THE EVOLUTION OF A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY IN A

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL:

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This study explores whether teacher leaders within a professional development school will take on leadership responsibilities while they are in the midst of learning new district and state change initiatives through the documentation of the formation and implementation of a professional learning community (PLC) within a professional development school (PDS). An ethnographic case study was used to gather information about how 20 teachers within a school worked through change initiatives and collaborative practices. Teachers presented book study topics to colleagues on PLCs and implemented the studied work in their collaborative practices. A Lead Teacher Questionnaire gave teachers an opportunity to express their understanding around PLCs, collaborative practices, and professional development. Teachers completed a SWOT analysis to measure the effectiveness of the book study and presentations. This study reveals that too many initiatives presented to staff leads to issues around district initiatives and changes. District leadership teams are responsible for establishing trust with staff, offering immediate feedback around instructional practices, ensuring that initiatives are streamlined, and that the goals of the initiatives are clearly articulated to staff. Clearly articulated goals helps staff members to know and master expectations. The study participants reflected on their collaborative practices and realized that they need to trust one another to engage in collaborative practices that promote optimal growth and learning for all individuals.

Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation to my husband Lonnel, parents Birsee and Anita Ross, and family who have consistently reminded me to keep God at the center of everything that I do. I am appreciative to my husband who I love with all of my heart. Thank you for being patient and understanding while giving me the encouragement to stay the course, and never quit. My parents have prepared me to endure and preserve since childhood. The verse quoted to me by them 2 Timothy 1:7: For God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love and a sound mind. I love you both for raising me to be a child of God. My sisters Tracy and Jennifer are my best friends who consistently give me honest feedback around my daily actions, and inspire me to reach for greater heights. The four of you have contributed greatly to my success. Thanks to my friends and extended family for the many prayers and encouragement to sustain me throughout this process. Thank you all for instilling in me an understanding that learning never stops, my steps are ordered by Christ, persevering in the midst of the challenges is a habit of mind that I must face and endure to grow in the wisdom of Christ Jesus. Psalms 23

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Thanks to the fearless leader, Andrea Ramsey who served as building principal during the time of the study. Your positive motivation and prayers were felt. I appreciate the central administration staff in the district that I work in for allowing me to complete this study. I am thankful for all of my teacher colleagues who have given me the opportunity to grow and learn through this process of studying the literature, observing your teaching practices, and having the opportunity to blend theory and practice.

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CHAPTER I

Personal Statement

News spread rapidly that Urban Elementary School (pseudonym), the most socio-economically underprivileged school in the district that I worked in would be reconstructed into a professional development school (PDS) in the school year of 2009 - 2010. Prior to the announcement of the new PDS arriving, I was happily settled in the position of an instructional coach at a school in a middle-income working class neighborhood. I was filled with anticipation about the potential PDS because during that time I was also a doctoral student working on a leadership studies degree at a private university, and my cognate area was professional development. Thoughts bombarded my mind as I imagined that the PDS would provide me with optimal experiences, growth, and learning related to teacher leadership and professional development.

I successfully navigated through the laborious interview process for a position within the PDS. My hopes expanded around the possibilities and experiences that the PDS could provide the students, staff, and community within the newly reformed school. I began to link my thoughts on the concepts and themes that I read about in my coursework that intrigued me regarding teacher leadership, professional development, and change process to this new school experience. I imagined a utopian educational setting where action research, professional collegiality, and reflection were genuinely the rule for teachers. Visualizations of this school being filled with teachers who were captivated by growth and learning for themselves and their students began to overtake my mind. Urban PDS would be a place where reflection was vibrant and expected. This

school would demonstrate high functioning staff and students that operate on levels above all standards and expectations academically and professionally.

Professional Development School Standards drive the actions of staff members in a PDS. PDSs are filled with informal teacher leaders who have demonstrated an ability to move students academically in a positive direction. Most schools have a few teacher leaders who go above and beyond the call of duty within the organization. Every teacher who is hired in a PDS is expected to have an understanding of the extraordinary obligations that they are required to engage in. Teachers in a PDS are required to lead their students and peers toward success according to the PDS standard Collaboration (NCATE, 2001).

The staff members at Urban PDS were provided a glimpse of accomplishment and what the building could become after the completion of the first year in the PDS. Urban PDS had the highest performance index growth in the county during the first year of operation. Teachers were working as hard as they could within their classrooms to show growth and gains within their students' academic levels. It appeared from a glance that teachers were engaged in collegial practices, and that the school was on track to be a model PDS in the years to come.

However, there were undercurrents that kept the PDS from continuing to run at high levels, and to sustain the growth that was evident within the first year. One of the most prominent reasons that the school did not function at a high level was the fact that the school had only been in operation for one year. The teachers had to adjust to the performance expectations of a professional development school primarily relating to field experience teachers and student teachers. Teachers were overextended due to the extra

workload of managing multiple field experience teachers and a student teacher on top of

their regular classroom teaching obligations. Collegiality between staff members around

the growth and development of each other's practices was miniscule. Staff conversations

often times veered away from instruction and learning and were about students' lack of

effort, or the students' parents' deficiencies related to their children's academic welfare.

Reflection on what teachers did in the classroom was not firmly built into the fabric of

the school vision, mission or goals, so the growth of the organization became stagnant.

In an effort to rejuvenate the spirit of novelty, increase collaboration, and change

adult behaviors to reflect a true professional learning community within the school, I

contacted an outside consultant to seek guidance for the well being of our school during

the second year of the PDS initiative. I gathered a team to meet with the consultant so

that we could develop a plan to increase our ability to implement action research, give

and receive feedback around teaching and learning, and reflect on our practice in order to

change our behaviors if needed to meet our goals. We worked with the staff on a monthly

basis under the guidance of the consultant for four months.

The professional development plan and professional learning community seemed

to be thriving during the first couple of sessions. The consultant asked if I could speak

with the principal about her coming to do some classroom visits. She and I both thought

that an extra pair of eyes and ears from an individual outside of the organization would

help the teaching staff better reflect on professional practices. As a staff we could

brainstorm and engage in professional conversations for productive growth and learning

after she completed the observations and gave us meaningful feedback. She offered to do

the observations free of charge, and not include them as part of the contract she had for

working in the school. I was excited about the possibility of us receiving immediate feedback from an expert without additional financial obligations attached. Immediate feedback is a critical tool to increase outcomes and learning (Hattie & Timperly, 2007). Feedback can be a critical component in the enhancement of the individuals' practices within an organization.

I relayed the message to the building administrator about the opportunity for the consultant to observe teachers as they worked in classrooms, and give our staff feedback regarding practices. I immediately began to feel pushback from the principal and the instructional coach regarding the work that the team deemed important for the growth of teachers. The principal said that he did not want to put that extra burden on teachers. He also said that teachers felt that the extra work from the PLC was becoming burdensome with all of the work that they were expected to do in and outside of their classrooms. The principal did not feel that staff members were ready to have their instructional and pedagogical practices observed by an outside consultant or each other.

It was quite evident that teachers were not ready to receive critique and feedback on their practice to grow, learn, and increase their students' achievement levels. Many individuals felt intimidated to examine their practices or have their practices openly assessed by others. This fear stemmed from educators working in isolation inside their classrooms in spite of the research that shows that teachers who work collaboratively bring about the best results for students (Donaldson, 2007; DuFour, DuFour & Eaker 2005; Fullan, 1993; National Commission on Teaching, 2003; Reeves, 2010). Deep reflective practice was not a cultural norm for the higher performing teachers within Urban PDS. Their teaching practices ranged on the rubric for Ohio Educator Standards

from the proficient to accomplished levels. These teachers used information about students' learning and performance to plan and deliver instruction to close the achievement gap. Getting to the highest level of teaching, the distinguished level, teachers would need to reflect more on their own and others' practices in order to make curriculum and instructional decisions to meet student academic needs (ODE, 2007).

Some educators felt more comfortable blaming outside factors as the basis for low academic achievement of the students that they taught. The teachers in this PDS had not yet conceptualized that an analysis of their teaching in the moment that they were observed was not an attack on them as a teacher, but a critique of the teaching practices used in that lesson. My immediate thought was that we were engaged in another failed initiative. I was quite disturbed that individuals within a PDS did not have the tenacity to engage in critical reflection or collegial interactions with colleagues. Collegial actions occur when staff members work together to reflect on their practices through classroom observations, critique, and feedback. I wondered why the teacher leaders who were hand selected to work in the PDS applied to leave their previous buildings to come to this restructured school, but engage in the same practices that had been evident in their prior schools. I questioned our capacity to grow as professionals in a professional development school when experimentation and reflection was obstructed by some of the staff and leadership that were considered to be highly effective. I did not let my hopes of a high functioning professional learning environment deflate, although the school was beginning to have the feel of a "regular" public school within the district by the end of the second year.

The district and PDS had some staff turnover and was under new leadership in the third and fourth years. There were multiple superintendents and a new building principal within two years. New leadership at both the building and district levels brought challenges to the educators due to some of the changes in leadership styles and expectations of leadership.

The teachers within our school had anxiety due to the change processes occurring at the district and classroom levels. Some of the changes included new co-teaching models within the school, curriculum overhaul, and the changes in the work that teachers were expected to engage in as teacher leaders. Three grade levels within our Pre-K – sixth grade school were engaged in co-teaching settings within classrooms. Two grade levels had to get used to the whole new co-teaching paradigm that took a lot of time and effort to pull off. Teachers organized their curriculum files, so that the following school year would run more smoothly. The expectation was that the teaching and learning would be more precise and methodical than the year before due to self-reflection and the changes we had made in the curriculum to increase the level of thinking in our students. In a building leadership meeting, we were made aware that three-fourths of our well designed and organized curriculum files were considered ineffective by the district leadership and OIP teams. The teachers were not content with having to recreate from scratch curriculum materials because those same curricular files were used to show over a year's worth of growth in our students the previous year. Our yearly plans had to be modified once again due to the fact that assessment expectations and outcomes would be measured by a different set of standards that we were not used to. We usually embraced change like a champion, but this time we were not adjusting like I thought we would.

There were many factors that kept my colleagues and me from working at optimal levels with our students in the classroom.

At the start of the fourth year some staff members thought that trying to keep up with the district pacing guide was difficult. Implementing Response to Intervention (RTI), a new initiative effectively seemed to take a toll on staff also. Waiting for district approved intervention strategies that could be used with students also contributed to the stagnation of the growth and development of professional practice and students. Keeping our heads above water was all we hoped for in the beginning of the year.

Urban City Schools like many other educational settings is a system that has been completely overwhelmed in change initiatives from top to bottom. Stagnation related to our work was evident due to many obstacles that came our way as a staff. We had to find a way to navigate through a time of unproductivity to advance towards increased learning for all within the school and district.

Introduction

Educators across America have been inundated with multiple school reform initiatives. National and state level policy makers believe these changes are important to increase student achievement among all students and close achievement gaps between subgroups within K-12 school environments. At the school district level, the initiatives can appear to be misaligned and have some educators on leadership teams within K-12 settings scurrying to find the correct initiative to impact the educational climate positively. The various initiatives that some districts choose to take on at one time are proving to be troublesome for educators in districts and schools trying to focus on raising student achievement. Schmoker (2011) stated,

> But the price for such swift improvement is steep: Most schools would have to stop doing almost everything they now do in the name of school improvement. Instead they would have to focus on only implementing "what is essential." Hardest of all they would have to ignore the rest' (Collins, 2001, p. 91) – the fads, programs and innovations that now prevent us from ensuring that every student in every school receives a quality education. (p. 2)

According to Reeves (2010, p. 4), " Raising student achievement in schools requires that school district leadership teams focus on the primary elements of teaching, curriculum, assessment, high impact professional development, and leadership." Districts and schools that have teachers who demonstrate effective teaching practices are learning centers focused on the deliberate practices of teaching rather than multiple workshops and checklists (Willingham, 2009 as cited in Reeves, 2010). Focusing on the primary elements of teaching requires teachers to be deliberately engaged in job embedded collaborative work with one another to positively impact each other's instructional and pedagogical practices to ultimately raise student achievement.

Professional learning communities (PLCs) can serve as a promising framework to develop teaching practices and advance the learning opportunities of teachers and students (Barth, 2001; DuFour, Eaker, DuFour, 2005; Fullan, 2002; Hord, Roussin, & Sommers, 2010; Reeves, 2010). PLCs lend opportunities for educators to collaborate with each other to refine their teaching skills. Some strategies for enhancing learning within PLCs include working to develop engaging lessons and assessments, analyzing student work, observing teaching, providing feedback around observations of teaching, action research, peer coaching, mentoring, and study groups. Within learning communities

school practitioners can engage in the job embedded professional learning opportunities to raise their understanding around best practices.

In summary, school districts need individuals in leadership positions who understand the processes of eliminating the urge to undertake new initiatives in place of developing the hidden talent within their staff around the concepts of teaching and learning to increase student achievement. The job embedded work to increase the teaching skills of teachers requires teacher leaders having the time to observe each other's practice, give feedback to one another around teaching practices, and practice promising strategies to increase teaching and pedagogical skills to work towards closing achievement gaps between subgroups of students. Developing the talents of teachers requires a focus of attention on the individuals and the core elements of teaching rather than new programs or initiatives that can impede the learning processes for both educators and students.

Rationale

House Bill 1 clearly notes that teacher effectiveness is the most in school factor impacting student academic growth and achievement. A teacher's performance is guided by multiple initiatives that come into play in K-12 schools. Some of those initiatives include the Ohio's Learning Standards, Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES), Ohio Educator Standards for Professional Development, Resident Educator Standards, and the Educator Teacher Performance Assessment (EdTPA). Educational policy makers put these initiatives in place to hold teachers accountable for the work that they do in schools.

Standards based learning stemmed from a call to action by the report *A Nation at Risk* (1983). *A Nation at Risk* was organized due to the public schools in America

academically lagging behind some of their international peers (US Department of Education, 2008). The report recommended that states adopt more rigorous and measurable standards to increase student learning. The late 80's and early 90's marked the beginning of what is known as the standards movement in education. This call to action enabled educators to have an understanding of what students should know and do by the end of a school year. The standards also guided classroom instruction and assessments to ensure academic growth for students.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) was designed to ensure high expectations for all students. The lofty initiative stated that all students would be on grade level by 2014. This bill was responsible for all states adopting standards and assessments to measure students' growth academically.

The Common Core Standards were developed in 2009 to respond to the lack of readiness of students entering into college and careers. These reading and math standards were created for students in the kindergarten through twelfth grade. The Common Core Standards provide a set of clear and focused learning outcomes that are consistent across states and outline what students should be able to do by the end of each grade level. Teachers, parents and students have the opportunity to be aware of the standards students are taught and assessed throughout the year. Common Core standards were developed to ensure that all students are exposed to equitable practices by ensuring that they are prepared to enter the workforce or two or four year colleges.

In June of 2011, House Bill 153 was signed into law, and changed the format of teacher evaluation. OTES is a standards-based framework based on the Ohio Standards

for the Teaching Profession. The seven Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession include:

- **Students.** Teachers understand student learning and development and respect the diversity of the students they teach.

- **Content.** Teachers know and understand the content area for which they have instructional responsibility.

- **Assessment.** Teachers understand and use varied assessments to inform instruction, evaluate and ensure student learning.

- **Instruction.** Teachers plan and deliver effective instruction that advances the learning of each individual student.

- **Learning Environment.** Teachers create learning environments that promote high levels of learning and achievement for all students.

- **Collaboration.** Teachers collaborate and communicate with students, parents, other educators, administrators and the community to support student learning.

- **Professional Responsibility.** Teachers assume responsibility for professional growth, performance and involvement as an individual and as a member of a learning community.

OTES standards are broken into three sections Instructional Planning, Instruction and Assessment and Professionalism. The sections in the rubric are broken down further to allow teachers to have an understanding of observation expectations.

Instructional Planning.

- Focus for Learning

- Assessment Data

- Pro Content Knowledge

- Knowledge of Students

Instruction and Assessment.

- Lesson Delivery

- Differentiation

- Resources

- Classroom Environment

- Assessment of Learning

Professionalism.

- Professional Responsibilities

Fifty percent of teachers' evaluation is based on student growth measures (value added/student learning objectives or alternative growth measures) while the other 50 % is based on teacher performance (observations and walkthroughs). Ohio's teacher evaluation system (OTES) is designed to encourage professional dialogue, nurture professional growth over time, customize teacher evaluation to a teacher's level of effectiveness (tiered system: accomplished, skilled, developing or ineffective), and propel schools to higher levels of effectiveness through improved teacher performance (Winship, 2011). OTES is a system of evaluation that allows teachers to receive yearly feedback on their performance. Teachers set two goals for the following year based on their level of performance throughout the year. The primary reason for teacher evaluations is to improve teaching and learning.

The Resident Educator program is part of the new licensure structure in Ohio for teachers. New teachers are required to participate in a four-year mentorship that prepares them to effectively reflect on their teaching practices and teach their students. The fourth year of the program requires teachers to take a performance based summative assessment that allows them to demonstrate their knowledge around best practices of teaching and learning (ODE, 2011).

EdTPA is a summative performance assessment given to student teachers by some universities in Ohio and other states at the end of their educator preparation program. The assessment is used to monitor the instruction that teaching candidates provide to students during their student teaching experience. This assessment primarily aims to yield an understanding of whether or not field experience teachers are prepared to enter the teaching workforce. Teaching candidates video record lessons that they teach during their student teaching experience, and reflect on the processes of teaching and learning within the taped lessons. Lessons are taught and measured against state and national teaching and curriculum standards. This assessment reflects the knowledge and skills needed to teach in a classroom to increase student achievement (edTPA, 2013).

The Ohio Standards for Professional Development document guides the manner in which teachers should be developed professionally. The standards for professional development in Ohio promotes job embedded professional development to enhance the pedagogical and instructional practices of teachers. The first set of Ohio Professional Development Standards was developed in 2005. The standards were updated during the 2013-2014 school year. The State Board of Education in Ohio was responsible for

updating the standards adapted Learning Forwards professional development into Ohio's

benchmarks. The Ohio Standards for Professional Development include:

1. **Learning Communities.** Professional learning that increases educator
   effectiveness and results for all students … occurs within learning communities
   committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility and goal
   alignment.

2. **Leadership.** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and
   results for all students…. requires skilled teacher leaders and administrators who
   develop capacity, and advocate and create support systems for professional
   learning.

3. **Resources.** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results
   for all students … requires prioritizing, monitoring and coordinating resources for
   educator learning.

4. **Data.** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for
   all students … requires the use of a variety of sources and types of student,
   educator and system data to plan, assess and evaluate professional learning.

5. **Learning Designs.** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and
   results for all students … integrates theories, research and models of human
   learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

6. **Implementation.** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and
   results for all students … applies research on change and sustains support for
   implementation of professional learning

7. **Outcomes**. . Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and

   results for all students … aligns its outcomes with educator performance and

   student curriculum standards.

According to ODE's website (2015):

A strong relationship exists between educational leadership, professional learning,

teaching knowledge and practices, and student results. Creating a system of

effective professional learning is one way that school systems can support all

educators, and encourage improved teaching and learning. Through ongoing

professional learning, educators gain the new knowledge, skills and ideas that

allow them to best meet students learning needs.

The updated standards for professional development in the state of Ohio have a

focus on leadership at all levels. The updated standards also take into consideration the

processes of change and adult learning theory. These updated standards differ from the

older standards because the new standards for professional development in Ohio

incorporate the themes change process, teacher leadership, and adult learning theory

within the standards. The updated standards will benefit multiple audiences including,

"planners, providers, participants and evaluators of professional learning" (ODE, 2015).

Race to the Top has outlined the code of behavior and expectations of teachers

and principals to meet the academic needs of all students. The Ohio Educator Standards

outline expectations and standards of performance for educators in Ohio to increase

student achievement. State standards for teaching, new teacher evaluation systems and

performance assessments adopted by Ohio have benchmarks that require teachers to

teach at higher levels to increase student learning. The national and state policies are

driving educators to engage in multiple initiatives (Reeves, 2010) that can be confusing and contradictory (Danielson, 2015), and teachers continue to work in isolation (Katzenmyer & Moller, 2009; Lortie, 1975). Administrators use the evaluation tool as a means for critiquing the instructional and pedagogical practice of teachers. Building principals provide feedback to teachers based on the evaluation tool, so teachers can change their practices to meet student needs. Principals and teachers are evaluated on their professional performance and student academic growth measures that were set according to the state. Professional learning communities, formative instructional practices, assessment data analysis, and curriculum alignment are programs that staff members in districts and schools are engaged in to meet the needs of the students that they service. The new changes that take place over time will require teacher leaders to accelerate their learning and collaborate with their peers, so that they can lead their staff members through the processes of change, and provide support as needed.

Many educators have been overexposed to initiatives and changes driven by school district administration and the state departments of education. The multiple initiatives have forced educators to a state of what Reeves (2010) calls the law of initiative fatigue. Initiative fatigue occurs when the number of initiatives increases while time, resources, and emotional energy are constant, then each new initiative, no matter how well conceived or well intentioned, will receive fewer minutes, dollars, and ounces of emotional energy than its predecessors. School district officials should monitor the number of initiatives that their staff engages in to make certain that staff has the ability to give their best effort to ensure student success.

Change fatigue is a concept that works in concert with initiative fatigue and stemmed from within the business sect. According to Ferguson (2011) fatigue can occur from multiple reasons. Fatigue can happen when mergers occur. Another way for individuals within organizations to experience fatigue is when employees are given a high quantity of work along with workers having an obligation to adopt new working patterns and behaviors. The amount of change being implemented can also elicit fatigue in staff. Lack of communication and lack of involvement of employees in the change initiative can also produce negative feelings that can lead to fatigue. The beginning and ending of change initiatives should allow employees to have a time to become reflexive practitioners, so they can make meaning of the changes and apply the learning to their work experiences. Reflexive practitioners are able to create theory from their practice (Ferguson, 2011).

The extensive literature review on professional development schools (PDS) illustrates that there is an absence of documentation that outlines the details of reflexive practitioners within a professional development school working through the changes needed to meet state and national mandates. The primary literature on professional development schools outline the collaboration processes between the K-12 staff and university faculty, document the benefits to field experience and student teachers, and record the formation of PDSs.

Ohio educators are required to take ownership of their professional growth individually, and as members of a learning community according to Ohio Educator Standard seven (ODE, 2007). A documented study of teachers taking on leadership roles within a professional development school could enhance the opportunity for teachers to

meet the Ohio Standards for Professional Development. Learning Community, Accountability and Quality Assurance, Collaboration, Equity and Diversity, and Structures and Resources and Roles are all standards that PDSs promote (NCATE, 2001). The documentation of teacher leaders learning and leading within a professional development school can enhance the literature on the work that needs to be done to improve schools. The themes that guided this study are professional development schools, professional learning communities teacher leadership, and change.

Problem Statement

Teachers are suffering from initiative fatigue; therefore, a professional development school is unable to be implemented at high levels and with fidelity.

Purpose Statement

This dissertation reveals whether teacher leaders within a professional development school will take on leadership responsibilities while they are in the midst of learning new changes set by the district through the documentation of the formation and implementation of a PLC within a professional development school. This study also enhances the literature on teacher leadership and professional learning communities within a professional development school. There is limited research on the documentation of utilizing teachers as leaders within professional development schools. The primary research in the field of teacher leadership includes descriptions of teacher leaders, principals' qualities to promote teacher leadership, and perceived impacts of teacher leadership. Brucker (2013) noted in her study about PLC's that there is limited research in guiding and establishing PLCs in a manner that allows for duplication of model (PLC's). Underwood (2007) recommended the need for qualitative studies that document

the transformation process of a PLC from the planning stages through the institutionalization phase. Murphy (2005) shared that "research that tracks leadership in change initiatives and across areas of school operations may prove to be especially productive" (p. 165). This study can add value to the literature on PLCs, PDSs and TL by giving researchers an opportunity to duplicate and enhance the work of PLCs within the work of teacher leadership and professional development schools.

Research Questions

1. How do national, statewide, and district initiatives impact teachers' behaviors within a PDS?

2. What are teachers' perceptions of what their role is within a professional development school?

3. What is required for teachers to do an effective job-mentoring novice teachers as well as guiding seasoned teachers in professional development to increase student learning?

4. How can a professional learning community (PLC) within a professional development school (PDS) create an environment that keeps the students at the cornerstone of everything teachers do?

Overview of Methodology

This ethnographic case study was implemented to enhance the understanding of the dynamics that take place when teacher leaders are expected to be the frontrunners of change although they are novices within the process of the changes that were implemented. This study documented the multiple changes that took place within a PDS, and the willingness or reluctance of teachers to participate in an interactive book study.

The teachers were required to lead a professional development session that covered a section of the book with their peers, and implement practices outlined in the readings during collaborative planning times and Teacher Based Teams (TBTs). Throughout the process, I documented field notes and observations that focused on the themes that would emerge for a study of all of the data.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

There were multiple limitations that evolved throughout this study. I closely monitored the limitations to ensure that the study remained **v**alid**.** My relationship with the setting is a limitation to this study. I taught fourth grade in the professional development school organization. I also served on the University relations committee within the organization. I had ongoing contact with both the elementary school staff and university staff. The participants participated in a book study and gave solicited responses to a Teacher Leadership Questionnaire, so that the researcher could gain insight into the experiences of the study participants. The relationship that I had with staff members could impact the way that the staff responded on the questionnaire, and it could impact the teachers' conversations during the book study. To avoid insincere responses I made every attempt to ensure anonymity and provided staff with a nonthreatening atmosphere to elicit authentic responses.

The school district that the PDS was part of was undergoing multiple restructuring projects that interfered with the study. The district had a turnover rate of three superintendents within one year's time, and teachers were pulled in multiple directions. The external forces from the district impacted the school as it pursued the PLC within a PDS initiative.

Definitions of Key Terms

The field of education is very broad and educational terminology is used loosely, and changes in meaning between states. I have listed and defined words that are interchangeable across the nation to eliminate discrepancies in the terminology.

1. **Candidates.** Individuals admitted to, or enrolled in programs for the initial or advanced preparation of teachers and other professional educators (NCATE, 2004). Teaching candidates are also known as student teachers or pre-service teachers.

2. **Clinical fieldwork.** Within the PDS model, clinical fieldwork is the process that individuals seeking a degree in teacher education work through to earn teaching credentials (Holmes Group, 2007; NCATE, 2001; Teitel, 2003). Field experience teachers are college students who are mentored by a cooperative teacher and supervising teacher to increase their instructional and pedagogical skills within a classroom setting.

3. **Cooperating teacher.** This refers to the supervising teacher who mentors a student teacher/ field experience teacher while they complete the required field experience work to graduate with a teaching degree (Holmes Group, 2007; NCATE, 2004; Teitel, 2003).

4. **High Quality Professional Development (HQPD).** This term refers to the ongoing process of professional development that is measured in terms change in

knowledge that ultimately affects instruction and student achievement. HQPD is implemented to provide teachers with strategies that will assist in developing the students that they teach (ODE, 2015).

5. **Mentor teachers.** Mentors are experienced teachers who have the job of ensuring that prospective teachers have a command of the subjects that they teach to enhance student learning. Mentor teachers also assist in developing in their mentees strong illustrations of good teaching and strong commitments to entering beliefs about teaching and learning (Nemser, 2012).

6. **National Staff Development Council.** The National Staff Development Council (NSDC), advocates for the success of all students through high-quality professional development. Professional development ranges from training programs with long-term support to methods such as action research and coaching. NSDC believes that "staff development is fundamentally people improvement" (NSDC, 2001) and has developed standards to guide professional development programs and practices.

7. **Professional development schools.** A P-12 school, or schools in partnership with a professional education unit with a mission to prepare new teachers, and other educators , support professional development, support inquiry directed at the improvement of professional practice, and improve student learning (NCATE, 2004).

8. **Professional learning community.** A professional learning community is the practice of teachers and administrators continuously seeking and sharing learning,

and acting on their learning. The goal of their actions is to enhance their effectiveness as professionals for the benefit of the students (Hord, 2010).

9. **Reflection.** Reflection is an active thought process aimed at examining beliefs, goals or practices to gain new or deeper understanding that leads to improved actions (Yorke-Barr et al. 2006).

10. **Reflective practice.** Reflective practice is about tapping into things deeply human, the desire to learn, grow, to be in community with others to contribute, to serve, and to make sense of our time on earth (Yorke-Barr et al. 2006).

11. **State report card.** The state report card in Ohio is a systematic outline of the academic performance, attendance records, and graduation rates of the schools and districts in Ohio (Ohio Department of Education, 2013).

12. **Teacher leaders.** Teacher leaders lead within and beyond the classroom; identify with and identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders; influence others toward improved educational practice; and accept responsibility for achieving the outcomes of their leadership (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009).

13. **University supervisor.** A person who is responsible for providing the guidance, support, and evaluation of the teacher candidate. This individual works in collaboration with the supervising teacher (Holmes Group, 2007; NCATE, 2001).

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

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction and an overview of the problem that the researcher addresses. Chapter II is a review of literature that covers professional development schools, professional learning

communities and change. The third chapter will provide the methodology and study

settings. Chapter IV is a reporting of the events that happened throughout the study.

