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ABSTRACT
            This study sought to promote increased understanding
of teachers' personal beliefs and philosophies about teaching and
learning and the impact of these beliefs and philosophies on action
in the classroom. Subjects were 17 elementary school regular and
special education teachers who participated in an inservice course,
videotaped themselves teaching before and after the course, and wrote
reactions to the videotapes. The inservice workshops were based on
socio-constructivist principles concerning the role of interaction
and reflection in the learning of teachers. The paper discusses
inconsistencies between the teachers' statements about how they felt
about the experience and the actions they took in response to the
experience. Teachers indicated that the workshops had not constituted
a learning experience for them, but they described changes in the way
they did things in the classroom as a result of participation.
Pre/post-workshop questionnaires revealed changes in the way the
teachers conceptualized discussion in the classroom, the importance
of interaction, and their understanding of the term "scaffolding."
The teachers are characterized as pragmatic skeptics who were
concerned about how change would affect their students. Implications
for promoting reflection and implementing staff development are
discussed. (Contains 55 references.) (JDD)

Beyond Pragmatic Skepticism:
Supporting the Continued Professional Growth of Teachers

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When teachers come together in a school setting with the intention of improving their practice through participation in an in-service course, both social interaction and reflective practice ought to play a role in the process. We have come to recognize the importance of social interaction in the learning processes of children (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1989; Forman & Cazden, 1985; Palinscar, 1986; Rogoff, 1990). It seems logical that it would be important in the learning of adults as well. We have also come to recognize the importance of incorporating reflective practice into pre-service teacher education (Clift & Houston, 1990; Korthagen, 1988; Veal, Clift & Johnson, 1989; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). It would follow that reflective practice should figure prominently in the in-servicing of practicing teachers (Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1993; Wildman, Niles, Magliaro & McLaughlin, 1990). In this paper, I report on a study that attempted to create an in-service seminar that took into account the interactive nature of learning and the importance of reflection. The goal of the study was to promote an increased understanding of the participants' own personal beliefs and philosophies about teaching and learning and the impact of these beliefs and philosophies on action in the classroom.

The most compelling arguments regarding the importance of interaction in the learning process are those that stem from a socio-constructivist view of teaching and learning (Vygotsky, 1978). In this view, learning depends heavily on interactions with others (Rogoff, 1990), and a movement from "other-regulated" to "self-regulated" action (Wertsch, 1979). Vygotskian constructs have given rise to metacognition as a cornerstone of our understanding of cognitive processing (Brown, 1978) and led to the development of a number of cognitive instructional strategies that use interaction as a key element (Manning, 1992).

Research in a number of fields acknowledges the importance of social interaction in the learning process. Awareness of the interactive nature of learning has been studied as a means of enhancing special and remedial education programs (Burns, 1984; Haywood, Brooks & Burns, 1986; Stone & Wertsch, 1984), as it relates to multicultural education (Au, 1980; Klifgen, 1988; McDermott & Gospodinoff, 1981), and as a means of understanding the nature of teacher-student talk in the classroom (Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1979). These different perspectives all support the idea that teaching and

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learning involves interaction and negotiation between teacher and learner. However, these constructs have not figured strongly in the design of learning experiences for practicing teachers.

In recent years, pre-service teacher education has stressed the interactive nature of learning through the use of reflective practice in both teacher preparation programs (Clift, Veal, Johnson & Holland, 1990; Korthagen, 1988; Ross, Johnson & Smith, in press; Zeichner and Liston, 1987;), and in teacher induction programs (Marshall, 1988; McIntyre, 1988; Wildman, et al., 1990). This has not carried over to in-service programs. Although there have recently been some attempts to encourage practicing teachers to be reflective and collaborative (see Grimmett, Rostad and Ford, 1992; Schön, 1991), for the most part, teachers are isolated and dissociated, and become progressively more so as their careers unfold (Goodlad, 1984; Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1989). Teachers rarely have the time or opportunity to be reflective. The traditional approach to professional growth for practicing teachers is through staff development, in-service, and supervision (Glickman, 1990; Gordon, Badiali & McClure, 1990).

