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Staff Development Programs in Public Elementary Schools in Northeast Tennessee

Richard A. Mcinturf
East Tennessee State University

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN NORTHEAST TENNESSEE

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership And Policy Analysis
East Tennessee State University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Education
In Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

by
Richard A. McInturf
August 1999
APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Graduate Committee of
Richard A. McInturf
met on the
15th day of July, 1999.

The committee read and examined his dissertation,
supervised his defense of it in an oral examination, and
decided to recommend that his study be submitted to the
Graduate Council, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in
Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis.

Signed on behalf of
the Graduate Council

Dean, School of Graduate Studies
ABSTRACT

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN
PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN
NORTHEAST TENNESSEE

By

Richard A. McInturf

The purpose of this study was to collect and report on the perceptions of elementary school teachers as to the quality of staff development programs being offered in schools and school systems throughout Northeast Tennessee. A second purpose was to study the relationship between certain school district characteristics and teacher perception scores related to the staff development programs.

The National Staff Development Council’s Self-Assessment and Planning Tool was used to collect data related to teacher perceptions. Mean scores were calculated and t-test analysis completed for each variable named in the study.

Conclusions of the study are consistent with most findings in the literature. Evidence suggests that significantly higher perception scores on the quality of staff development programs are obtained when school systems budget more than 1% of the total operating budget to staff development compared to school systems that budget less than 1%. Higher perception scores are also obtained in school systems where there is at least a half-time coordinator for staff development activities compared to school systems where there is either no formal coordination, or less than a half time coordinator for staff development activities. There is no indication that the amount of teacher input into the planning and delivery of staff development programs has any significant impact on teacher perceptions of the quality of staff development programs in school systems in Northeast Tennessee.

The results of this study may be used by school systems to plan for future staff development events. Similar studies should be conducted with middle school and high school teachers to assist staff developers at these levels.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Sheila, my loving and supportive wife. It was her constant encouragement and assistance that provided the motivation needed to complete this project.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a number of special people to whom I am greatly indebted for their assistance in the completion of this study. First, I am grateful for the assistance and support provided by my dissertation committee—namely, Drs. Gunapala Edirisooriya, Louise MacKay, Terrence Tollefson, and John Taylor. Their willingness to provide assistance allowed me to complete the project within a reasonable period of time.

I am also grateful to the administrative staff of the Bristol City School System and the wonderful teaching staff of Haynesfield Elementary School. They kept track of my progress, offered encouragement, and often carried more than their share of the workload so that I might concentrate on the completion of the project.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the National Staff Development Council for allowing the use of its Self-Assessment and Planning Tool in the study.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Public school systems are constantly challenged to offer effective and meaningful staff development programs for teachers. The public expects excellence from its schools and expects teachers to be well equipped to not only provide quality instruction in all required academic areas, but also to be well versed in a multitude of other areas such as conflict resolution, social interaction, and guidance. The State of Georgia is attempting to address the need for effective staff development through legislation. Harkreader and Weathersby (1998) report that in fiscal year 1998 the state appropriated more than $35 million for staff development in schools and school districts through the Quality Basic Education Act.

Classroom teachers have often rejected staff development presentations with contempt and ridicule (Ryan, 1987). They have seen them as "dull, irrelevant, pedestrian, repetitious, unfocused, [and] obvious" (Pipes, 1977).

There would be little argument that the organizational efforts supporting staff development programs have been well intended. Teachers should expand their knowledge, improve their skills and techniques, and be brought up to date on
technological innovations. We expect that the majority of classroom teachers working in American schools are interested in doing the best possible job and helping their students achieve their best.

The challenge for school systems is to design meaningful staff development programs offering teachers valuable information that may be transferred successfully to classroom practices. When staff development is meaningful for classroom teachers, it will positively impact student learning.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to collect and report the perceptions of elementary school teachers on the quality of staff development programs being offered throughout schools and school systems in Northeast Tennessee. Secondly, the study is designed to determine a relationship exists between certain district characteristics (e.g., the availability of a full-time staff development coordinator or the amount of choice given to teachers regarding staff development) and effective staff development programs.

**Background to the Problem**

School systems throughout the nation strive annually to offer meaningful staff development programs for teachers, but most such programs have been viewed by many teachers as
abject failures (Boyd, 1993). Some of the reasons cited for the sense of failure of staff development programs include the lack of contingency planning (Roberts & Woolf, 1984), concentration on specifics rather than underlying concepts (Joyce & Showers, 1984), and lack of active teacher involvement (Knowles, 1970).

Researchers such as Mohamed (1983) and Wall (1993) agree that staff development may be defined as any inservice activity that can potentially increase an educator's effectiveness within the school system. Other definitions include any planned process of education and/or training that will benefit the teacher, student, and school system.

Numerous practices, models, and suggestions are offered in the literature in an effort to describe characteristics of successful staff development programs. Examples include the need for classroom management skills (Brophy, 1979; Emmer & Evertson, 1980; Good, 1979), the selection of appropriate staff development experiences (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977), and proper program evaluation (Guskey & Sparks, 1991). Wall (1993) identifies three kinds of research on effective staff development programs. They are: (1) surveys, (2) governance studies, and (3) research about training.

If researchers are able to define staff development and describe certain characteristics of successful staff
development programs, it may be difficult to understand why teachers continue to rate most staff development offerings as being of low quality and unrelated to improving their ability to offer quality instruction in the classroom. The literature, as well as the personal observations of this writer, suggest this to be the case. Therefore, it is important to re-examine the characteristics of successful staff development programs. To this end, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), in association with numerous professional education associations, has developed the National Standards for Staff Development to assist school systems as they plan for ongoing staff development activities.

Research Questions

Staff development in Northeast Tennessee school systems is an ongoing process. The research conducted in this study is designed to provide useful information to planners of staff development. By developing an awareness of current teacher perceptions of staff development and studying the characteristics of systems with successful staff development programs, school systems may be able to improve overall offerings. The research questions of this study are:
1. What are teacher perceptions of the current status of staff development programs in elementary schools throughout Northeast Tennessee as measured by the NSDC's self assessment instrument?
2. To what extent do identified characteristics of individual schools and school systems relate to the success or failure of staff development programs?
3. Are there specific school system characteristics that are consistently present in school systems that are operating effective staff development programs? The characteristics to be examined include: a. the availability of a staff person responsible for the planning and delivery of staff development activities, b. the amount of the system operating budget devoted to staff development, and c. the amount of teacher choice allowed in the selection of staff development activities.

**Significance of the Study**

The introduction of the National Staff Development Standards is relatively new to school systems throughout Northeast Tennessee, and the process of rating performance of programs to the standards may be of interest to any school system interested in improving the overall quality of staff development programs. Additionally, when it is
determined that a school or school system is performing well on the standards and is offering quality staff development programs, it may be of interest to other systems to study certain key characteristics of the successful system. This information may result in replication, as systems seek to improve their own staff development programs.

This study resulted in the collection of performance data from public elementary schools throughout Northeast Tennessee and the tabulation of the ratings to provide information to schools and school systems concerning their performance according to the NSDC standards. These descriptive data were compared with certain characteristics of the school systems to determine if there was a relationship between the characteristics and systems that are consistently offering quality staff development programs according to the assessment instrument. Staff development is a broad concern for school systems and may mean different things in different systems, so it is important to understand some of the delimitations of such a study.

**Delimitations of the Study**

1. School systems approach staff development in a variety of ways, so teachers may have responded to the assessment instrument from different background experiences.
2. The timing of the request to complete the instrument may be a factor. If the instrument arrived at the school at a time when there were numerous other activities taking place, the teacher may not have put as much thought into the responses.

3. Teachers may have failed to respond with candor to the items in an effort to make their individual school or system look better on the assessment. Efforts were taken to assure teachers that individual responses would be kept anonymous.

4. Some assessment forms may have been completed by teachers who are not in the mainstream of regular staff development programs. They participate in staff training, like other teachers, but special area teachers, such as music and physical education, may have responded to the items in different ways than regular classroom teachers. Principals were instructed to offer the assessment forms primarily to regular classroom teachers.

5. Teacher experience levels within a specific school and within a particular school district may have had an
impact on how the assessment items were viewed. Opinions of staff development may have been different for a new teacher than for a teacher with several years of experience. All classroom teachers were invited to participate.

6. This study was limited to elementary schools and school systems served by the First Tennessee Regional Office of the State Department of Education. This included 17 school systems in Northeast Tennessee.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 presented the introduction, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 contains the review of related literature and research related to the problem being investigated. Chapter 3 contains the methodology and procedures used to gather data for the study. The results of analyses and findings of the study are presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains a summary of the study and findings, conclusions drawn from the findings, a discussion, and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The concept of using staff development to drive school reform has been a critical issue throughout the recent history of public education. In "A Nation at Risk" (1983), the National Commission on Excellence in Education recommended additional paid time for classroom teachers to allow for professional development. In almost every school in the nation, teachers take part in professional development activities that are intended to improve their knowledge and skills. A 1993-94 survey by the National Center for Education Statistics found that 96% of public school teachers had participated in some professional development activity that school year (Choy & Ross, 1998). Virtually every modern proposal to reform, restructure, or transform schools emphasizes professional development as a primary vehicle to bring about change. The overall effectiveness of professional development programs is often questioned by administrators, legislators, policy makers, and the general public. There is increasing interest among these groups of community and educational leaders in producing evidence that professional development programs are effective and that there is a relationship between the training and desired school level or system outcomes.
This chapter is divided into six sections, each focusing on a topic related to the major theme of effective staff development. The first section reviews the historical problems that have been encountered in the field of staff development. The second section reports on several formal studies that address budgetary concerns and deal with policy issues and staff development. The third section clarifies the working definitions of staff development and the findings of researchers dealing with the importance of staff training. The fourth section describes successful staff development programs defined in the literature, and the fifth section discusses specific models for staff development programs. The sixth section addresses the National Staff Development Council's three categories of staff development standards; Content, Process, and Context. References in the literature to some of the subsections within each standard category of NSDC are included.