Chapter V outlines the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations for future

studies.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

This study focuses on the willingness or reluctance of educators to enhance their expertise through job embedded growth and learning at a professional development school (PDS) in an era bombarded with constant mandates and change efforts. The researcher was drawn to this study because of an interest in teacher leadership, and the way that national, state, and district organizations require teachers to take ownership of their own growth and development while impacting their students' yearly academic performance.

Many mandates and changes have impelled teachers to work at higher levels alongside their peers, and at faster paces under a more critical eye utilizing real time data to bring about results to increase student achievement. Real time data refers to the quick turnaround time of assessment data such as formative and summative assessments that can be in the form of benchmark and common assessments. The analysis of the data can have the potential to play a key role in school, team, or grade-level improvement.

Teachers are told that they are the single most important factor in raising student achievement in classrooms and in schools (Hanushek, 2009; Haycock, 1998). According to Stronge (2010), a clear characteristic of effective teaching is student learning. Learning organizations are judged by results (Senge, 2006). Educators are rapidly becoming cognizant of the immediate need to show growth and development in their own practice to enhance their students' understanding of the content that they teach.

Some researchers and policy makers believe that if the students within our nation would perform at higher levels academically, increased human capital and international standing would be evident for American students (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hanushek, 2009). National and state policy makers have adopted programs that require school educators to examine and possibly change their practices to ensure that the students within their organizations perform academically at high levels. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2011) professional capital requires leadership to focus their actions on the needs of educators, the contributions of educators, and the career stages of educators. Educational leaders should provide opportunities for their staff members to participate in advanced professional development opportunities based on their individual needs and the needs of the organization that are tied to K-12 school improvement plans to meet the demands of national and state policy makers.

The literature review that impacts this study includes eight themes that researchers deem as important to teaching and learning in changing times in education.

- Policies Impacting Teaching
- Professional Development Schools
- Teacher Learning in Professional Development Schools
- Teachers as Mentors
- Teacher Leadership
- Professional Learning Communities
- Professional Development
- Change Process

The literature demonstrates that in the forever-changing landscape within the field of education, it is best for teachers to get comfortable with change, and to situate their normalcy in change (McKenzie, 1993). Changes occur due to the daily research that is improving the way that teachers instruct and students learn to elevate the learning of all individuals who are part of the educational system.

Policies Impacting Teaching

National educational policies greatly influence state, district, and school educational policies. Power and politics in K-12 education influences the constant change in school organizations to meet the organization's needs. The laws that our national government pass have an impact on the way that leaders in schools design their organizations to increase student achievement. Leaders who are deemed successful according to national and state guiding principles promote good organizational designs, and adjust the structure of the organization in order to meet goals.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act of 2001 was implemented to increase equitable practices in teaching and learning and eliminate disparities in student achievement within the educational system in the United States of America. One of the primary focuses of NCLB is to close achievement gaps that exist between students in schools. The conversation around NCLB is centered on the most effective ways to narrow the differences in achievement between the multiple sub-groups of individuals within the United States. School educators are held accountable for increasing achievement for all students since the NCLB bill was implemented (Silva & Gimbert & Nolan, 2004).

Policy makers who set goals in the academia sect seek to advance the academic standing of all students. Increasing the quality of teachers to expand learning opportunities for students is a strategy that national and state policy makers considers important (NCLB, 2001; ODE, 2007). Professional development is offered to teachers so that they can enhance and reform their instructional and pedagogical practices. The expansion of policies for educators in schools is required to increase the learning levels of all students. Expansions should include guidelines and procedures that allow teachers to participate in study groups, collaboration and mentorships to promote growth and learning of all individuals within schools.

National, state, and local initiatives have set the standard of growth and learning for teachers. Race to the Top, House Bill 1, and the Ohio Improvement Process are national and state initiatives that are prescribed plans for educators to follow in field of education. Race to the Top is an initiative that President Obama calls the blueprint for the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (US Department of Education, 2010). This lofty initiative seeks to enhance the quality of teachers and principals in schools, increase student achievement in low performing schools, and help parents develop a greater understanding about evaluating and improving their children's schools (US Department of Education, 2010). The Ohio Educational Reform Bill – House bill 1 outlines details about teacher effectiveness, evaluations, and student growth that school districts in Ohio must follow to ensure that students are college and career ready once they graduate high school (2009).

Teachers in Ohio have been challenged by the plethora of new initiatives from the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP). OIP is a statewide system of support that has aligned

multiple structures and resources within school districts to national and state legislation that promote college and career readiness. The OIP system of support has developed an alignment of tools to increase district wide practices and student achievement in schools (ODE, 2012). OIP projects include a Building Leadership Team (BLT), Teacher Based Teams (TBT's), Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), and Response to Intervention (RTI). All of these newer initiatives have been introduced within the last few years to the individuals within the state of Ohio.

The Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) is a support system for school districts that aligns resources and initiatives to create a unified system that increases teaching practices and enhances student achievement. The various educational policies that have been set for educators require building leadership in schools to provide systems of support to teachers. The systems of supports offered by OIP teams provide data that outline the need for change in schools. OIP support teams work closely with districts to build in systems of support throughout the workday. Teacher-based teams (TBTs) for K-12 educators is a process that OIP supports. This initiative is built into the daily work schedule, and eliminates the stress of teachers taking time after the workday to analyze and share data with their peers. The OIP processes ensure that teachers are in alignment with national, state, district, and school expectations to increase learning for students.

The OIP has clearly outlined the responsibilities of each team and program in school districts to ensure that they are aligned in a seamless manner to increase student achievement and teacher practices. The individuals on the Building Leadership Team (BLT) are responsible for utilizing research based models to set school goals, analyze student academic data, monitor data and provide feedback to staff members, and provide

ongoing learning opportunities for staff members to increase their professional skills related to teaching and learning. The primary focus of the BLT is the ongoing performance of students, and the quality of instruction for adults, (McNulty & Besser, 2010). The BLT's primary role is to improve instructional practices by following the Ohio five step process that begins with collecting and charting data, analyzing of data, establishing shared expectations for implementing shared changes, implementing changes across all classrooms consistently, and collecting, charting, and analyzing post data. The teacher-based teams (TBTs) consist of every teacher within the building. TBTs are responsible for analyzing student data, developing intervention groups, and planning instruction to meet the needs of all students. Intervention groups are instructional processes that meet the needs of students who are below the expected levels accomplishments. Teachers form instructional groups based on benchmarks or skills that students have not grasped to build on their level of mastery.

The Positive Behavior and Supports (PBIS) is an intervention that allows a team to create site-based systems to remove behaviors that impede student learning in school. One major aspect of PBIS is explicitly teaching students positive social behaviors to increase learning opportunities within school. The PBIS focus is on changing the culture of schools to embrace proactive structures of appropriate behavioral support to create positive school environments. Response to Intervention (RTI) is a framework that provides a three tiered support system for academics, and ensures that all students are provided with individualized high quality instruction to meet their academic needs (ODE, 2008). The OIP has provided a means to build capacity at all levels within a school district and in schools, and raise expectation and growth levels for staff and students. OIP

programs have intricately woven the Ohio Educator Standards and the Ohio Professional

Development Standards into the programs that they deliver to increase teachers' capacity

to grow pedagogically and instructionally. These standards adopted by the Ohio

Department of Education are modeled after national standards and requirements for the

enhancement of educators craft knowledge (Barth, 2001).

Professional Development Schools

A Professional Development School (PDS) is an innovative partnership between a

K-12 school system and a university that promotes educational change and new models

for pre-service teacher and in-service teacher development to increase student

achievement. According to the National Council of Teacher Education (NCATE,

accessed 2015) over 1,000 P-12 schools are involved in PDS partnerships. The state of

Maryland has adopted a policy that demands that all pre-service teachers within the state

work through PDS models to obtain their teaching degree and teaching certificate. Other

states recommend that pre-service teachers participate in a PDS model throughout their

field experience and pre-service teaching to advance their pedagogical and instructional

practices (Schwartz, 2000).

Laboratory schools were the earliest forms of PDSs (Hausfather, 2000).

Laboratory schools were considered to demonstrate the unification of theory and practice,

and were modeled after teaching hospitals in the field of medicine. Teaching hospitals

established collaborative partnerships between the medical school professors, practicing

physicians, attending physicians and medical students. The teaching hospital promotes

an environment that supports both the training of novice physicians and expert doctors.

The medical school and hospital serve as resources for each other, and patients drive the

decision-making (Consenza, 2010). Professional development schools, laboratory schools, and teaching hospitals were part of trailblazing partnerships that enhanced the growth and development of all parties involved within the programs.

Theory and practice in teacher training programs can appear worlds apart from each other (Goodlad, 1991). The teaching staff within K-12 schools and university faculty need to collaborate to ensure that they are on one accord to produce curriculum that enhances the learning of everyone involved. Bridging the curriculum gap between K -12 schools and college universities has been a topic of discussion nationally within the education camp. Learning in PDSs is a reciprocal process between field experience teachers, students, teachers, and faculty members. Tietel (2003) shared that within PDSs pre-service teachers and veteran teachers are developed professionally to improve student learning. Many times pre-service teachers enter classrooms with unrealistic expectations about the way that students learn and classroom management practices. University faculty members are sometimes unfamiliar with the practices needed for K-12 student growth because they are far removed from the classroom. K-12 teachers sometimes lack the theoretical foundations and rely on outdated instructional strategies and pedagogical practices. A PDS serves as a linchpin that allow practicing teachers to inform field experience teachers about best practice, and university students and faculty members can have the opportunity to demonstrate new and innovative research based practices in the field of teaching. Goodlad (1991) proposed that PDSs have the capacity to creatively bridge the gap and advance the teaching profession.

Educators in PDSs have the opportunity to lead discussions, research, and hold forums based on action research that could advance the teaching and learning profession.

Conversations around teaching practices lead to growth and learning of both teachers and students (Danielson, 2009). Capacity building is a major component of maintaining school improvement initiatives (Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 2005).

Wetig (2002) completed a study of teacher leaders within a professional development school. The leaders within the school reported that teaching within the school enabled them to have a broader understanding of the change process. The professional development school also afforded teachers with the opportunity to have knowledge and understanding needed to identify good teaching when they observed it. The participants noted that they had a greater knowledge regarding their content and pedagogy as a result in teaching in a professional development school.

Goodlad (1991) shared proposals that outlined innovative partnerships between K-12 schools and universities. He supported professional development schools as appropriate environments to enhance the learning of teacher candidates and teachers in relation to pedagogy to improve practice, inform the knowledge base, and help professionalize teaching (Goodlad, 1991). He argued that teacher education programs were not aligned appropriately to merge theory and practice or to promote understanding of the teaching profession. There can never be a profession of teaching until the public has a reason to trust teachers (p. 6). Goodlad's push for higher standards and more rigorous standards for entry into the teaching profession helped to advance the concept of professional development schools.

The Holmes Group was an essential organization that brought to fruition the idea of professional development schools. The Holmes Group missions to change the way teachers are educated, help construct a true profession of teaching, cooperate with school

people in inquiry that transforms the schools, and restructure colleges of education to achieve these ends. The Holmes Group (1990) outlined six guiding principles for creating PDSs. The principals include:

- Teaching for understanding

- Organizing schools and classrooms into learning communities

- Setting ambitious goals for everyone's children

- Establishing environments that support learning for all adults and children within the organization

- Making reflection and inquiry the central focus of schools

- Inventing a new organization (p.6)

The Holmes Partnership and Goodlad's work in the Center for Educational Renewal presented the idea of the professional development school initiative to the field of education in order to address the concerns that A Nation at Risk (1983) raised about America's schools. The Nation at Risk Report outlined a detailed account about the direction that America's schools were headed that led educators to believe that America's students were academically falling behind their international peers, veteran teachers in the field of education were not adequately prepared and lacked content knowledge, and new teachers were prepared in an inconsistent manner. The joint systems within a PDS consist of the field experience teachers, student teachers, teaching staff at the P-12 school site, and university faculty. The aim of the program is reflective inquiry to improve practice and enhanced student learning within the K-12 setting (NCATE, 2001).

The aim of a professional development school program is reflective inquiry to improve practice and enhanced student learning within the K-12 setting (NCATE, 2001).

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) was created in 1954 to advance the teaching field. NCATE aims to create teacher preparation programs that are high in quality. NCATE outlines five standards for PDSs. NCATE outlines five standards for PDSs. Those standards include:

- Learning Community

- Accountability and Quality Assurance

- Collaboration

- Equity and Diversity

- Structures, Resources, and Roles

The National Association For Professional Development School's (NAPDS) primary mission is to promote continuous development and sustainment of the P- 12 and higher education partnership. NAPDS developed nine essentials of a PDS. The nine required essentials of a PDS according to the National Association For Professional Development Schools (NAPDS, 2008) is listed below:

- A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community;

- A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community;

- Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need;

- A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants;

- Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants;

- An articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved;

- A structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration;

- Work by college/university faculty and P–12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings; and

- Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures

Table 2.1

Alignment of Organizations Supporting PLCs

Organization	Description of Standard
NCATE	Learning Community: supporting professional and student learning Accountability and Quality Assurance: upholding professional standards for teaching and learning Collaboration: development and implementation of university and school community which shares the responsibility across institutional boundaries
NAPD	A school-university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community. A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants. Ongoing reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need. Engagement in a public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants.

	A structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection and collaboration
Holmes Group	Organizing Schools and Classrooms Into Learning Communities

Teaching for Understanding

Establishing environments that supports learning for all adults and children within the organization

Making reflection and inquiry the central focus of schools |

Table 2.2

Alignment of Organizations Supporting Inclusion

Organization	Description of Standard
NCATE	Equity and Diversity: addresses the responsibility of PDSs partnerships to meet the needs of diverse learners
NAPD	A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and by potential extension, the broader community
Holmes Group	Setting Ambitious Goals for Everyone's Children

Table 3: Alignment of Organizations Supporting Structural Systems

Organization	Description
NCATE	Structures, Resources and Roles: addresses the infrastructure that a PDS uses and or creates to support its work.

A structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection and collaboration |
| NAPD | An articulation of agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved

Work by college/university faculty and P-12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings

Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition |

	structures
Holmes Group	Inventing a New Organization

The concepts of professional development schools have been outlined by professional organizations that played a pivotal role in pushing to advance the teaching profession through PDSs. NCATE, NAPD, and The Holmes Group are three organizations that advocate for PDSs and have outlined the components that make PDSs work. The Holmes Group outlined six principals for creating PDSs. The NAPD released nine essentials of a PDS. NCATE developed five standards for PDSs. The organizations that advocate for PDSs have three common themes that they promote, PLCs, inclusion, and structural systems.

Teacher Learning in PDSs

Professional development schools (PDSs) serve as a forum for increased teacher learning to increase student achievement. A PDS is a school that embraces the concept of professional learning communities (PLCs). PLCs have a collaborative culture with a focus on learning (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2005). PLCs are an important component of a PDS. Elevated levels of teacher learning in a PDS are extended to all participants who have the opportunity to observe and teach children within the organization. Lambert (2003) concludes, " Teachers become fully alive when their schools and districts provide opportunities for skillful participation, inquiry, dialogue and reflection. They become more fully alive in the company of others" (p. 422). Harris and Muijs (2003) proclaim that teacher leaders need to be continuously involved in leading groups, collaborating, and mentoring. Additionally according to Darling-Hammond (1994) professional development schools provide a platform for teachers to serve as collaborative decision

makers, peer coaches, mentors, teacher-educators, curriculum and assessment developers, researchers, university adjuncts, and problem solvers. Through these positions and professional lenses teachers have the opportunity to change practices to advance student learning. Members of a PDS should be be engaged in elevated levels of learning.

Teachers as Mentors in PDSs

Many districts have implemented mentorship programs within schools to attempt to address the issues related to teacher quality. Teacher mentorship programs can attempt to serve as leverages to close the gap in teaching practices between those who are considered highly effective and move students towards academic success and those who are considered novice or ineffective according to state and national instructional rubrics. Gordon, Kaine, and Stager's study (2006) showed that socioeconomically disadvantaged and minority students who have quality instruction for four consecutive years can compete academically with their white affluent peers. According to Moir, (2009), " If a public school is serious about achieving equity and ensuring that all students have access to an excellent education, it must confront the teacher quality gap" (p. 15). Quality mentoring programs can have a positive impact on the teacher attrition ratewhich can impact student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Haycock, 1998; Moir, 2009).

The role of mentoring should be concentrated on the growth and development of the mentee and mentor to impact student achievement positively. Therefore, formal mentor teacher training should be set up strategically, so the mentor can support new teachers or student teachers in developing their professional practice. Moir, Barlin, Gless & Miles (2009) noted that if mentors are to develop into highly skilled teacher educators who can serve as vanguard change agents, then their professional development needs to

be chunked, carefully sequenced, and delivered over time. Like their new teachers, mentors need just-in-time learning that systematically develops their skills (p. 52-53). Mentorship programs should be designed in a manner that provides teachers working towards becoming mentors with the opportunity to work through mentorship professional development in a manner that is "chunked, carefully sequenced and delivered over time" (Moir, Barlin, Gless, & Miles, 2009). According to Bullough (2005) planned strategies for mentors should be in place to help to develop the identities of mentors. Mentoring calls for a thought provoking approach to guide the learning of adults to meet the many needs of the mentee and the mentee's students. Drago-Severson (2008) outlined four practices that promote the growth and learning of adults including teaming, leadership roles, collegial inquiry, and mentoring.

The role of mentoring within schools can take on many forms. Nemser (2012) asserted that mentors and experienced teachers have the job of helping future teachers develop strong illustrations of good teaching and strong commitments to their entering beliefs about teaching and learning. Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) defined mentoring as a shared experience between practicing teachers and administrators. Lianes (1998) proposed that mentoring between pre-service and in-service teachers is also a shared experience. Mentorships within a PDS can range from mentor teachers working with field experience or pre-service teacher, practicing teachers mentoring novice teachers, practicing teachers mentoring each other, and principals who are considered academic leaders mentoring teachers. The New Teacher Center (NTC) outlined principles relating to high quality mentoring (Moir, Barlin, Gless, & Miles, 2009). Those principles include:

- Recruit, Select, Train, and Support Highly Skilled Mentors

- Sanction and Reinforce Time for Meaningful Mentoring Interactions

- Focus Interactions on Classroom and Student Data

- Engage Stakeholders and Align Mentoring with Instructional Initiatives

- Collect, Analyze, and Communicate Program Data

- Support Schools to Develop an Environment Where New Teachers Thrive

A PDS serves as a model of teaching and learning based on the medical model of development. Teachers within a PDS model are recruited based on their ability to teach their students, and yield high levels of learning from their students. Supervising or mentor teachers within a PDS are responsible for the development of both field experience teachers and their peers. Mentor teachers professionally develop pre-service teachers, and often engage in professional growth during specified times through the mentorship. Nemser (2001) declared that teacher candidates should work in a co-teaching setting with supervising teachers in order to raise their pedagogical and instructional skills. Pre-service teachers in PDSs often times have longer periods of time working in a co-teaching setting with a master teacher. The co-teaching setting allows the future teacher time to accumulate a greater repertoire of instructional strategies to draw from once they are in their own classrooms (Nemser, 2001). Shulman (1987) outlined key elements that drive effective teacher training: content area understanding; the texts, materials, and settings in the professional educational sphere; research on education, social organizational dynamics, pedagogy, learning and development; and, the experiential knowledge gained from practice. Experienced supervising teachers can provide in-service teachers with the skill sets necessary to be successful once they become certified and practicing teachers.

There are some impediments to the teacher development process in mentoring. If a mentor does not engage in effective practices, or provide a good model of instruction for mentees this could be detrimental to the growth and development of the mentee (Roehrig et al., 2008). Mentors who are not provided with ongoing support and development around the roles and responsibilities of the job may not yield positive results with mentees and students. Goodlad (1990) outlined that expanding teacher's leadership authority without proper training is irresponsible. The instructional mentorship process can be jeopardized when exchanges are informal, unfocused, and unrelated to instruction and student learning (Moir, Barlin, Gless, & Miles, 2009). Some mentor experiences that may harm the progression of development in teaching are those that primarily focus on emotional support and the procedural processes within schools. Although mentors should assist with emotional support and procedural processes, the role that yields the most positive growth in teachers and students is instructional mentorship (Moir, Barlin, Gless, & Miles, 2009).

According to Hobson et. al (2009) there is a lack of research on the effects of mentoring on mentors. Mentors' workloads are heavy because of the extra responsibilities on top of their regular classroom duties. Some mentees may be unwilling to be mentored (Roehrig, Bohn, Turner, & Pressley, 2008), which can bear heavily on the mentoring process. Bullough (2005) wrote about the need for mentors to have their identities developed through mentor group sessions due to feelings of isolation. The need for mentors is great, and they need time with mentors to assist them with their transition into their roles as mentors and teacher leaders.

Consenza (2010) conducted a grounded theory qualitative research study that outlined the impact of professional development schools on teacher leadership. The researcher interviewed 22 veteran teachers from two professional development schools to determine the effects of professional development on teacher leadership. Ninety-five percent of the participants viewed the PDS model as having a positive impact on teacher leadership opportunities. The leadership opportunities that were reported by teachers included being a mentor teacher, guest lecturer, collaboration between the university employees, and colleagues and Teacher Performance Assessor. The teachers reported that the PDS offered leadership opportunities that the traditional schools within the district did not provide. Conseza's study highlighted teachers' perceptions of PDS's collegial and professional learning environment's impact on teacher leadership.

Teacher Leadership

There are different definitions for teacher leadership although they have similar connotations. The definition of teacher leadership in this study is, "Teacher leaders lead within and beyond the classroom; identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners; influence others toward improved educational practice; and accept the responsibility of achieving the outcomes of their leadership (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Teacher leadership is also defined as "the ability to encourage colleagues to change, and do things they wouldn't ordinarily consider without the influence of the leader" Wasley (1991, p. 64). York-Barr and Duke's definition of teacher leadership is that Teacher leadership that positively affects school change. According to Greenlee (2007), teacher leadership is the unfounded leadership capital in teachers. Teacher leaders take on roles of leadership to impact the learning of their peers and students.

Researchers have outlined the evolution of teacher leadership. According to Silva, Gimbert and Nolan (2000) Teacher leadership has evolved in three phases over the past fifty years. The first phase focused on managerial teacher leadership roles and included department chairs, head teachers, master teachers, and union representatives. They add to the research noting that phase two instructional leadership roles included curriculum developers, team leaders, and staff developers. Phase three roles of teacher leadership have been expanded to include collaboration and informal leadership roles. Teachers observing each other's practice, giving each other feedback, analyzing data, and designing lesson plans in teams to assist each other in improving their practice and increasing learning levels of students are roles included in Phase three. Katzenmeyer and Moller outline teacher leadership roles from the eighties through the 2,000's. In the 80's they noted that teacher leadership was composed of department chairpersons and team leaders. The focus was on subject matter and grade level expertise. Early to mid 90's the focus was on governance leadership, and the focus was on whole school reform and shared decision-making. During mid to late nineties the type of teacher leadership was collective teacher leadership, and the focus was on standards based reform and professional learning communities. In the 2000's teacher leadership was organized into school based instructional leadership, and the primary focus was accountability. Today's 21st century teaching and learning environment requires teachers to focus on increased learning for staff and students to positively impact each other's practice to advance the learning of every individual within the organization.

The requirements of the national and state initiatives to improve student learning has enhanced teacher leadership in becoming an essential reform method and practice for

increasing student achievement within schools (Barth, 2001; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Silva, Gimbert, & Nolan 2000; Wasley, 1991). Many researchers have outlined their theories in regard to the importance of teacher leadership in relation to organizational growth and student achievement (Barth, 1991; Danielson, 2006; Fullan, 2005; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009; Lambert, 2003; Wise & Darling Hammond, 1985; Yorke-Barr & Duke, 2004). In accordance with the research, school district leadership teams are advocating for site based building leadership teams within schools. These leadership teams often times are composed of the building principals, instructional coaches, and representatives from every grade level team and teaching team within the building. The purpose of a team of leaders is to gain a collective perspective about the best way to guide teachers in progressing students academically. Formal and informal teacher leaders serve on school based leadership teams to advance teacher learning and student achievement.

Teachers can take on formal leadership roles within school district settings to meet the academic needs of students. Teacher leadership can be fulltime or it can be in addition to classroom teaching (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Formal teacher leadership assignments can include many positions within the school district related to teaching and learning. According to Silva et al. (2000) teacher leader roles can include department heads, head teacher, master teacher, and union representatives. Danielson (2006) describes formal teacher leaders as curriculum specialists, coordinators for implementing new programs, or individuals who assist colleagues with implementing new approach or strategy often times are teachers on assignment. Reeves (2008) also noted some of the more formal roles as academic coaches, instructional mentors, and teachers who have

taken on the title of "director" in schools and central office buildings. Harris and Muijs (2005) noted that teacher leaders who serve as mentors, coaches, facilitator, team leader, and staff developer work in collaborative roles. Formal teacher leaders play a dynamic role in shaping the academic environment for all teachers within school organizations.

Kelley (2011) conducted a qualitative study on teachers' perceptions of the formal role of teacher leadership. He used interviews, York-Barr and Duke's meta-analysis of teacher leadership, and Katzenmeyer and Moller's Teacher Leader Self Assessment survey to engage teachers and in rating their beliefs about teacher leadership. The study found that teachers who hold formal teacher leadership roles have different beliefs about their description of the responsibilities compared to teacher populations. The teacher participants found formal teacher leaders as having the ability to influence all individuals within the organization including the building administrator. Teacher participants wanted teacher leaders within their organizations to assist teachers in improving school performance. The teachers had experienced disconnect due to the invisible aspect of teacher leaders. Teachers also felt that formal teacher leaders' jobs were rooted in administrative responsibilities. The researcher reported that the schools that had an environment of teacher leadership had a closer consensus about the understanding of teacher leader contributions. The schools with more disconnected beliefs concerning teacher leadership appeared to have greater disconnects in their cultures. Teachers and teacher leaders in the study found that collaboration was a critical factor in student achievement. The lead teachers spoke about collaboration with colleagues through planning, mentoring, professional development, instructional design, and engaging in professional learning communities (p. 148). Teacher leaders in the study discussed the

need for formal training to support teacher leaders in understanding the expectations of the role.

Informal teacher leaders retain their classroom responsibilities while guiding their peers successfully within the area of teaching and learning. Teachers who are considered informal leaders may take on some formal leadership roles in various ways such as team leaders, members on textbook adoption committees, union representatives, curriculum writers, mentor teachers, and cooperating teachers. Educators who are labeled informal teacher leaders may influence other staff members through casual conversations, sharing materials, facilitating professional development, or extending invitations to be observed in their classroom (Katzenmeyer & Moller 2009). Informal teachers leaders can be highly effective as long as their roles are not mixed with administrative roles that are not related to academics (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Teachers who serve in an informal leadership role are exceedingly proficient and respected by members within the organization that they teach in.

Teacher leaders have a great impact on the culture of the organization. Katzenmeyer and Moller stated, "Teacher leaders influence others toward improved practice" (p. 9). Lambert (2002) asserted, "Being responsible for the learning of colleagues is the center of the definition of teacher leadership" (p. 38). Danielson (2009) believes, "teacher leaders possess certain dispositions that influence their work and with both students and colleagues" (p. 36). Teacher leadership serves as a platform to enhance a professional atmosphere of collegiality among teachers and educators to advance students academically.

Teachers in an organizational environment that have higher rates of trust and efficacy have a greater intent to stay within the organization, and implement effective practices. According to Bryk and Schneider (2003) teacher leadership in the form of collective decision-making can serve as an instrument that can enable teachers to have an increased perception of collective efficacy and trust within the organization. Darling-Hammond (2007) defends the notion that teacher leaders bring about change, promote democratic schools, and transform schools into adult and student learning. According to Noonan and Walker (2008), "The importance and pervasiveness of trust (or its betrayal or absence)… (as) implicit in our every effort to establish communities of learners and generative settings for the expression of our shared educational ambitions" (p.1). Some obstacles to trust in schools according to Brewster and Railsback (2003) include frequent leadership turnover, personal layoffs, poor communication, top-down decision-making and failure to remove ineffective teachers and principals. Thriving school organizations are dependent upon the staff members who trust each other enough to be able to effectively analyze each other's strengths and weaknesses in relation to teaching. Analyzing the strengths and areas of weaknesses of staff will allow teacher leaders to build learning opportunities to transform the learning environment.

Sanocki's (2013) grounded study research outlined some processes that teachers experienced to become teacher leaders. He also studied the processes that it took for teacher leadership to be distributed. The researcher used interviews and emails as a basis for collecting data on eight teachers. Throughout his study he found two roadblocks to teacher leadership. Those barriers included administrators as gatekeeper and the role of seniority in a profession that values teachers as equals. Teacher leaders walk a fine line

navigating between individuals on all levels of the hierarchical margins in the field of education. Some principals have limited understanding around the teacher leader concept, and teacher leaders often walk a fine line with colleagues whose belief systems keep them in the confines of contractual business. Teachers who led in his study had to explain and model the benefits of teacher leadership before others followed. Sanocki defended the PLC as an effective model for distributing leadership. He found that PLCs could bridge the gap between administration and colleagues, and tear down hierarchical boundaries.