Typically, professional development of teachers is based on the idea that any new information available to help teachers be more effective in the classroom can be efficiently conveyed through workshops, coursework, curriculum guides, presentations at faculty meetings, and one-on-one supervision. This approach does not give sufficient consideration to the role of the individual in the learning process. Nor does it enhance the image of the teacher as a professional with decision making capabilities. Those who have suggested guidelines for high quality in-service activities stress the importance of situational factors and individual needs (Glickman, 1990; Griffin, 1983, 1987; Little, 1981; Rubin, 1987). However, examinations of what actually occurs in practice reveal a very directive approach on the part of in-service planners and providers (Gordon, Badiali & McClure, 1990; Little, 1989). In most cases, in-service consists of training sessions geared to developing expertise in specific tasks: expertise that is often more important to the in-service providers than it is to the in-service participants (Joyce, Bennett & Rotheiser-Bennett, 1990).

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Holland, Clift, Veal, Johnson & McCarthy (1992) have suggested the concept of *professional inquiry* to promote a link between what is experienced by pre-service teachers and what is typical for in-service teacher education. They indicate a number of practices that would support professional inquiry, including reflective practice, collaboration, action research, clinical supervision, and coaching. These authors have described teaching as "a profession requiring a lifetime of sustained effort and focused reflection." (Clift, Veal, Johnson & Holland 1990). We have adopted reflection and collaboration as vehicles for promoting understanding among beginning teachers, but adopt a "training" posture with practicing teachers. Yet, reflecting on one's personal beliefs and philosophies about teaching and learning – what l will call *personal professional growth* – may be even more important for experienced teachers whose craft knowledge is already well developed.

Purpose of the Study

Personal professional growth results from the re-examination of personal beliefs about professional situations. It is not limited to specific problem-solving endeavors, nor the implementation of an instructional model. Instead, it focuses on conceptual and perceptual changes both in individuals and in the group. Do we understand things differently? Do we see the situation in a new light? Our actions are guided more by our "beliefs about teaching" than they are by our "knowledge of teaching." Our concern should be not only with "what" the teacher has learned, but with "how" that learning takes place. In the study described here, acquiring expertise through the development of a new knowledge base or technical proficiency was a secondary goal. The primary goal of this in-service activity was to create an opportunity for reflection that would enhance the participants' understanding of their own work. To accomplish this goal it was essential for the in-service activity to be embedded in the day to day life of the school. The purpose of this study was to explore the feasibility of providing a learning experience in which a group of teachers and a principal who were all members of the same faculty could work together to enhance their personal professional growth. This information should enable us to provide more meaningful and useful learning experiences in the future.

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Methodology

This study was conceived as an action research study. My primary focus was on the pheno.nenon of the learning experience. It was the situation and not the participants that was the subject of the research. I investigated how the teachers and I derived meaning from the situation and how the situation affected the relationships among all of the participants, both during the in-service experience and during our interactions with one another as colleagues in the school. However, the situation was further complicated in that I was not only the researcher, but also the building principal. I was more than an outside facilitator and more than a participant observer. I did not enter the setting as an outsider; I was familiar with the situation when the study began and had an existing relationship with the teachers involved. Considering my role as an insider, I could take Hopkins' (1987) description of teacher research, "...teachers who have extended their role to include critical reflection of the craft with the aim of improving it" (p. 115), and substitute the term principal for teacher in that definition. I attempted to record the teachers' reflections, as well as my own, as data that could be analyzed and organized to lead to conclusions about the learning experience.

The Participants

The study school was an elementary school of approximately 950 students that serves grades 1-5. The seventeen teachers in this study were all volunteers, and represented a variety of grade levels and specializations. All were female. There were 5 first-grade teachers, 3 second-grade teachers, 4 third-grade teachers, 2 fourth-grade teachers, 1 primary special education classroom teacher, 1 resource room teacher, and the school librarian. The participants were also representative of the staff as a whole in terms of age and level of experience. There was no selection process for the participants. All staff members had been invited to participate and these seventeen chose to do so.

Procedures

The teachers who volunteered for this study all participated in a 15 hour, one credit in-service course. They also agreed to videotape themselves teaching in their own classrooms both before and after the course and to write a reaction to their videotapes after viewing them privately. Each teacher

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completed a questionnaire before and after the course and agreed to be interviewed when the seminar was completed. The teachers used pseudonyms for both the questionnaires and the interviews to preserve their anonymity.