Problems With Staff Development

Before one can begin to understand the reasons for some of the new proposals on how to design effective staff development programs, it is important to have a clear historical understanding of how teachers have traditionally viewed staff development. Furthermore, it is important to
be aware of what previous research studies have reported concerning the effectiveness of staff development programs.

Guskey (1986) reported that staff development efforts could be traced to the initiation of the Teacher Institutes in the early 19th century, but instead of steady progress based on advances in knowledge, the history of staff development had been characterized primarily by disorder, conflict, and criticism. Goldenberg and Gallimore (1991) concurred with Guskey, noting that in more than a century no fundamental changes had been made in the way American teachers teach. Based on their research, they further reported that current staff development practices were inadequate to effect meaningful reform in teaching.

Wood and Thompson (1993) stated that the problem with staff development over the last 15 to 20 years had been that staff developers continued to plan and implement inservice education based on a series of faulty assumptions. Guskey (1997) compared the quest for effective staff development to the 40 years Moses spent wandering in search of "The Promised Land." He viewed educators' efforts in the area of staff development as aimless wandering without a clear idea of what was to be accomplished or how to measure progress.

The literature is rich with staff development research, but Showers, Joyce and Bennett (1987) reported that most of the research had been conducted since the mid 1950s. In
1957 only about 50 studies on staff development were located, and only about six were of experimental design in the areas of training, curriculum improvement, or the implementation of innovations. Between 1957 and 1977, they reported that the research base on staff development expanded considerably, but the majority of studies were still mainly descriptive and contained little experimental research. During the 1980s the collection of literature continued to increase, and more studies were completed using experimental research design. The 1987 meta-analysis of staff development research completed by Showers, Joyce, and Bennett included about 200 studies. Guskey (1997) also acknowledged the vast amount of literature dealing with staff development during the recent decades, reinforcing the findings of other researchers. However, he stated that most of the literature documented the shortcomings of staff development rather than prescribing solutions. Guskey noted three reasons why efforts to identify the elements of effective professional development had not been successful: "Confusion about the criteria of effectiveness, the misguided search for main effects, and the neglect of quality issues" (p. 36).

Goodlad (1991) analyzed staff development from the viewpoint of school reform and noted the ineffectiveness of staff development efforts in contributing to successful
school reform projects. He noted agreement among policy makers and educators that the individual school was the most likely location for meaningful reform, but that local educators were seldom thoroughly grounded in the knowledge and skills required to bring about meaningful change. Goodlad's research also indicated that inservice programs in school districts were doing little to prepare educators to participate in reform. He concluded that "the primary focus of district-driven staff development remained the teacher's individual teaching competencies, not the capability of an entire staff to renew the school" (p. 4). This approach to staff development and its questionable effectiveness was echoed by Garmston (1981), McBride, Reed, and Dollar (1994), and by Joyce and Showers (1988), when they described their "empty vessel" model.

Guskey (1986), Showers, Joyce, and Bennett (1987), and Hillard (1997) offered some specific reasons why research-proven best practices were not always incorporated into staff development planning. There was often a poor match between teacher needs and the staff development topics, and the appropriate instructional format was often not considered. Staff development planning was viewed as ad hoc, sometimes entertaining and usually quite diverse. The wide variety of topics addressed were usually interesting
and potentially useful but tended to be only remotely connected to successful outcomes for learners.

Sparks (1997c) and Richardson (1997a) stated that resisters to staff development existed, and methods had to be found for dealing with those who feared change, did not desire to put forth the effort to change, or simply expected new efforts to be of the same low quality as previous efforts. Their strategies for dealing with resisters included the use of adult learning principles, greater involvement of the learner, improving the school culture, and the use of staff development sessions as tools for reaching a goal.

Bagin (1997) wrote that staff development ventures often failed because they were not coupled with effective public relations programs. He emphasized the importance of keeping all stakeholders in a school system informed concerning the ongoing goals of a staff development program. Without this type of information sharing, the staff developer had difficulty gaining support for programs from policy makers, administrators, teachers, and the general public.

**Definition Of Effective Staff Development**

Teacher frustration with the ineffectiveness of staff development programs is well documented. The vast amount of
literature describing the consistent failure of staff development offerings might lead one to question whether there is any evidence of successful programming. To recognize effectiveness in staff development, one must first develop a workable definition for the topic.

Several researchers offered definitions of successful staff development programs, but the most consistent recurring theme was that they must have positive results on student outcomes or student learning (Asayesh, 1993; Sparks, 1991; Sparks & Vaughn, 1994). The use of data to drive a staff development program and ultimately achieve organizational goals was also stressed by Sparks (1996a). A second component of common definitions was that staff development was a process rather than an event, and it was an intentional and systematic effort to bring about meaningful change (Smylie, 1988; Todnem & Warner, 1994b). The ongoing nature of successful staff development was stressed by Sparks (1977b) in his assessment of the staff development implications of the report of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study. In an interview with Sparks (1991), Krupp described successful staff development programs as addressing three key areas: the how-tos, socialization, and self-awareness (p. 4).
Budget, Policies, and Research Reports

Successful staff development programs were defined and did exist in a variety of locations. There were certain factors and school system characteristics that contributed to successful programs. Appropriate budgeting and strong policy statements contributed to the knowledge base of how to create successful staff development programs.

Effective staff development programs required adequate funding. Bonstingl (1977) drew comparisons between the average school system and leading edge companies. He noted that a typical budget allocation for staff development in schools was about one half of 1%, whereas major companies spent 4 to 5% of their budget on improvement of staff abilities. Many European and Japanese companies spent as much as 10 to 15%. Davidson, Henkelman, and Stasinowskey (1993) noted similar findings. Boudah and Mitchell (1998) offered a possible explanation, noting that policy makers, teachers, and the public in general viewed staff development efforts as having a poor reputation, being pedagogically unsound, and not being cost effective. Reporting on a National Staff Development Council Survey, Davidson, Henkelman, and Stasinowskey (1993) noted about 80% of the responding systems allocated less than 3% of their operating budget to staff development and almost half allocate less than 1%. Only about 7.7% allocated greater than 5% (p. 61).

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Some policies dealing with the development and delivery of staff development existed at all levels of educational administration. Staff developers, however, recognized the need for more effective policies that would encourage the design and delivery of more effective programs (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Sparks, 1997d; Wise, 1991).

One of the best examples of national policy dealing with staff development was the Goals 2000 Federal legislation. According to Fagan (1995), the Goals 2000 legislation differed significantly from previous Federal legislation that had always stressed program adoption. The Goals 2000 discussed the importance of student achievement and the need to restructure our entire approach to teaching and learning. Systemic reform and the formation of partnerships were key components of the legislation. The emphasis on staff development as a valuable component of the reform effort was addressed in the seventh goal of the Goals 2000.

Individual states were also beginning the process of establishing policies directed toward staff development. Notable efforts were taking place in Maryland (Richardson, 1997b); Georgia (Stone & Heard, 1995); South Carolina (Ishler, 1995); Kansas (Crouther & Boyer, 1995); and Colorado (Schiff, 1995). State legislatures, in cooperation with business groups, were often the driving force behind
state-level policy development. Fullan and Pomfret (1977) studied implementation strategies at the classroom level and suggested that local policy developers move away from adoption based policy and move toward the recommendation of more "broad-based programs and providing corresponding support for local development of specific forms of implementation, thereby facilitating clarity and explicitness of programs on the part of users" (p. 391).

Five additional research studies were reviewed that had findings relevant to the specific topic being studied. Killion and Harrison (1997) studied the roles of staff developers and identified eight distinct functions they usually perform within a school system. When the multiple duties of the staff developer were considered in conjunction with the fact that most staff developers spent less than half of their time actually performing staff development activities (Davidson, Henkelman, & Stasinowsky, 1993), it became clear how the quality of programs could suffer at the local level.

Monahan (1996) reported that school systems attempting to create an attitude for reform, actually were encouraging teachers to participate in more traditional staff development programs because of the types of rewards and incentives offered to teachers. He recommended that a more comprehensive professional development model be implemented
which included incentives for more advanced activities such as peer collaboration, peer coaching, and curriculum design.

Extensive studies of the Madeline Hunter model (Orlick, Remaley, Tacemyer, Logan, & Cao, 1993) were conducted to determine its effect on student learning. Studies of progress in Washington State, California, New Jersey, Michigan, and Georgia, where the Hunter model was used, revealed instances of teacher behavioral change, but no evidence of student achievement gain.

Perhaps the most well known study dealing with reform and staff development was the Rand Change Agent Study. In McLaughlin and Marsh’s (1978) analysis of the Rand results, learning for professionals was viewed as one of the most important implications of the study. Four assumptions were given to guide the design and implementation for staff development activities:

- Teachers often represent the best clinical expertise available.
- The process by which an innovation comes to be used in a local setting is both adoptive and heuristic.
- Professional learning is long term.
- Staff development must be viewed as part of the program-building process in schools. (pp. 87-88)
Twelve years later, McLaughlin (1990) revisited the Rand Study to report on the specific findings that still held true for schools. In the report he reviewed practices found to be effective and ineffective in the original study. The modern emphasis applied to the Rand Study dealt with three areas: effect that local implementation strategies had on outcomes, the inability to legislate change through policy, and the value of local variability in the change process.

**Successful Program Description**

Research literature describing experimental studies dealing with the effective staff development programs was limited, but numerous articles and reports exist that describe the various characteristics and components which seem to be present in successful programs. Themes such as the consideration of adult learning principles (Nowak, 1994; Oja, 1991; Welch & Daniel, 1977), follow-up activities (Asayesh, 1993a; Hirsh & Ponder, 1991; Joyce & Showers, 1980) the inclusion of all system employees in training activities (Hirsh & Ponder, 1991; Nowak, 1994; Welch & Daniel, 1997) and the concepts of learning at the job site in collaboration with peers (Asayesh, 1993a; Hirsh & Ponder, 1991; Joyce & Showers, 1980; Nowak, 1994; Sparks, 1992;
Sparks, 1996d) were common in the literature on staff development.