Impediments to Teacher Leadership

Although teacher leadership concepts are gaining momentum in many school districts, there are barriers to teacher leadership. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) outline challenges to teacher leadership that include organizational commitment to teacher leadership, teaching culture, professional learning and personal balance. The building leader has the capacity to create a teaching culture that obstructs or facilitates collaboration and collegiality. Many school cultures do not encourage teacher leaders because of the deep historical context in education that promotes teaching in isolation and top down structures of leadership. Lortie (1975) outlined some factors that contribute to the isolation of practices including teachers being afraid of the criticism that they may endure at the hands of their peers for a fear of being perceived as patting oneself on the back, lack of sharing due to others possibly stealing the idea or receiving credit for the idea and having a fear of being viewed as incompetent. Principals provide a platform for teachers to lead by creating schedules and professional learning spaces that allow

teachers to understand their role as teacher leader and the ways that they interact with colleagues to alleviate isolated practices.

Lack of leadership training is another barrier to some teachers leading (Kelley, 2011). Teachers may have a strong handle on instructing students, but they do not feel as they are adequately prepared to lead their peers. The lack of adult leadership training and development in undergraduate and graduate courses is evident and teachers often back down when asked to lead their peers. Distributing leadership roles and responsibilities without distributing the necessary knowledge and skills to influence real school improvement efforts can also impede the leadership of teachers (Greenlee, 2007). A teacher who is assigned a leadership role may be intimidated by the role itself if adequate training is not provided for that staff member. Teacher leaders are confronted with obstacles that can prevent the learning environment from operating at optimal levels (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009).

Benefits of Teacher Leadership

Everyone benefits from teacher leadership (Barth, 2001). Lead teachers who invest their time and efforts in teacher leader roles inherit benefits that impact their professional practice and personal satisfaction. Teachers who participate in the decision-making processes within schools exercise their power as professionals and become investors in schools (Barth). Reeves (2008) shared that the morale of individuals within the organization can be boosted (Frost & Harris, 2005) and teachers will support changes in policies even though they do not agree with that policy if the process of decision-making is fair. Motivation and retention rates are also associated with benefits to teacher leadership (Harris & Muijis, 2003). Students benefit from teachers who collaborate with

peers to increase their learning around their practice (Danielson, 2009). Society in general profits from the leadership of teachers, due to the end result of increased student achievement. High academically achieving students are able to compete with their national and international peers, and they increase human capital and economic standing of our nation. (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

A school organization with educators who embrace teacher leadership has a strong support system at its base. The building principal restructures (Manthei, 1992, p.15), and systematizes the daily work within the organization to meet the needs of lead teachers. The organization is structured so that teachers within the organization have an opportunity to engage in study groups, participate in action research (Ash & Persall, 2000), mentor in-service and new teachers, and participate in decision-making processes to promote change. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) shared that "Supporting teacher leadership means understanding the concept, awakening the understanding of teachers themselves to their leadership potential, and then providing the development of teacher leadership" (pp. 123-124). According to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) principals frame the context in which the teacher leadership process succeeds or fails. Supporting teacher leadership requires the principal to enhance the abilities of teachers through professional development to enhance their mindsets around the many capabilities of teachers leading.

Jones (2007) studied the principal's roles in developing teacher leadership capacity and the effects of teacher leadership on positive achievement. He used surveys, focus groups, and interviews to gather data in three high performing schools in central Florida. The findings showed that the principals within the schools studied provided a framework that allowed teachers to lead. The principals developed structures within the

workday to embrace an open door policy that allowed teachers to express their concerns about anything that would impact student achievement. Those concerns could be related to scheduling, curriculum, or anything that could improve the school. Building-wide committees provided a platform for teacher leadership to flourish in the three buildings. Members of committees gave input about the mandates given by district administration. Principals in the three schools had high expectations for achievement outcomes. Principals and teachers within the study worked together, and developed a culture that embraced trust, honesty, and professionalism. The themes that emerged from the study showed that the principals in this study were good listeners, supported staff, and empowered teachers to lead in their strengths to meet district and school goals. This study aligns with the current literature on teacher leadership because it describes the role of principals in creating teacher leadership, and the structures that principals create to enhance teacher leadership within their buildings.

According to Ohio's revised PD Standard 2 Leadership:

Leaders in an effective professional learning system may be found at the classroom, school, or system levels. What these leaders share is the belief that professional learning is key to increasing student results – and, as a result, learning is among their top priorities. Effective leaders maintain a persistent focus on educator professional learning. They develop expertise among others in the community and create the systems and structures needed to enable learning. For some school systems, meeting this standard may require structural shifts. For others, it may require clearer articulation of the role of professional learning on

student results or a more targeted focus on developing skills for shared leadership, collaboration, and effective participation in learning communities. (ODE, 2015)

Professional Learning Communities

A Professional Learning Community is a reform strategy that promotes a positive school culture, and fosters collaborative processes to ensure that participation in decision-making is broad (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 1998). PLC's require an intentional collaborative learning process to ensure that student learning is evident, (Hord, Roussin, Sommers, 2012). Hord (2009) also noted that PLCs are communities of continuous improvement. PLCs allow teachers to work in collegial forums increase the learning for all individuals within school organizations.

DuFour, DuFour and Eaker's six characteristics of a PLC (1998) include the following:

- **Shared Mission**, **Vision, Values and Goals:** The focus of PLCs should be on guiding principles that promote student learning. All decisions within the organization should stem from the vision and focus on student learning (Louis & Kruse, 1995; Timperley, 2005).

- **Collaborative Culture With a Focus on Learning:** Educators within schools work together and share common purpose. They work collaboratively to ensure that learning is productive. (Fullan, 1993; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Timperley, 2005)

- **Collective inquiry Into Best Practice:** The educators seek new methods, test ideas, reflect on their beliefs, and coordinate efforts to reach goals. **(**DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Temperley, 2005)

- **Action Orientation/ Experimentation:** Professional learning community members turn learning into action.

- **Commitment to Continuous Improvement:** Professional learning community members continuously analyze their work to check whether the work aligns to the organizational vision. They continually search for ways to advance and grow.

- **Results Orientation:** The professionals in the learning community measure their growth using observable and measurable results.

Hord, Roussin, and Sommers (2009) outline five components of professional learning communities as listed below:

- **Supportive and Shared Leadership.** Leadership in schools should be shared by all members and is enhanced through support. Professional growth is reciprocal between all members within a school.

- **Intentional Collective Learning.** All individuals in schools continue to grow and learn through inquiry to bring about new learning to increase the students' learning.

- **Shared Values and Vision.** The school vision should be crafted by all individuals within the school, and reflect the values of staff members. The vision and values of school reflect increased learning for all individuals within the organization.

- **Supportive Conditions.** The physical conditions of the school are designed to enhance professional learning communities. Increased learning of all staff and students will thrive if the right conditions exist.

- **Shared Personal Practice.** Teachers collaborate to enhance their learning around their practices to increase student achievement. Teaching in isolation is not endorsed in a shared personal space atmosphere.

Teachers within a PLC work together and utilize the strengths of all educators to meet student needs. Teacher leadership is distributed in a PLC, and all educators are engaged in leadership roles and opportunities. The administrator should distribute leadership roles to staff members in phases (McBeath, 2009). The phases are more tightly coupled in the beginning stage and become more loosely coupled in the last stage. PLC's enhance learning environments by promoting collaborative cultures where teachers participate as leaders in deliberate collective capacities to improve their teaching practice.

The distribution of leadership can have some barriers as outlined by (Hackman, 2009). One barrier is that the district central office may view the principal's role as the head of the school. In an environment where teachers are accustomed to following, changing the culture to a system of teacher leadership will disrupt the school culture without proper training for teachers. Leadership development for teachers must be part of the school's culture. The principal needs to let teachers lead although they are responsible for the building outcomes. Teacher unions can impede the process of teacher leadership. Teachers who lead well may be taken out of the classroom for extensive amounts of times, and even put into formal leadership positions. The principal should facilitate the process of teacher leadership that eliminates winners and losers.

Leana (2011) conducted a study that demonstrated the effects of professional capital and social capital on the ability of teachers to increase student achievement. The study focused on the students' academic growth in mathematics within a year's time with their teachers. Leana's two-year study involved following more than 1,000 fourth and fifth grade teachers from 130 New York elementary schools to determine achievement outcomes. She measured the human capital, social capital, and math achievement levels in the fall and spring to measure student growth and achievement levels. The human capital measurements included teacher experience in the classroom and educational attainment as student achievement predictors. The teachers also answered questions that measured their ability to instruct children in mathematical logic. The questions were developed by the University of Michigan to ensure validity. A survey was also completed in a New York sub-district of first through fifth grade teachers that asked them to self report their confidence in teaching components in math.

The study results confirmed that schools with social capital woven into the system showed positive achievement outcomes. The research also showed that schools that had high levels of social capital and human capital yielded even higher results. The results from the research revealed that teachers with low human capital who worked in schools with high social capital yielded higher results than teachers who worked in schools with low social capital. The study showed that when lower performing teachers work in collaborative settings with effective teachers, the lower performing teachers' practices were impacted positively.

Some researchers have stated that PLCs are spaces where staff members embrace collaborative cultures and reject isolation of practice (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 1998;

Hord, Roussin, & Sommers, 2012). Schools with teachers working in isolation protect the status quo (Dufour, 2011). Teaching in isolation stunts growth and creativity (Goodlad, 1991). Practice that lacks collective discussion and analysis lacks continuous improvement (DuFour, 2011). Lieberman and Miller (2011) shared that communities eliminate isolation. Eliminating the tradition of teaching in isolation is a critical practice in professional learning communities that thrive and embrace 21st century learning. Teaching in isolation can have a negative impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning.

The National Commission on Teaching, (2003) noted that:

Quality teaching requires strong professional learning communities. Collegial interchange, not isolation, must become the norm for teachers. Communities of learners can no longer be considered utopian; they must become the building blocks that establish a new foundation for America's Schools. (p. 17)

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001, p. 45) assert that "Isolation is the enemy of learning, and principals who support the learning of adults in their school organize teachers' schedules to provide opportunities for teachers to work, plan, and think together."

Teacher leaders in learning communities are expected to take on participative roles to solve the problems within the organization. They observe each other's classrooms during planning periods, and take notes regarding the work being done in the classroom. They also video record each other's lessons, meet and discuss best practices, and improvement strategies to enhanced student learning. They critique and learn from each other to foster change in PLC's, (Fullan, 2005). Shared leadership allows all

individuals to flourish in their areas of strength within the organization. Fullan (1993)

asserts that teacher leadership is for everyone. Leadership at all levels in PLC's requires

that the work of all staff is openly analyzed, so that they become more introspective

around their work and improve practices.

PLCs require individuals to be reflective in nature so that educators can

effectively analyze their work. Communities of learning are housed with groups of

people who dialogue about strengthening instruction and improving the school

(Danielson, 2009; Venezky & Winfield, 1979). Louis, Kruse and Bryke (1995) believe

that reflective dialogue is in action when staff engages in conversations about students,

teaching, and learning to identify related issues and problems. Teachers working in

collegial work environments are more effective (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009).

According to Griffin (as cited in Sergiovanni, 2005) reflective dialogue leads to inquiry

that forces individuals to focus on the important factors of teaching and learning and

binds a learning community. Reflection within a professional learning community

requires the individuals within the organization to reflect on themselves and the work

they do to problem solve and meet goals aligned to the mission and vision of the

organization.

Organizations should be centered on a lifelong commitment to learning to

compete in a global world (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Senge (1990, p. 4) stated "The

most successful corporation of the future will be a learning organization. Every enterprise

has to become a learning institution [and] a teaching institution." Organizations that build

in continuous learning in jobs will dominate the twenty- first century" (Drucker, 1992, p.

108). Darling-Hammond (1996) asserts that schools need to be restructured to become

genuine learning organizations for both students and teachers; organizations that respect learning, honor teaching, and teach for understanding" (p. 198). Highly effective schools have a high priority focus on learning and align the vision of school to increasing the learning levels of everyone.

Greer's (2012) case study revealed the collaboration process in an elementary school PLC. This study confirms the literature review by speaking to the collaboration processes that research on PLCs have outlined. Greer documented the collaborative behaviors, perceptions, influences, barriers, and strategies that teachers utilize in PLCs. Surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations were used as data points for the study. The researcher outlined the PLC during its fifth year of being implemented. The implementation of the PLC in the earlier stages began with administrators requiring teachers to participate to gain opportunities for learning. The new learning would build through applying the skills for PLC development by creating school vision and mission statements. The skills also included establishing team goals that were aligned with the school's vision, and both establishing and implementing norms with fidelity. Greer documented that there was clarity around the procedures and expectations for meetings. Agendas set the direction of the meetings, and were given to participants in advance to ensure that everyone was prepared for the meetings. The participants were required to give input and ideas. The meetings started with a reflection on the prior week's work, conversations about student achievement and what did and did not work.

The primary focus of the PLC was to increase student achievement through the enhancement of teachers' practices. Classroom data was shared on a server drive. The data collected included quick checks or unit assessments. The data was compared and

discussed so that teachers could adjust their instructional practices to increase student achievement.

The meeting procedures were defined clearly, so that the PLC's were implemented with fidelity. The school administrators stated that the beginning stages of the PLC were monitored in a tightly coupled manner. Once teams became acclimated to the procedures of the PLC, and the PLC developed teachers began to take leadership and set goals for weekly meetings. The meeting procedures included completing a summary of the meeting, and ensuring that the administrators and team members received a copy.

This study aligned with research that shows that supportive administrators are vital to successful collaboration (Lambert, 2002). Teacher participants reported that their administrators promoted successful collaboration and shared leadership. The teachers were given a clear picture of where they stood as a building, and they were given a picture of where they should be in the end. The principals spoke about the way that they addressed the different levels of team development within the school. They used discussion as a tool to evoke critical conversations about what they seen, and how actions should be changed to reach their vision. The discussions provided clear guidelines about roles, responsibilities, and resources available to assist teachers in reaching goals. Administrators who are supportive often have to overcome barriers to move their organizations that reflect a culture of collaboration. Barriers to successful collaboration in the PLC studied included the inability and refusal to follow team processes, the inability to recognize the importance of relationships, introducing new team members to processes and the inability to think flexibly and change practices as needed. Administrators who are supportive often have to overcome barriers to move their

organizations that reflect a culture of collaboration.

Wilson (2011) completed a quantitative study that investigated 65 high school teachers' experiences of being involved in a professional learning community. The aim of the study was to gather data about whether or not the leadership and social capital were cultivated by being engaged in a professional learning community. Wilson used Hord's (1997) School Professional Staff as Learning Community Questionnaire (SPSLCQ) to analyze teacher's perceptions of their leadership and social capital. The survey questions in the study focused on shared leadership, shared values and vision, collective learning and application of learning, shared practice, and supportive conditions (Hord, 2010). The researcher created an open-ended survey to elicit responses about the teachers' experiences within a PLC. A questionnaire was given to staff to measure the social capital gains within the PLC.

The research findings showed that 82% of the participants viewed themselves as teacher leaders based on the roles or titles they were given to lead their peers. Teachers did not attribute being part of a PLC as being a leader. Eighteen percent of the participants viewed themselves as leaders based on their role as classroom teachers. The data also revealed that teachers did not perceive the PLC as a benefit in making their jobs more efficient. The teachers felt that the PLC was mandated and that they were not given adequate time to understand their role as leaders within the PLC. The participants did not buy-in to the PLC because of time constraints, money distribution, unequal distribution of responsibilities, and added work for the PLC. The data showed that professional growth and development was not attributed to the PLCs implemented in the schools. The surveys

revealed that PLCs were not developed and many components within the PLC were missing.

The primary aim of schooling is to increase student learning. According to Odden and Archibald (2011) building capacity for staff to work in PLCs is a fundamental strategy for improving student learning. Analyzing the effectiveness of a PLC requires focusing on student achievement (Hord, 2010). Professional learning communities (PLCs) are systematic collaborative processes that increase and enhance teaching quality through collegial and intentional learning that results in students' successful learning (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 1998; Hord, Roussin, & Sommers, 2012).

Professional Development

Professional development (PD) can serve as a tool to enhance teachers' development and understanding of professional practice to increase student achievement (Reeves, 2010). According to Dewey (1904) theoretical learning for teachers should be grounded in both theory and practice. Shulman (2004) proclaims that there is tension between theory and practice, and that theory drives practice and practice drives theory. "Teaching is such a complex craft that one lifetime is not enough to master it, but by rigorously focusing on their classroom practice teachers can continue to improve throughout their career" (Wiliam, 2011 p. 12). Meeting the new demands of standards-based reform will mean schools must not only change their approach to student learning, but teacher learning (Gulamhussein, 2013).

Teachers who receive high quality professional development (HQPD) related to instruction should receive support and feedback. The feedback is in relation to the new learning, and can produce higher quality teaching and increased student achievement

(Reeves, 2010; Wagner et al., 2006). Reeves (2010) asserts that professional development is a powerful tool that help teachers develop a deep understanding, alter teaching practice, and promote student learning. Effective teaching is about deliberate practice rather than checklists and workshops (Reeves, 2010) and demands reinforcement for improvement. Teachers should be aware of their strengths and areas for growth. Effective educators who know the areas that they can grow in choose professional development that enhances their instructional and pedagogical practices.

Both the National Staff Development Council and the Standards for Ohio Educators support high quality professional development and promote job embedded professional development through their policies. Job embedded professional development provides a platform for growth and learning that is site based and specific to the needs of the organization. Professional development for teachers should be meaningful and enhance instruction for student learning. Professional development is useless if it does not transform from the session to practice and improve and student learning (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012).

Professional development opportunities that are pre-packaged for school sites and handed down from higher administration staff or central office teams are oversimplified and do not guarantee teacher growth and student learning. Formal professional development opportunities that are organized for entire school districts often times do not provide the differentiation that is needed for site based school needs. According to Costa (2008) true reflection requires individuals to move outside of the spectator sport mode, and engage in deep thinking to transform their minds. It is essential that teachers actively and cooperatively work together to construct shared knowledge. Educators need the

opportunity to reflect individually, in partnerships and in groups, around the work that they do to increase learning levels for themselves and their students. Therefore, the traditional method for developing teachers and educators cannot suffice without the needed individualized based guidance and training needed to meet students' needs.

Researchers believe that teacher effectiveness is the most important in school factor impacting student growth and achievement (Hanushek, 2009; Haycock, 1998; Marzano et. al., 2005). Value added research shows that there are variances between teachers' ability levels to influence high levels of learning in students within and across schools (Rivikin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Designing professional development that directly impacts the wants and needs of the staff will allow teachers to be empowered and motivated to continue to grow and learn. National and state laws have outlined the way that professional development should be implemented for educators. No Child Left Behind (2001) provides clarity about what constitutes high quality professional development, and supports scientifically proven training that is embedded in the daily work of educators. Classroom instruction, teacher performance, technology training, and beginning teacher training are approved areas for educators to become developed professionally according to state and national policies.

The Standards for Ohio Educators (2006) outlines educational criteria for teachers and principals to increase their knowledge around their profession. Many successful schools and organizations have clear and shared standards and goals that align with district and state mandates. Members within an organization that implement clear standards and goals for programs allow staff members to have a common language, clear expectations, and provide a model of the important factors in teaching and learning. The

organizational leader should instill in staff members the passion to embrace and organize

their practices around learning, (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 1998). Joseph Murphy et al.

(2005) believe that "Improvement centered leaders make certain that a robust system for

developing staff expertise is in place and that each staff member has the learning

experiences necessary to grow his or her instructional skills." (p. 188). A school leader

advances a culture of learning and instruction that increases growth and learning for staff

and students (ISLLC, 2008). According to Ohio Standards for Principals (2008),

"Principals support the implementation of high quality instruction that results in high

levels of achievement for all students." The Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES,

2008) will advance principals' commitment to become instructional leaders by ensuring

that they adhere to the Ohio Standards for Principals beginning in the school year 2013-

2014. State and national policies clearly summarize that principals have a profound effect

on the advancement of student and teacher learning.

Leaders are essential in guiding and directing the instructional practices of

teachers to raise students' academic levels (Elmore, 1995; Marzano et al., 2009;

Rosenhaltz, 1985). The effective building principal gathers information related to the

professional growth needs of teachers. School educational leaders also identify

opportunities for teachers to meet their needs professionally. Researcher Darling-

Hammond (2007) believes that schools should be restructured to accommodate teachers

as they grow and develop to meet students' needs academically. The school leader's

primary role is to create an environment that ensures that all individuals within the

organization develop and advance to meet school and district goals.

Donaldson (2007) asserted,

Great schools grow when educators understand that the power of their leadership lies in the strength of their relationships. Strong leadership in schools results from the participation of many people leading in their own way. Whether we call it distributed leadership, collaborative leadership, or shared leadership, the ideal arrangement encourages every adult in the school to be a leader. Administrators, formal teacher leaders, and informal teacher leaders all contribute to the leadership mix. They hold power to improve student learning in the hands they extend to one another. (p. 28)

The instructional leader within a school setting is to advance the notion of a growth mindset in the teachers and staff to promote a learning environment. Dweck (2006) studied the concept of a growth mindset through her interest in how students navigated hard problems to gain insight about how people coped with failure. Some of Dweck's studies are rooted in the way that people in society view ability and intelligence. The research of Dweck (2006) ties into professional development in schools because her work interweaves teachers having the opportunity to experiment, make mistakes, give and receive feedback, and reflect on their growth through the process and refine mistakes to make them better in the future.

A school's culture has great influence over the learning that takes place within school settings. Successful school leaders create a learning environment and climate that embrace the concept of distributive leadership. Distributive leadership can enhance both learning opportunities and the management of change initiatives that will lead to growth and development of teachers.

Highly effective schools operate successfully because teacher leaders within the school advocate for change initiatives that will enhance professional practice. Lead teachers monitor and recommend the types of development needed for changes (ODE, 2015). The leaders of change are responsible for ensuring that the change initiatives meet intended school and individual staff members' goals. Change should always involve professional development. The staff could decide whether formal or informal professional development opportunities would meet their needs.

Formal professional development opportunities are composed of more traditional forms of growth and improvement. Traditional professional development often involves professional growth and learning opportunities that are off site. Teachers can participate in workshops, seminars, and conferences to learn about specific topics related to their teaching practice (Reeves, 2010). In contrast, informal professional development learning opportunities often times increase general knowledge and skills around teaching and learning. External consultants are many times asked to come in and help with the development of staff members. Outside consultants are often able to complete observations of the staff members working in classrooms. Consultants who are not a part of the organization can give impartial feedback about the climate of the building.

Informal professional development opportunities can revolve around job embedded learning opportunities related to action research for educators. Teachers engaged in job embedded professional development have opportunities to plan for change in team settings (Sweeny, 2003). Inquiry groups (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011), study circles, and staff meetings can be forms of informal professional development. Planning informally involves analyzing student work and test scores

(Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011), and developing engaging and integrated lessons for students along with organizing for change. Informal professional development can be as casual as two or more teachers dialoging about teaching strategies and learning outcomes for students. Conversations that revolve around inquiry and reflection about instructional and pedagogical practices are highly effective forms of informal teacher development because they allow teachers to collaborate with each other, increase their knowledge, and change their practices to meet the needs of their students. According to Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) a valuable technique for creating lively learning environments to create life long learning for everyone is to use both quantifiable data and shared experience to navigate teaching and learning issues to judge how to problem solve.

A study by Hicky and Harris (2005) demonstrated that teachers need the opportunity to lead professional development sessions within their organizations to increase collaboration and community. Their study highlighted 62 model teacher leaders within a rural setting who were selected to present an effective teaching practice to their peers in a formal manner. The survey data collected showed a positive experience for the staff that participated in the development sessions. Collaboration was increased due to the teacher led professional development. The teachers who presented the sessions reported that they believed that the effectiveness of the staff was increased as a result of the informal professional development.

Orchard (2007) completed a mixed method research study that outlined the importance of learner centered professional development for reluctant teachers to participate in, and continue new practices to increase student achievement. She used a

survey and interviews as data collection methods. Learner centered professional development is differentiated based on the learners' preferences for understanding. The study showed that when learner centered professional development was implemented in schools with reluctant teachers student achievement was increased and the teacher's reluctance to change decreased. The study results showed that professional development should be presented in a manner that (a) show teachers why and how (b) empower them to safely explore (c) emphasize the professional contributions of those being developed, and (d) ensure that teachers are engaged in meaningful conversations. This study was designed to help educators understand the type of professional development needed to draw all teachers into learning that advances student achievement.

Informal and formal professional development presents a well-rounded approach to development when used together. Although national and state professional development agencies promote job embedded professional development through their policies, some schools and districts may not have the capacity to effectively lead change on their own. An outside consultant can have the knowledge that individuals within a district or school do not have, and provide professional development to fill in gaps around sound practice (Goe, Biggers, & Croft , 2012). Educational leaders within schools have to diagnose their organizations honestly, so that they can assist external consultants in providing the changes needed to meet the needs of all individuals within the organization.

Leaders should ensure that they engage their staff members in high quality professional development to meet the needs of their students (Guskey & Sparks, 1996). They should constantly evaluate the way that teachers implement new learning to

increase the knowledge of their students. Implementing a system of professional development that has both formal and informal components will help leadership establish a culture of continuous improvement to meet the demands of state and national legislature.

Today's professional development requires a new and innovative approach to reach the diverse students that sit in America's schools. American K-12 schools are lagging behind some of their international academic competitors when it comes to being developed professionally (Darling- Hammond, 2010). Teachers within the top performing countries such as Finland, Australia, Japan, and China spend more time being developed and honing their professional skills than they do working with their students; 15-20 hours with their students and 20 or more hours engaged in professional development (Darling-Hammomnd, 2010). Professional development that transforms behaviors should be organized so that teachers are involved in both the learning and teaching process (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011).

- It must engage teachers in concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation and reflection that illuminate the process of learning and development.

- It must be grounded in inquiry, reflection and experimentation that are participant-driven.

- It must be collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among educators and a focus on teachers' community of practice rather than on individual teachers.

- It must be connected to and derive from teachers' work with their students.

- It must be sustained, ongoing, intensive, and supported by modeling, coaching, and the collective solving of specific problems of practice.

- It must be connected to other aspects of school change. (p 2)

Samford (2013) completed a qualitative multi-case study to examine the ways that meaningful professional development took place when teachers took ownership of continuous study and practice of a specific collegial reflective inquiry agenda. The qualitative study involved the analysis of four participant's experiences of working through a Teacher Leadership Endorsement Program, and the sustainability of changed beliefs of leading as a teacher within a school. The Teacher Leader Endorsement program (TLEP) helped teacher participants to gain a deeper understanding of the change process, and helped them to facilitate change within their buildings. The teacher leaders were able to communicate the change process to their peers and know when to slow down change initiatives to meet the individuals where they were. The teacher leaders were able to help organize their buildings to facilitate the changes needed to move the organization towards success.

School districts that want to develop a grassroots professional development program to promote the growth of teachers leaders within an organization should identify teacher strengths; match teacher strengths to professional development needs; develop professional development programs with teacher strengths in mind; provide time for teachers to prepare for their presentations; provide opportunities for informal presentations to reduce anxiety and stress of presenting; and provide time throughout the year for collaborative opportunities (Hicky & Harris, 2005). Organizations that utilize the talents of the teachers in concert with highlighting teaching successes and improvements (Hattie, 2005) can impact student achievement in schools.

Professional development can hinder the growth and learning of educators. Timperley (2005) synthesized literature on professional development, and noted that there are limited articles that tie student learning effects to professional development. There is a call for differentiated professional development based on the needs of the teachers and students within an organization to meet organizational demands (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Evidence of growth in learning and effectiveness in teaching (Hattie, 2005) is missing from the conversations of teachers across many school settings, so knowledge the progression is limited. Odden (2011) wrote that many urban and rural school systems spend a multitude of money on professional development that has little impact on teaching practices and student learning.

An overlooked aspect of professional development is the sustainment of changes in practices resulting from professional development (Guskey, 2003). Ohio's Standards for Professional Development (2015) Standard 6: Implementation requires professional development planners to build knowledge of change research for those being developed and, applying research on change to plan and lead the implementation of professional learning. Educational leaders should plan professional development based on a specific need that arises from the organization's data. Staff members should have input in the areas from the data that needs to be refined and developed. Professional development should be looked at as a process rather than an event (Louks-Horsley et al., 1987), so that proper support can be enlisted to ensure that the changes are implemented with fidelity and longevity.

Change Process

Educators who have been in the field of teaching over time have been exposed to

multiple change initiatives and innovations that have come and gone. Change in schools can be mandated from within and/or outside the educational organization. Van de Ven and Poole (1995) contend that change is the observation of difference over time of one or more dimensions of an entity. Building principals have the ability to place teachers in leadership positions to enhance the chances that changes related to the organizational aims are made with fidelity throughout the building. The ranges of change can vary from tweaks in scheduling, advances in technology, new programs, legislation that alters instruction, assessment and evaluation practices, and changes in society that may affect the organization. Fullan, (2002) developed six guidelines for understanding the process of change:

- The goal is not to innovate the most, but rather to innovate selectively with coherence;

- It is not enough to have the best ideas, you must work through a process where others assess and come to find collective meaning and commitment to new ways;

- Appreciate early difficulties of trying something new - what he calls the implementation dip. It is important to know, for example, that no matter how much pre-implementation preparation, the first six months or so of implementation will be bumpy;

- Redefine resistance as a potential positive force. Naysayers sometimes have good points, and they are crucial concerning the politics of implementation. This doesn't mean that you listen to naysayers endlessly, but that you look for ways to address their concerns;

- Reculturing is the name of the game. Much change is structural, and superficial.

