

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATORS'  
ON-THE-JOB EXPERIENCES AFTER SELF-SELECTED  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by

Cindy L. Manzanares

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to describe elementary educators' on-the-job experiences after completing a self-selected professional development (PD). This study was guided by the overall question: How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development? To provide further direction of the vast experiences three sub questions were utilized. (a) To what extent, if at all, have practices from the professional development been implemented? (b) What factors are perceived to positively impact implementation of the professional development? (c) What factors are perceived to negatively impact implementation of the professional development?

Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, as it relates to social learning and teacher efficacy, and Malcolm Knowles' adult learning theory, as it focuses on the needs of adult learners, both set foundations and provided structure for this study. Semi-structured interviews, experience writings, artifact collections, and focus groups - or follow-up clarification – all strive to capture the educators' experiences regarding PD. A poetic rendition is presented based upon the participant's individual experiences. Then, through several stages of coding the transcribed interviews and other data sources, as well as the researcher's reflective journal, 10 themes emerged as a descriptive account and insight on effective PD practices through these experiences. Implications are discussed, recommendations provided, along with suggestions for future PD research.

*Key Words:* professional development, professional learning community, tribes learning community, social cognitive theory, teacher efficacy, adult learning theory .

## Dedication

*I dedicate my research to our nation's passionate, caring, and hardworking teachers.*

These teachers are endlessly caring, persevering, and pouring their hearts into their work, into their students. These love-filled teachers make a difference through their selfless service! They consistently mold our future with layers of academia and care towards our next generation.

There are two quotes from the late Winston Churchill (1874-1965) which speak volumes to teachers' work. "Success is not final; failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts." Teaching is not easy; it is a *daily* challenging effort. Still, try new strategies and new ideas. If it fails, tomorrow will be a new day, so try again. That goes for both working with students and working with colleagues. Share your ideas. Share your successes; and even share your failures with other teachers. Blossom through this collaboration, becoming your personal best - for students and for yourself as well! Recognizing you are a continual work in progress, you are and should always be, *becoming the best version of yourself* (Kelly, 2005).

"Continuous effort- not strength or intelligence- is the key to unlocking our potential." Winston Churchill, regarded as one of the great wartime leaders from the last century (Wikipedia, 2015), seemed to have insight upon education as well. Perhaps the insights were on mankind and learning, in general. Overall, if you keep trying, only then will you reach *your* best!

## Acknowledgments

As I reflect upon my journey, it quickly becomes obvious: many others have made this possible. *Never* will I ever be able to claim success merely on my own efforts, and what a lonely place that must be for those who do.

Many teachers have molded me along the way. Most recently, my committee: *Dr. Dunnagan, Dr. Yurica, Dr. Parker*, and also *Dr. Milacci and Dr. Collins*, willingly invested time and energy in my academic growth.

And of course the *teacher-participants* who made this research possible. Without question, I could *not* have completed this without them. With all the time demands upon these teachers, they were still willing to stretch a little more, for this research, and as I see it, *for me*. With my deepest emotion, I thank each one.

Growing up in such a large family has also greatly influenced who I have become. Although my parents, *Robert and Margaret Gaines*, did not have an extensive formal education, they always encouraged me to set goals, to work hard, and to always do *my* personal best. And even more importantly, they taught me the truths of God's love and forgiveness, and that through God, *only through God*, anything I can dare to dream is possible.

My six siblings have also had, and still contribute, to the person I am. I love and cherish each: Margaret Ann, Phyllis, Alice, Bobby, Marian, and Amy. I have so many wonderful memories surrounding my childhood. From the moment I was born into a large, *only* financially poor family, God has blessed me. My family, *my solid foundation*, was my first and forever example of perseverance.

My children, *Carly and Dominic*, and my husband, *Jerry*, have sacrificed throughout this extensive journey. My research has taken time; much of this time would have been focused upon

them. Although I slept less in order to maximize the time with them, I know this has *occasionally* increased my irritability, decreasing the quality of our time together. Jerry has recently (yet, not really so recent when I realize it has been five years) added our family's financial management and taken on some of my typical household responsibilities.

In writing Chapter Five, my mind continually goes back to Patton's (2002) advice to one considering qualitative research, "Prepare to be changed. Looking deeply at other people's lives will force you to look deeply at yourself" (p. 35). Only now, as I approach the end of this journey, has that really brought clear meaning. I've always been the deeply reflective soul; yet, through this, I have been changed in many aspects. I know I am the catalyst for my own success – and my own failures. However, I can influence and adjust my self-efficacy in any area! And although I am naturally more *reflective* than *confident*, both qualities are very much alive in me. It is my own *passion*, my own *willingness*, that unites those two powerful forces. But *time*—**time is one thing we never get back; we never get more than another in one day; and seemingly, we never have enough.** I'm not sure my time has been well spent. Will my children recognize my hard work - my perseverance, as a positive character trait to develop in themselves, or will they see it as a hindrance, as in sucking the fun out of life? **Ironically, only time will tell.** *I can honestly say, I have done my best to balance my responsibilities, my goals, and 'my loves.'* *I now know, without question, time is the best present!* Overall, I could not have completed this without their support and understanding. In *time*, I hope it is viewed completely positive. I do recognize their sacrifice in this and am so thankful to have my family, my greatest blessings in life. God is good!

Jerry, I have "ranger'd up!" This is my Ranger Tab. **Rangers lead the way! Hooah!**

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### **List of Abbreviations**

Child Development Center (CDC)

College & Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)

College & Career Readiness Standards for Math (CCRSM)

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Continuous School Improvement (CSI)

Cooperative Learning (CL)

Curriculum Embedded Performance Assessment (CEPA)

Education Commission of the States (ECS)

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)

National Defense and Education Act (NDEA)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

Professional Development (PD)

Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Professional Learning Team (PLT)

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (S.T.E.M.)

Tribes Learning Communities (Tribes, TLC, or Tribes TLC)

United States (U.S.)

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Overview**

The involvement in professional development (PD) is not debatable for public school educators in the United States (U.S.) since all states require some form of continued PD, expecting teachers to further their knowledge of teaching (Butler & Gerkin, 2006; Jaquith, 2014). However, Carter (2008) reported only 16 states within the U.S. allocated time for PD, while about only half of the states funded PD activities. In a similar manner, teacher preparation programs and certification requirements vary widely from state to state (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009) just as continued PD varies from district to district and often even varies widely from school to school within the same district. There are various grant programs available for professional development; however, grants are not automatically provided but funded through competitive procedures (ASCD, 2013).

Again, this creates varied opportunities of availability for teacher PD; school systems are not all created equal. The educational world is in continual change. Educational systems dependent upon state revenue are also in continual influx. When funding is cut, professional development funds are often among the first cuts in order to balance the budget (Gulamhussein, 2013).

“One of the most important factors in student learning is the quality of the teaching they receive (Hattie, 2009; Haycock, 1999; Marzano, 2003; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997)” (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010, p. 81). In a similar way, “Fallon (cited in Payne & Wolfson, 2000) has stated that teacher quality is the most important variable in producing student achievement” (Griffith, Ruan, Stepp, & Kimmel, 2014, p. 190). Other research also emphasized this strong link between PD and student learning (Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Valli &

Hawley, 2002) being based upon the qualities and skills of the teacher. This connection between PD, teacher skill, and student learning has a long history of research (Lieberman & Miller, 2014; Long, 2014).

This educational research, along with popular beliefs, has historically sparked federal legislative action (Long, 2014). Having the most recent impact, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002 set mandates for all states to develop plans ensuring teachers to be “highly qualified.” A *highly qualified teacher* is characterized as one who is fully certified under state regulations, has passed a basic knowledge test, and has completed a college degree program with emphasis matching that of the teaching area. NCLB aimed at providing a foundation for improving teacher quality through innovative teacher reforms and effective PD (DeBray, McDermott, & Wohlstetter, 2005; Merriman, 2014) with support and flexibility for states and localities to improve academic achievement by providing high-quality, research-grounded, training for teachers (NCLB Report, 2001).

NCLB legislation also guaranteed that every child, educated in the U.S. public educational system, have a qualified teacher (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). “The Administration’s proposal for preparing, training and recruiting teachers is based upon the basic principle that teacher excellence is vital to achieving improvement in student achievement” (NCLB Report, 2001, p. 12). Foundationally, these laws aim to develop teacher excellence and increase student achievement (Long, 2014).

Federal educational regulations have typically included a direct focus on teacher quality impacting student learning. In 2016, the newest educational law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) will replace NCLB (Belkin & Peterson, 2015; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), 2015); however, ESSA, just as its predecessors, mandates PD for



teachers (NCTM, 2015). Since the teacher's pedagogical skill has a direct link to student achievement (Desimone, 2009; Kubitskey et al., 2012; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004), the pedagogical skill level is imperative. Overall, effective PD is vital for both teacher pedagogical growth and student learning (Curry & Killion, 2009; Long, 2012).

Yet, the actual amount or level of implementation of what was learned during the PD or *PD transfer* is often difficult to measure (DeGrip & Sauermann, 2013), not documented, not followed up on (Gravani, 2007), or not implemented (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Guskey, 2002; Webster-Wright, 2009). At the same time, research also acknowledges implementation of any new program or strategy being time consuming (Short & Greer, 2002) and difficult (Sharan, 2010). It is important to recognize the difficulty level in using the new strategy being taught in PD as well as the necessary time requirements related to teacher learning, student learning, and utilization of classroom time. Ermeling (2009) identified the hardship even experienced teachers have during the initial implementation of a new instructional technique (as cited in Gulamhussein, 2013).

Brown and McCracken (2009) found time to be a key component in formal learning (as cited in Kyndt & Baert, 2013). Even with a desire to change educational practices, it takes continued efforts and time to deeply develop the resources for permanent change in teaching practice (Schoenfeld, 2011). The difficulty level and time required to learn and then to implement could be critical factors influencing whether the PD was implemented, able to be maintained as regular classroom practices, or simply discarded.

Directly related to any goal or possible success is the teacher's thought process and actions employed. In anything challenging, *self-efficacy*, or the belief in one's own abilities, is crucial. *Teacher self-efficacy* is the self-reflected believe that the individual (i.e., the teacher) can

bring about positive changes in students (Dunn & Rakes, 2011). If a teacher has high teacher efficacy, there is a willingness to establish challenging goals and to work towards these goals due to the teacher's belief that doing so will have a positive impact upon students. Teacher efficacy will be explored further as related to the theoretical framework for this study. Overall, teacher efficacy is viewed as the catalyst for moving new knowledge, gained through PD, into classroom action with implementation.

In recognizing that PD can positively impact student achievement (Curry & Killion, 2009), is still required by law (NCLB, 2001; NCTM, 2015), added with the idea that teacher's self-efficacy also influences student learning (Bandura, 2002; Dunn & Rakes, 2011), the educator's efficacy level and perceptions on PD have the potential to impact the learning environment. Gegenfurtner (2011) found participation and the amount of learning-transfer dependent on several factors (as cited in Kyndt & Baert, 2013). In short, the teacher's self-efficacy level and attitude regarding the PD are important factors to consider regarding the future implementation of any PD. These are some factors found in literature, but educators experiencing the phenomenon may provide a more detailed picture of factors perceived to positively impact implementation or those factors perceived to negatively impact implementation, within the realm of a self-selected PD.

Tribes Learning Communities (Tribes, Tribes TLC, or TLC) provides a direct focus on PD at the research site. More than a program, Tribes is a process enacted within a learning environment. Tribes TLC incorporates several best practices which make up the entire professional learning experience. TLC is "grounded in a synthesis of a wide-range of literature and research on . . . approximately 17 research-based components for effective pedagogy" (Gibbs, 2006, p. 31). There is substantial research individually on best teaching practices and

related components of TLC, yet there is little qualitative data related to the teachers' perceptions of possible factors influencing implementation after PD. These best practices included: (a) setting the environment for inclusion, influence, and community, (b) implementing classroom agreements or norms, (c) utilizing energizers to maintain a positive environment and to keep an upbeat classroom for increased learning, (d) practicing reflective questioning techniques, (e) maintaining students in a fixed *tribe* or student learning group, (f) teaching collaborative skills for increased success in group work, and (g) implementing cooperative learning (CL) strategies to increase learning. Overall, this creates a worthy qualitative topic for exploring teacher perceptions on PD related to a variety of teaching practices.

### **Background**

Professional development (PD), sometimes called continued professional development (CPD), is a basic requirement across all professions (Graham, 2006 as cited in Webster-Wright, 2009). It is based upon the idea of all professionals continuing to grow in expertise, by furthering and increasing work related skills (Reutzel & Clark, 2014; Webster-Wright, 2009). CPD is forward moving, as a continual process where regular opportunities and experiences are systematically planned to promote teacher development (Aspfors, Porn, Forsman, Salo, & Karlberg-Granlund, 2015).

PD may increase teacher ability, and therefore increase teacher-efficacy (Bruce, Esmonde, Ross, Dookie, & Beatty, 2010). Increased teacher-efficacy has also been linked to increased student achievement (Cantrell & Callaway, 2008). For these reasons, continuing education units or credits are often a requirement for teacher recertification (Webster-Wright, 2009).

Historically, PD was thought of as a formal, educational activity including a course, *workshop*, conference, or an *in-service* day of learning for the entire staff. This was often a *teacher-work day* where a topic or concept was presented by a trainer, more often than not, from the local district office. All staff would be involved in the same training. Typically, little or no follow-up support was provided, and any subsequent in-services were often on an unrelated topic (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). This “in service workshop era” and “staff development era,” often used synonymously (Kragler, Martin, & Sylvester, 2014), did not produce many instructional changes in the classroom (Harris, Bessent, & McIntyre, 1969 as cited in Kragler et al., 2014) and was considered a waste of time by many educators (Ainsworth, 1976 as cited in Kragler et al., 2014).

A significant shortcoming of these styles of PD is that they provide little opportunity for choice (Guskey & Huberman, 1995). More than twenty years later, the same difficulties still exist. Without choice or teacher buy-in, the PD structure follows a deficit model (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 as cited in Kragler et al., 2014; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). However, these types of short, “one-size-fits-all” or “one-shot” workshops continue (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson, 2010) and have continued to result in few changes to the classroom learning environment (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Yet due to increasingly difficult restraints, school systems still often offer these PD workshops that are all inclusive, for all staff (Butler & Gerkin, 2006; Kragler et al., 2014), especially when the PD content is related to the school’s goal. Too often, this traditional PD is quickly forgotten or never truly implemented (Webster-Wright, 2009). It is uncertain if educational PD, without teacher input upon selecting the topic, actually increases teacher skill and therefore if it even increases student performance (Mustani & Pence, 2010). Teachers have a

need to understand the reasons related to organizational decisions, even if they do not agree with the decision (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008). Therefore to improve the willingness towards compliance with the PD and to overall improve teaching practices, a more collaborative and democratic system for selecting group PD is desired (Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2010; Lopez-Pastor, Monjas, & Manrique, 2011).

The concept of professional learning communities (PLC) was introduced to the U.S. by DuFour and Eaker (1998). “When discussing professional development today, the concept continuing professional development (CPD) is preferred over previously used concepts like in-service training, in-service education or staff development” (Aspfors et al., 2015, p. 401). This community approach to professional learning encourages the sharing of knowledge amongst colleagues and the emphasis on the reflection for learning (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Mourshed, Chijoke, & Barber, 2010). “The PLC process has a pervasive and ongoing impact. . . . If educators meet with peers on a regular basis only to return to business as usual, they are not functioning as a PLC” (DuFour et al., 2010, p.10).

The basic component of PLC includes teachers coming together on a regular basis to share ideas, study curriculum, discuss pedagogy, evaluate student work samples and assessments, and make on-going reflections related to professional learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Research conducted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2014) indicated teachers desire well-structured collaboration. However, although successfully used in other leading countries, the use of PLC struggles to impact all educational settings in the U.S., where professional learning is often viewed as flawed (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Professional learning communities still continue to hold promise for improved PD in the U.S. Collaboration has proven to transform schools into places of learning for teachers (Bean &

Swan Dagen, 2012). However, teachers lack time and opportunities to observe and learn from others in the educational system. Countries which currently outperform the U.S., such as Finland, on international assessments invest heavily in PLC, building this teacher collaborative time into the daily work environment (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). More than a decade ago, a lesson study or collaborative form of lesson planning was already a typical characteristic of PD in Japan (Fernandez, 2002). Teachers decide on the theme and frequency of research lessons, and then break out into groups of four to six teachers. A typical lesson study consists of 10-15 hours over three to four weeks. Students are dismissed around 3:15 p.m., while the teacher's work day is over at 5:00 p.m. Scheduling time, as part of the teacher's daily work requirements, for these collaborative measures are common practice in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009).

Darling-Hammond (2010) found that teachers in the U.S. have roughly 20% or less of their workday scheduled as preparation and collaborative time (i.e., non-teaching time). However teachers from higher-achieving nations have 40 to 60% of their work schedule deemed as preparation and collaboration time. Similarly, in many Asian and European countries, instruction accounts for less than half of the teacher's daily schedule while the remaining time is allocated for planning and collaborative purposes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). In a similar manner, in a status report, *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession*, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) reported on teachers in parts of Europe and Asia having equal teaching time to collaboration time (e.g., 15-20 hours of each per week).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is comprised of 22 participating countries that provide data related to their country's educational system in order to get comparative international information. In 2011, the international average of teaching time

for public primary school educators equaled 790 hours yearly, but over 1,000 teaching hours for the same category of U.S. educators (OECD, 2013). The amount of non-teaching time varied widely between participating countries as well, with a range of more than 400 hours (OECD, 2013). Finland, leader in education, and the U.S. data is referred to in Table 1.

Compared internationally, educators in Finland teach a low number of hours, well below other nations, but they also have well prepared and working PLC (Finnish National Board of Education, n.d.). Overall, Finland has an educational system which supports collaborative measures amongst educators, with time for collaboration included as a large portion of the work day (Finnish National Board of Education, n.d.; OECD, 2013).

Table 1

*Comparison of Teacher Work Time for U.S. and Finland*

	<u>U.S.</u>	<u>Finland</u>
Average Yearly Teaching Hours	>1,000	< 600
Work Day Scheduled as Preparation / Collaboration Time	< 20 %	40-60%

Darling-Hammond, L. (2010); OECD. (2013).

Finland, where teachers and administrator frequently collaborate on best practices during the work day, leads in educational excellence. Continuing education for teachers is required but also viewed as a “right,” as teachers are responsible for developing their own professional skills and expertise. The Finland teacher-attitude towards learning in PD represents a positive attitude with a deep desire and need for this learning (Finnish National Board of Education, n.d.). These factors of time allocation for the teacher’s daily schedule and collaborative learning, again, relate

to the possibility of time and social learning as being environmental factors which may have an influence on whether the strategies learned in PD are implemented and maintained.

More recently, continued PD is about teachers learning how they learn efficiently and effectively, increasing their knowledge, and applying this knowledge into the learning environment for an overall goal of increased student achievement (Avalos, 2011). PD is becoming more and more focused upon the direct needs of individual teachers and students (Bezzina, 2006; Kragler et al., 2014; Quatroche, Bauserman, & Nellis, 2014) rather than one topic for all staff.

Research has indicated that continued PD can support teachers in adjusting practices and implementing changes related to instruction (Evans & Waring, 2006; Quatroche et al., 2014). However, this multi-decade challenge of adjusting traditional PD into on-going, “sustainable and collaborative site-based education development, i.e. changing the practices of teachers’ professional development” (Rosendahl & Ronnerman, 2006) as cited in Aspfors et al., 2015, p. 411 has shown to be laborious.

Throughout the research on PD, many problematic areas have come to light. Gravani (2007) acknowledged educational PD often remains an isolated event of supplying information, unrelated to any specific work experience. When PD is isolated and not directly connected to classroom practices, there is often little impact regarding the PD (Darling-Hammond, 2010). PD may be initiated by a school; however, when the situation is a one-size-fits-all approach, where all teachers are required to participate in the same PD, not all teachers will be excited or engaged in the PD topic (Avalos, 2011). In a similar way, Egawa (2009) suggested that successful PD, especially when led by colleagues, must have a voluntary component in order to create a positive result. A recent research study conducted by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2014) found that



many teachers are not provided with choices on PD, but those who are provided with choices experience much higher levels of satisfaction with the PD.

In light of these PD shortcomings, there is an increased search for more effective PD practices (Webster-Wright, 2009) where teaching strategies are impacted by the PD for the purpose of increased student learning (NCLB, 2001; Lieberman & Miller, 2014; Long, 2014). In addition, PD has evolved into a larger expectation where learning by itself is not enough; PD now has an important action component (Avalos, 2011; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008), as also required in a PLC (DuFour et al., 2010). Without the action component of implementing what was learned from the PD, there is no change on the learning environment, resulting in no impact on the teacher's pedagogical skill level or student learning.

Unfortunately research on educational PD often produces disappointing results, including teachers' perception of the instruction being ineffective or irrelevant (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Laker and Powell (2011) defined 'training transfer' as the extent to which information learned in PD training is applied on-the-job and increases performance (as cited in Weisweiler, Nikitopoulos, Netzel, & Frey, 2013). Much PD research indicates that PD is not consistently being implemented into the learning environment (Antoniou & Kyriakides, 2013; Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gravani, 2007; Guskey, 2002; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; Webster-Wright, 2009). Bakkenes, Vermunt, and Wubbels (2010) identified problematic aspects of implementation for teachers include: experiencing some kind of friction or hardship, straining to maintain these new practices and the avoidance of reverting back to the old ways, and simply avoiding new learning (as cited in van den Bergh, Ros, & Beijjaard, 2015). Yet without implementation of the practices learned, PD cannot be considered

effective (Buczynski & Hansen, 2010). In the same manner, Kyriakides, Christoforou, and Charalambos (2013) noted that without effective instruction, learning would not occur.

McLean and Rhoton (2008) summarized research with the realization that financial resources have not been enough to create long-term PD implementation related to science education. If financial resources are not powerful enough to create a lasting change, then perhaps listening to the driving force – the teachers who hold the power to implement PD – can provide insights on this phenomenon. Kyriakides et al. (2013) called for more research in order to gain understanding of exactly how and what teachers do for increased student outcomes. Research has not yet provided a complete picture explaining PD through teachers' perspectives; studies regarding the educators' perceptions of PD for current teachers (Wasserman, 2009) and research with the focus specific to individual professional growth are needed (Cosner, 2009).

Webster-Wright (2009) acknowledged other gaps in the research on PD: (a) best practices of how teachers learn effectively are not often considered; (b) most of the research is aimed at the activities available for PD trainings rather than the teacher's experiences after PD. Moreover, the factors which help or hinder implementation of PD are not fully understood. Guskey (2002) noted that it was unclear if school environmental factors related to increased implementation or engagement with PD. "Researchers across several educational disciplines . . . have reported their frustration at the inconclusiveness of determining the impact of educational innovations on teachers' classroom and professional practice" (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009, p. 375). In a similar manner, there is a lack of research about the usefulness of PD for teachers (Jacobson, 2011). Researchers have not yet honed in on the teachers' experiences regarding PD and their perceptions of PD related to pedagogical skill and student performance (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008). This study sought to address this gap by gathering teachers' experiences and perspectives after a

self-selected PD (i.e., Tribes) to gain teachers' descriptive insights regarding educational PD, implementation practices, and perceived factors positively or negatively impacting implementation. Exploring teachers' attitudes and feelings related to this PD follow the conceptual framework as well.

### **Situation to Self**

As a researcher, I came with an already formed philosophical assumption and a *paradigm*, or basic set of beliefs. With an ontological assumption, I see the reality as subjective and very much dependent upon each participant's point of view. My paradigm declares how I perceive things around me. I came with the social constructivism paradigm where I "seek understanding of the world in which [I] . . . live and work" (Creswell, 2007, p. 20). One could expect that I offered broad, open-ended questions to the participants during the interviews in order to get the participant's full answer without leading, so that I could then construct meaning about the world around us (Creswell, 2007). Specifically, I aimed to construct meaning within the educators' world in relationship to self-selected PD. My ontological assumption and social constructivism paradigm provided a foundation and structure for this research.

I have always had an on-going interest in PD. Remembering my first teaching assignment in Colorado, more than 15 years ago. The school district mandated that all employees participate in two different, one-size-fits-all, PD courses. Each was just a day or two long with a few follow-up sessions throughout the year. While in the PD, I knew that I would use one and that the other PD strategy would not be retained, unless specifically required by my employer. Basically, even as a new, inexperienced teacher, I recognized the PD strategy that fit with my teaching style and personality and the one that did not. One strategy, the one I still use, was easy to implement (i.e., for me), but the other strategy, from my perspective, seemed awkward and too scripted for my

style. In reflection, I wonder if the ease of implementation verses the difficulty of implementation has an influence over whether or not the PD strategies are implemented. Was it just my initial judgement or belief towards each strategy which influenced my later use of the concepts learned in PD? Or, could it be related more to my personality? Overall, I do identify with factors, both environmental and personal, having a possible influence on the likelihood of PD implementation. However, independently, I cannot specifically identify the most important factors.

Throughout the years, I have developed strategies that seemingly increase the likelihood of my remembering and using the new PD. One, if provided with materials, I need to highlight them. Then, once I am at a computer, I need to type the key findings and my thoughts about the PD. If I do this reflective piece, I am more likely to use the strategy in the future. In addition, if I create a plan with small pieces to implement and do it slowly, it is less overwhelming, again, making me more likely to implement the new strategy. And if I am working with another teacher regarding the PD, the likelihood of implementation seems to drastically increase, as does the use of a particular practice if I know my supervisor is specifically looking for that. I have noticed these influences regarding my own personal factors; therefore, I am compelled to think there are environmental factors that influence the likelihood of PD implementation as well. However, these factors may be different from person to person.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem is that current teachers' perceptions related to post-PD experiences are lacking and needed (Wasserman, 2009; Webster-Wright, 2009). Researchers continue to work at improving PD and have been for more than 50 years (Lieberman & Miller, 2014; Long, 2014);

yet, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) indicated that well-designed, research-based professional development is out of reach for most U.S. educators.

Overall, practices learned in educational PD are not consistently implemented into the learning environment (Antoniou & Kyriakides, 2013; Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gravani, 2007; Guskey, 2002; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; Webster-Wright, 2009; Weisweiler et al., 2013). Attendance to PD or the gaining of PD credits is required in the teaching profession; however this requirement does not depend upon classroom implementation of the learned strategies or concepts (Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gravani, 2007; Webster-Wright, 2009).

Especially in this time of shifting from NCLB based assessments to College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS), teachers will need professional development (Long, 2012) for this educational reform to truly be transformational. Continued PD is viewed by educators and policy makers as the primary way to improve classroom instruction and therefore positively impact student achievement (Desimone, 2009; Guskey & Yoon, 2009), yet much of what is accomplished as PD is not later implemented in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Guskey, 2002; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009). Even though it is critical for teachers to return to their classrooms and implement strategies learned in PD, frequently there is no incentive for this transfer to occur (Sawchuk, 2010). If implementation does not occur, then PD was not effective, for it had absolutely no impact on teaching practices therefore nor on student learning. Just as Buczynski & Hansen (2010) sanctioned, PD can only be considered effective if teachers take the learned experiences from the PD back to their classrooms.

Educational PD is viewed as the primary way to impact learning through improved teacher pedagogical practices (Curry & Killion, 2009; Glazerman, McKie, & Carey, 2009 as

cited in Antoniou & Kyriakides, 2013; Nye et al., 2004; Valli & Hawley, 2002), so why are the newly learned strategies so often not implemented in learning environments after the teacher attended the educational PD, especially if the PD was teacher selected as a personal choice?

These inconsistencies with regards to teacher implementation of educational PD (Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gravani, 2007; Guskey, 2002; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; Webster-Wright, 2009) or training transfer are problematic realities of PD for student learning. Sawchuk (2010) recognized little educational research addresses the lack of incentives and therefore the lack of implementation of newly learned skills from PD.

The teachers' perspectives are critical in gaining a full descriptive understanding of post-PD on-the-job experiences especially since teachers have the power to implement practices learned. Current teachers' perceptions related to post-PD experiences are needed (Wasserman, 2009; Webster-Wright, 2009) with engaging stories using good prose, in a hermeneutical design (Breault, 2010). This research seeks to address this gap by exploring teachers' perspectives of PD in a descriptive fashion.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to describe elementary educators' on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected PD. Phenomenology will provide a means for the educators to share details, providing a glimpse, of self-selected post-PD experiences. Through post-PD experiences, teachers may provide descriptive insights on their overall perspectives of the PD, insights on what components were implemented, if any, and factors perceived to help and factors perceived to hinder implementation of PD. Their attitude and feelings related to the new practices, connect to one's self-efficacy, relating to the conceptual framework.

At this stage of the research, self-selected professional development is understood as: (a) voluntary, (b) researched-based class for teacher learning with the overall goal of improved student learning, (c) on-site, and (d) offers a possible university credit. Rather than looking at all PD, this research focuses specifically on TLC, developed by Jeanne Gibbs, as it is comprised of many components or strategies (Gibbs, 2006). This, Tribes, PD was offered at the research site as a self-selected and optional PD, with a possible college credit component.

The theories guiding this study include: Albert Bandura's (1993, 2012) social cognitive theory, as it relates to social learning and teacher efficacy, and Malcolm Knowles' adult learning theory, as it focuses on the needs of the teachers, as adult learners (Chan, 2010).

### **Significance of the Study**

PD and continued PD are on-going phenomena worthy of more research due to implications on student learning (Desimone, 2009; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Kubitskey et al., 2012; Kyriakides et al., 2013; NCLB, 2001). PD research is now focused on improving teachers' pedagogical skills (Adey, 2004 as cited in Kudenko, Ratcliffe, Redmore, & Aldridge, 2011) in order to improve student achievement (Desimone, 2009; Kubitskey et al., 2012).

Webster-Wright (2009) noted that better PD practices are not habitual perhaps due to the overwhelming amount of literature focused on the delivery of programs for PD rather than understanding the experience of professional learning. In the same sense, Webster-Wright (2009) advised about too much of the literature highlighting PD activities rather than focusing on how professionals learn, yet when descriptive experiences on how the professional gained knowledge are gathered, the field of professional learning gains insightfulness (Webster-Wright, 2009) for future implementation and duplication.

Whether PD even maintains teacher competency is debatable (Sachs, 2003 as cited in Webster-Wright, 2009); however, we gain insights by listening to the professionals describe how they learned, and how they evolved after PD (Webster-Wright, 2009). Cosner (2009) recognized empirical research focused on organizational growth in both education and business, yet little research identified individual growth. Although PD is a focus of much research, there remains many unanswered questions and areas needing more research. There is a lack of research about the usefulness of PD for teachers (Jacobson, 2011). Hill, Beisiegel, and Jacob (2013) discussed a crossroad where educational PD experts nearly came to a consensus on what characterized quality PD; then poor research results left researchers looking further into PD research possibilities. Overall, educational PD has many natural variables within “the real world” setting; there still remains many aspects to research for more in depth understanding. Breault (2010) determined the need for further PD research to give engaging stories using good prose, in a hermeneutical design.

On a larger scale of research on PD, this research seeks to give the teachers a “voice” to describe experiences in order to gain understanding of pertinent factors of educational PD. On a smaller scale, this research utilizes Tribes PD, both self-selected and optional, for improved willingness (Lopez-Pastor et al., 2011; Webster-Wright, 2009). TLC has many components with possible varied factors impacting implementation, which lends itself well to this study.

In a world of increased demands, increased student-teacher ratio, and reduced funding, the teacher must find a way to overcome all obstacles. The teacher must absorb all of the shortfalls of the system and continue to impact students. The teacher is the one with daily student contact and therefore a daily direct influence on student achievement and student attitudes towards school and learning. PD is more than a federal requirement (NCLB, 2001; Schneider,



2015), state requirement, or district requirement. PD is a personal journey masked with many choices; however since PD is linked to increased student learning (Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Valli & Hawley, 2002), continued PD is also an ethical obligation.

### **Research Questions**

In order to focus upon the central phenomenon (i.e., experiences after PD related to implementation or the lack of implementation / training transfer), the primary research question for this research is: How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development?

The related sub-questions are:

1. To what extent, if at all, has this professional development been implemented?
2. What factors are perceived as positively impacting implementation of the PD?
3. What factors are perceived as negatively impacting implementation of the PD?

Educators' perceptions of on-the-job experiences, whether practices were changed or unchanged, after completing self-selected PD may provide insights for effective PD. The inconsistency of implementation practices after PD (Antoniou & Kyriakides, 2013; Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Desimone & Stuckey, 2014; Gravani, 2007; Guskey, 2002; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; Webster-Wright, 2009) is anticipated to some degree, but it is likely to be different for each participant. Any amount of implementation or even the lack of implementation may indicate perceived factors impacting PD. If experiences are better understood from those with the specific and personal accounts, insights of best practices for educational PD may be gleamed and perhaps duplication of successful practices would evolve for overall improved learning, for both teacher and student.

### **Research Plan**

Phenomenology reflects the desire to understand phenomenon by recognizing the whole setting or whole experience of each participant, rather than focusing on individual components (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006). The essence of phenomenological research is encompassed by “how people experience some phenomenon—how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others” (Patton, 2002, p. 104). For these reasons, a qualitative phenomenological design was employed with a hermeneutical approach, seeking to capture the educators’ post-PD experiences.

This qualitative study uses a hermeneutic phenomenological framework. Unlike the transcendental researcher who sets aside her own judgments and simply describes the experiences of the participants, the hermeneutical researcher draws upon her own deep thoughts, beliefs, and experiences related to the phenomenon in order to reflectively make an unbiased interpretation, making meaning from the participant’s shared experiences and the researchers own reflective experiences (van Manen, 1990, 2003). The hermeneutical researcher recognizes her experiences and interactions with others, yet each unique perspective is valued and first analyzed for its own merit or specific importance to the phenomenon (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010) before analyzing for commonalities and developing themes. There is a deep desire to understand the experiences more clearly in order to bring meaning to the phenomenon with a profound desire to describe and bring true meaning to the experience.

This phenomenological investigation seeks to describe the elementary educators’ experiences after completing self-selected PD. Phenomenology provides an inside, bird’s eye, enlightened view for the researcher to use in order to gain an “everyday kind of experience” from those who live it (van Manen, 2003).

The educator's experiences were gathered through the participant's written expression and oral expression. The educator's voice, first the participant's individual experiences, and then the sum of these individual perceptions, gathered through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews, are the heart of this phenomenological research. Interviews were transcribed, member checked for accuracy of meaning, pre-coded, and then taken through as many stages of coding as needed, to clarify the essence of the phenomenon. Again, each participant was viewed separately, before analysis for commonalities. The participant's written expressions were gathered through essay responses, experience writings, and any artifact collections, such as implementation sequence, lesson plans, reflective journaling. Participant data was also collected from a focus group or follow-up sessions. In addition, the researcher's running records (i.e., field notes and analytic memoing) were also used as pieces of data to analyze.

Educators, from a large elementary school, located on a U.S. military base in the Pacific region, who also participated in on-site self-selected PD, with a possible university credit component completed in 2013, 2014, or 2015 (i.e., Tribes) were invited to participate in this research. In addition, the educator was required to have elementary teaching experiences after the PD. All participation was voluntary.

### **Delimitations**

There were several different PD opportunities available for study. However, this research focused on self-selected PD with components of being voluntary, researched-based class for teacher learning with the overall goal of improved student learning, on-site, and offered a possible university credit completed in 2013, 2014, or 2015 (i.e., Tribes). The PD on Tribes Learning Communities at Salter's Elementary School (pseudonym used), located on a U.S.

military base in the Pacific region provided a means for educators to share post-PD experiences. These parameters, or delimitations, helped to narrow the scope of the study.

Twenty-five educators at the research site were voluntarily involved in the Tribes PD during 2013. An additional Tribes PD was offered in 2014 with 15 participants. The 2015 PD on Tribes did not have enough voluntary participants for a PD. These, 40 in total, voluntary participants meeting the initial criteria were the possible participant pool.

In a phenomenological study, the researcher continues to interview, capturing the voice of participants, until no new themes emerge. Polkinghorne (1989) recommended five to 25 interviews being necessary (as cited in Creswell, 2007), while Moustakas (1990) noted that 10 to 15 participants can capture the phenomenon.

### **Definitions**

1. *Adult learning theory* – A learning theory developed by Malcolm Knowles which posits the importance of attending to six key areas for increased adult learning (Chan, 2010).
2. *Analytical memoing* – The process of a researcher writing down all related reflections, thoughts, insights, and wonders for the purpose of further analysis, coding, and reflection. Both coding and the analytic memo writing work together as qualitative data analytic activities and become the process for deeper understanding (Saldaña, 2013).
3. *College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)* – A set of foundational education skills for increased student success and growth with grade level learning expectations.
4. *Common Core State Standards (CCSS)* – CCSS provide a clear structure for learning goals and student expectations towards learning for each grade level. These standards are research based, aligned with college and career expectations, based upon a rigorous content and higher-order thinking skills, based upon the strengths of all state standards,

and informed by other top-performing countries to prepare all students for success within the global economy (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2016).

5. *Continuing Professional Development (CPD)* – On going learning related to regular opportunities planned for the improvement and overall development in the profession. Aspors et al. (2015) also characterized it as being both continuing and collaborative.
6. *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* – On December 10, 2015 President Barack Obama signed this bill into law. It replaces NCLB, starting 2016-2017 academic school year. ESSA gives each state more choices in how to help failing schools, increased funds available for preschool, and decreased federal guidelines (Belkin & Peterson, 2015).
7. *Highly qualified teacher* – A highly qualified teacher is characterized as a teacher who is fully certified under state regulations, has passed a basic knowledge test, and has completed a college degree program with emphasis matching that of the teaching area (DeBray et al., 2005).
8. *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* – On January 8, 2002 President George W. Bush signed this educational-reform bill into law. It set mandates for all states to develop plans ensuring teachers to be “highly qualified,” provided a definition and requirement for PD, required standardized testing of students, and increased the role of the federal government in education (NCLB Report, 2001).
9. *On-the-job Experiences* – The idea of on-the-job experiences relates to job-embedded experiences. For this research, on-the-job experiences include any teacher experience which occurs at the school of employment.

10. *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)* – A research group which focuses on comparing educational research internationally, currently with over 20 participating countries (OECD, 2013).
11. *Professional Development (PD)* – Professional Development has many styles and forms of learning and topics (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009); however, effective PD is believed to be vital for both teacher pedagogical growth and student learning (Curry & Killion, 2009).
12. *Professional Learning Community (PLC)* – The concept of professional learning communities was introduced to the U.S. by DuFour and Eaker (1998). This community approach to professional learning encourages the sharing of knowledge amongst colleagues and the emphasis on the reflection for learning (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Mourshed et al., 2010).
13. *Professional Learning Team (PLT)* – PLC (i.e., see above) and PLT are used interchangeably.
14. *Self-efficacy* – Self-efficacy is the belief in one's own abilities (Dunn & Rakes, 2011), as a simplified definition. However, it is a quite detailed concept with powerful implications (Bandura, 2012).
15. *Self-selected professional development* – This research defines self-selected professional development as: (a) voluntary, (b) researched-based class for teacher learning with the overall goal of improved student learning, (c) on-site, and (d) offers a possible university credit.
16. *Social cognitive theory* – A learning theory by Albert Bandura which focuses on the importance of social learning and self-efficacy level impacting learning (Bandura, 2012).

17. *Teacher self-efficacy* – Teacher-efficacy is the self-reflected believe that the individual (i.e., the teacher) can bring about positive changes in students (Dunn & Rakes, 2011).
18. *Training Transfer* – New knowledge gained is used – repeatedly- on-the-job, in the way intended and enhances the performance (Weisweiler et al., 2013). For teacher learning, it is the amount of newly learned strategies actually implemented in the classroom.
19. *Tribes Learning Communities (Tribes, TLC, or Tribes TLC)* – More than a program, Tribes is a process enacted within a learning environment. Tribes TLC incorporates several best educational practices (Gibbs, 2006). In order to narrow the focus, this research will be bound to the self-selected professional development of Tribes only.

### **Summary**

The background of PD as it relates to the NCLB Act of 2002 and ESSA of 2015, as well as its possible positive impact on student achievement related to teacher learning was emphasized in this chapter. In addition, the basic components of this research (i.e., problem, purpose, significance, questions, basic research plan, delimitations and limitations, and definitions) were presented.

Since U.S. teachers are not typically provided the same amount of daily time for collaboration and educational planning as other higher educational performing countries (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; OECD, 2013), it is even more critical for the teachers' voices to guide best practices in educational PD. By listening to teacher's individual experiences after self-selected PD, this phenomenological investigation aimed to describe elementary educators' on-the-job experiences post-PD.

TLC PD, with seven key practices, was used to gather elementary educators' post-PD experiences. First individually, then through analysis of commonalities among the educators'

experiences regarding PD, general perceptions, attitudes, stories relating to these post-PD experiences, insights on factors, both positively and negatively, perceived as impacting PD implementation are indicated through this research.



## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

Chapter Two first focuses on the lens in which the data is viewed. A brief paradigm is provided with much discussion on theories used to guide the underlining thoughts of this research. Instead of one theoretical framework, a conceptual framework model, where more than one theory is presented, was selected. The two theories guiding this research include: Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory with a focus on self-efficacy and Malcolm Knowles' theory of adult learning.

"Reviewing literature is essentially an act of interpretation. That is, the reviewers elect which literature to include and which to exclude based upon the guiding questions for the review" (Vescio et al., 2008, p. 88). It is my attempt to provide a balanced review of the relevant literature while connecting related ideas to this study. Therefore, this chapter concludes with a brief summary focused on the various components included in this chapter.

An overview includes information on the varied forms and role of professional development (PD). In order to fully understand this research, multiple areas need to be explored. Research on effective schools, effective PD, and effective teaching practices are shared. To identify levels of difficulty for teacher mastery towards implementation and to align Tribes Learning Communities (TLC) components with effective teaching practices (i.e., researched-based practices), the research surrounding the areas or seven components of TLC are reviewed (i.e., setting the environment, implementing agreements or norms, utilizing energizers, practicing reflective questioning techniques, maintaining small groups of tribes, teaching collaborative skills, and implementing cooperative learning strategies). Before the chapter summary, information is provided on how PD and Tribes are applied to the conceptual framework.

Especially with continued educational demands, increased student behavioral issues, budget restrictions, and the necessity for teachers to have the most effective forms of PD is paramount. Implementation of effective PD has been linked to increased teacher-efficacy (Bruce et al., 2010), improved classroom practices (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Evans & Waring, 2006), and increased student learning (Antoniou & Kyriakides, 2013; Gibson & Dembo, 1984 as cited in Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Valli & Hawley, 2002) for an overall increase in student achievement (Desimone, 2009; Hattie, 2009; Kubitskey et al., 2012; Nye & Hedges, 2004). In the same manner, Bruce et al. (2010) identified an indirect, but strong relationship between increased teacher efficacy and increased student achievement. Overall, research indicates a general belief of educators' abilities to have a paramount influence on student learning (Lasley, 2009 as cited in Fisher & Frey, 2014).

With such important outcomes, listening to the perspectives of the new learners (i.e., the teachers who attended PD) is a critical piece in understanding influences and factors which may positively impact the implementation process of newly learned skills and educational strategies presented in the PD and those which may negatively impact implementation. "It is to be expected that these classroom [and school] variables can make a valuable contribution to the research on involvement in work-related learning" (Kyndt & Baert, 2013, p. 307). Educational PD requires *on-the-job* learning if implementation is to occur. "Increasing teacher knowledge and pedagogy are the goals of professional development. If professional development does not enhance teachers' professional knowledge and classroom practices, little improvement in student learning will result" (DiPaola & Hoy, 2014, p. 159). This PD implementation is the hopeful catalysts for improved classroom practices resulting in improved student learning and achievement.

Desimone, Garet, Birman, Porter, and Yoon (2003) identified that PD research has focused little upon the implementation after PD has occurred. In addition, Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009) found a mismatch between the amount of PD and the amount of classroom implementation. Due to these issues, there is a need to understand the teachers' perceptions related to PD. Teachers may hold the key on what impacts the PD implementation process by sharing on-the-job post-PD experiences. Related, there is a need to focus on how professionals learn best, rather than only focusing on the kinds of professional activities offered (Webster-Wright, 2009). This additional quest for understanding teachers' perceptions and how they learn best, in part, was structured by the conceptual framework.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Instead of focusing on one theory, a conceptual framework model is presented and used as the foundation of this research. The overall paradigm acting as an anchor for this research is the social constructivism paradigm where multiple meanings of a situation are based on each participant's experiences (Lodico et al., 2010), and where the researcher attempts to interpret the meanings of others in order to make sense of the world. The individual's personal meaning is the focus with the context of the learning environment taken into consideration. These interpretations are often built around social or group interactions (Creswell, 2007; 2009).

The social constructivism paradigm aligns with each theoretical framework aiding as the foundation of this research: Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory with a large emphasis on efficacy and Malcolm Knowles' adult learning theory create the conceptual framework. In total, social cognitive theory and adult learning theory create the foundation in which this research is constructed and developed.

There are numerous learning theories related to behavior, cognitive, social and experiential areas, but all learning theories aim for positive growth and development in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Some learning theories are teacher-centered, while others are student-centered; a research debate over which are best has existed for decades with inconclusive findings. It is probable that there is not just one best learning theory. However, learning theories should depict the role for the teacher, roles for the learners, and include information on the relationship between these two groups. Overall, all learning theories are meant to guide effective learning (Wang, 2012).

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

Social cognitive theory stemmed from social learning theory where learning is believed to occur in social situations, even through simple observations. Social cognitive theory has three modes: personal agent for individual actions, proxy agent where people secure outcomes by influencing others to act, and collective agent where people work together to alter the situation or future. Social cognitive theory acknowledges that individuals do not have complete control over all choices, but rather individuals influence the environment (Bandura, 2002, 2003). Social cognitive theory asserts that teacher's self-perceptions as well as the perception of the organization will influence individual actions in practice (Schechter & Tschannen-Moran, 2006).

Within the social cognitive theory, efficacy enacts a massive component. Efficacy is basically the belief that one can be successful. People develop efficacy through modeling, spirituality, vicarious learning, observational learning, forethought, self-reflection, and self-regulation. These "self" qualities are greatly influenced by one's efficacy or one's belief in personal ability to influence change and to create successful outcomes (Bandura, 2003). "There are countless attractive options people do not pursue because they judge they lack the capabilities

for them” (Bandura, 1993, p. 130). One’s level of efficacy not only influences the outcomes but also guides the initial setting of goals. Now that is powerful: self-efficacy influences more than specific outcomes, but it also directly impacts the goals in which one is able to visualize and dares to determine in the beginning.

Efficacy beliefs influence whether people think optimistically or pessimistically, the courses of action they choose to pursue; the goals they set for themselves and their commitment to learn; how much effort they put in given endeavors; the outcomes they expect their efforts to produce; how long they persevere in the face of obstacles; their resilience to adversity; how much stress and depression they experience in coping with taxing environmental demands; and the accomplishments they realize. (Bandura, 2003, p.171)

This level of self-efficacy has a huge impact on one’s overall life. Self-efficacy beliefs determine the level of goals set, how much effort one puts forth, how long one perseveres, and the resilience one has towards other failures (Bandura, 1993). For nearly half a century, researchers have repeatedly noted the teacher’s self-efficacy related to that teacher’s level of challenge on goals, the effort they invest towards these goals, and overall willingness and motivation to try new strategies (Klassen, Tze, Betts, & Gordon, 2011 as cited in Tschannen-Morgan & Chen, 2014).

One’s self-efficacy has many influences in four possible areas: cognitive (i.e., to avoid self-doubt), motivational (i.e., to self-regulate), affective (e.g., stress or depression), and selection processes (i.e., selection of what one believes she will be successful at). Once efficacy beliefs are developed, they contribute significantly to one’s choices in life and the quality of one’s humanness (Bandura, 1993). Self-efficacy perceptions are determined by one’s personality

and past successes. Although efficacy levels can be influenced and slowly altered, they tend to be relatively stable and difficult to change (Bandura, 1997).

**Ways to increase efficacy.** Bandura (1997) noted that efficacy is based upon four primary sources: (a) mastery experiences, (b) vicarious experiences or modeling by observing the success of others, when the observer sees the initiator as similar to self, (c) social persuasion, and (d) affective or emotional states (e.g., stress, fear, anxiety, etc.). The most powerful source for increasing one's efficacy is for that individual to experience mastery or success in the related area. That is, when one accomplishes a task successfully, efficacy is increased.

Teacher efficacy can be developed through extended and meaningful PD (Cantrell & Callaway, 2008); however, Tschannen-Moran and McMaster (2006) noted that teacher efficacy often drops on the onset of PD, but with perseverance towards PD implementation and successful encounters, the efficacy level will consistently rise again (as cited in Cantrell & Hughes, 2008). Stein and Wang (1988) found similar results where teacher efficacy increased over the course of PD; as efficacy increased, teacher's PD implementation also increased (as cited in Cantrell & Hughes, 2008). Henson (2001) also found increased efficacy associated with PD, especially when it spanned over several months and had collaborative measures included. Bruce et al. (2010) found that those who did implement PD had an increase in teacher efficacy as well as an increase in collaboration with other teachers. There are subtle differences in these findings; however, in all of these research examples, completing new or challenging tasks in a successful manner presented an increase in efficacy. Teachers also experience increased efficacy when their students have improved achievement (Guskey, 2002). In short, success increases efficacy.