Asayesh (1993a) synthesized findings from several studies and reported eight specific characteristics of successful staff development programs:

1. It is one of three essential ingredients of successful school improvement. The two others are a supportive institutional context and strong content.
2. It employs strategies that are research-based, meaning they have been proven to be effective.
3. It is an ongoing process, beginning with intensive support activities that should be built into the school or school systems instructional structure.
4. It will make a difference in student learning, improving outcomes ranging from attendance to grades.
5. It will include an evaluation component that measures effectiveness in terms of both implementation and student outcomes. This information can demonstrate progress and serve as a blueprint for modifications.
6. The staff developers practice what they preach, maintaining an attitude of openness to change and personal growth.
7. Opportunities for collaboration and joint planning are built in as part of the model.
8. Teachers and other staff are involved in their own growth and take ownership of the program. (p. 27)

Joyce and Showers (1980) described two main functions of staff development; fine tuning present skills or learning new skills. The components of successful staff development were different depending upon the purpose. If fine tuning was the objective, the sessions involved modeling, practice, and feedback. When new skills were being learned, formal presentations, discussion of theory, and the use of peer coaching was considered. Similar descriptive approaches were taken by Nowak (1994) and Hirsh and Ponder (1991). Nowak described four key elements of staff development: multidimensional, decentralized, knowledge of the change process, and the changing role of the staff developer. For each element she described specific considerations for staff developers. Hirsh and Ponder used nine different topics in their description of effective staff development. Some of their considerations included planning, accountability, relevance, the use of local experts, and collaboration.

Barth (1991) challenged the concept of local expertise. He stated the most successful programs were those guided by a clear vision that saw beyond the walls of individual classrooms and schools. Outside expertise was often required because teachers and school-based individuals
generally lacked the capacity to conceive and implement worthwhile improvements on their own.

The speed with which staff development resulted in change was also a topic discussed by researchers. Some reviewers argued the most effective professional development efforts approached change in a gradual and incremental fashion, not expecting too much at one time (Doyle & Ponder, 1997; Fullan, 1985). Others insisted the broader the scope of a professional development program, the more effort required of teachers, and the greater the overall change in teaching style attempted, the better the chance that the program elicited enthusiasm on the part of teachers and was implemented well (McLaughlin & March, 1978).

Viewing staff development as both an individual and an organizational process was addressed by several researchers. Hall and Loucks (1978) stated that staff development must be relevant to individual principals and teachers and address their specific needs and concerns. Pejouhy (1990) also addressed individual needs but cautioned that addressing inservice to individual needs could sometimes be embarrassing and cause individuals to be reluctant to adopt new practices. Several researchers added that change is important for organizations as well as individuals. They stated that too much focus upon individuals without consideration of organizational features and system politics
severely limited the likelihood of success in staff development. A poor system environment caused any change effort to fail, no matter how much individual training took place (Beane, 1991; Clift, Holland, & Veal, 1990; Fullan & Pomfret, 1992).

How much to expect of staff development efforts was a concern addressed by researchers. Guskey (1991) stated that a common problem with staff development was that too much change was expected at one time. Professionals tended to be opposed to radical alterations to present procedures, so the likelihood of their implementing a new program or innovation depended largely on their judgment of the magnitude of change required for implementation (Doyle & Ponder, 1977). Fullan (1992) and Miles and Lewis (1990) addressed the need for long-term staff development. They wrote that it was not unreasonable to have short term objectives that lead to the accomplishment of three to five year goals for change.

The importance of working in teams and securing collegial support was addressed by Fullan, Bennett, and Rolheiser-Bennett, (1989) and Rosenholtz (1987). Working in teams allowed tasks and responsibilities to be shared. This reduced the workload of individuals and enhanced the quality of the work produced. Fullan (1991) noted that extensive planning was exhausting work and could often result in
burnout before the implementation phase if teachers planned in isolation.

It was stated that successful actions were reinforcing and likely to be repeated while those that were unsuccessful tended to be diminished. Similarly, practices that were new and unfamiliar were accepted and retained when they were perceived as increasing one’s competence and effectiveness (Guskey, 1989). The teacher’s ability to gather feedback on the result of an innovation appeared critical to the continued implementation of an innovation, whether the feedback was gathered from mastery evidence of skills (Guskey, 1985), student engagement observation (Stallings, 1980), or various forms of informal assessments (Smylie, 1988).

Follow-up in the form of support was also deemed necessary for a successful staff development program. Joyce and Showers (1980) noted that few persons could move from a professional development experience directly into implementation with success. Miles and Lewis (1990) saw innovation and implementation as a complicated process. Guidance and direction, along with support, were necessary to fit new practices and techniques to unique on-the-job conditions. Some researchers argued that guidance and support should be combined with appropriate pressure when adaptations were being made (Airasian, 1987; Fullan & Miles,
1992; Waugh & Punch, 1987). A final consideration for the development of successful staff development programs was the importance of integrating new efforts with existing knowledge and practice. Fullan and Miles (1992) found that innovation was often isolated in the field of education, expressing that often little thought was given to how a specific innovation contributed to a growing professional knowledge base. Latham (1988) referred to the implementation of isolated fads and the feelings of many teachers that if they reacted calmly to most calls for innovation, the excitement usually passed without incident. Doyle (1992) stated that substantial improvements became possible when several strategies were carefully and systematically integrated. This point was illustrated by Guskey (1988), Mevarech (1985), Marzano, Pickering and Brandt, (1990), and Guskey (1990) in their descriptions of how different combinations of innovations could yield impressive results. It was important to understand that no single model for innovation will work in all situations. Fullan (1992) stressed that "Schools are not in the business of managing single innovations; they are in the business of contending with multiple innovations simultaneously" (p. 19).
Models For Staff Development

As stated earlier, no single approach to staff development was expected to work in all situations. The needs of the individual and the organization must be considered, as well as individual motivation, timing, and realistic expectations of implementation of the innovation. Numerous models designed for staff development programs were described in the literature. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990) suggested that staff development strategies fit into five models: individually guided, observational/assessment, involvement, training, and inquiry. Asayesh (1994) described a model closely aligned with district goals that stressed high quality and advocacy to gain support from administrators and others who provide funding. DuFour and Berkey (1995) viewed the principal led staff development model as the most effective. They recommended nine steps the principal can use to guide effective staff development in a school. Other school based models included mentoring (Ganser, 1996), teacher inquiry (Ellis, 1997), and Teaching for Understanding (Perkins & Blythe, 1994). Teaching for Understanding was a five-year demonstration project funded by the Spencer Foundation that stressed teaching strategies to improve student thinking and reasoning skills. Each of the school-based models were in direct contrast to Barth’s (1991) beliefs that was discussed earlier. Barth contended
that effective staff development often required expertise from outside the school or school system. The staff development model that Johnson, Lasater, and Fitzgerald (1997) proposed incorporated training for paraprofessionals into the training process. The justification was the increasing importance of the role of the paraprofessionals as more and more responsibilities were incorporated into their job descriptions.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs was the basis for the model presented by Bennett (1991). She stressed the importance of comfort and food as a basic need for effective staff development. At higher levels she described the need for individuals to feel a part of the group and the need to meet certain self esteem needs during the training. After all of the lower level needs had been addressed, she stated the teachers were in a position to actually acquire knowledge, be creative, and reach their fullest potential.

Joyce and Showers (1996) and Munger (1995) discussed a job-embedded model of staff development. Job-embedded implied a process where all levels of school employees viewed themselves as having an important role as staff developers. Teachers and administrators were often the ones who offer training and ongoing support in acquiring new knowledge and skills (Sparks, 1994). Joyce and Showers (1996) described the three general components of a
comprehensive job-embedded staff development system as being concerned with serving individuals, taking collective action for studying school improvement, and implementing destructured initiatives in curriculum, instruction, and technology.

A model that was field-tested in an elementary situation was the Dimensions of Learning approach described by Marzano, Pickering, and Brandt (1990). They described a staff development effort that incorporated an awareness of five dimensions or types of thinking done by students in the learning process. The following dimensions were included:

1. Thinking needed to develop a positive attitude toward learning.
2. Thinking needed to acquire and integrate knowledge.
3. Thinking needed to extend and refine knowledge.
4. Thinking needed to make meaningful use of knowledge.
5. Thinking needed to develop desirable habits of mind. (pp. 2-21)

In this study, the researchers found that teachers routinely addressed dimensions one and two but did very little with helping students acquire skills in dimensions three, four, and five.
Todnem and Warner (1993) described the "Return On Investment" model of assessment for staff development that was first proposed by Kirkpatrick (1975), then updated in a new publication bearing the same name (Kirkpatrick, 1996). The evaluation model stressed the importance of training on four levels: participant reaction, participant learning, participant use of new skills, and measurement of organization results. This type of data-driven assessment model was consistent with proposals put forth by Asayesh (1993a), Branham (1992), Todnem and Warner (1994a), and Fullen, Bennett, and Rolheiser-Bennett (1990).

Other models for staff development incorporated training activities into everyday job activities. They used what had been learned in adult learner research and business applications of Deming's quality principles (Warwick, 1995). Action research (McKay, 1992), Authentic Professional Development (Boudah & Mitchell, 1998) and Constructivism (Sparks, 1996c) placed the teacher at the center of the learning process and used job-embedded situations in the training design.