The change required is in the culture of what people value and how they work together to accomplish it;

- Never a checklist, always complexity. There is no step-by-step shortcut to transformation; it involves the hard day-to-day work of reculturing (p. 6).

The research of Bryke and Schneider (2003) contends that relational trust in schools can serve as a platform for school reform. They completed a four year case study of 400 schools that demonstrated that building human resources is critical in the development of professional community. The study focused on relational trust and noted that the social trust amongst school leaders, teachers, and parents improves the work in schools and key to reform. Relational trust is based in respect, personal regard, competence in the job, and personal integrity (Bryke & Schnieder, 2003). A culture of trust can unlock the potential in learners and lead to a culture that promotes teacher group efficacy.

A school's culture should align with the importance of learning and organizational goals, and have the flexibility to constantly change to impact student achievement (Peterson & Deal, 1998). Change in schools should lead to improvement (Sergiovanni, 2005). Organizational goals should be articulated using bottom-line performance improvements. The goals should be broken down into incremental segments to outline the growth that is expected within a measurable amount of time. The manner in which the individuals in the organization embrace and organize practices around learning should be articulated through the policies, procedures, and actions of staff members.

There needs to be a clear understanding and definition of the problem or situation within an organization so change can occur. The building principal should clearly communicate a vision for the school, and enlist all stakeholders in the organization to participate in developing a shared vision to increase student achievement. Teachers participating in development opportunities should contribute to the decisions regarding these professional opportunities (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Once everyone has come to consensus, it is the leader's responsibility to enlist teachers to assist in applying pressure and support for the staff members to enhance the likelihood for sustained change (Evans, 1996). Teacher leaders help to raise the performance levels for all other teachers in the building. In applying pressure, the leader must do whatever it takes to make it more difficult for followers to continue old practices. Applying pressure is not always a negative concept, rather it allows for individual growth and development. As a team there is a sharing of best practices, encouraging all stakeholders to perform at higher levels. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) noted that, "You need individuals, of course, but the system won't change, indeed individuals won't change in large numbers, unless development becomes a persistent collective enterprise." Bottom-up and top-down forces will initiate the change process. The two forces serves as feedback loops to enhance the learning outcomes for the individuals within the organization. Leadership within the organization should articulate the direction of the organization to meet the needs of the district and school, and include the building leadership team in on the process.

Leaders are essential in raising students' academic levels and the learning levels of all staff related to teaching (Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005; Murphy & Hallinger, 1988). Leadership is the key to reform (Fullan, 2005). The school based

reformer's most challenging job is to change the culture that exists in schools (Barth, 2001). The school leader's primary role is to ensure that all individuals within the organization develop and advance to meet individual, school and district goals. Therefore a collaborative culture of organizational learning will advance all members within the organization (Liethwood & Fullan, 2012; Reeves, 2010; Senge, 2012).

Many times inside and outside factors determine the flow and effectiveness or ineffectiveness of an organization focused on professional learning. A school building leadership team could develop a plan for their school based on their building needs. Although a plan and timeframe could be set for change initiatives to occur within the building, new laws and initiatives set by the state or district may need to be immediately implemented, and can impede the change initiatives originally set by a school's leadership team. Multiple initiatives launched within existing projects to address district needs could hinder the organization's growth (Kotter, 2011). Therefore, it would benefit staff to take a step back, slow down, and allow teachers to adjust to the onset of the district led changes. Kotter (1979) noted that many change initiatives are subjected to problems and take longer than expected. Although the PLC process may not proceed through the stages in the timeframe that is planned, slowing down could play a role in keeping teachers' heads above water. Transforming the practices of teaching will require investing in individuals and groups to ensure that changes are sustained (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). The investment of people may require leadership within the organization to limit the amount of changes that staff go through by putting organizational plans on hold to meet the needs of the district, state, or national initiatives.

The literature review for the study of the implementation of a PLC within a PDS during the midst of multiple changes is comprised of themes that inform educators about the processes that need to be in place for teachers to increase student achievement. According to research, individuals in schools that utilize PLC's have a higher probability of increasing the learning of all individuals within the organization. PLC's utilize teacher leaders as researchers, mentors, master instructors, curriculum consultants, and policy makers. Teacher leaders can also push the academic agendas of teachers, schools, school districts, state policy makers, and national policy makers. In order for teacher leaders to operate successfully, instructional leaders are charged with creating a positive school culture that is built on trust. Trust is built when positive relations are established between staff members, and when support systems are in place to assist teachers with understanding both the change process and newly implemented programs and agendas within schools. It is the instructional leader's job to share leadership with educators in the school, and organize a school environment that embraces collaboration. The root of the enhancement of student and teacher learning lies in the collaborative practices of educators within school settings.

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

Chapter III will present a description of the methodology and research design of this study. An ethnographic case study is described. Data collection and the methods of data analysis are explained. Chapter Four is the presentation of data and the analysis of findings. The results of the study will be summarized and implications for further research are presented in Chapter V of the study.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to document the steps of how a professional learning community within a professional development school evolved throughout a school year. This chapter is divided into nine sections. The nine sections in this chapter include (a) introduction (b) researcher's lens, (c) research questions, (d) setting, (e) participants, (f) data collection, (g) data analysis, (h) trustworthiness, and (i) summary. These sections will outline the methodology used in a study of the evolution a PLC within a PDS within the 2012 – 2013 school year.

The methodological position that was used for this research study was qualitative. (7). "Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), attempting to make sense of or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Creswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln 2000, p.5).

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) outlined four characteristics of qualitative studies listed below:

- **Locally situated**. It studies human participants in natural settings and conditions, eschewing artificially constructed situations.

- **Participant-oriented.** It is sensitive to, and seeks to understand, participants' perspectives on their world.

- **Holistic.** It is context sensitive and does not study isolated aspects independently of the situation in which they occur.

- **Inductive.** It depends on a process of interpretation that involves immersion in the data and draws on different perspectives.

A case study design was used to implement this study. According to Merriam (1998) researchers wishing to study an in depth case should implement a case study. Case study research focuses its attention on a single entity, usually as it exists in its naturally occurring environment (Creswell, 2007). A case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single phenomenon or social unit (Merriman, 1998). Merriam (1998) added that qualitative case studies were especially effective when the investigator hoped to gain insight into occurrences such as teacher reluctance, when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context were not clearly evident. The researcher in this study used a case design due to the many factors that interacted with a program being implemented (Merriam, 1998) within a school setting. The program that was implemented was a professional learning community (PLC) that focused on the guidance of PLC's, and the implementation of the practices learned in a book study into teacher planning sessions. The case was inclusive of one professional development school in northeastern Ohio.

Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte (1999) noted, "Ethnography is a scientific approach to discovering and investigating social and cultural patterns and meaning in communities, institutions and other social settings" (p. 1). In developing case studies using the ethnographic research approach, Spradley (1979) wrote that inferences are made from sources that include (a) what people say, (b) the way people act and (c) the

artifacts that people use.

This ethnographic case study focused on collecting field notes over a yearlong process in a professional development school in order to document the ways that teacher leaders within a professional development school accept or reject the opportunity to lead through multiple change initiatives within a school district. Thick and rich descriptions and accounts of the events that happened throughout the school year were provided and detailed in this qualitative study (Creswell, 2007). Recorded events included conversations, field notes, emails, questionnaire, and a SWOT analysis to outline the events that occurred within the school year. This study was situated within a professional development school, and 20 teachers were studied in their work environment. I worked to understand the teachers' perspectives and experiences throughout the study.

Teachers participated in a book study about professional learning communities, and were expected to draw from the PLC book study knowledge to implement the work within collaborative planning times and Teacher Based Teams (TBTs). I documented and provided rich descriptions about the layout of each book study presentation and staff interactions during the presentations and responses to the presentations. Field notes were used to document the responses that staff articulated around the book study topic and the manner in which themes from the study were implemented in their daily practice. Field notes and district reports were also used to record the changes happening within the district as they occurred. The district records included emails, Common Core documents, formative and summative assessment data, Ohio Teacher Evaluation System and Ohio Principal Assessment data, RTI forms, and Value Added data. Observing the school's

teacher-based team data within building leadership meetings gave me an opportunity to gather data surrounding the implementation of information gained within the book study.

Role of Researcher

I was the primary research instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and served as a participant observer in this research process. Schenshul, Schenshul, and LeCompte (1999) defined participant observation as " A data collection technique that requires the researcher to be present at, involved in and recording the routine daily activities with people in the field setting." My role included creating a questionnaire to collect participants' demographic data and knowledge about the participants' understanding of Professional Learning Communities, and gathering resources while participating in the study. I also modeled the initial book study session. At the time of the study, I was a fourth grade teacher in the school setting studied. I am currently an assistant principal within the same district that the study was implemented. My current role as an assistant principal within the district studied, past experiences as a teacher in a PDS, and an instructional coach within the district studied shapes my beliefs about teachers working collaboratively to meet the academic needs of students. I believe that teachers if given the opportunity to lead can impact student growth greatly. Teachers can collaborate with one another if structural conditions in schools are created to enhance opportunities for teachers to learn from one another. It is my belief that teacher leaders both formal and informal should play a role in designing the learning opportunities to enhance the instructional and pedagogical practice for themselves and their peers. Within this study

there was an obligation on the part of myself to state the biases that may impact the study outcomes. The study's validity could be challenged due to the hopes, assumptions and expectations of outcomes by the researcher.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this research study.

1. How do national, statewide, and district initiatives impact teachers' behaviors within a PDS?

2. What are teachers' perceptions of what their role is within a professional development school?

3. What is required for teachers to do an effective job mentoring novice teachers as well as guiding seasoned teachers in professional development to increase student learning?

4. How can a professional learning community (PLC) within a professional development school (PDS) create an environment that keeps the students at the cornerstone of everything teachers do?

These questions gave the researcher the insights into a better understanding of this study.

Demographics

Setting

The qualitative ethnographic case study was conducted in an elementary professional development school. This professional development school is located in a northeastern city in Ohio. The district is one of the eighth largest school districts in Ohio. This school district is considered to be urban, and like some larger school districts, this

district is plagued with low academic performance. The 2011- 2012 district report card

for Ohio shows the progress that the district has made within the year. According to the

district report card, the professional development school that is under study met five out

of twenty-six indicators. Adequate yearly progress was not met, although value added

measures were met.

The elementary school research site studied is located in the southeastern part of a

northeastern Ohio school district. The school's student population is comprised of 64.7%

Black, non- Hispanic, 14.9% Multi-Racial and 19.0% White non- Hispanic. The White

student population within this school is considered the minority. The student population

consists of 21 percent students with disabilities. Ninety-eight percent of the student

population was labeled economically disadvantaged on the state report card.

According to the Ohio Department of Education's School Report Card four

components make up Ohio's accountability system (ODE, 2011). Those four components

include state indicators, performance index score, value added, and Adequate Yearly

Progress (AYP). The school's designation was in Continuous Improvement. The school

met one out of 10 indicators. The State Indicators are assigned based on the number of

state assessments given over all tested grades. The school needs to have a specific

percentage of students reach a proficient or higher score on given assessments. The

indicator met was attendance.

Participants

Urban PDS has 24 teachers. Twenty out of 24 teachers participated in this study.

Twenty out of 24 or 84 % of the teachers were participants in the study. Two teachers

were exempt from the surveys because one teacher had not arrived back from maternity

leave, and another teacher had just taken a position as a long-term substitute. Two

teachers requested to be excused from participating in the study. One did not want her

responses documented or published. Another teacher did not mention why she did not

want to participate in the study. Upon receiving permission from a central staff

administrator and the building administrator, the researcher administered the surveys to

the study participants.

The following chart shows the demographic data of the participants.

Table 3.1

Participants

Teacher	Gender	Ethnicity	Highest Education	Years Teaching	Teaching Responsibility
Teacher 1	Female	White	Master's + 16	21+	All subjects Spec Ed. Pre-K
Teacher 2	Female	White	Master's + 16	16 – 20	All subjects Kindergarten
Teacher 3	Female	White	Master's + 16	11 – 15	Math/ Science 6th Grade
Teacher 4	Female	White	Bachelors + 15	3 – 5	Special Ed All Subjects
Teacher 5	Male	White	Bachelor's	1-2	All subjects 2nd grade
Teacher 6	Female	African-American	Master's	21+	Math/Science 5th grade
Teacher 7	Female	White	Master's + 16	11 – 15 +	Reading
Teacher 8	Female	African-American	Master's + 32	21 +	All Subjects Second Grade
Teacher 9	Female	White	Bachelor's	3 – 5	All subjects 2nd grade
Teacher 10	Female	White	Master's + 16	11 – 15	Reading/Soc. St. 4th Grade
Teacher 11	Female	White	Master's	16 – 20	Reading/Math 4th and 5th
Teacher 12	Female	White	Master's + 32	11 – 15	All Subjects Kindergarten
Teacher 13	Female	African-	Master's +	11 - 15	Fourth Grade

		American	32		Math/Science
Teacher 14	Female	White	Master's + 16	16 – 20	All Subjects Pre-K
Teacher 15	Female	White	Master's + 32	16 – 20	Reading/Math Special Ed.
Teacher 16	Female	White	Master's + 16	10 – 14	All Subjects Kindergarten
Teacher 17	Female	White	Master's + 32	21+	Reading Math 1st and 2nd
Teacher 18	Female	White	Master's + 32	16 – 20	Reading/ Soc. St 3rd grade
Teacher 19	Female	White	Master's + 16	16 - 20	All Subjects 1st grade
Teacher 20	Female	White	Bachelor's	3 – 5	All subjects 1st grade

Data Collection

The data collection techniques used in this study included a questionnaire,

observations, field notes, meeting minutes, reports (state, district and school), and

archival documents. Careful observations, descriptive field notes, documents, and artifact

collection are part of the research process to ensure that the participants' perspectives of

their world are clearly understood (Hatch, 2002). Observations including both formal and

informal conversations that related to the work being done in the study were carefully

documented. Below is a description of the data collection processes that contributed to

the research findings and conclusions.

Lead Teacher Questionnaire.

The researcher developed a questionnaire to gather demographic data about the

staff, and to obtain information regarding the teachers' knowledge of professional

learning communities (PLC's) and teacher leadership responsibilities. The information

was gathered to plan future professional development opportunities for staff. Twenty-one

teachers filled out a professional development questionnaire in early March. The

questionnaire was organized into two parts. The first part was a six question multiple-

choice assessment that the staff completed on an online survey development tool. The

second part of the questionnaire had nine open-ended questions that focused on

professional learning. The PLC questionnaire was reviewed by the building principal, and

two university faculty members for content validity of the instrument. The study

questionnaire provided information that relates to the premise of the study.

     PLC Book Study.

Twenty teachers at Urban Elementary School were engaged in a book study about

professional learning communities (PLCs). The actualization of a PLC book study began

in November of 2012, and ended in April of 2013. I observed the book study on five

occasions for an average of thirty minutes each time. This book study served as a tool for

the building principal and me to gain an understanding of the background knowledge,

willingness to learn and comfort levels about PLCs. The book study also gave the

principal and me an opportunity to analyze teacher's comfortableness with collaboration

with and presenting to their peers. The teachers were divided into six teams to cover the

six sections of the book. The teams were charged with presenting the materials in the

section that they were assigned to their peers. Teachers were placed in groups that were

not part of their normal teaching teams. It was the intention of the principal and me to

change the grouping norms within the PLC book study group assignments to afford

teachers with an opportunity to work with teachers in the building with which they

normally did not work with. Themes that emerged from the book study included a lack of

trust and confidence in presenting to peers, unbearable workloads, and teachers felt that there was a lack of autonomy in choosing the topic of study for the book study.

SWOT Analysis.

Fourteen of the twenty teachers volunteered to complete a SWOT analysis around Urban PDS book study. Every teacher that attended a volunteer end of the year planning meeting completed the SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis gave teachers an opportunity to document the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the PLC book study. The data pulled from the SWOT analysis included information about what went well with the study, the improvements that could be made for the study, the opportunities that could open up to staff due to the study, and the variables that limited the effectiveness of the book study. The open-ended questions gave teachers an opportunity to document their true feelings around the book study.

Collaborative Planning Times/ Teacher Based Teams (TBTs).

The events that occurred during collaborative planning times and TBTs were primarily documented using meeting minutes, reports (state, district and school), and archival documents. Archival data included email communication in reference to meeting agendas, notes, and state and district data. Teacher based team meeting agenda and minute forms were used to document the events that occurred during TBTs. The forms documented student data, the analysis of the data, shared expectations for changes in the classroom, adult strategies to impact student learning in the classroom, and the charting of the post data.

Data Analysis

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999) data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data. As a participant researcher, I documented field notes to capture the events of the book study presentations, staff meetings, and teacher collaborative planning times as I observed. The dates and times were included in my field notes to ensure data accuracy. To confirm that the notes were accurate, I asked a university faculty member, building principal or a teacher to also scribe the important events within the study. I read through the data recorded at least twice to ensure that I had an understanding of the recorded events. The multiple field notes were compared and documented within 36 hours that the presentation was given. Any clarifications around the events that occurred within the book study presentations were clarified by asking questions to the other individual who scribed about the possible misunderstandings of any documented notes from the book study presentations. Once the notes were documented, I analyzed the data. I used a highlighted color-coded system to pull out the study themes. The words that teachers articulated and the actions of teachers were placed in a color-coded outline that was differentiated by theme. I counted phrases and sentences that were heard and actions that were observed in meetings to accurately identify major themes and findings for the study. I analyzed and interpreted my observations to discern patterns of behaviors to find the underlining meanings in the things I observed and heard (Creswell, 2007). Once data were coded I linked the coded data to the literature review to see if the study data collected aligned with the literature review data.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

I chose to document the evolution of a PLC in a PDS because I was a fourth grade teacher in the school studied. My connection with the teachers and staff within the school helped me to gain reliable answers to the study questions. The staff was aware that they were part of a study of the implementation of a PLC in a PDS. The study took place during the 2012-2013 school year.

Creswell (2007) further noted that "rich, thick descriptions" is important in qualitative research. I used rich and thick descriptions of participant demographics and school demographics, so that the study can be transferred. I documented observations and utilized a peer/colleague examination process (Creswell, 1998). This process involves having a teacher, principal or the university faculty member to document their observations of meetings. I compared notes, and asked clarifying questions to ensure that the data and themes were accurate. According to Creswell (2007) reflecting on my own subjectivity to ensure that I did not incorporate my own values and beliefs was important. I also used documents such as agendas, emails and the school district's archival data to ensure that the findings were data driven and not her own dispositions.

Member checking was another method that I used to ensure the data retrieved from the study was accurate. The comparing of notes with participants served as a method for ensuring that the observations and experiences of the participants that I documented were accurate. Once the participants clarified the data through note comparisons I felt that I had precisely reported the study events. To confirm that the notes were accurate and established inter-rater reliability I asked a faculty member, principal or teacher to also scribe while I was scribing. The two notes were then compared.

Summary

Chapter III described the design of the study, the participants and the methods used to gather participants' trust. The chapter included the participant demographics, description of study site, study timeline, and event records used to implement the study. Chapter IV will outline the participants' opportunities to lead, questionnaire results and the book study details.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of the research. The research was based on the following four questions listed below.

Research Questions

1. How do national, statewide, and district initiatives impact teachers' behaviors within a PDS?

2. What are teachers' perceptions of what their role is within a professional development school?

3. What is required for teachers to do an effective job mentoring novice teachers as well as guiding seasoned teachers in professional development to increase student learning?

4. How can a professional learning community (PLC) within a professional development school (PDS) create an environment that keeps the students at the cornerstone of everything teachers do?

In an effort to understand the process of implementing a professional learning community within a professional development school (PDS) in the midst of multiple change initiatives, the researcher documented the events that preceded the professional learning community (PLC) and the events that occurred during the implementation of the PLC. The data below described the events that occurred while organizing and implementing the PLC. Previous research has documented the perceptions of teacher leadership practices in PLCs and PDSs, and documented the type of professional development needed for sustained implementation of new practices for reluctant teachers in PLCs. However, this study aims to document the implementation process of a PLC in a PDS.

Urban PDS school site was selected because the school was a professional development school that did not operate at a high capacity as a PDS or a PLC. The researcher chose this site because she was a fourth grade teacher in the building, and wanted to assist with eliciting change within the school. The building principal had a concern that the building was not operating at its' full potential, and wanted teachers to collaborate with individuals outside of their grade level teams. Teachers also expressed in the past that they wanted to be reflective practitioners, so that they were prepared to work with student teachers and field experience teachers. The study set up the beginning stages of an elementary PDS that would provide teachers with an opportunity to share ideas and support one another in meeting their personal and professional goals. Teachers would

also have the opportunity to be empowered to lead their peers in a professional development session and be empowered and motivated to grow and learn. The staff members would use district protocol and the book study as a guide for Teacher Based Teams (TBTs) and the Building Leadership Team (BLT).

Research Question 1: How do statewide and district initiatives and changes impact teachers' behaviors within a PDS?

District PD Findings

The district of the selected school site for the study was in the midst of many change initiatives due to the national and state mandates that all districts in Ohio were encountering at the time. Urban district had another set of challenges that many districts did not encounter. On the sixth of February according to the *Canton Repository* (2012), Superintendent One resigned due to differences with the teacher's union. The curriculum director was named interim superintendent. March 5, 2012 interim superintendent one was named superintendent two of the district. An assistant superintendent was hired in the district on May 15, 2012. The newly hired assistant superintendent had previously worked as a director at the state level (Ohio Department of Education), and the experience that he had in a Pre-K -12 setting was when he previously worked as a central office administrator for a year in the district. The district's Safety and Security Director retired in June. On June 30, 2012, the Chief of Teaching and Learning resigned from her position in the district. She was an excellent resource for the district. She was given the county Lifetime Achievement awardee for her hard work and contributions. Superintendent Two took a leave of absence in October of 2012 due to being hospitalized and receiving treatment for Leukemia. On November 2, 2012 Superintendent Two died,

and the assistant superintendent was named Interim Superintendent Two. Interim Superintendent Two was named Superintendent (Superintendent Three) on January 15, 2013. The many changes in leadership within a six-month period had the district in a state of grief and bewilderment.

The new administrative team (Superintendent Two and Assistant Superintendent One) had worked over the 2012 summer to align the district more tightly to the initiatives set by the state to increase student achievement. The week of July 30, 2012 the new District Leadership Team (DLT) met and was introduced to staff members through email. According to the email, the DLT included members of the Senior Leadership Team, Professional Educator's Association President and Vice President and representatives from the elementary, middle, secondary, and special education teaching staff. Over the next few months the staff was given more details about the DLT along with information regarding BLT and TBT's. The DLT "worked in partnership with the State Support Team to develop protocols and processes that we will use across the district to align our work." (C. Smith, personal communication 2012).

The state department of education underwent changes that made it more difficult for districts to plan for the 2012-2013 school year. In an email on August 20, 2012 according to Superintendent Two (personal communication, August 20, 2012) "Our State Board of Education voted 18-0 to delay the release of State, District and Building Report Cards until after the State Board meets again on September 10. " This news came in late August, and postponed staff members' ability to analyze their data thoroughly, reflect on their practice and prepare for the school year. The test scores for students were available since June, but the usual release of the state assessment and item analysis were not

available for district personnel to dissect possible strengths and weaknesses of instructional practices and strengths and weaknesses of skills that students may have or may not have mastered. The unreleased testing items could have played a role in the lack of reflection on practices on part of the staff within the district.

The staff in the district that Urban PDS was engaged in multiple mandated curriculum related professional development. Common Core Standards training was a major focus for the school year. On September 17, 2012 the whole professional development day was devoted to staff becoming familiar with the standards in the area that they taught. September 26, 2012 the district superintendent two sent an email out to the staff and made it clear that the district would be training teachers and building principals on the process for TBT's on Monday, October 8, 2012. The TBT training would complete the process of building the organization to run as a "system of schools not individual schools as systems" (C. Smith, personal communication, 2012). TBTs would serve as a platform that allowed for teacher leadership. Teachers would be given freedom to plan utilizing research based strategies and data analysis to drive top-notch instruction and increased student achievement. This was part of the changing processes that the state and district required of educational staff members to enhance the reflection of instructional processes for teachers to increase student achievement. The months of October through December were packed with formal and informal professional development to calibrate the processes of TBT around the district. Teachers had to become more systematic in data gathering, data analysis, and planning for instruction to meet the outlined expectations that were set from the county and state officials' guidelines.

In January, 2013 Superintendent Three and Assistant Superintendent Two gave an outline of the professional development that would be implemented district-wide. The newly appointed assistant superintendent made staff aware that the late start professional development for teachers would be devoted an overview of the Ohio Teaching Standards, and the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) to prepare teachers for the following year's dive into the new evaluation system. All other staff members would be engaged in training for the new safety and security protocols that the new Safety Director implemented.

An Ohio Teacher Evaluation Three Day Training (OTES) was offered to the administrative staff and some teachers on January 30th through February 1st. This training gave administrators and teachers insight into what to expect the following year for teacher evaluations. The staff members who participated in this training were given the opportunity to become certified trainers.

The February 22nd waiver day served as another opportunity for district-wide professional development. The staff was engaged in safety and security protocols during the morning. The afternoon professional development session informed staff of phase two of the "Brighter Tomorrow Plan". The Brighter Tomorrow Plan introduced a planned overhaul of the district. Phase one included a change in the design of the district's middle schools as specialty academies, and was implemented during the 2013-2014 school year. Superintendent Three unleashed the completed second portion of his plan that broke the Pre-K-12 schools into grades Pre-K – 2 Reading and Math Preparatory Schools and grades 3-5 Leadership Schools. The 14 schools were to be divided into seven Reading and Math Preparatory Schools and seven Leadership Schools. The students and families

within the district would be served in their neighborhood quadrant in place of their neighborhood school. Students would be assigned to these teams of schools ("Sister Schools") based on geographical location. Superintendent Three outlined the opportunities that the reform initiative that he proposed would have for both students and teachers. He mentioned that students would be better equipped academically because of the focus on the developmental needs of the children, settings more focused on reading and math, and innovative learning environments due to the Pre-Kindergarten through second grade schools and third through fifth grade schools.

March was the month that the elementary staff members went through a two-day formal professional development session on formative instructional practices (FIP). The teachers were engaged in formative instructional and assessment practices that would enhance their teaching practices to increase student achievement. Teachers were also introduced to a practical book on formative assessment that most elementary schools used as a book study the following year. BLTs built in systems of support for FIP within their buildings for the remainder of the year, and the following year.

On April 2, 2013 Superintendent Three sent an email detailing the Late Start professional development plan. Staff members were directed to view a video about Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). The SLO training team designed the modules for staff members. Teachers had the opportunity to develop growth target rates and design their own SLO's for the following year.

The month of May was reserved for two district-wide professional development opportunities. The first session was for elementary teachers to deconstruct the Language Arts Common Core Standards. The second session was aimed at all staff. The staff

participated in a day-long safety and security drill related to procedures and protocols for the district.

Teachers were engaged in more professional development that included Common Core training approximately once a month during collaborative planning times. Fundations Wilson Language Basics, Close Reading, Writing Student Learning Objectives, and Formative Instructional Practices (FIP) were other professional development that all staff was required to participate in throughout the year. During the months of March through April, FIP training was given to all elementary teaching staff members as a one-day training. Building principals were charged with embedding professional development around FIP to their staff throughout the remaining of the year. These programs assisted staff to teach using research-based practices.

Urban School PD Findings

A PDS is a school that has multiple opportunities throughout the year for growth and development for all individuals within the organization. Professional development (PD) opportunities were offered in August at Urban PDS to get the year started in a positive manner. Teachers had the opportunity to choose some of the PD sessions. District administration and state department heads mandated other PD sessions. The principal invited some teachers to participate on leadership teams and committees based on the strengths of staff members.

Staff Retreat.

On August 15, 2012 all staff members were invited to attend a staff retreat at a local library. The retreat's agenda included an overview of the newly created vision and mission statement. The staff, parents, and community organizations created a vision and

mission statement the previous year that was relevant to the students in the school. The agenda also included presenting to teachers the professional development opportunities that they could engage in throughout the year, and the overview of the book study PLC related to this study. Teachers had the opportunity to engage in analyzing the previous years assessment data at the retreat. The day included multiple culture building opportunities that kept staff members engaged in the daily activities and work that needed to be completed.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports.

The principal sent out an email that outlined the proposed dates for professional development for staff members who were on the Positive Behavior and Support (PBIS) Team. The PBIS team members went through intensive training the 2011-2012 school year. The four workshop dates for 2012-2013 school year were scheduled between August and February of the 2012 -2013 school year. This team also met bi-weekly after school to create a plan, assess the plan, and provide interventions and supports for staff members throughout the year. PBIS is an intervention that is composed of four primary components. Those components are parent involvement, student engagement and student voice, staff morale and climate, and discipline. A team of staff members worked together to assess their school environment, and facilitate the process of developing a positive environment for all individuals within the organization. The district goals for climate and culture was to develop a system of student supports that reduce non-academic barriers to student achievement, and will reflect a maintenance or a decrease in the district's suspension and expulsion rate by 5% yearly. The PBIS team at Urban PDS met bi-weekly after school to implement school-wide plans around building a positive climate and

culture for students and staff.

