

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY STYLES

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By

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Abstract

One-hundred-thirty-one southeastern Kentucky public school teachers were surveyed with respect to their preferred mode of professional development. An ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a difference in teacher perceptions among content related variables. That ANOVA showed no significant difference among the means for new instructional practices ($M = 387$), new classroom management strategies ($M = 369.8$), and new policies and procedures ($M = 356.9$), ($F [2, 27] = 1.66, p > 0.05$). A second ANOVA produced a statistically significant difference in teacher perceptions for the 10 modes of delivery, ($F [9, 20] = 8.04, p < .05$). Tukey's *HSD* tests were then used to make post-hoc, pairwise comparisons; those tests showed that teachers perceived teacher-led and teacher-driven modes of professional developments as best. A similar procedure determined that participants perceived trainers who were in similar job roles within their school to be more effective.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	viii
Chapter One	2
Overview	2
Purpose of the Study	4
Problem Statement	4
Research Questions	5
Limitations of this Study	5
Assumption	5
Definitions	6
Summary	7
Chapter Two	8
Introduction	8
Kentucky Statutes and Regulations Regarding Professional Learning	9
Standards for Professional Learning	13
The Importance of Buy-In and Perception on Adult Learners	16
Self-Efficacy and Vicarious Experience	18
The Current State of Teacher Professional Development	20
Summary	24
Chapter Three	26
Introduction	26

Research Paradigm	26
Research Design	27
Reliability and Validity	27
Data Collection and Sources	28
Statistical Test Discussion	28
Summary	29
Chapter Four	30
Introduction	30
Analysis of Research Questions	30
Perceived impact of professional development delivery modes.	35
Summary	37
Chapter Five	39
Introduction	39
Who determines professional learning?	40
Cost vs. quality.	41
Job-embedded professional development.	42
Limitations of the Study	43
Professional Learning Communities	43
Kentucky Education Association	44
Categories of Trainer	45
Implications for Future Study	45
Summary	46

References	48
Appendix A	53
Appendix B	59
Appendix C	65
Appendix D	67

List of Tables

Table One: Standards for Professional Learning	12
Table Two: TELL Kentucky Survey Results - Percent Negative Responses	21
Table Three: Post Hoc Tukey <i>HSD</i> Results, Questions 6-8	32
Table Four: Factor Mean Comparison of Question 6-8	33
Table Five: Post Hoc Tukey <i>HSD</i> Results, Question 9	35
Table Six: Factor Mean Comparison for Question 9	37

Chapter One

Introduction

Overview

Teacher professional development systems across the nation are broken. Recent national studies have found that school districts are spending enormous amounts of money, on professional development that is showing little to no long-term impact on student achievement. Recent estimates state that the nation's 50 largest school districts spend eight billion dollars annually on teacher professional development (TNTP, 2015) and nation wide, school districts spend eighteen billion dollars annually (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014). In 2014, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation conducted a nationwide survey that asked teachers about the quality and diversity of professional development, as well as their level satisfaction. This study showed that only 29 percent of teachers are satisfied with the quality of their professional development and only 34 percent believe that professional learning conditions are improving (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014). This low-quality professional development, and its impact on school culture, has also been cited as a factor in the low retention rates of teachers nationwide (TNTP, 2012).

In the Commonwealth of Kentucky, teachers are required to earn 24 hours of continued professional development annually to maintain their teaching certification. At the time of this writing, educational organizations, such as the National Education Association, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations, TNTP (formerly The New Teacher Project) the American Federation of Teachers, policy makers, and others are taking part in a national conversation

around the quality and effectiveness of teacher professional development. This discussion was spurred largely by the publication of the Teachers Know Best, study in December 2014. In this study, the researchers discuss the dissatisfaction that teachers across the nation have felt over their professional learning experiences. The study's findings show that teachers have little choice in their professional development (PD), and many are pushed into PD experiences that are not related to their daily work. Organizations such as *Learning Forward* and the *National Education Association*, have sought to improve the levels of satisfaction with PD by publishing standards, best practices, and policy and belief statements to help guide policy makers and PD providers in the development and implementation of programs.

There is much discussion regarding teachers' satisfaction and the impact of professional learning after a session has been provided. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was one of the first national organizations to address this issue in their 2014 report "Teacher's Know Best", to be followed by TNTP with their 2015 report "The Mirage." However, there is little discussion related to the teacher's perceptions of professional learning before it takes place. The theory of andragogy, a modern adult learning theory, describes the importance of learning conditions for adult learners. Professional learning must take steps to address the adult learner's readiness to learn, acknowledge their experience, and remain practical and relevant to the learner's experience (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2010). Additionally, the theories of self-efficacy, which describe the importance of self-concept and experience (Bandura, 1997) and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which outline the necessary prerequisites for learning (Maslow, 1943), further outline the necessary conditions for learning to occur. If teachers are expected to learn and grow throughout their profession, then care and consideration must be taken to ensure that professional learning experiences meet the necessary learning conditions. Teachers must enter

into a professional learning experience feeling confident in the skills and techniques of their trainer, study in a safe and emotionally supportive environment, and be ready to learn (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012).

This study will seek to identify which modes of professional development delivery and which categories of trainers that teachers perceive to have the greatest impact on their professional growth. Consideration of teachers' perceptions may increase the level of teacher "buy-in" and engagement. This chapter will outline the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the limitations and assumptions of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to:

1. Measure perceptions held by classroom teachers regarding the effectiveness of the various modes of professional development delivery available to them.
2. Measure the perceptions held by classroom teachers regarding the impact that different types of professional development trainers may have on their professional learning.
3. Determine the perceived ideal learning conditions necessary to promote positive teacher buy-in and generate a positive professional development environment.

Problem Statement

Teacher professional development has been a topic of discussion and research since the late 1800's when John Dewey and his counterparts considered the role and responsibilities of the classroom teacher. Although there is research that considers the overall impact and satisfaction of teacher professional development, it is important to consider the impact of the notion of the

self-fulfilling prophecy on a teacher's professional learning experience. The learning theories discussed in Chapter Two suggest that if teachers enter into a learning experience that they perceive to be ineffective, then their learning experience will have a lower impact than one that is perceived as valuable.

Research Questions

The objective of this study is to answer the following questions:

1. What modes of professional development delivery do teachers perceive to be the most effective?
2. What category of trainer (teacher, administrator, college professor, etc. . .) do teachers perceive to have the greatest impact on their professional development experience?

Limitations of this Study

1. Participants in this study will be limited to public school teachers in rural Southeastern Kentucky.
2. This study will be impacted by the quality and quantity of professional learning experiences offered to participants in the past.

Assumption

This study was designed with the following assumptions:

1. Teacher respondents will provide honest ratings of their perceptions.
2. Teacher respondents will differentiate between their personal preferences and the true impact of a professional development experience.

Definitions

The following definitions will be used in this study:

Andragogy: A model of adult learning developed by Malcolm Knowles (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012).

Compliance Based Training: Annual training conducted to maintain legal compliance with state regulations. This category of training may include topics such as blood borne pathogens or suicide prevention.

Kentucky Education Association (KEA): The Kentucky affiliate of the National Education Association (Kentucky Education Association, 2015).

Learning Forward: A professional organization that builds leadership capacity to improve professional learning across the nation (Learning Forward, 2015).

Lesson Observation: Observation of a lesson by a teacher who is working to improve their skills in the classroom.

National Education Association (NEA): The nation's largest professional organization representing three million educators across the United States (National Education Association, 2015).

Peer Coaching: A confidential process in which two peers work together to learn, research, and solve problems in the workplace (Robbins, 1991).

Professional Development (PD): "A comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement (Learning Forward, 2015)."

Professional Learning Community (PLC): A group of educators who gather to work on problems in a school and support the professional learning of their peers (DuFour, 2004).

Self-Study: The act of an individual to study a topic on his or her own.

Self-Efficacy: One's belief in his/her ability to be successful (Bandura, 1997).

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: The tendency for our expectations to shape our experiences (Wilkins, 1976).

Webinar: An interactive online course.

Summary

This study is based on the current literature related to teacher professional development and effective learning conditions for adult learners. The next chapter provides a review of the literature related to professional development policy, adult learning theory, and participant buy-in that provide the basis for this study.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Introduction

In the Commonwealth of Kentucky, public school teachers are required to participate in 24 hours of continuing professional development (PD) each year to maintain their certification. Teachers may earn PD credit hours through a wide variety of venues and modes including conferences, professional learning communities, virtual courses, peer mentors, National Board Certification, and consultation by third-party providers (Kentucky Revised Statutes, 2014). With the wide variety of options available to teachers, it is important to consider the impact of the teachers' potential bias in regards to of the quality and effectiveness of a given mode of professional development before planning and implementing PD in the schools.