I attempted to develop an in-service seminar based on socio-constructivist principles that could serve as a source of information about the role of interaction and reflection in the learning of teachers. In keeping with socio-constructivist principles, this seminar needed to (a) be non-directive in nature, (b) encourage participants to share their existing knowledge, (c) provide opportunities for scaffolding from the existing knowledge to new learning, (d) have a direct connection to the teachers' own work and (e) foster reflection about that work. To accomplish this, the seminar had three components: (a) a knowledge base component, (b) a self-study component and (c) a scaffolding component.

The knowledge base component took the form of an in-service course made up of ten, weekly workshops in which the teachers had the opportunity to discuss current thinking regarding social-constructivist views on the role of interaction in teaching and learning. The workshops included information about (a) the role of dialogue (Palinscar, 1986; Wiggins, 1991b), (b) a proleptic approach to instruction (Stone and Wertsch, 1984; Wiggins, 1991a; You & Schallert, 1991), (c) interaction from a cognitive perspective (Brown, 1978; Leinhardt & Putnam, 1987) and (d) interaction from a multicultural perspective (Cazden, 1988; Heath, 1982, 1983; LaBov, 1972). The content of the workshops also included discussions of strategies in which interaction is a key factor, such as Reciprocal Teaching (Palinscar & Brown, 1984) and Talk Story (Au, 1980; Au & Kawakami, 1984) and those in which the proscribed steps of the model tend to overshadow interaction such as Informed Strategies for Learning (Paris, Cross & Lipson, 1984) and Direct Instruction (Rosenshine, 1976).

The self-study component was an attempt to involve the teachers in systematic analysis of their own teaching. Before the workshops began, each teacher made two videotapes of her classroom lessons in any of three areas – small group reading, whole class math, and whole class social studies. The teachers were also asked to make a second set of videotapes after the workshops were completed. These two sets of videotapes provided them with a record of their own teaching that was to be used for

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self-study. The videotapes were not viewed by anyone but the teacher. The teachers were asked to view the tapes on their own and record their reactions.

The scaffolding component was designed to assist teachers in making the transition from the learning experience in a workshop setting to an understanding of their own work.   A portion of each workshop was spent analyzing sample lessons on videotape. All of these videotapes were recordings of actual teachers. Most of them were videotapes of student teachers and cooperating teachers that were recorded in conjunction with a pre-service methods class.

<div align="center">Data Collection and Analysis</div>

Consistent with a qualitative research model, data were collected from multiple sources to be able to extract a variety of perspectives. Five data sets were analyzed: (a) audiotapes and videotapes of the in-service seminars, (b) pre- and post-study questionnaires concerning the participants' knowledge of the ideas that formed the content of the in-service course, (c) the teachers' written reactions to their own videotapes, (d) semi-structured interviews of each of the participants, and (e) my own field notes in the form of journal entries and transcriptions of informal conversations that I had with participating teachers during the course of the study.

The data analysis revealed issues pertaining to the teachers' view of the in-service activity as a learning experience. These issues were connected to the role of the principal as an instructional leader. Themes emerged concerning constraints on reflection and the value of videotaping. Throughout the analysis process I was confronted with what appeared to be inconsistencies between the teachers' statements about how they felt about the experience and the actions they took in response to the experience. This paper addresses these inconsistencies with regard to the in-service activity as a learning experience. The remaining issues concerning the role of the principal as instructional leader and in-service provider are addressed elsewhere (Author's manuscript will be cited here).

<div align="center">What Did The Teachers Learn?</div>

An analysis of the data revealed that the teachers did not feel they had learned very much from this workshop experience. This theme surfaced consistently in both the post-workshop

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questionnaires and interviews. While the participants indicated that viewing videotapes of other teachers in a group setting was interesting and useful, their reflections on the videotapes of their own classrooms proved to be far less revealing than I had anticipated. When asked to compare the workshops to other types of in-service activities, only rarely did a participant say that this workshop experience was better. This reaction was confirmed in the follow-up interviews. Almost all of the participants stated that the workshops had not constituted a learning experience for them. However, the emergence of this theme was not consistent with the teachers' responses to other questions. In each interview, the teacher went on to describe a change in the way she did things in her classroom or a different way of looking at her teaching as a result of participation in the workshops. In addition, many of the teachers (10 out of 14) said that, with a few modifications in the format, they would like to participate in a workshop like this again. It seemed incongruous for the teachers to feel that they had learned little, while at the same time, describing the impact the workshops had on their classroom practices and expressing an interest in other activities of this type.