Before the onset of the PBIS team meeting, a study participant shared to her peers that PBIS was a bit more than she bargained for. She stated, "The money that we are paid to stay after school to run PBIS is not worth it." Another participant agreed and said, "I always have so much schoolwork to do when I get home, and getting home after this meeting will only keep me up past my normal bedtime to get it finished." Teacher 6 proclaimed, "We already do positive things with our students. As teachers in a PDS, it is the expectation that we implement strategies to ensure that students and parents feel safe and welcome. This is too much added to our plates, not enough on the academics." The teachers on the PBIS team felt that they were already creating a positive environment for their students. They were also beginning to question the need for the PBIS program for themselves as teachers in a PDS.

Building Leadership Team.

On August 6th and 7th the district trained Building Leadership Teams (BLTs) on the critical roles and responsibilities of BLTs, and allotted time for the BLTs to begin developing, implementing, and monitoring practices related to supporting Teacher Based Teams (TBTs). BLTs were formed with the assistance of the building principals. Principals asked key staff members to participate on the BLT to lead and learn together to increase student achievement. The primary role of the BLT is to promote and maintain focus for instructional and pedagogical practices, monitor and provide feedback to teachers around their instructional and pedagogical practices, and provide opportunities for continuous learning. The BLT was responsible for creating one academic goal and one climate/culture goal to enhance student achievement. In December 2012 and May

2013 the BLT members used the OIP Implementation Criteria & Rubric to assess the

BLT and TBT's in the building. Members of The BLT members were charged with

setting up bi-weekly after school one-hour meetings to continue the work that they would

do throughout the school year.

The BLT members were charged with overseeing the academic endeavors within

the school. The team was responsible for ensuring that the BLT was in compliance with

the districts academic goals. Goal one was by 2014, all students in grades K-12 (public &

non-public) will improve on OAA/OGT and local assessments by 5% each year in

reading. Goal two for the district was by 2014, all students in grades K-12 (public & non-

public) will improve on OAA/OGT and local assessments by 5% each year in math. The

data analysis during collaborative planning times and during TBTs were tracking systems

to analyze whether or not the school was on target for meeting district goals.

The BLT meetings for September through November focused on analyzing the

data rooms and data cards for reading and math. The team organized methods for

utilizing rubrics for students and student data notebooks. Throughout the three-month

period rubrics and data notebook inserts were devised for teachers to implement with

their students, The BLT members were charged with taking the information back to the

TBTs.

December's BLT meeting agenda focused on the means for transitioning the

collaborative team meetings into TBTs. This undertaking would evoke change in the

processes that staff was accustomed to during meeting times. The staff members were

already aware that the changes were coming, and that some building staff members had

already implemented the changes needed for TBTs. The principal stated that she planned

to share the video that modeled the proper way to conduct TBTs during a staff meeting. The BLT agreed that showing the video to model expectations would begin to prepare the teaching staff of what is expected of them during TBT's beginning in January.

The BLT also talked about the implementation of the Rapid Rest (Accelerate 30) forms. These forms documented the interventions that staff would engage students in to increase their learning levels. The BLT was charged with deciding on the primary focus for the 30-day plans so that there was a building-wide focus. The BLT came up with a focus on DIBEL for kindergarten through second grade, and a focus on extended response questions, both two and four point questions for grades third through fifth.

January's first BLT meeting agenda's focus was on the transition from collaborative planning times to TBTs. The building principal asked the BLT to develop a plan to roll out TBTs and implementing the Rapid Reset (Accelerate 30) monthly intervention plans. The team collaborated and created a plan for TBT roll out that included staff having the opportunity to watch a video that modeled the TBT process during a staff meeting. The BLT agreed that the 30-day intervention plans should also revolve around extended response question for reading and math grades three – five and DIBELS for kindergarten through second grades. The teachers on the BLT were responsible for taking the information gathered from BLT to the TBT.

The second BLT meeting in January focused on the goal two initiatives that included enhancing climate and culture. The focus was on students who had high disciplinary concerns. BLT members were charged with talking to TBT members about making list of the top ten students with discipline concerns for each grade level. The BLT members made decisions about their philosophy around in school suspension placement

for students. They brainstormed a plan for repeat offenders and made suggestions for what needed to be done when the in school suspension room was too crowded. The teachers were held accountable for the behavior interventions in place to decrease disciplinary actions of students considered high need.

In January, the district administrative staff notified principals about two buildings whose staff were implementing the process with high fidelity to the program. Members of the building leadership team at Urban PDS went to visit collaborative planning at the schools that were highlighted for successfully implementing the five-step process in January. Teacher 1 reported back about her visit to one of the two buildings that were recommended to observe by district leadership in a February meeting.

> Teacher 1 stated, "The conversations were blunt! Everyone was holding everyone accountable for TBT forms and Rapid Reset (Accelerate 30) (30-day plans) completed before going to TBT meetings. We are here to improve and help our kids. This grade level did not turn in their forms! It is what it is. We are moving beyond the nice talk. We all must take the responsibility. BLT forms are in place just like the TBT forms. These are all of our kids."

A teacher from Urban PDS BLT asked the question, "How did they get that to work?" Teacher 2 responded, "There were no excuses. They used before and after school planning, along with staff meetings!" According to McNulty (2010) "The sole purpose of the Building Data (Leadership) Team is to focus on the ongoing performance of students and the quality of instruction." The BLT monitored the weekly TBT forms that all grade levels completed weekly. The TBT forms had information regarding formal and informal assessments, student grouping strategies and instructional strategies on them.

During the month of February the BLT continued to analyze TBT forms and the five-step process implementation by grade level teams and content-based teams. A teacher participant on the BLT made a comment, "It seems like teachers are just going through the motions to get the work complete. I don't think that there is much true reflection on their processes because they are so focused on completing the forms." The principal followed up by asking the teacher participant to explain what she was talking about. "Another teacher participant chimed in stating, "When we are in our TBTs, the teachers are so conscious about messing up. So, the process just ends up being a checklist of things to get through rather a reflective process." The principal asked that BLT members share with teachers that the TBT process is not much different than when they had collaborative planning times. She declared, "Teachers need to be cognizant about the things that they do in their classroom that brings about student results." Another teacher participant said, "All of the data collection required by the district in TBTs is cumbersome." The principal shared that she did not want teachers to get so caught up in the data that they were not focusing on a better way of doing things to bring about even greater results. The team also reviewed the Rapid Reset (30 Day) plans. The Saturday School Program and after school tutoring program that emphasized content based learning for math and reading was organized during the month of February. The BLT members were responsible for modeling for their TBT members the appropriate manner to complete a TBT form with the five-step process.

BLTs for the remainder of the year focused on increasing student achievement through adult implementation of best practices and interventions to accommodate all ability levels for students. March's BLT meeting was focused on the implementation of

summer school, after school tutoring and evidence of growth based on the data charted on the data cards and TBT forms. The BLT meetings in April and May focused on analyzing TBT forms that included analyzing student pre and post data and adult implementation strategies.

Building Level Committees.

Building level committees consists of all of the groups that are organized within the school to make the school year successful. Some of the committees include Rewards and Recognition Committee, Parent Involvement Committee, Social Committee, Response to Intervention Committee and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports Committee, and Community Involvement Committee. The committees were responsible for publishing monthly minutes to keep staff abreast of agenda events. These committees were all part of developing a climate and culture that reflected a positive learning environment.

University Committee.

The University committee members have a unique opportunity of planning to protect the best interest of the university and school partnership. The members on the team volunteered to be part of the committee. Members of the university committee are responsible for interviewing student teacher candidates. The members also made decisions about what the monies from a grant is spent on throughout the year. The ultimate goal of this committee is to increase student achievement at the elementary school site while providing field experience teachers and student teachers with experiences of teaching in an urban setting.

The primary theme that emerged from the multiple initiatives impacting teacher behaviors is that there were too many new initiatives at one time given to teachers, and comprehension issues surfaced around initiatives implemented. A teacher participant noted, "The PLC thing is something that many of us do not want to do, especially with all of the other change initiatives that we have to adjust to." A teacher participant in the book study said, "All of the data collection required by the district in TBTs is cumbersome. Although in the past we always collected data, now that we are mandated to do so, it appears overwhelming." A teacher participant noted on the SWOT analysis in the weakness section, "Lack of time; too many initiatives this year and for next." One participant shared that there were so many things expected of her that she did not know what to do. The teachers expressed that there were multiple initiatives and the work had to be completed. The multiple initiatives within the school year appeared to contribute to comprehension issues related to the new initiatives. Teachers complained that they had so many things to do that they really did not have an opportunity to connect the many initiatives implemented to their daily work. Teachers had to analyze too many things at one time. Therefore, they had problems making sense of the work and making the initiatives their own.

Question 2: What are teachers' perceptions of what their role is within a professional development school?

The teachers at Urban PDS were charged with collaborating with their peers as a whole group for discussion of a PLC book study and collaborating with a group of their peers to lead a professional development session over a topic from the book study. Although time for collaboration and TBTs were built into the fabric of the school day,

teachers were also expected to collaborate with their groups to present the material from the book study on their own time. The information learned from the PLC book study was to be applied during collaborative planning times and TBT's. The PLC book study and questionnaire in this study gave great details about the perceptions that teachers had around their responsibilities in a PDS.

The staff as a whole did not appear as though they read the material well enough to have deep discussion around the topic of shared beliefs, values and vision. Once the first group completed their presentation, a university faculty member chimed in by making staff aware of the processes of building a PLC. The faculty member told the teachers that all staff participating in the PLC needs to be prepared by reading the chapters in advance of the presentations. She also spoke about staff members being open to multiple perspectives and valuing all voices. She went on to voice that she could tell that everyone was stressed, and that she was aware of the multiple changes in staff within the district. The university faculty member also told staff that she was aware of the multiple initiatives that the state was mandating. She gave them times and dates that she would make herself available to assist the teachers in organizing their thoughts and professional development that they would deliver to their peers. One participant said, "I will take you up on that for my part. I know that I may need some assistance in organizing the part that I will present." A couple of other teachers nodded their heads as if they were going to utilize the faculty member as a resource to plan their PD sessions. The faculty member told the principal and researcher that a couple people stopped by to talk for a minute or two, but did not go into detail about their PD sessions.

The building principal ended the meeting with staff members needing to have the ability to communicate with people outside of their normal teaching teams. She elaborated on the fact that trusting each other was critical. Her major point was that her expectation was that everyone aligned themselves to Hord's PLC principles.

The second group presentation was about shared and supportive leadership. The presenters seemed more prepared to review the information covered in the section of the book although they were late for their presentation. The presenters spoke about teachers having the capacity to shape the culture of their building if the talents of teachers were utilized. The group also spoke about having high expectations of themselves, and supporting each other as teacher leaders. They reviewed the 12 cultural norms that impacts school improvement, and noted that those norms should drive their standards of practice.

The university faculty member spoke to the groups' honesty in their presentation. The group members said that they did not want the added pressure of having to commit to the book study. The second group also mentioned that once they began to read through the section, they understood the need for it. Group two mentioned the lack of trust that teachers within Urban PDS had for one another, and how that could impede their growth and learning.

Both the principal and university faculty member had closing remarks after the presentation. The university faculty member shared that they had been exposed to two models of presentations. She spoke about the first group sectioning off parts of the chapter, and the second group focusing their presentation on one of the book that they felt was most relevant to building the school's culture. The first two groups that presented to

their peers for the book study appeared to lacked enthusiasm and appeared to lack confidence in their presentation abilities. She once again gave an open invitation for groups to consult with her if they needed assistance in developing their presentation for the staff (Evans, 1996). In an email, the principal thanked the presenters of group two, and reminded staff that part of A PLC is empowering staff to know the content and collaborating with each other to change behaviors and impact student achievement. Their remarks gave the teachers within the organization and understanding of why they were engaged in the PLC. The expectations for staff members to be prepared to present, and engage in the presentation was set by the formal leaders within the organization (Evans, 1996).

The third group presentation covered the topic structural conditions of PLCs (Hord, 2010). The team focused primarily on collaboration to enhance the growth and learning of the teaching staff. The presenters challenged the teachers to write a short-term and long-term goal for collaboration and enhancement of PLCs within the school. The principal chimed in about staff trusting and learning from one another. She firmly made staff aware that if they had to be forced to learn, they needed to be thinking about whether or not Urban PDS was the correct placement for them. The building principal was applying pressure (Evans, 1996) to staff members making them aware of the expectation that she had about their learning and development as teachers. She supported their learning by guiding teachers to understand the key components of the chapter if the presenters did not capture it in their presentation (Evans, 1996).

The fourth and fifth presentations covered intentional collective learning and sharing personal practice. Group five focused on staff members taking time to listen to

each other. They mentioned that adults learn through dialogue. The group pointed out

that if everyone's yelling at each other that it's hard to listen. Group six's presentation

focused on the types of conversations that the staff had with each other. The primary

conversations that teachers had with one another did not involve feedback on teaching

practices and changed practices based on the feedback. The teachers spoke about the

possibilities of teacher coaches amongst themselves. They spoke about carving out time

to observe each other teaching, and giving each other constructive feedback around

teaching and learning.

The teachers in Urban PDS had great confidence in their abilities to teach children

because they continuously had the highest value added scores in the district according to

the statewide assessment given to third through sixth graders. According to ODE's

District Report Card, the school earned a grade of an A, an above rating in value added

scores (ODE, 2015). I observed that the teachers were proficient data collectors and

analyzers according to the collaboration records. They also were able to engage students

in learning and move kids academically over a year's growth in one year. Although they

moved students academically in a positive direction, the data showed that their students

still did not meet the Average Yearly Progress goals the state set as indicated on the

Ohio's District Report Card. The teachers at Urban PDS were experienced, and knew key

terminology that made administration think that they were reflective practitioners. The

teachers referenced that they wanted to be continuous learners and have the opportunity

to collaborate with their peers within the questionnaire and in the book presentations.

But, when given the opportunity to be reflective on their practice in the way that the Ohio

Educator Standards for the Teaching Profession's distinguished level requires, the

teachers in Urban PDS on some occasions fell short of that standard. The distinguished level on the Ohio Teaching Standards rubric requires teachers to reflect critically on their own and others' instructional practices to make appropriate curriculum and instructional decisions based on the teaching context and student needs. Urban PDS teachers needed continuous experiences with reflecting on their own and colleague's practices to begin moving towards the distinguished level on the rubric for standard four Instruction, of the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession (ODE, 2005).

The teachers at Urban PDS felt as though they could effectively lead field experience teachers and student teachers to be successful teachers. The teachers did have a concern that they needed deeper training in the Common Core Standards to be more effective in training field experience teachers according to the questionnaire. "One participant noted on the questionnaire, "I want to effectively teach the Common Core Standards especially if I will be the one modeling instruction for student teachers." Another participant wrote, "I value collaboration. I have never felt that I have all of the answers, and I enjoy having someone to work and talk through ideas relating to the Common Core Standards with." These lead teachers felt uncomfortable leading future teachers in an area that they had not mastered themselves. The principal kept referring teachers back the mission and vision statements that they created the prior year. She also gave teachers a copy of teacher expectations within a professional development school, so that they could begin to reflect on whether Urban PDS was the right placement for them. The NAPD (2008) noted that PDSs need articulation agreements that outline the roles and responsibilities of teachers. The teachers were given articulation agreements when they were first hired to teach at Urban PDS.

The teachers' perceptions of their role within a PDS were collected through the following sources, questionnaire and the PLC book study. Data gathered from the questionnaire allowed the researcher to obtain information regarding the insights of teachers' roles within a PDS. Teachers reported that they felt that they needed more training in leading their student teachers through the newly adopted Common Core Standards. They felt as though they were just becoming acclimated to the standards themselves and had some reservations about leading college students in an area that they were not expert in. Thirteen staff members PD goals were related to curriculum and instruction. Two teachers reported in the questionnaire that they needed PD around the work of collaboration. The questionnaire asked teachers what they believed their role was in education, and 18 reported that they believed their role was to promote learning. A participant shared, "It is my job to figure out how the student learns best, and motivate them to be successful." One participant wrote, "My role as a teacher is to help form that connection for students in order to teach them the standards." Another participant recorded, "The function of teachers in schools is to prepare students to be successful adults."

The themes that stemmed from the question around teacher perceptions of their roles in in a PDS included leading field experience and student teachers to be future teachers and being reflective in their teaching practices to meet the needs of their students. Data revealed that teachers also lacked the confidence, and skill set to lead a presentation to their peers. Teachers felt that tapping into the talents of staff members would enhance their ability to move through the change process. Those perceptions were realized through teachers' responses. A participant revealed, "I feel that trust is very

important to develop in order to have a true professional working environment." A book study participant stated, "Trust would have to be present amongst staff if that type of thing was going on." (in reference to scripting lessons and giving feedback to peers). According to a participant's notation in the SWOT analysis, "Too many people were reluctant to work with others."

Question 3: What is required for teachers to do an effective job mentoring field experience teachers and novice teachers as well as guiding seasoned teachers in professional development to increase student learning?

The teachers at Urban PDS were engaged in practices and participated in workshops that gave them an opportunity to mentor student teachers, new teachers, and work together to enhance the teaching practices of all teachers within the building. The workshops that aimed at enhancing the mentoring skills of teachers within Urban PDS included mentor teacher development, edTPA and the resident educator mentorship training. Teachers were also engaged in collaborative planning and TBTs to increase the academic achievement of all students by examining students work, creating assignments, assessments and lesson plans. The building principal mandated that all teachers partook in a PLC book study to enhance collaboration and leadership skills amongst her staff. Twenty teachers agreed to participate in the research study. Groups of teachers took the lead in developing their peers around the topic of PLCs.

It is imperative to note that the building principal, university staff member, and I provided teachers at Urban PDS with the opportunity to lead their peers in professional leaning opportunities. The model of professional development provided to staff members at Urban PDS was aligned to many of Ohio's revised standards for professional

development. The standards that were addressed within the PD opportunities were

Learning Communities, Leadership, Resources, Data, Learning Designs, and Outcomes.

The only standard that was not fully addressed within the PD opportunities for teachers

included Implementation. The areas of the Implementation standard that was not

addressed appropriately included element 6.2 sustain implementation: continue to support

to reach high-fidelity implementation of professional learning. Time was a limitation to

the standard Implementation. See below the opportunities for development within Urban

PDS.

Mentor Teacher Development

On August 31, 2012 Mentor Teacher Professional Development was offered. This

training was for teachers within the professional development school who were scheduled

to have a student teacher for Fall 2012. The teachers became more versed in their roles,

responsibilities, and had an opportunity to know where important forms were located on

the University's web page. This professional development gave mentor teachers the

expectations and updates for their student teachers and themselves.

Teacher Performance Assessment

The Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) training was offered in a half-day

session, and two teachers were selected to participate in the workshop. The two teachers

were expected to present the information to the rest of the staff in a staff meeting

throughout the year. The teachers did not have the opportunity to share the information

that they learned due to multiple initiatives that the district mandated for teachers.

edTPA is a reliable and valid performance evaluation that student teachers are expected

to complete to enhance their teaching practice (edTPA, 2015). Pre-service teachers are

expected to use research based instructional methods to enhance the learning of the students that they teach.

According to edTPa's website (2015):

edTPA is a preservice assessment process designed by educators to answer the essential question: "Is a new teacher ready for the job?" edTPA includes a review of a teacher candidate's authentic teaching materials as the culmination of a teaching and learning process that documents and demonstrates each candidate's ability to effectively teach his/her subject matter to all students.

Resident Educator Mentors

The principal of Urban Professional Development School wanted her staff to take advantage of being trained as a Resident Educator Mentor. Multiple teachers were interested in becoming mentors. Five teachers went through the training in October of 2012, and four of the five teachers became mentors the following year. Resident Educator Mentors are charged with being a mentor for first through fourth year teachers. This mentorship is based on ensuring that new teachers reflect on their practice to increase student learning (ODE, 2011).

Building-Wide Professional Learning Community

May 2012 served as the first planning meeting for the study. The building principal and I sat down to discuss the possibilities for the study. We had concerns about the growth of the PDS that they were part of. Although the staff had showed academic growth with students according to the state value added system, teachers were not collaborating on the level that is expected of a PDS. I decided to implement a PLC to enable staff to have an opportunity to work with colleagues outside of their grade level

teams. The principal mentioned that her staff did not have a true understanding of the underpinnings of a PLC. Therefore, my first task was to find a book around PLCs. One portion of the study was to work through the understanding of PLCs within the first semester. The next semester would be dedicated to the actual implementation of an agreed upon building-wide PLC. My goal was to document the implementation and evolution of a PLC within a PDS. I used this study as a reflection on her skills about what she knew about the topic and my growth.

Another planning meeting took place in the middle of July 2012. The building principal, a university representative and I discussed the possibilities of the PLC study. The decision was made to have teachers work individually, in small groups, and as a whole group for the PLC. Independently teachers were charged with analyzing student work and teaching practices to enable student growth. Teachers working in small groups would be engaged in creating assessments, analyzing data, building trust, and giving and receiving feedback on instructional practices (Hord, 2010) during collaborative planning times and TBTs. Whole group sessions would focus on the book study presentations by staff to promote growth of staff members that impacted student achievement. The decision was made that the PLC book study meetings would occur during staff meetings, late starts, and weekly collaboration meetings. The plan was to try and build in time during the TBT collaborative planning times for teachers to self reflect on their practice around PLCs, development, and leadership roles within the building. The researcher initially tried to build a program that allowed teachers to work through the Ohio Teaching Standards. The teachers could have an opportunity to turn in their reflections and evidence to apply for Master Teacher certification.

On Thursday, October 18, 2012 the principal, university faculty member, and I worked collaboratively to plan the first meeting that staff would be engaged in to give them an understanding of what they would be working on in the PLC. A power point presentation was completed that outlined information regarding who, what, when, where, and how of the PLC. It was determined that they would model for teachers the work that needed to be completed in the PLC in the first meeting. The first phase of the PLC required teachers to work collaboratively with colleagues from different grade levels and plan a professional development session based on a chapter of the book study.

The plan was for teachers to read an article about PLCs. The staff would then be exposed to an activity or experience that outlined the rationale for PLCs. The staff would complete an activity that allowed them to compare the practices of individuals within the school relating to the work of PLC's to the work that Hord (2010) outlines around PLCs. The teachers would be given their books, and assigned a section to read about PLCs.

Book Study

On July 2012, the building principal, university faculty member, and I met to discuss the details of the PLC book study. The University faculty member suggested that the book study be written into a grant that helped to fund projects for the PDS. The grant would fund the purchase of staff books, and it would hold the PDS partnership members responsible for implementing the PLC.

The book, *Guiding Professional Learning Communities, Inspiration, Challenge, Surprise and Meaning,* by Shirley Hord (2010) was used for the book study for the PLC. The book study assisted the staff to work through the understanding of what a PLC was within the first semester of the school year. According to the building principal, studying

the basics of a PLC would enable teachers to implement a PLC with fidelity in the building. I was charged with finding a book around PLC's for the study.

Once the book for the study was chosen, the researcher met with the building principal again, so that they could plan the framework for the study. The principal and researcher looked at the list of teachers, matched staff members up according to personality types, experience, and leadership capacity and placed them on learning teams. The book was composed of six chapters, so the 20 teachers were divided into six groups. Everyone was charged with reading all chapters, and participating in the PLC sessions. Each group would be responsible for a chapter in the book, and presenting the information in a meaningful way to the staff.

The district and school calendar for the 2012 - 2013 school year was analyzed, so that a plan could be made to outline the dates for the implementation of the PLC before the school year started. The original plan was to start the book study presentations late September, and complete the book study presentations by the middle of February. The staff would have the opportunity to decide on the PLC related to instruction that they wanted to implement to increase their pedagogy and instructional practices. The teachers wanted to become familiar with Ohio's Common Core Standards and formative instructional practices (FIP) within the end of the year PLC. Group memberships, chapters that each group would present, and the dates of each presentation were laid out on a schedule. The PLC was scheduled in a manner that did not interfere with teachers' independent planning times.

The original plan was to start the study in September, but due to district mandated meetings, the death of Superintendent Two, and late approval of the study by the district administration, the book study started in November and ended in March.

Group One Presentation.

The first group presented section one of the book during a staff meeting on November 14, 2012. Before the group came up to present, I gave an overview of the norms for the PLC that were developed during the previous meeting. I also had staff members review in partnerships the research behind PLCs according to the homework that they were assigned to read. The teachers reported out to the whole group the research responses around the pertinence of PLCs.

The first group presented chapter one of the book study titled Shared Beliefs, Values, and Vision. They organized the presentation into three sections. Teacher 1 spoke about the importance of teachers knowing the type of learner they are so that they are more receptive of the different learning styles of the students that they teach. Teacher 2 talked about section two: Shared Beliefs, Values and Visioning. The presenters asked the teachers to outline the ways that the staff at Urban PDS had high expectations for their students.

The presenters directed the staff to turn to page 43 of their books, and spoke about creating a culture of academic optimism. Teachers 3 and 4 in the group had staff members define in their own words what collective efficacy was. Teacher 3 spoke while Teacher 4 scribed the answers that the staff members gave on chart paper. Overall, the teachers came up with the definition of collective efficacy as having a strong commitment and belief in student and teacher ability. Teacher 4 said, "As a staff we

empower our students to be successful academically." Teacher 3 spoke about Section 3: Prioritized Abandonment. She said, "It is important for the staff to stay stress free and prioritize the things that we do that are important and not important!" Teacher 3 gave an example of what her group thought would help the material stick in the minds of the teachers. She said, "For example, data collection has become cumbersome. Although in the past we always collected data, now that we are mandated to do so, it appears overwhelming." Some of the teachers agreed, and two others mumbled that they did see a need for the newer data collection process that OIP had them going through.

Teacher 1 asked the staff, "What best practices can we abandon as a building to eliminate stress?" A teacher responded, " In order to become a better PLC we need to step out of our own comfort zone! Embracing change is something we all need to embrace. We need to communicate more so that we can integrate as a building." The researcher observed two staff members mocking another staff member while she was speaking about change, and moving into other groups. Another teacher mentioned, **"**Expand the curriculum guide to allow for integrated curriculum and project based learning." Someone else said, "We needed to abandon a certain subject because it is not as meaningful as others: like social studies. Another teacher mentioned, "Abandoning the discipline issues that interfere with learning! Repeat offenders need to have a plan in place to intercept the negative effects on the class." Someone else mentioned, "We must go deeper with the curriculum. Some of us are feeling frustrated that we have to fly through the math, and students are not mastering concepts." The last comment was, "We want to eliminate the lack of vertical planning." She went on to elaborate that she wanted to plan with other math teachers, and that it was difficult to plan math with one grade

level math teacher at each grade. Group one ended their presentation with the teacher's comments.

The university staff member and building principal had closing remarks at the end of the presentation. The university faculty member immediately stood up and commented on processes of building a PLC. She mentioned the importance of all staff being prepared by reading the chapters in advance of the presentation. She also spoke about the staff being open to multiple perspectives, and that all voices are valued in the meetings. She spoke about a common theme that constantly arose throughout the session was that everyone is stressed. She went on to sympathize for a moment about the multiple changes in staff within the district, and the changes in the state and national mandates. She immediately said that the one goal of the PLC was to work collaboratively to be ahead of the changes that are coming.

The university faculty member offered to help groups with the work that they needed to complete for future presentations. She told the staff to come up with their own way of bringing the book to life. She said that groups needed to think about the core ideas from the book that they deem as important and share those ideas to bring about learning. She went on to say that the chapter mirrored the work that they worked on the previous year, and related to newly developed core values, vision and mission statement!

The building principal then chimed in and asked her staff members to turn to page 37 in the book. She talked about the need to be able to communicate with people outside of their normal group, and she spoke about teachers needing to teach the same skills to their students. According to the principal, "Collective efficacy should be used to empower our socioeconomically underprivileged students to perform well academically"

She went on to speak about how high self efficacy in students and their ability to perform academically along with high efficacy in teachers' ability to teach their students can produce higher academic abilities of students (Hord, Roussin, & Sommers, 2010). She mentioned the six tenants of a PLC are the six boxes on the front of the book: beliefs, values and vision, shared leadership, structured conditions, relational conditions, intentional learning and sharing professional practice. She went on to say, "Hearing things outside of the building about things inside of the building is awkward! It makes it hard if we are not going to talk to each other within the building. Give us the opportunity to respond to the issue at hand." She then went on to tell the staff that everyone needs to do their part in making sure that they are aligning themselves with the PLC that Hord, et al outlines.

Group Two Presentation

The second PLC book study presentation was scheduled on December 10, 2012 during Late Start. Late Start days were days that the students came to school on a two-hour delay, so staff could participate in professional development. Group Two gave an overview of Chapter 2 of the book. The focus of the presentation was on shared and supportive leadership. Some participants in Group Two were not available to present at 8:00. Two were in meetings, one teacher was absent, and the other did not show up until a couple minutes after 8:00. The staff meeting started at 8:05, so the principal made the decision to start off with the meeting with the district-wide safety video.

The presenters started the meeting off by having teachers complete a questionnaire about the first four cultural norms that affect school improvement. After

about three minutes, the group collected the quick questionnaire, and began the

presentation formally. The staff was directed to talk with one another about the scores

that they gave. Teacher 7 tallied the data from the mini-questionnaire while the staff

discussed the results with one another.