When considering the principles of andragogy, as described by Malcolm Knowles in *The Adult Learner*, the attitudes and perceptions of the adult learner become connected to the overall impact of the learning experience (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012). If adults do not believe that a learning experience will be effective, it will not be, because they have already determined the outcome before learning has begun (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012). The lack of confidence in the efficacy of the training may act as a self-fulfilling prophecy and negatively impact professional learning. Until recently, professional learning has been treated as a compliance measure, rather than a tool for long-term growth and change. As a result, many educators have a negative perception of professional learning (Learning Forward, 2011). As professional development regulations change in Kentucky, it will continue to be important to

ensure that professional learning is offered in a style that teachers believe to be useful and relevant to their practice. Taking steps to ensure that the relevance and utility of the PD are clearly evident to teachers in advance will help prevent the PD experience from becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy of an ineffective training.

This chapter will examine the literature related to teacher professional development to determine the significance of teacher confidence in the professional learning process. Beginning with the Kentucky Revised Statutes and the Kentucky Department of Education's Policy Book (2015), this chapter will explore the requirements and expectations for professional development in Kentucky to survey the current professional development practices across the state. Once the current conditions for professional development have been established, the related literature on adult learning and the impact of participant "buy-in" and preconception will be considered. Finally, this chapter will review the current research in regards to teacher professional development. In addition, research will be reviewed considering the many delivery mechanisms for professional development and available data related to the types and quantity of PD experiences available to teachers in Kentucky.

Kentucky Statutes and Regulations Regarding Professional Learning

Professional development requirements for teachers in Kentucky are determined by the Kentucky General Assembly and regulated by the Kentucky Department of Education. At the time of this writing, there are seven statutes and four administrative regulations that govern professional development in Kentucky. These statutes and regulations can be divided into two categories; time and scheduling requirements, and definitions and delivery options.

The statutes and regulations require that all districts and schools implement a professional development plan. This development plan is formally defined as “a sustained, coherent, relevant, and useful professional learning process that is measurable by indicators and provides professional learning and ongoing support to transfer that learning to practice” (Annual Professional Development Plan, 2014). This plan must be rooted in the information provided in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and include the following six elements:

1. A clear statement of the school or district mission
2. Evidence of representation of all persons affected by the professional development plan
3. A needs assessment analysis
4. Professional development objectives that are focused on the school or district mission, derived from needs assessment, and that specify changes in educator practice needed to improve student achievement
5. A process for evaluating the impact on student learning and improving professional learning, using evaluation results (Annual Professional Development Plan, 2014)

The Kentucky Administrative Regulation, (704 KAR 3:035) requires each school to develop a professional development plan that is aligned with the district plan and rooted in data collected through state and local assessments as well as demographic data such as race, gender, disability, and free and reduced lunch participation. The Site-Based Decision Making (SBDM) Council at each school must adopt a PD plan with input from the faculty at large (School Council Roles in Professional Development).

Kentucky Revised Statute 158.070 states all teachers are required to participate in four days, or 24 hours, of professional development. PD days may be scheduled into the school

calendar, although districts may choose to utilize a flexible professional development plan that is approved by the local Board of Education. Districts are allowed to count one full day of professional development for district-wide activities or compliance based trainings. PD credit may also be granted to teachers in smaller increments (minutes or hours) rather than days. Teachers must seek approval of professional development credits before they can be earned. The approval may come from their supervisor, school council, or professional development committee, depending on the language in their school and district policy book. Additionally, teachers are required to participate in two hours of suicide prevention training annually (School Term - Professional Development & Kentucky Definition and Standards for High Quality Professional Development, 2010).

Kentucky Administrative Regulation 3:035 defines professional development as an “individual and collective responsibility that fosters shared accountability among the entire education workforce for student achievement” (2014). The regulation goes on to state that professional learning should be aligned with the Kentucky Core Academic Standards, state educator effectiveness standards, and the individual teacher’s professional growth plans. Also, PD should place an emphasis on content pedagogy and be rooted in the specific expectations for a teacher’s role within the school system.

The regulation 704 KAR 3:035 describes the various conditions under which professional development can occur. That is, teachers should engage in professional learning with peers who share the responsibility for student growth. Professional learning can be facilitated by a wide range of individuals, including curriculum specialists, principals, instructional coaches, competent and qualified third-party facilitators, mentors, and teachers or teacher leaders.

Finally, the regulation sets the expectation for professional learning to be an ongoing process that continues throughout the year (Annual Professional Development Plan, 2014).

This detailed definition highlights the goal of professional learning; to increase student achievement. Also, this definition describes professional learning as a shared experience and responsibility and encourages collaboration. The definition also outlines where teachers may turn for professional learning, including their peers, supervisors, and third-party professional development providers. Most importantly, this definition highlights the importance of professional development as an on-going process.

The same regulation describes characteristics of professional development experiences in Kentucky. It states that professional development credit can only be earned when the experience is directly tied to the district, school, or teacher professional growth plans, and when it is related to an individual's responsibilities in the school system. The regulation places particular emphasis on the use of research-based techniques and theories as well as the continual evaluation of the professional development program as a whole (Annual Professional Development Plan).

Finally, the regulations define how professional development is to be funded. Each year, the General Assembly budget includes a funding allocation for professional development. These funds may be used to support the professional learning for teachers by reimbursing them for the cost of conference registration as well as travel and expenses. It may also be used to reimburse teachers for college courses taken when the course directly aligns with the teacher's responsibilities in school. Only 15 percent of the allocation may be used for administrative purposes. Teachers may not be paid extra for professional development, as it is considered part of their existing contract. As such, they may not receive professional development credit for activities performed during the six-hour school day.

In practice, these regulations reflect the lack of teacher control and choice of their professional development. The definition outlined in the Kentucky Revised Statutes encourages teachers and administrators to work together in order to focus on the professional growth of the teacher instead of practices focused on mere compliance. For example, all teachers must complete annual compliance trainings, such as blood borne pathogines, safety, or suicide prevention, but individual teachers are encouraged to focus on specific growth areas that are meaningful to them, as an individual, such as questioning strategies, classroom management techniques, or technology integration. Later, this chapter will discuss how the desired focus on teacher growth is not always taken into consideration and that many times teachers have limited control over their professional development and their personal opinions and preferences are often not considered in the professional development process.

Standards for Professional Learning

In 2013, in accord with the Kentucky Administrative Regulation 704 KAR 3:305, which requires input from “nationally recognized effective schools leaders” Kentucky adopted a new set of standards for professional learning experiences. The new set of seven standards was developed and published by Learning Forward in 2011. Learning Forward is an organization with the purpose of improving teacher professional development in the United States. The current standards are an update from those published by Learning Forward in 2001. Learning Forward calls on education leaders and policymakers to reshape their understanding of teacher professional development to ensure that learning experiences follow sound principles and research-based best practices. The 2014 Learning Forward Standards are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Standards for Professional Learning
Learning Communities: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.
Leadership: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.
Resources: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.
Data: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.
Learning Designs: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all learning students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.
Implementation: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for the implementation of professional learning for long-term change.
Outcomes: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performances and student curriculum standards.

(Learning Forward, 2011)

The common theme of these new standards is the language (stem) at the beginning of each standard: “Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students... (Learning Forward, 2011, p. 2).” These standards are designed to connect the experience of professional learning with the ultimate goal of education, growth for all students. In the past, professional learning has been more focused on compliance, rather than professional growth (Learning Forward, 2011). Professional development has been viewed as a largely passive activity where little change in practice was expected (Learning Forward, 2011). In an effort to change the culture surrounding professional development, Learning Forward has placed an emphasis on learning, instead of compliance.

The Learning Forward standards also elevate the importance of collaboration and community (Learning Forward, 2011). The standards use inclusive language (educator) instead of exclusive language (teacher, administrator, etc.) to help illustrate the idea that planning professional learning and growth should be a collaborative effort. The standards help to foster the development of learning communities such that individual’s needs are addressed, data is regularly reviewed and used to make professional learning decisions, and leadership is not centralized to the school administration, rather it is shared with the teachers. Finally, the Learning Forward Standards demonstrate a holistic view of the professional learning process. That is, the standards do not focus on specific skills or dispositions that must be met; rather they focus on macro-level practices that are meant to guide a continuous program of professional learning (Learning Forward, 2011).