**Types of efficacy.** In general, efficacy relates to the capacity someone has towards creating a change or desired outcome. There are different types of efficacy emphasized in the educational realm.

***Self-efficacy.*** One's level of self-efficacy is a slow, varying force and typically has a different level for varied areas. For example, self-efficacy in math may be different from the self-efficacy the individual has in reading. An individual's perceived self-efficacy will influence areas of cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes (Bandura, 1993).

In education, self-efficacy towards cognitive areas and motivational areas impacts all learners. For example, if a student believes that good grades are due to genetic factors rather than hard work and study habits, this student will not recognize having any control or impact over learning and may give up easily or not even put forth effort.

Cognitive self-efficacy is also needed to stay focused in completing tasks and overcoming self-doubt (i.e., self-regulation). Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1986) identified those who have become good self-regulators also do better in academic areas than those with poorer self-regulation skills (as cited in Bandura, 1993).

Motivational self-efficacy is critical for this self-regulation (Bandura, 1993) and provides the driving force to complete difficult tasks. "Efficacy beliefs impact how people feel, think, act, and motivate themselves" (Schechter & Tschannen-Moran, 2006, p. 481). Maintaining high self-efficacy in various areas is critical for overall success.

***Collective efficacy.*** As self-efficacy levels vary between different areas, collective efficacy also has an impact on learning. The research by Yager, Johnson, Johnson, and Snider (2001) with cooperative learning (CL) groups found that low and medium-achieving students had strong gains, indicating that the group's collective efficacy and social interactions had

benefits for all members of the group. Collective efficacy relates to the sum of efficacy of all members of a group. On a larger scale for student benefits, it may be more beneficial for policymakers or even administrators to focus on the collective efficacy of a school (Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014).

***Teacher efficacy.*** As collective efficacy has a benefit for all members, high teacher efficacy also benefits all students within the class. Teacher efficacy is a combination of personal and professional efficacy joined together. One's personal experiences and characteristics influence the professional experiences. In addition, the level of teacher efficacy may also vary from subject to subject and from one group of students to another (Cantrell & Callaway, 2008; Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014). Teacher efficacy has a long history of research focus due to the potential and wide-spread impacts. Cantrell and Hughes (2008, p. 97) noted:

The concept of teacher efficacy has been linked to various teacher factors such as group leadership (Hoyt, Halverson, Murphy, & Watson, 2003), and job satisfaction (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Steca, 2003), but perhaps more importantly it has been associated with effective classroom practices (Ashton & Webb, 1982; Gibson & Dembo, 1984) and higher student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ross, 1992).

Observational data have suggested that teacher efficacy is related to teacher factors associated with higher student learning such as effective classroom organization and persistence with struggling students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

Those with high teacher efficacy see instruction and classroom practices as having an impact on student learning. In a related way, high teacher efficacy has an indirect yet powerful relationship with student achievement (Bruce et al., 2010). In essence, those who believe they will have an impact do in fact have an impact (Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014).



On the other hand, a “teacher with low efficacy believes that the locus of control is well beyond his or herself and there is little he or she can do to enhance student learning” (Bruce et al., 2010, p. 1599). Therefore, those with low teacher efficacy view instruction and classroom practices as having little or no impact on student learning.

Teacher efficacy not only impacts student learning, but it also impacts teacher PD. Those with high efficacy are more likely to implement and persist with new and challenging PD innovations (Bruce et al., 2010; Cantrell & Hughes, 2008). In short, teacher efficacy and professional actions are reciprocal. As PD can increase teacher efficacy (Bruce et al.), poorly structured PD, lacking resources and lacking follow-up coaching can decrease a teacher’s efficacy, resulting in damage to teacher motivation (Tschannen-Moran and McMaster, 2009 as cited in Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014).

Cantrell and Callaway (2008) found that teacher efficacy is related to attitudes about implementation of educational innovations. In Cantrell and Callaway’s research, all teachers implemented the PD but at varying levels. Those with low efficacy and low implementation levels gave excuses why a strategy did not work, whereas those with high efficacy and high implementation levels continued to search for answers.

Overall, findings indicate professional actions and teacher efficacy as being reciprocal (Bruce et al., 2010). PD is a connecting component, for teacher efficacy can be developed through challenging, yet successful, learning opportunities. In addition, teacher efficacy is also linked to the teacher’s motivation towards and attitude about the implementation of PD (Cantrell & Callaway, 2008).

***Collective teacher-efficacy.*** Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) posed collective teacher efficacy as a combination of interactive dynamics of group members and the emotional well-

being of the overall school environment (as cited in Schechter & Tschannen-Moran, 2006).

Ultimately, it is the quality of a school through the sum of teachers' perspectives. "Teachers in schools with high collective efficacy do not accept low student achievement as an inevitable byproduct of low socioeconomic status, lack of ability, or family background. They roll up their sleeves and get the job done" (Schechter & Tschannen-Moran, 2006, p. 482).

Goddard et al. (2000) identified a positive relationship between teacher collective efficacy and student achievement (as cited in Cantrell & Hughes, 2008). When a school's collective members believe improved instructional practices also improve student achievement, students in fact do achieve; ". . . school groups with high collective teacher efficacy are more likely to accept challenging goals, put forth high levels of organizational effort, and persist with students to achieve higher levels of achievement" (Goddard et al., 2000 as cited in Cantrell & Hughes, 2008, p. 100).

**Connections between types of efficacy.** Efficacy is a concept of believing in one's abilities related to a specific area. Self-efficacy has a dynamic impact on one's choices in life, one's willingness to persevere, one's attitude toward new innovations, and one's contributions to group or collective efficacy. Since teacher efficacy includes personal efficacy, along with professional efficacy, self-efficacy becomes connected with teacher efficacy. Any of the educational "collective" efficacies relate back to both self-efficacy and teacher efficacy, for the collective component simply includes all individual efficacy levels related to that particular group, organization, or community. An increase in one area, projects an increase in another area (Bandura, 2012). For example, an increase in self-efficacy will increase collective efficacy. All in all, an increase in teacher efficacy may increase student achievement, and this the improved achievement may then increase teachers' efficacy (Guskey, 2002). One increased area of efficacy

has a rippling impact towards improvement in other areas of efficacy. The opposite, a decrease in one area of efficacy will negatively impact another area of efficacy, is also possible as well.

### **Adult Learning Theory**

In 1833, German grammar school educator, Alexander Kapp coined the word “andragogik” to describe the educational approach of Plato” (Knowles et al., 2005 as cited in Finn, 2011, p. 36). Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner (2007) noted that Knowles initially offered four assumptions for teaching adults and later added two additional assumptions (as cited in Finn, 2011). Chan, 2010 lists the six main assumptions,

Knowles’ perspective on andragogy is based upon six main assumptions:

1. Self-Concept: Adult learners are self-directed, autonomous, and independent.
2. Role of Experience: Repository of an adult’s experience is a rich resource for learning. Adults tend to learn by drawing from their previous experiences.
3. Readiness to Learn: Adults tend to be ready to learn what they believe they need to know.
4. Orientation to Learning: Adults learn for immediate applications rather than for future uses. Their learning orientation is problem-centered, task-oriented, and life-focused.
5. Internal Motivation: Adults are more internally motivated than externally.
6. Need to Know: Adults need to know the value of learning and why they need to learn.” (Chan, 2010, p. 27-28)

Overall, it is critical for the environment, the learner’s experiences, and the relevance of instruction to be considered when instructing adult learners. The environmental influential factors include physical factors of room size and temperature as well as cultural considerations (Finn, 2011). Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) identified the adult learner’s wealth of

experiences as the key difference from child learners (as cited in Finn, 2011). These experiences guide knowledge construction and create an obstacle for the instructor to develop the optimal adult learning environment: (a) engaging, not boring, (b) challenging, yet not frustrating, and (c) having relevant tasks. The relevance component for adult learners refers to the adult's need to understand the importance of the content (Finn, 2011).

Adults continue education as a lifelong learner, usually for skills in order to compete in the 21st century (Chan, 2010). Unlike child learners, adults evaluate the cost or hardship related to the learning; adults want to be successful, but they also recognize other responsibilities. Therefore in order for adults to choose any particular learning venue, they must recognize a necessary purpose or overall benefit for the learning (Finn, 2011).

Andragogy (i.e., leader of adults) differs from pedagogy (i.e., leader of children) in its basic approach (Finn, 2011). With pedagogy, “the teacher decides what students should learn, how students are taught, and when the teaching and learning process will begin. Pedagogy is a teacher-oriented approach (Ozuah, 2005)” (Chan, 2010, p. 26).

The danger of continuing to use pedagogical training is that it has created a culture of dependence on top-down instructional processes. Many learners are not self-directed because they are accustomed to being explicitly taught everything that they need to know. (Steinke, 2012, p. 54)

In the pedagogical approach, the teacher has much to plan for instruction, including pacing and amount of appropriate information to cover (Steinke, 2012). On the other hand, with andragogy, the learner becomes involved in the process of learning where teachers act as a resource and learning facilitator rather than an information transmitter. In this setting, the learner must be self-directed and take initiatives toward learning (Wang, 2012). Communication between the learner

and teacher is improved as they cooperate in designing instructional methods to suit the learner's needs (Chan, 2010). Although andragogy and pedagogy began as a difference in educational approach due to learners' needs, Knowles identified it as a continuum (Wang, 2012).

Zmeyov (1998) agreed with Knowles' continuum idea between pedagogy and andragogy in an acknowledgment that all sectors of education need these principles, not just in adult learning (as cited in Chan, 2010). On the continuum, pedagogy is viewed as teacher-centered on one end of the spectrum, while andragogy is viewed as student-centered on the opposite end of the spectrum. Depending on the situation, andragogy could be more appropriate than pedagogy in some educational settings for self-directed children. However, these technical definitions of pedagogy and andragogy being on a continuum of teacher-centered to learner-centered are not the common ideology in the educational field today.

All in all, Knowles' adult learning theory poses the educational setting as directed by the needs of the learner with a large emphasis on one being a self-directed learner. Forrest and Peterson (2006) viewed adult learning theory with emphasis on self-directed learners as a necessity in bridging students for the work environment (as cited in Chan, 2010) with the learning opportunities being more actively engaging (Chan, 2010). The six assumptions of adult learners are used to guide instructional practices in setting the best PD learning environment.

### **Related Literature**

The relevant literature includes research on PD implementation processes with a focus on the effective schools, effective teaching practices, and effective teacher traits. By looking briefly at the qualities of effective teachers, a connection between the organizational structure and the classroom implementation process emerges. When effectiveness is prominent in the educational setting, it becomes a contagious cycle, bleeding into other educational areas. Effective schools

have effective teachers who create an effective climate with effective teaching strategies. In short, one area of effectiveness in the educational setting can, over time, positively influence effectiveness in other educational areas.

Then, in order to understand the benefits and level of difficulty for the teacher to master, the relevant literature will highlight the TLC components selected for focus (i.e., setting the environment, implementing agreements or norms, utilizing energizers, practicing reflective questioning techniques, maintaining small group tribes, teaching collaborative skills, and implementing CL strategies). These components are dissected in order to acknowledge the alignment with best teaching strategies (i.e., research based).

This chapter notes that, in general, some of the PD terms are used synonymously. Professional development, professional learning, professional learning communities, and professional learning teams, although similar, they do however have some distinct differences and connotations associated with each. In examining the similarities and differences related to PD verbiage, a historical glimpse of PD is provided.

### **Historical Overview and Role of Professional Development through Federal Policy**

Educational PD has been a topic of discussions, reviews, and slow changes from both the U.S. federal government and educational research. In 1957 after the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the U.S. population was concerned and urged for more rigorous educational guidelines in order for the U.S. to maintain international leadership roles. Due to this viewed threat, President Eisenhower signed the National Defense and Education Act (NDEA) which initially focused on math and science PD in order to improve the quality of teaching. Additional legislature provided federal funds for teacher PD, but in 1982 the Nation at Risk Report was published in response to an economic threat felt towards Japan. This linked education and

economic development, enacting a first-time reform movement with emphasis on teacher education (Long, 2014). Nearly every decade a new federal legislature mandating educational change for U.S. students with teacher professional development components included becomes a new reality for U.S. educators. Some of these legislative acts are included in Table 2.

Essentially, the reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) comes with new guidelines a new title or “chapter” typically with each new U.S. President, or ever three to five years (Korte, 2015). President George W. Bush’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) incorporated the biggest changes with the use of standards-based curriculum, teaching, and assessment with a first-time definition for educational professional development (Long, 2014). NCLB provided the foundation for improving teacher quality through innovative teacher reforms and effective PD (DeBray et al., 2005) with support and flexibility for states and localities to improve academic achievement by providing high-quality, *research-based*, training for teachers (NCLB Report, 2001). Again, this legislative action (i.e., NCLB) was initiated by another perceived competitive threat; this fear evoked from international comparisons of students’ academic achievement (Long, 2014).

In most recent studies, NCLB is credited for some improvements in student learning and also reductions in achievement gaps, presumably caused by NCLB’s strict accountability measures, or *pressures to perform*. Although gains fall short of the aspirations of the law’s title, NCLB, evidence does reflect some authentic changes in teacher practice. Wide spread adoption of the Common Core Standards or high level standards and trends toward more-focused teacher evaluations are other positive realities of NCLB (Hansen, 2015).

Table 2

## Key U.S. Legislative Funding Public Schools

Year	Title of Law	Supporting President
1965	Elementary and Secondary Education Act	Lyndon B Johnson
1976	Education of the Handicapped Act	Gerald Ford
1981	Education Consolidation & Improvement Act	Ronald Reagan
1985	Math & Science Educ. Act	Dwight D. Eisenhower
1994	Improving America's Schools Act	William Clinton
2002	No Child Left Behind	George W. Bush
2015	Every Student Succeeds Act	Barack Obama

Hargreaves, A. (2014); Korte, G. (2015, December); Long, R. (2014) In L. E. Martin, S. Kragler, D. J. Quatroche, & K. L. Bauserman. (Eds.).

Although NCLB had positive intentions and attributes, like high standards, accountability, and a goal to close the achievement gap between all subgroups of students (Korte, 2015), it also had major flaws and negative repercussions (Hargreaves, 2014). These negative repercussions of NCLB were unintentional consequences. First and foremost, the introduction of NCLB took away teachers' identity where "the improvement of teaching has been treated more and more as a matter of compliance with imposed training in prescribed methods and content" (Hargreaves, 2014, p. x). Teachers' professional judgments have been harnessed and restrained in order to keep pace with the intensely paced curriculum requirements (Hargreaves, 2014). In doing so, the teacher's self-efficacy is decreased, having rippling effects.



Even the term “highly qualified” has a negative connotation associated with it. Among the 670 pages of NCLB, the term *highly qualified* appears nearly 70 times. However in ESSA, on page 576 out of 1,061 pages, *highly qualified* is presented for the first time, where it indicates “highly qualified” to be replaced with “effective” (Schneider, 2015).

NCLB mandated every child to be proficient in reading and math by 2015 (Hess & Kelly, 2015; NCLB, 2001). Although educators recognize this pre-set impossible task, failure only further destroys efficacy. Many systems set perverse incentives and some teachers cheated in order to avoid complete failure (Bird et al., 2005 as cited in Hargreaves, 2014). The end of NCLB, leaves the educational system battered from impossible expectations, lack of listening to the educators as professionals, and with teachers feeling unimportant and not respected (Hargreaves, 2014).

When policies are top-down, it does not allow for creative problem solving at the local level. It also takes away one’s pride in finding a workable solution, decreasing efficacy and ultimately decreasing one’s level of contribution. The federal government is too large for this type of focused management and is not equipped to lead or govern the educational system (Hess & Kelly, 2015).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law by President Obama on December 10, 2015, will replace NCLB at the beginning of 2016-2017 school year; for now, NCLB continues (NCTM, 2015) to enforce PD for teachers. Many guidelines from NCLB are still part of ESSA, but the basic changes include: a) the state government having more flexibility in testing, b) the federal government will not mandate specific standards; c) accountability will be set up by each state; d) schools select their own interventions, or choice of use (Korte, 2015); and e) the term “highly qualified” has been replaced with “effective teacher” (Schneider, 2015).

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS), completed in 2010 (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), has evolved from this same fear of U.S. students not being competitive enough internationally. CCSS has also influenced an increase of teacher PD for the purpose of easing the pressure related to the necessary implementation process. Again in 2010, the U.S. federal government provided extensive funding for schools with an emphasis on PD through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. For more than 50 years the U.S. federal government has attempted to increase student learning by providing funds for teacher professional development (Long, 2014) or withholding funds for not meeting the requirements set through the legislative action.

All in all, federal policies have historically determined the implementation and plan of what PD should be available for teachers (Wilkinson & Son, 2011 as cited in Long, 2014). Potentially this has a large impact on U.S. students. Although both, federal policy and PD research fields, recognize teachers as the agent of any change in schools (Semadeni, 2010), these two forces are based upon different theories and topic implementation practices (Long, 2014).

Long (2012) explored these key differences. First, federal policy is grounded in institutional theory and sense-making theory which is focused more on the culture of an environment and making information fit into the structures of that culture. On the other hand, PD research is grounded in adult learning theory which is focused more on the learner's needs. The second difference, PD topic, is viewed from federal policy as planned PD based upon economics, international competitive factors, or what is publically perceived as needed. However, PD research advocates teacher driven PD choices.

Yet another, third, philosophical difference relates to time. "Rarely has the federal government sponsored professional development sessions conceptualized as something ongoing"

(Long, 2014, p. 26) even though PD research indicates the importance of ongoing and continuous professional learning (Desimone et al., 2002; DiPaola & Hoy, 2014; Hattie, 2009). These differences between the funding source (i.e., U.S. government) and educational PD research may have a negative impact upon any real change occurring from implemented PD practices. In the same manner, Darling-Hammond (2010) acknowledged the reality that few changes to the classroom learning environment have become a reality.

### **Historical Overview and Role of Professional Development through Educational Fields**

PD is a basic requirement across all professions (Graham, 2006 as cited in Webster-Wright, 2009) starting with the basic idea of a professional continuing to gain expertise. Continuing education units or credits are often earned through PD and are often a requirement for teacher recertification (Webster-Wright, 2009). Those in the educational field often have strong views on PD. O'Brien (2010) noted that school leaders believe PD improved teaching practices and teacher effectiveness. Similarly, the view of effective teachers holds that PD is a process of refining skills and developing new practices for classroom implementation (Mohr et al., 2005). Overall, this research indicates that those in the teaching profession perceive PD as a critical component in maintaining, refining, and improving teaching skills.

Other research has indicated an impact on students related to the teacher's involvement in PD. Nye et al. (2004) identified the teacher's pedagogical skill as having a direct link to student achievement. Likewise, Valli and Hawley (2002) emphasized a strong relationship between PD and student learning based upon the qualities and skills of the teacher. Overall, it is the general belief that effective PD is vital for both student learning and teacher pedagogical growth (Curry & Killion, 2009).

Beginning in the 1970s PD was thought of as a course, workshop, conference, or in-service day (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). This was a teacher work-day where a topic or concept was presented by a trainer, often times, from the local district office. This *expert* model of PD emerged in the 1980s (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Typically, all staff would be involved in the same training with little or no follow-up and any subsequent training sessions were often on an unrelated topic. Many U.S. school systems still offer this, required, one-shot, one-size-fits-all, type of PD (Butler & Gerkin, 2006; Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson, 2010), although it is no longer supported by research (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Too often, this traditional PD is forgotten or never implemented (Webster-Wright, 2009). Subsequently these short workshops have resulted in few real changes to the classroom environment (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

By the end of the 1980s, a shared decision making concept began to be utilized for educational PD. And finally, from the 1990s, a learning community approach with collaboration began to be emphasized. Over the past 50 years the PD model has become increasingly more student centered and more individualized in nature (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). However, all of these historic models (i.e., workshop-expert-trainer, one size fits all-staff development, shared decision making, and learning community) are still utilized in educational PD within the U.S. today (Kragler et al., 2014; Wei et al., 2010).

The traditional model of PD viewed teachers as passive learners in need of remediation, rather than focusing on continued growth (Thibodeau, 2008). More recently, continued PD is about teachers learning how they learn best, increasing their knowledge, and using this knowledge or new skill in the learning environment for an overall goal of increased student achievement (Avalos, 2011). The greater the new knowledge gained by the teacher during the

PD, the greater the student learning will be (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008). Evans and Waring (2006) indicated that continued PD has the potential to support teachers in adjusting practices and implementing changes related to instruction. More recently, Papay and Kraft (2014) found some evidence of PD benefits experienced even later in teaching careers, indicating the continued development of teachers.

However, not all PD practices benefit the learning environment. Gravani (2007) acknowledged that PD often remains an isolated event, unrelated to any specific work experience. There is little impact when PD is not directly connected to classroom experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2010), and when the PD topic is required of an entire staff (i.e., the one-size-fits-all approach), motivation is often low (Avalos, 2011), creating a disinterested and unreceptive audience.

Yet another struggle for U.S. schools relates to the classroom isolation of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Educators work in close proximity, yet often they will go for hours, or perhaps longer, without interacting with each other. Barth (2006) found that teachers do not share ideas. “The cost of concealing what we do is isolation from colleagues who might cause us to examine and improve our practices” (Barth, 2006, p. 10). Elmore (2004) also suggests a similar cost being that isolation eliminates the opportunity for teachers to support each other with instructional ideas. Isolation results in a competitive work environment, creating feelings of inadequacy and further discouraging any possibility of information sharing (Sergiovanni, 1991 as cited in Short & Greer, 2002). Without collaboration, teachers do not implement the PD into their practice (Wepner, 2014).

Isolation is the opposite of the best practice of collaboration. With an abundance of research on the benefits of collaboration (DuFour et al., 2010), isolation is an outdated practice;

yet teachers are often not provided with the time necessary to collaborate, to share knowledge, or to explore instructional possibilities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). This phenomenon of teacher isolation is not fully the responsibility of the educators. Although collaborative measures are beneficial, they are also time-consuming (DuFour et al., 2010). U.S. educators are typically provided less time for PD and have fewer PD opportunities than their international counterparts. Consequently, the U.S. lags in educational collaborative practices for instructional planning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Johnson, 2014).

In light of these educational and PD shortcomings, there is an increased search for more effective, evidence-based professional practices (Webster-Wright, 2009) for staff advancements (Minotti, 2005) and ultimately for increased student learning (NCLB, 2001). Table 3 provides a list of some of the PD research and the summarized findings. PD has transformed into a new paradigm where learning is not enough; PD now has an important, expected, action component (Vescio et al., 2008). Informal collaborations after PD helps to bring that learning into the classroom (Jones & Dexter, 2014).

Table 3  
Professional Development Research

Year	Researcher	Summarized Findings
2002	Desimone	Increased teacher buy-in improves implementation and sustainability. Increased teacher fidelity to implementation of interventions may increase student improvement. Support from supervisors is influential for initial implementation and sustainability of PD.
2005	Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher	Changing teaching practices and improving student achievement is difficult and unlikely to have immediate effects. Initially, there may be negative effects, called an implementation dip.
2007	Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley	PD alters teacher classroom practices which alters student performance. PD contact time matters; student learning outcomes increased with at least 14 contact hours.
2009	Guskey & Yoon	Confirms the difficulty in assessing PD into student achievement. Well-planned and implemented PD must take place before improvements occur. Teachers need time, job-embedded learning, Related to content, active learning, and follow-up assistance.
2009	Hulleman & Cordray	Accountability can be a type of implementation driver.
2009	Santagata	PD focused on increasing teacher content knowledge; indicates the difficulty in improving teacher content knowledge. Provides example of how tension with the district can cause teachers to view PD in a negative way. When observed, teachers spent more time working on assessment problems than those without observations ~ illustrating the importance of supervision and evaluation on PD.
2010	Sailors & Price	Team teaching and coaching led to positive effects on student achievement due to simple teacher behavior changes (not complex ones). Voluntary PD had positive effects on student learning.
2010	Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson	Teachers have fewer opportunities to participate in PD that are sustained over time. Short-term workshops are still the norm for educational PD.
2011	Desimone	Time seems to be the most difficult constraint to overcome.
2011	Penuel, Gallagher, & Moorthy	Voluntary PD had positive effects on student learning.
2013	Desimone, Convey, & Caines	Teachers with low content knowledge may not understand interventions or relate to the purpose of PD due to this low content knowledge. When teachers have different levels on content knowledge, the interactions between colleagues and PD providers may be stressed.
2013	Slavit & Roth-McDuffie	Teachers' motivation, attitude, attention, and awareness play important roles in teacher learning, especially when related to their immediate contexts.
2014	DiPaola & Hoy	The importance of PD to include Supervision and Evaluation.

Note. Full citations are provided in the Reference Section.

PD denotes professional learning for the sake of student achievement. For this reason, PD is evaluated as a key component of a district's efforts to improve teaching techniques and to increase student learning through implementation of high standards (Marshall & Olivia, 2006), utilizing the new techniques gained from the PD. The general role of PD in education is to provide opportunities for professional growth in teachers in order to increase student learning through the implementation of the strategies or information gained from the PD. Marzano (2003) recognized that there is a lasting change only if the PD enacted new strategies towards improved student achievement. If PD does not benefit students in lasting ways, the rationale for PD is eliminated.

Overall, teacher PD has the basic tenant of positively impacting student learning through improved teacher practices. In a broad view, PD includes all of the formal and informal learning experiences during training and throughout one's career. But in reality, PD is only truly "development" if it has a positive impact on teaching practices and more importantly, positive impacts on student learning (DiPaola & Hoy, 2014).

**Professional development.** Due to research on effective PD, the act of an adult continuing to learn in a particular field continues to evolve. The term *professional development* has also evolved, with some negative connotations and confusion related to dual meanings. First of all, PD may give the implied meaning of learning needed for remedial purposes or having a professional deficit, as if the knowledge base is missing, rather than on the learning being self-directed and on-going (Thibodeau, 2008; Webster-Wright, 2009). In addition, PD often means a *course for learning* or an *event* (Webster-Wright, 2009). Both of these structures relate back to the 1970s thinking towards PD (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009).



For these reasons, the term professional learning is frequently used in place of PD in order to avoid these misconceptions (Webster-Wright, 2009). In a related way, Learning Forward (2011), formerly the Standards of the National Staff Development Council, changed the verbiage from professional development to professional learning in the 2011 revised Standards for Professional Learning to reflect the emphasis on adults' active and continual learning process.

Overall, educational PD is related to everyday learning that is intense, ongoing, and connected to practice. It focuses on teaching and learning of specific academic content connected to school initiatives, and it builds strong work relationships among teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

**Professional learning.** *Professional learning* is learning specifically related to day-to-day practices with a more positive connotation of knowledge as a natural, continual process rather than a deficient. Professional learning is an on-going process; hence the connected term *continued professional learning* evolved. Professional learning and continued professional learning, for all practical purposes, are synonymous. Professional learning has a required embedded component of occurring in the workplace and is often referred to as *authentic learning* (Webster-Wright, 2009) but does not require formal classroom instruction or university credit. In short, professional learning is knowledge gained through an active, on-going, and daily process. When continued improvement is the educator's goal, professional learning will transpire naturally within the learning environment.

**Professional learning communities or professional learning teams.** In the school arena, professional learning communities (PLC) and professional learning teams (PLT) are used interchangeably as PLC or PLT. PLC and PLT are so interchangeable that both could be used within the same sentence. PLT takes this authentic learning in the workplace (i.e., professional

learning) and incorporates a collaborative component. Although educational collaboration is not visible in all U.S. schools, it is not a new idea. In fact, in the early to mid 1900s, John Dewey, the father of progressive education, developed an idea of community inquirers. This community-focused learning progressed through several terms. A few of these terms include: learning organizations, change agencies, collaborative action research, action learning, learning organizations, cooperative professional development, cooperative professional learning, professional learning team, and professional learning community (Clausen, Aquino & Wideman, 2009). In short, there are many terms which focus on the general idea of PD within the natural setting and also in a group-learn or social atmosphere.

In current practices using PLT, there is still a focus on community learning with a collective learning approach and having a key purpose of enhancing teacher effectiveness for the ultimate benefit of student achievement. In a PLC, all members actively engage (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, & Thomas, 2006) and construct knowledge through open, respectful dialogue, and through reflection of work practices (Clausen et al., 2009). “At its core, the concept of a professional learning community rests on the premise of improving student learning by improving teaching practice” (Vescio et al., 2008, p. 82). All in all, PD is based on a basic ideology that improved teaching practices will increase student learning.

The concept of PLT is grounded in two social assumptions. One, knowledge is found in everyday situations and best understood through reflection and dialogue with others who have also experienced this same situation. Two, active engagement with colleagues will increase professional knowledge, improving the classroom instruction and therefore enhancing student learning (Vescio et al., 2008).

Professional learning teams are used as a catalyst for day-to-day collaboration and professional learning with colleagues. In this manner, a PLT is created for the benefit of teachers' professional learning influencing an improved teaching environment, with the main benefit of improved student achievement. Therefore a PLT is, in itself, a form of PD. Any PD requires a knowledge base from some source, then in a PLT, this knowledge is used in a reflective dialogue process with colleagues in order to positively impact instruction and ultimately to increase student learning (Clausen et al., 2009; Kudenko et al., 2011; Stoll et al., 2006; Vescio et al., 2008; Webster-Wright, 2009). However, PD does not always evolve into a PLC/PLT (Stoll et al., 2006). Building an effective PLT requires planning (David, 2008), a willingness of the members to participate, and time (DuFour et al., 2010).

In general, a PLT is an on-going learning group where dialogue, reflection, and PD guide the process of continued professional learning toward the goal of strengthening teachers' instructional practices and teaching environment for the ultimate goal of improved student learning and achievement (Clausen et al., 2009; Kudenko et al., 2011; Stoll et al., 2006; Vescio et al., 2008; Webster-Wright, 2009). PLT build unity and are traditionally led by teachers within the school (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008). When colleagues collaborate on teaching ideas, student work samples, and best practices, a PLT has evolved.

### **Effective Schools**

Effective schools have an effective leader who is able to manage time and recognizes it as being a valuable resource (Drucker, 2006). Kouzes and Posner (2007) recognized five practices of exemplary leadership: “model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart” (p. 14). By following these five practices the leader recognizes, “leadership is not an affair of the head. Leadership is an affair of the heart”

(Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 351). All in all, the leader will set the tone and overall environment of the school; therefore, an effective school has an effective leader who empowers others.

Effective schools must also have a high collective efficacy. This high efficacy provides the belief that the teacher is able to impact student scores thru effective teaching strategies and hard work, regardless of environmental shortfalls. The teachers see themselves as agents of change, or leaders within the school (Marzano, 2003).

Two national studies, comprised of 26 schools, presented by Short and Greer (2002) revealed that the most important factor for an effective school is a “high level of teacher involvement and commitment” (p. 1). These two national studies also had evidence of the effective schools empowering students to act (Short & Greer, 2002). “Researchers have noted the centrality of collegial relationships in schools identified as unusually effective and the importance of collegiality as an aspect of school climate (Anderson & Iwanicki, 1984; Little, 1982)” (Short & Greer, 2002, p. 146 ). Overall, the teacher’s commitment and positive relationships amongst staff members are imperative for an effective school.

The building of relationships becomes critical for a school to maintain its effectiveness. When teachers feel comfortable with others in the work-place, a collaborative atmosphere is more likely to exist (Landsman, Moore, & Simmons, 2008). An effective work environment must have teachers who set high expectations for improvements, teach with a shared sense of purpose, and believe in their common ability to make a difference in the students’ lives (Schleicher, 2011).

Effective schools have effective teachers. Overall, effective teachers produce better opportunities for students’ learning (Guskey, 2003; Hill, 2009; Rose, 2010). A collaborative atmosphere feeds an effective school climate. Effective schools also have shared leadership, have

trust among staff, employ satisfied teachers, encourage PD as a natural part of on-going learning and focus on student achievement (Lambert, 2003).

### **Effective Professional Development**

Effective PD is characterized by its successful classroom implementation. Although there is nothing wrong with PD coming from an outside source, Bezzina (2006) found that teachers learn more productively when PD content is presented by a peer in an effective work environment characterized by positive relationships. When PD is successful, the learning environment naturally becomes highly motivational (Friedrich & McKinney, 2010).

Petty (2007) and others have stated that effective PD includes six key characteristics: (a) interconnected to aspects of school improvement, (b) sustained by others and intensive in nature, (c) connected to student needs, (d) collaborative in nature, (e) based upon inquiry, and (f) experimental in nature. In a similar manner, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) noted that effective PD should be embedded in the current curriculum. The members need time and a common focus in order to build commitment and to create relationships with the group (Heller, 2004).

Thibodeau (2008) agreed and expanded on this idea. Thibodeau found involvement in PD benefited everyone when it was active, meaningful, job-embedded, student centered, and data-driven. McEnery (2005) identified action research, where the teacher collects and uses classroom data to implement change due to the teacher's high interest on the specific topic, as beneficial. Effective PD practices must include a teacher's flexibility and on-going commitment to personal learning and a commitment to both students and colleagues. Although research of effective PD components varies, the characteristics are relatively similar throughout research.

Effective PD includes both action and interaction amongst all parties involved— students, parents, teachers, and administrators (Doubet & Quesenberry, 2006). Bernhardt (2009)

highlighted effective PD as being job-related with a self-directed learner. In addition, having high teacher efficacy, showing professional growth, and then documenting the learning for both teacher and student, are characteristics of effective PD. At the same time, effective PD may also include the sharing, discussing, and reflecting on student work. Bernhardt brought attention to the idea that effective PD can come in different forms. In Vazir's (2006) case study, students' work samples were analyzed and discussed among teachers. This process led to a deeper understanding of student learning outcomes.

Overall, effective PD is guided by student learning needs and by the interests of both the educators and students. By implementing the content learned in PD, teachers will be able to connect the experience from PD to classroom strategies, increasing retention of the concept. In turn, this success fosters teacher confidence, resulting in even more implementation of strategies (Frick, Chadha, Watson, & Zlatkovsha, 2010), and therefore also increasing the teacher's efficacy in the related area. Table 4 provides characteristics identified by researchers as critical for successful PD; these are recognized and well cited as foundational PD research findings.

Learning Forward (2011) provided prerequisites for effective professional learning and *Standards for Professional Learning*. The prerequisites, when included, set the stage for increased educator engagement in the professional learning and leads to overall increased student learning. The prerequisites include:

- 1) Educators' commitments to students are the foundation of effective professional learning.
- 2) Each educator involved in professional learning comes to the experience ready to learn.
- 3) The different experience levels and use of practice among educators can foster collaborative learning for increased individual and collective performance.
- 4) Educators learn in different ways and at different rates.

Table 4  
 Characteristics of Effective Professional Development

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2002 Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman

- Focus on content knowledge.
- Includes opportunities for teacher engagement and active learning.
- Coherent with standards and school goals.
- Promotes collective participation rather than individual learning.
- Provides an adequate amount of time ~ both in duration and span of time.
- Design and Organization of PD activity aligns to learners.

2009 Hattie

- Focus on increasing teachers' knowledge and skills for improved student achievement.
- Occurs over an extended period of time.
- Provides opportunities for teachers' discourse that results in learning for all students.
- Supported by principals who provide relevant expertise and knowledge on best practices.
- Challenges practices and beliefs about how students learn.

2009 Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos

- Focused on academic content knowledge.
- Sustained and intensive.
- Provides opportunities for teacher active learning.
- Coherence with other learning activities.
- Focused on instructional planning.
- Integrated into the daily life of the school.

2012 Long

- On-going.
- At least 6 contact hours.
- More impact if hours are increased to 35 or more on each topic.

2014 DiPaola & Hoy

- Improves teacher content knowledge and increases pedagogical skills.
  - Provides adequate time and resources.
  - On-going and continuous.
  - Collaborative with school-based goals.
  - Supervised and evaluated for effectiveness.
  - Uses a variety of formats, accommodates diversity, and promotes equality.
  - Clarifies understanding of meaning and relationship.
  - Uses student data to drive PD.
- 

Note. Full citation provided in the Reference Section.

The related standards for professional learning include key areas of learning communities, leadership, resources, data, learning designs, implementation, and outcomes (Learning Forward, 2011).

### **Effective Teaching Practices**

Effective teaching practices are those strategies in which research has shown to have a positive impact on student learning. NCLB (2001) indicates the necessity of “research-based” PD. Any PD should be research-based prior to any large scale school implementation.

In their book, Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005) provided structures of best practices for teaching: small-group activities, reading as thinking, representing-to-learn (i.e. writer’s workshop as self-selected topics), classroom workshop, authentic experiences, reflective assessment, and integrative units. These effective teaching structures focus on self-regulation, reflective practices, collaboration with cooperative learning, and communication skills.

A study by Alake-Tuenter, Biemans, Tobi, and Mulder (2013) found four characteristics of effective teaching with inquiry-based science. These characteristics included: (a) high level of subject matter knowledge, (b) high level of pedagogical knowledge, (c) positive attitude, and (d) competencies connected in complex ways. All in all, there are many effective teaching practices and characteristics of an effective teacher. Presented here are some of those effective practices which also relate to Tribes Learning Communities and therefore directly relates to this research.

**Environment set for promoting learning.** Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) identified the most effective teachers as those who work collaboratively with others to develop a positive school climate, to improve student performances, and to engage support for professional learning (as cited in Looney, 2011). This sets the stage for excellence by engaging colleagues and then brings these ideas into the classroom setting.



The effective teacher has well-structured lessons with challenging goals, knowledge of adequate pacing, and foresees problems related to content and student understanding. In the process of teaching, the effective teacher also has strong classroom management skills with an emphasis to express care and empathy for the students (Hattie, 2009).

In a similar way, Marzano, Pickering, and Heflebower (2011) focused on how the student feels within the learning environment. These feelings are created from the student's level of energy, the teacher's demeanor, and the student's perception of acceptance by other students as well as the teacher. In creating this positive environment for learning the teacher can incorporate five strategies: (a) use effective pacing, (b) include physical movement throughout the learning, (c) model intensity and enthusiasm, (d) use humor, and (e) build positive relationships (Marzano et al., 2011).

In addition when the learning environment is safe, supportive, and threat-free, learning is promoted by supporting memory function, emotional stability, resiliency, and self-efficacy. Classroom climate and teacher-student relationships are connected, and both have an impact on student learning (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). In a similar manner, as presented by Gibbs (2006), brain research shows that people do not remember when in a high stress situation. "Minds are killed through loneliness, hostility and exclusion by peers" (Gibbs, 2006, p. 61). The effective teacher creates a positive classroom climate and cares about relationships within the classroom setting.

In this research, two main components of the Tribes PD, *setting the environment* and *implementing classroom agreements*, are within this overall best practice area of creating a positive environment for increased learning. In addition, the component of *utilizing energizers* is

also categorized in this area to some extent. Energizers promote positive relationships and typically incorporate quick, fun physical movements to increase focus on learning.

**Teaching self-regulation of learning.** Dignath, Beuttner, and Langfeldt's (2008) meta-analysis indicated the effectiveness of self-reflection on learning outcomes, strategy use, and motivation for even primary students. In these cases, self-regulation was taught based upon social-cognitive theory: various aspects of learning in cooperative learning groups (i.e., social), training in elaboration and problem solving (i.e., cognitive development), training in planning strategies (i.e., *metacognition*, or reflection), and training in feedback (i.e., motivational strategies). Effective teachers find ways to teach students cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational strategies involved in self-regulation of learning.

Boekaert's (1999) model of self-regulative processes involved an interaction between cognitive and motivational processes (as cited in Dignath et al., 2008). When students are guided through the process of knowing what was learned, what still needs more attention, and what the next steps for learning are, this provides a life-long skill for effective learning. Both skill and will are needed for one to be a self-regulated learner (Dignath et al., 2008), yet even young students are capable of this life skill.

In this research, components of the Tribes PD include *implementing classroom agreements* and *practicing reflective questioning techniques* as components related to the best practices of self-regulation.

**Teaching reflective techniques.** The use of reflective questioning is widely viewed as a method to increase retention of learning (Marzano, Boogren, Heflebower, Kanold-McIntyre, & Pickering, 2012). Even at primary school levels, self-reflection is effective (Dignath et al., 2008). A significant study originally published in 1986 by Yager, Johnson, & Johnson found

profound results in favor of both the cooperative learning (CL) strategy and reflective processing with three third grade classrooms. In this study, CL in two classes had higher scores after instruction than the class who did not utilize CL. Five weeks later, the class who also utilized a 5 minute reflective process of their work and goal setting for improvement were able to maintain their learning. Overall, the classroom time spent on teaching and practicing reflective practices has evidence of being beneficial to student learning outcomes.

In this research, *practicing reflective questioning techniques* is a key component within the Tribes PD. In fact, Gibbs (2006) views reflective questioning as the most important component for increased student learning.

**Teaching collaborative and cooperative learning strategies.** Lin (2010) provides an overview of CL, acknowledging that CL groups should be permanent, long term groups focused on academic success for all as well as social issues, relationships, and cohesion of members (Johnson et al., 1994 as cited in Lin). The research and review by Yager, Johnson, Johnson, and Snider (2001) with CL groups found that low and medium-achieving students had strong gains, indicating that the group's collective efficacy and social interactions had benefits for all members of the group.

Various researchers amongst the leading proponents of cooperative learning such as Johnson & Johnson (1974), Slavin (1980) and Sharan (1990) hold the opinion that learners who are engaged on a task in small cooperative groups tend to master material better, feel better about themselves and are more accepting of classmates who are different from them. (Alexander & van Wyk, 2014, p. 691)

Related to setting the environment, effective teachers model collaborative measures so that students have an understanding of how to work together. In a similar way, effective teachers set

up CL strategies to be successful. In the many studies indicating the effectiveness of CL groups (Johnson & Johnson, 2009), research has also focused on the importance of setting up the classroom environment for success before employing CL strategies (Sharan, 2010).

These essential elements for effective CL groups include: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, the appropriate use of social skills, and group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Alexander & van Wyk, 2014). These essential elements for effective CL will be discussed later in this research, under the seven components of Tribes.

In this research four components of Tribes, setting the environment, maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups, teaching collaborative skills, and implementing cooperative learning strategies, are within the best practices for effective teaching discussed in this area.

**Teacher characteristics.** Both teaching and learning are the center of educational practices, yet the center of this, or the most important school-level factor affecting student achievement, is teacher quality (Looney, 2011). In 1966, Coleman's report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, indicated teacher characteristics being the primary explanation for variance in student achievement. In a similar manner, Hanushek (1992) found as much as one grade level difference between students with effective teachers than ones with least effective teachers (as cited in Looney, 2011).

Effective teaching also includes the teacher having a deep understanding of the core content. This knowledge base is imperative in order to teach the concepts accurately and with full meaning. The teacher's knowledge on the subject matter is crucial for student achievement (Imig & Imig, 2006). An effective teacher has a wide range of pedagogical knowledge in order to support student learning. Effective teaching also includes day-to-day knowledge of cultural and environmental influences (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006) on learning outcomes.

Watson, Miller, Davis, and Carter (2010) categorize teacher characteristics in two ways: teacher personality and teacher ability. After analyzing more than 300 studies, Stronge (2007) created a checklist for the effective teacher's personal traits. The effective teacher is caring, fair, enthusiastic, motivational, respectful of others, and has positive relationships with students in and outside of class (as cited in Watson et al., 2010). In a more simplified version, Steele (2010) attributed only three characteristics to effective teachers: high level of nonverbal communication skills, high level of self-efficacy, and a servant leader attitude. According to Jennings and Stahl-Wert (2003) servant leaders have a significant purpose: encourages others to use talents and strengths, models and sets high standards of performance, builds upon own weaknesses, and thinks of other's needs (as cited in Steele, 2010).

Overall, effective teaching includes a wide repertoire of strategies, styles, and techniques for presenting instructional content, with a focus on the best strategies for that particular educational setting (Darling-Hammond, 2006) in order to optimize student outcomes (Ding & Sherman, 2006). Wiggins and McTighe (2006) confirmed that effective teaching practices are able to produce transferability in learning where the learning can be used in a multitude of situations and connected to other concepts.

**Tribes TLC.** Tribes TLC incorporates several best practices which make up the entire professional learning experience. TLC is “grounded in a synthesis of a wide-range of literature and research on . . . approximately 17 research-based components for effective pedagogy” (Gibbs, 2006, p. 31). There is substantial research individually on best teaching practices and related components of TLC, yet there is little qualitative data related to the teacher's perceptions of possible factors influencing implementation after PD. Therefore, this creates a worthy qualitative topic for exploring teacher perceptions related to various PD components. These

best practices included: (a) setting the environment for inclusion, influence, and community, (b) implementing classroom agreements or norms, (c) utilizing energizers to maintain a positive environment and to keep an upbeat classroom for increased learning, (d) practicing reflective questioning techniques, (e) maintaining students in a fixed *tribe* or student learning group, (f) teaching collaborative skills for increased success in group work, and (g) implementing CL strategies. All of these practices are for the ultimate benefit of increased student, academic and social, learning.

***Setting the environment for inclusion, influence, and community.*** A safe environment for learning has long been known to be a required foundation (Maslow, 1943; Maslow, n.d.). In a related concept, social relatedness or feeling of belonging was linked to increasing motivation and positively influencing academic behavior (Beachboard, Beachboard, Li, & Adkinson, 2011). Overall, setting the best learning environment has many components related to student engagement, student relationships, as well as the physical arrangement of the desks (Gibbs, 2006) – and all with a focus on improved student learning.

In order for students to have the best learning environment, a positive classroom atmosphere is required. This does not just happen; a positive classroom is created through a teacher's direct focus on building this atmosphere. TLC uses three stages of group development along with agreements or norms to build this environment for students to practice collaborative skills needed for working with other people. Group development or a community is created through: inclusion, influence, and further community building focused activities (Gibbs, 2006). Gibbs provides many activities designed to promote each stage. These activities are presented in community circle, small group, triad, and partner forums. Although these activities are provided in a lesson plan format, they do require the teacher to organize and select the ones of most

benefit for the intended students. The influence activities should not be implemented until the inclusion phase is established. In addition, each of these activities typically requires 20 to 60 minutes of class time to complete; building a community most definitely requires a teacher's commitment. There is a cost of instructional time; therefore, the teacher must believe in the importance and overall benefits of building relationships within the classroom setting.

*Inclusion.* "The first custom of the Tribes process, no matter where it is used, is to invite people to reflect upon and share their own experiences" (Gibbs, 2006, p. 3). Students are often placed into various small groups, partner or triad, as well as a whole community circle for sharing. During the stage of building inclusion, each student presents himself to the group by sharing his name and individual response to a question or topic presented by the teacher. All students are encouraged to participate. With participation, each student is acknowledged by other members (Gibbs). "Time spent up front, building inclusion and trust is the most valuable commitment a group can make" (Gibbs, 2006, p. 74). Once restlessness and a larger amount of conversation is noted, this is a sign that students feel included, have a sense of belonging, are ready to move to the next stage, and can begin successfully working together. However, a quick inclusion activity (e.g., share with your partner what you had for breakfast) should be used in starting every Tribes or CL measure (Gibbs, 2006).

*Influence.* Each student has a need to feel as though a contribution can be made through personal actions. Learning is a social phenomenon where students contribute when they feel secure and recognize their benefits to the group (Gibbs, 2006). "The reason that people become drop-outs – whether from their families, staff, organization, or for that matter from other relationships is because they do not feel *included* and of *value* to the others" (Gibbs, 2006, p. 70). All students can benefit the group, utilize their individuality, and share leadership roles.

During the influence stage, the teacher provides a selection of strategies and learning situations for the students to express diverse opinions, to withhold from judgments, to respect individual differences, to make group decisions, and to share in the leadership responsibilities. The teacher encourages the group to work independently, for once the teacher joins the group, the group dynamics will change with focus being on the teacher rather than the group (Gibbs, 2006).

*Community.* “Community is the spirit that happens when many minds and hearts come together to work toward a common good” (Gibbs, 2006, p. 76). Once community is established, members recognize the strengths and weaknesses of other members, share responsibilities, express consideration for other members, reflect on experiences together, enjoy working together to solve problems, and celebrate accomplishments.

***Implementing agreements or norms.*** Four basic agreements are presented in TLC, with an acknowledgement that another agreement can be added if it fits the educational setting. However, it is cautioned not to add too many agreements. These agreements, as presented by Jeanne Gibbs (2006) are: attentive listening, appreciation/no put downs, the right to pass/the right to participate, and mutual respect. The process of TLC begins with instruction on these basic agreements. These agreements are the norms or normal daily procedures for an environment; in essence, these agreements are the established rules for a class/school. All organizations have norms conveying “this is how we do things around here” (Gibbs, 2006, p. 68). In TLC, these norms are explicitly presented and referred to often. Introducing the norms is an easy task, especially if done at the beginning of the school year. However, the real challenge is truly implementing the norms. The norms must be referred to often in order to build them into the fabric of the daily classroom environment. The norms must be “kept alive” for positive influence to take place.



At the research site, a fifth agreement was included: *personal best/quality producer*. In addition, the order for presentation purposes was also changed; that is, the school posters read:

1. Mutual Respect
2. Show Appreciations/No Put Downs
3. Show Attentive Listening
4. Right to Participate/Right to Pass
5. Personal Best/Quality Producer

*Mutual respect.* Mutual respect affirms the idea that we are all unique individuals, bringing different strengths and weaknesses to the group. This uniqueness is valued when others follow all the norms and provide ways to encourage others. When mutual respect is employed, all members of the group benefit, feel secure, and foster growth within others. “The purpose of the mutual respect agreement is to assure everyone that their individual cultural values, beliefs, and needs will be considered and properly honored” (Gibbs, 2006, p. 89).

