schools Academy

2001	PDK International (Attended)
	October 19, 2001
	Marshall University
2001	Advising Workshop (Attended)
	October 8,2001
	Marshall University
2001	2001 2nd Annual Effective Partnership Schools Academy
	(Co-Presenter with Paula Lucas)
	June 18-20, 2001
	Huntington High School
2001	Booth Scholars Program (Attended)
	March 31, 2001
	Pikeville, Kentucky
2001	Middle School Urban Conference (Attended)
	March 1,2
	Columbus, Ohio
2001	Stand-Alone Program (Attended)
	February 12
	Marshall University
2001	PT3 Implementation Grant workshop (Co-Presenter with Karen Lucas)
	January
	Marshall University
1999	T3: Teachers Teaching Technology (coursework)
1998	Computer Technology and Design IV—Computing Instruction and Design (coursework)
1997	Desktop Publishing II (coursework)
1997	Microsoft Office Works II (coursework)
1996	Desktop Publishing (coursework)
1996	Microsoft Office Works (coursework)
1996	Applied Math I (attended/participant in creation of county activities)
1996	Circle of Math (Attended)
	Charleston, WV
1995	Word Perfect (coursework)
1995	Teaching Strategies I and II (coursework)

University Service and Activities

2005	University Faculty Senator
2004 - Present	Member, COEHS Personnel Committee
2004 - Present	Member, Planning and Review Committee
2004	Member, creation of *Handbook of Clinical Experiences* for School of Education
2002 – Present	Member, West Virginia Collaborative Executive Committee for IBM Reinventing Education grant

2002 - Present	RE3 Administrator for Learning Village site
2002 – 2004	Member, Teacher Education Standards Committee
2002 – 2004	Member, Undergraduate Program Curriculum Committee
2002	Member, Search Committee for elementary/secondary/ technology teacher candidate
2002	Member, Search Committee for reading specialist candidate
2001	Co-Chair, Committee on Technology, NCATE
2001	Member, Committee on Performance Tasks, NCATE
2000	"We Are…Marshall" commercial

Other Services and Activities

2005	Guest Speaker for International Night February 10, 2005 Westmoreland Women's Club
2004	Reading Connection, Central City Elementary School
2004	School of Education orientation for prospective athlete
2004	Grading M.A comprehensive exams
2004	NCATE evaluation with Dr Darrell Garber (Attended) April 29, 2004 Marshall University
2003	Member, Clinical Experience Re-alignment
2003	NCATE December 10, 2003 Marshall Univesity
2003	NCATE: Standard 5 (Member) September 12, 2003 Teays Valley, WV
2001- Present	Evaluator of Capstone presentations and student teaching portfolios
2001	NCATE Workshops (Attended) October 19, May 31-June1, January 27 Marshall University
2001	Senior Project (Judge) January 16 Spring Valley High School
2000-2001	Member, PT3 Grant Project WVDOE/Marshall University/Mason County Schools
2000-Present	Selection Committee Member, Booth Scholars Program Pikeville College
1999	Empowering Teachers in Mathematics Workshop (Presenter) Cabell Midland High School
1997-2000	Technology Institutes (Instructor) Wayne County/Marshall University

Works

2005	*The Role of Teacher Development in Math Achievement* Submitted to Eastern Educational Research Association Conference
2004	Review of *Celebration: A Case Study for the Teaching of Reading and Writing*, Houghton Mifflin
2003	Review of *Language Arts: Learning and Teaching*, Thomson/Wadsworth
2003 – Present	Creation of "Language Arts" packet/text for CI447
2001	Creation of "Technology in the Classroom" packet for CI350

Honors, Awards, Speaking Invitations

As a teacher of education:

2005/2006	Empire Who's Who of Women in Education
2005	Who's Who Among America's Teachers 9th edition
2004	Who's Who Among America's Teachers 8th edition
2002	Gamma Beta Phi Faculty Appreciation Award—Certificate of Recognition
2001	Elected into Phi Delta Kappa

As a student of education:

Outstanding College Students of America (elected recipient)

Gamma Beta Phi (elected member)

Kappa Delta Pi (elected member)

Herschel C. Price Foundation Award for Scholarship, Leadership, and Achievement (elected recipient)

National Dean's List [undergraduate and graduate] (elected recipient)

Technology Integration into Teaching and Scholarship

Teacher Candidates:

Use of computers—particularly Office Suite—to produce course projects

Use of Internet—research, e-mail, source for add-ins

Use of Personal/Professional website—course information, course notes

Use of Listserv—class projects and communication

Use of website creation—student-created home pages used in the CI471 clinical experience

Use of electronic lesson plans—student-created lesson plans placed on the Marshall Learning Village site

Use of Reinvent Education/Learning Village site—resources, home pages, instruction

Use of technology integration in clinical experience—one component of lesson plans

Use of digital camera—attachments for lessons and home page