The Importance of Buy-In and Perception on Adult Learners

A basic tenant of andragogy is that adults must be ready to learn before they can learn (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012). That is, in order to learn, adult learners must believe that the content is useful, and they must be willing to accept and apply new knowledge. They must feel comfortable and secure in the learning environment (Merriam & Brockett, 2007). In addition, it is important that the PD presenter establish professional credibility with the participants in the targeted training content area (Merriam & Brockett, 2007). In order for teachers to learn and achieve at high levels, their PD must meet these expectations before the training can begin.

In Malcolm Knowles' definitive text, *The Adult Learner*, he outlines the six basic assumptions of adult learning, a theory he calls Andragogy (2012). The andragogical model is rooted in the understanding that adults are unique, with unique experiences and needs. Unlike the education of children, which is largely teacher-centered and content driven, adult learning must give consideration to the learner's needs and remain problem centered. Adults learn best when they discover the content on their own through problem-based activities and research (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012).

While the andragogical model provides some guidance as to how a course for adults should be laid out, most of the assumptions are related to learning context and pre-learning experiences. Knowles explains that adults must be ready to learn a new concept before they can internalize it. They must have a well-developed prior knowledge to build new learning upon, and must see the relevance of the learning in their daily life. Additionally, the instructor of adults should seek to build upon the experiences of the adult learner, and allow those experiences to guide instruction and growth (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012). All of these elements

contribute to the development of an adult learner's positive perceptions and buy-in of a learning experience. Without buy-in from the learner, the learning experience will be less successful.

The importance of learner buy-in and perception is also a central idea of the humanist movement of the 1970s. Abraham Maslow, often noted as the founder of humanist psychology, describes a motivational hierarchy based on human needs. At the bottom of the hierarchy are basic physiological needs; such as shelter, food, and water. These fundamental needs must be met before any further interaction or motivation can occur (Maslow, 1943). The next levels on the hierarchy represent internal motivations such as safety, love, belonging, and self-esteem. According to Maslow's theory, the needs must be met from the bottom of the hierarchy to the top in order to realize self-actualization, at which point deep and meaningful learning can take place (Merriam, Cafferella, & Baumgartner, 2007). In sum, creating a trusting environment where learners feel comfortable and engaged is vital to the learning process and helps establish a sense of buy-in before a session has begun.

Together, the work of Maslow and Knowles help to explain why teachers are largely dissatisfied with the professional learning experiences offered to them by the school systems. This explanation is supported by the "Teacher's Know Best" report on professional development in 2014, which explains that dissatisfaction comes from a lack of personalization, choices, and sense of control over their professional development. When professional development is perceived as mere compliance, teachers are less likely to engage fully in the process. When an adult is forced to participate in any experience, their natural reaction is resistance, as they do not feel safe and respected (Maslow, 1943). The adult learner may even become agitated, angry, or resentful of events that fail to consider their personal experiences and remain relevant to their roles. It is the burden of the presenter to help prevent these negative emotions by creating an

environment conducive to learning. If learning conditions are not well thought out in advance, the lack of structure can take valuable time away from the real content and new learning that should occur in a PD experience. If schools and districts can offer PD in a way that teachers believe to be more effective than they may participate more willingly, they may have a more positive attitude, and greater growth will be the result.

Self-Efficacy and Vicarious Experience

Other possible factors in establishing participant buy-in are one's self-efficacy and vicarious experiences. Albert Bandura, a Canadian psychologist, explains the importance of vicarious experience in his description of self-efficacy theory; one's belief in his or her ability to be successful in a given area. One's self-efficacy is developed through mastery experiences, social persuasions, psychological factors, and vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1997). In the context of professional development, vicarious experiences allow the participant to grow through a shared understanding of the presenter's professional experience and success with the subject matter.

Vicarious experience has a powerful and lasting impact on participants. A study in 2011 explored a psychological effect of vicarious experience called illusory power transference. The Illusory Power Transference study was comprised of a series of experiments in which the researchers demonstrated that low-power individuals (interns, new hires, low ranking staff), after spending time in the presence of high-power individuals (managers, executive level officers), begin to demonstrate high-power characteristics in their work (Goldstein & Hays, 2011). This vicarious transference has been documented in other aspects as well. Mussweiler notes that individuals may compare themselves to others in an effort to gauge their own abilities and successes and may change their behaviors to meet the perceived expectations of others

(Mussweiler, 2003). In both instances, vicarious experiences have had a lasting impact on the behaviors of those exposed.

The significance of vicarious experience, and its impact on self-efficacy, has been documented in adult learning settings as well. Academic self-efficacy in adults is slow to form, as adult's self-image is formed primarily through experiences (O'Neil and Thompson, 2013). Real world experiences work to build self-image more quickly, but vicarious experiences also contribute to its development. A study of adult learners in 2007, explored the impact of vicarious experience through modeling. Students who were able to observe procedures before completing them had greater confidence in their ability complete the task (Scheibe, Mennecke, & Luse, 2007).

Similar studies have attempted to demonstrate the link between vicarious experience and high self-efficacy and self-concept. Researchers in a 2012 study provided vicarious experiences and modeling to student teachers in the area of technology integration, and found that students were more likely to use technology in their classrooms later on (Al-Awidi & Alghazo, 2012). A similar study provided adult learners with vicarious experiences through live and video presentations regarding previous student success and found that it boosted the confidence in those who participated (Bartsch, Case, & Meerman, 2012).

In the aforementioned studies, the learner's self-efficacy and the addition of the vicarious experience helped generate "buy-in" and confidence in the learning process. The study participants achieved at a higher level because they were more invested in the learning process and had more faith in their ability to succeed. In terms of adult learning, these vicarious experiences should be incorporated into the learning process by the trainer or meeting facilitator. Providing highly regarded PD trainers who have demonstrated success with the subject matter in

the past will likely have a lasting impact on the way teacher participants feel about the subject matter after the learning experience is complete. Similarly, if a trainer does not have direct experience with the subject matter, or is viewed by the participants as someone who is unqualified to facilitate the discussion, the participants' confidence in their ability to successfully implement new strategies and techniques could be diminished.

The Current State of Teacher Professional Development

Even though teacher professional development is strictly regulated and held to high expectations in Kentucky, teachers across the state and nation, are increasingly growing dissatisfied with the quality and amount of professional development available to them (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014, TNTP, 2012, 2014). In 2013, 89 percent of teachers across the Commonwealth participated in the TELL Kentucky Workplace Conditions Survey. When the survey was given again in 2015, 89 percent of teachers participated. This survey asked teachers to self-report about a wide range of workplace issues, from the cleanliness and upkeep of their building to the quality of professional development available to them in their districts.

When asked generally whether they felt that professional development resources were adequate in their school district, 78 percent of Kentucky teachers indicated in 2013 that their school had adequate resources for professional development, compared to 82 percent in 2015. However, when asked more specific questions, the results tell a different story. When asked in which topics they had received more than ten hours of training, the vast majority of teachers indicated that they had not received training in working with special populations, integrating technology, and classroom management techniques. The majority of training received by

teachers in 2013 and 2015 was related to the Common Core Standards, student assessment, and their content area (See Table 2) (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013, 2015).

Table 2: TELL Kentucky Survey Results - % Negative Responses		
<i>Q8.3 In the past 2 years have you had 10 clock hours or more of professional development in any of the following areas?</i>		
	2013	2015
Your Content Area	35%	35%
KY Core Academic Standards	35%	48%
Student Assessment	41%	45%
Differentiating Instruction	60%	58%
Special Education	77%	77%
Gifted and Talented	92%	91%
English Language Learners	93%	91%
Closing the Achievement Gap	62%	64%
Methods of Teaching	54%	52%
Reading Strategies	56%	58%
Integrating Technology into Instruction	57%	61%
Classroom Management Techniques	77%	73%
(Kentucky Department of Education, 2013, 2015)		

Teachers in Kentucky are not receiving a wide variety of professional learning services (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013, 2015). While it is commendable that they are receiving professional development in their subject area, it is likely that those experiences were also rooted in assessment and the Common Core Standards, due to the state's adoption of the new standards and the release of a new state assessment during the same year the survey was given. Arguably, a limitation in the TELL Kentucky Survey is the lack of specificity in the questions. For example, the survey measures the number of hours that teachers have received, but not whether or not those hours relate to their professional learning goals, or if they were presented in effective ways. The data also do not differentiate between required, compliance training and optional trainings that teachers may seek on their own, nor does it ask who paid for

the trainings. This information would be necessary to paint a true picture of the state of professional development in Kentucky.