*Show appreciations/no put-downs.* The practice of giving compliments or appreciations is emphasized each time a partner or small group is used. This agreement teaches kindness with words and also with body language. The idea that body language communicates information is a focused lesson, teaching students that body language can benefit or block communication.

*Attentive listening.* Attentive listening focuses on more than just one’s ears. Attentive listening includes three components: eyes, ears, and heart. When one is practicing attentive listening, the individual looks at the person speaking, uses ears to hear, and also has an open or receptive heart for receiving the information. Using one’s eyes, ears, and heart develops effective communication skills. The person who spoke then feels valued for having your complete attention, and the one who was listening gained a fuller understanding by observing all of the

speaker's body language. The listener is encouraged to withhold any comments or opinions until the speaker is finished. Then, the listener should rephrase in order to clarify any details. Attentive listening is an active engagement component which needs direct instruction "because it affects children's ability to learn academic material" (Gibbs, 2006, p. 87).

*Right to participate/right to pass.* This norm allows students to recognize their own personal needs. Students are always expected to participate, but at times it may be best to observe rather than to vocalize a stance on something. When students feel safe, they will participate. "This protective agreement is essential within all organizational and group settings because it provides control to members. It encourages students to be self-determining and responsible for their own well-being among peers" (Gibbs, 2006, p. 88). This is a necessary life skill where individuals must depend on inner or self-directed stances rather than depending on outer controls from others; students need to develop the skill of passing, when necessary, instead of following the crowd. It is important to remember that being a silent observer is still a form of involvement (Gibbs, 2006).

*Personal best/quality producer.* This norm was added at the research site to emphasize each student being successful when personal best work is completed, resulting in a quality product. Personal best gives a reason for the student to be proud of the work ethics accomplished. This addresses the individual needs of students. While we recognize the needs of others, we must also recognize our own potential and live up to that. When an individual feels as though the best work has been produced, that individual should feel proud, regardless of how it compares to other students' work.

*Utilizing energizers.* There are times when everyone becomes tired and unengaged in learning. Energizers provide a quick-five minute physical activity for the purpose of adding

energy back into the learning environment. Energizers can also refocus concentration, to regain the connection between students, and increase enjoyment of learning (Gibbs, 2006).

*Implementing energizers.* Utilizing energizers does not require a great deal of preparation, materials, or class time. However, the teacher needs to have a general idea of employable energizers, teach the students about appropriate behaviors, and explain the general purpose of energizers. Although energizers are proposed as only requiring a few minutes, initially it does require additional teacher planning and student class time. Each new energizer will require an introduction. It is also critical to teach appropriate behaviors, so that after the energizer, the class is able to resume learning at a better state than before.

*Practicing reflective questioning techniques.* Reflective questioning (i.e., metacognition) to enforce the learning process is a common best practice in educational settings (Marzano et al., 2012). The use of reflective practices in learning can increase retention, and even more so when the use of reflection is coupled with CL groups (Yager et al., 1986; Yager et al., 2001). “Reflection of the process of learning together and attention to all the features of the cooperative task create and strengthen this opportunity (to learn lessons in cooperation)” (Sharan, 2010, p. 310). Thinking about the group dynamics and details of learning increases cooperation skills and overall retention of the material. “Reflection is emphasized in Tribes TLC because it is essential for learning and development” (Gibbs, 2006, p. 109). Reflection is a key component for all learning.

In fact, “the most important part of any TLC learning experience may be the reflection questions that you ask your students” (Gibbs, 2006, p. 151). TLC has this component of reflective questioning occurring on three levels: *content*, *social*, and *personal*. Content or thinking types of reflective questioning relate directly to the content of the lesson. Social or

collaborative types of reflective questioning relate to the group dynamics and interactions within the tribe (i.e., the established, long-term learning group). Personal types of reflective questioning relates to the personal experience of the learner. The teacher should focus the reflective questions towards the most relevant questions for that particular lesson or learning objective. Each learning activity has several possible reflective questions. The reflective questions can be posed as a time to quietly think, a time to share with a group, or a time to write. Implementing the continual use of reflective questioning has a positive impact on “academic learning, behavior, self-responsibility and social competency” (Gibbs, 2006, p. 396).

*Implementing reflective questioning techniques.* Elementary students do not typically reflect upon their learning naturally. This is a process in which the teacher must deliberately focus attention, provide direct instruction, and repeatedly model the process. In fact, the process of reflection in the elementary school setting will require the teacher to create habits of reflection before the students will ever master the art of self-reflecting.

Reflective questioning techniques require class time but not additional materials. More importantly, it requires a continued dedication from the teacher. The teacher must form and develop habits of reflection. The instructional time allocated to reflective questioning strategies is not wasted time, for there are impressive results towards student learning outcomes related to metacognition (Yager et al., 1986; Yager et al., 2001); however, the teacher must diligently create these habits of reflection and view reflective questioning as an important step in learning for proper implementation.

*Maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups: Tribes.* After several weeks, or perhaps even a few months, of using the agreements, learning personalities and names of students, along with the knowledge of students’ work experiences in various small groups, it is

time to create the *tribe*. The tribe is a consistent group for long-term learning. The purpose is to help each other learn important academic and social skills. The tribe should be diverse with each tribe's membership including males and females, high and low academic skills, and high and low leadership skills.

Gibbs (2006) suggests the students have input by writing six or seven names on an index card of those who are most desired to be in the tribe. This is secret information for only the teacher to view. Then, when the teacher develops the tribes, each person should have at least one student selected member, from the names written on the card, within the tribe. The tribe size varies from three to six students depending on the age of the students. Younger students need smaller tribes while older students generally work better with larger tribes.

Once the tribe is established, the need for inclusion continues. Besides helping others learn socially and academically, “major objectives of tribes is to call forth positive leadership qualities and self-responsibility in children” (Gibbs, 2006, p. 105). Issues will occur; that is part of the social learning process. But remember, “membership in tribes needs to remain as constant as possible. The long-term membership factor develops cooperation and peer support for individual achievement” (Gibbs, 2006, p. 118). The challenge for the teacher may be keeping the tribe together over an extended period of time, either several weeks or even months. Challenges within the members of the tribe will naturally arise; although challenging, it is imperative to help the students through this important social learning process.

*Implementation of small, fixed groups: Tribes.* The creation of each tribe, in itself, requires some teacher time but does not require a lot of sustained effort. However, the environment must be properly groomed through classroom implementation and consistent use of the agreements, development of the inclusion and influence stages prior to the tribe formation,

and continual focus on classroom community building. Information gathered during these necessary activities make it possible to create a well-rounded, heterogeneous and balanced, tribe. The selection of students within each tribe should be carefully calculated so that each tribe is diverse in all areas: gender, race, academic ability, leadership ability, and personal characteristics.

***Teaching collaborative skills.*** Teaching collaborative skills are included in the process of building inclusion, influence, and community. Collaborative skills are the focus during “the influence stage [and] become the foundation for a vital community . . . working together with others from diverse backgrounds, solving problems, assessing for improvement, and celebrating their achievements” (Gibbs, 2006, p. 90). Collaborative skills must be specifically taught and practiced often. Gibbs provided seven steps for teaching collaborative skills:

1. Guide students in identifying the need for the skill.
2. Teach the skill as appropriate.
3. Practice the skill regularly and have students give feedback on that performance.
4. Transfer the responsibility to the tribes where they remind each other to utilize the skills.
5. Ask reflective questions about the use of the learned skill.
6. Acknowledge times when students are using the skill well.
7. Openly praise and celebrate when the learned skill is performed as a natural behavior.

***Implementing collaborative skills.*** Again, no additional materials are necessary for implementation. However, class time and teacher commitment are necessary components for collaboration to be successful. Since collaboration primarily focuses on social situations and working together, building collaborative skills will require constant instruction, modeling of strategies, and frequent reminders. Working together, even for adults can be difficult at times;

there is no set curriculum for teaching collaborative skills. Collaborative skills require deliberate insights on working together, time to practice, and then problem solving when an issue arises. The teacher commitment in using class time and in setting up learning to occur in collaborative ways is critical in order for implementation of collaborative skills to be successful.

*Utilizing cooperative learning strategies.* CL is widely viewed as a teaching strategy with use of group work. A small group of students work together to achieve a common goal; all students within the group must reach success in order for the group to be successful (Slavin, 1996, 2011). With CL, social skill development is viewed as just as important as the academic skill development (Common Core State Standards, 2016; Gibbs, 2006; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Kagan, 1990; Kyndt et al., 2013; Sharan, 2010).

*Implementing cooperative learning strategies.* CL is one of the most researched learning strategies (Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000; Kyndt et al., 2013; Sharan, 2010; Slavin, 1980), stemming over 11 decades with more than 1,200 research studies. Many studies have a direct focus on the effectiveness of CL; yet, the strategy is only now used throughout the world (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). However, even today with the educational benefits widely known, “once the formal training programme ends, cooperative learning is often abandoned, or at best, practice is significantly reduced” (Sharan, 2010, p. 303). Thanh-Pham (2011) also identified CL as not being properly utilized by teachers. In a current meta-analysis on CL, Kyndt et al. (2013) recommended future empirical studies including perceptions and attitudes, as related to implementation and use of CL. There are many factors still needing more research in order to fully understand why cooperative learning is not fully utilized.

Although research supports the use of CL, many teachers fail to properly implement this strategy. Any new program can be difficult to implement (Short & Greer, 2002); it has long been

known that CL is difficult and can be overwhelming for teachers to master (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Kagan, 1990). Twenty years later, Sharan (2010) still acknowledged implementation of CL strategies to be difficult.

The strategy of CL groups has had challenges with implementation not being consistent (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Teacher's use of CL remains low, even with research findings emphasizing the importance of specific classroom environmental conditions for successful employment of CL strategies (Sharan, 2010). Although CL provides the avenue for academic learning, successful implementation must first include the *right* environment, conducive for CL groups and in using the elements for effective CL learning (Demirci, 2010; Gibbs, 2006; Sharan). The essential environmental elements for effective CL learning include: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, the appropriate use of social skills, and group processing (Alexander & van Wyk, 2014; Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

*Positive interdependence.* Positive interdependence is the *sink together or swim together idea* where each group member is depending on the other members in order to accomplish the learning task. The interdependence includes resources, roles (e.g., reader, recorder, summarizer, and encourager), and tasks (i.e., each member has a different responsibility to fulfill). Positive interdependence can be promoted through group rewards, individual or group assessments, having shared materials, having individual roles within the group, and by completing one finished product (Alexander & van Wyk, 2014; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). The use of goals, real or fantasized (such as visualizing or pretending to climb Mt. Everest), and the use of rewards tends to result in increased achievement and productivity (Jensen, Johnson, & Johnson, 2002, as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2009).



*Individual accountability.* Individual accountability is present when the performance of each individual member is assessed and the results shared back for comparison against a standard of performance (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Individual accountability insures each person in the group has a required action to fulfill. One way to quickly include individual accountability is to have students write in different colors within the group. *Social loafing* (i.e., being off task) increases as the size of the group increases (Messick & Brewer, 1983 as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Gibbs (2006) also suggests keeping tribes small with a size of three to six students.

*Promotive interaction.* Promotive interaction is the encouragement and help from others within the group. It includes trusting others, listening to different points of view, having motivation to complete a task, sharing resources, giving others constructive feedback, and challenging ideas when necessary. Positive interaction is the result of successful positive interdependence (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Tribes also focus on this through agreements and specific cooperative lessons focused on listening skills (Gibbs, 2006).

*Appropriate use of social skills.* In order for groups to be successful learning together, students must be taught interpersonal and collaborative skills. For high quality cooperation to occur, students must know and trust group members, have good communication skills, know acceptable ways to help each other, and be able to resolve conflicts (Alexander & van Wyk, 2014; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Students will need some specific instruction related to social/collaborative skills, communication skills, and conflict resolution skills. Similarly, TLC also emphasizes and provides lessons on these social skills (Gibbs, 2006).

*Group processing.* Group processing is a reflective process focused on what worked within the group and what did not; the purpose is to improve the effectiveness in achieving the

group's goals (Alexander & van Wyk, 2014; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Putnam et al. (1989) found individuals provided with social skills training and also involved with group processing, as opposed to those without those two components, developed more positive relationships with group members and these relationships tended to continue in other situations (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Relationships are the foundation for successful group work. This reflective component will also need some directed, teacher guidance in order for students to create this reflective habit. TLC incorporates both social reflection and group dynamics as paramount issues. In order to focus on this social development and skills of working through social problems, TLC promotes the tribe as being a long-term learning group (Gibbs, 2006).

### **Professional Development as Applied to the Conceptual Framework**

The social cognitive theory emphasizes the principle of efficacy. Teacher efficacy not only empowers one to act but also empowers one to set goals. Bandura (2012) explained how this efficacy is used to begin, implement, and follow through with PD practices. If a teacher lacks efficacy, the teacher has little influence and will find it difficult to implement any changes and will typically avoid PD in general. Therefore, it is critical that teachers build efficacy through continued successful circumstances. This reciprocal relationship of increased efficacy then increases the likelihood of more success. The more efficacious one becomes, the more one is willing to experiment by implementing new PD strategies. Then this successful implementation once again increases teacher efficacy.

The social cognitive theory also emphasizes the ability for people to learn through social endeavors. Current PD practices, especially with the development of PLC, emphasize collaboration amongst teachers. This teacher collaboration, or social learning endeavor, encourages teachers to learn from one another.

The adult learning theory directly relates to PD. If facilitators of PD want to maximize the learning of the adult-learners, implementing strategies to accommodate the basic six assumptions of andragogy is necessary. The adult learner is self-directed, is ready to learn what is believed to be important, is ready to learn for today's use, is motivated internally, will use prior experiences to gain new insights, and will want to know the value of any potential new learning (Chan, 2010). Knowing the audience (i.e., the learner) is critical for any educational setting. In this case, instructing adult teachers requires knowledge of andragogy. As this Tribes PD at the research site was self-selected, the six assumptions can more readily be applied. That is, the educators who attended this PD selected the content, increasing the likelihood of each teacher coming ready to learn.

### **Tribes TLC as Applied to the Conceptual Framework**

Social cognitive theory posits increased learning outcomes through social interactions. The social cognitive theory also holds a high importance to the principle of efficacy as well as the ability for people to learn through observations and collaboration. TLC includes character building components dependent on social learning situations. CL groups are emphasized for increased student learning outcomes (Yager et al., 1986; Yager et al., 2001). In addition, the formation of a diverse tribe increases the likelihood of success for all tribe members. This success will further increase each member's efficacy; therefore increase the tribe's collective efficacy. With increased efficacy, increased learning and academic achievement are expected (Bandura, 1991). Efficacy is the critical component in Bandura's social cognitive theory. Self-regulation and goal setting are important components of both Tribes and Social cognitive theory.

In adult learning theory, there is an internal accountability piece, focusing on one's self-concept, self-direction, and self-motivation to learn. TLC has the components embedded within

the lessons, teaching students related collaborative skills for use with the CL. In order for adults to be self-motivated and self-directed learners, the skills should be developed and fostered in student learners through reflection. Self-directed learning is viewed on a continuum of teacher-centered to student-centered, where the learner must be developed into a self-directed learner (Chan, 2010). Reflection is also viewed as a critical component in TLC. “The most important part of any TLC learning experience may be the reflection questions that you ask your students” (Gibbs, 2006, p. 151).

### **Summary**

The basic nuances of PD were explored in order to reach the tenants of best or effective PD practices. Effective PD practices briefly include professional learning communities where educators collaborate with ideas, instructional practices, and share student work samples in order to promote best teaching strategies for the ultimate goal of increased student learning. For successful use of new strategies gained from PD, the PD should be flexible, occur over an extended period of time, address the six assumptions of adult learners, and maintain teacher commitment.

A connection between the school environment, effective teaching practices, teacher efficacy, and teacher personal traits were explored through classroom implementation of PD. Finally, in order to understand the benefits and level of difficulty for the teacher to master, the relevant literature focused on effective teaching practices also used as TLC components, instructed upon within the PD (i.e., setting the environment, implementing classroom agreements, utilizing energizers, practicing reflective questioning techniques, maintaining long-term CL groups, teaching collaborative skills, and implementing CL strategies).

TLC is a process that incorporates effective or educationally best practices for learning. Since TLC is multi-faceted with the basic components being considered best practices in education and also having different levels of difficulty to implement, it lends itself well to this research. Research depicts difficulties with implementation of any program (Short & Greer, 2002), with specific difficulties widely known in implementing CL strategies (Sharan, 2010). In light of these challenges, the voices and perceptions of the educators may provide guidance regarding PD practices, implementation insights of the basic components of TLC, as well as implications for future PD.

In reflecting upon effectiveness of school environments, teaching practices, and PD strategies, a more complete picture of the current research on the best educational settings is conceptualized. Although the progression of PD has become more student-centered over the past 50 years, the U.S. still seems to lag behind other high educational rated countries in using effective PD practices, especially when related to teacher collaboration (Barth, 2006; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014; Elmore, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009) and the lack of required teacher time for instructional planning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Overall, it is a hope for any PD to evolve into a PLT, so that PL will be on-going. However, the use of a PLT is a process, not an event, which develops over time thru a common focus and developed relationships.

The conceptual framework used in this study includes two learning theories: Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory and Malcom Knowles' adult learning theory. TLC, as well as PD, was viewed through each framework.

In this hermeneutical phenomenology research, teacher's perceptions regarding experiences related to factors perceived at helping or hindering the implementation of PD were

gathered. These experiences may provide insights on why self-selected PD is not always implemented. In addition, by using the teacher's perceptions this research aims to provide implications for future PD practices and implementation processes, so that more of what is learned during PD will have an impact upon the learning environment.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

“Prepare to be changed.

Looking deeply at other people’s lives

will force you to look deeply at yourself” (Patton, 2002, p. 35).

### **Overview**

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research design, the researcher’s role, participant information, as well as data collection and analysis procedures. The methodological detail provides a rationale for the selected research design and approach as well as enables another researcher to replicate the study.

### **Design**

Research, both qualitative and quantitative, plays a critical role in identifying educational best practices and creating educational changes. Qualitative design is selected to tell the story in the natural setting while “the backbone . . . is the extensive collection of data” (Creswell, 2007, p. 43) in multiple forms. Qualitative research is identified as rigorous, time consuming, subjective, and open-ended in nature. It reflects the desire to understand the phenomenon by recognizing the whole setting or whole experience, rather than focusing on individual components alone (Ary et al., 2006). In short, a researcher selects a qualitative design over a quantitative design when the goal is to understand the natural phenomenon where the topic is “emotion laden, close to people, and practical” (Creswell, 2007, p. 43).

Due to this broad focus on the phenomenon in its natural setting, the researcher needs to be flexible, allowing the research to evolve and emerge naturally (Patton, 2002). While being rigorous in data collection methods, the researcher continually returns to the philosophical assumptions, paradigm, and conceptual framework in order to use these structures while

developing the true meaning and interpreting the participants' data. In such, the researcher is a key instrument, or as Creswell (2007) described "human instrument" (p. 38) in the research process, following the data collected and continually making judgments on what steps to take next in order to get the complete picture of the phenomenon. The general goal for qualitative research is to explore the phenomenon through data collected in the natural setting by going through the process of discovery, meaning construction of common themes identified, and using in depth descriptions.

"Lived experience is the breathing of meaning," (van Manen, 1990, p. 36) required of the researcher, and most often gained through reflection (van Manen, 1990). This phenomenological investigation seeks to describe the educators' on-the-job experiences post-PD. This research aims to help fill a portion of the qualitative research gap in telling the story to gain "a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (van Manen, 2003, p. 9) related to PD. This research will gather the elementary teachers' descriptive perceptions in order to better understand the common phenomenon of post-PD experiences.

Specifically, this investigation is bound to the experiences related to the PD on Tribes Learning Communities, as it has varied components, was available for PD at the research site, incorporated voluntary participation, is research based, and was available for university credit. Factors perceived as positively impacting and those perceived as negatively impacting implementation may be identified. In hearing the educators' voices and perceptions related to their post-PD experiences, this research may gleam further insights on educational PD. These insights may have an impact on classroom practices and therefore may have an impact on student learning outcomes. This common, every-day-kind of experience, is a worthy topic of study based upon the large, possible impact within the educational setting.



## Phenomenology

The phenomenological approach is one of the five basic approaches in qualitative research as identified by Creswell (2007). Its history goes back to Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), a scientist with interests in philosophy (van Manen, 1990; 2003). Phenomenology is commonly referred to as gathering the perceptions of the participants through the participants “lived experiences” (Creswell, 2007; van Manen, 1990; 2003). Researchers select this approach when the participant’s voice or specific insights are desired regarding the phenomenon. A descriptive dialogue of “what” and “how” (Moustakas, 1994) with emphasis upon the participant’s experience is what gets to the heart of this research, with reflection, although used differently, is an imperative process of both types, transcendental and hermeneutic (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990; 2003).

The main data collection for phenomenology typically focuses on capturing the participants’ voices through more open-ended interviewing practices (Moustakas, 1990) through questions focusing on the basic essence of the lived experience. (van Manen, 1990). The essence of phenomenology research is encompassed by, “[h]ow people experience some phenomenon—how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others” (Patton, 2002, p. 104). Phenomenological research is based upon the participants’ views of reality concerning the phenomenon as captured through the voices of the participants. The primary types (e.g., transcendental and hermeneutic) are categorized by how the researcher interacts with the data collected, including her own experience writings.

Transcendental phenomenology is characterized by subjectivity when the researcher *brackets* out her own experience, focusing with quiet reflection on the phenomenon, until the consciousness is *transcended* with creative ideas related to the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990).

It has a *meditative state of mind* component, with reflection being more of a quiet mind of thought. Again, the major difference noted between transcendental and hermeneutic is how the researcher interacts with the data. With transcendental, the researcher does not utilize her own experiences or thoughts on the phenomenon; the researcher's reflections are bracketed or deliberately left out of the descriptive research, as if experiencing it anew, as for the first time (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Hermeneutic Design in Phenomenology**

This qualitative investigation used a hermeneutic phenomenological framework. Unlike the transcendental researcher who sets aside her own judgments and simply describes the experiences of the participants, the hermeneutical researcher draws upon her own deep thoughts, beliefs, and experiences related to the phenomenon in order to reflectively make an unbiased interpretation, making meaning from the participant's shared experiences and the researchers own reflective experiences (van Manen, 1990, 2003). The researcher recognizes her experiences and interactions with others, yet each unique perspective is valued and first analyzed for its own merit or specific importance to the phenomenon (Lodico et al., 2010) before analyzing for commonalities and developing themes.

The hermeneutical researcher has a deep desire to understand the experiences more clearly in order to bring meaning to the phenomenon with a profound desire to describe and bring true meaning to the experience. Reflection is also important, as in transcendental, but it is a more deliberate, related to the specific phenomenon, with a writing component in hermeneutical form (van Manen, 1990, 2003), which are often times coded as well (Saldaña, 2013).

The *reflexive journal*, or analytical memoing, serves as a research tool. The researcher uses this reflective account to document all biases, previous beliefs, changing beliefs, all deep-

rooted thought regarding the phenomenon. The reflexive journal provides a venue for the researcher to become up close with the phenomenon through reflective writing, continually gliding between the whole and parts of the text (van Manen, 1993).

Unlike transcendental, in hermeneutics the researcher maintains a reflexive journal with deep reflections that may be used during the analysis process, to help develop meaning of the phenomenon. Hermeneutic phenomenology is the science of interpretation, especially interpretation of the written language. In fact, interpretation by the researcher is required (van Manen, 2003). “But exploring possibilities can also become an excuse for not finishing. There comes a time for bringing closure to analysis and getting on with other things. Taking too much time to contemplate creative possibilities may involve certain risks . . .” (Patton, 2002, p. 515).

Salk (1983), a hermeneutical researcher and scientist, would imagine being a virus or cancer cell in order to get another perspective of that particular phenomenon (as cited in Moustakas, 1990). Various perspectives and individual views are critical data points. This shared experience, or the phenomenon of focus, may have commonalities among the participants’ perspectives (Creswell, 2009).

### **Heuristic Approach to Phenomenology**

Heuristic comes from the Greek word *heuriskein*, meaning to discover, to experiment. It is related to the word *eureka* (i.e., I have found it), implying the “aha” phenomenon (Moustakas, 1990, 1994). In general, heuristic relates to an experience based method for solving problems. “At the heart of heuristics lies an emphasis on disclosing the self as a way of facilitating disclosure of others” (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 50). The researcher must bring forth personal thinking on the topic. “Heuristic inquiry requires that one be open, receptive, and attuned to all facets of one’s experience of a phenomenon, allowing comprehension and

compassion to mingle and recognizing the place and unity of intellect, emotion, and spirit” (Moustakas, 1990, Ch. 2 Self-Dialogue section, para. 2).

### **Research Questions**

This phenomenological investigation is guided by the overall question: How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development? The three sub-questions include:

1. To what extent, if at all, has this professional development been implemented?
2. What factors are perceived as positively impacting implementation of the professional development?
3. What factors are perceived as negatively impacting implementation of the professional development?

### **Site**

The school community has a small, home-town feel with only four traffic lights, one hotel, and most businesses are closed by 2100 (i.e., 9:00 p.m.). The community is a U.S. military base in the Pacific region. Yet just outside the community’s borders, a *megacity* (i.e., a city with a population over 10 million) thrives. Many students live off-post, in this megacity, and are bused to school.

This community has three schools— elementary, middle, and high— with a total student population of about 2,000. The elementary school, Salter’s Elementary School (pseudonym is utilized), serves pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The student population is transient with moves typically every two or three years for each student. These large scale moves are due to the high ratio of students related to various service branches: Army (60%), Air Force (6%), Navy

(5%), Marines (3%), and civilian work force and other categories (26%) based upon the Annual Report Card (2013).

According to the Annual Report Card for 2012-2013, the elementary school enrollment was 1,089 students with diverse race demographics: Asian (21%), African American (11%), Hispanic (9%), Caucasian (28%), Multi-Racial (19%), with 9% declined to state. Of those 1,089 students, 148 students or 14% of the student population receive special education services, while 126 students or 12% have *limited English proficiency*. Based upon the Terra Nova scores, the school proficiency percentages (i.e., students at or above 50% level) are: reading (75%), math (79%), and science (79%).

This site does come as having ease of access to the researcher. However more importantly, due to the PD offered in 2013, 2014, and 2015 on this multi-faceted program, (i.e., varying degrees of difficulty to implement individual components, voluntary PD, research based PD, and university credit available), this PD matches the research requirements of exploring the educators' perceptions related to self-selected on-the job post-PD experiences.

### **Participants**

Purposive sampling techniques (i.e., opposite of random selection used in quantitative research) are characterized by a purposeful selection, designed to generate specific cases in order to address the research questions, typically smaller than 30 cases, and tend to focus on narrative data (Teddle & Yu, 2007). For this investigation, purposive sampling was utilized with the criterion sampling variety.

The criteria for possible participants in this investigation included completion of self-selected PD (that was voluntary PD, researched-based PD, PD on-site, and PD had a university credit option). The participant must also have had elementary teaching experiences (i.e.,

provided classroom instruction) after the PD and must have volunteered to be a participant in this investigation. In order to narrow the focus of post-PD on-the-job experiences, this investigation bound the self-selected PD to PD provided at Salter's Elementary School during 2013, 2014, or 2015. Since on-site, self-selected PD at Salter's Elementary School was limited during this time period, this investigation was further bound to Tribes PD.

A list of names of those who were involved in the self-selected Tribes PD at Salter's Elementary School in 2013, 2014, and 2015 was the initial step in determining participants for this investigation. Then this list of names and criteria list were compared. Those on the initial list, who also meet criteria for this investigation, were moved to the next level of participant selection.

During the second semester of each school year in 2013, 2014, and 2015, PD (i.e., Tribes) was offered at Salter's Elementary School. All school staff, to include the central office, elementary school, middle school, and high school, had access to enroll in a TLC Course with an option to earn two college credits. Salter's Elementary School, which is also the location of the PD Tribes training, had first priority to enroll in the training. There was a goal to have at least 20 but not more than 30 participants enrolled in this PD. The TLC course was taught by a certified TLC trainer who is also a teacher at Salter's Elementary School.

For the first PD offered, 25 individuals collaborated in the Tribes learning. Two teachers dropped the course due to personal issues. Of the remaining 23, personnel included: three administrators, one school psychologist, one school nurse, one substitute teacher who often worked at other schools in the area, one special education assessor, five specialists/support teachers (i.e., teachers who teach specific content areas such as music, reading resource,

guidance counseling, Spanish, etc.), and 10 general education/classroom teachers ranging from first to fourth grade. All but two participants were staff from Salter's Elementary School.

For the second PD opportunity, 15 individuals collaborated with TLC training, from beginning to the end. Of these 15 participants, the school personnel included: two specialists, one special education assessor, one student teacher, and 11 general education/classroom teachers ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade. All participants were associated with Salter's Elementary School.

The 2015 PD did not have enough interested staff members, so the PD did not take place as planned. This PD remains voluntary. Table 5 provides the analysis by year. Twenty-five educators at the research site were voluntarily involved in the Tribes PD during the second semester of 2012-2013 school year. An additional Tribes PD was offered during the second semester of 2013-2014 school year with 15 participating. These, 40 in total, voluntary participants were the initial criteria meeting the possible participant pool.

Table 5

*Participant Selection Summary*

Year	Total Involved In Tribes PD	Total to Meet All Criteria	Teaching Areas
2013	25	14	7 Classroom Teachers 5 Specialist / Support Teachers 2 Special Education Teachers
2014	15	10	9 Classroom Teachers 1 Specialist / Support Teachers
2015	0	0	
Totals	40	24	

In a phenomenological study, the researcher continues to interview, capturing the voice of participants, until no new themes emerge. Polkinghorne (1989) recommended five to 25 interviews being necessary (as cited in Creswell, 2007), while Moustakas (1990) noted that 10 to 15 participants can capture the phenomenon. Teddlie and Yu (2007) advocated for fewer than 30 participants in order to get to a rich descriptive data set. For this investigation, 24 participants represent the total possible participant group.

A recruitment letter was presented to each of these 24 (i.e., 22 female and 2 male). To be a participant, one must have: volunteered to participate, signed the consent form, and agreed to complete the data collections. All participation in this research was voluntary. The informed consent indicated that the participants could withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequences or repercussions placed upon participants.

An estimated time requirement for each participant to invest in data collection for this investigation was expected to be three to five hours in total. This time include completing a brief ten question teacher self-efficacy scale, three essay prompts, three lived-experience descriptive writings, a one-on-one audio-recorded interview, gathering of any artifacts (i.e., journals or other records), and attending a focus group or follow-up session.

Additional experience or reflective writings would utilize more time; however, only three experience entries are required. Examples and possible prompts were provided, but there are no requirements on the length or depth of the participant's response. If a participant wrote more than three experience writings or was involved in a PLT focused on this PD, that time was not considered in this estimated three to five hour expectation of participants. All related participant writings were collected as part of the data collection.



Although Salter's Elementary School provided the site for instruction, each participant paid for the cost of PD and materials, as well as volunteering the time required. The cost of this PD, depending on whether the participant also earned two college credits, was between \$60.00 and \$260.00. No money or reimbursement of time was offered by the school or district; all initiations toward the TLC training, to include time, cost, and use of the skills learned at the PD, were completely voluntary by the educator.

The training took place on four Saturdays for eight hours each day and another two hours distributed after school, plus time for homework requirements; the structured instruction time equaled 34 hours. All was completed within a two to three month period. The certified trainer was also a staff member, who often expressed her willingness to collaborate, and offered a "Think Tank Wednesday" as a scheduled, yet not required, teacher collaboration time.

There is a district requirement for educators to complete a minimum of six continued PD undergraduate or graduate credits within every six year period in order for an educator to be eligible for recertification (Administrators' Manual, 2007). This is an independent, self-selected, not funded by the employer, recertification requirement. These six credit hours are not restricted to any particular content of learning; the educator is able to select any content of choice, but it does require university credit. During this time frame, 2013-2015, other PD opportunities were available at the research site, also on a voluntary, self-selection, and teacher-paid basis. However, all other PD offered (i.e., available for credit due to recertification requirements) was in an on-line setting, except Tribes. On-line selections were completed individually, not collaboratively. In order to narrow the focus, this investigation bound self-selected PD to a classroom or social setting at Salter's Elementary School to involving Tribes during 2013 2014, or 2015.

Of the 24 individuals who received the recruitment letter, three immediately declined involvement, five requested more time and information before deciding, 13 agreed to volunteer, and three did not respond. I attempted to meet with each possible participant to answer any questions. Although, all 24 received the invitational email, I did not discuss this research with two of those possible participants. Three, of those who declined, did suggest that I request again if I did not obtain enough volunteers; I did not re-request. Another agreed, but due to personal hardship, the consent form was not signed; hence, that individual was never considered a participant in this study. In total, 17 of the 24 possible participants agreed to volunteer and became the participants in this research.

Once participants signed the consent form, volunteering for this research, I compiled a list of characteristics for each participant, from my own perspective. I used these descriptive words in finding a pseudonym meaning which also represents the participant's character. This was completed before any data was collected and is based upon my own perspective. The pseudonyms are also in alphabetical order. Both the pseudonym meaning and alphabetical order are simply organizational tools for me, to aid in the participant number and my own identification of participant to pseudonym without needing the secured code directly in front of me; these organizational components do not represent any findings or direct meanings gathered from the data in the research.

The participants included 15 female and 2 male teachers. Participants have between 3 and 33 years of teaching experience and teach a variety of areas in elementary school (i.e. kindergarten through fifth grade in both classroom and support areas). The participant range in self-efficacy scores are 29-40 with 10-40 as the possible range. Participants have a variety of levels of formal education (i.e. highest degree attained) and various teaching certifications. Since

this school system is large, wide-spread, and often provides transfers to its employees, 10 of the participants also relocated during this research and 6 grade level or specialty area changes occurred. Table 6 provides individual data collected representing these areas of change.

Table 6

*Teaching Characteristics of Participants*

Pseudonym	Efficacy Score (10-40 Possible)	Years of Experience	Grade/ Teaching Area (s)	Highest Degree	Moved/ Relocated
Annalina	32	15	K-5 / Support	Master+	X
Brigette	40	29	1-4** / Classroom	Master	X
Charity	33	4	K-2 / Classroom	Bachelor	X
Docilla	40	9	3-5 / Classroom	Master	
			K-5* / Support		
Edda	31	18	3-5 / Classroom	Master	
			K-5* / Support		
Fantina	30	15	3-5 / Classroom	Master+	X
Gasha	29	6	K-2* / Classroom	Bachelor	X
Hilary	39	3	K-2 / Classroom	Bachelor	
Isaac	29	3	K-2 / Classroom	Bachelor	
Jerica	40	38	3-5 / Classroom	Master	
Kalyn	34	6	K-2 / Classroom	Bachelor	X
Linna	30	8	K-2* / Classroom	Master	X
Mona	38	33	K-2 / Classroom	Master	
Naomi	37	12	K-2 / Classroom	Master	X
Olga	34	39	K-5*/Support	Bachelor+	X
			K-2/Classroom		
Pete	36	7	3-5 / Classroom	Master	
Qiana	33	14	K-2 / Classroom	Master	X

Note: Data provided from each participant.

\* Indicates a grade or position change.

X Indicates the participant moved/relocated to another region/school within the three year research time period of 2013-2016 (i.e., the 1<sup>st</sup> Tribes PD until the end of the data collection).

## **Procedures**

Support and initial research approval from Salter's Elementary School were provided. Research approval from both Salter's Elementary School and Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) was completed prior to data collection. An approved IRB (see Appendix A), was required before the district would fully authorize a research request (see Appendix B). Each of those in the participant pool was provided with both a recruitment letter and email (see Appendix C). Attached to the recruitment email, an electronic decision button for participation was included. Participants were identified by those who volunteered from the possible participant pool. The voluntary participants were emailed, for prior review, and then individually approached with the informed consent (see Appendix D).

A personal delivery of the recruitment letter was attempted to all possible participants and also emailed via the school email address. Twenty possible participants were contacted via email and in person. There were failed attempts in personally contacting two of the 24 possible participants; these two were only contacted via email. The additional two possible participants, had relocated, so were only contacted electronically as well due to the extensive travel distance. The informed consent (see Appendix D) offered full assurance of participation being voluntary, confidential, and also provided an option to withdraw from this study at any time, and without any negative ramifications. No assent forms were needed since all participants are adults.

Schwarzer, Schmitz, and Daytner's (1999) Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (see Appendix E) was used to gather responses on the participant's teacher efficacy level and used to give more descriptive detail on the participant with a hope to provide relative insights in regards to social cognitive theory, one of the conceptual frameworks for this investigation. This teacher self-efficacy scale was included in the materials provided to each participant. It was completed, by 14

of the 17 participants, at the same time the consent form was completed. The other 3 participants emailed the completed scale.

The next steps included written expressions from the participants. The essay prompts (see Appendix F) and Lived-Experience Descriptive Writing (see Appendix G) were emailed to each participant before the scheduled one-on-one interview. These two written expression components were prepared both electronically and in hard copy form, within the provided materials to each participant, included with an anticipated due date. Participants could write the written responses within the journal, provided by the researcher, or the participant could electronically type responses. The participant's responses provided another forum for the participant to share *the story* of experiences after PD.

The anticipated due date was set before the participant's scheduled interview. Reminders were sent to the participants regarding the anticipated due date. However, in two cases the responses were not completed before the interview. In these cases, the questions were addressed at the beginning of the interview by the researcher taking notes on the participant's verbal response.

Again, all participants were provided with a hard copy as well as an electronic version of all forms and encouraged to document their personal "Tribal Trail." However, only the three essay responses and three lived-experience descriptive writings (see Appendix G) were required. Either format, handwritten or typed, was acceptable for these written participant responses.

Fourteen participants provided this data in electronic form; only one participant provided hand-written responses. Again, two participants did not return the responses before the interview; in these two cases, the questions were addressed before the interview by the researcher taking notes on the participant's verbal responses.

Any Tribes materials, lessons, posters, or other memorabilia available to the researcher throughout the study was shared, via hardcopy or email, with participants. Any electronic materials related to the PD on Tribes was also available on the research site's shared computer drive, for maximum availability to the entire school. Again however, use of these shared materials was completely optional.

The researcher contacted each participant before the scheduled interview in order to review information and for the researcher to collect any other artifacts available by the participant. Items reviewed include: the pre-interview checklist (see Appendix H), definitions and key points for this study (see Appendix I), the interview protocol (see Appendix J), and the semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix K). These items were available before, during, and after the interview.

The pre-interview checklist was used to adapt more specific questions in order to gather the most detailed responses from the participant. These documents were used to help guide the interview and provided key words which may trigger the participant's memory of an important data piece. Sharing key definitions provided certainty that all participants defined key words in the same manner. The interview protocol was provided to the participants in the hope of increasing ease towards the upcoming interview; by giving the protocol, the adult learning theory's assumptions were also valued.

If a discussion of these items, between the participant and researcher, was not possible, at the very minimum, these items (i.e., the pre-interview checklist, definitions and key points for this study, interview protocol, and semi-structured interview guide) were emailed to the participant at least one day before the scheduled interview and had already been provided in hard copy form. Then these items were discussed before the scheduled interview. The participant was

reminded, via email, to gather any possible artifacts, essay responses, and lived-experience descriptive writings, if not already returned. During the interview, the researcher again asked for any possible artifacts related to this PD. In all cases, these materials had already been shared with the researcher. There was no need for the researcher to copy and return items as initially planned. All except for one participant provided typed (i.e., electronic) responses. Based upon the participant, this one, hand written document did not require copying.

The semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix K) was utilized in the pilot study. The pilot study was created as a time to adjust the structured questions if not properly aligned to the research questions, to rearrange the order, or to adjust other details related to the interview if determined necessary or better for the investigation. After this adjustment period, no further changes would be allowed. In this research, no additional changes were required during the pilot study. All data collected from participants utilized the same tools; however, the interview was semi-structured in nature, allowing questions to be viewed as options in order to follow the participant's story related to the phenomenon, yet having some structure with standardized topic components. The open-ended questions encourage a space for the participant to utilize in telling, or unfolding the experiences.

This pilot study specifically focused on the alignment of the interview questions with the research purpose and research questions as well as the nature of the research questions (i.e., Do the interview questions provide insight on the research purpose and questions without leading the participants?). An external pilot study was initially planned if more than ten participants volunteered for this research. However, since no questions or protocol was altered, an internal pilot study was conducted. The data collected during the pilot was considered the first participant in the research. In addition, this internal pilot study was also a participatory pilot

study; the participant, a current doctoral student, was aware of being in the pre-test phase and involved with the checking clarity of questions (i.e., this discussion relating to the clarity of interview questions directly followed the first, or pilot, interview). All research steps were conducted with the pilot study first.

To ensure credibility of the interview instruments (i.e., interview protocol and semi-structured interview guide; see Appendix J and K) a committee of experts, including three educators and one administrator, all holding various doctoral degrees, reviewed these items. Minor changes in format were made to more closely align the interview questions with the research questions and purpose of this research. The expert panel agreed that the questions were appropriate for this research, providing face validity. Again, it was possible for these questions to be modified during the pilot study, however the questions were determined appropriate and no changes were needed.

Interviews were scheduled individually, conducted one-on-one, audio recorded, transcribed by a professional transcriptionist, reviewed by the researcher, member checked, coded and re-coded, triangulated with other data sources for accuracy, and later analyzed for common themes with the other data sources and other transcribed interviews.

The researcher also maintained running records (i.e., field notes and *analytic memoing*) related to on-the-job post-PD experiences, stages of the research, and research-thinking throughout the data collection and data analysis portions of this research. This process encouraged an unbiased interpretation of each participant's experiences. These records also included pertinent information from participants related to PD during informal conversations. All researcher running records were documented, coded, and analyzed for meaning as well.



At the conclusion of each interview, analytical memoing or reflective note taking was utilized in order to capture any observational items viewed as pertinent or to draw attention to any *iconic words*, descriptions, or unique insights provided by the participant (see Appendix L). The researcher listened to the interview while completing the analytical memoing and then securely sent the audio file to a professional transcriptionist (i.e., [www.transcriptionlive.com](http://www.transcriptionlive.com)).

The professional transcriptionist transcribed each interview using verbatim transcription process. The researcher again listened to the audio interview and checked for accuracy of the transcription. Then the transcription was provided back to the participant for *member checking*. That is, the participant was asked to read the transcription for accuracy related to the actual meaning. Member checking is used to add validation to the findings thus far (Saldaña, 2013) by adding another “check on the meaning of the data . . . and the trustworthiness of your interpretation” (Galletta, 2013, p. 30). The participant may request to alter any part of the transcription; this allows for the maximum amount of accuracy of the participant’s views (Saldaña, 2013).

Participants were instructed to read the transcriptions for errors in meaning and content, but to not focus on grammar. Although many participants commented on how verbatim transcriptions vastly differ from written expression (i.e., verbal expression often has increased use of both incomplete sentences and incorrect grammar), however no alterations towards grammar or even meaning were requested from any participant. Upon the member check completion of each interview transcript, coding of all data from a participant was the next step.

Each new step started with the same participant’s data (i.e., the pilot study) in order to build consistency and to identify the most useful coding techniques. Pre-coding and two cycles of coding were conducted in a sequential manner.

Once all interviews were complete and through the second stage of the coding cycles, two focus group sessions were scheduled. Participants were asked to attend one of the focus group sessions or to schedule a follow-up with the researcher. Six of the seven local participants attended the first focus group scheduled; so, the second focus group session was canceled. The focus group protocol and sequence (see Appendix M) were utilized. The researcher met for a follow-up with the local participant who was unable to attend the focus group. Ten participants had relocated to various distant locations; these participants could not attend a local focus group session. An electronic version of the data collection forms for the focus group (see Appendix N) was emailed to those distant, non-local, participants and a request for a follow-up. The electronic version was modified in size so that each of the two forms would fit independently on one page (i.e., two pages total).

Transcriptions were not utilized during the focus group sessions, due to the utilization of simultaneous activities and multiple speakers. The artifacts created during the focus groups were collected, compiled, and later coded using the same process (see Appendix O) . This focus group/follow-up data was not collected for individual results; rather, this data was collected as a compilation.

The various data sources were compared from the cycles of coding each participant's data (i.e., using triangulation for improved accuracy). All participant data sources and the researcher's analytical memoing were then analyzed for commonalities for theme development towards answering the research questions.

### **Researcher's Role**

Due to being a military spouse which requires frequent moves, I have only been employed at the research site since October, 2012. PD on Tribes TLC was available March–May

of 2013 and again in February–April of 2014. It was also offered in the spring of 2015; however, there were not enough voluntary participants for the PD to be conducted.

I was exposed to Tribes TLC at a previous school and recognized positive qualities in the TLC process. However, I had not attended any formal TLC Training or PD before 2013. I voluntarily signed up for the TLC training. I had no immediate PD requirements to fulfill, so I did not take the class for college credit. I enrolled in the PD completely voluntarily, stemmed from an interest in the PD topic of Tribes.

As a current fourth grade teacher and one who recently attended this PD on TLC in 2013, I have some experience on the PD process and the implementation of TLC components. In the hermeneutical design to phenomenological research, this similar experience required of the participants is also required of me as the interpretive researcher (Moustakas, 1990; van Manen, 1990). I was tasked, during the initial Tribes PD, with the posting of the TLC agreements in several school locations. Therefore, before the academic school year of 2013-2014 began, I created and posted 10 sets of agreements throughout the school's common areas and made the templates of the agreements available to all staff members via the school's shared hard drive. I was also involved with the natural discussions regarding TLC since completion of the PD. Although I had insights since I, too, had this experience, my goal as a researcher was to capture the lived experiences of the teacher participants. My desire was to honor the participants' voices through their experiences and stories.

I am a teacher at the research site and a member of the faculty where the PD took place. There was a risk of being too close to the topic. However, I had no authority over any of the participants. The process of identifying and properly expressing my biases, along with my paradigm and theoretical framework were critical in overcoming this limitation (Merriam, 1998;

2009). In addition, the heuristic approach to phenomenology was selected for it requires me (i.e., the researcher) to become involved in the phenomenon. “Unlike [other] phenomenological studies in which the researcher need not have had the experience . . . , the heuristic researcher has undergone the experience in a vital, intense, and full way” (Moustakas, 1990, Ch. 1, para. 19).

I also brought a desire to improve PD. I hold the basic belief that most educators are hard workers and have an innate drive to become better. Yet, I also recognize that much. PD is not acted upon or utilized in the classroom –based upon my own experiences and observations within elementary schools. I would like to better understand this phenomenon. In addition, I bring a view of Tribes being a positive way to influence students in becoming “the-best-version-of-[themselves]” (Kelly, 2005, p. 87). Related, my basic educational philosophy resides on the quote I first read by Thomas Hoerr many years ago: “The kind of person you are is much more important than the kinds of things you know” (Hoerr, 2008, p. 3). Due to these beliefs, I feel it is of utmost importance to teach students how to deal with each other and appropriate behaviors for living, for human kindness and general respect for self and others.

Through my selection of the conceptual framework, it is obvious that I believe one’s personal perceptions and beliefs (i.e. efficacy) lead to success or failure. This social cognitive theory framework also emphasizes that individuals learn from each other, in social situations. Therefore, I agree that learning is best as a social endeavor, in using collaboration and CL groups. However, I have experienced the difficulties in implementing CL strategies. In addition, I acknowledge my belief in the power of using reflective strategies, self-regulation, and goal setting as critical components in learning and in the development of personal change, which is present in both social cognitive theory and adult learning theory. Yet, as an elementary teacher, I

also recognize the difficulty in remembering to take the time to teach students how to reflect and then to reflect on each learning experience.

As an adult learner, I have experienced learning differently than as a child, and therefore I also acknowledge that adults typically have particular reasons for learning with some unique factors to consider in optimizing learning (i.e., the assumptions in adult learning theory). In total, these two theoretical learning theories are the foundational components of this research.

I also brought a desire to give the educators, each, an opportunity to tell the story of the lived PD experiences. This ontological assumption, where I view reality as subjective and dependent upon each participant's own experiences, is closely aligned with my social constructivism paradigm. Again, I viewed each interpretation as being developed around social interactions, yet each individually set a perspective or meaning of the situation. Each experience was first analyzed for the uniqueness it offered, for the story it unfolded, and then the sum of all data was analyzed for comprehensiveness towards describing and understanding the wholeness of these PD experiences.

### **Data Collection**

This phenomenological research used multiple descriptive means and forms of data: teacher self-efficacy scale, participant written expression (i.e., from essay responses, lived-experience descriptive writings, and artifact collections), semi-structured interviews, focus group or follow-up sessions, and researcher's running records (i.e., field notes and analytic memoing). During this part of the research, a spreadsheet was used to check off when each data piece was collected from each participant and maintained some brief notes on this spreadsheet as well. A formal list of steps (see Appendix O) aided in organization of the different data collection / data analysis steps per participant. For example, I could have been on step 11 for one participant, on

step 14 with another, and step 16 with yet another participant. In order to keep sequencing aligned with all data collected, coded, and analyzed in the same manner, accurate and continual field notes were imperative.

### **Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale**

This teacher efficacy scale, constructed by Ralf Schwarzer, Gerdmarie S. Schmitz, and Gary T. Daytner in 1999 initially included 27 questions related to job accomplishment, skill development on the job, social interactions on the job, and coping with job stress. Using this data analysis from 300 German teachers, the assessment was narrowed down to the 10 question instrument used.