Teacher 5 said:

"We are focusing on the article, *Good Seeds Grow in Strong Cultures* on page 76

of the book. If our school culture thrives, then so will school improvement. The

teachers are the culture shapers! The professional staff has different talents and

knowledge bases. We need to use them all. Experimentation: we have to look for

better ways to increase student learning. We are all held accountable for high

expectations. We hold high expectations for our students. We must have high

expectations for ourselves. The PLC thing is something that many of us do not

want to do, especially with all of the other change initiatives that we have to

adjust to. We must have a good attitude about it, and try it, and see if it works.

Tangible support: We have to support each other. The first three have been

researched and well documented to improve our schools. Staff members are

leaders, and we need to flourish in our leadership!"

Teacher 6 focused on norms six–twelve that influenced school improvement. This

group member was an African – American fifth grade teacher who had two years left of

teaching before retiring. She was one of the three teachers who did not go through the

group interview that the majority of the staff went through.

Teacher 6 said:

"I have so much work to do, and did not want to do anything extra. But, as I began to read the chapter, I felt this was perfect for us. Caring, Celebration, and Humor is an area of focus in this section. We need to model for our kids. The kids are looking to us! We have to be on one accord. The cafeteria workers feel we are down on them. We need to be more caring towards each other. We can do this. We need to work on stepping up and doing the work that we need to do. My door is always open. Come in my classroom critique me, and share what you know. Lastly number 12. This is the month of December. We need to be excited. Twelve is Open and Honest Communication. What does number 12 say? Do we have honest and open communication? How many people think we can work on honest, and open communication. I should not be afraid to talk to someone because I am nervous that what I say get back to someone. We are walking on eggshells. We are a family, and we need to feel comfortable going to each other and critiquing the work that is done in the building. We need to be able to agree to disagree! I am here to work together with everyone and get the job done. We need to come in ready to work in a peaceful manner. Right here I have one goal, and that goal is to make each student pass the Ohio Achievement Assessment, and have a love for learning. Write down one reason why we scored a two in honest and open communication. I hope you feel comfortable coming to me."

Teacher 7 summarized the session by sharing that the 12 cultural norms that impact school improvement should be the compass that the building uses to increase student achievement.

The University faculty member began to compliment the presenters' honesty around the topics in the chapter. She spoke to the staff about how they have seen two models of how groups can present. She described how the first group took sections of the chapter, and how the second group focused on one area that they felt related most to the building up the culture of the school. She went on to say that as a group they had the opportunity to structure their presentation the way that they choose to do so. Once again she wanted to let the remainder presenters know that she was available to assist staff members in any capacity that they needed their for presentations. She gave her email address, and let the staff know that she is available to assist with future presentation preparation.

The following morning via e-mail on Decemeber11, 2012 the principal thanked Group Two for the presentation and discussion of chapter two. She expressed that they would continue to experience a variety of presentations and styles as they advanced through the book study.

The principal wrote:

The whole point of the PLC is staff empowerment. I hope that we are all gaining something from this process, and getting to know each other as well. If we choose to, we can create an awesome team that will effect needed change in our building and as a result there should be an increase in the achievement of our students.

This book study allowed teachers to openly discuss their concerns while continuing to drive the work that needed to be done to enhance the capacity of the members' abilities to collaborate to meet district and state goals. Teachers worked to rely

on each other and motivate each other to continue the work and move towards the

changes that were being implemented to advance student learning.

Group Three Presentation

The third PLC presentation was on Jan. 10, 2012 during the monthly scheduled

staff meeting. The meeting started out with the newly implemented Allen Eagle award

ceremony. This award was developed to enhance recognition of staff members who

demonstrated collegiality and provided support for staff members.

Group Three presented Chapter 3 of PLC. Their presentation focused on the

structure of a PLC. Teacher 9 started the presentation by asking the staff to name the

three vital components are part of a PLC. The staff members rattled off time, size of the

staff, and communication: daily emails and schedules. Next the presenters played a video

of a Speaker: Taylor Mali from the Teaching Channel. Once the video was over Teacher

9 summarized the video by saying, "It is all about the people: It does not matter if you

have the time especially if you do not get along with the staff." The presenters passed out

an article about collaboration by Garmston (as cited in Hord, Roussin & Sommers, 2010).

The staff completed an article review. Each group had a section to read, and questions to

ask. Then, each group presented their portion of the article to the staff. In summary, the

teachers said that everyone should share their ideas and give input during collaboration

times. Teacher 11 asked about the methods to sustain collaboration. According to the

teachers, the article highlighted that there must be a change in the school culture to reflect

staff dialoging and working together collaboration. Teacher 10 asked staff to write down

two goals for collaboration on the note card, one short-term for this year and one long-

term goal for next year. Staff members wrote their short and long term goals on the cards.

They were challenged to work towards their goals to assist with enhancing the PLC in the building.

The principal asked everyone to turn to page 112 in the book. She quoted Peter Senge (2000) "In a school that learns, people who may have traditionally been suspicious of one another…. recognize their common stake in the future of the school system, and the things they can learn from one another." She went on to say that the idea is that all individuals within a school can learn. "We want to stay refreshed in our learning! We have to comply to things but if you have to be forced to learn, you may want to take a look at why you are here. These PLCs are unique because the presenters present from their perspectives. Where have we heard about collaboration first?" A staff member said our vision statement. Then, the principal read Urban PDSs School's vision statement to close out the meeting.

Group Four Presentation

Group four was schedule to present the section on relational conditions. The date they were scheduled to present was on January 14, 2012 during a late start date. Late start days were days that students reported to school two hours after their normal start time. These days were delegated to implement school wide PD. Due to conflicts with scheduling of PD initiatives from the district, the presentation was put on hold until the beginning of the next school year. The new plan was for the group to present during the first staff get together of the next school year and start to build a collaborative culture.

Group Five Presentation

Group five presented on the topic of intentional collective learning and its application on February 14, 2013. The building principal was called out of the meeting

due to an emergency. The presentation started off with Teacher 18 setting the timer to 14

minutes, and promised the staff that they would be able to summarize the chapter within

that time frame. Teacher 17 asked, **"**What prevents you from learning something new?"

The teachers replied with the answers, **"**Time, screaming, I don't know, stepping out of

your comfort zone." Teacher 18 said, **"**In order to become a great learner, you have to be

willing to step out of your comfort zone." She said that adult learning is learned best

through dialogue. She went on and began talking about issues between different groups

of staff members.

Teacher 18 said:

There are issues between the office staff and teaching staff. There are issues

between special education staff and teaching staff. We had a tape of a city on a

hill. Everyone is yelling at each other, and not listening. For time's sake, we will

not play the video. I will send you the video in an email. The bottom line is we

need to become more personal. We need to be friendly and agreeable. We need to

be compassionate and concerned.

Teacher 18, the group member who set the timer began to talk about the

importance of listening to each other. She said that reflecting on what each other does

requires one to listen to the speaker. We need to be empathetic towards one another,

analyze and try to understand what the speaker is saying. We need not judge the speaker.

We should listen to what the speaker is saying.

Lastly, group five had the staff complete a quick analysis of how the staff accepts

change and innovation. The presenters asked staff members to make a line plot using a

Levels of Use Graph (Hord, Roussin, & Sommers, 2010) to show what the staff's typical

behaviors were in reference to connecting professional learning in the classroom. The focus of the learning being targeted on the graph was the elements of the PLC book study and practices in TBTs. The teachers began to plot X's on the graph to represent the stages of concerns and the number of teachers in at each stage. Teacher 17 spoke to her colleagues about needing to ask himself or herself where they were in relationship to implementing newly learned information into their practice. She said, "Change can be difficult or easier based on our ability to collaborate with one another, and hold each other accountable for the work being done here." According to the university faculty member, the group modeled the importance of adult learners within the PLC to make the learning come alive to the students.

Group 6 Presentation

Chapter 6 of the PLC book study was presented on March 13, 2013. This chapter was about sharing, critiquing, and enhancing instructional practices through teacher leadership. According to Hord, Roussin and Sommers (2010) Sharing professional practice is a formal action. "For example, a host teacher invites a visiting teacher to come to his or her classroom at an appointed time to observe an identified action or behavior. The visiting teacher observes, scripts notes, and discusses the observation with the host teacher after the visit. This activity is in the spirit of peers supporting peers" (Hord, Sommers, & Roussin 2010, p. 189).

Teacher 20 asked the group of teachers, "How many of you all have gone into each other's classroom and observed a colleague's practice?" Nine teachers raised their hands. Teacher 20 asked, "How many of you scripted the observed lesson, scheduled an appointment after the observation, and gave constructive feedback to the teacher that you

observed?" There was not a teacher who raised his/her hand about the scripting of the lesson and feedback. Teacher 20 asked staff members to speak to the members at their table about the possible power of scripting observed lessons and giving feedback to peers about the observed lesson. Teacher 19 asked staff members to report out their responses to the question about scripting lessons and giving feedback to peers. One staff member said, "Trust would have to be present amongst staff if that type of thing was going on." Another staff member said, "This type of work would allow us to become better, and streamline our practice before our formal observations took place by the principal." Teacher 15 went on to say that as lead teachers in a professional development school they should be coaching each other. Teacher 17 said, "We need to become a team, look at each other's strengths and help each other."

Teacher 14 gave an overview of the four conversation types according to Hord, Roussin, and Sommers (2010): parallel conversations, exchange conversations, adaptive conversations, and generative conversations. Parallel conversations state information without expectations of responses, and as a result nothing comes out the conversation. Exchange conversations can change the way concepts are understood. Perspectives are expanded because of the inclusion of different points of view and the exchange of information. Adaptive conversations can transform one's own views as well as those of others. In expanding the information or point of view, the learner can rearrange information or see things in new ways. Generative conversations distribute information, reorder thinking and also generate new ways of thinking and problem solving. Learning is advanced greatly with generative conversations (Hord, Roussin, & Sommers 2010). Teacher 15 asked the teachers to look at a table of the four terms in the book. Then, she

asked teachers to think about the types of conversations that they have with their

colleagues. She then, asked them to speak about which types of conversations are they

primarily engaged in with their peers? Fourteen out of 25 staff members agreed that the

majority of the conversations that they engaged in reached the exchange conversation.

Three said that they have engaged in some adaptive conversations while no teacher

admitted to engaging in the generative conversations that were needed to transform the

learning outcomes of staff.

Teacher 20 asked staff members to work with their table partners and discuss the

dynamics of teacher coaches. One teacher answered "Teacher coaches support staff

members; observe teachers and give feedback in the classroom." Teacher 14 then asked

about the ways that the role of the coach changed in the district that they worked in?

Another teacher volunteered and said, "Some coaches would come in the classroom and

teach lessons, and give feedback. Now, the coach's primary role seems to be to pass out

assessments, give teachers information regarding curriculum and collecting paperwork

and data." The instructional coach burst into tears, and some of the teachers around her

tried to console and support her while a couple of the teachers were openly laughing. The

principal immediately made it clear that there was nothing wrong with coaches and

teachers going to another classroom to observe other teachers. The principal noted that

the role of the coaches in the district changed a bit in the direction from past experiences.

The teachers spoke about the multiple roles of coaches, the importance of conversations,

and the ways that observing each other's practice with a purpose and giving each other

feedback could contribute to generative conversations that brought about the most

learning. Teacher 19 closed the presentation saying, "We have differences and strengths

as a staff! Are we really open to others? Do we offer our colleagues support? Do we express our feelings about what is going on? Are we really open for improvement?"

Teachers had multiple opportunities to reflect on their practices through the book study and collaborative planning times/ TBTs. Reflection and collaboration are critical components of growth for educators. Collaborative planning/TBTs provided teachers with the opportunity to observe the work that their students did, and measure their students' growth through formative and summative assessments. The work that teachers did with their peers during planning times allowed them to change their practices as needed to meet the needs of all students.

Teacher Leader Questionnaire

The questionnaire gave insight into teachers' perceptions around PLCs and professional development (PD) opportunities. The questionnaire asked teachers what they valued most in PD. Three teachers noted that the value of the information and resources presented or created should be authentic, and have an immediate use in the classroom. Ten teachers noted that PD should be conducted in a collaborative environment. Collaboration was described by teachers as creating resources together needed for the classroom, regular contact with team members, sharing ideas, learning from one another, supporting one another, being part of decision making, ongoing support to implement best practices with fidelity, trying to become one family, developing trust, and team building activities. The two themes that emerged from this question on the questionnaire primarily were resources that could be used in the classroom and collaboration.

Teachers were asked to write their personal definition of a professional learning

community. Sixteen of the teachers' definitions of PLCs related to increased quality teaching for student learning. Three teachers mentioned shared leadership that increases the learning outcomes of all stakeholders involved in the school community including students, parents, teachers, and administrators. One teacher wrote about problem solving. Three themes emerged from the question related to defining PLCs, increased quality of teaching and learning, shared leadership, and problem solving.

Teacher participation in PLCs was the theme of another question. The results of the questionnaire showed that 17 teachers had not participated in a PLC and four teachers had engaged in a PLC. The next question was if they participated in a PLC, what was the topic of study. Two teachers participated in culturally relevant practices PLC, one participated in best practices in literacy PLCs, and one teacher participated in a book study. The majority of the teachers within Urban PDS had no experience of participating in a PLC.

The teachers' perceptions on the possible effects of a PLCs implemented at Urban Elementary School was documented in the questionnaire. Fourteen participants' responded that PLCs would increase teaching practices or student achievement. Raising student achievement was the response given by ten teachers. Three participants responded that PLCs would allow for more skilled teaching. Two teachers responded that PLCs could allow for more problem solving, innovation and experimentation. Shared leadership was a theme that was cited by seven participants. The participants wrote about being involved in decision making, everyone having something to offer, school-wide leadership and students, staff taking responsibility for what happens in school, team support, cooperation and reduced isolation. Building trust was an outcome that could

stem from a PLC at Urban PDS according to the participants. Trusting Relationships included no side bar comments during meetings, having a supportive and caring environment, staff being honest, eliminating stress, building relationships with students, and embracing all students. One staff member wrote that the effects of a PLC on Urban PDS would probably be none because there was no buy in to PLC philosophies. The primary themes for answers to questions around the themes of PLC's and professional development were shared leadership, elevated levels of teaching practices, increased student achievement and trusting relationships.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis was given to staff members to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the PLC book study. According to the analysis half of the teachers who completed the SWOT analysis listed that the multiple district changes and initiatives impeded the work of the PLC. The comments about the multiple initiatives were listed under weaknesses or threats section of the form. Some of the statements about the limitations of the effectiveness of the study included, "All CCS district changes on top of PLC;" "District lead initiatives that inhibited PLC group presentations;" "Too many incentives this year and next year;" "Other district initiatives;" "Workload very full this year with lots of new initiatives." These comments spoke to the massive mounts of changes that took place within the school year of the study.

Collaborative Planning

The teachers within Urban Elementary School were given an eighty-minute weekly planning time to plan with their grade level teams. This planning time served as a

means to implement the initiatives that were driven by district and the school's PLC book study. This time was set for collaboration, data analysis, analysis of student work, analysis and critique of teaching strategies, best practices of peers, planning, and creating assessments. August through December planning was implemented in an informal manner. Teachers were professional and focused on the growth and learning of their students, but they did not have a refined process for analyzing data and implementing changes needed to change learning outcomes for students positively in a progressive manner.

During the first collaborative planning time in September teachers were given the Average Yearly Progress (AYP) Reading and Math Learning Targets for the 2012-2013 school year. The AYP reading targets were grade three 94.2%, grade four 93.7%, grade five 93.7%, and Grade six 95.2%. Math AYP targets were grade three 92.1%, grade four 93.4%, grade five 89.9%, and grade six 91.0%. The teachers were aware that the learning targets were non-negotiable and had to be met according to the Ohio Department of Education.

Table 4.1

2012-2013 Average Yearly Learning Targets

Grade	Reading	Math
Grade Three	94.2	92.1
Grade Four	93.7	93.4
Grade Five	93.7	89.9
Grade Six	95.2	91.0

The teachers used a data room and data cards as part of a framework for monitoring and reflecting on student growth. Data rooms were comprised of charts for every grade level for both reading and math. The charts were organized by the colors red, yellow and green. The red section housed the data cards for students who needed intervention. They yellow section of the chart housed the data cards for students who had not quite met the standard. The green section of the data chart housed the data cards for those students who were on or above level. Every student was assigned a separate math and reading data card. The data cards tracked district assessment scores. The data cards documented 13 monthly assessment scores ranging from OAA practice tests to district-wide common assessments in reading and math throughout the school year. The data recorded on the cards started with the students' previous years' Practice Ohio Achievement scores ended with the current year's May short cycle assessment scores for reading or math. Included on the data cards for both reading and math were subject, grade, gender, enrollment date, subgroup, and student name. The reflection process started with teachers coming with prepared data to be analyzed through discussion and feedback from peers to increase student learning.

The district administration team made clear that the focus of student learning was based on four driving questions. What are you learning? How will you use this in your life? What do you need to do to improve your work? How will you know if your work is good? Teachers closely monitored their planning and instruction to ensure that students would be able to answer the driving questions after a lesson. The teacher planning time became more formal and refined during the months of January through May by using the platform of Teacher Based Teams (TBTs).

In the months of September, October and November the teachers continued to focus their efforts on analyzing student data to increase learning during collaborative planning times. The data collected for reading and math included practice OAAs, two short cycle math assessments, and a short cycle reading/writing assessment. Teachers also agreed upon the forms that would be used for rubrics and student data notebooks. The teachers were constantly grouping and regrouping students for intervention to fill the gaps in their learning. The teachers discussed instructional techniques that would best reach all learners.

A December collaborative planning period was focused on climate and culture. The teachers were required to sit as grade level teams and rank order the top ten students with disciplinary problems. Those students academic standing was analyzed in relation to their behavior. The TBT members were charged with ensuring that the behavior lists were given to BLT members.

Collaborative planning was built into the fabric of Urban PDS. Questionnaire data revealed that the staff at Urban PDS valued collaboration with peers. Some teachers noted that they needed more training in data analysis, and using the data to change their instructional practices and using the data to create small groups for intervention.

Teacher Based Teams (TBTs)

Teacher based teams are collaborative teams at the classroom/instructional level that implement procedures for the effective use of data to assess the impact of student learning, and to make decisions about formative teaching and learning (State Support Team 9, 2012). All teachers played a role on TBTs within the building that they teach. Each grade level is considered a TBT. On the morning of Monday, October 8,

Superintendent Two wrote in an email,

> " Our entire district instructional staff will be trained in the Teacher Based Team
> (TBT) process. At that point in time, all components of the Ohio Improvement
> Plan (OIP) will be implemented in our District. We will all work together to move
> from implementation to making these processes part of our system. There will be
> additional support at the building and district levels provided by State Support
> Team – and others as needed." (C. Smith, personal communication 2012)

Teachers were trained in the process for TBTs on October 8, 2012. Teachers were
provided with support and the central administrative staff, building administrator, and
instructional coach applied pressure on teachers to ensure that the TBT process was
calibrated within each building. District personnel and staff developers sent each building
a video of a successful TBT. Staff members were given opportunities to practice the
TBT process during weekly collaborative planning times.

In addition to the work being implemented in collaborative-based teams, Urban
PDS began to focus on implementing the five-step process in January, and the BLT gave
the TBTs feedback regarding the work that they did. In December 2012 and May 2013
the TBT members completed an assessment of the TBT process within the building using
the OIP Implementation Criteria and Rubric. The teachers within the building set a goal
for TBTs, and wanted to progress to the accomplished level by the middle of the 2013-
2014 school year.

During the month of January, Urban PDS began to transition the traditional
collaborative planning times into the newly TBTs. The district set protocols such as
following details related to the five-step process of times for collaboration and planning.

The planning form had a five-step focus. The first step involved collection and charting

data. Teachers were expected to have their classroom data (formative assessments) scored

and ready to go before the meeting started. The grade level teachers had five minutes to

combine their classroom data and recognize student data, based on pre and post

assessment data. The next 10 – 15 minutes were spent on analyzing student responses to

questions to gain an understanding of student learning. Step three was earmarked for

brainstorming and listing instructional strategies that teachers would use within their

classrooms to increase student understanding of the skills taught. Teachers were required

to share what the teacher and students would do in the classroom to increase student

learning within a ten-minute timeframe. The last step involved documenting the common

assessment data that would be used to document evidence of student learning.

Confusion around the five-step process grew because it was a new initiative

within the school district. The staff was unsure of the amount of time to spend on a TBT

form's five-step process. Staff members reported that they began to feel overwhelmed as

they felt the need to complete a TBT form with the five-step process within a week's

timeframe.

Although confusion remained around the Five-step process for TBTs, in February,

teachers were required to complete Rapid Reset (Accelerate 30) forms to document a

need and the weekly interventions that were provided within a month's time. Each

classroom teacher was required to complete a form based on the content that he/she

taught. The school focused on extended responses aligned to the Ohio Achievement

Assessment for grades three-five in reading and math while grades kindergarten through

second focused on a reading assessment known as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early

Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Teachers who taught grades three-five were required to develop rubrics and guidelines that allowed students to understand the learning outcomes for answering two and four point extended response questions. The implementation of rubrics was no problem for teachers as this was already a common practice for them. Teachers began to panic and feel overwhelmed about the Rapid Reset (Accelerate 30 forms) as indicated by the conversations during TBTs and BLTs.

TBTs served as a time to organize extended learning opportunities for students. An afterschool tutoring program and Saturday School was spearheaded by a fourth grade reading teacher to enhance students' learning opportunities outside of the normal school day for reading and math. The Saturday School program allowed students to be engaged in three extra hours of teaching and learning to enhance their understanding of test taking strategies while being exposed to higher level questioning on a more frequent basis. Saturday School lasted for six weeks prior to OAA testing. Teachers within the building had the opportunity to engage in after school tutoring for four weeks prior to the statewide assessments for math and reading.

During the month of March teachers continued their Response to Intervention efforts, and documented evidence of student growth in relation to either DIBELS or the extended response questions depending upon the grade level that they taught. Teachers collaborated and developed plans to accelerate their student's learning to increase their ability to score higher on the statewide reading and math assessment. Educators at Urban PDS discussed and documented the learning that took place in school, after school, and during Saturday School. All grade level teachers reported that their students were progressing although at varying degrees.

April and May were the months that teachers used to reflect on their teaching practices throughout the year. The OAA was given to students during the month of April. Teachers utilized TBTs to continue to document evidence of student growth. TBTs in May were used to reflect on the current year to focus refined efforts for the next school year to come 2013 - 2014. Teachers were required to continue extension activities to prepare students for the following year. They analyzed the post data from the fourth nine-week common assessment data to focus on where their students were and where they needed to be to be successful by the following year. The remainder of the year served as filling learning gaps and engaging students who were on level academically in extension activities to stretch students' thinking abilities.

The themes that emerged from question three were relationships built on trust, collaboration, and reflection and openness to improve. The participants expressed the need to develop authentic relationships and becoming more friendly, compassionate and concerned with one another. The participants also felt the need to rely on each other to accomplish the multiple change initiatives that they were experiencing.

Question 4: How can a professional learning community (PLC) within a professional development school (PDS) create an environment that keeps the students at the cornerstone of everything teachers do?

The educators at Urban PDS worked to place students at the center of all that they did within the organization. Structures and conditions were set to enhance the PLCs within the organization. A new mission and vision statement drove the shared values and vision of the organization. The district administration and school administration outlined structures that enabled shared and supported leadership to flourish. Sharing personal

space was a practice that was at the beginning stages of becoming an expectation for staff to grow and learn from one another. Relational conditions and shared leadership were areas that could use enhancement for the practitioners in the school. The teachers in the school participated in intentional learning opportunities within collaborative planning and TBTs. The teachers rarely set up times for intentional learning with their peers that included visiting other's instructional and pedagogical practices. Therefore, the teachers in the Urban PDS needed to move outside of their classrooms and view the quality of teaching of their peers to increase the teaching of all teachers within the organization.

Structures and Conditions

The building principal and district central administration team played a major role in creating the structures and conditions of PLCs to enhance student learning. Weekly eighty minute collaborative planning times were mandated throughout the district to allow teachers to focus on student assessment data and the implementation of instructional practices during the first half of the year. Training for BLTs and TBTs were provided for staff members to transition the district into a more calculated and reflective process for improving instructional practices and students' academic performance during the last portion of the school year. Once the transition was made from collaborative planning times to TBTs, teachers planned daily for 45 minutes in the LRC before the students came in the classrooms. The structures and conditions supported both academic and climate/cultural shifts to enhance the academic achievement of all students equitably.

Building time for collaboration was critical to the implementation of PLCs within the building. The building principal relied heavily on emails and weekly newsletters to deliver information to staff that would normally be given during staff meetings. The

emails and newsletters freed up time for the book study initiative to be implemented during staff meeting times. The principal made it clear for teachers that the book study work would be completed during the school day. This ensured that teachers participated in the PLC initiatives. The principal outlined meeting places for staff collaboration, so that they could learn from one another to increase student achievement. The teachers were aware that they were to meet in the data rooms for collaborative planning and TBT meetings. The library was the meeting place for the book study. The principal at Urban PDS played a critical role in reforming the school into a PLC (Barth, 2001; Fullan, 2002).

The PLC presenters on the topic of structures of a PLC asked staff members to focus on the types of structures that facilitated a PLC. Teachers spoke about time, size of staff and collaboration. Throughout the presentation the topic shifted once again to trusting colleagues and working together. The staff at Urban PDS established a protocol for collaboration while in the PD session. The teachers felt that everyone should share ideas and give input during collaboration times. The presenters of the book study gave teachers an opportunity to write two goals for collaborating at work. They challenged teachers to work to enhance their communication skills to become better practitioners. The principal added a Peter Senge quote that premised that removing suspicions of one another to become a learning community. The principal read the school's newly created vision statement that focused on the collaboration of staff, community and parents working together to meet the goals set for the school.

The SWOT analysis of the book study revealed that teachers felt that they had limited time to work with their book study teams due to the district filling PD days that were planned for the book study to push out initiatives that they deemed important related

to safety and security within the district and climate and culture initiatives. Although the researcher, building principal, and a faculty member from the university worked a plan to ensure that the book study was planned in advance, the structures that were built within the district did not allow for total autonomy of site based professional development within the school. Site-specific PD tailored to the needs of each school within the district would enhance the likelihood that the PD book study sessions would have adequate time to be completed, and embedded within the teachers day.

The Ohio Standards for Professional Development (2015) documents the need for teachers to work in professional learning communities (PLCs). In element 2.3 of the PD standards it is noted that there must be support systems and structures for professional learning created within schools. The structures and systems that should be implemented into the fabric of schools include the creation of learning communities that provides teachers with an opportunity to improve their teaching and learning while working in teams organized by grade level, subject area, interests, roles, and goals. The school district leadership team and building principal ensured that the teachers in Urban PDS had an opportunity to engage in professional learning that met the need of teachers.

Shared Beliefs and Values

The educators, parents, and community members at Urban PDS valued the new vision and mission statements that they developed together over a year – long process. The vision statement is Urban School students will achieve their personal best in academics, life skills, and citizenship in a safe environment with the support of staff, families, and community collaboration. The mission statement is: We will engage students in nurturing, authentic, culturally relevant and rigorous learning experiences that

empower them to become life-long learners. The mission and vision documents drove the focus of everything that was done within the building. The principal embedded the new vision and mission statements on the documents that she sent out via email, through word of mouth, and on documents that she gave staff members. The principal saved a spot on the agenda for an activity that focused on the mission and vision statements at the staff retreat at the beginning of the year.

The book study presenters gave the study participants an opportunity to speak about their shared beliefs in relationship to the expectations that they had for students. They spoke about the importance of having a culture of academic optimism within Urban PDS. As a group they defined collective efficacy as having a strong commitment and belief in student and teacher ability. Lastly, the presenters for the book study spoke about alleviating stress by abandoning practices to eliminate stress.

The Teacher Leader questionnaire data also uncovered themes in relation to the shared beliefs of teachers within Urban PDS. The last portion of the questionnaire required the participants to report their philosophy of education including what they believed about student as learner, role of teacher, and the role of school in education. In the student as learner section two of the participants described the learner in terms of teachers' first providing an inviting climate for all students then, students should work hard and strive to be better. In continuation with the responses to the student as a learner section, one teacher reported that students should have the opportunity to be curious and inspired to learn. Three teachers responded that students should take risks to learn new things. Two educators mentioned that students should take active roles to learn. Students should work hard according to a participant. A teacher reported that students should

strive to be better. A teacher wrote that students should collaborate to increase their

learning. The themes about students as learners were positive climates students needed to

have a thriving mindset to learn and collaborate. Once again, as reported in the above

section eighteen teachers reported that their job was to cause learning.

The participants' responses to the role and function of school and education were

varied. Eleven participants described the school as having a role in increasing the

academic achievement of students. Four teachers wrote that schools should prepare

students to successfully function in society as adults. Providing a safe environment for

students was one teacher's response. The themes in the role of school and education were

primarily increasing student knowledge and preparing students to be successful citizens

within their communities.

Shared and Supportive Leadership

The building principal at Urban PDS wanted teachers to take on leadership roles

to increase student academic achievement. She encouraged teacher leadership by creating

an environment that was conducive for adults within the organization to thrive and grow.