While the teachers indicated an increase in their satisfaction with the resources available to them, there has been very little change in the types of professional development being offered to teachers. A large majority of teachers, over 70 percent (Kentucky Department of Education 2013, 2015) are not receiving training on how to work with the student populations who need the most help and support in the classroom. It is unrealistic to assume that teachers are not seeking PD related to special student populations. The data suggest that teachers are receiving policy-based trainings, in topic areas such as the Common Core Standards or student assessment tools; however, teachers may not have access to, or be allowed to participate in, professional development related to special populations, instructional technology, or classroom management.

While there are no Kentucky-specific data to address this question, there have been national studies that explore professional development more deeply. In December 2014, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation released a report entitled “Teachers Know Best: Teacher’s Views on Professional Development.” This report is considered by many to accurately describe the current state of professional development systems across the country. The researchers surveyed and interviewed over 1600 teachers nationwide. The report revealed that teachers are overwhelmingly dissatisfied with the level of effectiveness of professional development. Only 29 percent of teachers interviewed were highly satisfied with their professional development experiences. The teachers reported that the professional development models available to them supported the administration, more so than the teacher, and did not lead to long-term growth or changes in professional practice.

As part of the “Teachers Know Best: Teacher’s Views on Professional Development” study, the researchers asked teachers to rate their satisfaction with various modes of professional development delivery. They then asked school and district administrators what methods of professional development in which they wanted to spend the most time. In nearly every instance, the teacher’s opinion is the opposite of that of their administrator. The most significant example is the professional learning community, which teachers gave a “net satisfaction” score of -45 and administrators gave a “net increase” score of +74. This shows a significant perceptual discrepancy between the teachers and the administration (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014).

When placed into context with the theories previously discussed, this perceptual discrepancy reinforces the compliance nature of professional development, and therefore, contributes to the teacher’s negative perceptions. Teachers are rarely given a choice as to what types of professional development they want to participate in. In the same report, 61 percent of teachers indicated that they never get to choose the professional development they attend (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014).

The Kentucky Department of Education is making progress towards increasing the number of professional development options for teachers through the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) implemented during the 2014-15 school year. The PGES is a method for evaluating and supporting teachers in the classroom. This system is based on Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*, which quantifies the myriad of professional responsibilities each teacher is responsible for. These responsibilities are divided into observable and non-observable standards. The goal is to create a system that considers the entirety of the

teacher's role and responsibility, isolates potential areas for growth, and supports the teacher as they work towards that goal (Kentucky Department of Education, 2014).

At the time of this writing, Kentucky public school districts have just completed the first year of implementation of the PGES System. Districts, schools, and professional development providers are not yet prepared to monitor and administer unique professional learning opportunities to meet the goals of each teacher. It is likely that many years of growth, reflection, and program expansion will be necessary before the vision of PGES is fully realized.

Summary

Professional development is strictly regulated and monitored in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Teachers are expected to earn 24 hours (four days) of professional development annually. Their professional learning goals must be established early in the year and be aligned with both school and district professional development plans. Teachers may seek professional learning from many sources, including their peers, supervisors, and third party consultants.

While professional development is closely monitored by the Department of Education, teachers are largely unsatisfied with the quality of the professional development options available to them (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014) and the importance of teacher perception and buy-in has been largely overlooked. The research presented in this review supports the notion that teachers must believe that content is important and relevant before learning can take place. Teachers need access to vicarious models of prior successes and assurance they are working in an environment where they feel safe, secure, and respected. Kentucky has taken positive steps towards shifting professional learning away from a compliance-based culture (Learning Forward, 2014) yet teachers still report that significant

areas, such as technology inclusion, closing the achievement gap, and working with exceptional populations, are being overlooked.

The chapters that follow will provide further insight into the buy-in and perception of teacher's professional development experiences, specifically, which styles of professional development have the highest buy-in. As the nature of professional development changes in Kentucky, shifting away from the current mandated, compliance-based model, towards a model that includes teacher choice and differentiation, it will be beneficial for providers of professional development to have some insight into the preconceptions held by teachers for the various models of professional development delivery. If providers of professional learning know which styles of professional learning have more buy-in from the beginning, then the conditions of professional learning for teachers will improve as the learners' basic needs can be addressed early on.

Chapter Three

Methods and Procedures

Introduction

The literature review considered the Kentucky Revised Statutes, the Kentucky Department of Education's policy book, and the TELL Kentucky Survey to provide an overview of the current professional development system in Kentucky. In addition, the review reflected the impact of teacher preconception, buy-in, and the potential effect of a self-fulfilling prophecy on professional learning experiences. It also discussed the wide range of professional development delivery mechanisms available to teachers in Kentucky, and the effectiveness of each mode of delivery. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the model used in this study to measure the preconceptions held by teachers regarding the impact of a professional development style on their growth. Also, this chapter will discuss the procedures used to collect and analyze data.

Research Paradigm

This quantitative study used a causal comparative design to determine which modes of delivery for professional learning experiences teachers perceive to have the most impact on their growth. The study sought to determine if a relationship exists between various modes of professional development delivery and their perceived effectiveness.

Research Design

Teacher perceptions of professional development were measured with a survey (see Appendix A). The survey consisted of nine questions including Likert scale items that asked participants to rate their perception of various modes of training delivery and categories of trainers from “no impact” to “significant impact”. The survey was constructed using a forced-choice model to eliminate neutral responses. Additionally, the survey collected basic demographic data to allow for the identification of trends or gaps among the participants.

Reliability and Validity

The survey was piloted by a high school faculty in southeastern Kentucky to determine its reliability. The pilot survey instrument was administered to the faculty twice, with a 14-day interval between administrations. The first round of assessment yielded 31 completed survey responses while the second round of assessment yielded 34 completed responses. Once survey responses were collected, factor means were calculated for the training categories in questions six through ten. This was done by assigning point values to the four response options and adding them together. A series of linear regression tests were performed to determine if there is a statistical correlation between the two sets of data. It was not necessary to run a reliability test on questions one through five because these questions were demographic questions. The results of the tests are as follows:

- Question 6 – The linear regression test shows that there is a statistically significant correlation between Test 1 and Test 2, ($r = .88$, $F [1,8] = 27.18$, $p < .01$).
- Question 7 – The linear regression test shows that there is a statistically significant correlation between Test 1 and Test 2, ($r = .85$, $F [1,8] = 20.54$, $p < .01$).

- Question 8 – The linear regression test shows that there is a statistically significant correlation between Test 1 and Test 2, ($r = .90$, $F [1,8] = 35.65$, $p < .01$).
- Question 9 – The linear regression test shows that there is not a statistically significant correlation between Test 1 and Test 2, ($r = .57$, $F [1,8] = 3.85$, $p > .05$).
- Question 10 – The linear regression test shows that there is a statistically significant correlation between Test 1 and Test 2, ($r = .81$, $F [1,9] = 16.82$, $p < .01$).

Based on the statistical analysis, Question 9 was removed from the survey instrument.

A committee of professors reviewed the survey with related expertise from the University of the Cumberlands to determine validity. After review of the survey instrument and related reliability data, the committee deemed the survey valid.

Data Collection and Sources

The survey instrument was distributed electronically via email to teachers in southeastern Kentucky. The survey remained open for two weeks, during which time 171 participants began the survey, with 131 completed responses for analysis. All respondents were K-12 public school employees from Bell, Clay, Harlan, Knox, Laurel, Leslie, Middlesboro Independent, and Perry county school systems. The teaching experience of the respondents ranged from one to 40 years.

Statistical Test Discussion

A regression analysis was performed to determine the reliability of the pilot survey questions. Following the collection of survey data, an ANOVA test was conducted to identify differences between participant responses for the three instructional variables; new instructional practices, new classroom management strategies, and new policies and procedures (Spatz, 2011). A series

of Tukey *HSD* tests were conducted to further identify the potential differences. A factor means comparison was used to determine which modes of delivery that teachers perceive to be the most effective.

Summary

To determine teacher perceptions of professional development delivery techniques, this study collected surveys from 131 classroom teachers employed in southeastern Kentucky public schools. The survey included Likert scale items designed with a forced choice model that asked teachers to rate various professional development delivery styles from “No Impact” to “Significant Impact.” The findings of this study could influence educational leaders in the design, delivery, and facilitation of professional development.

Chapter Four

Research Findings

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research design, methodology, sampling procedures, and statistical tests used in the study. This chapter provides an analysis of the survey data. It also provides answers to the two research questions posed at the beginning of this study.