The 10 question Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (See Appendix E) was administered to all participants since efficacy is an important component of the conceptual framework for this research. The information from this scale was used as another means to describe each participant. This scale is comprised of ten statements which relates to one's personal feelings towards teaching. The participant responds to each question with one of four choices: (1) not at all true, (2) barely true, (3) moderately true, or (4) exactly true. The final results for each participant provide a score with a range of *10 to 40* points. Each participant's self-efficacy score was previously included in Table 6.

### **Participant Written Expressions**

All learners have various strengths and weaknesses. By providing an opportunity for the participant to write her own words, another avenue for capturing the participant's full story was provided, with a means for differentiation for learners (i.e., participants in this situation). "[T]he most straightforward way to go about our research is to ask selected individuals to write their experiences down" (van Manen, 1990, p. 63).

However, it is critical to consider the possible difficulties for participants towards writing tasks, as most participants will speak more in depth than they will write (van Manen, 1990). In this research, participants' written expressions (i.e., essay responses, lived-experience writings, artifact collections) compiled 123 pages of data.

**Essay responses.** People have a variety of modalities preferred in learning situations. One way to differentiate for these learners is to provide multiple ways to assess the learning, multiple ways to share an experience. In this way, each participant provided written responses to three general prompts:

1. Describe yourself.
2. Describe your feelings regarding professional development.
3. What have been your on-the job experiences after completing the professional development on Tribes?

Although each prompt had splinter, or additional probe prompts, for more in-depth responses (Patton, 2002) and for furthering the participant's understanding of the response focus (see Appendix F), only the above three prompts were required. All prompts were open-ended in nature, encouraging each participant to answer comfortably, in her own way, and in her own area of comfort (Bogden & Biklen, 2003 as cited in Norton, 2013).

The data collected from the first prompt (i.e., Describe yourself.) was primarily used to help construct the participant introductions and also in efficacy-related accounts. It allows for the participant to answer as freely and as completely as she chooses, giving the participant full control regarding the personal details shared. Background types of questions are standard in qualitative research, as it allows the participant to be identified in relation to the other participants (Patton, 2002).

The second prompt (i.e., Describe your feelings regarding professional development.) focused on encouraging the participant to use her voice, to gain her own perspective and to also gain insight on the participant's attitude toward PD. Slavit and Roth-McDuffie (2013) found the teacher's attitude, as well as the teacher's motivation and awareness as critical aspects in PD implementation.

The third prompt (i.e., What have been your on-the job experiences after completing the PD on Tribes?) focused on encouraging the participant to ponder specific situations and experiences related to Tribes as well as the everyday teacher environment, more specifically- her (i.e., the participant's) environment. Teachers views relating to their experiences, individually or socially, and the related goals impact learning. It is possible to gather insight on the participant's level of motivation, attitude, willingness to work on a challenge, as well as one's interest in working collaboratively. All of these factors benefit learning and implementation of PD. Motivation, attitude, and willingness to continue working on a difficult task have been found to relate to one's efficacy (Klassen et al., 2011 as cited in Tschannen-Morgan & Chen, 2014), while Aspors et al. (2015) emphasized the importance of collaboration for continued PD learning.

These written expressions provided another means for a descriptive account. The participant's word choice and exact experiences provided insights into the participant's story and becoming more acquainted with the participant.

**Experience writings.** Experience writing is used to gather many stories or lived experiences regarding the phenomenon of post-PD experiences; these stories provide data which allows the researcher to become more experienced through these authentic texts. It is important for the participant to describe the experiences, rather than the reflections (van Manen, 1990) as the reflections are already analyzed. The researcher can decrease the likelihood of it occurring by



discussing this factor with the participants. Some suggestions for producing a lived experience description are provided by van Manen (1990; p. 65):

- Describe the experience as you lived through it.  
Avoid explanations, generalizations, and interpretations.
- Describe the experience related to your feelings.
- Focus on one incident or experience during each writing.
- Focus on an example that stands out.
- Describe the environment around you, during this one incident.
- Your description does not need to have fancy word choice; just describe as you recall.

Each participant wrote three separate on-the-job experiences (post-PD). An example of experience writing descriptions was provided to the participants (see Appendix G). A spiral notebook within a 3-ring binder was provided to each participant. In addition, a fill-able, electronic document was also provided to each participant.

One participant handwrote her experiences and provided a paper form before the interview. All other participants selected to type the lived-experience descriptive writings (i.e., narrative account of an experience); each participant emailed this data before the participant's scheduled interview. This, along with any other artifacts (i.e., lesson plans and reflections from the PD) were collected, coded, and analyzed for meaning.

**Artifact collections.** Although not required for participation in this research, participants were asked to share any artifacts, such as implementation sequence, lesson plans, reflective journaling, or any artifacts pertinent to this research. All collections were planned to be photocopied by the researcher and originals returned to the participant within three days. However, all

items were supplied electronically; therefore, there was no need to return the originals. All artifacts were coded using the same coding techniques and sequence.

### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

Interviews are the heart of the data in most phenomenology for this is where the participant's voice is most likely to be heard, as the semi-structured interview grants a probe into the lived experiences (Galletta, 2013). The interviews followed Patton's (2002) three suggestions for heuristic research: (a) The interviews were informal and conversational in nature where the participant's dialogue naturally unfolds. (b) A general *interview guide* was used, highlighting a set of topics to explored. (c) Some questions/key topics were asked of all participants.

When all the same, pre-established, questions are asked in the same order (i.e., standardized interview), the effects of the interviewer are decreased. It is also easier to analyze this type of data because all participants respond to the same items. However, the standardized interview process also has some shortcomings by limiting the participant's focus. Regardless of the participant's response, the exact next question must be asked. For this, the semi-structured interview guide incorporates more flexibility (Patton, 2002).

All in all, the interviews followed the Interview Protocol (see Appendix J) making a set structure for all the interviews, with a predetermined list of possible questions or topics, but the interviews remained flexible and conversational in nature. "The early part of the interview is intended to elicit . . . the central story that will give your interview direction and depth. The questions are open-ended in order to create space for the participants to narrate their experiences" (Galletta, 2013, p. 46-47). These standard questions were carefully crafted, intentionally broad in nature at the beginning. These broad questions later become more specific to each TLC

component, as necessary. However, the initial broad questions, allow enough flexibility for the participant to expound and freely describe the experiences. It also gives the researcher some flexibility in crafting the next question to relate to the participant's current discussion, as long as the topic is one listed on the semi-structured interview guide.

The interviews were audio recorded using a Sony digital voice recorder (ICD-PX333) with intelligent noise cut capabilities. In total, these oral expressions captured from the participants consisted of nearly nine hours of one-on-one interview audio recordings. These oral expressions were professionally transcribed using verbatim transcription techniques to create 228 pages of verbatim transcription data. Interviews lasted between 14 and 61 minutes in duration, with many ironically lasting 27 minutes. Due to relocations, six of the 17 interviews were conducted through the use of advanced technology, such as Google Hangouts, Skype, or Face Time. Each participant needing the use of technology for the interview selected the best means for herself. Electronic interviews were still conducted with one participant at a time and audio recorded, transcribed, and coded following the same techniques and sequence.

The questions captured a description of the elementary teacher's on-the-job experiences after self-selected PD: insights on the teacher's efficacy level, reflections on PD, levels of implementation related to the different components of Tribes, perceptions of factors having a positive and those having a negative impact on implementation on the PD components, and perceptions of best practices on one's own learning strategies. In addition, Galletta (2013) mentioned the importance of setting a comfortable environment for increased participant sharing with the semi-structured interview having three phases: opening segment—creating space for the participant experience, middle segment—questions for greater specificity, and concluding segment—revisiting the opening narrative for theoretical connections and closure.

**Semi-Structured interview questions.**

1. Describe your teaching career.\*
2. How much of an impact do you think teachers (schools or you) have on student learning outcomes?\*
3. Describe your perspective regarding professional development.\*
4. Describe your on-the-job, post Tribes professional development experiences.  
Describe it so that a non-teacher might understand your specific experiences. \*
5. Why did you select this PD? \*
6. Describe how you learn most effectively.
7. What professional development experiences do you perceive as useful?
8. To what extent, if at all, has Tribes professional development been professionally useful?
9. To what extent, if at all, have components of Tribes been implemented into your classroom since the Tribes professional development?
10. Describe your views on Tribes.
11. From your perspective, has this professional development on Tribes impacted your classroom instruction and student learning? Explain.
12. Describe any factors or influences that you perceive as helping you to implement this PD?
13. Describe any factors or influences that you perceive as hindering you from implementing this PD?
14. Describe your perceptions of why PD may not have been implemented by all participants.\*
15. Is there anything more you would like to share regarding your on-the-job experiences after this professional development? \*

Although each interview prompt or interview question had splinter, or additional probes, for the overall purpose of more in-depth responses (Patton, 2002) only seven of the above (i.e., \* or see Appendix K) questions or prompts were required. All required questions or prompts were open-ended in nature, encouraging each participant to answer comfortably (Bogden & Biklen, 2003 as cited in Norton, 2013).

**Opening segment: Creating space for the participant's experience.** The prompts remains open-ended. The opening part of the “interview is intended to elicit . . . the central story that will give . . . direction and depth” (Galletta, 2013, p. 46-47) to the interview.

Required, prompt one (i.e., Describe your teaching career.) focused on establishing a comfortable environment for the participant and encourages some background data in order for the participant to be identified in relation to the other participants (Patton, 2002). It also provides some data triangulation with essay prompt one (i.e., Describe yourself.), both relating to various degrees of the participant's personality. Several studies indicate effective teacher traits exist. One example, through the analysis of over 300 studies, Stronge (2007) created a list of effective teacher traits as: caring, fair, enthusiastic, motivational, respectful of others, and has positive relationships with students in and out of the classroom (as cited in Watson et al., 2010). It also has the potential to provide information related towards the conceptual framework of social cognitive theory by indicating factors related to self-efficacy.

Required, prompt two (i.e., How much of an impact do you think teaches/our school/you have on student learning outcomes? Explain.) provided little direction. Yet, this question also provided insight on the participant's self-efficacy, and another means for data triangulation. The question is quite open ended, so that the participant is able to self-select and freely discuss her own views.

Required, prompt three (i.e., Describe your perspective regarding PD.) is the same prompt used within the essay prompts, offering specific triangulation of the data. As previously discussed, Slavit and Roth-McDuffie (2013) found the teacher's attitude, as well as the teacher's motivation and awareness as critical aspects in PD implementation.

Required, prompt four (i.e., Describe your on-the-job, post Tribes PD experiences.) is also a prompt used within the essay written response, aiding in the specific triangulation of the data. Again, this prompt attempts to gain insight on the participant's motivation, attitude, work habits, and efficacy level.

Since these prompts are so broad, the participant was able to take the responses in many directions. At this point, I gave specific attention to the participant's word choice, body language, and areas of emphasis by "listening carefully to the unfolding story, probing to ensure portions of the narrative are clear, and noting" (Galletta, 2013, p. 47) these in a short list. Although the interview was audio-recorded, it was also important for these acknowledgments to be noted within the field notes and used to properly direct the upcoming prompts or questions posed to the participant. These critical pieces of data were immediately used to guide the remainder of the interview.

**Middle segment: Questions for greater specificity.** This middle segment was less structured in nature, for it was guided by the participant's previous responses. The researcher may reflect upon, draw from, or question deeper meanings from prior responses. In order for this to be non-threatening for the participant, the phrasing is critical, as well as an established level of trust being developed during the prior segment. The questions became narrower or more specific in nature. Since this interview was semi-structured, questions were constructed or subtly adjusted

based upon the participant's responses. In qualitative research, the researcher is considered the main research tool, continually making these research decisions (Galletta, 2013).

Required, prompt five (i.e., Why did you select this PD?) had the *possibility* to provide participant insight related to willingness to implement, collaborative preferences, teacher experiences, teaching-style, educational philosophy, and general teacher personality. It is only a possibility due to the participant's response not known prior to answering the question, and this question has the potential for a varied of responses.

Optional prompts were expected to elicit a response indicating either a positive or a negative factor perceived to impact PD implementation based upon the participant's own preferences. Prompt six (i.e., Describe how you learn most effectively.) was expected to indicate a teacher preference to teach in a similar manner in which she likes to learn. Prompt seven (i.e., What PD experiences do you perceive as useful? ) was expected to gain insights towards positive factors influencing PD implementation. Prompt eight (i.e., To what extent, if at all, has Tribes PD been professionally useful? ) was expected to provide, perhaps, both positive and negative factors influencing PD implementation. Prompt nine (i.e., To what extent, if at all, have components of Tribes been implemented into your classroom since the Tribes PD?) is directly related to one of the research questions. Other prompts, including the pre-interview checklist, directly and indirectly relate to this question, offering data triangulation.

**Concluding segment: Revisiting the opening narrative for theoretical connections and closure.** The final part of the interview still required less structure but more research-mind-set decisions. The researcher directs questions at areas still needing exploration, any contradictions, and iconic words, "or phrase[s] pregnant with meaning" (Galletta, 2013, p. 51) to get to the essence of the phenomenon.

Optional prompts were primarily developed to provide further insight in answering the research questions, specifically on positive and negative factors impacting Tribes PD . Prompt 10 (i.e., Describe your views on Tribes.), prompt 11 (i.e., From your perspective, has this PD on Tribes impacted your classroom instruction and student learning? Explain.), prompt 12 (i.e., Describe any factors or influences that you perceive as helping you to implement this PD?), and prompt 13 (i.e., Describe any factors or influences that you perceive as hindering you from implementing this PD?) are questions expected to be answered within the open-ended, naturally unfolding, previous sections. If, however, these concepts have not been explored, these prompts are options for questioning.

Required, prompt 14 (i.e., Describe your perceptions of why PD may not have been implemented by all participants.) provides an indirect, with or without ownership, opportunity for the participant to indicate factors perceived as having an impact on PD implementation. This does not indicate any positive or negative implications, nor does it express a desire for environmental influences or personal factors. It is completely open-ended, allowing the participant to freely describe her own perceptions.

Required, prompt 15 (i.e., Is there anything more you would like to share regarding your on-the-job experiences after this PD?) offers a final opportunity for the participant to share any data the participant finds important. The end of the interview should be less intense, giving an opportunity for the participant to share any additional experiences related to the phenomenon (Galletta, 2013). Similarly, Patton (2002) noted that by allowing the interviewees to have the final open-ended free-response, this could lead to the richest and most unexpected data. This type of question: “Is there anything more you would like to share about your post-PD experiences?”



provided another opportunity for the participant to tell “her story,” rather than being strictly structured with specific questions.

### **Focus Group or Follow-up Sessions**

After all interviews were completed, transcribed, member checked, and coded, two focus group sessions were scheduled. The focus group protocol and sequence (see Appendix M) was utilized. Participants were asked to attend one session. If a participant was not able to attend either pre-scheduled focus group, a follow-up session was requested. For example, 10 participants were not able to attend due to the extensive travel and expense, therefore an electronic form (see Appendix N) was used and an electronic follow-up initiated as previously planned. An electronic focus group was also considered; however, with participants residing in different countries (i.e. South Korea, Japan, Germany, Italy, and the United States), an adequate time for each of the 10 participants was not feasible.

Six of the seven participants, who still live locally, attended the first focus group session. Therefore the second focus group was canceled, and a follow-up, as used with the distant participants was utilized for one local participant. The six assumptions of adult learners were considered and utilized in order to increase the likelihood of this time being valuable. In addition, a time for collaborating and socializing with food was available.

The formal portion of the focus group lasted less than an hour. The session took place at the research site after the duty day ended. Each participant placed colored stickers on a community poster in order to identify that participant’s perception of the easiest component to implement, perception of the hardest component to implement, the perceived most successful component implemented, the perceived least successful component implemented, the perceived top two most important components for increased student learning, and the perceived least

important component. Each color had a specific meaning or characteristic assigned. The stickers were limited, therefore the participants could not reuse the same category; they had to make a selection. The stickers representing “Did not implement” were available for multiple placements, as needed by each participant. In staying true to Tribes however, there was an option to “pass.” Tribe components were utilized (i.e., agreements, appreciations, social learning, reflections, etc.) throughout the focus group session.

In the planning stage of this research, before the data was collected, I had selected three basic questions, related to the research questions or conceptual framework, for use in the focus group. These questions were: (a) What factors did you notice to have a positive impact on implementing Tribes PD? (b) What factors did you notice to have a negative impact on implementing Tribes PD? (c) How did you learn and retain the components of Tribes PD best? However, after data collection and analysis of the written and oral expressions, I did not feel as though I needed to collect more data on these items. The 17 participants’ voices were clear regarding these initially planned items.

Although some data was available regarding the participant’s views towards the individual components of Tribes, I felt as though more data was needed in this area for a clear picture or clear understanding had not been attained. Therefore, part of the focus and follow-up sessions was geared towards participants adding insight into each component regarding perceived level of success, importance, difficulty level of implementation, or not implementing. As aligning with Tribes, participants were also provided with an option to pass or restrain from answering any portion. In addition, my analysis identified another area, more critically needing clarification.

About two months into the data collection, the school system implemented required PD with College and Career Readiness Standards for Math (CCRSM) for all elementary classroom teachers. There was over six months difference in time between the first interview and the last. Although the second interview addressed this upcoming issue, as time moved forward, the presence of this required PD became more noticeable. Those interviews which were conducted towards the end of the data collection phase often had strong feelings regarding this required PD. In honoring the participants' voices along with the open-ended interview process, participants were not corrected or stopped from expressing their experiences even though the questions included "self-selected" PD. Therefore these required PD experiences seeped into the data set, requiring a later separation. For that reason, the focus group and follow-up sessions also targeted characterizing self-selected PD from required PD.

During the focus group, one large graph was utilized for all participants; this allowed for the data to be collected as a whole. Meaning, individual participant views were not needed. The collection of views as a whole was coded and analyzed as a whole. A quiet, reflection concluded this activity. After a community circle time of sharing an appreciation, apology, or an "aha" moment, the focus group ended with words of gratitude from the researcher. Some participants stayed beyond the focus group time; a social collaboration time took place while eating. Some non-participants (i.e., other colleagues with a nearby classroom) also joined this social time.

For those participants now living outside of the research local community, data was collected with electronic forms. This data was added in without regard to whom it belonged. Again, the focus group data utilized the collection as a whole. Five participants were not involved in the CCRSM PD required for classroom teachers; therefore, these participants did not characterize the similarities and differences between self-selected and required PD. However,

since these participants did not experience this required PD, they would not have shared any experiences on this required PD either, allowing their experiences related to self-selected PD to already be part of the data collected. After six weeks of attempting to collect this data from each participant, the data collected from 15 of the 17 participants was analyzed for the research findings.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis in qualitative research must first begin with the collection of rich data, often from open-ended interviews where the participant's lived experiences are captured in a natural setting (Creswell, 2007). Data analysis can take many forms; the researcher's decisions in coding methods and overall data analysis, are critical factors, making the researcher an important research tool (Galletta, 2013).

The hermeneutical researcher draws upon her own deep thoughts and experiences related to the phenomenon in order to reflectively make an unbiased interpretation, making meaning from the participants' shared experiences and the researcher's reflexive journaling (van Manen, 1990, 2003). This reflexive journal provides a path for the researcher to get close to the phenomenon (van Manen, 1993).

### **Transcriptions**

The first step in analyzing the interviews required a verbatim transcription of the recorded interviews. A professional transcriptionist transcribed each interview using the verbatim transcription process. This process was selected for it retains the voice of the participant; grammatical corrections or other deletions are not permitted.

The researcher personally reviewed each transcription for accuracy by listening to the interview audio and reviewing the transcription simultaneously. Each transcription was seven

and 30 pages in length. The transcriptions were also checked by the participant for accuracy, for both content and meaning (i.e., member checked). No participant requested changes. After checking for accuracy of the transcription, a title with participant pseudonym and page number heading, along with a two inch right margin were added. The heading provided increased organization for the multiple pages of transcription. The increased right margin allowed space for manual coding.

### **Coding**

Through repeated analysis of the transcriptions and data collections, similarities were identified and codes created to match these similarities. Coding is one way to analyze qualitative data, and in coding there are many methods (i.e., ways and kinds) of coding possible. It occurs in a cyclical manner with repeated reflections in order to make a transition between data collection and data analysis (Saldaña, 2013). “Coding is not just labeling, it is *linking*” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 8). The code is based on some similarity within the data or a connection between the data into some shared characteristic. The manner of coding, the extent of coding, and the order of coding methods used is directed by the researcher. “Coding is not a precise science; it is primarily an interpretive act” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 4).

The researcher’s written documentation (i.e., *field notes*) and the researcher’s journal entries about participants, the phenomenon, and research process (i.e., *analytic memo writing*) are also important analysis pieces and can expedite the formulation of key findings. Analytic memo writing is a critical component for researchers (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006) to develop before, during, and after the coding process (Saldaña). A sample is provided (see Appendix L).

Saldaña (2013) offers a generic list for coding, yet cautions for researchers to be careful in not getting stuck with methods before you know if you are getting all the needed information.

Table 7

*Cycles of Coding Selected for Initial Coding Plan Based on Saldaña's Generic List*

- 
1. Pre-coding
  2. First Cycle Coding
    - a. Attribute coding – as a management technique
    - b. Holistic Coding – all data for “overview”
    - c. Descriptive Coding – detailed inventory of comments used in field notes, documents, and artifacts
    - d. In Vivo Coding – Attuned to a participant's language and work choice in transcripts.
  3. Second Cycle Coding
    - a. Eclectic Coding – refines First Cycle coding
    - b. Pattern or Focused Coding—categorizes coded data
- 

Note: Adapted from *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*, (2nd ed.), p. 64, by Saldaña, J., 2013. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

The researcher should maintain a willingness to change coding options if the researcher recognizes that a better method is necessary. However, based on Saldaña generic list options, a generic coding plan, as provided in Table 7, was initially selected as the coding cycles.

**Pre-Coding.** After member checks were completed, each transcription was pre-coded on a paper copy. Holistic coding, or a single code or general topic added to a large amount of data (Saldaña, 2013), was written in the two inch right hand margins. Key words were also underlined. The circling, highlighting, underlining, or changing of fonts of words with potential importance (i.e., *pre-coding*) can be a starting point before first cycle coding with words or short phrases (Saldaña). There was at least one day between the pre-coding and first coding cycle.

Saldaña (2013) recommends starting early and maintaining a separate codebook which includes a list of emergent codes, a content description, and perhaps a basic example. In addition, he emphasizes the importance of the researcher maintaining flexibility in coding methods until

the right fit or structure is obtained. During the pilot study, flexibility with coding techniques was utilized, as Saldaña encouraged. Changes were made in the coding methods and procedures, first following those listed in Table 7 and then progressing to those listed in Table 8.

I found it necessary to change the organization of my data as well. After trying a few formats, I found one that worked for me. Once established, all data followed this same coding process and same procedures (see Appendix N). Although this research was split into three coding cycles as illustrated in Table 8, this same research could be viewed as having many more coding cycles since several coding methods were utilized. “In Vivo Codes could be used as the sole coding method for the First Cycle of data analysis” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 94).

Table 8

*Cycles of Coding Used as Final Analysis in this Research*

- 
1. Pre-coding
    - a. Underlining what I identified as key or important points related to the data
    - b. Holistic Coding – Chunking of broad topic areas for a general overview
  2. First Cycle Coding
    - a. Attribute coding – as a management technique includes data format and type of coding
    - b. Process Coding – gerunds used to show observable and conceptual actions in data; process and descriptive coding were used simultaneously.
    - c. Descriptive Coding – one or two short noun phrases identifying key data every few lines; this is a splitter, more detailed, approach to holistic coding.
    - d. Magnitude Coding
      - i. Impacts toward Implementation: POS / NEG
      - ii. Levels of Efficacy: HIGH / LOW
    - e. In Vivo Coding – Attuned to a participant’s language and work choice in transcripts.
      - i. Electronically highlighting direct quotes in yellow
      - ii. Electronically highlighting key words within the quotes light blue
  3. Second Cycle Coding
    - a. Eclectic Coding – refines First Cycle coding
    - b. Focused / Pattern Coding—categorizes coded data
- 

Note: Adapted from *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*, (2nd ed.) by Saldaña, J., 2013. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

**First cycle coding.** The first coding phase included: attribute, process, descriptive, magnitude, and in-vivo coding. Attribute coding acts more as an aide in the organization of data (Saldaña, 2013). As a header on top of each data set, “DATA FORMAT: \_\_\_\_\_” and “TYPE OF CODING: \_\_\_\_\_” was added, with the blanks filled in appropriately.

All data was read thoroughly. I selected process coding for it focuses on gerunds or “-ing” words which imply actions. I also selected descriptive coding for it assigns labels, usually nouns, to small sections of text. It is much like holistic pre-coding, except descriptive coding



focuses on describing smaller pieces of data (Saldaña, 2013). These two coding methods (i.e., process and descriptive coding) together focus on nouns and actions. Both nouns and actions are the basic components of a story. Since phenomenology is focused on the story of the participants, together these methods seem most appropriate. As each code was assigned, it was placed in a separate electronic file.

Still within the First Coding Cycle, data was coded using magnitude coding methods where intensity is focused upon (Saldaña, 2013). Data emphasizing the impact towards implementation was coded with “POS” for positive or “NEG” for negative. This data directly relates to the research sub-questions. In a similar way, data indicating levels of efficacy were coded with “HIGH” or “LOW.” This data relates to the conceptual framework, specifically social cognitive theory.

Particular attention to the words of the participant is a critical component when coding (Moustakas, 1994). *In Vivo Codes*, key words or phrases used by the participants, are critical. The focus is directly on the participant’s exact words. The naming of the code, as by the participant, will offer insights grounded in the lived experiences of the participant (Galletta, 2013). The key words selected were electronically highlighted in yellow, indicating important data directly quoted from the participant.

As identified by Saldaña (2013), first cycle coding methods occur during the initial coding of data and tend to be fairly simple and direct, but second cycle coding methods are more challenging, requiring analytical skills such as classifying, prioritizing, and conceptualizing. However, after careful and extensive first cycle coding is complete, this becomes a bridging component to the second cycle coding methods.

**Second cycle coding.** After all data went through the first coding cycle, I began the Second Cycle of Coding, or re-coding. Saldaña (2013) characterizes Eclectic Coding as a refinement of the First Cycle of codes – a “recoding based on the learnings of the experience” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 188).

Looking for common codes and finding the most frequent codes, naturally seemed like the next step. This type of coding is referred to as Focused Coding or Pattern Coding (Saldaña, 2013). The separate electronic file or list of codes created during the First Cycle of Coding created a compilation of 473 total codes. Many of these codes repeated or were similar in meaning. Within these codes there were 70 mentions of *Time*, 63 mentions of *Teacher*, and 26 mentions of *Collaboration*.

The In Vivo Codes were re-coded or re-focused upon. The yellow highlights, from the First Cycle of In Vivo Coding, were re-read and focused upon more deeply. Within the yellow highlights, or exact words from the participants, if further, more precise, critical, or key words were identified within the In Vivo Codes, these words were highlighted light blue. The highlighted quotes were then copied and pasted into a new electronic document. These statements of *codable moments* remain direct quotes from each participant.

These further examined In Vivo Codes were re-coded electronically. Phenomenology is focused on telling the participant’s story, in a descriptive dialogue of *what* and *how* (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore process and descriptive coding (i.e., focusing on gerunds and nouns) were again selected coding methods. A text box was added to the right side for this re-coding. Simultaneously, a *slimmed* list of codes was maintained, with an effort for similar meanings to be assigned the same code.

The slimmed list of codes included 84 total codes, slimmed from 473 codes during the first coding cycle. Similar codes and those with similar qualities were grouped with similarities related to this research. Of these codes, nine related to adult learning theory, 13 related to social cognitive learning theory, 10 related to the research sub-question one, 23 related to the research sub-question two, and 29 related to the research sub-question three.

### **Gateway Process: Creating Poetic Renditions to Hear the Participants' Voices**

Carolyn Mears' Gateway process of using an "excerpted narrative" (Mears, 2009, p. 131) as a means for deeper understanding of a phenomenon; this deeper understand is the "gateway" for others to share in this experience. It is the process of reducing words into a poetic structure for powerful communication. The order of words and statements can be moved as long as the meaning is not changed, but the words remain verbatim with a goal of maintaining the participant's voice in communicating the experience, the story.

"Creativity seems to be one of those special human qualities that play an especially important part in qualitative analysis, interpretation, and reporting" (Patton, 2002, p. 513). A poetic rendition was crafted using each participant's *voice*. Written data and then oral data (i.e., transcriptions) are presented as a means for readers to enter the "gate" and experience this educator related phenomenon of PD in the workplace.

"Sufficient description and direct quotations should be included to allow the reader to enter into the situation and thoughts of the people represented in the report. Description should stop short, however, of becoming trivial and mundane" (Patton, 2002, p. 503). Unlike Stake (1995) who emphasizes telling the whole story, Patton cautions on leaving in too many details and emphasizes the difficult yet necessary responsibility in focusing the data. "The agony on the

part of the evaluator of having omitted things is matched only by the readers' agony in having to read those things that were not omitted but should have been" (p. 511).

With this in mind, a purposeful effort was made to give a deep description of each participant, followed by two sections of a poetic rendition or excerpted narrative with deep description. The reader can elect to review all 17 participant introductions and all poetic renditions, or the reader can follow a specific participant. This initial thick description becomes the foundation for the interpretation (Patton, 2002).

Once the themes are presented under the appropriate research sub-question, the voices of the participants remain evident, but the quantity of those examples provided in the poetic rendition is now only sampled. As Patton remarked, "the purpose of analysis is to organize the description so that it is manageable" (Patton, 2002, p. 503).

## **Themes**

The qualitative researcher must devote significant time to analyze the transcripts, to organize the descriptive information on each code, and to repeatedly adjust codes and themes as the construction of meaning occurs in "waves of interpretation" (Galletta, 2013, p. 122). This is a slow layering process of recognizing similarities and differences, and then bringing meaning to each. This process of verifying codes and categories continued until *saturation* (i.e., no new ideas emerge) occurred. Saturation of the data was actually suspected after coding the 10th data set. However, as an additional check on the data completeness, all interviews and data sets were completed following the same protocol.

As previously presented, a code is a word or phrase describing a piece of the data that is explicit; these codes are categorized to create the themes. Themes are phrases or sentences describing the sometimes subtle meanings of a data set.

“A theme is an *outcome* of coding, categorization, or analytic reflection” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 14). These codes lead to themes in the data, yet in phenomenology it is critical to maintain the voice of the participants. Although the participants’ voices should still be evident, but the description should be balanced, for too much description becomes its own confusion (Patton, 2002).

These 10 themes are presented under the appropriate research sub-question, in order to answer the primary research question: How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development?

### **Trustworthiness**

In any research, having credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability are necessary. Without these components, it is unclear if the data is correct. With inaccurate or incomplete data, the research lacks trustworthiness and is then not worthy of review. Therefore the research would then lack usefulness. This research utilized several methods and organizational structures in order to increase areas of trustworthiness. In essence, increasing the trustworthiness of the research will then increase the value and overall usefulness of the findings. Therefore, the researcher should strive to attain and maintain increased trustworthiness.

### **Credibility**

Credibility refers to the accuracy of which the findings describe the reality. It directly relates to the truthfulness of interpretations and conclusions (Ary et al., 2006). *Data triangulation* or the use of several data collection forms in order to verify all point to the same conclusions, *reflexivity* or the continued reflection with self-awareness, and in-depth interviews with member checks were utilized. In addition participants were able to use the Tribes’

agreement to skip or pass on any question. The data is also confidential in nature. These aspects of the research help to provide increased accuracy, increasing credibility.

To ensure credibility of the researcher-created instruments (i.e., interview questions) a committee of experts, including three educators and one administrator, all holding various doctoral degrees, reviewed these items. A few changes in format were initially made during two separate rounds of expert examinations. The expert panel agreed that the questions were appropriate for this research, providing face validity. In addition, a pilot study with focus on the interview questions being aligned to the research questions was utilized. After the pilot study was conducted, the semi-structured interview guide could have been adjusted as necessary, with another review from the expert panel. After this possible adjustment, no further changes would be permitted to these tools. No adjustments were necessary during the pilot study review. All data collected from participants utilized the same tools; however, the interview was semi-structured with some standardized topic components.

### **Dependability**

The use of the same tools for data collection purposes also increases dependability of the research. Dependability, called reliability in quantitative research, deals with consistency within the research. Dependability is also provided through the use of a detailed research plan, as presented in this research. A list of data collection and analysis steps is provided (see Appendix O) as well as the researcher's analytical memoing (see sample in Appendix L). This provides availability for an acceptable audit trail, increasing the dependability by allowing other researchers to follow and perhaps even duplicate the research format.

The member checks, allows the participants to clarify, adjust, or change any information with incorrect meaning or emphasize a more accurate account of the participant's true

experience. The code-recode procedures check accuracy and consistency in coding the data. The use of multiple data sources allows for triangulation or cross checking of the data for even more verification of accuracy. In general, multiple methods and numerous data sources add to the dependability of research findings (Ary et al., 2006). Member checks, code-recode procedures, and triangulation all provide a means to verify the accuracy of the data, increasing the dependability of this study.

### **Transferability**

Transferability, although limited in all qualitative research (McMillan & Schmacher, 2001), addresses the need for research to be applicable to other contexts. A detailed account of the research plan was provided along with detailed descriptions of the participants and context where the research occurred (Ary et al., 2006). This allows for future inquiries to determine if this research is transferable to other specific situations. It also provides a means for this research to be replicated.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability relates to the research being free of bias (Ary et al., 2006). Reflective journaling (i.e., reflexivity, reflective note taking, memoing, or analytical memoing) were utilized during my own journaling throughout the research. In these field notes, personal opinions were acceptable for they were recognized as such, my opinions. Self-awareness has the potential to put my own bias into perspective, for an overall means of reducing researcher bias. My own story related to PD is shared as an additional means of making myself, my situation, and my perspectives as transparent as possible (see Appendix P).

In order to increase these trustworthy factors and to decrease the influence of the researcher's own values, preconceptions, and biases, an audit trail was utilized. In total, nearly

50 pages of typed analytical memoing and about three-fourths of a 200 page composition book with handwritten, usually double-spaced, documentation were logged as a means of improving the trustworthiness of this qualitative research. A complete and detailed research plan, various forms of reflective journaling (see Appendix L), the researcher's own story is reflected upon (see Appendix P), organized coding documents utilized for each participant (see Appendix Q), and organized theme development documents (see Appendix R). Patton (2002) acknowledged that although not completely possible, the researcher should strive for objectivity.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Although there is little risk of harm, participants could feel as though judgments are placed upon individual actions related to TLC implementation. However, measures were taken to decrease possible identification of participants. Participants' identities were kept as private as possible by use of pseudonyms. It is extremely unlikely for the general population to identify participants; yet, those participating in this research are aware of other's participation in the research.

Due to the small population of participants, it is possible for one participant to identify another participant, even with the use of a pseudonym. In addition, community members could identify a participant based upon the detailed participant introduction. Due to this, each participant was asked to approve the individual introduction. One participant requested one detail to be deleted; this request was honored and then resubmitted to the participant for approval. In the end, each participant approved the individual introduction.

The interview data and artifacts were kept confidential. Any participant's involvement in the focus group could not be confidential data since it was an open forum. Participants could elect to not participate in the open forum used in the focus group and could also elect to pass or



not answer a particular question during the interview. On the consent form, participants were also informed of participation being voluntary, the ability to skip any interview question, and the ability to withdraw at any time without personal repercussions. All reasonable attempts were made to avoid harm to the participants.

The researcher has a working relationship with all participants; yet, these collegial relationships held no supervisory connections. Another possible weakness in the study relates to researcher bias. Qualitative methods of analysis with reflective journaling were also utilized in order to decrease researcher bias. Triangulation of data provided a means of checking for accuracy (Patton, 2002), fullness of data, and multiple perspectives from the 17 participants.

### **Summary**

“There are always trade-offs in research design” (Kubitskey et al., 2012, p. 425); however, in hearing the educators’ voices, this phenomenological study sought to describe elementary educators’ on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected PD. Strategies learned in educational PD are not consistently implemented into the learning environment (Antoniou & Kyriakides, 2013; Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gravani, 2007; Guskey, 2002; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; Webster-Wright, 2009). Additionally, little research has been conducted exploring teachers’ post-PD teaching experiences (Webster-Wright, 2009). Therefore, studies regarding the current educators’ perceptions of PD are needed (Wasserman, 2009).

This research sought to address this gap by exploring teachers’ perspectives regarding on-the-job experiences after self-selected PD. PD and continued PD are on-going phenomena worthy of more research due to implications on student learning (Desimone, 2009; Guskey &

Yoon, 2009; Kubitskey et al., 2012). The overall purpose of this phenomenological research was to describe the elementary educators' on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected PD.

Schwarzer, Schmitz, and Daytner's (1999) Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale was used to inform on the participant's teacher efficacy level. This information was used as a descriptive detail of the participant and to provide relative insights in regards to the social cognitive theory, one of the theoretical frameworks for this investigation.

Data was collected through: participants' written expressions (i.e., essay responses, lived-experience writings, and artifact collections). In addition, the researcher's field notes and analytical memoing were part of the data sources. All data were coded through several cycles of coding and in various coding methods. In vivo codes were used to extract the codable moments related to the research questions. These verbatim quotes were used to create a poetic rendition of each participant's experiences related to educational PD. Through analysis of codes, significant statements were clustered into similar themes. By exploring elementary teachers' perceptions of on-the-job experiences after a self-selected PD, this investigation aimed to describe the educators' post-PD experiences and to provide implications to benefit future PD.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

“[I]n the history of education, no improvement effort has ever succeeded in the absence of thoughtfully planned and well-implemented professional development”

(Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p. 497).

### Overview

In this chapter, an overview of the analysis process is provided, the 17 participants are introduced, and the results are presented from the data analysis. The results are first expressed through the use of each participant’s perspective with the specific use of language being drafted into a poetic rendition. Participants’ written expressions (i.e., essay responses, lived-experience writings, artifact collections) compiled 123 pages of data. The oral expressions consisted of nearly nine hours of one-on-one interview audio recordings. These oral expressions were professionally transcribed using verbatim transcription techniques to create 228 pages of verbatim transcription data. Each participant’s written expressions (i.e., essay responses, lived-experience writings, artifact collections), and then each participant’s oral expressions (i.e., through the verbatim transcriptions) were coded in a variety of ways and re-coded.

Specifically, the In Vivo Codes, capturing the participant’s specific voice, were used to create a “Gateway” for others to enter the world of this phenomenon of experiences after self-selected professional development. The In Vivo Codes are presented in a poetic fashion and provide the deep description of the phenomenon. This thick description becomes the justification for the interpretation (Patton, 2002).

Data collected from the focus group and follow up sessions is also shared. Similar codes and those with similar qualities evolved and are weaved into themes. These themes are presented

under each sub-question in order to answer the overall question: How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development?

In phenomenology, it is critical to maintain the voice of the participants; however, the amount shared should be limited and focused as to not bore the reader with unnecessary data (Patton, 2002). For this reason, only a selected few examples are presented under the themes.

Hermeneutic phenomenology tries to be attentive to both terms of its methodology: a *descriptive* (phenomenological) methodology because it wants to be attentive to how things appear, it wants to let things speak for themselves; it is an interpretive (hermeneutic) methodology because it claims that there are no such things as uninterpreted phenomena. (van Manen, 1990, p. 180)

In keeping true to hermeneutic phenomenology, participants' exact words were utilized in order to stay true to the participants' voices in answering the research sub-questions and developed themes. Carolyn Mear's Gateway Approach of using a poetic structure, or as she calls it, "an excerpted narrative" (2009, p. 131), is a way to share the participants' experiences. A poetic structure is provided for participant's written compilation of data and for the participant's oral expression (i.e., the transcribed interviews).

Again, the purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe elementary educators' on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development. This study was guided by the overall question: How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development? The three sub-questions include:

1. To what extent, if at all, has this PD been implemented?
2. What factors are perceived as positively impacting implementation of the PD?
3. What factors are perceived as negatively impacting implementation of the PD?

## Participants

The participants included 15 female and 2 male teachers. Participants individually have between three and 39 years of teaching experience, with a combined total of 258 years of teaching experience in a variety of areas in elementary school (i.e. kindergarten through fifth grade in both classroom and support areas). The self-efficacy scores of these teachers range from 29 to 40 with a possible range of 10-40. Participants also have a variety of formal education or degree completion, from bachelor degrees, master degrees, and approaching doctoral degree. Several participants also hold certification credentials in more than one teaching area. During the duration of this research (i.e., beginning of 2013, at the onset of the first PD offered, to the beginning of 2016, during the final data collection phase), 10 participants relocated to different regions/schools, three participants switched grade levels, and three participants switched teaching areas (i.e., between classroom and support).

As participants agreed to volunteer for this research, I made a list of characteristics for each participant, from my own perspective. I used these descriptive words in finding a *pseudonym meaning* which also represents the participant's character (i.e., from my perspective). This was completed before any data was collected and is based upon my own perspective. The pseudonyms are also in alphabetical order. Both alphabetical order and the pseudonym meanings (i.e., "Viewed as \_\_\_\_" as used below) are simply organizational tools for me, to aid in the participant number and my own identification of participant to pseudonym. More specifically, because the pseudonym matched my own perspective of the participant's character, it allowed me to use the pseudonym with ease, without the need for continual reference to the secured, protected list. These names do not represent any meaning in the research itself.

Information from the first essay response and researcher knowledge of each participant was used to construct the following introductions. In order to create uniformity and equality, an effort for the word count to be between 200-300 words per participant introduction was carefully and successfully crafted. Many participants expressed humility; however each participant approved the introduction, with one personal detail omitted, due to participant request, from the entire 17 participant original introductions.

### **Annalina ~ viewed as Graceful Light**

Annalina has a bubbly personality with a perfect, contagious smile. Some of her greatest character traits revolve around her friendly, caring, and God-like spirit. She has been in the educational field for 15 years in a variety of grade levels and positions as an aide, special education teacher, and guidance counselor. She is easy to talk with and recognizes the importance of showing students her own *humanness*, so that they recognize that no one is perfect. Annalina's professional and personal traits are magnetic, drawing both colleagues and students to her. Her positive relationship with students is evident with frequent laughs, continual smiles, and all the while maintaining a structured learning environment.

Every week, she has a theme color; her nails are painted to match her attire color for that week! She also loves karaoke and seems to always have a song softly erupting from her being. She volunteers and is actively involved in the music ministry at her church. Annalina is also working towards her doctoral degree and agreed to be involved as a participatory, pilot study. She was aware of being in the pre-test phase and involved in checking clarity of questions. This helpful act further exemplifies the nature of her character. She is the kind of person everyone enjoys being around; her true character is flawless!

### **Brigette ~ viewed as Strong**

Brigette has a strong, helpful, and involved personality. She has a strong work ethic and is usually at work a few hours before the required time. In addition, she volunteers on several committees and school related groups. To foster a love for reading and to implement fun-filled learning for students with additional instructional time, she sponsors reading clubs and educational games outside of the school day. Teaching as a supportive roll and helping students become the kind of person valued in society are important aspects of her teaching craft. Brigette has a wide repertoire of educational strategies, is a dedicated educator, and a knowledgeable colleague willing to help others.

She joined the educational field as a second career and has 29 years of experience, teaching every grade level, first through eighth, except third, and also teaching support positions, such as music, art, computers, and media. Brigette has also worked as a professional development trainer, school improvement liaison, and has always been willing to learn for a new challenge or needed position to be filled at her school. Brigette reads and incorporates research findings in order to enhance her understanding and to improve her practice as an educator. She is always up on the newest trends, both in research and in fashion.

### **Charity ~ viewed as Giving with Kindness**

Charity grew up in different countries but attended American schools. She began teaching, four years ago, at the elementary school that she once attended as a student. She comes from a “teaching” family with a strong Christian upbringing. She likes to try new strategies, uses a repertoire of technology while teaching, and enjoys collaborating with other teachers on her grade level. She has a creative nature about her and uses this creative flare in the classroom. Her

future plans include taking time away from the teaching field in order to complete her master's degree.

Charity is always willing to help others. She initially created and consistently puts many voluntary hours into a school program which honors fallen service members; it has always been well organized, planned with perfection, and contoured into a true memorial. Although she is relatively new to the teaching profession, it has never interrupted her ambitions. She has served as a grade level chair, co-chaired a Continual School Improvement Committee, helped develop the Mentorship Program at our school, and took the initiative with collection and organization of grade level data. Charity is certainly the manifestation of giving with kindness and has also been recognized in the local community by being recognized by General Thurman and also being named as the Veteran's of Foreign Wars (VFW) "Teacher of the Year" in 2013.

She is able to lead others but prefers to work in a collaborative setting. Charity has a soft nature about her, is flexible when working with others, and follows her heart. She is the kind of person everyone enjoys being around, both professionally and socially.

### **Docilla ~ viewed as Calm**

Docilla has an easy-going, quiet nature. She enjoys collaborating with others but does not enjoy the spot-light of speaking in front of a group. Docilla enjoys taking hands-on professional development that can be immediately implemented into the classroom. She has enjoyed all of her teaching positions - being a classroom teacher, small group specialist/support teacher, and also a large group specialist/support teacher. During her nine years as a teacher, she has taught fourth grade, fifth grade, Spanish, and math support. One of Docilla's strengths as a teacher is her ability to immediately improvise a lesson and to differentiate. She sees a positive environment as a critical component for the learning and has a natural tendency to incorporate CL structures. In



the past, several students have openly commented on enjoying how they work together in her class.

Docilla balances professional and personal responsibilities. With small children at home, she feels that the specialist positions are a better fit for her now; although, she also recognizes that she will want to be back in the classroom at some point in her career and perhaps even teach in the middle school setting. Colleagues recognize her as a team player; one who is flexible and easy to collaborate with.

### **Edda ~ viewed as having Clear Goals**

As a mother of three young children, Edda appears to balance her home responsibilities and work responsibilities with ease. She has a spring in her step and an energetic nature about her. Edda is always focused on her next steps of learning, both in her teaching and in her own learning. She enjoys changing positions every few years. In over 18 years in the educational field, she has taught classroom and support positions, both small group and large group as math support, English as a second language (ESL), media, and other educational areas. Edda enjoys new challenges, likes to experience new areas in education, and seems to always have clear goals of what she desires to tackle next.

She jokingly admits to being “on the OCD spectrum” regarding order, liking her work space to be tidy and organized. As a teacher she also tends to be organized and structured; yet, she strives to incorporate more structured choices to the learning environment and sees the value in CL. Edda enjoys collaborating with others, volunteers on the social committee at school, and is always willing to help. Without requesting, Edda encouraged others to participate in this research; this exemplifies the kind of helpful colleague she is.

**Fantina ~ viewed as Childlike with Fun**

Fantina is an educator with 15 years of experience, teaching both special and general education. She has taught for several school districts due to frequent relocations as she supports her husband in his military career. Fantina enjoys professional development with hands-on activities for she believes this is the best way to apply her own learning within her classroom, immediately amplifying her art of teaching and positively impacting student learning. She purposefully seeks out professional development to improve her marketability by selecting those classes which will potentially add to her certification areas. She has earned a master's degree with several additional credits. However, rather than focusing on adding additional degrees, she focuses on adding teacher certification credentials. Her current goal relates directly to elementary S.T.E.M. certification, with an upcoming ambition as an Instructional System Specialist as a S.T.E.M. coordinator or Science curriculum specialist.

Fantina offers an exuberant and science-filled learning environment for her students. She has a passion for science and technology and uses this personal energy to excite students for learning and to extend beyond the required curriculum in these areas. She knows about *and buys* the newest gadgets and keeps up with the newest of technology; she is so ambitious that her spirit is very childlike with fun and excitement for learning new things. She shares this knowledge openly with any colleague, and adds plenty of modifications and strategies to bring success for their learners as well. Fantina is a positive addition to any staff and is well received by her colleagues and students. She is a quiet leader and prefers to collaborate with small groups rather than directly lead the mass. Others see only her strengths and professionalism, yet Fantina continues to find areas for her personal improvement and growth. She continually brings forth great ideas!

**Gasha ~ Viewed as Good**

Gasha has a bubbly, energetic, and a transmittable fun-spirit. She is forever smiling and recording her world with continual clicks of her phone camera. It is not surprising that her hobbies include scrap booking, digital picture collages, photography, and writing. In fact her first career choice, broadcast journalism, put her in front of the camera. Although she enjoyed working on local events and with community musicians, she realized that she did not have a deep passion for this. Veterinary Science and Marine Biology were other leading areas of interest; yet, the thought of euthanizing an animal kept her from seriously exploring this path in depth. Even in this detail, Gasha's good, kind personality shines clearly. She has a soft, empathetic personality who will always help another in need.

As a teenager she tutored Korean native speakers and even taught one to read English. Every time she went back to her parent's house from college, she eagerly anticipated these tutoring sessions, and they were highlights of her visits. Before her junior year in college, she realized this passion for teaching and followed her heart into early childhood education. She has stayed here!

Gasha's experiences as an "army brat" provide her with an increased understanding of her students' experiences of continually moving. As a child, she attended school in Hawaii, Virginia, Michigan, and Korea. Her own ethnic blend of being a Korean-American also provides her with a deep understanding of her students' ethnic and cultural diversity. Gasha is also a single-mom of a younger elementary-aged son. These life experiences make her a perfect choice in connecting with the families she services. Interestingly, she started teaching in the community where she graduated from high school. Now, she seeks to be a lifelong learner with a continual passionate edge for teaching her students.