Despite the teachers' statements to the contrary, there is evidence that the workshops were a learning experience. The responses to the pre- and post-workshop questionnaires revealed some changes in the way the teachers conceptualized discussion in the classroom and the importance of interaction, as well as a better understanding of the term scaffolding. For example, on the pre-workshop questionnaire, nine out of the sixteen teachers characterized typical discussion in their classrooms as questions and answers, and five teachers spoke about discussion in terms of the atmosphere in the classroom. Only two mentioned the importance of having students listen to one another or thinking before responding. In contrast, on the post-workshop questionnaires, five out of the nine teachers who responded made mention of the importance of listening, attending, and thinking about what is being said when describing a discussion. In response to the pre-workshop question about the meaning of scaffolding, four teachers thought it meant modeling, eight thought it had to do with teaching simple skills first and then building on what is known. Only three teachers mentioned support in any way. In response to the same question on the post-workshop questionnaire, only three teachers still answered in

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terms of building on prior knowledge, no one mentioned modeling, and six of the nine responses had to do with providing support. In addition, the concept of providing support was more developed in the post-workshop responses.

<center>Changes In Teaching Practices</center>

Although the teachers seemed to come to some understanding of these concepts, in their view, it was not learning. It may be that this perception came about because they did not make substantial changes in their teaching practices, and therefore did not see the connection between what we were doing in the workshops and what they did in their classrooms on a day-to-day basis. When asked about their expectations for the workshop on the pre-workshop questionnaire, nine of the thirteen who responded to the question said something pertaining to changing their practices. Comments such as "improve my teaching strategies," "acquire some practical ideas" and "to acquire some practical ideas that can be used right away" were typical of the responses.

During the interviews, three teachers said they had made changes in their teaching because of the workshop experience. In the first example, the teacher mentioned having become more aware of groupings and interactions in her classroom.

> The seminars caused me to be more aware of certain things that I'm doing in the classroom. So, in a way I guess it has caused a little bit of change. I've been more aware of the way the children are grouped and the way they have a chance to interact with each other, and also with me. So, yeah, I have changed some things.

For a second teacher, the change was very deliberate and stemmed from her concern about providing a clear focus for her students. She had been very concerned that she did not always know the point of what we were doing in the workshops, and did not want her students to feel that same sense of confusion. Therefore, listening to the students became much more important to her. For the third teacher the change seemed to be more of a mind set toward her classroom and her students.

> Yes, definitely, I feel a lot more relaxed and more open with the children. For some reason, I don't feel as rushed to teach them. I'm more open to them discussing among themselves. There's always been some kind of discussion taking place in the classroom with my children, but now there's more discussion taking place. I feel a lot more relaxed. I think I see it more... I can see the child's point of view now as far as what they want to talk about. Very different, definitely.

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Twelve of the teachers interviewed said they had not changed their teaching, but that involvement in the workshop had caused them to be more aware of what they do in the classroom. A representative comment typical of the responses is:

> Mine, no. I think that it just helped me look at myself more closely and really analyze why I do things or what I've done.

Two teachers who, in response to one question, said they had not learned anything from the workshops, gave specific examples of how the workshops had affected their awareness of their students' thinking when they responsed to another question. One indicated,

> I think the way that maybe the course has impacted is that I think more about the things that the children are... the children might be thinking at that particular point as opposed to what I thought they should be doing. So, that's the difference.

Another credited the workshops with causing a specific change in behavior.

> I think it's made me a little more aware of children that I call on and I think that I've started questioning children a little bit more. When they give me an answer, I may ask why, or how did you get to that, and have them interact with me a little bit more than I did before.

Value of Videotaping

Little data was available to indicate whether any changes the teachers made were as a result of watching themselves on videotape. However, there was evidence that the teachers found the videotaping useful. The videotapes were intended to enable the teachers to connect the workshop experience to their own practice. Although most of the teachers stated that they did not see a connection between the content of the workshops and what they saw in their videotapes, all but one saw the process as being beneficial. The excerpt below is representative of the type of comment that was made.