The district administration team played a critical role in outlining the DLT, BLT and

TBT processes that would be implemented with fidelity to embrace leadership for all

educators within the organization. The district leadership team (DLT) members included

a building principal and a teacher from each building within the district. DLT members

met monthly to align the actions of all educators within the district to increase student

learning. The DLT reported district initiatives to the BLT. The BLT pushed out agendas

to the TBT that were derived from the DLT. The TBT members are the educators who

drove the work within the classrooms, and reported back to the BLT about the

effectiveness of the initiatives that were given to them while updating BLT members about practices that work. The job of the BLT was then to report to the DLT the needs of the teachers and effective practices that would increase the learning levels of all individuals within the district.

The building principal attempted to enhance leadership responsibilities of staff by also engaging them in a book study around the practices of a PLC. Teachers in the PLC study took on participatory roles to solve problems and increase their understanding around the kids that they serviced. They used reflective dialogue that focused on the growth and learning of their students within collaborative planning periods, TBTs and the PLC book study. Collaborative planning times and TBTs provided opportunities for teachers to focus on academic and climate and culture data related to students. See below some remarks of participants around shared and supportive leadership.

The book study presenters of chapter two spoke about teachers having the responsibility to shape the culture of the school. Teacher 5 told staff members that they all had strengths, and that they all had unique talents and knowledge bases. He went on to express professional teachers were responsible for utilizing each other's talent to maximize all of their potential. He spoke about the multiple new initiatives happening within the district, and how the book study was not appealing to most individuals within the organization. He followed up saying that they needed to work through the process to see the learning as a result of the PLC book study. He closed his section of the chapter study by saying that teachers should be flourishing in their leadership.

Teacher 6, a presenter for chapter two of the study, talked about her hesitation to participate in the study because of the overload of work that she had to do for her

students, and development related to the new initiatives. She spoke about the need for the

staff to work on open and honest communication to increase the learning levels of all

individuals within the school. She commented on the fact that after she read the first

chapter of the book, she knew that the book study was something that the staff needed.

She spoke about the questionnaire results that they gave staff at the beginning of their

presentation. She asked staff why open and honest communication was scored low as a

staff. She then encouraged the teachers to come to her and feel free to critique her

practices if needed. The teachers discussed their concerns around trust within the

building while looking at deliberate and planned methods to enhance the teaching

practices of the individuals within the building.

The questionnaire and SWOT analysis that teachers completed hinted to the

possibilities of shared leadership opportunities and the opportunity for growth in the area

of collaboration. Teachers were asked to document their personal strengths and weakness

in relation to teaching. Collaboration with colleagues was strength for two teachers. One

teacher listed collaboration as an area of needed improvement in the questionnaire. Two

teachers' personal professional development goals were about collaborating with

colleagues to meet student needs. They reported that they wanted to have a deeper

understanding around the collaborative teaching model and to be active participants in

PLC's. Teachers were asked to write their personal definition of a PLC. Increased quality

of teaching and learning, shared leadership, and problem solving were themes that

emerged from the PLC definition. The SWOT analysis results that were analyzed at the

end of the study showed that teachers felt overwhelmed by the multiple initiatives. The

teachers felt that they would have been more vested in the book study portion of the PLC

if they did not have so many responsibilities unrelated to the PLC.

According to Ohio Educator's Professional Development Standard 2, leadership capacity for educators are grounded in professional learning including the collaborating in teams and making decisions about professional learning. The teachers at Urban PDS had the opportunity to collaborate in teams during collaborative planning times and TBTs. Teachers had the opportunity to make decisions around best practices for student learning. They analyzed data, created lesson plans, and decided on the best approaches to teaching and learning to meet student needs. Teachers were also engaged in leading sections of a book study, and they were encouraged to plan the study session to engage their peers in collective learning opportunities around PLCs. Throughout the study, teachers were engaged in multiple opportunities to lead their peers.

Intentional Collective Learning

Once again, collaborative planning and TBT times provided staff with optimal opportunities for growth and learning. Student achievement was measured during collaborative planning times and TBTs. The teachers worked through the five-step process which included collect and chart data to identify how students are progressing, analyze student work specific to the data, establish shared expectations for implementing specific effective changes in the classroom, implement changes across all classrooms and collect, chart, and analyze pre and post data.

Teacher 18 who was a presenter of group five of the book study said that stepping outside of their comfort zones would promote learning. The presenter began talking about group issues within the school. The conversation shifted towards listening to each other,

and being empathetic towards one another in a nonjudgmental manner to create growth and allow for innovation.

Book study group five also had the staff do a quick analysis of how they accepted change and innovation to increase their learning around new practices in instruction. The presenters asked staff members to make a line plot using a Levels of Use Graph (Hord, 2010) to show what the staff's typical behaviors were in reference to connecting professional learning in the classroom. The focus of the learning targeted on the graph was the elements of the PLC book study and practices in TBTs. The teachers were engaged in reflective inquiry to improve their practices (NCATE, 2008) as they began to plot X's on the graph to represent the stages of concerns and the number of teachers in at each stage. A group five presenter said that implementing the newly learned information into TBTs was critical for growth. Another presenter said, "Change can be difficult or easier based on our ability to collaborate with one another, and hold each other accountable for the work being done here." The presentation allowed teachers to understand that cultural change required a change in their mindsets to meet the needs of students (Fullan, 2002).

The teachers also came to an agreement that they needed to trust each other and find a consensus on the way that they worked. The building principal mentioned to staff members that a goal of a PLC is to build trust in one another as team members and to be ahead of the changes (Dufour) to meet the needs of the students at Urban PDS. According to the university faculty member, the group modeled the importance of adult learners within the PLC making the learning come alive to themselves for the enhancement of students' academic performance. The group presentation focused on trusting each other,

so that everyone could be held accountable for their actions, and move toward improved practices in teaching and learning.

Standard Six for Ohio professional Development (2015) focuses on applying research on change and sustaining support for implementation of professional learning. The goal is to build educators knowledge on the research of change. Teachers were not given much preparation on the processes of change within the PLC at Urban PDS before they engaged in the multifaceted PLC within the school. The developers of the PLC at Urban PDS could have included some articles, videos and discussion around change processes to prepare teachers about the way that change happens.

According to the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession (2008) Standard 6.3, teachers should be engaged in collaboration and communication with other teachers, administrators and school and district staff to support student learning (ODE, 2008). According to the indicators on the rubric, the teachers' collaboration and communication efforts at Urban PDS aligned with the proficient level. The proficient level requires teachers to establish productive relationships with the school community and consult with and learn from one another. Teachers are also required to consult with and learn from colleagues in planning and implementing their own instruction. In order for the teachers at Urban PDS to move to the accomplished level on the rubric they would be required to engage in professional dialogue from peer observations that generated feedback, coaching, and collegial learning opportunities around the teaching practices observed.

The SWOT analysis that some teachers completed, lead the researcher to an understanding that some strengths related to the book study included, "Greater support and appreciation for each other's work;" "team building and unity;" " Opened thoughts

and ideas that otherwise would not have come forward as a staff;" "Opportunity to work with staff you typically don't work with (diverse);" " Discussion of PLC monthly;" " Improved building climate;" "The idea of getting teachers on different grade levels to collaborate was good;" "The collaboration was good… getting together as a group;" "I liked the idea of improving in the collaboration process;" "Making changes as abuilding;" " Gave me some connection to Urban PDS;" "Always learning something;" "Activities were beneficial;" " Groups pulled a lot of good, useful information out of their chapters." In conclusion, collaborative practices were the most critical strengths of the PLC book study according to teachers who completed the SWOT analysis. Collaboration provided teachers with opportunities to learn and grow from one another while giving each other an opportunity to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the staff members as a whole.

Sharing Personal Space

Peers supporting peers by visiting, critiquing practices, and giving feedback on instructional and pedagogical practices is a critical component in keeping students at the center of everything done in schools. Urban PDS School was set up intentionally to allow student teachers and field experience teachers to observe the practices of teachers weekly or daily. Teachers were required to host a student teacher in their classroom at least once a year. Teachers were also assigned up to four field experience teachers each semester to develop pre-service teachers' teaching skills. Resident Educators and Resident Educator Mentors went into each other's classrooms to observe and reflect on each other's

practice. Teachers involved in the Resident Educator program had the opportunity to reflect on their practices through the lenses of video recordings. Some teachers had the opportunity to reflect on their practices with assistance of their colleagues in Urban PDS. Although the state has organized protocol for reflection within the RE program, there was not a reflection on practices piece built into the fabric of Urban PDS that involved video recording lessons. Nine of the 20 teachers at Urban PDS reported that they had the opportunity to observe each other's practice.

Trust should be built into the fabric of the climate and culture of schools to engage teachers in sharing personal space in schools. According to Teacher 18, Group 5 participant in the book study:

There are issues between the office staff and teaching staff. There are issues between special education staff and teaching staff. We had a tape of a city on a hill. Everyone is yelling at each other, and not listening. For time's sake, we will not play the video. I will send you the video in an email. The bottom line is we need to become more personal. We need to be friendly and agreeable. We need to be compassionate and concerned.

Although there were conversations about the possibilities of observing each other's teaching practices within Urban PDS, teachers did not have the opportunity to do so in a way that would impact the change of their practices for optimal student growth. Nine of the teachers observed each other's practices, but they did not give feedback on the practices that they observed. Teachers spoke about the benefits of observing each other's practices including higher performances on their teaching evaluations, and

increased student achievement. The teachers also spoke about being a team and building on each other's teaching skills by using the staff's strengths through a coaching model.

Data that emerged from the questionnaire revealed that two teachers were interested in gaining more insight into the collaborative team teaching model. Two third grade teachers and two fourth grade teachers had teaching assignments that allowed them to merge two grade level classes into one classroom. They shared teaching responsibilities. One teacher took the lead in teaching reading and social studies to all of the students while the other teacher led math and science.

Teachers were given a SWOT analysis form to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the book study. According to a SWOT analysis feedback form teachers wrote, "Too many teachers were unwilling to work with particular teachers." Another form read, "Staff is not a team as a whole.... Small teams of staff can work together, but we're not united as a school. Two teachers wrote about not feeling confident in presenting information to their peers. The feedback led the researcher to an understanding that staff needed to engage in opportunities to build trust, and allow all voices to be heard within the organization. Once trust is established, teachers can learn and grow from one another to enhance student growth.

Ohio Standard Six for the Teaching Profession (2008) focuses on teachers having the ability to collaborate and communicate with one another. Collaboration and learning from one another primarily took place in collaborative planning times with grade level teams. The teachers had time to analyze data, assessments, and lesson plans in teams. Those actions aligned staff members to the proficient level on the rubric for the teaching standards. In order to move to the accomplished level teachers would need to move into

each other's classrooms to engage in more collegial learning activities that allowed for constructive feedback.

Standards within the professional development standards for educators 2015 outline the need to frontload educators about change process and adult learning theory. Standard five for the Ohio Educator Professional Development Standards articulate the need to develop and share knowledge around adult learning theory. Sharing knowledge with teachers around the ways that adults develop would enhance their knowledge around presenting information to their peers. Standard Six outlines the need to inform teachers about research on change and the sustainment of change. Teachers within Urban PDS could have been more prepared to work through the multiple changes and initiatives that they were engaged in throughout the year if they had been privy to the research on change and adult learning theory.

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Summary

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Chapter four is a reporting of the events that happened throughout the school year and study related to multiple change initiatives that teachers had to endure while leading their peers in professional development. The researcher gave a detailed report of the book study that was implemented to share the opportunity that staff members had to lead their peers. This book study reporting gave insight into the willingness, preparedness, and readiness of staff members' to lead through change within a PDS. The detailed outline also demonstrated the way that building leadership approached learning opportunities for teachers within the school. A reporting of questionnaire answers was documented. The documentation of the questionnaire gave insight to the learning levels of the staff

members in reference to teacher leadership, professional learning communities, and reported teachers' insights to their own desired learning and growth opportunities.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions

This study documented the evolution of a PLC within a PDS within the midst of change initiatives. Teachers within the study were given the opportunity to participate in a book study about PLC's while attempting to implement the PLC practices within their classrooms, collaborative planning times, and TBTs. The primary goal of PLCs is enhanced teacher practices for student achievement (Hord, 2010). This chapter outlines

the conclusions drawn from the year-long documentation of professional development processes at Urban PDS. This chapter offers implications for practice in the education field, and transferability in PDSs and similar schools with teacher leaders.

Review of Methodology

The study questions were answered using a qualitative ethnographic case study. Urban Elementary School was chosen because the building was a PDS, and the researcher worked in the setting that the study was completed. The study documented the participation of 20 teachers who taught Pre-Kindergarten through sixth grade in an urban setting. The researcher used observations, field notes, documents and artifacts to understand the views of the participants.

Question 1: How do nationwide, statewide, and district initiatives impact teachers' behaviors within a professional development school?

The 2012-2013 school year was full of initiatives driven from the national and state levels within the field of education. Urban PDS was in the fourth year of operation, and the building principal and university faculty members were ready to push the PDS initiative to operation levels that are considered high. This push for growth and development occurred in the midst of the multiple changes within the district. Some of the changes included the three changes of the district superintendent and the new state initiatives such as the implementation of the Common Core Standards, Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES), Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) initiatives: Building Leadership Teams (BLTs) and Teacher Based Teams (TBTs), multiple mandated professional development sessions on top of the classroom teaching responsibilities that

all teachers are required to do, and the obligations that teachers within a professional development school including field experience teachers and student teachers.

The teachers within Urban PDS expressed their concerns about leading student teachers while they were beginning to learn the new curriculum standards at the time called the Common Core. Teachers had to develop themselves on the Common Core Standards because the official training was not offered to teachers until May. The questionnaire results showed that teachers wanted training around the Common Core Standards earlier in the year, so that they could mentor their student teachers in a meaningful manner. Although teachers were given websites that had the Common Core Standards (CCS) broken down for them accompanied by sample assessments and activities, the teachers felt that their should have been some job embedded training around the CCS. The training preferred was for grade level teachers to have an opportunity to work in teams to dissect the standards and create learning targets at their grade level. Teachers did not have the opportunity to engage in that activity as extensively as they wished. The training provided in the spring gave teachers an opportunity to work through one language arts standard within the framework of the FIP training session. Teachers were given some time and the opportunity to work through CCS once a month during late start days with their grade level teams. The CCS's work aligned with PD that shows that one-shot professional development offerings with support enhance understanding to change adult behaviors (Darling Hammond, 2010; Reeves, 2010).

The BLT meetings became arduous for teachers because BLT members were required to meet twice a month after school. The teachers met to discuss the building data

that teachers documented on student data cards that were housed in the data room, organize the transition from collaborative planning times to TBTs, manage Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) agenda items and stream line the changes that were to be implemented. Results of the BLT implementation process survey according to the BLT members were Beginning in December and Developing in May. The Building Leadership Team still had work to do to become an effective operating system of support within the building.

Collaborative Planning/ TBTs

Teachers at Urban PDS and all other teachers within the district had to undergo a transformation process to move their collaboration with their peers from collaborative planning times to TBTs. Many of the change initiatives that the district underwent were pushed through TBTs and collaborative planning times. The teachers had a difficult time understanding the value of the five-step process, but towards the end of the year started understanding the process more clearly. The framework for TBTs was more formal than collaborative planning time and required each part of the TBT to be set within a timeframe. Some of the changes that were channeled through collaborative planning times and TBTs included the use of data cards, data pocket charts, 30-day Plans, and the TBT five step process. Results of the TBT implementation process survey according to the TBT members were Beginning in December and Developing in May. TBT was also far away from operating at an optimal level to be successful.

Book Study

The participants' statements and actions showed their reactions to changes that occurred throughout the school year at Urban PDS. The theme of being overwhelmed

with work initiatives was prevalent throughout the study. A Group One participant

mentioned that all of the data collection required by the district was cumbersome.

Teacher 6 said that the staff did not want one more thing on their plates, and felt that the

book study was added work. She said that before beginning to read the book, she felt that

it was too much work. As she read she felt that the study was exactly what the staff need

to become more unified. Two participants in Group 1 mentioned that they did not see a

need for the OIP.

In all five sessions presented, the theme of trust surfaced. A teacher participant in

Group two spoke about trusting each other and being on one accord. She went on to

invite her colleagues into her classroom to critique her instructional practices and share

their knowledge with her. She asked her peers to reflect on whether or not they as a staff

work in an environment where honest and open communication flourished. She

mentioned that their were staff divisions, and a disconnect between the cafeteria workers

and the teaching staff. She went on to speak about staff walking on egg shells, and being

unable to communicate with one another due to a fear of their words being misconstrued.

Teacher 6 had goals for her students that included ensuring each of her students passed

the statewide assessments, and to have a love for learning. She ended her part of the PD

by stating that she hoped that the staff felt comfortable coming to her. In another PD

session, a book study presenter spoke about the positive possibilities of having a PLC if

the resource of time was available. She went on to mention that the PLC would

functioning at a minimal level if staff members did not get along with each other. In

another session, the presenters spoke about having issues between different sections of

staff members including the office staff, special education staff and teaching staff. A

group member spoke of being passionate and concerned with one another. Lastly, Teacher 20 from Group 6 asked teachers if they have had the opportunity to get into each other's classrooms. A participant mentioned that to observe and give feedback to each other, they needed to trust one another especially with the multiple initiatives that they had to partake in. The teachers within the PDS were recruited to the school based on their past teaching records. The multiple initiatives that the district and state launched made experienced teachers feel confused and overwhelmed, and they experienced what Kotter (2011) deems as change fatigue.

Danielson (2015) asserted.

"I hear it everywhere I go: "initiative fatigue." The common-core standards are being implemented in more than 40 states, requiring significant shifts in instructional practice. At the same time, major teacher-evaluation reforms are taking hold. Too often, educators experience these changes as discord at best, contradictory and confusing at worst."

Reeves (2010) noted that multiple initiatives in schools are increasing while resources remain constant.

Supporting one another in the midst of the changes happening within the district was a third theme from the book study PD sessions. Although the teachers voiced concerns for the multiple initiatives and the lack of trust that they sometimes had for each other, they stressed the need for supporting one another as staff members to enhance each other's growth. The second group that presented spoke about having a good attitude and working through stressful times together. Teachers within another session spoke about motivating one another through the collaboration process. The teachers wrote about

having a need for collective efficacy and trust (Angelli, 2011) within the SWOT analysis. Teachers articulated during the book study the need for changes in their collaborative practices with their peers.

Leadership was distributed to teachers by the principal at Urban PDS as she gave them opportunities to lead PD in the book study and in TBTs within collaborative learning settings (Sanocki, 2013). The building principal and university faculty members consistently spoke about teachers being supportive to one another and sharing leadership opportunities during the book study PLC (Ryan, 1999). The building principal and university faculty member supported staff members and offered staff assistance with enhancing the PD sessions that they were required to present to their peers on multiple occasions. One teacher wrote in the SWOT analysis form that she would have benefited from having a more scripted format for presenting the PLC study chapters to peers. The teachers at Urban PDs did not take advantage of the university faculty member willing to assist teachers with crafting PD sessions. The first presentation that was modeled for the staff by the researcher and university faculty member did not give her enough direction to present information from the book to her peers. A template could have been provided for teachers to outline their PD sessions to make the learning more precise from the book.

Question 2: What are teachers' perceptions of what their role is within a professional development school?

Teachers in professional development schools serve as collaborative decision makers, peer coaches, mentors, teacher-educators, curriculum and assessment developers, researchers, university adjuncts, and problem solvers (Darling-Hammond, 1995). According to the questionnaire, the teachers at Urban PDS felt that the job of the educator

was to teach students and ensure that learning and understanding was prevalent amongst the children that they served. Data from a statewide database demonstrated that the teachers at Urban PDS had a hold on increasing students' understanding of the concepts that were taught to them. Some teachers at Urban PDS had previous positions that prepared them to be teachers in a PDS. Those teachers were previous instructional coaches, and new teacher mentors in buildings that they served in prior to teaching at Urban PDS. Several of the teachers at Urban PDS had to be reminded of the duties that they signed up for by applying to teach in the PDS school that they were teaching in. The teachers in the first two presentations were not as prepared as the principal and university staff would have liked them to be. The teachers who presented appeared to lack confidence while they presented. Some of the teachers in a later book presentation tried to rush through the presentation to get it over with.

The teachers lacked confidence when they first began to collaborate with teachers outside of their grade level team members to present a professional development session to their peers. During some of the PD sessions in the beginning session of the book study, the teachers had to be reminded that their roles within a PDS are broader than the teacher in a traditional school. The principal consistently provided coaching during the book study PD sessions by asking teachers to turn to certain pages of the book, and having them reflect more deeply on the sections as related to their practices that she deemed as important. The university faculty member offered her assistance and support to teachers who would be presenting on later dates (Evans, 1996). Fullan (2002) wrote about the implementation dip when implementing new initiatives. There were some difficulties

with teachers presenting to their peers especially since some of them did not provide professional development for their staff members before the book study initiative.

Some of the teachers completed a SWOT analysis around the book study PLC. This informal analysis took into consideration the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and, threats around the PLC book study. Speaking to the weaknesses of the study and improvement opportunities, approximately half of the teachers who completed the SWOT analysis wrote that the book that was read for the PLC study was a bit boring and difficult to adapt for presentations due to the lack of time that was allotted in some of the presentations. The activities in the book had time limits that ranged from $60 - 90$ minutes. The times that the principal allotted for book study presentations were approximately 30 minutes. Time was limited due to the multiple initiatives that the district had set for the district. In order to fully develop the concepts from the chapter, teachers had to be strategic professional development planners. Therefore, the university faculty member offered help to teachers to guide teacher presenters (Evans, 1996) through the process of capturing the central theme of the topics, and creating a plan for their presentation. The researcher reserved to place blame solely on teachers for their participation or lack of participation in the book study portion of the PLC. Time limitations partially contributed to the teachers having to work their way through the PD and not feeling as confident as they could have presenting to their peers

A limitation that affected the outcome and lack of time to complete the PD sessions had to do with the principals within the district having limited autonomy of site based professional development for individual schools. The district academic goal for math and reading was by the end of the 2014 school year all students will improve on

local and statewide and local assessments by 5% in reading and math. An action step to increase the likelihood of an increase in scores was to implement professional development to teachers was to "provide strategies to teachers to incorporate into their classroom instruction through content focused professional development utilizing intervention coaches, literacy coaches, and department chairs." The PD strategy did not include the building principal and teachers being in charge of the development of teachers on a site-based model. BLTs should have had the opportunity to craft PD goals for their buildings. DLT members could then assess the building PD goals against the district goals. Educators within schools should have been given the opportunity to implement their PD plans (Elmore, 2000; Spillane, 2007).

In relationship to teachers within a PDS being collaborative decision makers Darling-Hammond (1995), three of the teachers mentioned within the SWOT analysis that they were not included in the decision making process for selecting the type of book study that the school should have engaged in throughout the year. Five teachers wrote that they would have preferred a book study that emphasized instructional practices or some other topic that they could implement within their classrooms. The building principal made the decision that teachers in her building would benefit from having an understanding of PLC protocols. The principal and university faculty member felt that the PLC book study aligned nicely to processes including the new initiatives relating to the BLT and TBT that the district had adopted that year. The newly learned information from the book could be applied within TBTs and BLTs.

Teachers had the opportunity to document opportunities that stemmed from the PLC study within the SWOT analysis. Teachers reported that they could provide PD for

the district around the practices of PLCs. PD sessions could be offered to other teachers outside of their building, and graduate credit hours could be provided for teachers who partake in the PD sessions. The act of continuing to collaborate to provide professional development opportunities inclusive of best practices for their peers would place teachers within Urban PDS as adjunct faculty within a partnering university.

Question 3: What is required for teachers to do an effective job mentoring field experience teachers and novice teachers as well as guiding seasoned teachers in professional development to increase student learning?

One of the most important tasks that the field of education has to accomplish is to create a workforce of professional teachers that meet the academic needs of all students. In the teaching field there is a continuum of levels of educators from new teachers (Resident Educators) to expert teachers (Lead Professional Teachers). All teachers must be prepared rigorously to teach students at high levels from the first day that they begin teaching until the their last day in the classroom. Some of the teachers at Urban PDS participated in mentor training sessions for pre-service teachers and new teachers to prepare aspiring and new teachers to meet the academic needs of the kindergarten through sixth graders in the building.

One training session that two of the teachers at Urban PDs went through was called the Educator Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA). The edTPA is a student teacher performance assessment developed by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE). The training was a half-day session that gave an overview of the program. The session outlined the details of student teachers having to record lessons on video that they taught, and the manner in which they ad to analyze and critique

their teaching against Ohio's Teaching Standards. The teachers who went to the session were charged with bringing the information to the rest of the staff during a staff meeting. The edTPA training provided for teachers for student teachers was not adequate according to research within this study (Moir et. Al., 2009). Mentors must be provided with on-going support to enhance their mentees with the knowledge base needed to teach in the field of education.

There is a skill set that needs to be developed to mentor field experience teachers, student teachers, novice teachers, and seasoned teachers. Although there are some negatives around the work of mentorships such as increased workloads on top of teaching responsibilities (Lee and Fang, 2007; Simpson et. al, 2007) and feelings of isolation in roles (Bullough, 2005) for mentors, a lack of support and not being challenged by mentors for mentees, research has shown that teachers who have the opportunity to engage in highly effective mentoring programs have higher attrition rates than their counterparts (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Haycock, 1998; Moir, 2009). Higher attrition rates can have a positive impact on student achievement.

The teachers who housed student teachers in their classrooms at Urban PDS for the semester were required to go to a mentor session at the university that was 2.5 hours to increase the likelihood that the student teaching experience would positively affect student achievement. The trainer in the workshop session outlined information about where to retrieve the documents to evaluate teachers were housed on the college website. The session leader spoke about the different types of models of teaching that could be beneficial and used to mentor student teachers. The professional development sessions for supervising teachers were not adequate according to researchers (Moir et. Al., 2009)

due to the one-shot workshop experience without the on-going support needed to ensure success of the mentee.

All new teachers within their first through fourth years of teaching work through a mentorship program called the Resident Educator Program in Ohio. New teachers are expected to engage in a four-year induction program that offers ongoing support to new teachers in their first through fourth years of teaching and allows opportunities for them to reflect on their practices as a teacher. According to Shulman (2005) teaching is cognitively demanding, and requires much reflection. Five Resident Educator Mentors at Urban PDS worked through a two-day training that outlined the processes for mentoring first year teachers. The professional development was not adequate according to the research on mentor teacher training (Bullough, 2005; Goodlad, 1990). According to Moir et al., (2009) professional development for new teachers should be centered on the phases of teaching and learning. Mentors should have training that is spanned over time, and involves deep thinking about the processes that they engage in as mentors (Bullough, 2005; Goodlad, 1990). Mentor teachers need ongoing training and development to have a deep understanding around the roles and job that they are expected to do. There was not enough ongoing support for the mentor teachers to engage in enhancing their practices through reflection around the mentorship experiences.

The teacher leaders at Urban PDS did assert some influence over each other's improved practices. They collaborated with one another during collaborative planning times and TBT's by analyzing student data and student work, creating assessments, implementing interventions, sharing teaching strategies, and changing teaching practices to meet teacher needs (Danielson, 2009; Katzenmyer & Moller, 2010; Lambert, 2002).

Although they worked in partnerships and teams during collaborative planning and

during TBTs, the teachers at Urban PDS still operated under a semi-closed-door

mentality and lacked reflection on their practice (York-Barr et al., 2006) and collegiality

in the highest forms. Some of the teachers were not confident in having their peers come

into their classrooms and give them feedback on their practice, and they lacked

confidence in presenting professional development around PLCs to their peers.

The building principal wanted the teachers at Urban PDS to take the next step and

become teachers of teachers for optimal growth and learning (Drago-Severson, 2008).

She wanted teachers in classrooms, observing each other's practices, and giving feedback

to each other for optimal growth and learning. The building leader of Urban PDS

modeled pressure and support to her staff members around the concepts of the book study

(Evans, 1996). The principal ensured that teachers were aware that all staff would

participate in the PLC book study by reminding them that if the book study was

something that they were considering too extensive for them to engage in, Urban PDS

may not be the place for them to teach. She offered support to enhance their

understanding of the concepts around PLCs by providing a model of the first PLC book

study session. During the session the principal, university faculty member and the

researcher labeled and highlighted aspects of the book study PD that they deemed

important from the book. The university staff member offered her services on multiple

occasions to assist teachers in developing their session. The principal of the building in

this study wanted her teachers to have a thorough understanding of what collegial

professional learning was, so that they could hold each other accountable for the work

being done within her building (Killion & Roy, 2009). Ultimately, she wanted her staff to engage each other in the generative practices and lead each other to learning.

Noonan and Walker (2008) noted that deep learning within organizations occur when trust is present. Unfortunately, some staff members at Urban PDS mentioned in the book study sessions and documented on the SWOT analysis that a lack of trust between staff was prevalent within the organization. Moving the staff members at Urban PDs to transform their practices and promote an atmosphere that is generative for all individuals within the school will require that trust and democracy are built within the structure of the school (Ryan, 1999).

Question 4: How can a professional learning community (PLC) within a professional development school (PDS) create an environment that keeps the students at the cornerstone of everything teachers do?

PLCs are the cornerstones of PDSs when teachers are given an opportunity to reflect on their practices and implement the concepts learned within their daily work. NCATE (2001) noted that it is essential to place student needs at the center of PDS work to achieve professional and student learning. Organizing schools into learning communities advance the learning of all individuals within the organization (Holmes Group, 1990). PDSs and PLCs have common goals including the advancement of student achievement through quality teaching, collaboration, and a focus on results (Hord, 2010).