### **Hilary ~ Viewed as Joyful**

Hilary embarked upon teaching after her youngest of four children started school. Beginning mid-year as math support and now with just over two years of classroom experience, she strives to continually improve her teaching craft. She enjoys learning with others and recognizes the need for her own continual learning in order to properly equip students for our ever changing world. Being a team and helping each other are the foundation of her classroom environment. Hilary understands the challenges her students and their families face, as she is also part of a military family. As a military spouse, frequent relocations of family and *now* career are required. Even with the next move lingering in the upcoming months, Hilary continues to go the extra mile for her students, colleagues, and community.

Even with these challenges, Hilary moves on in a positive manner. She has a continual smile on her face, a perpetual bounce to her step, and uninterrupted joy in her spirit. Her upbeat personality and “cheerleader” attitude are a positive addition to any team. She is the type of person who joyfully helps all those around her, finds enjoy in simple fellowship with friends and family, and yearns for that satisfying Star Bucks moment.

### **Isaac ~ Viewed as Laughter**

Isaac offers his gentle, and genuine, smile freely. He has a spirit of kindness and laughter, where a soft-simmer of bubbly joy seeps from his being. He smirks at his own craziness. Even when he should be over-whelmed, he maintains his composure and looks outward as he continues to help others. He describes himself as an “ADHD-type” where energy is abundant, where organization is often lacking, and where chaos is viewed as a challenge, not a hindrance. He lives a healthy, active life style and enjoys cross fit and exercising in group settings. He

knows a lot of people, yet his inner circle is small. Although he exerts a socially vibrant persona, he is also naturally quite quiet and reflective.

This reflective spirit is obvious in his classroom as well. His educational philosophy revolves around building a love for learning in a nurturing, close-community environment. He has an integral understanding of his students' situations, primarily due to his own childhood experiences. He was raised in various foreign countries where his parents were also educators to U.S. military children. In this life-style, community becomes an extension of one's family. Isaac recognizes the importance of a positive school environment and extends himself in building community with his colleagues as well. Isaac has three years of teaching experience, yet he plays an active leadership role with school improvement.

### **Jerica ~ Viewed as a Strong, Gifted Leader**

With a petite stature and a no-nonsense walk of confidence, Jerica is a strong, gifted leader. She is skillful in bring those with different views together in compromise within a reasonable amount of time. In her 38 years as an educator, with more than 20 years in this school system, she is well-known and well-received. Although her daughter is now an adult, Jerica continues to volunteer at after-school student activities. In fact, she often "spreads herself too thin" by volunteering in many school leadership areas, such as School Advisory Council, Parent Teacher Organization, and Grade Level Chair. She is all about quality, yet efficient teaching and learning.

Jerica understands her students' life situations, as she was also part of a military family, now a retired military spouse. She is a practical thinker, both professionally and personally. After retirement, she plans to volunteer, training animals and using these animals to nurture educational and therapeutic needs. Although she has hoped to retire for a couple of years now,

she has continued to work due to loop-holes in policy. All the while, she has upheld an active role at her school, continued with professional development, and maintained her up-beat personality and top-notch professionalism. Jerica is one of those well-rounded, upstanding citizens anyone would be honored to call a colleague and friend.

### **Kalyn ~ Viewed as being like a Rosebud**

Kalyn has a flare for red with a sweetly spiced personality. After finishing her degree in illustration and graphic design, she went back to earn her teaching certificate. Her artistic talent is undeniable. All 6 years of her teaching career have been with lower elementary, however you would not guess this while having a conversation with Kalyn, for her vocabulary is extensive and flows freely from her mouth. Even her writing has an artistic sway about it with favorable words, completeness of thought, and vivid imagery. Kalyn's personality is beautifully complex, delicate and woven rhythmically together, just as a red rosebud.

In her classroom, Kalyn finds differentiation, building a family-like community with a safe learning environment, and offering controlled choices as the foundation. She first gained a complete understanding of the importance of differentiation in parenting her, now, two teenage sons. In doing so, differentiation became the critical catalyst for success in two very different people.

Outside of her classroom, she is an active volunteer in many school based forums, including co-chair of her grade level. She is always willing to help others, yet she cares about the quality of her work so she cautiously adds responsibilities. Even with agreeing to be a participant, she was concerned about the required time factor due to an upcoming relocation; yet she consented simply to support a colleague. In the end, her quality of work was impeccable, noticing fine details and adding layers of meaning in her reflections.

### **Linna ~ Viewed as being like a small, Blue Flower**

Linna has started her eighth year as an educator. Showing her flexibility and willingness to adapt, she has taught ESL, 10<sup>th</sup> grade world history, kindergarten, first, and second grades. Her easy-going humorous nature benefits her students as well as her colleagues. She enjoys collaborating with her grade level - truly enjoying their friendship, volunteering at her school, and taking a leadership role as co-chair of her grade level. She balances a full family schedule by supporting her husband and his military career, refereeing three dynamic and different personalities of her children, and exercising her energetic dog. Her children have helped develop her understanding towards the necessity of differentiation. Although she would like stability in her career, she values her family unity much more. Linna enjoys city lights, main attractions, vacations, socialization, yet quiet walks with her dog. She is the essence of easy-going and hustle-and-bustle – all in one small, pleasant package.

She walks with confidence and yet maintains gracefulness. She has the essence of a small, beautiful blue flower, as her prominent blue eyes welcome others. Linna has a powerful, yet also passive presents about her. When her belief is strong, she will ignite the conversation. When the issue is not of importance to her, she will listen and only engage as needed, in a supportive means for her friends. At work, Linna is considered a dynamic teacher with fun aspirations for learning, a team player, and a valued colleague.

### **Mona ~ Viewed as a Wise Counselor**

Mona has been an educator for 33 years, spending equal years as a special education teacher focused on students with emotional impairment, a preschool teacher, and a primary general education teacher. Her classroom learning environment is organized and structured in nature with a lot of movement incorporated into the learning. Among Mona's numerous

strengths, managing difficult behaviors remains an impeccable strength seemingly from her special education background. She enjoys the challenge, maintains an aspiration for each student to feel wanted, and personally understands the hardship for parents dealing with a child having special needs as well as one who does not. Personal insight gives Mona an insightful edge in relating to parents. This *home to school connection* is important to Mona and creates a foundational support for her classroom environment.

She continues to love learning and considers extending her education in order to become certified to teach middle school or high school history. In 2011, Mona was trained for a leadership role in professional learning teams. It is not surprising for her selection of this collaborative leadership role, for other staff members easily relate to Mona's kind and helpful nature. I have noticed her hard work ethics, her motherly essence, and her spirit of partnership; anyone who is able to work beside her is surely blessed. Mona has a wealth of knowledge, a willingness to share, the gentleness to work with colleagues, and a desire to pursue learning; "wise counselor" is quite fitting towards her character.

### **Naomi ~ Viewed as Delightful**

Naomi eagerly takes on extra responsibilities in order to make her school, her colleagues, and her students the best possible. She enjoys working with others, so she tends to naturally create professional learning teams with those having similar teaching styles and similar interests. She is known to start a professional book club which then meets to discuss new research or to revisit prior learning. With her magnetic personality, infinite energy, and positive attitude, it is not surprising that she earned the title of, 2014-2015 *Teacher of the Year* in her district.

Naomi is passionate and energetic in all she does. She is a supportive military spouse, which uproots her career with each required move, and a proud mother of two elementary aged



children. She has a soft, delightful nature and the ability to lead others from the front, yet her natural leadership style is to build others from underneath. Her easy-going, warm, and inviting personality draws others. She enjoys new and inventive ideas which enrich her teaching and foster an uplifting learning environment. She openly shares her struggles as a former student and feels these, sometimes difficult experiences, have helped mold her into a quality teacher, as she can understand students who also struggle. She followed in her mother's footsteps in becoming a teacher. During her 12 years of teaching, she has experienced every grade level from kindergarten to third grade. Without question, the kindergarten classroom is her dream career. She often says, "I'm a lucky girl," in referring to teaching kinder students.

### **Olga ~ Viewed as Holy**

Olga's educational career began 40 years ago. Serving the families of U.S. service members in several different countries, she has taught first through fourth grades and reading support. Her entire family serves in some capacity, as her husband and one daughter are both educators, while their other daughter serves in the U.S. Air Force.

Olga is an endless and tireless worker for an important cause, whatever she deems that to currently be. During the night hours, if her husband finds her missing from bed, she can certainly be found in her classroom. Without realizing it until it was too late, Olga has worked the night away and ended up starting a new day at school with yesterday's clothes. Her dedication and hard work ethics cannot be challenged.

Creativity cascades from her being almost as freely as her kindness and compassion submerges those around her. Olga has a heart of pure gold, deep rooted in her strong Christian values. She welcomes new comers openly, remembers birthdays, and lives her life guided by Godly principles. She is the type of person who goes out of her way to make others feel valued

and to unite people. Although she never gave herself credit, I believe she was responsible for secretly typing a page of compliments, noticing the *little things*, and without recognition of herself, quietly delivering it to my work mailbox. Others received this same sentiment, at various times throughout the year. The author was never confirmed; nonetheless, this clearly represents “*Olga-like behavior*.”

### **Pete ~ Viewed as being like a solid Rock**

After 28 years of U.S. military service, Pete followed his wife’s teaching career. He joined the school system as an educational aid, worked in supply, and after completing student-teaching, he eventually landed a teaching position 8 years ago. His teaching environment is relaxed and encourages students to be individuals while collaborating and learning cooperatively. Pete is organized and well-prepared, offering frequent science experiments, and using a variety of technological components within his repertoire of teaching strategies.

If Pete received hourly pay, the school would not be able to afford him, for he seems to work nearly around the clock, seven days a week. A “*can-do attitude*” surrounds his every thought. Time serving as a Marine has developed his powerful voice, matured a complete set of positive leadership traits, and refined a self-less service demeanor. Pete does not seek recognition for any of his past or present accomplishments, but is rather quite humble. He is actively involved in his school community, representing different entities from year to year, such as Robotics Sponsor, Yearbook Sponsor, and Computer Club Sponsor, Continual School Improvement Chair, School Advisor Council Teacher Representative, School Advisor Council Campaign Representative, Faculty Representative Spokes Person, and Union Vice President. Pete is one of the most dedicated, hard-working, helpful, and versatile colleagues around. He has personally had a positive impact on me and upon my own teaching craft.

Pete is widely recognized as a foundational support in many areas - family, grade level, the entire school, and beyond. He has an endless skill set and a perpetual willingness to help others. As a new employee, I remember Pete being welcoming, continually supportive, and going out of his way to offer assistance. As others have joined the team, he continually repeats these natural actions of his with this same helpful generosity.

### **Qiana ~ Viewed as Gracious**

Qiana is a kind and gracious colleague. She had no obligation to partake in this research, yet without hesitation she agreed to participate even with the exasperating demands of dealing with the sudden relocation of her family. In gathering data, one of the last comments she expressed, “Thanks again for including me in your study. I feel so honored.” This comment exemplifies Qiana’s essence of graciousness and complete humility. Her personality is one full of care and helpfulness. She follows through with her commitments and continues to willingly expand her teaching craft with a variety of professional development opportunities. She finds *all* her experiences with second, third, and fifth grade as “her favorites.” Although she loves teaching, she also has aspirations towards becoming a curriculum specialist.

As most teachers, she often takes on more than she should, and although she recognizes the increased need to say, “No,” she finds it difficult. Her spirit is naturally reflective and finds comfort in the successes of others. Professionally, she relishes in seeing former students graduate from high school and in their sharing fond memories of prior school days. Personally, she is most proud of her two college-aged children and how her family overcomes life’s challenges together.

Inside her classroom she is a focused educator of 14 years and known for her ability to get things done. She is peaceful and flexible with both colleagues and family. She has uprooted her career more than once in support of her husband’s Army service of more than 20 years.

Although challenging, she also views it as molding her to sympathize the hardships faced by her students and their families. She lives this challenge, just as they do. Overall, Qiana is a beautiful person – inside and out! Her gracious spirit and hard work nature benefit any environment.

## **Results**

The overall question for this study is: How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development? In order to answer this primary question, the individual experiences of each participant are first presented within a poetic rendition structure, under two data collection formats: written expressions and oral expressions.

### **Participant Written Expressions: Essay Responses/Experience Writings/Artifact Collections**

In total, 123 pages of participant written expression were collected in a variety of forms (i.e., essay responses, experience writings, and other artifacts). The essay responses included three broad areas:

- Describe yourself.
- Describe your feelings regarding professional development.
- What have been your on-the-job experiences after completing the professional

development on Tribes?

For experience writings, an example was provided to the participants. However, all participant formats were accepted and coded for analysis. Artifact collections included some of the participants' notes from the PD class, reflective responses of readings related to the PD, and lesson plans related to Tribe activities.

Multiple coding methods and cycles were conducted; however, the In Vivo Coding was critical in compiling the poetic rendition. These poetic creations provide an opportunity for

others to experience this phenomenon (Mears, 2009). These poetic renditions are direct quotes excerpted from each participant's written expressions. Two cycles of In Vivo Coding set the foundation for extraction of these codable moments and then crafted into a poetic fashion to provide the deep description of the phenomenon. This thick description becomes the justification for the interpretation (Patton, 2002).

A few guidelines were employed: I maintained flexibility to omit words, to rearrange the sequence of the excerpts, and to adjust spacing and punctuation or even to utilize the lack of punctuation; this allows some flexibility to create the poetic structure. However, these guidelines required the participant's meaning to be unchanged. In addition, sub-headings were inserted in order to increase the flow and clarity of the poetic structure.

#### **Participant Written Expressions: Gateway Poetic Rendition**

**Annalina*****Professional Development . . .***

is great  
 if the topics are relevant.  
 Tribes training was really useful.  
 Different PDs  
 gear towards  
 other disciplines.  
 Constant  
 PowerPoint presentations  
 should not happen.  
 A chance  
 for open dialog  
 should happen.  
 The delivery,  
 in a lot of instances,  
 should change.

***Experiences . . .***

Being more in tune  
 to the benefits  
 of the feeling of community  
 in classrooms.  
 How different  
 some classrooms became,  
 once Tribes was implemented.  
 ~ Changes in class morale.

**Brigette*****Professional Development . . .***

Needs to be offered  
 Should have at least some face to face  
 Consideration of generational differences  
 Choices of delivery

***Experiences . . .***

Strong work ethic,  
 Desire to do quality work,  
 Belief that I always have more to learn

I can learn from everyone  
 and every experience;  
 Like to collaborate,  
 Work hard to follow through  
 With commitments,  
 Will go the extra mile for students,  
 colleagues and actually almost anyone.

I am thrilled with the opportunity  
 to get to know some of  
 my colleagues more deeply.

Taught many different grade levels  
 each experience increases  
 my knowledge base,  
 ~ Improves my practice.  
 I work hard to incorporate with fidelity.

Some of the non-graded  
 Things we do in the classroom  
 are the most important things  
 We will ever do.  
 Helping students become  
 The kind of people we all value  
 Important to me.

***Experiences with Hardship . . .***

Sometimes life is hard  
 You feel like you are walking alone  
 (except for the Big Guy of course)  
 It does the heart and soul a world of good  
 to have someone value you  
 for who you are.  
 There have been moments  
 when I have thought about how far  
 from a good teacher I am right now.  
 A new grade level,  
 New standards that make everyone a bit crazy,  
 A grade level team  
 that operates pretty much as individuals

and not a team,  
 Trying to get resituated in a new location,  
 Trying to make new friends,  
 Can all be a bit overwhelming . . .  
 I feel like I am not doing anything well  
 But I am going to keep plugging along . . .  
 Moving to a new grade level  
 is just like being a first year teacher  
 -- It is tough.  
 Next year will be better.  
 I feel sad for my class this year as they  
 aren't getting the best teacher they could  
 have.  
 That is how I felt  
 for my first 4th grade class too.  
 Next year will be better.  
 I can't believe what a huge emotional  
 weight  
 I was carrying.  
 The adult interactions  
 in our school were toxic and demoralizing-  
 Leaving a feeling ~ hopelessness.  
 I am feeling much better  
 - physically, mentally and emotionally.  
 I truly feel like a new person.  
 I hope those that have suffered  
 are starting to heal.  
 It takes a long time to heal.  
 For those who were not targets  
 of the insanity,  
 I am happy they didn't experience it.  
 For those that were . . . and got out,  
 I am happy.  
 And for those that remain,  
 I pray for them and their healing.  
 I am healing.  
 I feel lucky.  
  
 A diamond is merely a lump of coal  
 that did well under pressure.

We are all diamonds!!!!

### ***Experiences . . .***

End of the year is a difficult time  
 to implement a new plan  
 Next year I will start out  
 By adding some routines  
 Based on Tribes  
 Great hearing students make connections  
 of similarity between classrooms  
 Powerful if those connections extended  
 Throughout the school  
 I will be more intentional and consistent  
 in identifying examples and non-examples  
 of agreements when they happen  
 I have incorporated cooperative learning,  
 Harder to do at the beginning,  
 But they have been able to handle it  
 at the end  
 Many folks claim they are doing  
 Cooperative learning  
 When in fact they are using  
 Cooperative learning strategies  
 And not incorporating  
 Cooperative learning itself.  
 This gives cooperative learning  
 a bad rap  
 Which is unfortunate  
 We might all be amazed at how  
 Teacher-centered  
 ~ We still are.

### ***Docilla***

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

Quality PD from trained professionals,  
 Hands-on learning,  
 Strategies that can be implemented  
 in the classroom right away,  
 Inspirational,

Resources allocated  
 More accessible to teachers  
 within their own districts  
 provided by the district.  
 Collegial Coaching  
 Choices

### *Experiences . . .*

It's been a bit challenging to implement  
 the TRIBES components as a specialist.  
 I do use the classroom agreements  
 and even teach them in Spanish.  
 I have used a couple of the energizers,  
 but time constraints have made  
 it challenging to really  
 focus on any of the other components.  
 I suppose if I could collaborate with a  
 teacher that was also using  
 TRIBES in their classroom,  
 I could implement more  
 of the components  
 within the large group specials setting.

### *Experiences . . .*

Momentarily, after the training  
 I felt very inspired  
 About the possibilities  
 That it could offer students  
 Within my classroom,  
 But the momentum of it faded.  
 Especially since I don't really feel  
 The Tribes model is fully  
 Supported at the school.  
 Everyone seemed very enthusiastic  
 during the training  
 but I'm not sure about after  
 Since there wasn't any follow-up,  
 at least not for me.  
 Students thrive and crave  
 The community building

That TRIBES offers.  
 As a large group specialist,  
 I do notice a positive difference  
 in classrooms between teachers  
 that take the time  
 to build community  
 (Whether with Tribes or some other way).  
 Trying to incorporate TRIBES  
 within the special's environment  
 is more challenging than I thought.  
 The common language  
 - in a quick and efficient way  
 is not there, since we are  
 not a full-on TRIBES' school.  
 With the limited time in specials  
 and still having to teach my curriculum  
 It takes too long to train every class  
 on procedures/common language.  
 Every class is also at a different level  
 when it comes to their sense of community.  
 Seeing students only once a week  
 makes it difficult  
 to build that community  
 if it is not already there.  
 Though I am not doing community circle,  
 I have tried to incorporate  
 a quick and positive way  
 for students to acknowledge  
 each other at the beginning of class.  
 We are focusing on  
 "Palabras Positivas" (positive words),  
 so students give an appreciation  
 using the positive word  
 with at least 3 different classmates.  
 It does not feel authentic,  
 but it is what I am able to carry out  
 and follow through with at the moment.  
 At the beginning of the year  
 I spent some time explaining  
 the TRIBES' agreements  
 with all of the classes.



We went over what each agreement  
sounds like and looks like.

I quickly refer to the agreements  
at the beginning of each session.

I will point out a specific agreement  
If I feel the class needs a  
reminder on that specific agreement.  
I feel the agreements encompass so much  
and I really enjoy using them.  
I tie them into the process  
of language learning,  
being that it is challenging  
to learn a new language  
and requires students  
to be willing to take risks  
to try out the new language

I do wish it were a school wide effort  
as some students seem much  
more familiar than others.  
My experience in incorporating  
the energizers has not been  
as consistent as I'd like.  
I find myself using Kagan strategies  
more often than the TRIBES  
for classroom engagement.  
Perhaps I find them a bit more  
practical than TRIBES.  
Many times I do feel as though  
I need a refresher course,  
so that I can be  
a bit more confident . . .

### **Edda**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

is a long process.

Needs support from

Administration and colleagues.

Enjoy going  
to professional development-

I like to see if it works . . .

Tribes - I tried it right away

My students enjoyed . . .

#### ***Experiences . . .***

I love what I do  
and enjoy waking up  
to come to work.

I am a "in the box" teacher,  
But I do like to have fun.

I would like to  
use cooperative teaching  
and less paper and pencil.

I am a strict teacher, but I do think  
students need age appropriate  
play time as well.

Everything is about time.

I had a hard time  
keeping things consistent.

The curriculum  
expected  
so much.

It would help if everyone used  
the same agreements

I implemented . . .

Agreements

Setting the environment

Energizers – but the room was too small

Reflective Questioning

Cooperative Skills

Cooperative Learning Strategies

I tried to maintain long-term  
cooperative learning groups  
but did not really turn out.

Cooperative learning strategies are great  
If – time . . .

Always in a hurry to get things done . . .

I don't explain all the agreements.  
I see the students for less than 10 minutes.  
I start with respect and attentive listening.  
Students seem to understand  
we all need respect  
and good listening  
in order to accomplish  
what needs to be done—  
short period of time.  
It is just so hard  
to really share everything  
I want during lesson time . . .  
It is a long process.

### **Fantina**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

In my work environment  
we typically have to seek out  
our own professional development.  
Otherwise it is usually peer to peer  
professional development  
I would prefer having actual experts.  
I like to attend engaging  
Professional development,  
centered towards improving my  
knowledge and improving  
my classroom teaching experience.  
I attended a science conference.  
I paid for.  
All hands on  
Very inspiring and motivating  
I put lessons into practice  
As soon as I began  
the following school year  
with great success.  
Many teachers wanting to learn  
and

utilize my materials.

I shared my knowledge with teachers.  
Two other peers have also attended  
And shared.  
My job also requires 6 college credits  
Every 6 years in order to maintain  
Teaching certification.

Some teachers take courses  
Not as meaningful  
in order to complete  
The requirement quickly and easily.  
I take classes that will give me other areas  
Of certification - to be more marketable  
For job placement.  
I usually learn the new and upcoming  
material being taught to future educators.  
This material is then sometimes presented  
to our faculty in a mandatory  
professional development.  
Instead, of inquiring to experiences,  
we are all required to be exposed  
to it again.  
This frustrates many teachers  
~ View as a waste of valuable time.

#### ***Experiences . . .***

I implemented many  
of the components  
of Tribes before  
even attending the class.  
Tribes incorporates  
really good teaching practices.  
My classroom is set up in teams.  
We utilize classroom agreements  
and always have community circle  
each morning.  
We also always share appreciations  
during community circle.  
I encourage my students to discuss

problems with each other  
 using their words and  
 tone appropriately.  
 Sometimes we have energizers but  
 I use a different format.  
 They learn collaborative skills  
 All the time and utilize some  
 Reflective questioning, especially  
 for behavior reflections.  
 My students work in cooperative  
 learning groups all year but I do  
 change the groups each quarter.

***Experiences at New School . . .***

I have been swamped!  
 Things run differently here.  
 I've been inundated with work!  
 Implementing Tribes is going to be difficult  
 in this new school.  
 None of my colleagues have taken  
 the training and they are all  
 adamant followers of  
 Whole Brain Teaching.  
 In order to be a team player,  
 I will run my classroom rules  
 As Whole Brain and  
 I will continue to teach social/emotional  
 Skills through Community Circle.  
 Fearful that my students will be confused  
 But hoping it will all work out.  
 I wish some of my colleagues  
 were on board  
 But I will be a lone wolf for now.

Difficult to fit in with this crazy  
 New schedule.  
 I will make it work!

Community Circle - I've decided  
 To really dedicate the time towards

Social/emotional development  
 Which addresses my health standards  
 This time also focuses on the class  
 Really becoming a community  
 In sharing stories, answering open ended  
 Questions and appreciating peers.

Wow,  
 I finally feel like I'm making  
 A difference.  
 This new style, even though it's not the  
 Full implementation is working!  
 It's nice to have feedback  
 from Multiple adults  
 and to get  
 Different perspectives.  
 Manners are becoming more evident  
 In my class and a few parents  
 Have contacted me  
 to say that they  
 Are seeing it at home as well.  
 A wonderful story shared with me . . .  
 Implemented  
 community circle  
 at home  
 As she wiped away tears . . .  
 So nice to have the family sharing.  
 I am astounded.  
 I am so happy  
 Community Circle  
 Has been such a positive process!  
 Students are more respectful  
 to each other.  
 It's nice to see the kids working  
 out problems  
 without adults.  
 Some teachers are surprised  
 at the language  
 my students use  
 in working out issues.

I wish other teachers would take this PD  
and actually implement it.

It makes the classroom environment  
a better place of learning.

Classrooms

still have students sitting in rows  
and children not interacting.

This is not conducive  
to producing productive citizens  
that communicate effectively  
with each other.

### **Gasha**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

~Always be a lifelong learner

I want to be

more marketable

and to be

more knowledgeable.

Too many teacher's lose sight,

lose their Passion

for teaching

Because . . .

of the system

or

politics?

I don't want to be like that.

#### ***Experiences . . .***

I can see how it can be easy

to lose some passion

or feel discouraged

Especially when

year after year

You feel

you give your all

And just hit a wall or

Get slammed

with Negative vibes or criticism

But, at the end of the day,  
We do it for the kids.

I find myself understanding

The Union a little more

And the importance of it,

But I still get very frustrated

At some of the things

that "we" complain about.

I don't go the extra mile

Or spend the extra time

Or money

For acknowledgment or

Compliments or anything

Other than knowing

That the children benefit from it.

I have been meaning

for the past two weeks

to actually read through the binder and

wrap my head around things

but things at work got really busy for me,

taking on too much this year.

Professional Growth Plans can be

so time consuming,

and to be honest,

I just don't have the time.

I am just very frustrated this year

With inclusion and certain things.

I disagree with a lot and didn't understand

The Student Support Team process here.

I have had THE WORST

AND TOUGHEST YEAR YET.

Just sucks.

Dealing with UNBELIEVABLE parents

I've taken on so much this year.

Should've been fine, but

People can't seem to do their part,

So I'm having to compensate

for their laziness and

lack of respect  
 for my kindness.  
 To add to it,  
 My class is insane.  
 But I find comfort in knowing  
 that it's all,  
 Not just mine.  
 I've been trying  
 to keep  
 Myself together  
 From  
 having a  
 nervous  
 breakdown.  
 I have to have admin  
 in conferences next week,  
 So I'm stressing,  
 But after next week,  
 I'll have some "down" time.  
 I've just been praying  
 and I know  
 He will get me through  
 all of this  
 Because He has already . . .

### **Hilary**

***Professional Development . . .***  
 is important for ALL teachers.  
 Education is constantly evolving  
 If the changes are not embraced,  
 The students lose.  
 Anything and everything  
 offered to me as PD  
 Has been helpful.  
 More PD is needed.

TLC helped me,  
 But I did not use it in all aspects.

### ***Experiences . . .***

I have used some of the Tribes components  
 Sometimes it works,  
 Sometimes it doesn't.  
 All components implemented have provided  
 A positive impact  
 on the classroom community.  
 Environment has a huge impact daily.  
 Classroom agreements – not so much.  
 Energizers work great!  
 Reflective questioning – not gone well.  
 Collaborative skills work for some students -  
 Some are not there yet,  
 Maturity wise.  
 Cooperative learning groups -  
 Sometimes Work, but not always.

### **Issac**

### ***Professional Development . . .***

We as teachers are STILL STUDENTS.  
 Teaching is a profession in which a lot  
 Of material is covered,  
 We need help!

### ***Experiences . . .***

Without the philosophy of Tribes,  
 Students are taught –  
 a test is the most Important factor;  
 Instead of arming students  
 With the knowledge  
 Of self-motivation,  
 Problem solving, and  
 Resiliency . . .  
 We teach them to regurgitate information,  
 Information which might not be  
 Necessary to future endeavors.  
 Sometimes my information needs  
 To be heard, and  
 They need to listen  
 (call me old school).

Right away, I made sure  
 Every science lesson was hands on  
 And ran by students.  
 This meant more group work,  
 And me walking around.  
 Immediately  
 I noticed students  
 More engaged in science.  
 Instead of coming up to me and  
 Asking a question,  
 They would go  
 To another classmate,  
 or head to the computer.  
 Seeing this,  
 Made me giddy with joy.

### **Jerica**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

Presenters must be good speakers and  
 Know how to hold  
 An audience's attention.  
 Participants should leave with materials,  
 Guidelines, information, plans, etc.  
 That are useful.

#### ***Experiences . . .***

I actually now have a carpet  
 for group meetings  
 I like energizers  
 when kids are squirrely, or  
 I am crabby.  
 I handle a bad day easily with energizers.  
 Collaborative skills  
 integrated across the curriculum  
 a lifelong tool.  
 Students have a sense of belonging  
 Know they have someplace and  
 Someone to go to  
 If they need help.

### **Kalyn**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

is necessary.  
 However, it should be:  
 Practical,  
 Applicable,  
 Innovative,  
 Aligned with my teaching practices,  
 Aligned with my philosophy.

In a mobile community,  
 With participation at all levels  
 Not fully guaranteed,  
 It will be interesting to see  
 The ways we will compensate,  
 If necessary,  
 to make it work.

If mandated  
 without buy-in,  
 Implementation may not be executed  
 Properly and then  
 Something good, becomes bad.

#### ***Experiences . . .***

I work hard to create a safe classroom  
 Even before Tribes  
 Students need structure and boundaries  
 To feel safe.  
 Encourage a casual, yet respectful,  
 Environment.  
 The interaction  
 of a student centered classroom  
 can be more fulfilling for me,  
 so my hope is  
 the same goes for my students.

I want to like everyone in my class.  
 I have to see these young people  
 Almost every day and

I want to be excited about that.  
 Happiness, gratitude, fondness  
 Can be a choice.  
 Though, I admit  
 There are a few ego centric individuals  
 Who can make it challenging.  
 I promote community and group learning,  
 With Vygotsky undertones.  
 Students need to learn to problem solve and  
 Collaborate (with guidance).  
 Students have controlled choices.  
 Rotating seating system – in groups of 3 to 4  
 So everyday students sit  
 With the same group of peers,  
 They choose a different seat  
 At a different table.  
 Students gain autonomy  
 to make good choices;  
 They become comfortable  
 In the entire space of the classroom.  
 Students are not territorial  
 About seating.  
 The drawback-  
 Students do not get  
 their own personal space.  
 They do get their own cubbies though.

Because of my experience as a parent,  
 Having one son struggle  
 The other excel,  
 I take differentiation seriously.  
 I want for my students  
 What I want for my own children:  
 To see them individually,  
 No matter where they are,  
 Move them forward.  
 I am adept at determining  
 student strength and weaknesses  
 and a wide range of interventions  
 or next steps for growth.

Including the use of varying modalities.

I see my class like a big family  
 On a long bus trip.  
 Sometimes we get grouchy  
 At each other  
 Sometimes we are singing  
 Road songs.  
 I am at the wheel.

My experience helps me anticipate  
 Potential issues and  
 Be proactive about solutions.  
 My experience has given me perspective.  
 I am more confident now,  
 I do second guess my actions often.  
 But I do have a stronger sense  
 My actions align with  
 My better developed teaching philosophy.  
 If I exude confidence  
 They have more confidence and  
 Trust in me.  
 It is very important to constantly self-assess  
 Make changes as needed.  
 My students should also know  
 I make mistakes  
 We all do.  
 Part of what I do  
 to create a safe environment  
 is to make mistakes okay and  
 model how to handle them.

Teachers need to be assessing  
 each student  
 Through different methods.

This was a positive reminder for me;  
 It wasn't new information.  
 But it gave me a review  
 A refresher

on many best practices.  
 Tribes can enrich  
 How I shape the environment and  
 Develop the classroom culture.  
 Tribes works in easily  
 At the beginning of the year.  
 But as the year progresses,  
 It seems to get harder and harder  
 To implement  
 Due to the many benchmarks,  
 Required assessments, and  
 Overload of requirements.

Organization is my weakness.  
 Every day  
 I am  
 Inundated  
 With papers and information  
 From all directions –  
 Administration,  
 colleagues,  
 students,  
 parents . . .  
 Even when I have  
 an organization system in place,  
 I am quickly overrun  
 with more work  
 As I take on more responsibilities  
 Or have responsibilities thrust upon me.  
 My classroom space looks untidy at times;  
 However, I make it a habit  
 Not to clean up after students.  
 They are accountable  
 For the state of the room as well and  
 Must clean up after themselves.  
 Admittedly, there are times  
 When I have walked away  
 From my own messy desk.  
 Though organization is important,  
 There is only so much time

In a day and  
 We must pick our battles.  
 I would rather put more energy  
 Into my student interactions and  
 Spending time with my family.  
 Yet, I do feel better  
 in a tidy environment,  
 So I continue to look for better ways  
 To be organized.

Tribes PD reminded me of practices  
 To be more consistent with.  
 It was nice – the entire grade level team  
 Agreed to implement the agreements;  
 This allowed for common language  
 And consistency.  
 If students get comfortable  
 With the energizer,  
 It really is a quick activity.  
 Better to only do a few-  
 There are so many  
 It can be overwhelming.  
 If I have to teach  
 The energizer every time,  
 Then it takes up  
 too much class time.  
 Five is a good number to teach and  
 Rotate between them.  
 Reflective questioning is a constant practice  
 I want students to think  
 about what they will do and have done.  
 I often use it as an “exit” task.  
 I really didn’t use long term groups;  
 I prefer flexible groups, so  
 I can change the groups to fit the situation.  
 I spend a lot of time teaching and coaching  
 Students on how to treat others;  
 This is a life skill.  
 There are so many small things  
 We do to develop collaborative skills,



It is difficult to write them all down and  
 Describe all the subtle actions  
 it took to get there.  
 Students learn to cooperate  
 to a higher degree with Tribes.  
 Within Tribes Learning Communities,  
 Some direct instruction is still used.  
 Comforting . . .  
 While I do appreciate  
 the value of collaborative learning,  
 Sometimes it seems that  
 Direct instruction is the most appropriate  
 Method to use.

With so many things in the air,  
 We are forgetting to give  
 Our appreciations.  
 Still I am pleasantly surprised  
 When a student tells me  
 How another classmate  
 Made them feel better.  
 It is all-the-more sweeter  
 When I did not have a hand  
 in the outcome.

At this time of year  
 My students need a lot of refreshers.  
 Most students  
 have an innate sense  
 Of right and wrong.  
 However, knowing what is right and  
 Doing what is right – is different.  
 Also, my students have become  
 More independent . . .  
 I have been able to multi-task,  
 But that sometimes pulls me away  
 From the activity -  
 For example, while students share  
 I quickly call the nurse  
 To check on a student.

I have to remind myself  
 To maintain my interaction and  
 Listen attentively.  
 Regardless of how far we have come,  
 We should stay consistent  
 With our expectations  
 Throughout the school year.

### **Linna**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

I am extremely fond of  
 Professional development  
 If it is relevant  
 to what I am trying to develop  
 About myself.  
 Useful - help me in my career  
 When I taught in Northern Virginia,  
 I loved all their PD courses.  
 They were almost always free, and  
 Gave graduate credit and/or recertification.  
 We had to complete six hours of PD  
 Per school year.  
 It kept educators abreast  
 of what is going on  
 In the education system.  
 Educators need a lot of PD courses offered.  
 The more varied courses available,  
 The more likely they are willing  
 To participate in PD.

The most useful course for me  
 Was a PD with Jan Richardson's  
 "The Next Step in Guided Reading."  
 It was not just a person  
 Who was "certified" in her course,  
 It was Ms. Richardson herself.  
 We worked with actual students.  
 She watched us and  
 Gave us pointers and advice.

We got lots of materials  
to use in our classroom.  
It was extremely helpful  
In how I teach guided reading.  
It was broken down  
to K-2 educators and 3-5 educators.  
The course was broken down  
even smaller  
into areas of guided reading:  
Comprehension, decoding,  
Fluency, word work, etc.

### ***Experiences . . .***

I also enjoyed the Tribes course, as  
It gave me great classroom  
management skills and  
enabled me to help children  
Learn to resolve conflict,  
Work together,  
Give them life skills.  
Kids draw and write examples of what each  
Agreement means and  
How it is useful and  
Relevant to them.  
Students need a constant reminder.  
We do a lot of energizers.  
Using energizers gives students  
The brain breaks and  
movement they need.  
It's difficult for them to sit still,  
so the energizer allows them to move  
I love to connect it to a core standard, so  
They are learning  
But they don't realize it!  
Giving kids the tools for conflict resolution  
Such as "Time Out Stop" and  
"I- messages" is a great way  
to work things out.  
Having kids learn and  
Build their own self-worth,

Is another way  
to build self-confidence.

They empower each other,  
Learn from each other,  
And truly value one another.  
We focus a lot on collaborative learning.  
Kids sit at tables  
A lot of group activities or partner work –  
Sometimes, I just want to  
Throw kids together, or  
Just pull names out of a hat.  
But the educator, USE the children  
To help make the tribe!  
Sometimes heterogeneous groups,  
Homogeneous groups,  
I also pay attention to personalities  
And work styles.  
Some kids can work very well in a group,  
While others cannot.  
It's a hard process for many kids to learn.

My Tribes practicum helped me  
For utilizing Tribes  
in my classroom.  
I have noticed  
many positive changes,  
Both personally and professionally.  
Even the youngest students  
deserve  
Mutual respect.  
I am more patient  
with my students.  
It made our entire grade level  
more cohesive.  
Every student  
on the grade level knew  
Exactly what was expected.  
Students took more  
accountability

For their own actions.

The process needs to be a slow one.

Ensure inclusion,

influence, and

community.

That's why

all those fun activities

Are crucial!

Community Circle is crucial!

It gives kids a chance

to bond and

Connect

with each other.

We must be a whole school

community.

A set of norms

need to be established.

It seems a Tribes School,

Where every teacher and student follows

Would be extremely successful.

In such a global world,

The more we learn about

Mutual respect,

Active listening,

Showing appreciations to others,

The right to pass . . .

We will build an inclusive and

Influential community

Of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

I am very excited

to fully implement

Tribes

In my classroom

next year!

Even moving to a school

that is not Tribes,

I was still able to utilize Tribes.

I'm proud to be a Tribes' teacher!

### **Mona**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

I was trained in 2011 to be part of a

Professional learning team.

A week of training and

spent the majority of the week

doing team building activities.

I never before spent so much time in a class

developing a relationship

among my team mates

but as the year went on,

I could really see how well

we worked together,

solved issues and were able to come up

with ideas and strategies to work on –

by building that foundation of trust.

I was very disappointed

that we were not utilized in the school

the following year.

We were forced into PLT's by grade level.

Ideas our PLT came up with were ignored.

Leadership of PLT's were given

to people with no training.

It is amazing for me to see

how much difference

Not having that trust and foundation

built in slowly –

has made collaboration

much more difficult.

By being forced into it,

as a school,

many people don't want to

collaborate or work as a team.

Even people who want to be in a PLT

negative feeling about the process now.

Professional Learning Teams  
 fit right into  
 the concept of what Tribes  
 wants to strive for.  
 The goal of our school  
 should be to utilize learning teams  
 because the focus is on student  
 achievement and success  
 through the education and  
 learning of adults.  
 We want to make our school  
 a learning community.

I'm tired of going to staff development  
 Where you come out of it saying,  
*"I could have read the info.  
 on my own  
 in an hour  
 instead of spending  
 six hours  
 working in groups  
 just to accomplish what is considered  
 staff development."*

### ***Experiences . . .***

I am struck by the fact,  
 I am doing many of the things  
 Needed for a caring environment  
 For cooperative leaning.  
 I have structures in place  
 For positive interactions.  
 We spend a great deal of time  
 Focusing on making  
 Responsible decisions,  
 Listening attentively,  
 Resolving conflict,  
 Working together, and  
 Being able to express ourselves  
 Appropriately.

As a whole, I have a very good class.  
 Our class rules are  
 Be Kind, Be Safe, Do your Best Work,  
 Follow Directions and Be Earth Friendly.  
 We discuss the rules daily.  
 The first two rules cover just about any  
 instance of keeping us focused  
 on establishing relationships with peers  
 or what Tribes calls community.  
 At the beginning of the year,  
 We spend time everyday discussing  
 how we treat each other.  
 These rules have pretty much  
 covered everything  
 I thought I needed in class.  
 I saw the Tribal Agreements of  
 Attentive Listening,  
 Appreciations and No Put Downs,  
 Mutual Respect and the  
 Right to Participate or the Right to Pass  
 can add so much.

We also do a morning meeting  
 consisting of calendar,  
 temperature, place value,  
 and word wall words.  
 Making this a community circle  
 in addition to a working group  
 would be a benefit in so many ways.

I think that this is difficult to do  
 at the end of the year.  
 Reading that this process takes  
 several weeks to implement and  
 includes many inclusion strategies,  
 I really felt that I could  
 Not get a good start on the process.  
 I was very torn about starting to implement  
 Tribes in my classroom  
 so late in the year.

I had pretty much decided to wait  
until next year to start  
but during one very busy week  
the students were having difficulty  
getting along  
at lunch and recess,  
I thought about how being in a Tribe  
might have changed the interaction  
among my students.

I read that experienced teachers  
have students meet several times a day  
for sharing, having discussions,  
for participation and learning  
collaborative skills, reflect on the day and  
have celebrations.  
I did a small amount of community building  
in our community circle  
but found out that time  
was a problem for us.  
We could not do  
our regular morning activities  
plus focus on sharing  
because seven students  
leave at 8:30  
to go to LSS and ESL.  
I have tried inclusion strategies  
such as Brainstorming, Fold the Line,  
Where Do I Stand.  
I think we could use these better  
with more training  
on Community building.  
We only did a few  
but it was just enough to see  
what I needed to do to improve.  
I used Fold The Line  
in a math fraction activity.  
The kids liked it and had fun  
with the fractions but they were a little  
confused on the fraction cards and

how they could match their fraction.  
This was the first time we did an actual  
“thank you appreciation” to their partners.

Students are trained to tell someone,  
*“Please stop, I don’t like it when . . .”*  
In handling personal situations.  
If they don’t like what someone is doing  
they must first tell the person  
to please stop in a respectful way.  
They know that they will probably  
have to say it more than one time.  
I am not supposed to hear about it until  
they have tried to discuss  
problems among themselves.  
I realized,  
I have truly never taught my kids  
How to listen.  
Everyone is quiet during our group times  
but I know that it is not always  
attentive listening.  
Just having the students turn  
to who is speaking and  
show better attention has made a difference.

I also like the idea of having a right to pass  
in case someone does not feel  
comfortable participating.  
I don’t force students to participate  
but using the word “pass”  
gives a student the power  
to not participate in a non threatening way.

The important thing is the child isn’t  
embarrassed or humiliated because of work.  
I had to think about the statement  
“minds are killed through loneliness,  
hostility and exclusion by peers”  
to include by teachers also.  
Some colleagues are mean to kids.

We can't have a safe learning community unless we take the time to make sure that doesn't happen to kids.

I also am thinking of ways to use meta-cognition more in the classroom. I have not been very good about helping the students be aware or think about their own learning process. I do talk about skills we are working on but don't tie it together with standards or learning styles.

The last area I'm playing around with is how to structure my class into Tribes. I'm thinking about putting them in tribes for the rest of the year – which will be a big adjustment for me.

This will probably be the most difficult part. I choose to change tables every 5 to 6 weeks and sometime what looks good on paper just doesn't work with people. My philosophy has always been to have everyone in my class sit at each table and for every student to sit with different groups of students to learn to work with everyone. Careful - about where I put each student especially since I have nine students reading below grade level. Two students are on the autism spectrum. Whatever group I put them into, they will have a good support system with their peers. I also have one student who displays many disruptive behaviors. He talks all the time, whistles whenever he can, plays and has trouble sharing

group materials. His tablemates look forward to when he is moved to a new group which will be tricky to assign him to a team. I may need to ask for advice on this issue.

Overall, Tribes fits very well into the structure I have in the classroom

Even if it didn't, The social R's – Relatedness, Respect and Responsibility are just too important not to incorporate them.

At this point I am going to start planning for using Tribes next school year. I plan on rereading the book over the summer and do more research on implementing it in the classroom. My first step will be to introduce the Tribe Agreements. We will talk about and include them in our morning meeting/community circle. In our community circle we will try and use some strategies of inclusion.

In the article I read, One thing mentioned was to frequently go over The Tribes Trail. That kept her on track in moving from Inclusion to Influence to Community. This information motivates me to do research.

**Naomi**

***Professional Development . . .***

Is essential to teacher growth.  
 The best professional developments  
 Have been by fellow colleagues,  
 Give concrete ideas and  
 Examples that can help enhance teaching.  
 Wants to have “ah-ha” moments and  
 Be able to turn around and put  
 learning into place  
 The best professional development was  
 in-house,  
 Teacher-led,  
 Where all teachers were able to choose  
 which sessions they wanted.  
 Professional developments that are  
 Not focused on student-centered learning are  
 Not useful.  
 These types of professional development are  
 usually when information  
 needs to be disseminated,  
 but is masked as professional development  
 for teachers . . .  
 Leaves feeling like the day was  
 A waste of time.  
 True professional development should  
 Empower teachers,  
 Making them feel  
 like they can greet their students  
 the next day,  
 As a better teacher!

***Experiences . . .***

After taking the Tribes professional  
 development three years ago,  
 I struggled  
 on how to implement  
 each component.

The professional development days  
 Were long, and  
 The information was overwhelming.  
 I felt a little confused  
 with the whole process,  
 but managed to implement  
 Learning Agreements and  
 Community Circle.  
 I continued to study Tribes, and  
 With each new school year,  
 I implemented another component.  
 Even with simply implementing  
 one or two Tribes’ components,  
 I witnessed a positive impact  
 on my students,  
 which is why I kept studying and  
 Continued to perfect my Tribes’ classroom.  
 This year  
 I have fully implemented  
 the Tribes’ way of learning, and  
 Am astonished  
 At what the students are able to do,  
 How much they retain,  
 How well they work together.

It took me studying Tribes on my own,  
 In depth, after my initial Tribes PD  
 To fully understand the impact  
 on student learning that  
 Tribes can truly have.  
 At first, the PD showed me  
 How students can work together and  
 Care for one another,  
 Which is an important and  
 necessary  
 component of Tribes.  
 After studying Tribes more,  
 I realized the profound impact  
 the Tribes Process  
 can have on student learning.

I am building community in my room.  
I have been thinking of a lot of ideas  
How to effectively do this

Without community,  
Tribes will fail.  
It is going well and into only 15 days  
With my kinder kids.  
We do community circle 1-2 times a day,  
and this is helping.  
I have been racking my brain  
On how to really and truly  
Build a caring community.  
It takes time and  
patience for sure.  
I have to yell a HOORAY!!  
I have had so many teachers and guests  
Comment on how well  
my class always  
works together  
and  
helps each other.  
YAY!!!!!!  
It is showing in so many areas.  
The collaborative groups  
I have my kids in are  
THRILLING to observe.  
I have, as Tribes says,  
been trusting the process and  
I am seeing such benefits.

The “woe is me”  
Is still there,  
at times,  
But more often,  
I am so proud of these kids.

I am now facilitating  
a Tribes Focus Group  
in my school,

helping other teachers learn  
about the Tribes way of learning.  
I am really excited as  
many teachers  
are interested in it.

Yesterday was a ROUGH day,  
I couldn't help but think,  
*“Am I really capable of leading a Tribes  
group? Am I adequate enough?”*  
We are TOTALLY our worst critic.  
I had felt like an absolute  
Tribes failure  
the day before.  
Today went so much better and  
My pity party is over. ;o)

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEK!!!!!!!!!!  
I keep forgetting . . .  
UGH.  
My brain is not working lately,  
With so much inside!!  
I, too, need to find a healthy balance.  
With moving into the new school  
Later than expected,  
It's been so rushed.  
I need a secretary for my brain.  
With teaching the Tribes class,  
Planning the school dance,  
The upcoming Seuss Night,  
Having multiple  
professional development days  
in a row . . .  
It has been very busy.  
This is the busiest year I have had so far.  
My cup runneth over  
ANYTHING extra gets tossed  
To the side.

Prayers for me, too.



**Olga**

***Professional Development . . .***

I regard professional development  
as the tool that keeps me  
(and other long time teachers)  
grounded  
in what is happening now with education.  
It is very easy when you have been teaching  
for such a long period of time  
to teach the “same way” you always have.  
Being involved in professional development  
helps keep me current.

***Experiences in 2013 . . .***

From the very first session,  
some inclusion activities were include  
in the lesson plan  
for the first three weeks of school  
as set forth by the Read 180 program.  
Students are placed in groups of 3-5 students  
(which can now be transitioned into a “Tribe”)  
After our last class,  
I began thinking of ways  
that I could begin to implement  
some aspects of Tribes  
while trying to maintain my strict  
Read 180 schedule.  
I knew that any changes would derail me  
from staying on schedule,  
So I had to select carefully.  
I looked at the grouping of my students  
really took into consideration  
their social interactions with each other,  
Rather than their Lexile level  
(as the criteria I had always used to group them).  
I changed the groups according to who I  
thought might work best together . . .  
My first attempt at forming a “tribe.”  
I asked them to sit with their new group.  
I want the students to actively participate in  
selecting at least one member of their tribe,

so this was just my experiment.