> The taping helped me think about being more aware of the children, and had I really answered a question, or were we looking at the same passage in the same viewpoint? In that way, I saw myself differently. The videotaping was very helpful.

Having more than one videotaping experience was also beneficial. There are subtle indications that participation in the workshops affected this teacher's perception of herself and her class.

> I looked for different things the first time. The first time, I really almost scripted it, you know, so yeah, that got across, no, that didn't get across, yeah, that was what I thought had happened, that kind of junk. The second time I looked at it differently, I looked more at the interaction of

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what was going on between the members in the class during the lesson, more than I looked at how well I did at getting my point across.

Another teacher pointed out that it takes some time and effort to get to the point of objectivity concerning one's own work.

> I think it is difficult for most of us to be objective about what we see, however, even if we want to accept the things that we like or don't like, we know they are there. I think when you do it more than once, that it gives you an idea to look into things that you like or you don't like, and change them or leave them as they are.

<u>Constraints On Reflection</u>

Reaching a point of objectivity that would allow the teacher to benefit from self-generated feedback requires the teacher to be reflective. One participant referred to this as turning your attention inward to yourself. Watching their own videotapes was a first step in this process. I expected that experienced teachers would be able to do so with only minimal guidance if they were given the opportunity. The teachers also stated that they felt they had the ability to study their own teaching. However, there seemed to be practical concerns that interfered with the teachers' ability to reflect. Lack of time was an almost universal theme in all of the teacher comments.

Time, as an issue, was reflected in one teacher's comment regarding the amount of activity and constantly changing circumstances in the classroom. For this teacher, it was difficult to consider the importance of any one event within the context of the many things that require the teacher's attention. These deterrents tended to take time away from the teachers and inhibit their ability to reflect on their teaching.

An additional deterrent to reflection seemed to be that the teachers focused their attention on the content of what was taught. Content here refers to the broad question of what should be taught, not the specific elements of the curriculum, as reflected in one participant's statement, "I don't want somebody to tell me how to do it, but somebody to tell me what I'm supposed to cover." Further evidence of constraint was found in their reactions to their own videotapes. Although all teachers stated that they found the videotaping to be very beneficial, it was difficult to find evidence of what they had gained from the experience. Ultimately, the written responses to the videotapes were the least revealing source of data. The teachers' responses were short and tended to deal with personal

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characteristics, classroom decorum and evaluative comments. Only two teachers said anything pertaining to any insight into interactions with children.

The only direction the teachers were given before watching their tapes was to look at what seemed to be important to the teacher. In their responses, only two made reference to an awareness of what was important to them as teachers. Most of the responses concerned management isuues, lesson pacing or classroom decorum. This was not unexpected for the first tape since in each case, it was recorded and viewed before the workshops began. However, the responses were not much different for the second set of tapes. Only one teacher described the classroom decorum, but five teachers summarized the lesson and three wrote about their personal characteristics. Three teachers showed some insight into the nature of their interactions with children and three referred to what was important to the teacher. Based on the nature of the discussions during the workshop sessions, this was an unexpected result.

Conclusions

This study set out to investigate the impact of an in-service experience based on socio-constructivist principles and incorporating issues of reflective practice. Although it was possible to establish an in-service experience that was consistent with these four premises, by many accounts, there were inconsistencies in the impact of the workshop experience. The teachers felt that the workshops were not a significant learning experience. Yet despite their dissatisfaction, most of them expressed an interest in participating in similar activities in the future.

In addition, there were many statements that indicated that the teachers were viewing their own teaching differently and rethinking many of the things they did as a result of their participation in the workshops. Despite their statements to this effect, the teachers as a whole were not satisfied with the experience. One possible explanation for this may be that these teachers seemed to have a far greater concern for what happens in the classroom than for their own personal professional growth. A change in teacher perspective was one goal for this experience, but this goal was not sufficient in the teachers' view. For them, the experience was not learning unless it led to changes in their practices.

.. is was not because they had a myopic view of change, bu. because they had very strong priorities. They put their students first.