Several researchers (Hall & Louchs, 1978; Loucks-Horsley, 1991; Matthews, 1993) discussed staff development from the standpoint of teacher concerns. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) was based on extensive experience with
educational innovation in school and college settings. The following assumptions were a part of the CBAM model:

1. In educational institutions change is a process, not an event.
2. The individual must be the principal target of interventions designed to facilitate change in the classroom.
3. Change is a highly personal experience.
4. The change process is not an undifferentiated continuum.
5. Staff development can best be facilitated for the individual by use of a client-centered diagnostic/prescriptive model.
6. Staff developers and other change facilitators need to work in an adaptive, yet systemic way. (Hall & Loucks, 1978, pp. 38-39)

The CBAM model described six stages of concern that a teacher goes through during the implementation phase of an innovation. As the teacher gained knowledge and confidence in the use of the model he/she progressed through the various stages or levels. The six levels were: awareness, informational, personal, management consequence, collaboration and refocusing (p. 41). The research obtained from studies on CBAM was so influential that the National
Staff Development Council (Standard, 1995) incorporated CBAM as a major component of the process section of the National Standards for Staff Development.

The staff development model proposed by the National Staff Development Council was standards based. The Council used current research and the input of educational experts to develop 24 specific standards for staff development (Standards, 1995). The standards were divided into the three general areas of content, process, and context. They were consistent with recent NSDC resolutions related to staff development (Sparks & Richardson, 1997). The standards were intended to be used by school districts to plan and implement staff development activities that reflected the most recent thinking and research in the field (Sparks, 1996c).

Numerous models exist for the planning, delivery, and evaluation of staff development activities. No one model is designed to be effective in every situation, but all are intended to offer options to the staff developer as plans are made at school, system, and organizational levels for the implementation of change. This study focuses on teacher perceptions of staff development based upon the NSDC standards. Therefore, it is necessary to review each of the general categories of standards presented by the NSDC.
Context/Process/Content

Context (Standards, 1995), as related to staff development, "addresses the organization, system, or culture in which the new learnings will be implemented" (p. 1). The specific standards included by the NSDC in context included continuous improvement, leadership/advocacy, organizational alignment and support, time for learning, and staff development as an innovation.

Process (Standards, 1995) referred to how staff development was conducted. "It described the means for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills" (p. 1). Process standards recommended by NSDC included, organizational development and systems thinking, the change process; individual, the change process; organizational, data driven decision making, selection of content, integration of innovations, evaluation, models, follow-up, collaborative skills, and group development.

The NSDC (Standards, 1995) definition of content “refers to the actual skills and knowledge effective elementary school educators need to possess or acquire through staff development" (p. 1). The content standards include childhood and pre-adolescent development, classroom management, diversity, interdisciplinary curriculum, research based instructional strategies, high expectations, family involvement, and student performance assessment.

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Staff development standards were research based and were addressed throughout the literature on staff development. The specific standards (Standards, 1995) included in the NSDC model were the consensus product of the NSDC Board of Directors, the National Association of Elementary School Principals Board of Directors, several educational professional organizations, and numerous individual researchers and reviewers (p. i-iii).

Cohen (1993), Sparks (1997a), Raywid (1993), and Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) addressed the context issues of finding time for learning, especially as it related to collaboration with other professionals. The creative use of the school calendar, early dismissal, and adding contract days were discussed as options. Asayesh (1993b) indicated context was a critical issue, noting that if an innovation was used in an environment that was not very cooperative, student learning would not improve. In an interview with Sparks (1997a), Darling-Hammond addressed the need for continuous improvement for all school employees. She discussed the need for collaboration, and how supervisors could help to create the time required for teachers to work together on improvement strategies.

Within the process standard, much literature was found in areas dealing with systems thinking, evaluation, integration of innovations, follow-up, and models. An
entire section of this review has been devoted to models of staff development.

Systems thinking (Asayesh, 1993b; Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, & Smith, 1994; Sparks, 1996b;) was an approach to organizational growth based on awareness of the whole, the part, and the interaction of the two. Etzioni (1964) emphasized the importance of environmental factors in his study of the open systems model. Asayesh (1993b) related some components of systems thinking to Deming's Total Quality Management System. She noted that systems thinking began in the 1950s but had been applied to education only since the 1980s. McManama (1971) stated that most of the early writing concerning systems thinking often left school administrators bewildered because of a lack of understanding of the problems and objectives of education. Senge (1994) also related systems thinking to “cybernetics, chaos theory; gestalt therapy; the work of Gregory Bateson, Russel Ackoff, Eric Frist, and the Santa Fe Institute “ (p. 89). He also stressed the importance of looking at the “whole” rather than individual parts in systems thinking.

The evaluation of staff development programs could take place at the teacher level, at the outcome level, or a combination of the two. Kirkpatrick (1996) incorporated teacher opinion and student outcome data into his evaluation model. Most researchers stated that staff development
efforts should be evaluated primarily on student outcome data. The types of outcome measurements that could be obtained were illustrated by Todnem and Warner (1994a) and Edmonds (1985) in their descriptions of school improvement efforts with data collection components. Todnem and Warner (1995) stressed the importance of planning for data collection and assessment at the beginning of any school improvement process. Other models and suggestions for linking staff development and student outcomes were reported by Asayesh (1992a), Branham (1992), Guskey and Sparks (1991), and Fullan, Bennett, and Rolheiser-Bennett (1990). Sparks (1996a) wrote that the data driven evaluation of staff development should be a natural process of the job for all system employees.

The integration of innovations was discussed for major efforts such as the ESEA legislation at the federal level by Doyle (1992). The widespread impact of Title I as it related to children from low-income families, private schools, and the overall education program, illustrated how progress must be integrated into the existing program. A second illustration given by Doyle was the effect technology innovations had on schools and the operational changes that existed when technology was introduced. Guskey (1990) and Fullan and Miles (1992) wrote that innovations often failed because they operated in isolation. Poor planning,
impatience, and failure to integrate new strategies with existing strategies, often contributed to the poor showing of innovations.

The content of staff development programs is very broad and occupies a large portion of the literature dealing with staff development. This is easy to understand because just about anything accomplished in a school system in the name of teacher training could be called staff development content. Asayesh (1993a) warned that not all innovations were of equal value and those that were not powerful would not result in improved student learning. Guskey (1993) pointed out the relationship between introducing an innovation and the context in which it would be used. The content may have been appropriate but not in the present context. He contended that this was one reason quality research in the field has been so difficult. Guskey's report was consistent with the comment of Garmston (1992) in relation to the effects of context or content. In an interview with Sparks (1992), Shulman recommended regular weekly seminars for teachers, to discuss content issues and innovations. Asante (1991) addressed curriculum diversity with his Afrocentric suggestions for the education of African Americans. Research based strategies were addressed by Edmonds (1979) in his study of effective schools for the poor and by Brophy (1981) in her study on the use of teacher
praise. Interdisciplinary teaching and its effect on student learning was described by Gardner and Boix-Mansilla (1994). Effective classroom management techniques were reported in studies by Brophy (1979), Emmer and Evertson (1980), and Good (1979). Their studies stressed the powerful effects of quality classroom management skills at the beginning of the year, as a technique to overshadow areas where lesser skill had been demonstrated, and as a method of improving student learning through direct instruction, especially in the early elementary school years. Cohen (1993) proposed a “Purpose-Centered System of Education” (p. 792). This classroom management and instructional strategy approach focused on the development of five crucial dimensions of purpose, values and ethics, self and others, systems, and skills. Their model stressed the integration of the five dimensions into a single curriculum based on social purposes.

Summary

Staff development is a major topic in educational literature. It is viewed by many as ineffective and inefficient in terms of the use of school system dollars. Its importance has been recognized as an important and critical tool for impacting student learning, yet few studies exist that solidly demonstrate success. It is clear
that quality programs are costly in terms of dollars, yet school systems continue to allocate small portions of their budget to staff development. The National Staff Development Council has now proposed a set of staff development standards to assist school systems as they plan for staff development. Those standards reflect current research on the topic and may have the potential to guide systems to improved staff development offerings. Staff development models have been proposed by consultants and educational experts, yet no model has been proven to be consistently effective in delivering quality staff development opportunities.
CHAPTER 3
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of staff development programs, as perceived by elementary school teachers in Northeast Tennessee. A second purpose was to identify certain characteristics of school systems and investigate the relationship between the characteristics and staff development programs perceived to be effective by elementary teachers. Data were collected from elementary teachers throughout the Northeast Tennessee region using the Self-Assessment and Planning Tool (see Appendix A) designed by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC). Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential methods.

Participants

This study involved the population of elementary school teachers employed in the 17 school systems that made up the First Tennessee Regional Service Area of the Tennessee State Department of Education during the 1998-99 school year. Schools were considered to be elementary when the highest grade being served was not above sixth grade. In schools which served grades K-8 or K-12, only teachers in grades K-6 were asked to participate in the study. The only exceptions
were those teachers in school systems where the Director of Schools opted not to participate in the study. The study also included one central office supervisor from each participating system. This supervisor was designated by the Director of Schools and was asked to respond to a questionnaire for the purpose of collecting information dealing with specific characteristics of the system. The selection process for the population focused upon the fact that the 17 school systems work cooperatively on numerous projects throughout each school year. They all belong to a regional service agency called the Upper East Tennessee Educational Cooperative and one of their major annual projects is a cooperative staff development project that takes place each October on the campus of East Tennessee State University.

Instrumentation

The Self-Assessment and Planning Tool (see Appendix A) was developed by the NSDC for the purpose of assisting individual schools and school systems in the planning and delivery of more effective staff development programs. When the assessment tool was scored, it provided feedback in the three staff development categories of context, process, and content, as well as each of the 24 individual staff development standards. The Self-Assessment and Planning Tool
asked teachers to respond to 48 individual questions related to staff development. Each question had a five-point scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". Assessment forms were grouped by individual school, for scoring purposes, and scores were averaged for each question. Mean scores were graphed on a form similar to the NSDC Scoring Guide (see Appendix B), for the purpose of determining the level of teacher perception of satisfaction for that specific question.