Energizers to get the kids excited about  
something “new.”

We began with just saying our names and  
passing a hairy ball.

On another day, we sat in group circle and  
said one positive thing  
that we had experienced  
in the past week.

We definitely needed to work  
on appreciations vs. put-downs.

Whether we realize it or not,

We play a big part  
in a child’s ability to rise above  
all the external factors  
by providing a positive atmosphere  
through sharing and caring and  
encouraging participation, and  
having high expectations  
of each of our children.

This change,  
from teacher-centered to student centered,  
does not happen easily

Especially when so much emphasis  
is placed on grades  
and test scores in our system.

Teachers are afraid to give up the “control”  
because they believe the responsibility  
for showing growth is on them.

As I read about the Tribes model,

I wondered how I could fully implement it  
with such a structured program.

I simply don’t have the flexibility to allow  
my students to work in cooperative groups  
throughout the 90 minutes.

Excited about the Tribes model

Hope to be able to use some parts

I can definitely set up the Tribe Agreements-

Will provide for a more positive atmosphere  
 from the very beginning of the school year  
 I hope to be able to use other aspects  
 of Tribes in my classroom as well.  
 Since May begins next week,  
 we will not have much time  
 to get through  
 the influence and community stages  
 but I will do what I can  
 to make my classroom  
 a more positive atmosphere  
 in which to work.

*Experiences in 2015 . . .*

To be honest with you,  
 I have not done much with Tribes  
 either after I took the initial training  
 or this year going back into the classroom.  
 I did set up the agreements and  
 my students know them,  
 but pretty much I left it there.  
 I have been waiting for Tribes training  
 to begin again  
 so I could start fresh.  
 I am taking Tribes again  
 Because I never really got to do it.  
 Hard to do as a specialist,  
 Having kids come every 25 minutes.  
 I think this time will be different, and  
 I am excited to have the opportunity  
 to use it.  
 We have just had  
 our first class and  
 I have begun with Community Circle  
 (Thank goodness I found my text book.)  
 I will try to build community  
 with my students,  
 but I know at times  
 it is very frustrating  
 with so many challenges.

Building a community takes time,  
 and often times,  
 I feel the time constraints of teaching  
 ALL that has to be taught . . .  
 Give myself permission  
 to take time out  
 to build a true community . . .  
 I have to keep  
 reminding myself  
 that these are  
 FIRST grade students.  
 When I forget,  
 and a lesson fails,  
 I tend to beat myself up  
 because I know  
 It was not the kids' fault.  
 I have to go back  
 Reflect on what I need to do differently.  
 Like I said, right now  
 I am challenged  
 with so many needy students  
 (and some behavior challenges.)  
 Sometimes it is NOT  
 so easy to remain  
 positive.  
 I must continue to work on this.

First grade is a challenge  
 to say the least.  
 One child -supposed to have a full time aide,  
 but none has been hired yet;  
 One, very needy, goes out with SPED teacher.  
 Speech, OT, PT . . .  
 One being tested for SPED;  
 One more - in the SST process.  
 Things have been crazy here;  
 I have been living at school . . .  
 It is almost 10:00 tonight,  
 Conferences are tomorrow.  
 I still have lots to do

to get ready.

The past two days  
I have left school  
at 3:00 AM and  
last night was an early night  
at 11:30.

Seriously,  
at times I feel like  
I am treading water and  
am about to go under.

I know that as hard as I try,  
I don't ever feel that  
I am "good enough"  
In any given situation.  
I tend to be a perfectionist and  
want things to be "perfect"  
even if it takes me 24/7 to achieve this.  
I don't mind putting in the extra time  
But oftentimes, even with all the  
Extra time and effort,  
I still don't feel the sense of satisfaction  
Of a job well done.  
I see my imperfections,  
Even when others don't.  
We are in the middle  
of learning to implement  
the CCRS right now,  
It is proving to be a challenge to me. Having  
grown up in a time  
when one memorized math facts and  
having always taught the importance  
of knowing multiplication tables and  
fact families (by heart),  
having to teach students  
to EXPLAIN their answers  
instead of just answering  
the problems is having me rethink  
how to teach math.

Also, having been out of the classroom  
for almost a dozen years,  
I have been totally OUT of tune  
with the latest in professional development.  
Although I have taught for so many years,  
this year is even more challenging  
to me  
because I feel like  
I am having to "relearn" things  
in order to teach  
my students.

I wish there was more time  
to soak in what has been introduced  
in the PD session.

I equate it to someone coming in  
to "model" a lesson for you.  
The lesson was well prepared  
by the presenter,  
With no regard to the follow-up  
Required on a day to day basis  
With the 20 students you teach.  
I always wonder  
what the lessons would look like  
from week to week,  
month to month.  
Sometimes things seem unrealistic  
Given that ideas are presented and  
There is a long period of time,  
Before the next session.

The thing that has been the most helpful  
to me was having teachers to bounce  
things off of after the PD session.  
Two heads are better than one,  
Sometimes I need that person  
to "re-explain"  
Something that was not clear.

I feel very fortunate  
 There are experienced teachers  
 Who are more than willing  
 to share their expertise and  
 EXPLAIN things  
 so that we are ALL successful  
 in teaching our students.  
 I value their expertise.

**Pete**

*Professional Development . . .*  
 should be short and to the point.  
 Teachers have  
 so  
 little  
 time  
 for extensive classes  
 and  
 to apply something learned  
 can be  
 very difficult.

Over the last 4 years  
 I have selected and taken 6 credit hours  
 Four were 1 credit classes.  
 One was a 2 credit class.

Of the four 1 credit classes,  
 Two were online,  
 Two were face to face.

Two online classes -  
 programs using the Smartboard.  
 I use technology to teach and  
 wanted to use other tools.  
 The first online class was Smart Notebook.  
 There are many ways  
 to use Smart Notebook  
 with the Smartboard,

but I found  
 It has a steep learning curve  
 even with my bachelor's degree  
 in computer science.  
 It did not do what I wanted it to do.

The second class was in Kidspiration.  
 It also did a number of nice things,  
 but wasn't a useful tool either.

Because I found these classes  
 not so useful in the classroom  
 may be the reason  
 I did not care for these classes.

I have taken very few classes  
 I cared for online.  
 They are impersonal;  
 Engagement is flat, and  
 There are no emotions.  
 I am sure there are some classes  
 that this will work for,  
 but most teacher classes are  
 personal and emotional.  
 I think teachers need engagement.  
 We expect it from our students,  
 So why wouldn't we want it  
 in a Professional Development class?  
 We learn  
 from our engagement  
 with other people.  
 Two face to face classes -  
 Two 8 hour days of a weekend in class,  
 Tried it in our classrooms,  
 Then wrote a paper about our experiences.

The first 1 credit class  
 English as a Second Language (ESL) -  
 How to reach those students and  
 Best teaching practices for that group . . .

It was taught by one of our ESL teachers.  
 Students could easily  
 contact the instructor  
 for follow up questions.  
 Teachers were able to immediately  
 incorporate what was learned.

The second 1 credit class  
 Behavior modification in the classroom -  
 Same format  
 Taught by the school psychologist.  
 Again the instructor was readily  
 available for questions.

Both of these classes  
 had instant affects  
 in the classrooms.

With that being said,  
 The two - 1 credit  
 Face to face classes  
 were the most useful.  
 The 2 credit class –  
 Classroom environment called Tribes.  
 Face to face  
 But took over 2 months  
 A number of weekends  
 A number of papers  
 Well-designed  
 With a lot of useful information,  
 Almost too much.  
 To apply  
 most of the learned skills  
 took time  
 and it had a steep learning curve.  
 There were many parts  
 of the class  
 that could be used  
 without applying the whole concept  
 and

they are still being used.  
 Overall . . .  
 lots of information  
 and  
 a lot of time  
 spent on it.

Would have been better served  
 over a 5 day period  
 right before school started.  
 The lessons learned in the class  
 could have been applied right away  
 at the beginning of the year.  
 Taking this class later in the year  
 left too large of a time span  
 before fully implementing it  
 at the beginning of the next year.  
 Still, it was a good class.

There have been various training days  
 devoted to Professional Development  
 at this school.  
 The problem lies  
 in the classes...  
 Teachers need to talk,  
 to exchange ideas,  
 to learn from others.  
 By the time the information is put out  
 For teachers to absorb  
 To engage in conversation-  
 Teachers are asked  
 to move on to the next topic.

It is like a teachable moment for teachers.  
 Do teachers stop  
 That teachable moment-  
 Move on,  
 Or do they take that interest and  
 Explore it?  
 We explore it.

I have left many  
Professional Development classes  
Wanting . . .  
We don't have time  
To go back and  
Explore it . . .  
Because  
The school year moves on,  
Papers to grade,  
Parents to conference with,  
Lessons to write.

When teachers get these  
Learnable moments,  
They need time  
to explore them.

### ***Experiences . . .***

Community agreement  
Spot on to our class rules  
My students come up with every year:  
No bullying,  
The golden rule,  
Listen  
Respect others  
Community agreement  
is what students want.  
It will work well in my classroom.  
I really like the detail  
definition of attentive listening.  
I struggle with that concept the most.  
If there is one thing  
I want my students to take away  
From Tribes,  
It would be Attentive Listening.  
Tribes likes  
the peer to peer communication,  
which is used all the time.  
I would like to learn  
how to keep conversation

somewhat on task.  
I love the group learning aspect of Tribes  
but I need my students  
a little more successful at it.

Teachers teach to their strengths  
Whatever that may be  
I personally  
Spend an equal amount of time  
Between lecture and questioning  
I feed the students information  
Then ask questions  
Using Bloom's Taxonomy  
I start with basic knowledge and  
comprehension questions  
to make sure they understand.  
Then move on into the analysis,  
synthesis, and evaluation questions.  
The lecture and questioning  
is only about half of my lesson.  
The second half  
I give instructions on application.  
The students have a project  
they work on in groups.  
The groups are either  
student or teacher selected.

I do like cooperative learning,  
Positive reinforcement,  
The community and team effort,  
The whole school buy-in for support.  
Support not only for the student,  
But the teacher, school, and community.

The implementation of Tribes  
at first looks to be  
a very long  
and  
arduous journey.  
It looks to be very time consuming.

I question whether it will justify the time.  
 It will be well justified  
 if it really builds  
 the class community and cooperation  
 as well as behavior control.  
 I can see using parts of this  
 for community building  
 and some of the strategies  
 I all ready use.  
 Another teacher said  
 this course validates practices  
 I cannot agree more.  
 I am finding  
 I use a lot of their ideas already  
 But I am also discovering  
 Quite a few more strategies  
 That I could implement.

I am really looking  
 for another way  
 to make group work better.  
 The implementation stage of Tribes  
 really helps in the approach of  
 group problem solving.

What I find the more difficult part  
 of implementing Tribes  
 is the curriculum.  
 That is the part of Tribes  
 that seems the most challenging.  
 As I implement Tribes  
 I am also looking at ways to make  
 it part of the standards  
 and goals of each lesson.  
 After completing my first lesson plan  
 I find it difficult to create lessons  
 that incorporate tribes  
 in every lesson.  
 I can see using tribes at least daily  
 but it will take a while

to fully incorporate Tribes.  
 I find to use Tribes  
 as a teaching method  
 is a total new approach.  
 You will have to throw out  
 most of everything  
 in a lecture method lesson.

So in the next month I going to try  
 and teach at least one Tribes lesson  
 every other day.

Tribes has a great potential  
 for the classroom  
 as well as the school.  
 The strategies in Tribes can be used  
 in any classroom  
 but more importantly  
 the positive attitudes  
 and reinforcements  
 are what will make the classroom  
 and school a better place to be.  
 I hope as a small number of teachers  
 begin to use this  
 appreciating approach  
 It will catch on with other teachers.

Tribes has been an interesting journey.  
 A myriad of things  
 I would like to try.  
 Many things I already do.  
 It will be a slow process  
 and  
 should be a slow process  
 to fully incorporate Tribes  
 in a classroom.  
 A large learning curve  
 for teachers  
 as well as students.  
 Success at the end

Should justify the time  
and effort,  
which will be shortened  
as the teacher becomes more familiar  
with the system.  
The one area  
I really need to work on  
is the positive reaction to negative behavior.  
People react to negative behavior -  
Whether it is from  
a student, parent, teacher, or administrator.  
How we react  
to someone else  
is a reflection of us.  
If we could all act  
in a positive way  
then our work environment  
would be a pleasant place to be.  
If only  
fifty percent of us  
acted positively  
it could change the whole atmosphere  
of the school.  
My first and foremost goal  
for the rest of this year  
and next  
is to react  
more positively  
to negative situations.

### **Qiana**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

Should be provided and required  
during the school year and summer.  
Teachers are busy  
during the school year,  
Summer would be a great time  
for them to catch up  
on current trends in the classroom.  
This would also be a great resource

for teachers  
who are struggling in the classroom  
or want to evolve to be better  
teachers for students.  
School districts/organizations  
should provide  
free professional development courses,  
as well as require teachers to attend  
a number of hours during the school year  
to stay abreast of trends.  
All professional development  
Courses are useful.  
Professional development  
in education technology,  
Special education  
(i.e. Autism, 504, dyslexia, etc.), and  
classroom management  
help me  
in being a better teacher  
for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

#### ***Experiences . . .***

Most teachers feel comfortable  
Using the traditional paradigm  
Because a learning community  
has not been built.

I like the anticipation  
Students have  
When we start an activity  
In which everyone gets a chance  
to share  
with the group  
and then shares with buddy.  
I like how Tribes agreements  
Are introduced and defined.  
Classroom agreements  
Are enforced daily;  
They become norms  
Instead of rules.



An agreement my students will need  
more practice with -  
“attentive listening.”

An area I need work on –  
Asking the three types  
of reflection questions.  
The implementation of Tribes  
in my classroom has us,  
teacher and students,  
using a common language  
in hopes of avoiding conflict.

Classroom becomes  
A learning community.  
They are given opportunities  
to participate  
in team building activities.  
Our learning community expands  
Outside of our classrooms.  
Should be used school-wide.  
Since (experimentally) doing  
some of the inclusion activities,  
I have noticed a change  
in the atmosphere in our classroom –  
both students and myself.  
Because of the positive outcome  
and feedback I have received,  
I too am more excited  
about Tribes  
in our classroom.  
I have gone from just posting  
the agreements  
to now implementing  
the activities and learning experiences.  
I would like to try:

Energizers are great  
For all learners  
And wakes up brains.  
Reflection questions –  
great for social skills and learning,  
an important element -  
I tend to forget.  
Long-term cooperative learning groups,  
Great way for students  
to learn and build social skills.  
Students are able to learn  
Strengths about each other.  
I plan on doing the same activity  
We did in our class -  
students write their name  
in the center of the card and  
Choose three members  
they would like.  
I plan on my class forming tribe groups  
after Spring Break.

I would like to plan more  
Cooperative learning experiences.  
Cooperative learning strategies  
are wonderful  
for peer tutoring and  
reinforcing what was learned.  
It also builds confidence  
in struggling students  
When they are able to teach  
and help their peers.  
I was thinking of how the quote,  
*“It takes a village to raise a child,”*  
Seems to tie into the name of Tribes.

### **Participant Oral Expressions: Interview Transcriptions**

Interviews are thought to be the heart of the data in most phenomenology for this is where the participant's voice and individual perspective is most likely to be heard (Galletta, 2013). More than 8 hours of audio recordings from the one-on-one interviews were transcribed, creating 228 pages of verbatim transcription data. In Vivo Coding identified key points, phrases, and codable moments of each participant. It allowed for the original words of each participant, honoring their flavor of speech and personal perspective, to be maintained. In doing so, each participant's perspective and experiences unfold in a poem-like form.

These poetic renditions are direct quotes excerpted from each participant's interview. The Gateway Approach, as used in this research, has "the purpose of creating a gateway to deeper understanding of the complexities of human experience (Mears, 2009, p. xv). To create these poetic renditions, two cycles of In Vivo Coding set the foundation for the use of these excerpted quotes from each participant.

As with the previous poetic structure using the written participant data, a few guidelines were employed: I maintained flexibility to omit words, to rearrange the sequence of the excerpts, to adjust line spacing, to adjust spacing and punctuation or even to utilize the lack of punctuation. These grammar and visual elements allow some flexibility in order for the poetic structure to evolve. These guidelines were only utilized to formulate the poetic structure; use of these guidelines required the participant's meaning to remain intact. In addition, sub-headings were inserted in order to increase the flow and clarity of the poetic structure.

### **Participant Oral Expressions: Gateway Poetic Rendition**

**Annalina*****Professional Development . . .***

's necessary.

I should never stop learning.

Always very Frustrating

To go through professional development

I didn't value it.

Only geared toward teachers . . .

Only geared to a certain grade . . .

Other people are sitting there.

It's ~~almost~~ . . . a waste of time.

Absolutely willing to learn;

Learn by doing

Absorb things when hands-on.

I have a love of learning . . .

To help me be better

at what

I do;

I try to stick with it to see

What I

Could possibly gain

Maybe . . .

Just call in *that* day . . .

I could be doing other things.

Something else . . .

Directly affected,

Something else?

Even if- peer professional development.

The greatest day:

We got to learn from each other.

So awesome!

***Experiencing Lack of Time . . .***

For me, the biggest thing

I wanted a safe environment:

setting the environment

implementing classroom agreements

I could Not Waste Time

On implementing Energizers

I had to get to my Standards

I didn't have a lot of Time

All are important,

But I just didn't have the Time.

***Experiencing******Lack of Teacher Willingness . . .***

Some educators

never willing to try anything new

Negative Nancys.

Seasoned educators,

Set in their ways.

New educators,

Set in their ways.

Unless mandatory,

Will never implement?

Even if mandatory,

Whole heart into it?

Teacher presence –

negatively affected,

Teachers not buying into it.

Some teachers

are negative –

They follow along.

Just like kids,

They have a leader –

Negative leader.

Some teachers

take it personally . . .

Not good enough?

No, this is just a different way

to do something to help the kids

and to help your job be a little bit easier

and to teach kids strategies

that they can take

outside of the classroom.

Time.  
Yeah, I have a short amount of Time  
with the students.

Easier to stick with what you know  
On Autopilot  
Just Burned Out  
Don't have the extra Time  
To research how it works;  
The effort into trying something new

You know,  
It's Time.  
I think just the effort it would take  
...TIME.

### **Brigette**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

For good teaching practices  
Practiced: experiment, observe,  
Feedback, reflection.  
Over time  
Job-embedded  
Study groups, then  
Like a professional learning team . . .  
Came together, talked, gave examples,  
Nonjudgmental, peer observations  
We learned from each other  
About our own practice  
There was a quality of getting teachers  
Into each other's rooms,  
having those collaborative conversations,  
being willing to try something  
and experiment with it.  
Even if it didn't work . . .  
*"Oh, well. This is what I learned from it.  
It didn't work the way  
I thought it was going to.  
Now this is what I'm going to tweak,  
and now I'm going to try it again."*

Teachers in my generation  
Need hands-on,  
Face-to-face,  
Help.  
Emails - *"Here's a help sheet."*  
That's NOT that HELPFUL.

When we rely on  
Professional development like that,  
We lose a great group of people.

Used to have  
a tremendous,  
very high-quality  
Professional development program  
Fabulous . . .  
Oh my gosh;  
It was amazing  
Professional development.  
Teachers  
felt  
Valued  
because  
They had that opportunity  
for professional development.  
We don't have one now at all, I believe;  
Having an online class is not the same.

This year I took two classes . . .  
One totally online,  
Difficult for me.  
The other, face-to-face,  
Way easier for me.  
I benefit from the conversations . . .  
I need that.

Having a critical eye on me . . .  
Very Helpful.  
Teaching teachers . . .  
huge learning curve for me.

Situations force  
Major learning.  
I had to figure out:  
Every single behavior  
You'd see in third grade,  
You see in the group of teachers.

### ***Experiencing***

#### ***Inadequate Learning Environment . . .***

Risk-free environment . . .  
to do all of that.  
It's not risk-free . . .  
So people are fearful to try things,  
So they stick to what they know,  
and they stick in their rooms,  
to themselves.  
If people don't know  
what you're doing,  
then somebody can't tell  
somebody else -  
You can't get in trouble.  
That bothers me.  
Not a risk-free environment~  
People are afraid to change  
practices;  
*"I am not saying that out loud."*  
It's too scary.  
One day  
when I got called into the office,  
They made me recite . . .  
It's misused.  
People take bits and pieces,  
Then they misuse them.

#### ***Experiencing Tribes PD . . .***

The training was validating  
Many of the things  
I was already doing  
And it was also a shot in the arm,  
An injection of

*"Okay, I need to be thinking  
about these things."*

Sometimes you Forget  
the stuff,  
You know you should do.

It made me start being reflective again  
About practices and  
Going back  
To tried-and-true things—  
Overtly incorporating them back  
Into my practice  
Some days I'll go home and think,  
*"I was the worst teacher  
In the world today!  
Tomorrow, I have to do better."*

Be really reflective about your own practice  
And make changes with your practice.  
Reflection is really hard.  
It takes a lot of guts to look at yourself~  
Keep changing to meet their needs.

#### ***Experiencing Social Learning Choice . . .***

So unaware  
So involved  
Video games.  
Don't always have natural  
social skills,  
collaboration skills,  
teamwork skills . . .  
They learn to disagree respectfully,  
To coach,  
Not just tell.  
I want to coach them.  
I teach them how to coach.  
Partner work.  
Group work.  
So important . . .  
It doesn't matter who you are.

Being a good listener,  
 Being nonjudgmental,  
 Helping people come to their own beliefs,  
 NOT putting yours on them.

Teacher is important  
 To set it up.  
 To organize.  
 To oversee.  
 Lots of times  
 kids help each other  
 Better than I can.  
 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills  
 Yes, academics.  
 But a lot is being able  
 To collaborate,  
 To share ideas and  
 Use other people's ideas,  
 Being a team player.

Time-consuming.

It will pay off for them in the end,  
 But it doesn't always pay off for you here.  
 You don't always see the benefit.  
 Sometimes –  
 Sometimes that light bulb goes on  
 And you see it,  
 But not always.

### ***Experiencing***

#### ***Lack of Teacher Willingness . . .***

Teachers, in general, want to go to a class,  
 Get the information,  
 And RUNAWAY.

They don't want to be held accountable  
 for implementing,  
 being reflective about that practice,

and having conversations.  
 They don't want it to be over Time.  
 They want it to be short.  
 They don't  
 want it  
 over Time.

College is now providing  
 Professional development –  
 Because of their accreditation process,  
 They are forced to doing that over time.

Teachers are getting testy about it.  
 I kind of like it,  
 But a lot of people do not.  
 I notice when we do  
 Professional development here –  
 Whatever we do, however you call that –  
 People don't want to have the conversations.  
 People get annoyed.  
 People want to stop talking  
 and LET'S JUST GO.

A lack of investment . . .  
 Often times people are saying  
 in our grade level  
 "Just tell us what to do, and we'll do it,"  
 Because - people don't want to invest.  
 And then –  
 and I think I even stood up and said-  
 "Okay, yeah.  
*But then they're going to tell you what to do  
 And you're not going to like it,  
 Then you're going to complain  
 for the next five years.  
 You can't have it both ways."*

When it affects where you live,  
 You have more of an investment  
 Or you shut up.

People take professional development  
because they need the credits,  
Because they have to re-cert.  
People aren't taking it necessarily  
Because they have a desire to get better.  
When people take professional development  
because of that desire,  
They do implement.  
But when it's just to get the credit,  
That diminishes.

***Experiencing Lack of Materials . . .***

In the space for me,  
for the energizers –  
We just don't have the space,  
But again  
Not only about the space,  
But it's about timing.

***Experiencing Required PD . . .***

Like right now, mandatory math training  
It's coming top-down.  
For some people, it will be okay.  
For other people, they are annoyed.  
Annoyance - it doesn't have all the pieces.

*"You don't have the curriculum that  
supports what you're doing?"*

"No. Those are all coming later."

*"Okay, now I really don't want  
to invest that much.  
If it's going to be top-down,  
then good grapes –  
You need to have all the pieces there."*

***Experiencing***

***Lack of Time & Large Curriculum . . .***

Time-consuming.  
I feel such great pressure here  
About everybody  
being in the same place,  
and I'm always behind  
because of my teaching style.  
Then when you incorporate  
those things on top of it,  
It puts me farther behind.  
That takes longer.  
Then I feel the pressure.  
I get anxious about that,  
And so I probably don't do as much  
As I would like to

***Experiencing***

***PD at Frustration Level . . .***

I get FRUSTRATED when it's online.  
You've got to teach yourself.

Okay, I can't teach myself.  
If I could have taught myself,  
I would have done it without this class.

I need help.  
I want somebody to teach me.  
I can't learn it . . .  
I get too frustrated.  
I don't understand it.

Frustrating.  
I don't incorporate it  
Because by the time  
I get done with it,  
I'm – so - done!  
I don't care if I ever do that again.

Motivation makes a difference.

***Experiencing******Inadequate Learning Environment . . .***

Often they send people  
 To do professional development  
 Who are not good at it.  
 Several times ours said,  
*"We all agreed this is a canned script.  
 We can't step out of this.  
 We have to do this."*

You know what?  
 Even if that's true, you don't say that.

You help people  
 Get to where they need.  
 I think they lacked the skill  
 to be able to do that for people.

***Experiencing******Desire for Collaboration . . .***

I'm very disappointed . . .  
 I thought the PLTs were a great opportunity,  
 That's why I took the PLT training.  
 They said,  
*"You can't have a PLT  
 if you're not all in the same grade level."*  
 I greatly disagreed.  
 There's great learning  
 when it's vertically articulated.  
 The PLTs were a great  
 Professional development piece  
 That went awry.  
 Administration got involved,  
 Started telling people  
 Who could and could not do what,  
 And they weren't supportive.

With that PLT,  
 Not one of them  
 Would ever get up in front

of anybody and speak.  
 I convinced those members  
 Every single one of them got involved.  
 I coached them to put together the  
 professional development.  
 When we got there,  
 I sat back and just jumped in  
 If I needed to,  
 But let them.  
 They made some mistakes, but it was theirs.  
 They did a session on PLTs  
 And a session on generational differences  
 I'm so proud of them.  
 That's the power, I think.

But if you don't have  
 a supportive environment, it goes.  
 But— the PLT  
 I did was not sanctioned  
 by administration.  
 They told me no.  
 I said,  
*"I'm not trying to be the official PLT.  
 It's just a group of people that want to get  
 together and collaborate."*  
 The official PLT:  
 Told, every time, what to do.  
 Met, with them, the week prior,  
 Told them what to say, what to do.

So we never had time  
 To do any collaborative work.

We never had Time  
 To discuss student achievement,  
 Assessments  
 There was never any Time.  
 That's why we started the second PLT.  
 We wanted to look at student work and  
 Have those conversations,



~there Wasn't Time there.

I don't think the school can  
do it right Now  
People won't open up and  
Share those things  
Because that's too risky.

### **Charity**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

If it's one you take online  
Do the reflective questions  
Comment on people's posts,  
It's Not effective.

If it's done right,  
If done correctly,  
IT HELPS.

Face-to-face - rather than online  
It's easier for me to learn that way.  
Hands-on  
Actually doing it,  
You learn more than if somebody  
Gives you the book and just says  
*"Here are all the energizers."*  
Actually implement in your classroom,  
Checking for understanding for teachers –  
If there was more of that,  
More effective.

I think when done right,  
It could be very beneficial to students.  
I would love to see an entire ~ TRIBES,  
What it looks like,  
How they use it,  
Get pointers from things they've done  
What's worked, what's not?

It would be more impactful . . .  
Done periodically throughout the year,  
Checks  
The whole school  
I could go into any one  
of my colleagues' rooms . . .  
Helpful if everyone did it altogether

It should have been a longer program  
than just four Saturdays.  
You're not in the class anymore,  
So it feels like more of a Burden  
To go ask after the fact

#### ***Experiencing Poor Timing . . .***

At the beginning of the year,  
I was More Willing  
to do these things . . .  
You're getting to know the kids.  
They're getting to know each other.  
You kind of need that bond to happen  
at the beginning.

More Willing right after the training  
It was fresh in my mind,  
So I Remembered most of it.  
As time has gone on,  
I have Forgotten a lot of it –  
Not because I don't like it,  
But because  
There are So Many other things.

I took it at the end of spring . . .  
It should be done over the summer  
So you start it as soon as you start school  
And then have a Saturday periodically  
Throughout the school year  
To check to see what's working,  
See what you are still confused about . . .

***Experiencing Hardships . . .***

I thought it would be interesting . . .  
 It has been Harder to implement.  
 I don't feel like  
 I picked up enough  
 of what I needed to do.

For the most part,  
 It's easy to build into lesson planning.

I don't have enough Time  
 To go back and read through the book  
 To see what I should do  
 for this or what  
 I Forgot about.

More effort was done  
 in the beginning of the year,  
 It's kind of  
 Teetered Off since then  
 Because  
 We get SUPER BUSY.

I know TRIBES is supposed to be  
 kind of built-in ~ easy,  
 But again  
 you have to Remember  
 those components.  
 You have to,  
*"Okay, I need to remember  
 what I need to do . . .  
 and then implement that  
 and then do reflective questioning."*  
 So it takes More Time  
 than you would think  
 or that it was said to take.

***Experiencing Regret . . .***

But it does need to be  
 Continuous,

throughout the year.  
 I should have done more  
 Throughout the year.

***Experiencing Lack of Time  
 & Lack of Teacher Willingness..***

Mostly TIME  
 and Remembering . . .  
 If it's not built into your lesson plan already,  
 Then you kind of PUSH IT OFF  
 to the side or  
 You FORGET about it.  
 If you don't put it in your planning or  
 Your daily Schedule,  
 Then it's kind of like,  
*"I didn't remember I had to do that"* or  
*"I should've done this."*

The more you are involved in it,  
 see it  
 see it multiple times  
 do it  
 multiple times,  
 then  
 it Sticks  
 more than  
 if you just read it in a book  
 and then  
 you're supposed to do it.  
 Easier because  
 I know, Did, and Saw, - all of those things.  
 Still,  
 I don't feel as comfortable doing it.

I Forgot  
 some  
 of the things  
 So I kind of relied  
 On My Way.  
 So I kind of Stuck with that.

***Professional Development Should Be . . .***

Continuous  
 Very frequent,  
 Very often  
 A daily routine  
 Engraved in your lesson plans  
 Check-in throughout the year.

I took a math course.  
 We did lessons in the classroom.  
 But because it  
 Wasn't Continuous,  
 It just was like,  
*"That was cool."*

Didn't ever do it again-

The first couple months of school,  
 it would need to be  
 very frequent,  
 very often.  
 So it's already  
 a daily routine.  
 It's already  
 engraved in your lesson plans,  
 everything.  
 It then can be tapered off,  
 but still check-in throughout the year.

Timeline . . .  
 Was Not direct.  
 Timeline could be beneficial -  
 When to implement  
 Talk about progress of implementing.

Not everyone would attend  
 if it was a voluntary thing.

***Docilla******Professional Development . . .***

is absolutely necessary  
 for teachers to grow and advance.  
 It has to be good  
 professional development -  
 Useful, Beneficial, Relevant,  
 Advancement, Growth

My whole gripe with  
*"Professional development"*  
 is that it's  
 NOT professional development.  
 A teacher telling me what they're doing?  
 I don't think it's fair  
 to call it professional development.  
 For me,  
 Professional development  
 Should offer advancement and growth  
 In my profession-  
 Not only in what I can apply  
 In my classroom,  
 But also toward being able to renew  
 My certification.  
 Other than that,  
 I don't think  
 It's professional development.

***Experiencing Desire for Collaboration . . .***

I had really awesome  
 Professional development opportunities.  
 A group of grade-level teachers would meet,  
 actually NOT during our plan time  
 We would develop lessons together,  
 Talk about our lessons,  
 Present one lesson to the group . . .  
 Afterward talk about the lesson  
 It was all strengths-based,  
 So focus on -  
*"This is what I learned."*

The district would actually  
 Provide substitutes for that.  
 For example on the fifth-grade team,  
 There were four teachers.  
 They would come watch me give the lesson,  
 and there would be a substitute in their  
 classrooms for the duration of that lesson  
 and then the discussion afterward.  
 It was maybe an hour, hour and a half -  
 every quarter.  
 The district supported -  
 Got certification points  
 for renewal  
 Of our certificate  
 for participating in collegial coaching.  
 It was a little intense,  
 But it was a really good learning experience.

You got time during your workday  
 It was quite nice to be able to have that.

### ***Experiencing Tribes PD . . .***

First real professional development  
 offered since I started  
 It just sounded exciting to me,  
 To be able to receive  
 Some sort of real professional development  
 And then, the college credit also!

I was very nervous teaching . . .  
 I didn't feel like I had the expertise for that

Obviously a lot of factors go into  
 Student learning outcomes ~  
 Good professional development  
 Relationships within the classroom  
 A teacher can really affect whether the  
 learning is happening intrinsically,  
 actually learning,  
 Not just going through the motions.

I really haven't implemented TRIBES  
 the way  
 It's supposed to be implemented.  
 It's Hard to do.  
 We are not a TRIBES school.  
 As a specialist,  
 if kids aren't practicing in their classrooms,  
 It's hard to carry over into my classroom.

I can tell when a teacher uses them  
 and when a teacher doesn't use them.

### ***Experiencing Poor Timing . . .***

When I first took the TRIBES training,  
 I tried to implement some,  
 But it was the end of the year  
 It was a little tricky to get it going.  
 It was the end of the year!  
 The kids were pretty much just done.

I've used the agreements.  
 Some of the cooperative learning  
 I've been setting the environment;  
 But you know, I didn't even really think,  
*"That's a TRIBES thing."*  
 It's just something that I was doing.  
 I didn't think,  
*"Hey, wait a minute. That was TRIBES."*

The energizers, I really don't . . .  
 We have 45 minutes,  
 So I really don't have Time to do those.

### ***Experiencing Regret . . .***

I wish I could implement it  
 a little bit more  
 or more consistently.  
 But it is a little challenging.

***Experiencing Lack of Time  
& Large Curriculum . . .***

It's Challenging .

If it is not really supported school-wide.

I just don't have the Time.

I would like to implement more  
of the reflective questioning.

It kind of gets HECTIC at the end.

I just think we get CAUGHT UP

in all the subject matter,

in the content . . .

We have to teach.

We just FORGET

There's more to education

As a teacher, honestly,

I can say that I forget to do it

I get TIRED - planning lessons

And it's like, *"I still have to plan for that?"*

You just get Tired, I think,

OVERWHELMED, maybe?

If you have a more challenging class,

Your main thing is—

The behavior management component.

I also think

There is this underlying sense —

We want it to be quiet.

*"Don't let it get too loud."*

If it's getting too loud ,

*"Oh my gosh, I'm going to be judged."*

It's getting too loud,

It's getting out of hand.

Some energizers

and cooperative learning —

Sometimes the kids get loud.

That's just the way it is.

Kids have very little sense

of volume control.

Even though they're still learning —

Magical things

happening with learning,

Internalizing.

We tend to back off

If it starts getting too loud or

People are excited;

We want to calm you back down.

I tell myself,

*"Just relax.*

*It's okay if it's not all perfect*

*and quiet*

*and not under your control"*

Because maybe . . .

That's when real learning is happening.

But it's Hard.

It's a fine line between being able to tell,

Is there really learning going on or

Just messing around?

***Experiencing Regret . . .***

I wish I could implement it more.

I don't think I have really.

Obviously,

I haven't implemented it the way

It's supposed to be.

Yeah, not really,

Just wishing I could have More

TIME,

I guess.

The other thing is ~

You take the training, and  
You go back to your room.

If you don't practice those things,  
You Forget  
all the elements.

I've Forgotten a lot  
Maybe I should take it again.  
Maybe I'll do it again this year  
Need REFRESHERS  
if you're  
Not constantly doing it.

### **Edda**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

's very important  
It got me excited to try those strategies,  
Hear something new-  
Haven't tried . . .

Do the professional development  
Use it,  
Right away  
And see the outcome.  
Visual learner ~  
I have to see myself  
Hands-on  
No online.  
Online- it's not authentic  
Like having a colleague  
You work with –  
working on it together  
Bounce off ideas . . .  
Face-to-face – to talk  
About what works,  
What doesn't?  
It helps me out a lot.  
A weekend, eight to five, Saturday, Sunday  
Need to get this credit done – over with

#### ***Experiencing Hardship . . .***

Oh, I'm very teacher-directed.  
Being outta the classroom made me reflect:  
More cooperative learning  
I needed help in the classroom.  
I needed something different  
'cause I was just In a Rut.  
I was doing what I felt was best.  
But I knew there was a better way.  
So I wanted to try something out.  
– sold me on it.  
At first when I was in the training,  
I DID -  
Wanna implement everything.

#### ***Experiencing***

#### ***Lack of Time & Large Curriculum . . .***

But realistically in the classroom,  
With  
Everything  
I had to cover,

It was hard

To try everything  
At ONCE.

I did start . . .

There was just  
NO  
TIME.

TIME . . .  
Curriculum  
Planning the lessons  
Grading papers  
Emailing parents  
Parent-teacher conferences  
Yeah, it is HARD.  
TIME.

***Experiencing Poor Timing . . .***

There was just No Time.  
All the Things  
Had to cover –

Then after Terra Nova  
I was more into trying something new.  
But before that,  
I already had a system going.  
Hard to do away with  
I knew what I had to cover.  
It was kind of HARD.

***Experiencing******Desire for Collaboration . . .***

End of the year after I took the class,  
I implemented it.  
But it kinda . . . . . DIED out.  
If there was a Refresher –  
Like a learning team  
We discuss ideas -  
What works, what doesn't?

I think I would've kept going.

I got excited and then  
I kind of GOT LOST . . .  
I was doing – everything - and then  
I FORGOT about it . . .

A team that gets together –  
Just talk about it . . .  
What works?  
What doesn't?  
*"Oh, let's try this."*  
Not a long session,  
Maybe half an hour,  
Weekly . . .  
That would've helped.

The Think-Tank . . .

I didn't feel comfortable:  
More like same grade level or  
People that have a similar style-  
I can bounce off ideas.  
Anybody could drop by  
One day and then  
Not come the next,  
It just didn't work for me.  
There is no consistency  
And I don't like that.  
It has to be more systematic:

Like if the fourth-grade team–  
Four of us  
Who want to try it out  
We get together  
Half an hour  
Weekly  
Brainstorm  
Talk about what worked,  
What didn't  
And then try it out.  
That would've been  
More effective.

At a school in Guam . . .  
They were more cooperative –  
Like,  
Family atmosphere.

The teachers  
- still there -  
They're still breathing there.  
They'll probably die there -  
Right?  
So there's not much movement of teachers  
And the admins are still there  
- like after 20 years  
They're still there

With the same group of teachers  
 And it's like a family.  
 Everybody knows about everybody.  
 But it's different there.

Well,  
 You – you have to accept it  
 Here  
 Because it is  
 A transit environment  
     People come and go.

### ***Experiencing Benefits . . .***

Parents willing to try new things  
 Parents come with certain expectations . . .  
 Your parents supporting you,  
 Trusting you.  
 Admin support, too.

Somebody who knows that field.  
 It can't be just Suzie Q  
 Who's read about it or  
 Somebody who's just done research and  
 has no idea what it's like in the classroom.  
 'Cause you can tell -  
 If they really know their stuff.  
 I like to read research  
 But I like to see people  
 Who actually used it  
 How they used it  
 How it worked  
 Show the failures, too,  
 Not just all glamour.  
 Discussing  
 Not-so-pretty situations  
*"If you come into issues with this,  
 Okay, maybe you need to try this . . ."*  
 Not just, here are the strategies . . .  
*"Go do it in your classroom."*  
 But something more realistic . . .

*"These are some of the issues  
 that might happen . . .  
 This is how we solve it . . ."*

That WILL HELP.

### ***Experiencing Hardship . . .***

It's not exactly as pretty  
 as what they describe sometimes.  
*"That's not the way it happened for me."*

People coming in the classroom  
 They try to control  
 for one hour and they leave.  
 They're not with them  
 From morning till night . . .  
 Potty break . . .  
 Throw up . . .  
 Parent complains–  
 All different scenarios.  
 And it's just unrealistic.  
 Like yeah, ya might be a good teacher  
 But you're not here  
 All the Time!  
 I am,  
 Seeing what I see.  
 That's one of the problems in education -  
*"You should set up your classroom like this"*  
*"It should look like . . ."*  
*"You should have centers here"*  
*"And you should . . ."*–  
 I was like [pounding noise] . . .  
*"Are you kidding me?"*

*"Have you looked  
 at All the Curriculum  
 I have to cover, huh?"*  
 Seriously.  
*"Have you graded  
 Any of those papers*



*I have to grade?  
And put them  
in GradeSpeed, huh?"*

And that's the reality in the classroom . . .  
And people are like –  
*"Oh, you need to put the data together."*  
I'm like –  
*"Why don't you put the data together?"*  
I don't have Time for that.

Like CDC – 4 years- have homework.  
Are you kidding me?  
Four years old  
have homework?  
That is ridiculous.  
It's not the teachers' fault.  
But that's how much pressure  
We're giving to kids  
With all this testing, too  
Kids don't have time  
To be kids.  
They don't have time  
To develop gross motor skills  
–they're missing out on a lot.  
So I think it's time.

It's time.  
I mean, the contact time  
with kids has to be meaningful.

It can't be just  
throwing things at them saying  
*"Oh, you need to do this  
because it's required."*  
– Not that kinda contact.

You need to plan the lesson.  
But We don't have TIME  
for planning.

Teachers don't get respect.

It's parenting, too ~Tantrum.  
If the kid wants something,  
just give it  
If a kid is misbehaving,  
We don't wanna deal with it  
I think that mentality's wrong.

### **Fantina**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

I'm very passionate about Science,  
But that didn't count ~  
It ended up being, like,  
a continuing ed credit,  
Instead of a full credit  
Which that was frustrating  
Although, I don't care at this point  
'cause I just love it . . .

#### ***Experiencing Tribes PD . . .***

Tribes . . .  
My colleagues talked me into it  
even though I was already implementing,  
just in a different way . . .  
Pick and choose –  
Even when I was in the training,  
I knew I wasn't going to implement  
everything,  
Probably?

I do that anytime  
I learn something new.  
I just pick out components  
I enjoy and utilize them.

It depends on the class  
I get, too.  
Different group of kids, other areas.  
I love the kids working in teams.

I've done that quite a bit.  
 I don't refer to them as Tribes.  
 I refer to them as teams or groups.

I don't keep them in the same group all year,  
 Like Tribes.  
 I change 'em quarterly  
 With the philosophy,  
 They have to work with others.

In a circle, an open question time,  
 Start easy,  
 A little bit,  
 Work into more difficult . . .  
 I try to do 15 minutes every day.  
 It always ends up being maybe 20-25,  
 depending on what the topic is and  
 how long the kids are taking to answer.  
 Sometimes, I cut out appreciations  
 if it cuts too much into our language arts  
 Time.

The kids have gotten really good with it,  
 More personable.

And then they follow the rules,  
 Definitely a community.  
 And they listen to each other,  
 More of a family atmosphere...  
 It's gotten better and better.  
 They don't have to participate;  
 Some choose to pass.  
 I like that aspect, too.  
 And, of course,  
 when we get new students,  
 it takes a little while  
 to get them comfortable  
 and in the groove.

The Energizers . . .  
 I use GoNoodle for Brain Breaks.  
 I pay for the subscription  
 Put questions in  
 Practice a concept  
 we may be working on.  
 They're moving and earning points  
 as a team,  
 against a villain on there.  
 And then we have dance activities.  
 And I can also gear it towards the class  
 and see what they're into.  
 I do like how it's made –  
 Like, little YouTube channel movies.  
 And it takes away all the little commercials.  
 They are very interested in engineering and  
 Why things are made that way.  
 We watch those for a snack break  
 or a brain break.  
 It's a break; they're still learning!

Reflective questioning techniques -  
 Not to the extent that Tribes does for sure.  
 I would do more  
 if I had maybe an average  
 or a higher-level group.  
 Exit tickets?

Work appropriately together . . .  
 Eventually I'll start incorporating  
 a little bit more of that into my team work.

***Experiencing Hardship  
 & Lack of Teacher Willingness . . .***

We get INUNDATED  
 with other things,  
 Or say yes to other things.

It takes much more TIME  
 Than we necessarily wanna take

To implement it.  
It takes a lot a TIME to start new things.

Implementing  
community circle  
was rough for me at first.  
It was a big learning experience.

The other areas I could be implementing?

The next year, I was like,  
*"No, this worked for me.  
I am comfortable with this.  
I would have to do more work  
to implement XYZ."*  
Instead,  
I'd rather implement what I picked -  
The one – the one aspect  
I enjoy  
The most . . .  
And then put my energy  
Towards other things.  
I continue working  
on those areas I enjoy,  
Making sure it aligns.

And every year changes,  
Depending on the new team,  
School,  
Or the kids that you get,  
I change.

A lot of teachers pick out one or two things  
From a professional development,  
They choose to implement.

Some teachers get STAGNANT  
With NOT changing or adapting  
But I feel,  
It's a process every year

That adapts and changes.  
I'm never the same teacher year by year.  
I don't tend to do exactly the same thing  
all the time.  
I tweak it or change it.  
I think a lot of the good teachers do that.

Some teachers who get a little bit Tired  
May tend to do the same thing  
Over and over and over again  
And not change

And then pick up areas here or there.  
Overseas teachers don't get  
The same exposure  
To professional development  
Like we did when we were stateside  
And don't see all the opportunities  
That are possible.

Or, They see opportunities;  
Don't act upon it  
Because  
It's inconvenient for where we live,  
Cost, On a weekend . . .

It's hard to find things  
To be passionate about  
Or put your money somewhere  
You're not quite sure  
If you're really gonna enjoy the PD.  
More teachers need to step up,  
Offer or share expertise  
I did a little PD today at school.  
A little frustrating when it comes to science  
Because  
They really don't do it.  
It's weird.  
They just save it for the one week  
They do STEM,

Very frustrating  
After coming from a school that did it

Just doing a small activity  
With the teachers -  
Loved sharing; they got excited.  
The entire faculty got excited about it.  
Anytime people get excited,  
It just makes you wanna do it a little more,  
Share more knowledge.

Their excitement  
Kind of feeds you  
Keeps you doing it  
Definitely makes me feel like  
I'm doing the right thing.

***Experiencing Benefits . . .***

And then parents jumped onboard  
immediately HERE.  
I have more parent involvement  
Than I ever did

***Experiencing***

***Desire for Collaboration . . .***

It's the first year.  
And I get that –  
and the team's building.  
But they're definitely on a different track  
than where I was.  
There was that Tribes' group  
You could go to and chat or share ideas-  
Other people were using it.  
And here, nobody is using it at all-  
I haven't found anybody.  
Here- Very gung ho about Whole brain.  
I'm only using some things-  
Like Tribes,  
I use basic or certain components.  
'cause I don't wanna drop Tribes either.

I'm not the type that just delves in full feet,  
full ahead and everything.

I like to pick out pieces that work for me  
Or that I really enjoy  
Then just use them, in-depth.

I'm so passionate about science.  
They don't even have the science kits here,  
Nothing . . . And that's frustrating.  
It's rough not having other people  
To share ideas with or  
Bounce ideas off of.

A lot - collaboration between - classes,  
And then once school starts,  
Something . . .  
I think life takes over;  
Extracurricular activities take over;  
And then college classes.

***Experiencing Required PD . . .***

I match it up to what I would've taught  
in the curriculum,  
used those lessons  
plus a few that they provide.  
I don't really, particularly,  
like some  
of the stuff they're giving.  
Some of the questioning is way higher  
than the kids are ready for.

I have co-workers,  
on the same grade level,  
Who refuse to even follow it

I don't like the way they're presenting  
Through these different organizations  
Terrible  
The people presenting were not enthusiastic.

They weren't friendly.  
 They weren't passionate about it.  
 They were pretty sarcastic, negative.  
*Attitude* definitely affects  
 how it comes across.  
 It was NOT enjoyable.  
 A lot of teachers have grumbled, upset.  
 They don't listen  
 To what the complaints are  
 To adapt and  
 Change the PD.  
 So when they're doing that,  
 Then the PDs aren't gonna be  
 As successful.

I think everybody's done some articulation.  
 Doing that each Time  
 With how Tedious it is;  
 It is a WASTE!

We could be sharing,  
 Collaborating ideas  
 For lessons  
 With meaningful articulation  
 More beneficial!

They're obviously  
 Not taking the feedback seriously  
 And adapting to our needs . . .  
 Like teachers should.

## **Gasha**

### ***Professional Development . . .***

We're supposed to be lifelong learners.  
 Important to continue learning.  
 Our professional development days  
 Teachers, teaching teachers  
 We look at each other as mentors  
 Definitely, learn from each other  
 Sometimes we only share  
 Within our grade level . . .  
 Whether it's convenient or  
 Just 'cause of planning time?  
 Truly implementing,  
 Not just walking away with information

### ***Experiencing Poor Timing . . .***

We just got SMART Tables.  
 And I'm still learning how to use it  
 But because I don't feel super comfortable  
 I'm not utilizing it to the best that I can.  
 Therefore,  
 My kids are not getting the best benefit.  
 I am -kind of-  
 Doing somewhat of an injustice  
 By not, ya know  
 – by having a SMART Table in my room  
 and not really using it;  
 My kids not using it.  
 I wish I had learned this  
 over the summer  
 Before I had started my routines  
 With my class . . .  
 Still trying to get that swing of things  
 So it was kind of like,  
 not too late,  
 But . . . just testing the waters,  
*“Oh, this is gonna be so great  
 for next year.”*

***Experiencing******Lack of Time & Large Curriculum . . .***

The curriculum, too –  
 Only so many hours in a day  
 To fit even more in.  
 It makes implementing  
 A little bit more difficult.