Personal professional growth is multi-faceted and requires a long-term commitment. A small change in beliefs can cause a very gradual shift in perspective that may not have an impact on practice for some time to come. As one participant noted, the workshops often left the teachers with more questions than they answered. A number of the teachers spoke of having immediate needs and concerns regarding their classrooms for which they were seeking immediate solutions. This should not be considered short sighted on their part. These teachers were not looking for easy answers to complex questions. Rather, they were conscientious professionals who did not see themselves at liberty to ponder their own growth because the growth of their students was a more pressing responsibility.

> I also do approach everything I do, every course that I take, for what benefit will it be for me in that room (the classroom). Will it make their learning any better? ·

Even in viewing their own videotapes, the teachers tended to put the students first. Although they were asked to focus their attention on themselves, they made reference, instead, to being concerned about what was happening to the students. One teacher responded,

> Well, I'm just beginning to *view* my own teaching. As far as really study it, I don't know whether or not I'm ready for that right now. I don't know. Because I don't tend to focus in on the teaching. I still... When I look at the videotape, I look at other things, and not exactly my teaching. I'll look at that child, I'll look at this one. That's what I'm doing. So, I don't think... I'm probably able to, but I don't think I'm ready to really study my own teaching right now.

She reported that her viewing of her videotapes was gradually influenced by the workshops and later stated that she thought it was important to be aware of how she influenced the students.

> Again, when I look at the video I focus in on the children. I think perhaps you should be focusing in on what you're doing, and on the reaction of the children to what you're doing and what you're saying. I'm not doing that, I'm just focusing in... I look at this child, I look at that child. That's what I'm focusing in on. I'm still doing that when I watch the videotape.

Pragmatic Skepticism

These comments reflected the teachers' overriding concern for the children in their classrooms. Doyle and Ponder (1977-78) recognized this tendency in teachers and referred to it as a *practicality ethic*. In making the case for the practicality ethic, they argue that descriptions of how change should

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occur and the ways innovations ought to be structured are not valuable without considering how classroom teachers respond to change influences. These responses are governed, at least in part, by a perception of practicality on the part of the teachers.

To better understand teacher's responses to change, Doyle and Ponder described three images of the teacher that, at the time, were predominant in the literature on innovation. The *rational adopter* logically assesses the wisdom of the change before deciding to incorporate it into her present practice. The *stone-age obstructionist* steadfastly resists advances, particularly those that are technological. The *pragmatic skeptic* is responsive only to change that is judged to be practical.

Unfortunately, it is possible to cast pragmatic skepticism in a negative light and to group the skeptic with the cynic. Individuals who are concerned with the daily circumstances of the classroom may be seen as lacking in vision. Those who emphasize the immediate need for activities that will appeal to their students seem to be interested only in getting through the day and getting the task accomplished. My experience with the teachers in this study contradicts this negative view and reinforces the notion that skepticism can be something positive and prudent. The teachers were not pragmatic skeptics because they were resisting change or only wanted change that would make their work simpler or more expedient. They did not focus their attention on themselves. They were concerned with how any change would effect their students. The responses of the teachers in this study indicated a connection between their pragmatic skepticism and their perceived priorities and sense of responsibility to their students.

The teachers' reactions to the value of the content of the workshops showed a great concern for the lack of immediate utility and a disdain for the overemphasis on the underlying belief structure of teaching and learning. Yet, adopting the stance of a pragmatic skeptic should not have been an unproductive approach for these teachers. Careful assessment of each aspect of the workshops to determine a connection to their own classroom needs should have allowed the teachers to get more out of this experience. This was, in short, the goal of the entire project. However, in this case, pragmatic

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skepticism drew the teachers attention away from their own behaviors and personal professional growth and focused it, instead, on the students.

Promoting Reflection

This in-service experience was not sufficient to enable the teachers to develop techniques for systematically reflecting on their own teaching. The sparsity of the teachers' written responses to viewing their own videotapes and their frustration at being unable to identify what was "important to the teacher" would indicate that they were not able to engage in this activity at a level that was satisfying to them as professionals. Although some modeling was provided, it appeared to have been inadequate. To be able to look reflectively at what is being done, a teacher seems to need to have some understanding of his or her conceptualization of teaching before starting. If not, the focus tends to be on such issues as the mechanics of the lesson, the classroom management, the personal qualities or the ability to reach the stated objectives. I suggest that there are at least six steps through which teachers must pass in order to be reflective about their own work. A teacher must:

1. formulate (or be aware of) an individual conception of teaching and learning,
2. isolate elements of the lesson such that those that are indicative of the teacher's conception of teaching are distinguished from those things that represent the mechanics of the process,
3. be able to make a connection between those elements and the individual conception of teaching and learning that stems from step 1,
4. be able to recognize the things in her own teaching that are consistent with or contradict this conception and, either
5. readjust the conception of teaching and learning as a result of the rethinking that has occurred or
6. reaffirm the teaching process as a result of a stronger conviction about this conception of teaching and learning.