A Characteristic Questionnaire (see Appendix C) was administered to each of the designated system supervisors for the purpose of collecting data related to specific system characteristics. The questionnaire was established specifically for this study, with the items selected from a review of the literature on those factors that may have the greatest effects on the quality of professional development in schools.

Reliability and Validity

The Self Assessment and Planning Tool is an instrument created by the NSDC for the purpose of assisting schools and school systems as they plan for more effective staff development programs. The items on the instrument were created to be in congruence with the NSDC standards. No validity and reliability data were available on the
instrument at the time of the study, so efforts were taken to establish reliability and validity as a part of the study.

Validity for the instrument was established by administering the instrument to six elementary school teachers in the Bristol, Virginia School System. The Bristol, Virginia School System is a neighboring school system to East Tennessee and the schools are similar to Tennessee schools in terms of student composition and teacher characteristics. The field test group of teachers was then interviewed by the researcher to determine the consistency with which the teachers had a common understanding of each of the 48 assessment items. The interview also verified that the focus of each item was consistent with the intent of the NSDC and the intent of this study.

Following the field test of the instrument, the researcher determined that the teachers had fully understood the intent of each of the questions. No modification of the instrument was necessary.

Content validity was established through a review of related literature. The literature established clear descriptions of successful staff development programs, and studies consistently found that specific activities, such as regular follow-up to inservice programs, tended to make the
offerings more successful. The National Standards were found to be consistent with the findings reported in the literature (Guskey, 1990).

Expert validity was established by the NSDC using the services of 58 educational experts from throughout the country. They assisted in the development and review of the standards prior to publication. The experts represented a cross-section of educational professions including district and school level administrators, teachers, university personnel, educational consultants, Department of Education personnel, educational research facility personnel, and staff development experts. The standards represent the current thinking of experts in the field of education and staff development research.

As an educator, this researcher reviewed the standards and concluded that they contained a great deal of face validity. The criteria seemed logical and useful to anyone who desired to assess and attempt to improve staff development offerings in a school or school system. The items referred to common topics of concern as teachers discuss school improvement and instructional methodology.

The Characteristic Questionnaire was administered to a field test group of three supervisors who had not been selected as the designated supervisor for their school system. Each supervisor was interviewed by the researcher.
to verify the clarity of the items. The interview also verified that the questions matched the intent of the study. No suggestions for improvement were proposed by the supervisors.

**Research Design**

This study uses a descriptive research design to answer the research questions posed in the study. The relationship of independent variables on the dependent variable of teacher perception of successful staff development offerings is investigated. The study attempts to demonstrate the causal-comparative nature of the relationship among the variables in an *ex post facto* context.

**Permission to Participate**

To obtain the data for this study, I first selected all elementary school teachers in the First District of the State Department of Education as potential participants. The purpose of the study was presented to the Directors of Schools. Each School Director had the opportunity to agree to participate in the study or opt out of the study. A permission form was signed by each Director expressing a desire to participate in the study (see Appendix D). Directors who agreed to participate also designated the supervisor, who served as the system contact.
Accurate Determination of Participants and Collection of Data

I worked cooperatively with the designated supervisor in each system to determine the exact number of teachers who would participate in the study. Appropriate numbers of assessment forms were prepared and packaged both by school and school system. Each form was pre-coded with a school number and a system number so it could be matched to the appropriate school during the data analysis phase. A letter of introduction including an explanation of the project (see Appendix E) was placed with each packet of materials. The packets were mailed or delivered to the designated supervisor along with a target date for when the materials should be returned. A copy of the Characteristics Questionnaire was also left with the supervisor at that time. It was the responsibility of the supervisor to distribute the materials to each school and collect the materials after the teachers had responded to the self-assessment instrument. About two weeks were allowed for this phase. When the researcher was notified that the packets were ready to be picked up, arrangements were made either for them to be mailed to the researcher, or for the packets to be picked up by the researcher.
Data Organization and File Preparation

As the Self-Assessment forms were returned, they were organized by school and by school system. The rate of return was calculated for each participating school. Data files were created for analysis. The database consisted of the information from the assessment forms and the characteristic questionnaire. Variables were created for the system number, the school number, each of the 48 response items, and each of the characteristic questions.

Data Analysis

The SAS® data analysis software package was used for all data analysis procedures in this study. For each school, and for each system, the mean score was calculated for the questions dealing with each of the three standards areas. Mean scores were recommended by the NSDC for the scoring of the self-assessment instrument. The context area covered questions 1-10, the process area covered questions 11-32, and the content area covered questions 33-48. Each question had five response options ranging from “strongly agree”, to “strongly disagree”. A response of “5” equaled strongly agree; “4” equaled agree; “3” equaled somewhat agree; “2” equaled somewhat disagree; and “1” equaled strongly disagree. A mean score of less than 3.0 at the school or
school system level was considered to be an area in need of improvement.

Results from the Characteristics Questionnaire were reviewed for each system. *t*-tests were run to determine the relationship between each of the three independent variables being studied, and the system mean results on the self-assessment tool. *t*-tests were also run, using the system mean results, in the specific areas of context, content, and process. The independent variables dealt with whether or not the system had an individual on staff responsible for staff development, and if so, the amount of time that was spent on planning and delivering staff development activities. The second area dealt with the percentage of the general purpose budget that was allocated to staff development activities in each school system. The third area dealt with the extent to which teachers had choices in the type of staff development in which they participated. *T*-test and MANOVA results were examined to determine if there was a relationship between any of the independent variables and the satisfaction levels with staff development that were reported by teachers. An alpha level of .05 was used for all tests of statistical significance.
Graphing and Reporting

For each participating school, the mean scores for each group of questions was graphed, using the scoring guide provided by the NSDC. The graph and a brief summary report was returned to each school, as an information item, and a resource document to be used in planning future staff development programs. Individual school graphs were assembled into a booklet for each participating system. One additional graph was included in the system booklet indicating the mean perception scores, in each area, for all teachers in the system. The booklet, along with a summary of the findings of this study was returned to the Director of Schools of each participating system.

In chapter four, the data are presented for each participating school system. Each research question is addressed and data are presented in tables where appropriate. Individual school data were also tabulated and sent to the schools for analysis and use in the planning of future staff development activities. A complete set of school reports, as well as a summary of system reports was prepared for each participating system’s Director of Schools.
CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the analysis of data gathered in this study and addresses how the data answer the research questions proposed in the study. A discussion of the findings is presented in Chapter 5.

Participating Systems

Two letters of invitation to participate in the study were sent to the 17 school systems served by the First Tennessee Regional Office of the State Department of Education. Nine systems agreed to participate in the study, which represented 53% of the systems in the region. Of the participating systems, five were city systems and four were county school systems. In 1998-99 the participating systems had a combined elementary student population of approximately 27,000 students. The largest system had over 4500 students and the smallest system had just over 1000 students.

Participating Schools

In the nine school systems, 71 schools could have participated. Of them, 66 schools returned data, which represented a participation rate of 93%.
Participating Teachers

Seven hundred eighty-six individual teachers participated in the study. The percent of teachers who participated in each school varied significantly based upon the level of emphasis placed on the completion of the survey by the principal. Some school systems had policies that mandated optional participation in such studies. It was not possible to calculate the actual rate of return for the study, because accurate numbers of teachers at the targeted grade levels were not available for the 1998-99 school year. Based upon figures supplied by the State Department of Education for the previous year, there were approximately 1,496 teachers at the targeted grade levels in the participating schools. Based on this figure, the return of 786 surveys represented a return rate of just over 53%.

Descriptive Data

The designated supervisor from each participating system responded to the Characteristics Questionnaire. For the question dealing with staff development coordination, two systems indicated that they had a full-time person responsible for staff development. Two additional systems indicated that they had personnel who spent between half time and three-fourths time coordinating staff development activities. Four systems indicated that they had personnel
who spent less than half time coordinating staff development activities, and one system indicated that they had no system level position devoted to the coordination of staff development activities.

In the area of budget, no participating system allocated more than 3% of the total operating budget to staff development. Four of the systems indicated that between 1% and 3% of the budget was spent on staff development while the remaining five systems spent less than 1% of the total operating budget on staff development.

In the area of teacher choice, 6 of the participating systems indicated that some form of continuous menu of staff development offerings existed. They also indicated a high level of cooperative involvement among teachers, administrators and supervisors in the planning of the activities. The remaining 3 systems reported a more centralized planning of staff development activities with teachers having limited choice as to which activities to attend.

Table 1 reports the coded system numbers, potential and actual number of participating schools, the potential and actual number of teachers who responded to the survey, the approximate percentage of responding teachers, and the Characteristic Questionnaire responses for each system.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Number</th>
<th>Schools Potential</th>
<th>Schools Actual</th>
<th>Approximate Number of Teachers</th>
<th>Approximate Responses</th>
<th>Characteristics 1</th>
<th>Characteristics 2</th>
<th>Characteristics 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>74</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>89</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<tr>
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<td>73</td>
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<td>115</td>
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<td>66 (93%)</td>
<td>1496</td>
<td>786</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Number of teachers represents the total number of classroom teachers in each school for the 1997-98 school year. It was assumed that the number of teachers for the 1998-99 was similar.

The approximate percent represents the total number of responses divided by the number of potential responses for each system.

Characteristics 1, 2, and 3, represent the answers supplied by the system level supervisors to the Characteristics Questionnaire (1=coordination; 2=budget; 3=teacher choice).

* Column 3 total as a percent of column 2 total.

Mean scores were calculated from the returned self-assessment instruments in the areas of context, content, and process. An overall mean score was also calculated for the instrument. The NSDC literature suggested that any area with a mean score of less than 3.0 might be considered an area for concern for a system or at the individual school level. No participating system had an overall mean score of less than 3.0. Overall mean scores ranged from 3.38 to 3.92. One school system had a mean score for the area of...
context of 2.96. Context means ranged from 2.96 to 3.82. Content means ranged from 3.83 to 4.35, and process means ranged from 3.25 to 3.69.