***Experiencing Tribes PD . . .***

I felt, like, I was already doing Tribes  
 NOT necessarily understanding everything  
 I just knew that was something *I was*.  
 I definitely feel children benefit.  
 That's how I wanted my classroom.  
 That's how I kinda built my classroom.  
 Tribes helped to sharing a little bit more.

It's been Hard for me to implement.

Behavioral Challenges.

I actually incorporated Tribes with DoJo.

Children do a weekly reflection,  
 Color-coding positive points . . .  
 It was very Time-consuming.  
 The students this year – as a whole-  
 Just did not have the stamina  
 To truly get through a lot of lessons.  
 It's very Challenging this year.  
 And their attention is just not there –  
 We were doing it step-by-step.  
 It was –  
 It was just –  
 It was just Challenging.  
 So I stopped –  
 I changed it to just reflecting  
 On what they want to work on  
 Really honed down the reflection piece–  
 Reflecting on their own learning  
 Setting goals for themselves.

Energizers . . . many times

Use Go-Noodle

I have been implementing new things

But keeping it basic

Working together -

They struggle the most.

Just not kind to each other

Some, Not willing to share

Getting frustrated with friends

Not cooperating in groups –

Some do the whole thing on own

Don't want to disappoint me

Want to get their work done

So, do it on their own...

And that's not working together.

Challenge - behavioral

Just constant blurting out

Makes it difficult to teach

You can only do so much

And you can only get through just so much

Curriculum when your class is doing that.

***Experiencing******Desire for Collaboration . . .***

Very interested in learning about it

Heard such great things about the class

The class was not convenient

With being a single mom and stuff.

*"Well, if you keep giving excuses,*

*You'll never get it done."*

But a bunch of colleagues doing it,

I felt a bond already

So I thought it'd be even more fun

To do it with them.

Collaboration is key.

Sharing things that I do in my class

Just getting that idea from another teacher,  
Helps.  
I love collaboration.  
I can't emphasize how important  
That truly is.

***Experiencing New School . . .***

Everyone was very welcoming.  
There was another new teacher.  
We Bonded.  
The school culture was very different.  
At first it was stressful.  
A free spirit . . .  
Like, everything is just  
"Whatever you wanna do."  
Not "by the books" –  
That was what we were used to.  
The school was more free rein,  
Trusting teachers  
To do what their students need.  
Which isn't a bad thing . . .  
But  
Sometimes, it's nice to have direction.  
Too much freedom can be negative as well.

This year we have a new teacher  
So we've been trying to teach her the ropes.  
Not used to  
All the paperwork,  
All the procedures,  
All the restrictions . . .  
Whatsoever.

But, I will say, as a grade level  
We're always like,  
"Oh, thank God we all work."  
We love our team.  
And we do work well together  
This year, a lot more  
We just flow

We're more of a unit -  
'Cause you already know  
Each other's personalities

Does her own thing-  
And she knows that.  
And we knew that.  
And we respected that.  
But that was why first grade wasn't  
On the same page last year.  
We still collaborated  
But nothing like we do this year.  
It's a lot nicer -  
When the collaboration piece is there.  
You're united as a grade level.  
You're seeing eye-to-eye.  
But even when you don't,  
It's so professional.  
And you're at least taking  
everyone's opinion into account.

***Experiencing Required PD . . .***

Spending hours  
Upon hours at the school  
Planning and getting to know these lessons –  
And how to teach it.  
And it's – and it's,  
You know – we're trying.  
"Oh, man,  
Our campus is so not ready for this."

**Hilary**

***Professional Development . . .***

's necessary.  
We have limited  
Availability of classes  
Here.  
When we're not doing it,  
That's when we become Stagnant.  
The world is changing.

If we stop developing as teachers,  
 We're gonna be doing the kids a disservice,  
 you know.  
 We've got to continue to move forward.  
 Learning is a life skill.  
 You cannot stop learning.  
 Even as teachers,  
 We cannot stop learning.

You're never gonna get *there*.  
 You're never gonna be at the end.  
 If we're showing students,  
*"Hey, I'm excited*  
*'cause I'm learning something new."*  
 Then that's gonna show them  
*"Wow, even adults are learning."*  
 You can never stop learning;  
 Once you stop learning,  
 You're gonna stop living.

### ***Experiencing Social Learning Choice . . .***

My classroom is  
 Hands-on  
 Work on a problem of the day,  
 Which is math  
 Reading . . .  
 Writing . . .  
 And all things combined  
 Attack a couple different skills every day  
 Brain break

Then we meet whole group – limited  
 because this class can't  
 And when I say they can't sit still  
 They can't sit still!

We work in our groups.  
 I change their groups,  
 Like, every week  
 to be familiar with each other.

But they always have a core group.  
 It's constant movement in here -  
 All day long,  
 All week long,  
 All month long.  
 Chaos. [laughing]

### ***Experiencing***

#### ***Desire for Collaboration . . .***

I often find myself disappointed  
 Because there's not continuity  
 From year to year,  
 Teacher to teacher  
 Even within grade level.  
 And our school's just so big  
 It's never going to be the same.  
 It would really benefit everybody  
 If it were the same across-the-board.

To have someone else who's also doing it -  
 It was very nice when we did Tribes  
 With our peers  
 Online- I would be alone in trying  
 No matter how excited about it -  
 May become discouraged  
 It's not that I can't do things on my own  
 But when you have a group  
 Who are all excited,  
 It makes it easy.  
 It helps . . .

You can bounce ideas off of one another.  
 You can see how they're doing it.  
 You can see what works;  
 What doesn't  
 They can try something.  
 You can try something.  
 And report back to one another.  
 That makes it more fun.



Sometimes we need  
 Encouragement  
 To implement–  
 within our daily Schedules.

***Experiencing***

***Lack of Time & Large Curriculum . . .***

And with the  
 Limited amount of TIME  
 We have . . .  
 Limited time to take classes  
 Limited time with students  
 Limited time to plan

We have so much to cover  
 In such a short day

***Lack of Teacher Willingness . . .***

Unfortunately,  
 We spend hours  
 Upon hours  
 Of our own time,  
 You know.  
 And that makes it HARD  
 To implement something  
 You're really excited about  
 Because  
 You're already spending so much time  
 Doing what's Just necessary.  
 And then on top of that,  
 To do above and beyond,  
 You just don't have the Time.

It becomes  
 EXHAUSTING  
 and  
 Less exciting.

***Experiencing Tribes PD . . .***

I was curious about what it was.  
 I believe in a community  
 Within the classroom  
 I love the idea of all of it.  
 Do I believe in every single part of it?  
 No.  
 But I believe in a lot of it.

I find myself implementing Tribes  
 In ways I didn't even realize.  
 Things I do to promote community-  
 We're a team.  
 Put kids in their groups  
 Encourage community  
 Within the small groups  
 Then within a large group  
 All of that  
 I do now  
 Without even thinking  
 about it.  
 And I think,  
 It's something I've always done  
 Even before I did Tribes.  
 But then to realize,  
 "Oh, it's a thing!"  
 Like I'm doing something  
 Other people do  
 Found successes doing-

It's not just me.

***Isaac***

***Professional Development . . .***

shouldn't be force-fed.  
 A lot is done online,  
 Which isn't necessarily helpful  
 For example,  
 We did our training this week.

It was just  
Clicking – clicking and clicking.

PD training . . .  
Wonderful class . . .  
Go back to your classroom,  
Try it out.

Should reconvene:  
*“Hey, did you try any of these?  
How did they go? Let’s discuss it.”*  
There needs to be more follow-up.

A community coming together and saying:  
*“This is what we used. This is what works.”*  
Not a blog,  
That would just bog  
People down.

Just somebody  
Who takes a leadership role and says:  
*“Hey, let’s meet on this day, over coffee,  
and discuss what we did for TRIBES.”*  
Then guide a nice post-PD discussion.  
That’s really important.

Depending on the staff needs  
Staff-led,  
so shared leadership  
Having somebody within the staff do it,  
Changes the atmosphere  
It gives them that chance  
To shine and show  
*“Hey, we do have such expertise.”*  
I like that.  
Professional development,  
Makes me feel like I’m doing more -  
Effective . . .  
Gives me a purpose.

If professional development  
Is used correctly,  
Positively, and  
Based on the needs of the school  
Goes a long way.

To be able to have everybody in on it,  
Number one:  
Have transparency with all your actions  
Making sure they know the end objective.  
Even in education,  
We want to show the objective.  
Frequently communicating  
Where we’re at,  
Where we’re going -  
Always fosters buy-in.  
Have open communication,  
Even if it’s venting . . .  
Increases the relationship  
Will help in the end,  
At crunch time.

***Experiencing Lack of Time . . .***  
Time.  
Time is always an issue.

***Experiencing  
PD Aligned with Teacher . . .***

A lot of it aligned  
With my personal philosophy  
Toward education –  
Fostering more of a community  
Than just a classroom  
Where we work.  
I really focus on them wanting to learn  
When they leave my classroom,  
I want them to be loving school,  
Not hating it.

They want to work . . .

*"Okay, I want to learn."*

TRIBES

Professional development

Gave me reassurance:

*"Hey, you can do it that way."*

It corresponded to my teaching style.

It was pretty close already

I was okay with doing some of it.

Always trying to better myself as a teacher

*"Hey, let's take PD. Let's do it."*

### ***Experiencing***

#### ***Desire for Collaboration . . .***

I did it with a few coworkers

That worked in relative distance to my pod –

So they were using it as well.

We would collaborate

a lot and

Use it together.

More people using it,

*"Okay, let's try it together and  
see how it works."*

That was fun.

That helped me implement it more.

### **Jerica**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

in its essence is good.

To help teachers -

Grow,

Improve,

Gain new ideas,

Gain confidence

So the overall founding of it is excellent.

Learning how to use the new materials

Fine-tune your teaching,

Make your teaching go smoother,

Expedite your planning process,  
Something you need.

It's something you can use.

That's what should be entailed  
in those sessions.

It's taught by a master in their field.

Professionals – that train people.

It's important to have different avenues

To get student behavior under control

To build continuity within your classroom

To give everybody a sense of belonging

There's always new methods

New ways to tweak

What you're already doing

Make it stronger

Enhance your overall program

It reinforces

what I was already doing.

So then you feel good

About what you were doing–

A way to look back,

Reflect on what you were doing

To improve it

It doesn't mean . . .

It was wrong; It was bad -

You're not a good teacher -

But a way to improve,

A way everybody feels good

About it

The kids – they do better.

They feel good about themselves.

I learn best by –

I like having the presentation.

I like knowin'

what we're going to learn first.

And I do that when I teach.

*“This is what this chapters about.  
This is what you’re going to learn.”*

I wanna know what I’m going to learn.

And it’s always nice  
To have a little Background information  
So you know where it’s coming from.

And I like that planning.  
I like when they tell me how  
We’re going to do it.  
And I like a mix of  
visual, auditory and hands-on.  
To say we’re only gonna do hands-on –  
Some things, maybe, I’m not that good at  
hands-on-wise – other things I am.  
So it’s that mixture,  
The combination of everything.

And that’s what Tribes does.  
It has the kinesthetic,  
The auditory,  
The visual combined altogether  
With different components  
So that you reach Every type of learner

***Professional Development Should . . .***

Enhance my teaching.  
Sometimes it’s simple tips or techniques  
I can use immediately  
in my classroom.  
Makes it easier to do –  
Expedites my planning  
Those are the kinds of things I like to do.

I really like the thrust of the training  
To be useful ideas,  
Methods,  
Materials

That I’m going to use  
Right away  
And Not forget how to use ‘em.

***Experiencing Benefits . . .***

What simple,  
Easy organizational –  
Makes ya buy into their program?

But again,  
It was things

I used  
the next  
day.  
I came in on the weekend.  
I tabbed my book.  
When we had work sessions,  
That’s what I did with our team –  
brought our books,  
brought our stickies, and  
We tabbed all our books  
so everybody had their books tabbed.

So how easy was that  
It made our lives easier.  
It made you accept the program  
and that curriculum much more  
Than tellin’ me –  
*“Go to this website.  
Then when ya get there, click here.”*

I’ve had trainings -  
One time we had this lady  
do the writing workshops.  
We all did the writing.  
We went back and did it with our kids.  
It was so fun.  
We all had a good time.

***Experiencing Tribes PD . . .***

I used it as a latticework with my health,  
 I worked at it  
 Because  
 I wanted it to go  
 With what I was already doing,  
 So it fit with my curriculum for health.  
 So I did work at it a little bit.  
 And every now and then  
 I see an area of need,  
 Then I put it in there.  
 But I did have to work at . . .

***Experiencing Hardship . . .***

I look and read it.  
 And it's so complicated to do it.  
 I thought,  
*"Well, I'm never doin' that one either."*  
 So I really looked  
 for the ones that's easy -  
 Everybody will get  
 With minimum direction  
 Because when you're doing  
 These kinds of things,  
 It needs to be that . . .  
 It'll flow nicely.  
 It'll go quickly.  
 I think sometimes  
 They're just not comfortable teaching it.  
 Sometimes ya like it,  
 But you're not comfortable teaching it.  
 Or maybe,  
 You've had a bad experience with it.  
 Like you had an evaluation,  
 When you were doing it -  
 It was ugly or negative.  
 And so then,  
 You don't wanna do that anymore.  
 It gives ya a sour taste in your mouth.

If it's presented and  
 It's just so boring . . .  
 Or,  
 It's so overwhelming . . .  
 It doesn't make sense,  
 It doesn't have a flow to it,  
 It's not a complete overview  
 of what you're going to do . . .  
 Why would you wanna do this?

***Experiencing Required PD . . .***

It was painful.  
 It was boring.

Although it looked like  
 they had spent time  
 preparing for it,  
 it wasn't something I was going to use.  
 It wasn't something I was going to  
 implement into my teaching.

And they didn't give us an overview  
 – *"Okay, this is what we're gonna do,"*  
 because they didn't have an overview.  
 So I was really RESENTFUL about that  
 I felt, like, they WASTED all our times.  
 They wasted TIME I could've – rather –  
 really rather been with my students.  
 It made me just real ANGRY  
 That we had to sit through that  
 and, uh, Be TORTURED.

And that's how I saw it: As Torture.

I was MISERABLE.  
 Take away more TIME  
 Away from our teaching.

They're gonna  
 have us involved  
 in a program

They do not even have completed yet.  
 We don't even know  
 What it's going to be.  
 They've picked and  
 Chose pieces  
 That don't flow together.  
 It made no sense to me.  
 So unless we have a concrete pattern  
 Of how we're going to do this and  
 What we're going to do,  
 45 minutes to me,  
 There is a WASTE.

There is another waste  
 to be with people that, ya know,  
 we don't have – none of us have an idea  
 of where it's going.  
 So no, we don't have a full picture.

They've made so many people ANGRY.  
 It's going to be very DIFFICULT  
 for people to  
 buy into  
 this program and to fully integrate it.  
 I would have a HARD TIME.

So even though they started,  
 their sequencing is so off balance that  
 I still Can't Buy Into it.  
 Because when people are angry,  
 They're not gonna come to you.  
 They're going to come to me and  
 my supervisor and say what a lousy job  
 I've done, not you.  
 I am The – Absolutely –  
 This is where the buck stops: ME.  
 I'm the One  
 That parents are gonna be angry at.

I would rather have a nail stuck in my eye  
 Than go to another one

Of those training sessions with  
 Those people brought in from the states  
 That we paid lots a money for.

That's how I feel about that  
 'cause that was just PAINFUL  
 And INSULTING to me:  
 Pay for these people to come  
 that really didn't . . .  
 I walked outta those training sessions  
 with  
 NOT one lesson plan,  
 NOT one idea  
 On how to teach or present a lesson.  
 How PATHETIC is that?  
 I was just APPALLED.  
 That was appalling to do -  
 to treat us like that.

It's not anything we could implement.  
 We had no ideas.  
 They had no vision.  
 They couldn't explain  
 What was coming next.  
 They couldn't answer  
 any of our questions.  
 It just really made me ANGRY.  
 And then we have the  
 the gentleman in charge of ours –  
 our grade level for math  
 We said, "*Ya know,*  
*We're spending hours*  
*trying to plan for these things.*  
*And, ya know, that's NOT right.*"  
 And he said,  
 "*Oh, I forget.*  
*I was a middle school, high school teacher.*  
*I forget you teach more than one subject.*"  
 And again I told him,  
 "*Do not say that to us again, sir.*

*This is your job to know this.*  
*Don't say it to us again*  
*that you forget we teach*  
*more than one subject."*  
 And so again,  
 It was just very FRUSTRATING.

I think the initial instruction-  
 We shouldn't have to spend  
 Any of our Own TIME  
 I think the implementing –  
 That's where you do . . .  
 tabbing, etc. for increased  
 Daily quick reference

And then when he came in,  
 He was quite Condescending,  
*"Ya just have to click here."*

I said,  
*"Well, we're havin' trouble with that?"*  
 Ya know,  
 Like we're stupid  
 'cause  
 we're elementary teachers . . .

He goes on there, and it didn't work.  
 And we were all Thrilled, ECSTATIC.  
 And, ya know, again, then you Feel Bad  
 'cause you're happy that he Failed.  
 But we were –  
 Because he was condescending,  
 Like, *"Can't you just click?"*

It didn't work.  
 It didn't work for him.  
 So thank GOD.  
 I said,  
*"Thank you, Lord,*  
*for not lettin' it work for him."*

I know that's an evil prayer.  
 You shouldn't pray negatively.  
 But he could feel – FEEL MY PAIN.

Now, you try doing that -  
 Week after week  
 In addition . . .  
 Teach  
 Social Studies,  
 Science,  
 Math,  
 Health  
 Reading . . .  
*"You try that, buddy, and see how you do."*

I can't imagine anything  
 more appalling than what they've done to us  
 and more degrading as professionals.  
 They don't do that – any other profession,  
 They don't treat their people like that.  
 And they have.  
 They've treated us really ugly  
                                 – Like we're sheep.  
 We just have to do what they tell us to do?  
 That's unfair.  
 I don't like it.  
 They took something that we understood  
 and knew how to do – and made it difficult.  
 They just changed the order around and  
 made it confusing.  
 That's what they've done  
 by preceding the order  
 -not made it easier  
 -not made it successful.

Everybody needs to feel successful,  
 not just the kids  
 but the teachers.  
 They need to empower us  
 to feel successful.

And when we give ‘em feedback,  
incorporate it.  
And they’re not  
because we gave ‘em feedback  
the first week of school.

So then some people find ways to do it  
and just say,  
*“Well, this works; okay, I’m done.  
I did it.”*  
And that’s what’s happening.  
That’ll happen.  
Or people will just say,  
*“I’m not doin’ this.”*  
You’ll get mutiny.  
*“We’re not gonna do this – so make me.  
So what’re ya gonna do, fire me?”*

*“Okay.  
That’s not gonna happen  
‘cause that’s gonna take years.”*

Ugly,  
This is ugly what they’ve done to us.

### **Kalyn**

#### ***Professional Development . . .***

it’s necessary for teachers.  
We can be updated in our practices.

I guess we’re really not  
preparing our students  
for the world  
they’re going to enter –  
the job market, now global.

. . . Uh, retaining information is necessary.  
But it’s actually not as necessary  
as it has been in the past.

I get the most use  
out of practical application –  
Learning about things  
I can directly implement.  
Adjust it to see what works for me.  
I can apply directly to my classroom.

I don’t know that there is a typical day  
Whenever I plan for something and  
I think that I have prepared,  
Inevitably,  
I will get an email or  
a group of emails  
from admin, parents, colleagues -  
from different directions.

And then something else  
will land in my plate.

And ya know, my prep time is gone.  
And I end up staying  
I don’t think that I ever leave the time  
my duty day is over.  
I’m usually at school at least two hours  
after my duty day  
That’s a good day.  
And I’ve had to stay till 9:30 sometimes,  
Every year is different.

I think this is true for most Adult Learners:  
We tend to gravitate  
towards things considerate of our time.  
We tend to be more motivated  
– self-motivated.

I just want a schedule.  
Give me my deadline.  
Give me my syllabus.  
Give me my deadlines.  
What is the criteria  
so I can just do it to fit my schedule.



I need to know-  
 what I'm learning is practical,  
 Has purpose.  
 I'm not in that  
 place of exploration anymore-  
 My Time is filled.  
 Everything I do has an end result –  
 Has to have a function,  
 a purpose in what I'm doing.  
 I'm taking classes now,  
 I know . . .  
 I'm working towards a degree  
 and the specific purpose  
 of the class is to be able  
 to implement XYZ in my classroom.

***Experiencing  
 Desire for Collaboration . . .***

We don't have as many opportunities.  
 We're STUCK in our rooms.

I'm always open to anything  
 that is going to be collaborative.

I want it to be positive for everybody.  
 I don't wanna have to struggle.  
 I want to enjoy going to work.

***Experiencing  
 PD Aligned with Teacher . . .***

I don't want them to feel, like, coming  
 to school's a drag.  
 Ya know how much, percent of our life,  
 we are in that classroom?  
 We shouldn't have to suffer through that.  
 I always see the classroom like a family,  
 Even if it's tough love . . .  
 Their best interest at heart  
 So I'm just always looking for a way  
 that different personalities  
 can get along

or at least find a way to be positive . . .  
 not dread going to school or work.

Areas that I've implemented  
 work with my personality.  
 Behavior management is an extension  
 of our personality –  
 How we relate to people.

***Experiencing Tribes PD . . .***

I really felt -  
 Hit a chord with me,  
 Very natural.

And everything I do in my class,  
 I don't want to force.  
 I want it to be very natural.

And what works for one person  
 doesn't work for another person.

I didn't want it to be a strain.  
 I want it to be very easy,  
 Natural.

***Experiencing Hardship . . .***

If I'm thinking  
 about implementing new curriculum –  
 How does that actually play out  
 in the real world?

Ya know, you could have a pacing guide  
 along with new curriculum and  
 not realize . . .  
 Yes, these children are supposed  
 to come in with these standards mastered.  
 But the truth of it is,  
 they all won't.  
 So what –

We, the teachers,  
have to fill in the blanks.  
So the reality versus the theoretical,  
sometimes stands in the way.

Teachers have to make a lot of decisions  
about how things are implemented.  
Standards aren't necessarily realistic  
or they don't account for all  
personality types  
or backgrounds  
or experiences that a child has had.

***Experiencing  
Lack of Time & Large Curriculum . . .***

We don't have control over time.  
Nor do we have control over how much time  
it takes a child to process and  
retain information.  
It'll peak and plateau  
I could run through and stress  
And I know you know this.  
But ya know,  
I really shouldn't,  
but I have used curriculum  
interchangeably with the standards.  
But really our focus is the standards.  
And the curriculum is kind of edited and  
prioritized to meet those standards.  
But when I'm running through the material  
that is given to me,  
I could easily just go through it in a day.  
But it doesn't mean that  
group has learned anything.  
So – we're having to assess.  
We're doing our formative assessments.  
We're slowing down.  
We're re-teaching.  
And we're pulling students back.  
And yeah, so it's just

we're not in control over time.  
I think it is time.

***Experiencing Hardship  
& Lack of Teacher Willingness . . .***

I just – I've thought about it.  
I don't know  
How to get more out of the day.

Maybe if there was a  
smaller ratio of students –  
Maybe that would be something?

Professional development  
we have to be very proactive about.  
Ya know, I think about 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills.  
And I do think – okay, technology –  
technology changes a lot.  
And I read – this is from Edutopia.com –  
One of the best technological resources  
is a teacher who can learn  
new technology quickly,  
without necessarily needing a training.

I think there are a lot a teachers like that  
because  
We Don't Have Time  
for a lot of different training  
to match up with how quickly  
technology changes.

So I think it's more of our Attitude.  
And it's more of our  
Adaptability as teachers.

But we need the type of professional growth  
that helps us with the way  
we see ourselves in our role as teachers,  
as facilitators more than lecturers –  
So that type of professional development

And it really is 21st Century skills.  
Skills that are going to be needed  
for our children  
When they get out of school.

We're set in our work.  
And so I think there is some security in that.  
But we don't realize –  
if I were to quit this job today and  
try and get a new job,  
what – what jobs would I –  
what new skills would I have  
I'm already – ya know – thank goodness,  
I'm already here in my job.  
And I have, um, a certain  
amount of stability.

So we really need to be very realistic  
in our expectations.  
We need to see the big picture –  
we're not just kind of running kids  
through our classroom,  
tryin' to just get 'em out –  
get 'em to the summer.  
In the big picture,

We need to know–  
What are we setting . . .  
What foundation are we setting here?  
Ultimately we want these students  
to become functional adults.

You can't take for granted  
that you are always going to be necessary.  
You can't take for granted that,  
um, ya know –  
Yeah, you can't take anything for granted  
because you can be replaced.  
So you have to be very vigilant  
about your skills and um – yeah,

### ***Professional Development Should Be . . .***

I just feel, like – and sorry –  
I don't mean that to be negative.  
But I think that we –  
I think the big overall message here is –  
We need to keep learning.

But we also need to keep  
the end result in mind  
when we are with our students.  
We want students  
to become functional adults.

And the only thing that is constant  
is change.  
So that's why  
We need professional development, too-  
To keep us in touch  
With the needs of our learners.

Professional development because  
sometimes there is a little idealism  
that doesn't help  
in real-world implementation.

### **Linna**

### ***Professional Development Should Be . . .***

Relevant  
Broke down to grade level  
Guided- lesson with real students  
Watch you and then critique

*"I really learned so much  
from that because it was relevant,  
and it was important to me at the time."*

### ***Experiencing***

### ***Benefits from PD . . .***

You got materials.  
You had lessons.  
You had everything that you took back.

And then you had to work with students and  
 Then write a report or a reflection on it and  
 Then, ya know, bring it back.  
 I still do guided-reading, pretty much every  
 day with my kids –at least my low kids.  
 And I am still using  
 That PD probably seven years ago.  
 And I'm still using it every day.  
 Because it was relevant to me.

### ***Experiencing Hardship . . .***

Some PDs you go and you just sit and  
 You watch a PowerPoint all day.  
 Those are so ineffective.

Teachers have to be sure to find  
 the right ones for them.

### ***Experiencing Required PD . . .***

CCRSM with this math  
 And these PDs that –we've been having,  
 Are completely – like,  
 I've learned nothing.  
 It's just like,

*"Here, take it back and use it."*

I'm still not understanding it.  
 There's no active things happening.  
 Like, we're not working with kids or  
 seeing someone do an actual lesson.  
 So it's more about the philosophy  
 instead of implementation.

I'm kind of learning on my own,  
 which is also FRUSTRATING  
 because everything else we have to do,  
 I just don't have TIME for that.

So I'm kind of using  
 what I already knew from before and  
 trying to tweak it.

### ***Experiencing***

#### ***Desire for Collaboration . . .***

Colleagues kinda talked me into it.  
 I did need some credits.  
 I really wasn't buying into it.  
 A few people kind of convinced  
 Me to take it.  
 I think 'cause of my friends and  
 colleagues were taking it,  
 I thought what the heck.  
 But as we did it –  
 It was very interactive

I think collaboration is definitely key  
 I mean, not just Tribes  
 But I think for most things.

#### ***Experiencing Regret . . .***

I don't do it as much as I should.  
 I'm gonna say that.  
 If everyone's on the same page,  
 I think it makes it a much  
 more cohesive environment.  
 Then more, conducive to learning.  
 Whereas, if everyone does a different thing  
 And I say to a child –  
*"We should be giving appreciations,  
 not put-downs."*  
 And they're gonna be like,  
*"I don't even know what you're talking about."*

#### ***Experiencing New School . . .***

I can't fully say I'm a Tribes' classroom  
 because our school has its own version  
 of PBIS that we have to use.  
 There's three rules:  
 Be responsible, be safe,  
 Be kind and respectful.  
 And so we basically took the three rules  
 Broke it down  
 Then fit the Tribes' agreements –

Mutual respect –  
Well, what would that fall under?  
It would fall under  
being respectful and kind.

***Experiencing Tribes PD . . .***

But I still use a lot of the Tribes' verbiage  
and a lot of the Tribes' things  
We always . . .  
Can learn more.

That's what I like about Tribes  
'cause I feel you can tweak it and change it.

And we do the Brain Breaks- the Energizers.  
Those are just things that we do, anyway.

And the other thing I love about Tribes is  
that you can embed curriculum into it.

I feel it's a pretty good classroom  
management system  
I've kind of have changed  
my ways of classroom management,  
adding in more Tribes' elements-  
Really work together  
Speak to each other about what's going on  
Community circle-  
We do that weekly  
Where we talk about  
What's going on in the classroom,  
What's bothering us.

There's pieces of these things  
I've done over the years.  
Tribes-  
It's all encompassing  
Everything is there.

I like that you can make it your own.

You make it work for you.  
There's been other programs –  
at schools I've been at  
Where it's like,  
This is the way that you do it.  
And it doesn't always work for every child,  
ya know?  
But I feel with Tribes,  
It can work for every child.  
You have to figure out how to make it work.  
But for the most part  
I haven't had to make many  
variations or changes to it.

***Experiencing Benefits . . .***

Most of the PDs that I liked  
the instructor would do a check in  
after a few months,  
send you an email or "*How's it goin'?*"  
Are you able to use this?  
And in some PDs I've taken,  
90 to 120 days,  
You had to write another follow up  
A reflection on how it helped you  
You wouldn't even get your credit hours  
until you had done that.  
And that kinda forced you to actually  
Use the PD that you learned

Everyone has to stay abreast  
of what's going on in their field.  
Education needs to be the same way.  
New methods are happening all the time.  
Education's changing.  
Children are changing.  
If we're not knowing what's going on,  
then how we can be effective educators?

***Experiencing Hardship . . .***

I just wish  
 The current district -  
 had better professional development offered.  
 It can offer courses online.  
 We have district offices-  
 They can offer things.  
 I don't think it has anything to do  
 with location, in my opinion.  
 I read things on my own  
 Those online things,  
 I just kinda do on my own.  
 And I don't even actually do it for credit.  
 I just do it 'cause I wanna learn.

It's important to me . . .

***Experiencing Regret . . .***

In the past nine years  
 So much has changed.

***Experiencing Lack of Time . . .***

I wish there was more Time

***Experiencing Regret . . .***

or maybe  
 they put less demands on teachers  
 so there is more time.

I don't know what the right answer is.

But I really am a firm believer  
 in professional development,  
 especially  
 if it's relevant  
 to the teacher.  
 I have worked for districts  
 where you have to take a certain amount  
 of professional development,  
 each year.  
 I found it to be successful because

there were so many  
 different things offered.  
 It just really helped teachers  
 stay competitive.

***Mona******Professional Development . . .***

I am excited.  
 I am going to take Kagan  
 at the middle school.  
 I'm starting that in November.  
 It's a big commitment, big expense.  
 But I am going to try to start doing that  
 because  
 I've heard is wonderful, and  
 I really want to.

There are so many new ways and  
 different ways of doing things.  
 I love meeting fairly new teachers and  
 talking to them  
 I think it's exciting to learn.

***Experiencing My Classroom . . .***

For me, it was hard to start doing  
 more collaborative work  
 with the kids and let them  
 do things on their own.  
 I've kind of never been  
 "the centers" kind of person,  
 I've had to become open to doing that and  
 let go of some of that control.

***Experiencing******PD Aligned with Teacher . . .***

Knowing they have a safe  
 Loving environment  
 They feel that  
 they are not going to get in trouble  
 no matter what mistakes they make,  
 no matter what kind of behavior.

They know it's going to be okay  
no matter what.  
It just provides a safe place  
for them to learn.  
I don't raise my voice,  
never raise my voice.  
As a matter fact, I get quieter.  
Part of that is because  
of my special ed background.  
I just have really good control.  
I think that's one of my management skills,  
I've had to do that on my own and find out  
what's comfortable for me.

### ***Experiencing***

#### ***Inadequate Learning Environment . . .***

Professional learning teams.  
I was one of the people chosen to  
come back early and take a week  
full of training.  
The next year I was very disappointed  
People were told:  
had to do professional development,  
given own teams,  
forced into that group.  
Everything against  
what we had learned  
on developing  
professional development teams.

I was very excited about that.  
I was working with that.  
We had two kindergarten teachers,  
two first grade teachers,  
and two second grade teachers  
We were all trained together.  
We were excited to be able to work together.  
Then we came back, and  
We were not able to work together.  
That was very frustrating

because it was a perfect example  
of what we could do  
to work on our own and  
work with a team of people.  
We were all very excited about it.  
Then it just kind of fell apart.

Nobody ended up doing really anything.  
It kind of made you want to not be part of  
the teams that were started  
We spent a lot of time  
Building collegiality,  
Working together,  
Putting -people that wanted the same goal  
They wanted to do this thing  
or wanted to take this professional  
development  
or become interested in this.  
A lot of people in second grade  
wanted to work on Daily five,  
especially first grade.  
First grade really developed  
That as a whole team and  
Wanted to work together.  
So then it was kind of disappointing to say  
"No, you can't work together.  
You have to do this team."

### ***Experiencing***

#### ***Desire for Collaboration . . .***

Support of the time-  
Maybe if we had kept  
Some of the groups together,  
Maybe I'd be using More of the Tribes  
in my classroom than I am now.  
\_\_\_\_\_ was so passionate about it.  
I just thought it would be a good idea  
to learn something and  
experience some new things.

I actually needed some credit  
for my recertification.

I think if you're working together  
with the group of people,  
You're more likely  
to continue working on something.  
You just don't want to let your peers down.  
When you do something  
on your own, you'll say,  
*"I'm going to continue doing this."*  
Then you get involved in other things.  
You have other priorities,  
Teaching a different curriculum  
or something that kind of takes priority  
over some of the things  
You really would like to try.

Sometimes we're separated.  
We're separated here.  
I know there's a lot more collegiality  
going on up on the hill.  
We had part here, but now  
there are only two teachers here and  
seven teachers up there on my grade level.  
Open up the door and  
yelled down the hallway  
*"Hey, why don't we do this?"*  
*Let's trade this.*  
*Let's share this idea."*  
You kind of can't  
work together as much  
when split.

### ***Experiencing Benefits . . .***

My previous school  
We had a very supportive principal,  
who liked for us to do the collaboration  
and different kinds of things.

So that was one place where a bunch of  
people would get together and say  
*"Okay, we want to try doing this."*

He would give us TIME.  
He would even let us have subs to go and  
Observe other people's classrooms.  
He would give us Time  
to explore and  
Give us Time  
during the duty day  
to do that.  
I know we were a smaller school,  
but he made it happen  
no matter what.  
If you want to watch a colleague do their  
lesson in the morning for an hour,  
he would make that happen –  
Even he would go in our classroom himself.

There were times  
Where he would hire subs  
for a whole day,  
Then he would ask,  
*"Sign up . . . some time; you can  
work with your colleagues  
to do something that you're interested in."*  
That kind of gave us permission  
to come up with these ideas or  
come up with these collaborative  
ways of working together.  
*"Hey, I want to go into this first grade class  
and see what they're doing because  
they're doing some really neat grouping.  
I have some really neat ideas."*  
To see it in action because just hearing about  
It sometimes is different  
Than just coming in and watching  
How somebody does their morning meeting  
Or how they're making words or



How they're doing their class activities.

He also gave  
struggling teachers

TIME

to go in and  
observe

other people, too.

Which gave them a boost, and  
also gave me a boost.

It made me feel good.

### ***Experiencing***

#### ***Inadequate Learning Environment . . .***

"We've always done it that way"

kind of place –

NOT open to new ideas

because

we've always done it THAT way.

Even things with Scheduling,  
just a lot of different things -

When I came to the school,

I was very excited to come to the Pacific.

I had come from a school  
where we were really pretty much given  
free rein to do a lot of things.

When you came here,

they're like,

*"Oh, no. We don't do that here."*

So that was very surprising to me,  
to have that kind of feeling.

Then

You kind of SHUT down –

Take a step back.

Teachers need to be given  
an opportunity

to have

the chance to explore.

### ***Experiencing Hardship . . .***

You know,

especially right now

when we're starting a new math,

all of our time is sucked into this math.

You can't think of anything else.

That's it.

You're just consumed

by the things that you HAVE to do.

Trying to do different things or  
even exploring more things with TRIBES?

I have some things I wanted to plan,

and I actually had them

in my lesson plans to do.

It was like,

*"Okay, this isn't going to happen."*

It sounds really great on paper

You really want to try some of the ideas,

But the reality is

When you get the kids in here and

You're working.

Then those things

that you really want to try

Get PUSHED

OFF to the side.

### ***Experiencing***

#### ***Inadequate Learning Environment . . .***

It was only our third year of using it,

Now we're on a totally new math.

You're just getting to where you felt  
comfortable using that, and then

*"Okay, that's out. Now we're doing this."*

I know that they have to make changes and  
have to do things,

but it's just been so poorly done.

When people above you

have things poorly planned,

You are the ones  
that are left to struggle  
in the classroom  
to implement their poor planning,  
their ideas and their structure

It really leaves you feeling,  
*"Okay, just do the best you can.  
You're teaching the kids."*

***Experiencing Lack of Materials . . .***

I've even gone back,  
Doing some of the old curriculum,  
just because it's there.  
It's good.  
I have the book.  
I know the structure.  
I know the routines.  
I know what we're supposed to be doing.

***Experiencing***

***Inadequate Learning Environment . . .***

Maybe . . .  
It's kind of like our writing goal.  
We were kind of Pushed into our rubrics.  
Even with that,  
We were Pushed into a math goal  
a couple of years ago.  
We had to do a math goal,  
and then they changed it,  
and then they changed it again.  
It was not us.  
We had what we wanted on math,  
Then they changed it again.  
They said, *"No, that's not right."*  
They changed.  
The whole year,  
We never got a solid goal or  
a solid statement of what we wanted  
because "above us" kept changing.

*"No, you can have this one.  
It doesn't say this.  
Go back and rewrite it.  
You can't do that."*  
Now we've done away with that goal.  
It seems like it's the system.

You just get started doing something,  
When I like it,  
We're changing.  
Stop - midstream.  
Turn you right around.  
Let's go do something else.

It doesn't give you a chance  
to feel comfortable  
with what you're doing.

**Naomi**

***Professional Development . . .***

's meaningful ~  
If it's well thought out,  
Teachers can get a lot out of it.  
There's some  
that just check the block.  
It depends on the trainer, too.  
If the trainer really knows  
what they're doing,  
then they're gonna deliver  
a much more meaningful  
professional development  
than someone else who is just kind of again,  
just going with the flow and  
checking that box.

For me to learn something,  
It takes a long time  
to completely understand something.  
So I need to have it from all aspects.  
Repeat it over and over:  
Doing it,

Hearing it,  
Seeing it,  
Thinking it.

***Experiencing***

***PD at Frustration Level . . .***

The first time,  
it was OVERWHELMING.

So I just decided,  
I'm just going to take  
bits and pieces  
and implement the easy parts.

The first year,  
learning agreements  
community circle  
I did that RIGHT AWAY.  
Every year since then,  
I've added more and more  
to the Tribes process.

It just took me each year,  
Going from a class  
That was super overwhelming,  
To be able to relearn it  
On my own and utilize it.  
I would go and find it in the book,  
Reread it and figure it out . . .  
Understand better.

***Experiencing Benefits . . .***

Oh, that aha moment . . .  
You implement that one piece ~  
You reflect  
You think and  
You think.

This year and last year,  
I've added every aspect of it.  
I've seen a huge impact.  
I've become more of an expert

each year  
because  
I've done my homework  
If you're DRIVEN because –  
You know what's the Best  
for your students –  
Then you're going to do that.  
If you're not driven,  
If you don't have that passion –  
then you probably won't.

***Experiencing Tribes PD . . .***

Every class is different, too.  
And so ya kinda have to tweak  
How ya implement Tribes  
Based on that class.

***Experiencing***

***PD Aligned with Teacher . . .***

I originally took it because  
\_\_\_\_\_ approached me.  
She had been in my classroom and  
Seen my teaching style.  
“Oh, this is right up your alley.  
You need to come do it.”  
Then I went online, and  
I researched it.

***Experiencing***

***Desire for Collaboration . . .***

Every other Monday,  
I'm teaching  
a focus group on it.  
And so that has been  
absolutely  
huge.  
It's just so interesting—  
I've learned from it.  
I'm teaching them.

But I have learned even more  
about Tribes –  
Just by teaching it.

And we're passing in halls,  
We're collaborating about it,  
We're meeting offsite, and saying,  
*"Okay, how are you doing with this?"*  
So it's been big.

### ***Experiencing***

#### ***Teacher Willingness . . .***

I think it might be two things:  
I think one is The DRIVE of Teachers.  
[2]  
When I first came into this new school  
People would ask me,  
*"What are you doing?"*  
*Your teaching is different, unique."*  
And so I would just start talking about it.  
It just kinda started a  
    Quiet Rumble.  
I started explaining it more.

The biggest question- I usually say,  
focus on the learning agreements and  
community circle first.  
And they all have.  
– most are taking the baby steps.  
I've got three teachers  
who are going full force with it.  
One who just made Tribes this week.  
Two are making Tribes next week.  
Pretty cool.

It totally depends on what your goal is and  
What you're needing them to get out of it.  
Having the skills of Tribes  
is way more powerful  
than the class that doesn't.

It's so big.  
There's so many personalities.  
In order to get ~~everybody~~  
the majority onboard ...is very difficult.  
It has to come from leadership, really.  
This school, it's smaller.  
And the leadership is all onboard with it.  
– it's different, unique.

Could we build that rumble?

People have to truly believe in it  
in order for it to work.  
Someone could be interested.  
But the minute  
you require them to do something,  
that's a put off.  
Then it's like,  
*"Ah, I don't know now."*  
It really is about how you work it.  
How you sell it.  
That goes with anything.  
You quietly maneuver it into place.  
And then all of a sudden,  
*"It's like, oh, this is awesome,"*  
Versus,  
*"You **will** do this!"*  
I mean, I love ice cream.  
But the minute you tell me  
I have to eat ice cream,  
I'm not gonna wanna do it.

### ***Experiencing Tribes PD . . .***

The reflective questioning,  
That came very difficult  
That's something that you really have  
to put a lot of thought into and understand  
why you're asking those questions.  
And you have to allow extra time

in your day for those questions,  
which adds up.

And so you feel pressed for time already.  
And then you think,  
*“Oh, man, I gotta now put these questions  
into, ya know, all these activities?”*

But until I realized the value of it,  
it was very difficult for me.  
Teaching a kindergarten class  
to truly collaborate  
with each other and listen  
It’s HARD.  
But it’s working.  
They’re doing it, which is really neat.

Come into my class and  
Watch it happen  
because  
It’s happening.  
They’re doing it.  
I mean, it’s AMAZING  
how well they work together.

The first time – it was harry.  
But then we reflected on it.  
And we learned from it.  
And each time, they’ve gotten better.  
I did one last week.  
And I was like,  
*“You guys knocked it outta the park,”*  
– I mean, amazing.

### ***Experiencing Required PD . . .***

They could’ve – they –  
Whoever they are – ya know,  
With the new math –  
Could’ve done a better job of the  
Buy in.  
– instead of saying,

*“We’re **doing** this,”*  
Maybe explain it  
a little bit better and  
Explain the why, before we’re doing this.  
Ya know, the WOW!  
Look at this!  
Wouldn’t this be amazing  
if our kids could do A, B and C and  
Then create that...  
That - Ooh Excitement?  
Then say,  
*“Well, guess what? We are getting to do this!”*  
Versus  
*“We’re **doing** this,”*  
Now you’re going to be trained.  
And you’re going to, ya know,  
Work your way through it . . .

It’s all in how you Deliver it.  
Everyone went in skeptical,  
first of all.

But,  
I think they would have seen  
where this is going,  
If there weren’t  
so many  
Hiccups.

The problem is, too,  
We didn’t take the common core verbatim.  
We kind of hodgepodged  
a little bit and  
took this and that from it.  
And so  
it’s Not a Flowing System,  
a lot of grade levels  
are very frustrated with.

And so because of that,  
It’s caused a lot of

FRUSTRATION.

And now people  
are doubting  
the common core.  
But yet,  
we're not really, truly,  
doing the solid common core.

It's a little mixed up.

**Olga**

*Professional Development . . .*

Teachers have a great impact  
on student learning  
We set the expectations –  
the whole stage –  
for the classroom.  
We set them up for success or failure.

There used to be a whole lot more  
professional development opportunities.  
They've cut down a lot.  
Now – it seems like  
The only thing we get lately-  
things the district want us to do.  
I don't think  
We get asked  
what we would want  
professional development on.

*Experiencing Required PD . . .*

Right now,  
the only professional development  
we have at our school is math.  
It's just so we can do  
the math standards...  
the new math curriculum.  
I can tell you  
It's so darn confusing.

I don't know what you guys are getting,  
But we're getting Packets-  
THICK –

Of what we're supposed to be doing  
for the next Three weeks.  
It's things, they've kinda put together  
from all kinds of things.  
And it's so confusing.

I brought 'em all home this weekend  
to try to figure out  
What in the heck  
I am doing with some of this stuff.

And some of the teachers  
are blowing it off,  
Even though we're being told to do it.  
We want something that's cohesive.  
This just looks like it's been put together.  
And it's so hard to follow.

For one lesson...

One day's  
Math lesson,  
Ten pages!  
It's just kinda crazy.  
I know that we need it,  
But to internalize it all?  
It just takes a while to internalize it.

You have your own  
Personal Teaching STYLE.  
And sometimes it's kinda HARD  
to change those styles  
with this new CCRSM,  
it's changing the way we're thinking  
So it's kinda hard  
To make that transition over.  
So that buy in is not totally there.  
I think it takes a while  
before you feel comfortable with it.

***Experiencing******Desire for Collaboration . . .***

The one thing that helps me the most  
is talking with other people  
on my grade level.

You go to the  
Professional development  
You try to internalize it yourself.  
Sometimes things don't make sense.

***Experiencing Lack of Time . . .***

There's Not TIME There  
to try to figure things out  
to ask questions . . .

Because  
They present it,  
Go on to the next thing,  
Present it,  
Go on to the next thing.

Helps me the most  
When you come back and—  
We kind of work together to understand.

***Experiencing Hardship . . .***

Right now, our teachers are really  
Frustrated  
with the whole system of what's going on.  
And then, it's not even gonna be  
what's there next year,  
the way we understand it.  
So it's like we're trying to  
Muddle through this year.  
Hopefully, next year there will be  
something more cohesive.

We have lunch together on Fridays  
We meet every Wednesday during our  
planning period.  
And then we have the one meeting after  
school we have to have, once a month.

And now, we just voted on collaboration  
time or something like that.  
So I guess that is more Time  
We can plan together and talk about things.  
That's what helps me the most -  
When I can get with other teachers.  
Some of them have been on  
grade level for many years,  
They've got more insight as to  
things that we're doing.  
And I rely on them right now.

We made a calendar  
Day -we're supposed to do this . . .  
I've been trying to stick with it.  
But I found out . . .  
When I was talking, they're going like,  
"Sure, we're doing it."  
I don't know.  
They're not?  
And they're going like,  
"Yep, if anybody asks us, we're doing it."

So we're supposed to do the CEPAs.  
I was ready to give the second CEPA.  
And they were going like,  
"We think it's inappropriate."  
We're not gonna do that CEPA.  
I'm like, crap.  
Like, I don't know.  
It's very CONFUSING.

It's very confusing with what is required.  
Like, I'm thinking,  
Somewhere along the way,  
Somebody's gonna say,  
"Show us what data you've gotten."  
And without having done those things,  
You're going like,  
"Um, I don't have anything?"

We do talk about things together.  
 But  
 I don't think that anybody is doing them.  
 It's so CONVOLUTED.  
 We're looking at the skills that are required  
 for the lessons and  
 trying to teach those skills  
 in whatever way we feel is best.

***Experiencing Tribes PD . . .***

I see a difference in the BUY in,  
 Tribes, doing after school  
 Some people have paid for it  
 as a college class.  
 And some of us are just taking it  
 just to do it.  
 There's definitely a difference because  
 we don't have to be there.  
 And so you WANT to learn.  
 You want to make a difference  
 in your classroom.  
     So that is your choice.

The other one, we have to go There.

I have to keep doing the same thing.  
 I have to keep practicing the same thing.  
 Um, something doesn't come easy  
 the first time for me,  
 So, I have to reread things and  
 Really think about what I'm doing.  
 Some people learn something really quick  
 They just go off and they do it.

I have to do some more research,  
 Some heavy thinking.  
 Even Tribes, for example,  
 I took that whole entire course,  
 went through that whole thing.  
 But at the time when I took it,

I didn't implement it  
 because  
 I was seeing kids 25 minutes a day.

So I didn't really internalize it  
 Whatsoever.  
 I love the learning agreements,  
 But didn't go any further.  
 And then this year when I started it,  
 I was really gung ho about it.  
 And then with all the things going on,  
 that has not been in the foreground.  
 So I am going back through  
 with highlighters,  
 trying to figure this whole thing out again  
 because  
 I obviously didn't get it the first time.  
 As a learner,  
 I need to go back and do it again –  
 Go back through it.  
 Relearn things again.