Analysis of Research Questions

This study sought to identify which modes of professional development and which categories of trainers that teachers perceived to have the greatest impact on their professional learning. A researcher-designed survey instrument featuring questions with Likert scale choices was used to measure the perceptions of 131 education professionals working in public school settings located in southeastern Kentucky (see Appendix A). Survey questions one through five consisted of informed consent and demographic questions. Questions six through eight were designed to measure teacher perceptions of 10 professional development delivery styles under different content variables, such as new learning, classroom management strategies, or policies and procedures. Question nine was designed to measure the perceived impact of 11 various categories of trainers.

Perceived impact of professional development delivery modes. Participants in this study were asked to rate the impact of ten modes of professional development delivery; choices ranged from “no impact” to “significant impact” for three content driven variables (new learning, new classroom management strategies, and new policies and procedures). Question six asked participants to rate training experiences focused on new instructional policies; question seven asked participants to rate training experiences for new classroom management strategies, and question eight asked participants to consider training experiences for new policies and procedures.

Before considering each variable independently, questions six through eight were compared to provide a macro level view of the data. Factor means for questions six through eight were calculated using the following formula: [(Number of Responses, No Impact * 1) + (Number of Responses, Limited Impact * 2) + (Number of Responses, Some Impact * 3) + (Number of Responses, Significant Impact * 4)/131].

Using these scores, an ANOVA test was conducted to determine if there are any significant differences in teacher responses for the three content-driven variables ($F [2, 27] = 1.66, p > 0.05$). This ANOVA test showed that there are no statistically significant differences between the three variables. A second ANOVA test was conducted to determine if there were statistically significant difference between participants’ responses for the ten modes of delivery ($F [9, 20] = 8.08, p < .05$). This test showed that there is a statistically significant difference between participant’s responses for the perceived impact of the ten modes of delivery.

A series of post hoc Tukey *HSD* tests were conducted to identify which modes of delivery had significant differences. From the 45 post hoc tests, 11 tests showed significant differences. The results of these 11 tests are shown below in Table 3.

Variable One	Variable Two	Q Stat	P Stat	Significance
Multi Day Training or Conference	Interactive Live Webinar	5.59	0.0214	$p < .05$
Observing Another Teacher's Lesson	Interactive Live Webinar	7.73	0.001	$p < .01$
Observing Another Teacher's Lesson	PLC	5.91	0.0131	$p < .05$
Observing Another Teacher's Lesson	Self Study	5.73	0.0173	$p < .05$
Observing Another Teacher's Lesson	Video Training	6.05	0.0106	$p < .05$
Observing Another Teacher's Lesson	College Courses	7.02	0.0024	$p < .01$
Peer Coaching	PLC	6.27	0.0076	$p < .01$
Peer Coaching	Video Training	6.41	0.0061	$p < .01$
Peer Coaching	Interactive Live Webinar	8.09	0.001	$p < .01$
Peer Coaching	Self Study	6.09	0.01	$p < .05$
Peer Coaching	College Courses	7.38	0.0014	$p < .01$

The Tukey *HSD* post hoc tests showed that “peer coaching” and “observing another teacher’s lesson” have significant differences when compared to “PLC,” “video training,” “self study,” and “college courses.” These results indicate that teachers perceive there to be a difference in the impact of these modes of delivery. Interestingly, the largest difference between the means occurs when “peer coaching” and “observing another teacher’s lessons” are compared with “interactive live webinar,” with both tests receiving a p value of 0.001.

In an effort to further determine the teacher’s perceptions, the factor means for questions six through eight were combined for comparison. Similarly, responses for “some impact” and “significant impact” were combined to create a “combined positive” score. The ten delivery methods were then ranked to provide an overview of the data collected. The ranking can be seen in Table 4.

Delivery Method	Factor Means	Percent Positive
Peer Coaching	3.25	84%
Observing Another Teacher’s Lesson	3.22	83%
Multi-Day Training or Conference	3.02	80%
Half Day Seminar	2.92	76%
Full Day Seminar	2.85	73%
Professional Learning Communities	2.67	62%
Video Training	2.65	60%
Self-Study	2.69	59%
College Courses	2.56	57%
Interactive Live Webinar	2.5	53%

The results of the previously mentioned Tukey *HSD* tests are reflected in this ranking, where “peer coaching” and “observing another teacher’s lesson” rises to the top of the ranking, with a 297 point difference between “peer coaching” at the top and “interactive live webinar” at the bottom. Similarly, the Tukey *HSD* comparisons of “multi-day training or conference” and “interactive live webinar” are also reflected in this ranking.

The modes of delivery presented in Table 4 can be grouped into categories by their ranking. The highest-ranking delivery methods are those in which teachers are working directly with their peers, either as a peer coach (84 percent positive) or by observing another teacher implementing a technique (83 percent positive). Following that are the more traditional methods of professional learning; multi-day training or conference (80 percent positive), half day seminar (76 percent positive), full day seminar (73 percent positive). These are followed by more modern and hands off delivery styles, professional learning communities (62 percent positive), video training (60 percent positive), self-study (59 percent positive), college courses (57 percent positive), interactive live webinars (53 percent positive).

It is worth noting that the professional learning community model is theoretically designed to be a peer-to-peer approach to continued professional growth through data analysis

and teamwork (DuFour, 2004). In this data set, (see Table 4) the PLC model is not grouped with other teacher-driven modes of delivery. This finding suggests a limitation of the study as professional learning community implementation may vary on a site-to-site basis and may not always follow the research-based best practices developed by DuFour (2004); there are also concerns about the social psychology factors that impact the functioning of groups that are socially engineered; as Vann (1994, 1995, 1996, 2008, and 2011) shows, primary and reference groups are principally the most meaningful groups that form in the workplace, geographic community, or indeed any social organization. It could be that administratively implemented PLCs sometimes do not reflect actual primary and reference groups that organically form in the workplace; therefore the notion that a “community” exists, professional or otherwise, is null and void in those situations. It is also important to note that according to Vann the concept of PLC is exclusive to the public school profession; sociologists, geographers, and social psychologists do not use that conception of groups of people.

When the factor means for questions six through eight are viewed in isolation, peer coaching and lesson observation continue to rank in the top two spots, with the exception of learning for new policies and procedures, in which lesson observation drops, presumably due to the lack of instructional implication with most policies and procedures. Conference style trainings (multi-day, full-day, half-day) continue to fall in line behind the classroom teacher driven models, while self-directed professional learning methods (self-study, video training, and live-interactive webinar) continue to stay near the bottom. It is important to note that interactive live webinars consistently score the lowest, only to raise one point for policy and procedure training (rising above college courses).

On the perceived impact of various trainer categories. Question nine specifically addresses the second research question for this study by asking respondents to rate the impact of a professional learning experience by various categories of trainers. As with the previous questions, an ANOVA was conducted to determine if there is a statistically significant difference in the participants perceptions of the impact of the various categories of trainers ($F(10, 1430) = 3.92, p < .01$). This test showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the respondent's scores. A series of 55 post hoc Tukey HSD tests were conducted to determine where the differences lie. The Tukey HSD series showed 23 significant differences in the means. The results of these tests are presented below in Table 5.

Variable One	Variable Two	<i>Q</i> Stat	<i>P</i> Stat	Significance
Classroom teachers from your district	Union/KEA Staff	7.54	0.001	$p < .01$
Classroom teachers from your district	Researcher	7.98	0.001	$p < .01$
Classroom teachers from your district	Third party professional trainers	5.69	0.0025	$p < .01$
Classroom teachers from your district	Elected Union/KEA official	6.98	0.001	$p < .01$
Classroom teachers from your building	Classroom teachers from outside your district	7.78	0.001	$p < .01$
Classroom teachers from your building	District administration	4.79	0.0253	$p < .05$
Classroom teachers from your building	Elected Union/KEA official	10.47	0.001	$p < .01$
Classroom teachers from your building	Higher education professionals	6.58	0.001	$p < .01$
Classroom teachers from your building	Instructional coaches	6.38	0.001	$p < .01$
Classroom teachers from your building	Researcher	11.47	0.001	$p < .01$
Classroom teachers from your building	Third party professional trainers	9.18	0.001	$p < .01$
Classroom teachers from your building	Union/KEA Staff	11.02	0.001	$p < .01$

District administration	Elected Union/KEA official	5.69	0.0025	$p < .01$
District administration	Researcher	6.68	0.001	$p < .01$
District administration	Union/KEA Staff	6.25	0.001	$p < .01$
School administration	Elected Union/KEA official	7.38	0.001	$p < .01$
School administration	Classroom teachers from outside your district	4.69	0.0319	$p < .05$
School administration	Researcher	8.38	0.001	$p < .01$
School administration	Third party professional trainers	6.08	0.001	$p < .01$
School administration	Union/KEA Staff	7.94	0.001	$p < .01$
Researcher	Higher education professionals	4.89	0.0201	$p < .01$
Researcher	Instructional coaches	5.09	0.0123	$p < .01$
Union/KEA Staff	Instructional coaches	4.66	0.336	$p < .05$

The results of this series of Tukey *HSD* tests show that there are some significant differences in the means. There is a strong difference between “classroom teachers in your building” and nearly all other trainer categories. It is also notable that there are many categories whose scores differ between those of “school administration” “district administration” and “classroom teachers from your district.”