Table 2 lists each system, the number of teachers responding, and the mean score for each section of the self-assessment instrument. A narrative report and a graph were also created for distribution to each participating system and school (see appendix G). Each Director of Schools received a chart for the region, the system, and all schools in the system. Each school received a chart for the region, the system, and the individual school.

**Answers to Research Questions**

Research question number one investigated teacher perceptions of the status of current staff development programs in elementary schools throughout Northeast Tennessee.

Mean scores calculated from the returned self-assessment forms suggested that elementary classroom teachers perceived staff development offerings to be basically effective and worthwhile. The area of content received the highest ranking with a regional mean of 4.10. Context received the lowest score (3.50), and process received a 3.55. The regional mean for the overall instrument was 3.72. Only one system had an individual mean
TABLE 2. SYSTEM LEVEL MEANS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System No.</th>
<th>Context Mean</th>
<th>Content Mean</th>
<th>Process Mean</th>
<th>Overall Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>821</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>822</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>901</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

score of less than 3.0 in any area. System 320 had a mean score of 2.96 in the area of context. At the individual school level, several schools had mean scores of less than 3.0 in a variety of areas. Only one school had an overall mean of less than 3.0. Seven schools had mean scores of less than 3.0 in the area of context and five schools had a mean score of less than 3.0 in the area of process. There were no school level means below 3.0 in the area of content. The number of schools in each system with mean scores above and below 3.0 and the specific areas of concern are reported in Table 3.
The second research question asked to what extent identified characteristics of individual schools and schools systems relate to teacher perceptions of staff development programs. To answer this question, an independent-sample $t$-test was used to compare individual system means in the areas of context, process, content, and overall, to the various reported system characteristics. The null-hypothesis on each statistical testing was that there would be no difference between the system means and system characteristics. Responses to the Characteristics Questionnaire divided themselves naturally into two groups for the second and third question. The second question dealt with system level budgeting for staff development. The third question dealt with the amount of teacher choice given in the planning and delivery of staff development programs. For question one, responses of A or B were considered one group and responses of C or D were considered another group. Hence, $t$-test was used to analyze the data to answer research questions. An alpha level of .05 was used to determine the statistical significance.

For coordination, the two groups that were compared were systems that had a staff development coordinator who spent one half time or more planning and delivering staff development activities and systems that had
### TABLE 3. NUMBER OF SCHOOLS WITH MEAN SCORES OF GREATER OR LESS THAN 3.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System No.</th>
<th>Context Schools</th>
<th>Content Schools</th>
<th>Process Schools</th>
<th>Overall Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;3.0</td>
<td>≥3.0</td>
<td>&lt;3.0</td>
<td>≥3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>821</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>822</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>901</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** A mean score of 3.0 or less indicates the area to be one of concern for a school.

either no staff development coordinator or a coordinator who spent less than half time planning and delivering staff development activities. The analysis revealed a significant difference between the two groups in all areas: context, content, process, and all questions. Teachers in the group with higher levels of coordination indicated significantly higher perceptions of staff development programs than did teachers in the group with lower levels of coordination. The null-hypothesis was rejected for this question. Mean scores for each variable and the associated t-test statistics are reported in Table 4.

The second system characteristic that was compared dealt with the amount of the system's total operating budget that was allocated to staff development activities. The
first group included teachers in systems that allocated less than 1% to staff development. The second group included teachers in systems that allocated between 1% and 3% to staff development activities. Independent-sample t-test analysis revealed a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups in each area; context, content, process, and all questions. A review of the mean scores, which are displayed in Table 5, showed that teachers in systems that allocated higher percentages of the operating budget to staff development had a significantly higher perception of staff development offerings than those teachers in systems that spent less than 1% of the budget on staff development. The null-hypothesis was rejected for the second characteristic. The details are given in Table 5.

The third system characteristic that was compared dealt with the amount of teacher choice with regard to development and attendance of staff development activities. The first group included teachers where staff development was centrally planned by system level administrators and school principals. Teachers had limited choices in what activities were attended. The second group included teachers where there was a continuous menu of staff development opportunities that had been planned cooperatively by teachers and administrators.
TABLE 4. SYSTEM CHARACTERISTIC #1: STAFF DEVELOPMENT

COORDINATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Coordination</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>36.91</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.69)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Coordination</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>34.08</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.41)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(784.0) = 6.48*; \ p < .0000$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Coordination</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>66.69</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4.17)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Coordination</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>65.02</td>
<td>8.46</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4.06)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(784) = 2.73*; \ p < .0066$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Coordination</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>79.73</td>
<td>11.99</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.62)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Coordination</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>77.10</td>
<td>12.62</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.50)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(784) = 2.87*; \ p < .0042$
Table 4. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Coordination</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>183.33</td>
<td>24.33</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.82)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Coordination</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>176.21</td>
<td>23.12</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.67)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(784) = 4.05*$; $p < .0001$

Note: ** The mean score for the specific area divided by the number of questions in the area (context=10; content=16; process=22; all=48)

Independent-sample $t$-test analysis revealed no significant difference between the mean perception scores of the two groups. A review of the mean scores of the two groups, which are displayed in Table 6, showed that teachers in systems with an ongoing menu of staff development opportunities did not have significantly higher mean scores in any of the investigated areas of context, content, process, or all questions. For the third system characteristic, the null-hypothesis was not rejected.

When testing was completed in the areas of content, context, and process by coordination and budget, using oneway ANOVAS, the results were statistically significant. When content, context, and process were tested by teacher choice using oneway ANOVA, there was no statistical
### TABLE 5. SYSTEM CHARACTERISTIC #2: BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1%</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>33.38</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.34)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1% to 3%</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>36.68</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.67)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(784) = 8.01*; \ p < .0000$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1%</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>64.45</td>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4.03)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1% to 3%</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>66.71</td>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4.17**)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(784) = 3.89*; \ p < .0001$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1%</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>76.00</td>
<td>11.94</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.45)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1% to 3%</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>79.94</td>
<td>12.28</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.63)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(784) = 4.56*; \ p < .0000$
Table 5. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1%</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>173.83</td>
<td>23.14</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.62)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1% to 3%</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>183.34</td>
<td>23.49</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.82)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(784) = 5.71*; \ p < .0000$

Note: ** The mean score for the specific area divided by the number of questions in the area (context=10; content=16; process=22; all=48)

difference in the means. This prompted additional investigation into the outcome. According to Stevens (1996), several ANOVA's on a number of criterion variables by a categorical variable(s) may not produce significant results as total variance of all criterion variables is taken into account one variable at a time in isolation from the rest. Therefore, MANOVA is preferred to several ANOVA's because MANOVA has the potential to detect significant differences among several criterion variables by a categorical variable. Hence, a decision was made to test content, context, and process by teacher choice using MANOVA. The MANOVA procedure failed to reveal a significant difference by the teacher choice variable when content, context, and process were considered simultaneously. MANOVA results confirmed
### TABLE 6. SYSTEM CHARACTERISTIC #3: TEACHER CHOICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less choice</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>34.69</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.47)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Choice</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.53)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(784) = 1.35; \ p < .1784$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Choice</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>65.81</td>
<td>8.53</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4.11)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Choice</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>65.50</td>
<td>8.07</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4.09)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(784) = .49; \ p < .6211$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Choice</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>78.13</td>
<td>12.26</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.55)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Choice</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>77.97</td>
<td>12.29</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.54)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(784) = .18; \ p < .8591$
Table 6. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Choice</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>178.63</td>
<td>23.86</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.72)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Choice</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>178.77</td>
<td>23.86</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.72)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t(784) = .08; p < .9388$

Note: * The mean score for the specific area divided by the number of questions in the area (context=10; content=16; process=22; all=48)

the individual ANOVA findings. Nevertheless, results showed that the probability level associated with between groups test (Wilks' Lambda = .99, $F (3, 782) = 2.03; p = .108$) is much smaller compared to probabilities associated with any of the individual $t$ tests results which are given in table 6.

The third research question asked if specific system characteristics existed that were consistently present in school systems which were operating effective staff development programs. This question required further analysis of results from the second research question. The results from the second research questions showed that the level of staff development coordination and the amount of the total operating budget allocated to staff development
were both significant factors in determining teacher perceptions of staff development. The amount of teacher choice in the planning and delivery of staff development was not a significant factor.

Each system included in the study had an overall mean perception score of higher than 3.0. According to NSDC, all systems were considered to have effective overall programs. For the purpose of responding to research question number three, the four systems with the highest mean scores were considered. Higher mean scores suggest higher perceptions, by teachers, of the staff development programs. The systems to be considered included system 301 (M=3.92), system 822 (M=3.88), system 101 (M=3.84), and system 821 (M=3.80).

For the area of staff development coordination, three of the four systems had a staff development coordinator who spent half time or more planning and delivering staff development activities. Only system 301 devoted less than half of an individual’s time to planning staff development. Only one of the systems (901) with an overall mean of less than 3.80 had an individual who devoted more than half time to the planning and deliver of staff development activities.

Table 7 shows the individual systems ranked according to overall mean scores and the response categories for the first and second system characteristic questions. For the
TABLE 7. SYSTEM MEAN SCORES AND CHARACTERISTIC RESPONSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>System No.</th>
<th>Overall Mean</th>
<th>Higher Coord.</th>
<th>Lower Coord.</th>
<th>1%-3%</th>
<th>Less than 1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>3.38</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Columns 6 and 7 represent the respective levels of budget allocations for staff development for each system.

area of budget allocations, once again, three of the four systems with the highest mean scores allocated between 1% and 3% of their total operating budget to staff development. Only system 101 allocated less than 1% to staff development. Only one system (900) with a mean score of less than 3.80 allocated more than 1% of the total operating budget to staff development activities.
Summary

The data in this study indicated that both staff development coordination and budget allocations for staff development had a significant relationship to teachers' perceptions of staff development offerings in their school systems. No significant relationship was found between mean perception scores and the amount of teacher choice that is exercised in the planning and attendance of staff development programs. Some evidence was found that higher levels of coordination and higher levels of budget allocations are consistently present in systems with the highest mean perception scores.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study was conducted for two reasons. First, as school systems attempt to improve staff development offerings, it was important to establish some baseline data regarding current teacher perceptions of staff development. Without such data, it would be difficult for a system to measure any improvement that future offerings had on teacher perceptions of staff development. The NSDC Self-Assessment and Planning Tool provided a consistent method for the collection and tabulation of teacher perception data for school systems desiring to have this baseline data.