Proceeding through these six steps in the context of a constantly changing classroom setting is a difficult undertaking. The initial challenge is recognizing where the teacher is in the cycle. One teacher may begin with an apparent conception of teaching, step 1; another may begin with step 2, by observing her own teaching and coming to the realization that there is more to teaching than the mechanics; still another may begin with step 3 and find herself suddenly confronted with a contradiction that is difficult to resolve. An individual teacher may operate at different levels in

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particular classroom situations and may, perhaps, be at these levels simultaneously. It is probable that teachers are constantly moving through these stages at an intuitive level.

Fullan states that "in many cases, changes in behavior precede rather than follow changes in belief" (Fullan 1990, p. 9). However, the growth cycle cannot continue unless the subsequent changes in beliefs instigate additional changes in behavior which may again cause changes in beliefs. At some point in this cycle, the teacher must be keenly aware of her present belief structure and the manner in which these beliefs impact on practice. Without that, we tend to look at change in isolation. The teachers in this study were experienced professionals whose practices were finely honed. They will continue to adapt and adjust as they learn, but there is also a need for them to understand and reflect on what it is they currently do. It should be possible to create opportunities for that understanding and reflection in a setting that will allow for, but does not require, a change in practice.

Promoting Reflection: Implications for Research

The teachers in this study had difficulty reflecting on their own work in isolation. In contrast, they found the group discussions of the sample videotapes to be the most beneficial aspect of the workshops. It may be that teachers need interaction to support their initial attempts at reflection. Studies with student teachers (Colton and Sparks-Langer, 1993), with teacher induction programs (Wildman et al., 1990) and with experienced teachers (Pugach and Johnson, 1990) have utilized one-to-one mentorships and peer collaborations in promoting reflection. For practicing teachers, further action research projects would be beneficial and could provide information about how teachers respond to interactive formats designed to promote reflective inquiry. One lesson learned from this study was that asking teachers to reflect in isolation was not productive. It may have been a mistake to have attempted individual reflection before the group workshops took place and without any collegial interaction. Future research into promoting reflective inquiry among experienced, practicing teachers should take this into account.

Promoting Reflection: Implications for My Own Practice

In addition to the insight this study has given me regarding the importance of interaction in

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supporting teachers' efforts to be reflective, it has also caused me to consider ways in which the cultural environment of the school supports or inhibits reflective inquiry. Colton and Sparks-Langer (1993) suggest four attributes of reflective decision makers: *efficacy,* the belief that one can make a difference in the lives of the children, *flexibility,* including the willingness to consider other perspectives and find new meanings and interpretations, *social responsibility,* caring about others and taking an active role in the school and community, and *consciousness,* the awareness of one's own thinking and the ability to articulate that awareness. Colton and Sparks-Langer (1993) speak of the importance of consciousness in terms of their work in teacher induction but they also recognize its contribution to greater understanding.

> While intuitive teaching is certainly valuable, it can make communication with a novice difficult. The precision of language required to clarify one's own thinking–or that of others–clearly promotes deeper reflection and awareness of meaning. (Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1993, p. 50)

These four attributes of reflective professionals are consistent with the findings of this study. From my experience in this study, consciousness is a culminating attribute. It is awareness and articulation that makes reflection valuable. Yet, the interdependence of these attributes should not be overlooked. Consciousness is dependent on the efficacy and flexibility of the teacher as well as the willingness to take responsibility for one's own learning. Without the willingness to take risks and adopt an alternative perspective, it is doubtful that the level of consciousness will be such that it impacts on decision making. This may have been a problem for many of the teachers in this study. In most instances, their responses to the videotapes of their own teaching revealed a narrow focus and a pre-determined view of what their teaching practices should be. To the extent that this represented their level of flexibility and proclivity to take risks, it impacted on their ability to reflect and ultimately to be responsible for individualized instructional judgments. Thus, my experiences as a participant in this study and as the principal of the school provided me with insights into how these factors impacted on my practices in the building. The findings of this study indicate that it may be possible for the building principal as instructional leader and as in-service provider to take a more regulatory stance without being in an authoritative or directive position. The success of any collegial