As with the previous questions, the Tukey *HSD* test results reflect the differences in the factor means and combined positive scores, displayed below in Table 6.

Trainer Category	Factor Means	Percent Positive
Classroom teachers from your building	3.22	85%
School Administration	2.98	75%
Classroom teachers from your district	2.95	78%
District Administration	2.85	69%
Instructional Coaches	2.73	67%
Higher Education Professionals	2.71	66%
Classroom teachers from outside your district	2.63	58%
Third party professional trainers	2.52	55%

Election Union/KEA Official	2.42	48%
Union/KEA Staff	2.37	48%
Researchers	2.34	44%

The data collected through this question clearly delineates the impact of trainers based on how far removed they are from a teacher's individual classroom. The highest scoring trainer categories were those trainers who were perceived as having direct understanding or experience of an individual teachers classroom; classroom teachers in your building (85 percent positive), classroom teachers in your district (78 percent positive), school administration (75 percent positive). As the trainer categories become farther removed from an individual teachers classroom, their positive impact begins to diminish; district administration (69 percent positive), instructional coaches (67 percent positive), higher education professionals (66 percent positive). As the type of trainers are categorized as from outside of the school district, their percent of positive responses continues to fall; teachers from outside one's school district (58 percent positive), third party professional trainers (55 percent positive). Finally, trainer categories including those who may not have a direct link to a K-12 classroom are perceived to have the lowest impact on professional growth; elected union/KEA officials (48 percent positive), union/KEA staff (48 percent positive), researchers (44 percent positive).

Summary

The data presented in this chapter provides a glimpse into the current perceptions teachers hold about their professional development offerings. This study sought to answer two questions: (1) What modes of professional development delivery do teachers perceive to be the most effective? (2) What category of trainer (teacher, administrator, college professor, etc.) do teachers perceive

to have the greatest impact on their professional learning experience? Based on the data collected, the answer to both questions can be summed up by a single statement: teachers perceive the professional development that has the greatest impact on their professional learning is teacher led and teacher driven. In all instances, participants indicated that they perceive the highest level of growth to come from experiences in which they work with peers from their school to solve an instructional problem.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Implications

Introduction

This goal of this study was to determine the perceived ideal conditions for the preparation and presentation of professional development for teachers. Chapter two presented an overview of the current literature related to teacher professional development to lay a foundation for the study. Chapters three and four presented the methodology for this study and a discussion of the findings. The data collected during this study revealed that the perceived ideal professional learning conditions for teachers occur when professional learning is teacher led and teacher driven. This chapter will discuss the potential implications, limitations, and questions for future study on the topic.

Discussion

As with most aspects of public education, teacher professional development is guided by layers of laws, regulations, and policies. Teachers in Kentucky are required to earn 24 hours of professional development credit each year in order to maintain their certification. This research reflects many implications for the way education and professional development policies are written and enforced.

Who determines professional learning? National data suggest that the current culture of professional learning is largely compliance based, that is, a district level administrator makes professional learning decisions for the entire district (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014, Learning Forward, 2014, TNTP, 2015). This type of centralized management works when the administrator is simply maintaining records, however, if true professional growth is the goal of professional development, then individual teachers must have a degree of agency and autonomy in professional development decision-making. Principals should collaborate with individual teachers to determine their unique priority needs based on a number of factors such as the teacher's evaluation, classroom observation, and student growth , etc....

Chapter Two explored the concepts of buy-in and self-efficacy as vital components of a successful adult learning climate. As policies are revised in the future, decisions regarding the type, delivery and awarding credit for PD should consider the individual teacher's needs and preferences. The best teachers know what they do not know and, if given the opportunity and encouragement, will seek answers and solutions to meet their unique needs (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014).

In instances where teachers are unsuccessful, policies regarding professional development should be written to support targeted assistance that includes input and conferencing with administration and teacher mentors. A principle of andragogy is that adult learners learn best when they have a role in the decision-making process. Adults learn better when learning decisions are made with them, rather than for them (Knowles, M., Holton, E., & Swanson, R. 2012).

The issue of ownership of professional learning has immediate implications at the time of this writing due to Kentucky's implementation of the Professional Growth and Effectiveness

System (PGES). This system seeks to differentiate professional learning by asking teachers and administrators to reflect on teaching practice, set data- driven goals, and align professional learning experiences to meet those goals. As districts begin to implement new professional learning protocols, this research suggests that teachers be permitted to make professional judgments about their PD and provide opportunities for teachers to seek a wide range of professional learning options that meet their individual needs and learning preferences.

Cost vs. quality. As adequate school funding continues to be an issue in Kentucky, many districts are turning towards lower cost alternatives to meet the professional learning needs of their staff. Inexpensive online tools such as KET, PD360, and webinar programs are growing in popularity. While these training options may be less expensive and appear to offer a multitude of topics and the convenience of 24-hour access, this study indicates that teachers may not feel these methods are effective.

Limited funding leads school boards and administration to cut ineffective programs from their budgets. Efficient operation requires the analysis and comparison of cost, time, and impact of each program. School councils and local school boards often analyze the cost effectiveness of professional development. While it may seem ideal to spend less to gain access to the wide range of content available online, it is a wasteful expenditure if the teachers are not using the tools or do not perceive them to be effective. Similarly, it is not cost-effective to spend thousands of dollars on independent consultants whom, as this study suggests, teachers perceive to be ineffective.

Based on the results of this study, teachers perceive the most efficient facilitators of professional development to be their peers. Teachers have varying degrees of professional

competencies, skills expertise and areas in which to grow. By creating job-embedded, teacher-driven models for professional learning, school districts will spend less money and get higher quality PD that comes with more buy-in and support from their faculties (Coggshall, J., Rasmussen, C., Colton, A., Milton, J., & Jacques, C. (2012).

Job-embedded professional development. Job-embedded professional development (JEPD) refers to teacher learning that is designed to enhance a teacher's understanding of the content and research-based best practices for instructional design and delivery. As the name suggests, JEPD takes place during the day and is centered on student learning and interaction (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Hirsh, 2009). In non-education careers, JEPD is the norm and is colloquially referred to as "on the job training." JEPD occurs when two or more professionals work together in a coaching or mentoring model to hone their skills and improve their practice (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Hirsh, 2009).

This study did not include JEPD as a delivery option because current state policy does not allow teachers to earn credit towards their required professional learning hours during the school day (Annual Professional Development Plan, 2014) JEPD is directly related to the teacher led models of professional learning, such as peer coaching and observation, identified by this study as having the greatest impact on a teacher's professional growth. These models should take place during the school day and live coaching and observing should happen when children are present. By practicing JEPD in this manner, teachers grow professionally in a way that is more closely aligned with the current statutes and regulations that expect PD to occur within groups of peers and remain student-centered (Annual Professional Development Plan, 2014).

The state PD policy has led to a culture where most professional development happens after school or on the weekends. This culture of professional development is counterintuitive when viewed within the context of this study. If the highest-quality professional development is that which involves peer coaching and observation during the day, then teachers should be able to count those high-quality training hours towards their state mandated minimum. While this study measured teacher perceptions and not the actual impact of a training style, the literature discussed in Chapter Two illustrates a connection between perception and effectiveness. Future policy should seek to transform professional development culture to allow professional development credit to be awarded in multiple ways and times.

Similarly, the current model of teacher scheduling must be addressed in order for high quality peer-to-peer professional interactions to take place. The TELL Kentucky Survey, as referenced in Chapter Two, identifies a lack of time to collaborate as a significant barrier to success in the classroom. As policies related to professional learning are reviewed and implemented, it will be important for future policy makers to allocate a provision of time for teachers to engage in professional learning during their regular work day.

Limitations of the Study

Professional Learning Communities

Professional learning communities consist of a group of educators who gather to work on concerns in a school and support the professional learning of their peers (DuFour, 2004). While the results of this study show a significant preference towards professional learning that is teacher-led and teacher driven, professional learning communities consistently scored lower than

other teacher driven categories. There is not enough data related to this specific delivery method to be able to delineate why it underperformed other teacher-led models. Still, sociologists, including Vann (1994, 1995, 1996, 2005, 2008, and 2011) argue that arbitrarily designed social groups may or may not reflect actual primary groups in the workplace, so these social groups are little more than secondary groups: they are composed of people without emotional binding, albeit gathered together in the same place; they may even be made of cliques and people who feel left out because they have no emotional connection to the other members.