The second purpose of the study was to determine if relationships existed between certain identified school system characteristics and the mean perception scores for the teachers in a given school system. The specific characteristics of staff development coordination, budget allocation, and teacher choice in the planning and delivery of staff development were identified from the literature as critical characteristics and selected as the variables to be studied.

Bagin (1977), Guskey (1997), and Ryan (1987), agreed that teacher perceptions of staff development programs had
often been found to be very low. The research conducted in this study was designed to better inform school administrators in public school systems in Upper East Tennessee regarding how local teachers viewed staff development and to assist school systems as they planned future staff development programs.

**Review of the Methodology**

Seventeen public school systems in the Northeast Tennessee region were invited to participate in the study. Data were collected on nine systems that agreed to participate. Elementary teachers in each school in the participating systems were asked to complete the NSDC’s Self-Assessment and Planning Tool. Additionally, a designated supervisor from each participating system was asked to complete a Characteristics Questionnaire for their system. Survey forms were collected from teachers and mean perception scores calculated for the staff development areas of content, context, and process. Overall means for the entire survey form were also calculated. Mean scores were calculated at the individual school level, the system level, and the regional level. Mean scores at the system level and individual system characteristics were analyzed using t-tests to determine if there was a relationship between any of the characteristic variables and system perception.
scores. Furthermore, MANOVA was used to determine whether there was a difference among the two categories on teacher choice variable when content, context, and process were considered simultaneously. Each participating school and school system received a report containing the results of the overall study as well as data related to its individual school.

**Overview of Significant Findings in Relation to Current Research**

The major findings of this study were divided into two general areas. The first area dealt with the overall perception of elementary teachers in the participating schools in Upper East Tennessee. The NSDC Self-Assessment and Planning Tool yielded mean perception scores for individual schools, systems, and the region in the staff development areas of context, content, and process. An overall mean score was also obtained for all systems and schools. The NSDC recommended that any mean score of 3.0, or less, should be considered an area of concern and be targeted for improvement. At the regional level, there were no areas below 3.0. All system means were also above 3.0, with the exception of one system, in the area of context. At the individual school level, seven schools had mean scores of less than 3.0 in context, five had mean scores of

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less than 3.0 in process, and one school had an overall mean of less than 3.0. All content means were above 3.0.

These findings indicate that elementary teachers in the participating schools had a relatively high perception of staff development programs being offered. A few isolated areas of concern remain, but in general, the mean scores were well within the NSDC standards for acceptability.

The second area of findings in the study dealt with the relationship of specific system characteristics to the mean perception scores. The findings are consistent with research in the area of staff development.

In the area of staff development coordination, it was found that systems with higher levels of coordination had significantly higher mean scores in all areas studied. Todnem and Warner (1994b) addressed the advantages of a staff development person who devoted large amounts of time to the planning and delivery of programming when they noted that staff development was much more than an event. It was a process that required ongoing planning. Bagin (1997) also reinforced the advantages of an individual who devoted time to staff development by stating that the staff developer could use effective public relations techniques to gain support for ongoing programs. Davidson, Henkelman, and Stasinowsky (1993) wrote of the reality that most systems had difficulty devoting large amounts of staff time to staff
development planning. Their study found that most staff
developers spent less than half time in staff development.
In this study, 56% of the systems devoted less than half of
an individual's time to staff development activities.

In the area of budget allocations, this study found
systems that devoted between 1% and 3% of the total
operating budget to staff development had significantly
higher mean perception scores, in all areas studied, than
systems that devoted less than 1% of the total budget to
staff development. This study found that 56% of the systems
allocated less than 1% of the operating budget to staff
development and 100% of the systems allocated less than 3%
to staff development. The findings almost mirrored the
findings of Barstingl (1977) and Davidson (1993) who studied
typical budget allocations for school systems.

No significant relationship was found between mean
scores of teachers and the amount of teacher choice allowed
in planning and attendance of staff development activities.
This finding was not consistent with what the researcher had
anticipated, but was probably consistent with the mixed
findings in the literature on staff development. Asayesh
(1993a) and Nowak (1994) discussed the importance of teacher
ownership of staff development programs and
decentralization. During the same general time period,
Barth (1991) wrote that most successful programs were
planned and delivered from outside the school or school system. Monahan (1996) stated that many systems actually encourage teachers to participate in more traditional offerings as a result of well intended incentive programs. Some systems in Upper East Tennessee are in the practice of paying incentives to teachers who attend summer staff development programs. This may reduce the desire for teachers to become involved in the planning process and encourage them simply to attend what is offered. Teachers may also see themselves as being very busy with classroom instruction and are comfortable leaving the planning process for staff development to system level administrators.

**Implications of the Findings**

This study was completed for the purpose of assisting school systems in the Upper East Tennessee region with the planning and delivery of future staff development programs. The findings indicate that staff development programs were generally perceived as a positive experience by elementary teachers. Nevertheless, school systems should continue to strive to offer the best possible programs for teachers. At the regional level, teachers rated content as the highest area of staff development. Context and process were rated lower, but still above 3.0. At the system level, the area of context was most often the area for concern. This
finding suggests that systems, in the future, should concentrate on the contextual issues when planning staff development activities. Context issues include areas such as continuous or ongoing improvement, the role of leaders in advocating staff development, comprehensive system-wide planning for staff development, providing adequate time for learning to take place, and knowledge of the change process to allow for innovations to have a chance for success.

School systems should study the organization of systems with the most successful programs and possibly replicate certain characteristics that have been found to be consistent with higher teacher perceptions of staff development. If the system does not currently have an individual responsible for staff development, that assignment should be considered in the future. At least a half time position should be considered.

School systems should review the general operating budget to determine the level of funding they are devoting to staff development activities. If the figure is less than 1%, consideration should be given to increasing the allocation. Long range goals for the systems should be to allocate from 4% to 5% of the total budget to staff development as recommended by Davidson, Henkelman, and Stasinowsky (1993).
Limitations of this Study

Many of the findings of this study are consistent with other research in the field of staff development, but the organization of the study produced some limitations that must be considered:

1. Nine of the 17 school systems served by the First Tennessee Regional Office of the State Department of Education agreed to participate in the study. In some situations, school board policies prevented participation. Some school systems opted not to respond to the invitation.

2. Some participating school systems allowed optional participation at the school level. This resulted in a few schools not submitting any survey forms.

3. Some individual principals allowed optional participation at the teacher level. This reduced the percentage of teacher responses for some schools.

4. The final question on the Characteristics Questionnaire may have been a limitation. The item was not questioned during the field test, but as results were analyzed, the researcher realized that there may have been some overlap in the possible responses that may have caused
some confusion for the supervisors responding to the question.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Staff development programs are ongoing in nature and warrant continuing study. The replication of this study, in other regions of the state or nation, would contribute to the research and further substantiate the findings.

School systems in Upper East Tennessee are being required to implement staff development programs based upon comprehensive staff development plans and school improvement plans. This study should be repeated in from two to five years to determine if the levels of teacher perception have changed for any of the NSDC standards.

Finally, the NSDC also produces a Self-Assessment and Planning Tool for middle schools and high schools. This study should be conducted in the same region for those teachers. With assessment results from teachers at all levels, a school system would have all of the data necessary to plan a comprehensive staff development program for all teachers based upon the National standards.
A Nation at Risk. [Online]. Available:


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Self-Assessment and Planning Tool
Self-Assessment and Planning Tool

Groups can use this self-assessment tool to determine the current state of implementation of the context, process, and content of effective staff development for elementary schools. The assessment can be used to reveal strengths as well as areas for improvement. A scoring guide and index follow the standards. Because of the value in obtaining multiple perspectives, the self assessment will be most useful if completed by a group rather than individually. We suggest the following steps:

1. Make copies for group members and have each member complete it alone.
2. Have participants compare their individual scores. It is recommended that group members discuss similarities and differences rather than average scores.
3. Have the group discuss why specific scores were given and ask the group to reach consensus on a score which represents the school's current level of implementation.
4. Prepare an action plan based upon the findings from the assessment.