The school that this study was completed in was a northeastern Ohio urban school that was reformed into a PDS. The teachers at Urban PDS were hand picked by central administration staff, and considered high performing due to growth measures and the academic achievement levels of their students. Although many students did not meet

academic AYP benchmarks that were set by the state, the teachers' academic value added reports revealed that their students made up to double the growth of teachers in other buildings within the district, according to valued added measures. Teachers were comfortable in their practices because they were outperforming their peers in the district. This sense of complacency kept Urban PDS at a lower functioning level for a PDS.

Shared Beliefs, Values, and Vision

PLCs should be based on the shared beliefs, values and vision of the staff around academics (Hord, 2010). The Urban PDS community created a mission and vision statement that aligned with the values about learning of the individuals within the organization. The building principal communicated the mission and vision as often as she could. Every agenda and email that she created throughout the year had the vision and mission statement on it. She held teachers accountable to the documents that were created as a team (Barth, 2001; Greer, 2012). The staff working in a PDS with a vision and mission statement that places students at the center will have a more probable chance of keeping kids at the center of everything that they do.

Shared and Supported Leadership

PLCs thrive when leadership is shared and supported (DuFour, DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hord, 2010). The teachers had an opportunity to share and reflect on student academic data, teaching strategies, and assessments that would meet the needs of all students (Hyacinthe, 2011; Green 2012). The PLC book study was a framework that gave teachers the opportunity to collaborate with their assigned group members, share how the PLC book related to the work that they did in their classrooms and in planning times, and

guide their peers through professional development activities that related to the topic of the PLC book study. The book study PD that staff provided for their peers afforded them the opportunity to increase collaboration efforts and community (Hicky & Harris, 2005). The building principal and university faculty member felt that the PLC book study would help to embed the principles of shared leadership that the district was moving towards.

The Teacher Leadership Questionnaire had a question that asked teachers to write their definition of a PLC. Three teachers wrote about shared leadership in their PLC definition. When asked through the questionnaire about some possible effects of PLCs implemented within Urban Elementary School seven teachers wrote that shared leadership would be a result of implementing a PLC. Shared and supportive leadership was an important component of what some teachers and the principal wanted to make the learning visible (Hattie, 2012) for all individuals within the organization.

Structural and Conditions

According to Hord (2010) structures and conditions must be in place to ensure that the components of PLCs are in place to meet student needs. The structure of the school day played a vital role in the success of creating a PLC within Urban PDS. The district provided a weekly 80-minute planning time to be used for teachers to reflect on their practice, organize and make plans, and change their teaching practices to meet the needs of students. The principal carved out times that she would typically use for staff meetings, and allowed teachers to engage in PD activities that they developed around the book study.

The structural conditions for collaboration that the principal set provided who, what, when, where and how staff came together (Hord, 2010) to meet the needs of

students. During the beginning of the year, the teachers decided on the norms and expected behaviors of staff members in collaborative meetings. Those norms provided productive working situations to solve problems (Hord, 2010). The principal organized an environment that allowed collaboration and around the topic of PLCs (Fullan, 2005; Barth, 2001) and the district organized time for collaborative planning times and TBTs.

During the book presentation of the structural condition's topic, the principal asked everyone to focus on identifying a PLC learning goal. She quoted Peter Senge (2000) "In a school that learns, people who may have traditionally been suspicious of one another…. recognize their common stake in the future of the school system, and the things they can learn from one another." She went on to say that the idea is that all individuals within a school can learn. The principal told the staff that they needed refreshed in their learning. She reminded them that if they needed to be forced to want to learn that should think about whether or not Urban PDS is the right placement for them. She read Urban PDSs School's vision statement to remind staff of the contract that they created about where they wanted to see the individuals within the organization in the future.

Intentional Collective Learning

PLC's are premised on the intentional growth and learning of teachers to impact student achievement (Katzenmeyer & Moller 2009). Therefore, intentional collective learning has to be embedded in a PLC (Hord, 2010). Opportunities for intentional growth and learning were provided for the staff at Urban PDS. Formal training opportunities came in the form of PD offered to enhance curriculum and instructional practices such as training for FIP, Common Core, and the multiple mentor training opportunities that

teachers engaged in. Informal PD included opportunities for teachers to learn and grow

from one another through TBTs, BLTs, DLTs, book studies, PBIS, and building wide

committees. The teachers were provided multiple formal and informal PD opportunities

within and outside of the building to enhance the learning of all students.

Sharing Personal Practice

Keeping students at the cornerstone of everything done in a PLC within a PDS

requires teachers to share personal practice (Hord, 2010). PDSs with PLCs are organized

to allow staff members to collaborate to promote collegial interchange and do away with

practices that embed isolation (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, 1998; Hord, Roussin, Sommers,

2012; The National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001; The National

Commission on Teaching, 2003). My study findings revealed that nine of the 20 teachers

at Urban PDS had the opportunity to observe each other's practice. They used part of

their TBT time to go into classrooms and watch other teachers teach. None of the

teachers reported that they actually scripted the lesson that they observed to give

feedback to the peer that they observed. The staff conversed about the potential power of

scripting if used to coach each other. The PD session also lead into dialogue around the

conversation types that staff had with each other. Most conversations were not deep or

did not lead to generating new ways of thinking and problem solving (Hord. Roussin &

Sommers, 2010).

Sharing personal practice requires staff members to trust one another and

engaging in collaboration to improve one another's teaching practice. There was a lack of

trust of teachers at Urban PDS according to a finding in the SWOT analysis of the book

study and teachers' reflections during the book study. Teachers mentioned while

participating in the book study that they did not feel as though they were equipped with the skills necessary to have staff members come into their classrooms, observe them working, script what they see, and give constructive feedback around their instructional practices. The staff members at Urban PDS lacked trust and collective efficacy (Angelli, 2011). The absence of a high level of collective efficacy prohibited staff members from feeling comfortable opening their doors and possibly exposing vulnerabilities that they may have had in regard to their own teaching practices.

There may have been multiple factors that contributed to the staff members not feeling as though were as connected as they could have been. The school district that Urban PDS was part of had a high turnover rate of leadership in the central office within a one year period. The frequent change of superintendents could have played a role in the lack of trust of the teachers within the organization. The multiple new top-down initiatives driven by state and national laws may have played a role in the lacking collective efficacy within the organization. The controversy over the perceived hiring practices of three staff members may have also contributed to the mistrust within the organization. Undercurrents of irritation about the effectiveness of the teaching styles of new staff members hired were expressed in the form of conversations during meetings. Brewster (2003) wrote about the failure to remove ineffective teachers being a reason to limit trust within an organization. Although most of the teachers that some of the teachers had suspicious views towards had value added scores that were deemed between average to high, the negative perceptions that teachers had about them did not appear to account for their performance. Therefore, hiring staff that some deem ineffective could negatively impact the group efficacy and diminish trust between staff members.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research in the areas of teacher leadership, PLCs and PDSs have a probable chance of confirming the outcomes of this study, and deepen the understanding of teaching and learning. Longitudinal qualitative studies that document the evolution of and the sustainment of a PLC within a PDS would enrich the literature of PLCs within PDSs. Qualitative studies that incorporate interviews of teachers, principals, and university faculty members as a means for documenting the implementation of a PLC study within a PDS would also benefit the field of education. More research on the documented efforts of school districts or schools building their own mentor training programs to allow mentors to grow actively as mentors would enhance the teaching field. A study on the effects of mentoring on mentors would also add to the literature. Studies that demonstrate how leadership ensures that teachers are aware of their responsibilities from the inception of the PDS and throughout the evolution of the PDS would add value to the literature on PDSs and PLCs. Studies related to the evolution and sustainment of teacher leaders would benefit the teaching field. An ethnographic case study that documents building principals actions throughout the implementation of a PLC could also impact the teacher leadership body of literature.

Researcher's Reflections

I set out to understand whether teacher leaders within a professional development school would lead their peers in PLCs through the midst of multiple changes. The teachers at Urban PDS kept students at the center of what that they did by analyzing the work that students did during collaborative planning times and TBTs. An area that could be enhanced in teacher's practices at Urban PDS was observing the adult behaviors that

produced growth in students. The adults in the organization worked in their classrooms utilizing isolated teaching practices. Isolated practices that the teachers were engaged in did not offer opportunities for teachers to examine each other's practices by observing each other's teaching, critiquing the observed teaching practices or providing feedback to their peers around the practices to generate new ways of learning. The researcher believes that once teachers became accustomed to engaging in the new initiatives, building off the best practices that they utilized while observing student work and practices in TBTs, they would be more willing to take the next step and begin to examine more closely the adult behaviors and teaching practices within the organization.

The reflections from the questionnaire, SWOT analysis, and the analysis of the collaborative interactions between staff members suggested that there was an issue of trust between staff members at Urban PDS. The lack of trust limited the collaboration efforts of staff due to their unwillingness to expose their possible teaching weaknesses. The principal continued to speak to her staff about the power of collaboration, collegiality, and the possible growth that could stem from the PLC.

The building administrator at Urban PDS needed to create a system of collaboration and trust in an intentional manner (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). The intentional actions that facilitate trust on the part of the building principal should have included soliciting input from all staff around the work related to the betterment of the organization, celebrating successes of staff, offering feedback to improve teaching practices, and modeling the craft of learning and leading to enhance and refine skills to impact students positively. School organizations that thrive are spaces where individuals have built the capacity for trusting relationships with their peers and self-efficacy is

evident. Once self-efficacy and collective efficacy is developed in staff members, they should be more willing to be more collaborative, accept feedback to improve their work, and assist in leading the way for change (Gates Foundation, 2015; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Teacher leaders within Urban PDSs believed that there was a lack of formal training that clearly outlined the roles of them leading peers through the book study. Although the first presentation was modeled for teachers, and the university staff member offered to assist teachers with the preparation of the PD that they would facilitate for their peers, teachers still felt that they needed more training. The building principal, university staff member and I could have created a template that clearly outlined the outcomes of the PD session for the staff. As a result of the request for a study presentation template, I created a template that outlines the expectations for a book study presentation for educators in schools (appendices). Front loading adult learning theory practices could have enhanced the probability that teachers may have felt more comfortable presenting in front of their peers (ODE, 2015). Informal teacher leaders along with formal teacher leaders need training on how to lead adults effectively to meet the academic need of all students.

The data revealed that the teachers were engaged in multiple new initiatives that could have impacted the way that staff members engaged in the PC book study. Some teachers wrote in the SWOT analysis that they felt overextended and could not fully commit themselves to engage in the extra work that the book study required. The SWOT analysis also uncovered the fact that teachers may have been more inclined to do more work if they had an opportunity to have choice in the book study that they were engaged

in.

Autonomy about the professional development opportunities at the building level is a comprehensive strategy to increase the learning levels of individuals within schools (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014). A portion of the job embedded professional development at Urban PDS was limited in its' effectiveness because the district had PD agendas often times took precedence over the PD sessions that were planned the summer prior to the beginning of the school year. Although the principal, university faculty, member and I used the school district goals to develop a plan of development centered-around the work of PLCs within a PDS, time was shortened for presentations. The time was so limited that group four did not have the opportunity to present because the district implemented a whole day PD session around safety and security measures within the district. Group four had the most important section of the book in accordance to the needs of the building. Group four focused on relational conditions within PLCs. The section focused on developing the capacities of individuals and the group through processes of building trusting relationships to enhance the PLC. According to Hord (2010) " Relationships are more positive and thus more powerful when they are characterized by reflection, porosity, and transparency. Think mirrors for reflection, windows for transparency, and membranes for porosity increase experimentation creativity. Trusting relationships in schools open the doors for people to work together in a more productive manner (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Once trust is established, building administrators will be able to give effective feedback to teachers to enhance their teaching practices. Looking at standards for practice including Ohio Educator Standards, OTES Standards, Professional Development School

Standards or Teacher Leader Standards building principals need to find a means to

organize schools in a manner that will utilize the talents of all staff members. Creating

cultures that reflect collaboration will also be a step the right direction to allow staff to

interact collegially to bring about the results (Reeves, 2010) needed for school reform.

A school environment that is built on trust allows the building leader to give

effective feedback to staff and engage in generative conversations around the work that

they do. Instructional leaders complete multiple informal and formal observations in

classrooms to analyze the practices of teachers. The feedback that the principals offer

teachers in post observation meetings should be immediate, and give teachers clear and

concise explanations around performance tasks related to teaching to increase their

instructional and pedagogical practices (OTES, 2015).

In order to make the teacher performance expectations clear during post

observations, one strategy I use as a building administrator is to copy two areas of the

OTES rubric, one reinforcement area and one refinement area that the teacher

demonstrates during the formal observation. I highlight the refinement and reinforcement

areas on the OTES rubric using the colors green and pink. The area that I highlight in

green on the rubric is an area of reinforcement, so the teachers know that they are either

rated Skilled or Accomplished in that area on the OTES Rubric. The area that is

highlighted in pink on the rubric is an area of refinement so that the teachers know that

they are either rated Developing or Ineffective based on the OTES Rubric descriptors.

The teachers that I evaluate are always asked to look at the rubric during the post

observation meeting, think about their performance and student performance during the

observation and share how they can bump their teaching performance to a higher level on

the performance rubric. The processes of teachers understanding where they are and where they need to be through the analysis of the their work and the rubric descriptor expectations, allows the teachers that I evaluate to have a deep understanding of the expectations that I have for them to be high performing teachers.

Providing immediate and effective feedback is part of one area that my colleague and I call critical formative teaching practices. Critical formative teaching practices are the formal and informal ways that instructional leaders gather and respond to evidence of teacher learning that influences student learning. I recommend that instructional leaders utilize this process I call critical formative teaching practices with teachers to ensure that they both know and understand the expectations that the district, state, and national officials have set for them.

National, state, and district leaders have high expectations that are driving teachers to work in complex teaming situations in the form of TBTs, BLTs, and DLTs without providing educators with the pre-requisite skills to extract the best atmosphere for the creation of new knowledge to advance the teaching force. Some of the pre-requisite skills needed to promote generative knowledge include establishing trust among staff, refining professional development that so that it is focused on the desired goals of the organization, providing pressure and support for the implementation of new initiatives, organizing a process that ensured PD is chunked and manageable to accomplish goals, and preparing educators to lead each other through the change process. Building wide professional development can be organized after the building administrator analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of staff members. Teachers can be paired with buddies that have a strength area where their weaknesses lie.

Refining PD that focuses on desired results in districts and schools may require professional development leaders within districts and schools to plan with the end in mind about what should and can be accomplished within a given timeframe. The leaders who develop the PD should also consider the amount of PD initiatives that teachers are engaged in (Reeves, 2010) and ensure that the initiatives are aligned. If the PD initiatives have competing values that may confuse staff (Danielson, 2015) around the work that they do, district leadership should provide a framework that outlines expectations of what teachers should do to assist with fidelity to the district or school goals. Because teachers are engulfed in changes that are deemed necessary to increase student achievement districts need to do a better job of preparing teachers for change processes.

Implications for Practice

Participation should not have been mandated for the book study. The building principal wanted her staff to engage in professional development around the work of PLCs. The book study could have been more effective if teachers could have had the option of whether or not to engage in the work. A grassroots approach would allow those who were interested to implement the work that they learned in a meaningful manner and bringing others on board once they word spread about the effectiveness of the study.

Hiring practices should be documented and standardized to eliminate any suspicions about the credibility of staff members' effectiveness. The staff felt that three teachers did not experience the extensive interview process that all staff prior to them was engaged in. The hiring process ritual that brought pride to the organization was broken due to the new principal not having an understanding of the hiring practices at the PDS.

The lack of district follow through stability was another issue that surfaced in the

study. I would suggest that school districts have a team of educators use a collaborative approach to designing the professional development for the district. Therefore, regardless of the change and rollover in staff, initiatives could remain somewhat constant.

Collaboration and collegiality requires that trust be established within the district. Trust can stem from follow through on new initiatives, equitable hiring practices, stability of staff, and input from all stakeholders about the new initiatives being implemented within the organization. Many district leadership teams are requiring staff to engage in critical reflection with their peers. The reflection on their practice often times does not reach the levels that the district officials would like because staff does not trust one another to reveal their weaknesses to one another to improve them.

Conclusion

The teachers in the study were challenged to move out of their comfort zones, collaborate, and work together to enhance their own and their colleague's practices, and meet the needs of their students throughout the midst of multiple change initiatives. Throughout the study, the teachers at Urban PDS were diligent about the data analysis of student work and performance. They shared practices, lesson plans, and strategies during collaborative planning times to increase student learning. The book study portion of the PLC study yielded a different result. Some teachers did take on leadership responsibilities to implement the book study section of the PLC within Urban PDS. The degree in which teachers took on the leadership tasks to improve their own practices along with their colleagues varied amongst teachers. Some teachers were overwhelmed by the multiple initiatives and felt that the book study portion of the PLC added too much to their workload. Others completed the book study out of obligation to the job. A select few

teachers were excited about the opportunity to improve the practice of all individuals within the school through the information gained from the book study.

In my opinion, more teachers would have participated more willingly in the book study and had a greater understanding around the book study concepts if they were given the appropriate time to allow the concepts to resonate with them. A greater understanding of the book study concepts would allow teachers to clearly identify how the concepts tied into their daily work more visibly. I would suggest that the building principal, the university faculty member, and the researcher clearly and intentionally identified frequent pauses in the study to interject the way that the book study related to the daily work of teachers before the onset of the study and throughout the study.

Teachers may have been more eager to authentically engage in the study if there were adequate time to complete the book study portion of the PLC. The teachers were often times rushed to complete their presentations within 20-30 minutes, and reflection time was limited. The short timeframe given for presentations often lead to some of the presentations having a limited flow and impact on the deep learning and reflection related to the teaching practices of teachers. The rushed presentations did not support the possible learning that could have stemmed from the book study PLC initiative. District administration should be more cognizant of the professional development needs of each building. Taking a more cognizant stance of the needs of the building would allow district officials to ensure that the professional learning is able to take place based on the individualized needs of the buildings.

The results from the questionnaire showed that teachers believed that they were highly reflective and collaborative decision makers. The work that teachers did within the

collaborative planning times and TBTs demonstrated that they were well versed in data analysis and providing interventions to meet student needs. Hence, the students were making major yearly Value Added gains academically in relation to their urban, rural and most suburban peers in the district, county and state. The book study gave me insight to the teacher's beliefs about their collaborative practices with their peers. The Value Added growth of students at Urban PDS was impressive to the central administrative team. The concern of the DLT was that the students were still below grade level academically in many of the schools in the district including Urban PDS. Collaborative efforts on the part of all staff members could have the potential to close the achievement gap between student subgroups at faster rates. Teachers at Urban PDS could have benefited from practices that involved video recording lessons (Gates Foundation, 2015; Hattie, 2012), identifying an area of growth and an area of weakness to work on throughout the year, observing each other's practices, giving constructive feedback to each other, and changing practices based on observations and the feedback given.

Working through the process of implementing a PLC within a PDS leads me to believe that it is the role of the building principal and teacher leaders to keep each other aware of the standards for practice including professional development standards, teaching standards and the PDS standards related to the areas of improvement within the organization. Although the teachers at Urban PDS were engaged in some of the actions of reflective practitioners as skilled and accomplished teachers, they were not aware that all of what they were doing were standards of performance that they should have been engaged in. Some of the teachers were doing the work without being able to label the practices that they were engaged in. If teachers had the opportunity to get to know the

standards of excellence that they were held accountable for accomplishing, they would be able to utilize job embedded professional learning opportunities and professional development opportunities to enhance their teaching to increase the learning opportunities of all students that they serviced.

School district administrators and educators within schools are able to work based on the recommendations for improvement based on initiatives that are set by nation and state policy drivers. Educational leaders within K-12 school organizations have to organize themselves in a manner so that they limit the new initiatives that they present to their staff. Creating a framework that allocates advanced learning for all individuals requires that we focus on the right things: teaching, learning and building teacher leadership capacity.

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Appendix A

Letter Invitation for Teacher Participation

Dear Teachers,   November 15, 2012

       I am a doctoral student at Ashland University studying in the areas of teacher leadership and professional development. My current research will document the growth of a professional learning community within a professional development school. This research will also document the evolution of teacher leadership to support the growth of a professional learning community in the midst of the many district, state, and national mandates.

       The Department of Leadership Studies at Ashland University supports the practice of informed consent and protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you will participate in the present study. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time.

       Participation in the research study is solicited but strictly voluntary. There are no physical or mental risks associated with participation in the study. The study results will not be used for evaluative purposes. In addition, all information gathered as a result of the study will remain confidential. Therefore, names will not be associated with the research findings in any way.

       If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, or have any issues or concerns, please contact one of us listed below by phone or mail. Thank you very much for your time, and we appreciate your interest and cooperation.

       Thank you for your assistance and understanding,

Nicole Bush	Dr. Judy Alston, Ph.D.
Graduate Student	Leadership Studies Chair
330.327.8588	Ashland University

I have read and understand the information about "Title of Research Study." I give my

consent to participate in this study. I understand that this consent is voluntary and can be

withdrawn without penalty at any time.

_____
Signature of study participant

_____
Date

Appendix B

Participant Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT

Evolution of a Professional Learning Community within a
Professional Development School

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Nicole Bush, a doctoral student at Ashland University, is conducting a research study to gain an understanding of the evolution of a professional learning community within a professional development school. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a teacher leader within the professional development school under study.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to be in the study, the following will occur:

1. You will be asked to participate in six book study presentations and lead one 40-minute presentation with a small group. You will be expected to merge theory and practice and lead your peers through a professional learning opportunity.

2. Your presentation will be observed, documented and transcribed.

2. Once the research data has been coded and analyzed, a draft of the data will be developed. Participants will have the opportunity to review the draft document and provide feedback. This process will involve the option of receiving your input via e-mail or postal delivery of written comments or verbally during a personal interview or personal phone call. Participation in this feedback process is important to the research but not mandatory.

C. RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts.

D. BENEFITS

The direct benefit to participating teachers in this study will be the opportunity to share your voice and understanding of teacher leadership to the field of education.

E. COSTS

There will be no costs to you as a result of taking part in this study.

F. PAYMENT

You will be paid $10 for your participation in this study. A gift card will be mailed to participants within 30 days after your participation in the study.

G.   QUESTIONS

If you have any comments or concerns about participation in this study, you should first talk with the researchers. If for some reason you do not wish to do this, you may contact the Human Subjects Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the board office between 8:00 and 5:00, Monday through Friday, by calling (419) 521.6877. You may also E-mail Carol Reece, Chair of Human Subjects Review Board, at: creece1@ashland.edu.   .

H. CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. Your decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on your present or future status as a [patient, student or employee].

If you agree to participate, you should sign below

_____   _____
Date   Signature of Study Participant

_____   _____
Date   Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Appendix C

Lead Teacher Questionnaire

Lead Teacher Questionnaire

Please write/type thorough and complete responses to the 18 questions in the spaces below.

Demographic Information

1. How many years of teaching experience (including this year) do you have?

2. What is your grade level assignment this year?

3. What are your primary job responsibilities? (Example: teach all subjects, teach math, teach math and science)

4. What is your highest level of education?

5. What is your gender?

6. What is your race / ethnic background?

Professional Development and Continuous Learning

7. What professional strengths do you bring that allow students to achieve at high levels?

8. What skills do you feel you still need to acquire to assist students' achievements at high levels?

9. What leadership qualities do you bring to your position as a teacher at the Allen Professional Development School?

10. List the <u>title</u> and <u>context</u> of the professional development opportunities that you engaged in for the past two years. Please include the training dates, number of hours, and skills obtained from the training
    - **PD Examples**: mentor/peer observation, courses/workshops attended, courses/workshops taught, conferences/seminars attended, conference/ seminar presentations, observations at other schools, researching topics relating to work, reading professional literature and informal dialogue with colleagues

- **Title and Context Example**: <u>Peer Observation</u>: I observed the third grade classroom for 40 minutes on May 15, 2012 to get an understanding of the team teaching concept. I was able to gain insight into the way that the classroom was organized and the way that they implemented small group instruction.

11. What is your personal professional development goal for this year?

12. What do you value most in the development of you and your colleagues professionally?

Professional Learning Communities

13. What is your definition of a professional learning community?

14. Have you ever participated in a professional learning community?

15. If so, what types of learning did you gain from the learning community?

16. How could the individuals within our school benefit from having a PLC?

17. What are some structures or practices that we could implement in our building to support each other while we work through the district, state, and national mandated initiatives for this school year?

Philosophy of Education

18. What is your philosophy of education?

Appendix D

TL Questionnaire Questions Related to Study Questions

Teacher Leader Questionnaire Questions Related to Study Questions

1. How do statewide and district initiatives impact teachers' behaviors within a PDS?
   a. How could the individuals within our school benefit from having a PLC? **#9**
   b. What are some structures or practices that we could implement in our building to support each other while we work through the district, state, and national mandated initiatives for this school year? **#17**
   c. What is your philosophy of education? **#18**

2. What are teachers' perceptions of what their role is within a professional development school?
   a. What professional strengths do you bring that allow students to achieve at high levels? **#7**
   b. What skills do you feel you still need to acquire to assist students' achievements at high levels? **#8**
   c. What leadership qualities do you bring to your position as a teacher at the Allen Professional Development School? **#9**
   d. List the <u>title</u> and <u>context</u> of the professional development opportunities that you engaged in for the past two years. Please include the training dates, number of hours, and skills obtained from the training. **#10**
   e. What is your personal professional development goal for this year? **#11**
   f. What do you value most in the development of you and your colleagues professionally? **#12**
   g. What is your definition of a professional learning community? **#13**
   h. Have you ever participated in a professional learning community? **#14**
   i. If so, what types of learning did you gain from the learning community? **#15**
   j. How could the individuals within our school benefit from having a PLC? **#16**
   k. What are some structures or practices that we could implement in our building to support each other while we work through the district, state, and national mandated initiatives for this school year? **#17**

3. What is required for teachers to do an effective job mentoring novice teachers as well as guiding seasoned teachers in professional development to increase student learning?

a. What professional strengths do you bring that allow students to achieve at high levels? #7
b. What skills do you feel you still need to acquire to assist students' achievements at high levels? #8
c. What leadership qualities do you bring to your position as a teacher at the Allen Professional Development School? #9
d. List the <u>title</u> and <u>context</u> of the professional development opportunities that you engaged in for the past two years. Please include the training dates, number of hours, and skills obtained from the training. #10
e. What is your personal professional development goal for this year? #11
f. What do you value most in the development of you and your colleagues professionally? #12
g. What is your definition of a professional learning community? #13
h. Have you ever participated in a professional learning community? #14
i. If so, what types of learning did you gain from the learning community? #15
j. How could the individuals within our school benefit from having a PLC? #16
k. What are some structures or practices that we could implement in our building to support each other while we work through the district, state, and national mandated initiatives for this school year? #17
l. What is your philosophy of education? #18

4. How can a professional learning community (PLC) within a professional development school (PDS) create an environment that keeps the students at the cornerstone of everything teachers do?
a. What professional strengths do you bring that allow students to achieve at high levels? #7
b. What skills do you feel you still need to acquire to assist students' achievements at high levels? #8
c. What leadership qualities do you bring to your position as a teacher at the Allen Professional Development School? #9
d. List the <u>title</u> and <u>context</u> of the professional development opportunities that you engaged in for the past two years. Please include the training dates, number of hours, and skills obtained from the training. #10
e. What is your personal professional development goal for this year? #11
f. What do you value most in the development of you and your colleagues professionally? #12
g. What is your definition of a professional learning community? #13

h. Have you ever participated in a professional learning community? #14
i. If so, what types of learning did you gain from the learning community? #15
j. How could the individuals within our school benefit from having a PLC? #16
k. What are some structures or practices that we could implement in our building to support each other while we work through the district, state, and national mandated initiatives for this school year? #17
l. What is your philosophy of education? #18

Appendix E

Book Study Presentation Template

Book Study Presentation Template

Meeting Purpose: Wrote down the overall meeting purpose in relation to teaching standards, professional development standards and Common Core standards.

Session Goal and Outcome: List one-three learning opportunities that will be addressed in the collaborative learning session.

Essential Question: What open-ended question addresses the topic of study? Example: How can teachers create learning communities that offer all educators the chance to share ways of improving teaching?

Anticipatory Set: Hook the attention of the audience with something meaningful related to the topic of study and teachers' daily work (symbol, picture, quote, video, game, or questionnaire). Allow the participants to give their points of view and insight.

Book Section Overview: Highlight the key points of the section that are being presented.

Theory into Practice: How has and how can the research read be applied and embedded in your daily practice?

Reflection: Allow the participants to reflect on the book in light of their practices.

Meeting Wrap- Up: How was your content knowledge, teaching practice, or thinking enhanced in light of the subject presented? How will you change your practice based on the material read and discussed? Connect new learning back to the standards (teaching standards, professional development standards, content standards etc.).

APPENDIX F BOOK STUDY

SWOT ANALYSIS

Allen PDS BOOK STUDY

STRENGTHS:	**WEAKNESSES:**
What went well with the book study?	
OPPORTUNITIES:	**THREATS:**
What opportunities could be open to us because of the book study?	What limited the effectiveness of the book study?
What trends could we take advantage of?	What could limit the progress of a future PLC? What could be improved?