A possible, albeit weak on social psychological theory, explanation may lie in the nature of professional learning communities themselves. As a theoretical framework, this delivery method focuses on bringing teachers together to use their combined intellect and experience to solve problems and provide peer support. The role and impact of a professional learning community is directly tied to the needs of the individual group of teachers. As such, its implementation – and by extension, its impact – varies from site-to-site.

Kentucky Education Association

The Kentucky Education Association (KEA) is nonprofit membership organization that consists of public school employees. Its role is to advocate and provide professional services for the teachers of Kentucky. KEA is a large scale provider of professional development for teachers across the state. In the survey, KEA Elected Officer and KEA Staff scored the lowest regarding perceived impact. This stands out as contradictory to the data presented in Chapter Four as KEA is a teacher led and teacher-driven organization.

It is possible that many survey participants are unaware of the various roles of leadership within KEA, particularly related to KEA Elected Officer's active teaching status. It is also

possible that participants may not have had prior experience in attending training events hosted by KEA or that they have pre-disposed negative feelings towards KEA due to their role as a labor union in Kentucky.

Categories of Trainer

The survey instrument used in this study asked only one question related to teachers perceptions of the impact of the various trainer categories. As such, a ranking was provided for analysis. Traditionally, statistical analysis is used in quantitative research to make assumptions about a larger population from a smaller sample. Despite the limitations of the sample, the question related to the perceived impact of the categories of trainer offers some important insights into the state of professional development. When factor means are compared, the data show that teachers value trainers who share a similar role, such as their peers or school administrators. Trainers who are further removed from an individual teacher's classroom are perceived to have less impact. Further research could yield findings that have a significant impact on the way administrators choose providers of professional development in the future.

Implications for Future Study

Having established a correlation of the perceptions teachers hold regarding professional development delivery, future study needs to be conducted to verify the accuracy of their perceptions. It would be beneficial to conduct a series of experiments designed to measure the lasting impact of the delivery methods and compare them to the perceived impact documented in this study. By doing so, future researchers will be able to verify whether or not the delivery

mechanisms recommended by this study have a greater impact than the other delivery mechanisms available.

Summary

Professional learning impacts every teacher, administrator, and education policy maker in Kentucky. The data collected in this study show that the study participants believe that the most effective professional development comes from their professional peers who are from their own schools and districts.

At the time of this writing, Kentucky is in the process of implementing the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES). This staff support system encourages administrators to have detailed conversations with teachers about the quality of their instruction. Also, PGES encourages the administrator and teacher to work together to determine professional development that supports the individual professional needs of each teacher. This study points towards the next step in this shifting culture of professional learning, allowing teachers to take more ownership over their PD decisions and to seek learning opportunities that are most aligned with their individual needs.

Future research needs to be conducted in the area of professional development. While the findings of this study reflect recent national reports, there is a lack of Kentucky-specific data to address the quality, effectiveness, and general perception of PD. Future researchers should explore the impact of job embedded professional development models and teacher developed training methods.

It is important that every teacher has access to high quality, individualized professional learning when they need it. As policies related to teacher professional development continue to

be revised, it will be important that they are given the agency to guide their own professional development to meet their needs in a meaningful and individualized way.

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Appendix A

Perceptions Survey

Section One – Informed Consent

1. Informed Consent

Section One – Demographics

2. School District
3. Grade Level
4. Subject Taught
5. Years of Experience

Section Two – Survey

6. Please rate how significantly the following professional development modes impact your professional learning for new instructional practices.

	No Impact	Limited Impact	Some Impact	Significant Impact
College Courses				
Full Day Seminar				
Half Day Seminar				
Observing another teachers lesson				
Multi-Day Training/Conference				
Peer Coaching (working with a peer of your choice on a problem)				
Professional Learning Communities				

Self Study (such as a book study or action research)				
Video Training (such as PD360 or KET)				
Interactive Live Webinar				

7. Please rate how significantly the following professional development modes impact your professional learning for new classroom management strategies.

	No Impact	Limited Impact	Some Impact	Significant Impact
College Courses				
Full Day Seminar				
Half Day Seminar				
Observing another teachers lesson				
Multi-Day Training/Conference				
Peer Coaching (working with a peer of your choice on a problem)				
Professional Learning Communities				
Self Study (such as a book study or action research)				
Video Training (such as PD360 or KET)				
Interactive Live Webinar				

8. Please rate how significantly the following professional development modes impact your professional learning for new policies and procedures.

	No Impact	Limited Impact	Some Impact	Significant Impact
College Courses				
Full Day Seminar				
Half Day Seminar				
Observing another teachers lesson				
Multi-Day Training/Conference				
Peer Coaching (working with a peer of your choice on a problem)				
Professional Learning Communities				
Self Study (such as a book study or action research)				
Video Training (such as PD360 or KET)				
Interactive Live Webinar				

9. Please rate how significantly the following professional development modes impact your professional learning for annual compliance training (blood born pathogens, suicide prevention, school safety, etc.):

	No Impact	Limited Impact	Some Impact	Significant Impact
College Courses				
Full Day Seminar				
Half Day Seminar				
Observing another teachers lesson				
Multi-Day Training/Conference				
Peer Coaching (working with a peer of your choice on a problem)				
Professional Learning Communities				
Self Study (such as a book study or action research)				
Video Training (such as PD360 or KET)				
Interactive Live Webinar				

10. (9.) Please rate how significantly the following categories of trainer impact your professional learning goals.

	No Impact	Limited Impact	Some Impact	Significant Impact
District Administration (Superintendent, PD Coordinator, etc.)				
Elected Union/KEA Official (President, Vice President, Board of Directors, etc.)				
Higher Education Professionals				
Instructional Coaches				
Classroom teachers from your building				
Classroom teachers from your district				
Classroom Teachers from outside your district.				
Researchers				
School Administration (School Principal)				
Third Party Professional Trainers				

Union/KEA Staff				
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Appendix B

IRB Form



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

7429 College Station Drive

Williamsburg, KY 40769

Tel. 549-4403 OR 549-4492

Email: barry.vann@ucumberlands.edu

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN
SUBJECTS**

Instructions

This application must be approved by the EdD IRB Board before writing Chapters Four and Five of the dissertation. Detailed guidance and directions for completing this form are available on the EdD Program web site. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact us at (606) 549-4403; 549-4492 or barry.vann@ucumberlands.edu.

1. Project Information

Title:

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DELIEVERY STYLES
--

2. Principal Investigator's Contact Information

Name Prefix:

Mr.

Address

First:

Matthew

--

Middle:

Phone

Bradley

Last:

Courtney

2.1 Faculty Sponsor's Contact Information (All Students are required to have a faculty sponsor)

Name Prefix:

Address

7429 College Station Dr
Williamsburg, KY 40769

First:

Middle

Last:

Phone

3.0 Dissertation Committee

List all committee members below. Each member must be a graduate level faculty member at the University of the Cumberlands. Members must be appointed by the student’s dissertation advisor and the program director. One member must be employed outside of the EdD program.

Name	Academic Department/Program

4.0 Ethical Treatment Conditions for Human Subjects

To be approved, the doctoral candidate must ensure the protection of human subjects. This includes freedom from the fear of reprisal, emotional distress or physical harm.

1. Are participants assured of anonymity? Yes , No

2. Will participants be exposed to mental or physical stimuli of an experimental nature?
Yes , No If yes, what precautions will be taken to protect the participant from harm?

3. Is the study designed to measure perceptions of an issue via a survey form? Yes ,
No (Please attach the survey form to this application)

4. Does your study rely on Census data or other established measures such as test scores?
Yes , No

5.0 Approval Signatures

By signing this application, you are affirming that no harm will come to study participants. All members must be employed as faculty at the University of the Cumberland, and two members must serve in Departments outside of the EdD program.

Student Researcher _____ Date _____

Dissertation Advisor _____ Date _____

Committee Member _____ Date _____

Committee Member _____ Date _____

Committee Member _____ Date _____

Courtney

Perceptions of Professional Development

Program Director _____ Date _____

Appendix C

Informed Consent

Project Title:

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY STYLES

Principle Researcher:

Matthew B. Courtney

mcourtney@bgteacherquality.org

Work: Bluegrass Center for Teacher Quality

Home:

Phone:

Cell:

You are invited to participate in “Teacher Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Professional Development Delivery Styles.” Matthew Courtney, a doctoral student at the University of the Cumberlands is completing this project in partial completion of the Doctor of Education degree. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to initiate or leave the study at any time.