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effort depends on an understanding of the culture of the school. As Cooper (1988) points out, that culture must come from the teachers and cannot be imposed. However, the culture of a school is not stagnant, it is constantly evolving. As such, it can be guided and nurtured.

During the course of this study we were in the formative stages of collegiality. Our goal was a better understanding of the connection between our beliefs and our actions. The most important function of the instructional leader may have been to guide our actions keeping our efforts consistent with our vision and supporting the growth of the culture. In the whole school setting, the principal as instructional leader can regulate rather than direct if the obligation of the teacher goes beyond learning the latest methods and techniques and includes personal professional growth that stems from a further understanding of (a) his or her own beliefs about teaching and (b) the common vision of the school community.

An Alternate View of Staff Development

The aspect of the study the participants identified as most beneficial was the opportunity to spend time together and learn from one another. However, during a discussion on planning an ideal in-service experience, they reverted to some predictable models, such as staff development day, grade level meetings, model lessons taught by coordinators, and traditional observations with feedback from a supervisor. This would seem to imply that the teachers in this study would prefer that future in-service activities in our school be more traditional in nature and would indicate that they saw the opportunity to share as an enhancement of, not a replacement for, some more traditional in-service experiences. The teachers gravitated toward the formats they knew well and with which they were familiar and this was what they said they wanted.

However, what they said was contradicted by the nature of the programs they themselves planned and implemented. Immediately following the conclusion of this study, the teachers involved planned two in-service workshops that were conducted in-house. It was important to them that all of the teachers be involved and that the experience be directly related to their classroom work. This included planning time for the in-service provider to work with children in the classrooms while groups

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of teachers observed. This was vastly different from the way the same program was implemented in other buildings in the district.

While it is likely that typical content-based staff development would do more to expand a teacher's knowledge base, it does not necessarily provide for a teacher's personal professional growth. We should not return to a view of teacher learning that is centered around a paternalistic belief that one person best knows what should be done and should communicate that information as directly as possible to the participants. In returning to this view, we would be sacrificing the long term personal professional growth of the teaching staff by pursuing the short-term goal of uniformity of purpose and direction. Judging from those the aspects of the workshop sessions that the teachers stated were most beneficial, we need to look beyond our customary staff development practices and develop the kinds of in-service programs that will have more of a building wide impact and are an outgrowth of the culture of the school.

I am encouraged by the fact that I saw some indications that the teachers in this study were beginning to view their teaching differently and gain some understanding of what was important to them as the study proceeded. Some of the teachers asked about the possibility of continuing to videotape after the study had ended. I am also encouraged by the indications that these teachers may continue to work as a collegial group. If we continue to engage in this kind of activity in the future, the teachers may become more at ease with and adept at reflection and it may become a commonplace occurrence.

This study has also caused me to give consideration to the role of the principal in future staff development activities. The teachers reported on the advantages of participating in a school-wide learning experience with the building principal. We were able to establish some common understandings that would have been of little use had this been an outside workshop or an outside presenter. In addition, I found that the experience provided me with insights that I doubt I would have realized from any other source.

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The end of this study is also a beginning. The experience these teachers shared may have been a necessary first step that identified the important issues for personal professional growth within our school. We have the potential to develop meaningful learning experiences that go beyond superficial training and enable teachers to come to an understanding of how they conceptualize teaching if (a) the dominant form of staff development consists of school-based activities that involve the majority of the staff in a shared learning experience that promotes reflective inquiry, (b) the culture of the school encourages interactive participation of all personnel, and (c) instructional leadership is used not only to set direction and determine outcomes, but to involve teachers in leadership roles that promote and support personal professional growth. When the circumstances in a school are such that they allow us to set aside prior assumptions about the nature of learning experiences, teachers can learn a great deal through interaction with one another. This will lead them to a better understanding of their own work.

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