Self-Assessment: Elementary School Staff Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Staff development is ongoing and job-embedded.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Staff development activities result in changes in classroom practice for most teachers on the staff.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The budget allocation supports ongoing professional development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. There is widespread support for professional development among administration, teachers, parents, school board members, and other influential members of the community.</td>
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<td>5. Staff development is viewed as an essential component for achieving the purposes of the organization and is valued as an integral part of the strategic plan.</td>
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<td>6. Central administration supports the work necessary to accomplish school improvement goals and provides an adequate budget.</td>
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<td>7. Strategies for facilitating planning and learning during the school day exist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. A minimum of twenty percent of the work week is devoted to joint learning and work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. The school staff is organized into study groups to learn about the change process and or about particular innovations.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Teachers are observed randomly to determine their use of an innovation and the innovation's effect on students.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Process

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| | | | | | |
| 11. The school’s improvement plan addresses important aspects of organizational effectiveness such as decision making, communication, and team functioning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Information about systems thinking and the change process are used in making school improvement decisions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. The principles of adult learning permeate staff development. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. The learning climate of staff development activities is collaborative, informal, and respectful. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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### Process (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. The three phases of the change process are initiation, implementation and institutionalization in the planning of programs.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Staff and administration are aware of the &quot;implementation gap&quot; (things often go wrong before they get better).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Staff development decisions are based on data regarding valued student outcomes.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Recognition of a need to seek improvement exists.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Staff reading, study, and discussion of educational innovations provide occasions concerning staff development.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Research-based content serves as the base of staff learning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Improvement plans include a carefully-designed framework for the integration of innovations being implemented.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. An instructional framework that describes how selected innovations collectively address school priorities exists.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Program evaluation assesses participants' reactions to the program and measures participants' learning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Program evaluation assesses participants' use of new knowledge and skills and the impact on student learning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Staff development includes activities other than &quot;training workshops.&quot;</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. All staff development training activities include theory, demonstration, practice with feedback, and teaching.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Desired changes in on-the-job behavior are supported and result in improved student learning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. Staff members regularly analyze and self-correct performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. Site-based management councils focus primarily on instruction and student learning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. Consensus decision making is used to increase staff ownership.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. School teams/groups are models of effective interpersonal and group skills.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. Training and development in collaborative skills occurs regularly, especially for new teams or committees.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
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### Content

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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33. Teachers and administrators are knowledgeable regarding the needs of children and young adolescent.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>34. Decisions about instruction and new programs are based on how well they reflect developmentally-appropriate practices.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>35. Teachers' classroom management strategies increase academic learning time.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content (continued)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36. Teachers are familiar with and utilize the research-based findings that support a safe and orderly environment.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>37. The school's staff possesses the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to ensure a quality education for all students regardless of culture, race, gender, or ethnicity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>38. School data confirm that all students have equal access to and participation in the school's programs and activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>39. Students can discuss the connection between the various content areas and their real-life concerns.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>40. Teachers offer skills and knowledge to all students in an integrated manner based on essential themes and questions.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>41. Teachers use a variety of approaches to teaching, know underlying instructional theories, and understand relevant research.</td>
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<td>42. There is research to suggest that the use of a school's staff development programs will increase student learning.</td>
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<td>43. Through the use of a variety of instructional strategies, administrators and teachers demonstrate a belief that all students can learn.</td>
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<td>44. Teachers use strategies that demonstrate high expectations for all students.</td>
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<td>45. There is regular communication between the school staff and parents/families about individual student’s academic progress.</td>
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<td>46. Parent/staff communication focuses on the school’s goals, classes, and curriculum with special attention to in-school and community opportunities to enhance student achievement.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>47. Student performance assessments include interviews, observations, portfolios, projects, and demonstrations.</td>
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<td>48. Student performance assessments focus on what students can actually do with the knowledge and skills they have acquired.</td>
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APPENDIX B

Scoring Guide
### Scoring Guide

Compare individual, group, and school-wide scores from the self-assessment for each question.

#### Context

<table>
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<th>Score</th>
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<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>Leadership/Advocacy</td>
<td>Organizational Alignment and Support</td>
<td>Time for Learning</td>
<td>Staff Development on Innovation</td>
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Reprinted with permission of the National Staff Development Council, 1999.
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Note: Any assessment statement receiving a score of 3 (somewhat agree) or less by a majority of the staff or teams should be considered for improvement.
APPENDIX C

Characteristics Questionnaire
School System Characteristics Questionnaire
(To be completed by a member of the supervisory staff)

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for the purpose of comparing specific characteristics, related to the staff development program, among systems. Teacher responses on the National Staff Development Council’s Self Assessment and Planning Instrument will be compared with responses on this questionnaire to determine if any specific system characteristics tend to be associated with staff development programs that are judged to be more effective by teachers. Please respond to each question from your school system’s perspective. Circle the response that most closely describes your system for each category.

1. Staff Development Coordination.
   A. My system does not have an individual who is responsible for the coordination of staff development activities systemwide.
   B. My system has a staff development coordinator who spends less than half time coordinating staff development activities.
   C. My system has a staff development coordinator, or individuals who share coordination activities, who spend between half time and three-fourths time (FTE) coordinating staff development activities.
   D. My system has a full time, or the equivalent of a full time staff development coordinator.
2. Staff Development Budgeting
   A. My system allocates less than 1% of the total operating budget to staff development activities.
   B. My system allocates between 1% and 3% of the total operating budget to staff development activities.
   C. My system allocates between 3% and 5% of the total operating budget to staff development activities.
   D. My system allocates 5% or more of the total operating budget to staff development activities.

3. Teacher Choice and Staff Development Activities
   A. Staff development activities are mainly mandated by the system, and teachers have little choice in what to attend.
   B. The system, or school principals plan most staff development activities and teachers have some choice in what to attend.
   C. Schools are free to plan site-based staff development sessions to meet their individual needs. The system is not involved much in the planning.
   D. There is an ongoing menu of staff development opportunities which are planned cooperatively by teachers, administrators, and supervisors which are designed to meet the needs of individual teacher as well as system goals.

   System: ____________________________
APPENDIX D

Participation Form
STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS STUDY
PARTICIPATION INTEREST FORM

School District: ____________________________

Director of Schools: ____________________________

Our school system would like to participate in this study. I understand that summary reports will be generated for individual schools as well as the school system. All individual teacher responses will be kept confidential.

The designated supervisor contact for our school system will be ____________________________.

________________________
Director of Schools

Please return this form by August 15, 1998 to:

Rick McInturf
Bristol Tennessee City School System
615 Edgemont Avenue
Bristol, Tn. 37620
APPENDIX E

Cover Letter to Teachers
Dear First District Elementary Teacher:

My name is Rick McInturf, and as a supervisor of federal projects and staff development, and a former principal, I am well aware of the limited amount of time that classroom teachers have to accomplish various tasks. I am requesting that you take a few minutes of your time to complete the attached questionnaire dealing with your perceptions of the staff development programs being offered by your school system. Your responses will become a part of a study being made of numerous schools and school systems throughout the Upper East Tennessee region. Individual school and school system responses will be reported as a part of my dissertation dealing with teacher perceptions of staff development programs in the region.

This study has been authorized by your Director of Schools and results will be used as one source for planning future inservice events in your school system. The survey instrument is a product of the National Staff Development Council and is designed to be used as a planning tool for school systems.

Read each item carefully and mark your response from your own perception, as a classroom teacher. Most of the questions need no explanation, but when in doubt, consider the question from a system perspective.

All individual responses will be kept confidential, and there is no need to sign the form. Results from individual schools will be reported only back to the school system for planning purposes.

Thank you for your participation in this study. Working together, school improvement will become a reality.

Sincerely,

Rick McInturf
Doctoral Candidate
Bristol City School System
APPENDIX F

Cover Letter to Principals
Dear Elementary Principal:

As a former principal, I am well aware of the limited amount of time that your teachers have for planning and conducting other activities that take place outside of the classroom. I also know that teachers are regularly asked to participate in studies and respond to various questionnaires. Since both you and your teachers have a limited amount of time for these activities, I have attempted to streamline this study, to the extent possible.

The study is looking at elementary teacher perceptions of staff development programs in schools and school systems throughout Upper East Tennessee. As a result of the efforts of the teachers, you will receive a report for your school indicating how your teachers feel about the staff development in which they are participating. Your Director of Schools will receive a set of individual school reports and a system summary of the results. The results may be used in the planning of future staff development events in your school system.

The instrument was designed by the National Staff Development Council. The Tennessee School Boards Association is recommending that systems have a Board policy stating that staff development programs reflect the content, context and process standards which have been developed by the National Staff Development Council. Assessment of where we currently stand with relation to these standards is the first step. This study has been authorized by your Director of Schools. I hope the feedback from the study will be helpful.

To complete your portion of the study, you should do the following:

1. The packet of questionnaires should have been sent, or delivered to you by a supervisor in your school system.

2. Distribute a questionnaire to each teacher in your building who works within the grade span of K-6. Special area teachers should be included.

3. Allow a reasonable amount of time for each teacher to respond to the items. If the exercise is completed in a staff meeting, it should take about 20 minutes. Collect the forms, place them in the same envelope, and return them to the designated supervisor for this study (__________________________). A one week turn around time would be ideal. Teachers should respond to each item from their personal perspective.

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions, I may be reached at 423-652-9230 or by e-mail: mcinturfr@ten-nash.ten.k12.tn.us

System: ____________________ School:______________________________
APPENDIX G

System and School Report Samples
### Staff Development Assessment

**Mean Results**

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Any area with a mean score of 3.0 or less may be an area of concern.
VITA

RICHARD A. MCINTURF

Personal Data: Date of Birth: October 2, 1950
Place of Birth: Newark, Ohio
Marital Status: Married

Education: Public Schools, Licking County, Ohio
Milligan College, Johnson City, Tennessee:
   Physical Education/Elementary Education, A.B.,
   1972
East Tennessee State University,
   Johnson City, Tennessee:
      (Reading, M.A., 1974)

Professional Experience: Special Reading Teacher, Johnson City Schools,
   Johnson City, Tennessee, 1974-1975
   Elementary Guidance Counselor,
      Johnson City Schools,
      Johnson City, Tennessee, 1975
   Director, Project COMRAD,
      Upper East Tennessee Educational Cooperative,
      East Tennessee State University,
      Johnson City, Tennessee, 1975-1978
   Associate Director, Upper East Tennessee
      Educational Cooperative, East Tennessee State
      University,
      Johnson City, Tennessee, 1978-1990
   Supervisor of Federal Projects, Bristol City
      Schools, Bristol, Tennessee, 1990-1992 and
      1998-Present
   Elementary Supervisor, Bristol City Schools,
      Bristol, Tennessee, 1992-1995
   Principal, Haynesfield Elementary School,
      Bristol, Tennessee, 1995-1998

Honors and Awards: Milligan College Outstanding Student
   Teacher, 1972
   Keynote speaker for Wilson County Education
      Association preschool inservice, 1984
   Certified assessor for the Tennessee Principal's
      Assessment Center, 1986