All of your answers to the survey instrument will be anonymous. No personal or identifiable information will be collected in any way. There is no risk to participating in this study.

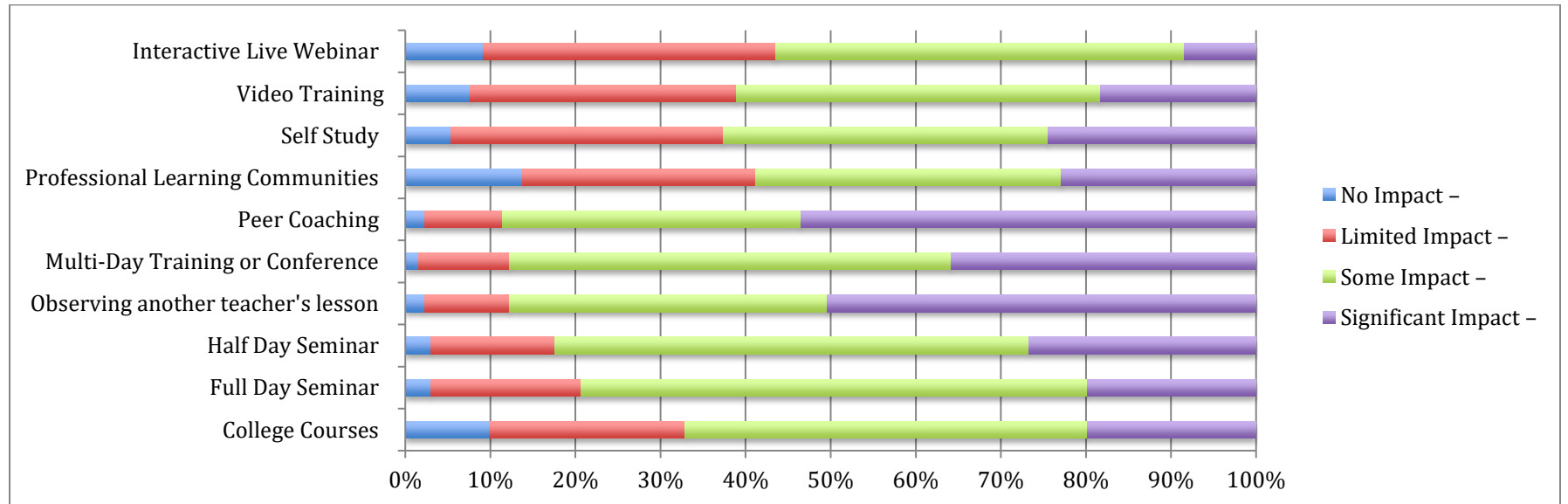
If you wish to participate in this study, you may do so by signing and dating on the form below.

Any questions regarding the intent or confidentiality of this study may be directed to the researcher.

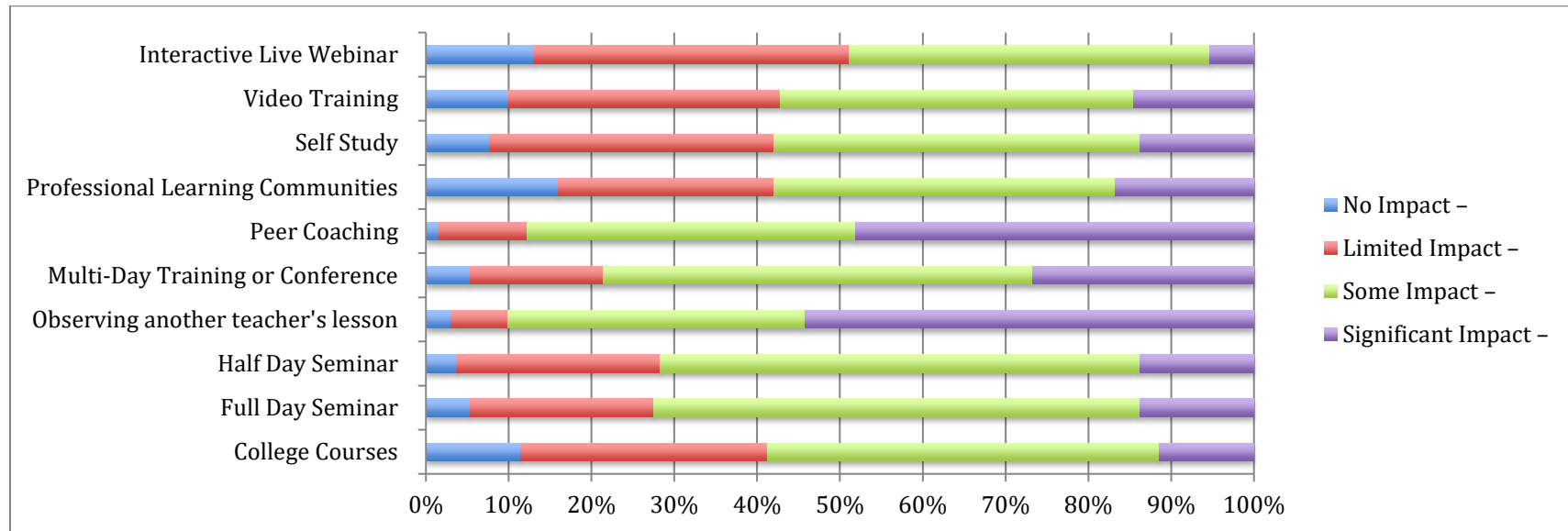
Appendix D

Data Charts

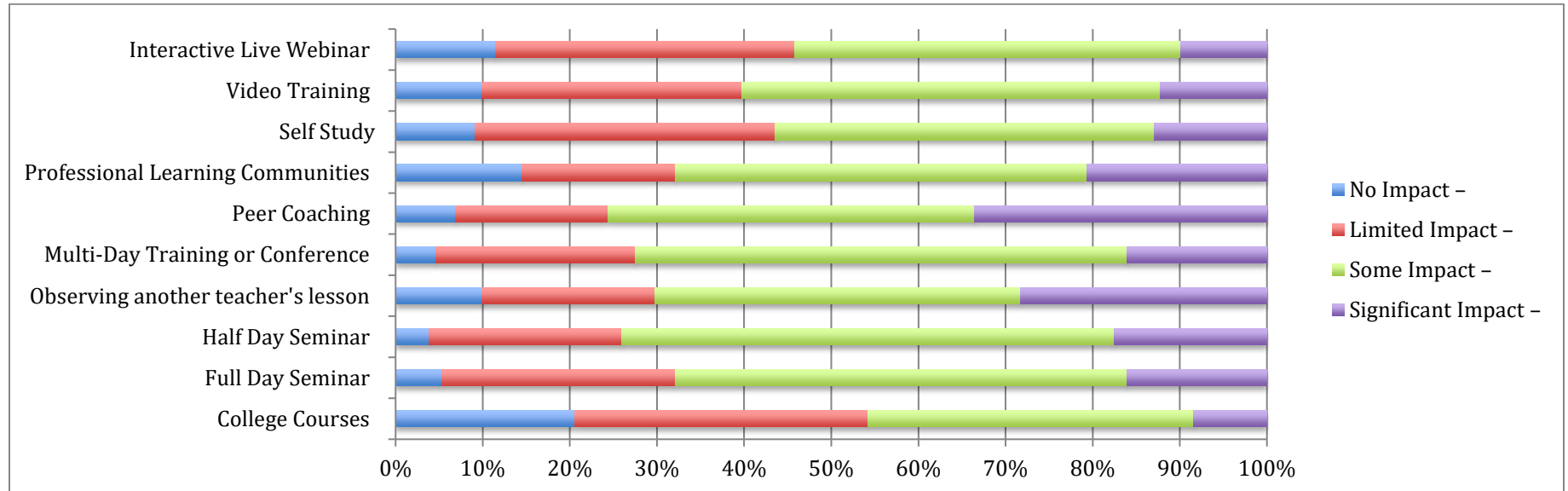
Question 6 - Please rate how significantly the following professional development modes impact your professional learning for new instructional practices.



Question 7 - Please rate how significantly the following professional development modes impact your professional learning for new classroom management strategies.



Question 8 - Please rate how significantly the following professional development modes impact your professional learning for new policies and procedures.



Question 9 - Please rate how significantly the following categories of trainer impact your professional learning goals.