***Experiencing Hardship . . .***

I really do have some nice kids  
 Individually, nice kids  
 But together, so many of them  
 Feed off of each other.  
 I'm trying to figure out who to put together,  
 How to put them together  
 so that they can actually work together?  
 And I've tried so many combinations.  
 So I'm STUCK right there.

I wanna go forward.  
 But I've got to get control over this...  
 This situation with these kids.  
 But I don't honestly feel  
 like he feels included.  
 I just think that he can't control it,  
 so disruptive in class



And I don't know how to get past this-  
 Conference with parents,  
 I just turned in Paperwork  
 It's like an Entire write up.  
 It took me a while to get this stuff together.  
 I had to have all of the scores-  
 Everything,  
 And it's Not his scholastic part.  
 It's just the behavior part.  
 But anyway, ya have to do ALL that stuff,  
 Now the paperwork is all in.  
 And hopefully,  
 Shed Some Light...  
 It's hell in my classroom!

### ***Experiencing New School . . .***

We're in a brand-new school.  
 We were given 25 desks and a teacher desk;  
 That's it – 25 desks, teacher desk and a rug.  
 And the desks –  
 The desks are not square.  
 So you can't really put them together in  
 groups of fours or sixes or whatever.  
 Like, ten of these things or so make a circle.  
 The furniture makes it difficult.  
 If you can make five or four together,  
 it makes a semicircle.

At least half to three quarters of my kids  
 Can't form their letters correctly.  
 I'm like, "*Where in the heck?*" – and  
 There's no handwriting  
 on our curriculum.  
 They come writing letters  
 try to correct 'em,  
 they go right back  
 I've tried.  
 Every time I go by  
 Try to have them write  
 The next minute– I don't know.

### ***Experiencing Tribes PD . . .***

We've done some of the energizers.  
 He kind of dominates what happens.  
 He likes community circle–  
 There's never a community circle  
 that he doesn't blurt out.  
 It's frustrating.  
 "*You won't get any support from the  
 parents.*"  
 So anyway, I want to do things.  
 I just need to get past those hurdles and  
 Don't know how to get past it.

The reflective questioning  
 is something that is hard for me.  
 I have to really think about it.  
 I think it's something that you have to plan.  
 It doesn't come easy for me.  
 It doesn't come easy.  
 It's not something that I have internalized . .  
 ...  
 I can see that a lot more.  
 She tells what kind  
 of reflective question it is.  
 I never think in any of those terms.  
 I agree.  
 I think I do reflect in a different way.  
 But I don't put 'em together  
 in the categories.  
 And so I don't know whether  
 I'm doing all the categories.  
 What can I possibly do?  
 This didn't work.  
 I need to change this. . . .  
 I guess in those categories,  
 I have not internalized  
 those three categories of reflection .  
 I'm gonna ask this kind of question.  
 Like, she always does  
 Sometimes ya can't beat yourself

over the head with it  
 And not be worried  
 so much about those terms—  
 It's like,  
*"Okay, what do I need to ask?"*

I – totally- under the wrong impression  
 until this week  
 It felt like a little bit of a disconnect  
 because I thought it was like  
 The whole purpose  
 of having the  
 tribes  
 was to constantly  
 have the cohesiveness  
 where they work together  
 It's – ya did call 'em together for one lesson  
 or one part of a day on...once a week.  
 Like I said, I have not implemented this.  
 So I'm not really sure how that works.

As far as collaboration,  
 we have not done a lot with it  
 just because of the whole nature  
 of our classroom.  
 We'll sometimes do partner groups.  
 I need to go back through,— like,  
 this weekend . . .

### ***Experiencing Regret . . .***

I want to go back through and  
 see if I can get a handle on this and  
 see if I can go past where I am...  
 Where I'm Stuck.  
 I need to work on getting us  
 to where we can collaborate more  
 We can work more cohesively  
 figure out what I can do with this kid  
 so that we can.  
 With all the stuff

that we've been doing with school,  
 Trying to get back into first grade,  
 Trying to get a handle with the math,  
 I have just not done a whole lot  
 with the Tribes.

I really have to be honest.  
 Um, I...I'm slowly going...  
 Getting to it.  
 You know end result expectations...  
 When the kids come up to  
 the next grade level . . .  
 I heard a lot of the teachers get together:  
*"Oh, they came from THAT class;  
 They didn't learn anything in that class."*  
 – so content really does matter.  
 [crying]

### ***Experiencing***

#### ***PD Aligned with Teacher . . .***

It was really a cool way to  
 interact with kids and  
 have it be a really positive experience  
 for kids at school.  
 I really respect \_\_\_\_\_ as a person and  
 her personality  
 How she gets kids involved  
 I love that...the dynamics of all that.  
 So I wanted to see what it was all about.  
 I love what Tribes is trying to do.  
 I'm having a difficult time giving up  
 controls.

### ***Experiencing Hardship . . .***

We all have our BURDENS, ya know.  
 I'm not the only one  
 One of them has had a kid suspended  
 from school, five times or six times  
 because he's such a bully and  
 Does all kinds of things.  
 Teachers will say they feel like they're

*“Teaching kids on crack,”*

‘cause their classes are crazy, too.  
 So it makes me feel a little bit better  
 that my class-  
 Not the only one.  
 I want it to all run smoothly.  
 I want the kids to all work together.  
 I just need to be able to figure out  
 How to get this kid under control  
 so we can.  
 I wanna be more flexible with what  
 I’m able to do.  
 We’ve done this forever.  
 We made these plans . . .  
 I’ve been trying to find things:  
 Teachers Pay Teachers,  
 try to find units,  
 try to find books,  
 try to find whatever  
 We don’t have a social studies book or  
 a science book or something to go by.  
 We have this topic.  
 I’ve gotta go and try to find things  
 Really easy for them -  
 But then they’ve been doing it.  
 They don’t stay behind any day after school;  
 They’re gone.  
 And they had all their little stuff all lined up.  
 But for me, – I have worksheets.  
 They gave me a worksheet.  
 I haven’t been doing this.  
 So that’s what takes me so darn long.  
 It’s just taking a lot.

Feel like, you’re Treading water.  
 It would be easier to just follow  
 the curriculum –  
 I’m inventing things because  
 They have been doing for years  
 and have it all together.

And yeah, you wanna do a good job -  
 Still do fun things  
 Next year it will be easier  
 I’ve already found things.  
 But just this first go round,  
 It’s a lot a Time.

The obstacles that I’ve encountered  
 The abilities of the kids-  
 Not very independent  
 Cannot leave them alone  
 For any amount of Time  
 Cannot read the first sentence by themselves  
 Just the classroom dynamics

I really wanted to have groups for reading  
 I feel the kids learn better in a reading group  
 where I can actually teach ‘em  
 at the level where they are.  
 I haven’t been able to do that  
 I don’t know what to do  
 with these kids that can’t do anything.  
 I’ve got some kids that cannot go  
 from one thing to the next on their own.  
 There was nothing academic  
 I could give them on their own –  
 They’re at such different levels  
 that has kept me from being able to do  
 the things that I want to do –  
 Now I have an aid that’s there,  
 so it’s gotten a little bit better.  
 She tries to keep those kids going.  
 But she’s hopping,  
 just like I’m hopping.  
 Those obstacles sometimes  
 Keep us from fully implementing

I want to do Tribes  
 The way it’s supposed to be.  
 How to get past roadblocks,

That- I haven't been able to solve  
 To be able to go ahead and  
 Implement completely.  
 And I don't know –

### ***Experiencing Hardship . . .***

I haven't really talked  
 to the other people doing Tribes  
 We have our class.  
 I haven't really talked to them  
 as far as  
 What they are doing or  
 How  
 One, I don't know how he got it all together  
 and figured out  
 He was gung ho about wanting to do it and  
 I guess didn't have it all...  
 Didn't understand it completely.

All of us in that Tribes class  
 Trying to implement  
 As much as we understand  
 But there's a lot that goes into Tribes.  
 There's a lot that goes into it  
 To understand  
 The Tribes' trail map  
 To get from one stage to the next  
 I'm not even sure  
 How  
 To get to the influence stage,  
 To the community stage  
 I'm trying–  
 I'm on that trail  
 But not sure  
 How to get to  
 The next step.

It's like trying to jump–  
 The first ones are kind of easy to do  
 But, how to get to the next step?

How to give up that control?

### **Pete**

### ***Professional Development . . .***

is best done face-to-face.  
 Online professional development  
~~almost~~ a waste a Time.  
 I've done both.  
 Online professional development  
 weak  
 compared to face-to-face.  
 It just doesn't have the same impact.  
 You don't have any of the emotions.  
 You don't have any  
 facial features and expressions.  
 Professional development  
 needs to be short and to the point.  
 I don't think we need long,  
 Drawn out Professional development.

The long -drawn out- ones  
 were weak,  
 Wasted Time  
 Didn't get to what I needed to know.

Most teachers don't have the Time  
 or the energy to do  
 long-term  
 professional development.  
 So it should be  
 short and to the point –  
 Which it can be  
 If it's done by the right person,  
 In the right way.

We don't have enough  
 Good at teaching professional development  
 Over the last eight years . . .  
 I've had some really good experiences,

The short-to-the-point ones—  
Able to utilize faster.

Those ones I took  
for credit only  
were the ones I did NOT like.  
Those ones I took  
because of what I am interested in  
And for PD credit—  
More productive  
But still, those were the shorter ones.

[The district] should put more effort into  
professional development—  
in those short, sweet classes.  
I don't know why we don't.  
I don't understand:  
If you want us to utilize  
Professional development,  
We should have more provided to us.  
It could be easily done.  
Just pay the right people.  
We Waste money on smartboards-  
could be utilizing professional development.

They can almost guide their  
professional development,  
into areas they want  
by providing it for us —  
simple, short,  
“to the point” Professional development  
I gained the most from  
Teachers—  
the ones already in the classroom  
Doing it.  
I can read the book.  
I wanna know how this looks  
in a classroom.  
Learning from somebody  
Who's doing it—

is a lot better than from  
somebody who's preaching it.

Without personally engaged  
in that environment,  
You don't know  
what teachers are going through.  
It's hard to tell a teacher to do something-  
if you've never done it before.

There's opportunities  
for professional development  
to be useful for teachers.  
Some are very good.  
Other ones aren't so good.  
So it really depends  
on the actual development itself:  
How it's laid out  
How it's used  
What it's for

Implementing new . . .  
Not done very well  
They beat around the bush a lot  
without getting to the medium.  
I need hands-on.  
Show me how this looks.  
From that, I can push on.  
But they don't do that very well.  
They need to show what that looks like  
one-hour scenario

### ***Experiencing***

#### ***Desire for Collaboration . . .***

To me even talking with teachers—  
You're collaborating.  
Forced collaboration—  
Very limited production.  
You're not gonna get the same amount  
of collaboration done in that amount a time  
than they would if it was done voluntarily.

You would get something out of it  
 But not as much as you would  
 if they did it voluntarily.  
 When professional learning teams  
 Get together and  
 they let those teams  
 Develop,  
 Those people are gaining  
 a lot of information  
 in a shorter amount a Time  
 Than forced collaboration.  
 There's gotta be some way to let  
 professional development teams develop,  
 encouraged without interference.  
 They scripted our PLTs.  
 When forced . . . PLTs FAILED.

That's what professional development teams  
 are all about – teachers  
 who have commonalities come together  
 Environment  
 Personality  
 Wanting to come together  
 is a big part of that  
 There are teachers  
 that I have nothing in common with-  
 I would work with  
 Just because they think totally different  
 You need somebody  
 who thinks totally different

***Experiencing  
 PD Aligned with Teacher . . .***

I believe  
 We set the mentality of  
 how they perceive education.  
 Student's gonna score the same  
 on Terra Nova whether it's me or  
 the other eight teachers.  
 We all are pretty well  
 versed in how we teach.

But how they leave  
 your classroom –  
 I think has a lot to do with the  
 teacher in that classroom.  
 If you can create an atmosphere  
 where they enjoy school  
 Then hopefully that will follow them  
 throughout their educational career.  
 Students need that difference in styles.  
 You start losing students  
 because it's too repetitive.  
 It gets almost boring.  
 At least that's the way I feel about it.  
 That's why I try to do structured lessons  
 And turn around and do something  
 Totally different  
 Hands-on Stuff  
 I don't think our students get enough  
 Cooperative learning  
 At the lower levels.  
 Kindergarten - Too structured  
 Don't even do centers almost anymore  
 'casue they're teaching all the time.  
 They shouldn't be teaching all the time.  
 The kids should be working together.  
 We have more social issues in students  
 Than we did even ten years ago.

***Experiencing Hardship  
 & Lack of Teacher Willingness . . .***

You get a lot of information  
 You're Not gonna be able  
 Implement it ALL  
 At one Time  
 It's just so Much information.  
 So you slowly implement things  
 You find that work,  
 That you wanna use.  
 Sometimes you're just looking  
 For that one little part

A lot-Teachers  
are very comfortable-  
the way they teach  
They're not willing to extend too much.  
They're not willing to push too far outside  
That box – Their box.

***Experiencing Tribes PD . . .***

In my fourth year of teaching  
comfortable with subject,  
had my schedule down,  
looking to improve classroom management,  
for credit . . .  
That's why I took Tribes.

I definitely didn't give 'em all  
the same amount of effort.  
Some of 'em, –  
Setting the environment,  
I spent a lot of time doing that and  
Implementing classroom agreements.  
That's one of those ongoing things.

I did go full implementation  
Beginning of the second year –  
Or the year after I took it.  
I did all of it.

Other than  
the long-term cooperative group,  
I guess I did most of 'em pretty much  
about the same amount of time.  
I did do long-term grouping.  
I just didn't stick to that,  
based on behaviors.

Classroom space has been an issue  
Reflective questioning is one  
you have to work at.

***Experiencing Lack of Time . . .***

Schedules  
definitely impact  
They're pulled in and out so much.  
They lose instructional time.  
Time allotment  
has everything to do with it.  
Instructional time,  
Planning time  
And All that to implement . . .  
We just–  
within the paid day–  
Don't have near enough Time.  
We need more Time in the school day.

***Qiana***

***Professional Development . . .***

I love professional development.  
I've been teaching for so long,  
Sometimes I get into –  
that thing of where okay,  
I've been doing this for so many years,  
This is what works.  
Sometimes I need to get myself out of that,  
Learn something new  
Push myself to try something new  
See that –it's gonna work  
Get outta that stigma  
of just doin' the same thing  
over and over and over again.

Whatever I've gone through with  
Professional development,  
I try to implement it in my classroom-  
See if it works for me or not.

***Experiencing***

***Desire for Collaboration . . .***

I saw other people doing the appreciations.  
I had no idea that was part of Tribes.

Also –  
 one of my colleagues  
 decided to take it.  
 And ya know,  
 thought it'd be fun  
 to take a class together.  
 Support each other.

It was nice to know  
 Teachers were very supportive  
 of Tribes,  
 Hearing experiences  
 In an all-Tribes school,  
 It just really sparked my interest.

I think it built a community with me,  
 With you all  
 I've only been teaching there for one year.  
 But because I built that relationship  
 With you and the other teachers,  
 I felt like,  
*"Wow, I'm really part of this school!"*  
 – which was why I was so crushed  
 when I left.

They [teachers] have little complaints.  
 And I would just say to them,  
*"Oh, my God, if you were where I was at,  
 you would think you're in heaven right now.  
 It is wonderful here."*

***Experiencing Hardship  
 & Lack of Teacher Willingness . . .***  
 We get TIED UP with other things –  
 And don't implement –  
 Can't blame them  
 Maybe they just  
 didn't have a buddy system.  
 If they tried one of the activities,  
 It just failed . . .

You go through reflection –  
 Ask somebody –  
 How it worked . . .  
 They didn't have that buddy system  
 Where they can ask somebody –  
 So Not gonna do it anymore,  
 Not gonna work

Sometimes  
 They think  
 It might Not be Relevant –  
 Like let's say,  
 They've been doing  
 The same thing for ten years  
 It's worked for them  
 for the past ten years,  
 But  
 We want all these kids to be  
 Career and college ready,  
 21st Century learners  
 Everything else is progressing  
 Evolving  
 Education has to keep up with those trends.  
 But you know,  
 Some teachers-  
 Rather just stick to what they know.  
 And they're comfortable with that.

***Experiencing Hardship . . .***  
 It was a little bit of a Challenge.  
 I did it every day  
 Then they saw other  
 teachers doing it as well.  
 It was Always a Work in Progress.  
 I wish I could've taken another class of it,  
 To Reinforce what we learned–  
 It's Challenging.  
 Difficulty  
 with the activities or the lessons  
 Trying to schedule it  
 during the day,



Just some kind of consistency –

***Experiencing Regret . . .***

I wanted to do more  
than just the agreements,  
appreciations, and the energizers.

***Experiencing***

***Lack of Time & Large Curriculum . . .***

I wanted –  
I didn't even get a chance  
to do a lot of the cooperative learning.  
Things that I wanted to do  
with the kids,  
I didn't get to that  
only because the Schedule  
was so Tight  
during the day.

We just had to teach ALL the Subjects.  
Not only the Subjects,  
then *to fit in* the counseling–  
I don't wanna say last minute,  
But you know, sometimes things arise–

Where we had *to Try*  
*To Fit* that in  
during the day.

And then we had kids that were Pulled Out.  
And you know, it's just –  
Not the whole class was there.  
I really wanted all the kids to be there–  
So we could build our community.

I always told myself,  
“*That's just the nature of the beast*  
*of education.*”  
It's never gonna be that perfect day  
Where you get to do  
All the lessons  
You planned for –

You Try  
To Fit Everything in.

There Wasn't Enough Time in the day.  
– it was just the Schedule.

**Focus Group / Follow-up Sessions**

About two months into the data collection, the school system implemented required PD on CCRSM for elementary classroom teachers. Those interviews which were conducted towards the end of the data collection phase often had strong feelings regarding this required PD. The semi-structured interview questions remained the same and continued to ask about self-selected PD or Tribes. However, in honoring the participants' voices along with the open-ended interview process, participants were not redirected or stopped from expressing any of their experiences related to PD. Therefore these required PD experiences may have seeped into the data set, requiring a later separation. For that reason, the focus group and follow-up sessions targeted characterizing the differences between self-selected PD from required PD. Table 9 provides key words participants used to characterize self-selected PD and required PD. It is important to recognize that the required PD experiences set a firm tone, impacting the collective school environment.

Table 9

*Participants' Viewed Differences Between Self-Selected and Required PD*

Self-Selected PD	Required PD
Challenging	Overwhelming
Excited	Stressed
Interesting	Repetitive; Boring
Creative Thinking	Not Helpful; Not Useful
Materials Available	Hunting for Materials
Well-developed Materials & Concepts	Materials Piece Milled
Liberating	Lost
Eager to Learn	Curious
Presenter Well-Trained	Presenter Lacks Deep Understanding
Community-building Environment	Scripted Environment
No Outside Pressure	Struggle
Wanting to Collaborate	Wanting to Collaborate – at first
More Enjoyable to Learn with colleagues	Very Tedious
Fit Personal Believe System	Required
Time Consuming	Time Consuming

Note: Data collected from Focus group and Follow-up Sessions.

In addition the focus group and follow-up sessions also targeted the participants' thoughts regarding the seven components of Tribes and identifying areas not implemented. During the focus group, one large graph was utilized for all participants; this allowed for the data to be collected as a whole. Specifically, individual views were not focused upon. Instead, this data was analyzed as a whole, and then compiled with the other data, providing triangulation. Table 10 provides a simplified form of participants' compiled characterization of efforts towards implementation of each of the seven Tribes' components. Reflective questioning and cooperative learning posed the most diverse perspectives, while the other components were similar amongst the 17 participants.

Table 10

*Participants' Basic Characterization of Efforts towards Implementation*

<u>Component</u>	<u>Overall Characterized Efforts</u>
Setting the Environment	Natural process; easy to implement
Classroom Agreements	Helps set environment; easy to implement; on-going
Energizers	Easy to implement; easy to overlook due to time restraints. Many choices or kinds of energizers.
Reflective Questioning	<i>Varied responses:</i> Difficult and often omitted due to time. Fits my teaching style and promotes higher order thinking.
Long-term Groups	Never implemented; working with a variety of people is also important. A different grouping system is used.
Collaborative Skills	Important Life skills; on-going; explicitly taught Important to teach and easy to embed within instruction.
Cooperative Learning	<i>Varied responses:</i> On-going; challenging due to time restraints. Most lessons use this strategy. Conducted mainly in math <i>group.</i> Not implemented. Strategy worked on the most.

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Note: Data provided through focus group and follow-up sessions.

**Analytical Memoing/Researcher Reflective Journaling**

In alignment with hermeneutical phenomenology, I used my own experiences for deep thought and reflection in order to make an unbiased interpretation by developing meaning supported by participants' shared experiences along with my own reflective accounts (van Manen, 1990, 2003). My lived experiences, reflective accounts, and analytical memoing are not the findings of this research; rather, they are merely another important piece of the data collected for coding and analysis.

As the hermeneutical researcher, I must draw upon my own deep thoughts and experiences related to the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990, 2003). My own reflective accounts related to PD are provided (see Appendix P). These PD opportunities were similar experiences in which the participants had also encountered.

One experience is a partially self-selected, but a required PD day (i.e., workshop style with limited choices). It was offered by the district yet organized at the school level, in part, to enhance the implementation of CCRSM (i.e., new math standards); for those participants who recently relocated to other schools, a similar experience, yet not the exact PD experience transpired. In fact, those participants who are still at the research site, had a choice of the specific PD sections. Overall, these reflective experiences were included in order to mirror the experiences in which the participants faced during the data collection period. Although these are my own reflective experiences, pseudonyms are used to protect the identities of those included within my experiences.

In addition, various forms of reflective journaling were developed. Researcher notes were regularly maintained relating to steps completed as well as the upcoming steps, as a means to maintain organization in following the same steps and procedures related to data collection and analysis steps for each of the 17 participants (see Appendix N). Frequent researcher thoughts, wonders, comments, and insights were also documented in an attempt to decrease researcher biases, the researcher's personal values, and any preconceptions (Patton, 2002) by making them transparent. After each interview, after each initial coding, and after each second coding cycle, key ideas from the participant along with the researcher's reflective thoughts were also documented. Nearly 50 pages of typed analytical memoing and about three-fourths of a 200 page composition book with handwritten documentation were logged through the research process, later reread, used to develop the researcher's story or experiences related to PD (see Appendix P), and later coded as appropriate. A sample of these are provided (see Appendix O).

## Themes

All data was coded using multiple coding methods and several cycles of coding. This requires significant time with repeated adjusts to codes and themes as the construction of meaning occurs in “waves of interpretation” (Galletta, 2013, p. 122). It is a slow, layering of meaning through coding and re-coding. Then these codes were categorized and clustered. These commonalities were then weaved into themes in order to answer the research questions.

After triangulation by using multiple data means, the primary emergent themes were identified:

1. Teachers value PD, especially when face-to-face and with colleagues.
2. Teachers want to implement newly learned strategies.
3. Teachers evaluate the usefulness and value of learned strategies. Rather than implement all components, teachers focus on what they feel is practical and possible.
4. Teachers believe collaboration is important, yet collaboration is very limited.
5. Teachers recognize a variety of factors perceived as positively impacting implementation; together, this variety of factors creates an enhanced learning environment.
6. Teachers recognize a wide range of negative factors contributing to an inadequate learning environment for professional learning.
7. Teachers lack time.
8. Timing of PD matters.
9. Teachers feel overloaded and do not feel valued.
10. Current effective teaching practices for learning are often not provided for teachers’ learning.

These 10 themes, the culmination of the 17 participants’ voices, answer the three sub-questions as a means of answering the overall research question: How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development?

**RQ one: To what extent, if at all, has this PD been implemented?** All 17 participants implemented several components of the PD. Table 11 presents a numbered account of each component implemented. Implementation in itself does not indicate the degree, intensity, or the continuation of the implementation. At least two years after this PD, all 17 participants continue to use some part of the content learned in this PD. Two participants implemented all seven components with one continuing to implement all components. This research sub-question is answered further under three themes.

Table 11

*Implementation Counts of Each Component from Tribes, Self-Selected PD*

Component (Area of Learning related to PD)	Number of Participants Who Implemented (N=17)
Setting the Environment	17
Implementing Classroom Agreements	15
Utilizing Energizers	14
Practicing Reflective Questioning Techniques	12
Maintaining Long-term Groups	2
Teaching Collaborative Skills	17
Implementing Cooperative Learning	14

Note: Data provided through the compilation of participants' experience writings, interviews, and focus group or follow-up sessions.

**Theme one: Teachers value PD, especially when face-to-face and learning with colleagues.** Teachers recognize the importance for continued learning. When the learning is face-to-face with colleagues, it is viewed as improving both learning and enjoyment. Table 12 presents participants' perspectives.

Table 12

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 1: Teachers Value PD*

Participant	Quote
Annalina	I feel that educators should never stop learning. I'm absolutely willing to learn. I have a love of learning.
Docilla	I think that professional development is absolutely necessary for teachers to grow and advance.
Fantina	Professional development, I think is in the hands of every teacher and is their responsibility, to an extent, to keep up with . . . be open to learning new things. I did appreciate working in schools where they offered . . . opportunities for you.
Gasha	We're supposed to be lifelong learners.
Hilary	Professional development – it's necessary. When we're not doing it, that's when we become stagnant. . . . You can never stop learning because once you stop learning, you're gonna stop living.
Isaac	Professional development, it shouldn't just be force-fed. It should be depending on what the staff and the surrounding needs obviously. And it should be staff-led, so shared leadership. . . . It gives them [school staff] that chance to shine.
Jerica	Professional development in its essence is good. It's to help teachers grow, improve, gain new ideas, gain confidence. So the overall founding of it is excellent. . . . fine-tune your teaching, make your teaching go smoother, expedite your planning process.



Table 12 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 1: Teachers Value PD*

Participant	Quote
Linna	I can't fully say I'm a Tribes' classroom because our school has its own version . . .that we have to use. But I still use a lot of Tribes' verbiage . . .
Mona	I think it's exciting to learn.
Kalyn	We need to have professional development so we can be updated in our practices. . . . The type of learning that they actually need to do is different than, ya know, the factory model that we have done. And it's more of teaching them to access information now. Uh, retaining information is necessary. But it's actually not as necessary as it has been in the past. . . . I think the big overall message here is that we need to keep learning. . . . The only thing that is constant is change. So that's why we need professional development, too - to keep us in touch with the needs of our learners.
Naomi	I think if [professional development] is meaningful and if it's well thought out, then teachers can get a lot out of it.
Pete	There's opportunities for professional development to be useful for teachers. . . . It really depends on the actual development itself and how it's laid out and how it's used and what it's, ya know, for.

This professional development was voluntary; not one teacher was required to enroll in this class. Although credit towards recertification was elected by 14 participants, only one of the participants currently needed the PD credits for upcoming recertification. Table 13 presents quotes for further support of theme one. All 17 participants expressed selecting this PD for at least one of the following reasons: (a) colleagues involved in the class, (b) a desire for school change, (c) an interest to learn the content of the PD, or (d) a desire to learn from face-to-face PD. The most common of these were related to the social conditions; more specifically, they took the PD to be with colleagues and because the class was offered as face-to-face PD.

Table 13

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 1: Teachers Value PD (for Specific Reasons)*

Participant	Reason	Quote
Fantina	Colleagues	My colleagues talked me into it even though I . . . was already implementing everything I've learned in Tribes in my classroom, just in a different way.
Gasha	Colleagues	And they [two colleagues] kinda gave me that extra push. . . . And then I knew a bunch of, ya know, colleagues that were doing it that I felt . . . a bond with already. So I thought it'd be even more fun to do it with them.
Linna	Colleagues	Um, colleagues [laugh]. I think 'cause of my friends and colleagues were taking it, and I thought, 'what the heck.' . . . A few people kind of convinced me to take it.
Mona	Colleagues	_____ was so passionate about it. I just thought it would be a good idea to learn something and experience some new things.
Olga	Colleagues	_____ ~ I really respect her as a person and her personality and how she gets kids involved in things.
Qiana	Colleagues	One of my colleagues . . . decided to take it. And ya know, I thought it'd be fun to take . . . a class together . . . and both support each other in the class.
Brigette	Change	I was very hopeful that this would be something that could help our school.
Hilary	Change	I often find myself disappointed because there's not continuity from year to year, teacher to teacher, even within grade level. And our school's just so big.

Table 13 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 1: Teachers Value PD (for Specific Reasons)*

Participant	Reason	Quote
Edda	Content	I think I needed help in the classroom [laughing]. I needed something different 'cause I was just in a rut. And I was just doing what I felt was best, but I knew there was a better way do things. So I wanted to try something out.
Olga	Content	I wanted to see. . . . I love what Tribes is trying to do.
Gasha	Content	I was very interested in learning. . . . I had heard such great things about the class.
Qiana	Content	Hearing _____'s experience, um, in an all-Tribes school, it just really sparked my interest.
Charity	Face-to-Face	I took it – one, mostly because it was a face-to-face type of course; whereas the other one that I took was online, and online is not my favorite. If it's one of those that you take online and you do the reflective questions or you comment on people's posts, it's not as effective.
Docilla	Face-to-Face	Because it was the first real type of professional development that I felt had been offered . . . since I started. It just sounded exciting to me, really to be able to receive some sort of . . . like actual real professional development.
Isaac	Face-to-Face	. . .done online, which isn't necessarily helpful. For example, we did our [required] training this week. It was just clicking – clicking and clicking.
Pete	Face-to-Face	I think professional development is best done face-to-face. . . . Online professional development is almost a waste of time, uh, 'cause I've done both. . . . Collaboration, that asking of questions that, uh, ya know, uh, hearing other ideas – 'cause you just don't hear that on a computer. Ya know – it just doesn't have the same impact. You don't have any of the emotions. You don't have any of the . . . facial features and . . . expressions as you do in a group. So I think professional development is best done face-to-face.

***Theme two: Teachers want to implement newly strategies learned.*** As discussed above, teachers did not enroll in the PD for mere credit. Teachers wanted to implement and add to their repertoire of strategies or teaching practice. See Table 14 for participant perspective regarding implementation. When asked about the implementation or use of components, teachers often shared regret for not implementing more.

Table 14

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 2: Teachers Want to Implement*

Participant	Quote
Brigette	I think when you look at 21st century learning skills – yes, there are academics in there. But a lot of that is about [being] able to collaborate, being able to share ideas and use other people’s ideas, being able to be a team player. If you don’t put that social learning in your class, where do they get those skills? . . . I think they don’t always have those natural social skills, collaboration skills, teamwork skills. Unless we do it, help them, I think they struggle.
Charity	I liked doing it. I liked learning about it. As far as implementing it, it’s been more difficult than . . . that. . . It’s has been harder to implement.
Docilla	I wish I could implement it a little bit more consistently or just even more, I guess. But it is kind of . . . It’s a little challenging. . . . Maybe I should take it again.
Edda	It got me excited to try those strategies out. So when ya hear something new or things that ya haven’t tried, you can do the professional development and use it right away and see the outcome. . . . At first when I was in the training, I did wanna implement everything. But realistically in the classroom with everything that I had to cover with my lessons, it was hard to just try everything out at once.
Kalyn	I get the most use out of practical application . . . learning about things that I can directly implement, . . . kind of adjust it to see . . . what works for me.

Table 14 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 2: Teachers Want to Implement*

Participant	Quote
Linna	[Concerning reflection with students] ~ I don't do it as much as I should. I'm gonna say that. Um, 'cause I feel it's a little hard especially in the younger grades . . . for them to express their feelings. . . . Maybe I am not very knowledgeable in that part yet.
Mona	Concerning the start of a new self-selected PD ~ You really don't have time to do the professional development. [But] I am excited. I am going to take the Kagan thing at the middle school. I'm starting that in November. . . . It's a big commitment, big expense. But I am going to try to start doing that because I've heard is wonderful, and I really want to.
Olga	I was really gung ho about it. And then with all the things that 've been going on – [Tribes] has not been in the foreground. . . . I want to do things. I just need to get past those hurdles and don't know how to get past it.
Pete	Everything I've taken, . . . I applied it, tried it. You know, so if I have questions, I can go back and ask. . . . I have to immediately apply it to see if it works and what doesn't work. . . . I definitely didn't give 'em all the same amount of efforts. I did most of 'em –about the same amount of time, I guess, if I look at it. I did do long-term grouping. I just didn't stick to that , uh, based on behaviors. . . . Reflective questioning is one of those you have to work at.
Qiana	Whatever I've gone through with professional development, um, I try to implement it in my classroom. . . . Whenever somebody gives me something new or teaches me something new, I just like to try it and – and see if it works for me or not. . . . I wanted to do more than just. . . the agreements and the appreciations and the energizers. . . . I didn't even get a chance to do, um, a lot of the cooperative learning things that I wanted to do with the kids.

***Theme three: Teachers evaluate the usefulness and value of learned strategies. Rather than implementing all components, teachers focus on what they feel is practical and possible.***

Teachers, as adult learners, come into the *selected* PD learning environment with a depth of knowledge and a developed personality. Then, they take all of that and what was learned in the PD back to the classroom, to that particular place with particular needs where they, individually, are responsible. If the strategy or concept does not seem important or is too challenging, it will less likely be implemented. For example, only two educators implemented the long-term learning groups; five indicated this was the least important component. On the contrary, 15 participants implemented the agreements; six indicated this component to be the easiest to implement. Table 15 provides direct quotes from participants related to this evaluation and then implementation process, as presented in theme 3.

Table 15

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 3: Teachers Evaluate New Information from PD & Then Implement what is viewed as Practical and Possible*

Participant	Quote
Annalina	For me, the biggest thing was setting the environment . . . because I wanted to make sure that the environment was a safe place. As far as energizers, I didn't have a lot of time for that because I had to get to my standards. I think all of them are important, but I just didn't have the time.
Brigette	So setting the environment – I think that safe environment, I think that's part of what you need to do. I did do that before, but I think about it more and I talk to the kids about it more. . . .Energizers - we just don't have the space to do, except the wiggle-out. ... I have a whole book of energizers . . . There's a lot of great stuff you can do, but again not only about the space, but it's about timing.
Docilla	The energizers, I really don't. . . We have 45 minutes, so I really don't have time to do those type of energizers. . . . classroom agreements definitely. I don't have the cooperative learning groups set up. I wish that I did because I think it would make things easier. I just don't have the time.

Table 15 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 3: Teachers Evaluate New Information from PD & Then Implement what is viewed as Practical and Possible*

Participant	Quote
Gasha	I actually incorporated Tribes with DoJo. . . . I have my DoJo points actually labeled that way [with agreements].
Fantina	The community circle. . . I try to do 15 minutes every day. It always ends up being maybe 20-25, depending on what the topic is . . . sometimes I cut out appreciations if it cuts too much into our language arts time. . . . I use GoNoodle for Brain Breaks . . . just like the Energizers. . . . Implementing, um, like, community circle was rough for me at first. And it was, like a lot of – it was a big learning experience. And then the other areas that I could be implementing, . . . But the next year, I was like, ‘No, this worked for me. I am comfortable with this.’ I would have to do more work to implement XYZ. Instead I’d rather implement what I picked out and chosen that I really like – the one – the one aspect that I enjoy the most and then, um, put my energy towards other things.
Linna	[Concerning long term groups: tribes] ~ I’ve always had them flexible. . . . I also like to change things up just because I feel, like, they start to get too comfortable with each other. Or there might just be people that are not meshing well. And yes, . . .you need to learn to work it out. But they also need a break.
Naomi	The learning agreements . . . And . . . the community circle [were] easy to implement, so I did that right away. The reflective questioning, that came very difficult because . . . that’s something that you really have to put a lot of thought into and understand why you’re asking those questions. And you have to allow extra time in your day for those questions, which adds up. And so you feel pressed for time already. And then you think oh, man, I gotta now put these questions into, ya know, all these activities. But until I realized the value of it, you know, it was very difficult for me.
Olga	I took that whole entire course, went through that whole thing. But at the time when I took it, I didn’t implement it because I was seeing kids 25 minutes a day. So I didn’t really internalize it whatsoever. . . . the learning agreements, but as far as anything else, didn’t go any further. And then this year . . . I was really gung ho about it. And then with all the things that ‘ve been going on – [this] has not been in the foreground. So I right now, I’m going back through with highlighters . . . trying to figure this whole thing out . . . I obviously didn’t get it the first time. So I, as a learner, need to go back and do it again – go back through it and relearn things again.
Qiana	It was a little bit of a challenge. But because I did it every day and then they saw . . . other teachers doing it was well. . . . it was always a work in progress.

**RQ two: What factors are perceived as positively impacting implementation of the PD?** Teachers recognize specific helpful factors which may increase the likelihood of implementation within the classroom. This research sub-question is answered under theme four and theme five.

*Theme four: Teachers believe collaboration is important, yet collaboration is very limited.* In the same way that the participants elected to take the self-selected PD in order to be with colleagues, teachers enjoy working with other teachers in learning new material and throughout the process of implementation and adjustments. When teachers collaborate, implementation is increased and continued. Table 16 provides direct quotes related to collaboration from the participants. Although teachers believe collaboration is important and enjoy collaborating, the actual amount of time spent collaborating is quite limited.

Table 16

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 4: Teachers Believe Collaboration is Important but Limited*

Participant	Quote
Brigette	We never had time to do any collaborative work. We never had time to discuss student achievement, the assessments. There was never any time. That's why we started the second PLT. We wanted to look at student work and have those conversations, and there wasn't time there.
Charity	I think she might've done this, but again, it's the whole <i>time</i> thing. Meetings to talk about where we should be, what we should be doing and check-ins and things of that nature – I think that would have helped.
Fantina	[Experiencing a new school] ~ I loved the team that I had. . . it actually developed over the course of a couple years. The first year was always rough. And this year. . . is that year. . . it's rough not having other people to share ideas with or bounce ideas off of.  We chat . . . And then once school starts. We kind of do not. . . anymore. . . I think life takes over; extracurricular activities take over and then college classes.



Table 16 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 4: Teachers Believe Collaboration is Important but Limited*

Participant	Quote
Annalina	That was the greatest day. That was so awesome when we got to learn from each other.
Edda	<p>Face-to-face . . . I think it helps me out a lot more. . . . If there was a refresher or something . . .like a learning team that we discuss ideas and what works and what doesn't, I think I would've kept going. But it kind of –I got excited. And then I kind of got lost – everything I was doing. And then, I forgot about it.</p> <p>I think the think-tank that she was implementing, I didn't feel comfortable. I think if it was more like same grade level or people that have a similar style – like I can bounce off ideas – but just going there and not just – like anybody can drop by and just talk about it, it just doesn't work for me. It has to be more systematic for me. Like if it was, like, the fourth-grade team doing it – and then, like, there's four of us who wants to try it out and then we get together – like brainstorming – maybe, like, half an hour, like, weekly or something and just talk about what worked and what didn't. And then I can try it out. I think that would've been more effective 'cause if it was think-tank – like anybody can just drop by one day and then not come the next day. So there is no consistency.</p>
Gasha	Collaborating is key. . . . I love collaboration. . . . I can't emphasize how important that truly is. . . . We love our team. And we do really work well together – this year.
Hilary	It's nice to have someone else who's also doing it. . . . When you have a group of people who are all excited about it, it makes it – it makes it easy. . . . It makes it more fun.
Kalyn	We don't have as many opportunities to observe other classes. . . .as teachers, . . . – we're stuck in our rooms. . . . We just need to freshen our skills. We need to get new ideas. And ya know, I'm always open to anything that is going to be collaborative – uh, something that is positive and benefits the students.
Linna	If everyone's on the same page, I think it makes it a much more cohesive environment and then more, ya know, conducive to learning. . . . I think collaboration is definitely key.
Mona	I think if you're working together with a group of people, you're more likely to continue working on something. You just don't want to let your peers down.
Naomi	[At new school]~ Here . . . every other Monday, I'm teaching . . . a focus group on it [Tribes]. And so that has been absolutely huge. . . . I'm teaching them, but I have learned even more about Tribes just by teaching it. . . . We're passing in halls, and we're collaborating about it. We're meeting offsite, ya know, and saying, 'Okay, how are you doing with this?' So it's been big.

Table 16 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 4: Teachers Believe Collaboration is Important but Limited*

Participant	Quote
Olga	<p>The one thing that helps me the most is talking with other people on my grade level. . . . – we kind of work together . . . to . . . understand what's happening. . . . But we meet . . . – we have lunch together on Fridays - that we can meet. We meet every Wednesday, um, during our planning period. And then we have the one meeting after school . . . a grade-level meeting once a month . . . we voted on collaboration time. So I guess that is more time that we can plan together and talk about things. But that's kinda what helps me the most is when I can get with those other teachers because some of them have been on the grade level for many years, and they've got more insight as to things that we're doing. And I kind of rely on them right now.</p>
Pete	<p>To me, even talking with teachers. . . - you're collaborating. . . . When they get together with professional learning teams and they let those teams develop, uh, those people are gaining a lot of information in a shorter amount a time than forced collaboration. . . . There's gotta be some kinda way to let professional development teams develop, uh, and [be] encouraged without, uh, interference. . . . We had professional development teams . . . slowly developing. . . . We had two teams going full time and a third team that was getting ready to be started. And that's when the admin. stepped in and crushed it by develop[ing] – forcing the professional development teams, which didn't – now we have none. . . . because of the . . . forced influence.</p> <p>[Professional development teams,] ~ teachers getting together . . . teachers who have commonalities come together. . . . That want to come together is a big part of that. I mean, there [are] teachers that I have nothing in common with that I would work with just because they think totally different than I do. . . . You need somebody who thinks totally different than you do. . . . I need somebody who can bring other ideas in. Uh, and that works . . . – just the fact that you both want to collaborate.</p>
Qiana	<p>I really liked the Tribes class. . . . not only did it build a community in my classroom, I think it built a community with me . . . with . . . you all because . . . I've only been teaching there for one year. But because I built . . . that relationship with you and the other teachers, I felt, like, 'Wow, I'm really part of this school,' – which was why I was so crushed when I left [laugh].</p>

***Theme five: Teachers recognize a variety of factors perceived as positively impacting implementation; together, these factors create an enhanced learning environment.*** All of the participants implementing ‘Setting the Environment’ component, illustrates that teachers recognize the importance of the environment for increased learning. Teachers recognize many factors: teacher motivation, the alignment of the PD with the teacher’s personality, learning style, and teaching style, relevant to the teacher’s specific duties, and in a supportive environment. Table 17 contains participant perspective regarding factors positively impacting implementation. In total, all of these factors create the enhanced learning environment for implementing newly learned concepts.

Table 17

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 5: An Enhanced Learning Environment*

Participant	Quality	Quote
Brigette	Motivation	. . . motivation makes a difference. . . when people take professional development because of a desire, I think they do implement.
Fantina	Motivation	If they’re very passionate about it, [they] go back through and continue improving.
Naomi	Motivation	If you’re driven to – because you know what’s the best thing to do for your students, then you’re going to do that. . . I believe people have to truly believe in it in order for it to work.
Kalyn	Attitude	. . . it’s more of our attitude.
Mona	Time Provided (Job-embedded)	. . . the support of the time.

Table 17 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 5: An Enhanced Learning Environment*

Participant	Quality	Quote
Brigette	Experimentation Feedback Reflection Observation Collaboration	[Our school system] “used to have a tremendous professional development program. . . experiment with concepts . . . Feedback . . . Reflective papers . . . As an instructor, you met with them and had conversations. . . nonjudgmental peer observations, being willing to try something and experiment with it. Even if it didn’t work, ‘Oh well. This is what I learned from it. It didn’t work the way I thought it was going to. Now this is what I’m going to tweak, and now I’m going to try it again.’
Charity	Practiced Frequently  Daily Routine  Embedded in Lesson Plans	I think the first couple months of school it would need to be very frequent, very often. So it’s already a daily routine. It’s already engraved in your lesson plans, everything. It then can be tapered off, but still check-in and all of that throughout the year. Not just, ‘All right, you’re done. You got your TRIBE learning. Do it on your own. Just do it.’
Linna	Interest  Reflection Follow-up Small groups Modeling Observation Critique Reflection Materials Available	<p>If it’s something I’m interested in . . . I just kinda do on my own. And I don’t even actually do it for credit. I just do it ‘cause I wanna learn. . . it’s important to me. Most of the PDs that I liked was when the instructor would do, like a check in. . . . And in some PDs, after 90 to 120 days, a follow up, a reflection on how it helped you. . . . And that in a way kinda forced you to actually use it.</p> <p>[In reference to another self-selected PD] ~ The one that just keeps coming to mind . . . they broke it down to what grade level you taught, and then they even broke it down to different types . . . - it was more effective. . . . break-out classes . . . And she would do a . . . lesson with real students. And then she would have you do one . . . watch you and then. . . critique. Um, but in this. . . you got materials. You had lessons. You had everything that you took back. And then you. . . work with students and then write a report or a reflection on it. . . . And I am still using those [strategies]. . . And I took that PD probably seven years ago.</p>

Table 17 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 5: An Enhanced Learning Environment*

Participant	Quality	Quote
Naomi	Expert Presenter	It depends on the trainer, too. If the trainer really knows what they're doing, in and out, then they're gonna deliver a much more meaningful professional development than someone else who is . . . just going with the flow and checking that box.
Pete	Classroom Experienced Presenter Modeling Duration-short Single Concept Expert Presenter	<p>The ones I took that I gained the most from . . . - were from teachers who were doing it already. . . . They were the ones already in the classroom – and doing it. . . . I wanna know how you – how this looks in a classroom. . . . I do believe that learning from somebody who's doing it is a lot better than from somebody who's preaching it.</p> <p>Professional development needs to be short and to the point. I don't think we need long, drawn out professional development. Uh, most teachers don't have the time or the energy to do long-term professional development. . . . done by the right person in the right way. We don't have enough people teaching professional development . . . that are good at teaching professional development. I learned more from them [short PDs] – . . . I was able to utilize what they taught me quicker, faster . . . and in my classroom. The long, drawn out ones. . . the amount of information . . . over that amount of time was just not as well used as the short, to the point ones.</p>

*Alignment with Teacher.* Teachers have ideas of what has worked for them, what they enjoy, and what they feel is necessary. “I don't think our students get enough cooperative learning at the lower levels now. I think we're too structured in – I just – talked with kindergarten - how they don't even do centers almost anymore 'cause they're teaching all the time. And they shouldn't be [directly] teaching all the time. The kids should be working together in those little centers” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015). Tribes aligns with

these basic ideas of social learning and collaborative skills being critical teaching and learning points within the educational setting (Gibbs, 2006).

Teachers identified important aspects of PD alignment with their own personality, learning style, and teaching style. One's personality has an impact on the choices one makes. This is also related to one's self efficacy. Even in this research; after reading the participant introductions, similarities within all 17 participants are noticeable. Concerning learning style, most teachers are social learners and enjoy hands-on learning. As an adult learner, teachers want to know the importance of the learning, the objectives of learning, the agenda or plan of learning, and want to be able to use the learning immediately. Teaching style is related to both one's personality and one's experiences of success. Again, it also relates to one's self-efficacy. Overall, teachers want to go into the teaching environment and feel comfortable and confident. Table 18 provides an account of participants' words indicating alignment of the PD with self.

Table 18

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 5: An Enhanced Learning Environment through Teacher & PD Alignment*

Participant	Alignment	Quote
Annalina	Personality	When I look at students, I see them.
Brigette	Personality Teaching Style	I build that relationship with the parents, but I also build it with the kids.
Kalyn	Personality	. . . areas that I've implemented . . . work with my personality. . .  behavior management is an extension of our personality – how we relate to people. And so the areas of Tribes that I really felt hit a chord with me, were very natural. . . . I want it to be very natural. . . . What works for one person doesn't work for another person.

Table 18 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 5: An Enhanced Learning Environment  
through Teacher & PD Alignment*

Participant	Alignment	Quote
Annalina	Learning Style	I learn by doing. I tend to absorb things when I actually do them.
Edda	Learning Style	Hands-on – no online. And I'm a visual learner. I have to see it myself.
Fantina	Learning Style Teaching Style	I'm definitely a hands-on, visual learner. If I can play with something, do something myself, and that's – . . . I end up teaching that way 'cause I like to do it as well.
Jerica	Learning Style Teaching Style	I learn best by – I like having the presentation. I like knowin' what we're going to learn first. . . . I like when they tell me how we're going to do it. And I like where it's a mix of visual, auditory, and hands-on. . . . And that's what Tribes does. It has the kinesthetic, the auditory, the visual combined altogether with different components so that you reach every type of learner.
Linna	Learning Style	I learn most effectively by doing – like, on the job, . . . not just sitting there – so very hands on. . . . In some PDs where you go and you just sit and you watch a PowerPoint all day, I think those are so ineffective. . . . People get bored.
Naomi	Learning Style	For me to learn something, it takes a long time . . . to completely understand something. So I need to have it from all aspects. repeat it over and over . . . doing it, hearing it, seeing it, thinking it.
Brigette	Teaching Style	When I took the training, it was validating for me because many of the things that they talked about were things that I was already doing, so I liked that. And it was also- shot in the arm because sometimes you forget the stuff that you know you should do. So it was a reminder. . . . it was an injection of, 'Okay, I need to be thinking about these things.' So it made me start being reflective again about practices and going back to tried-and-true things and incorporating them back into – overtly incorporating them back into my practice and into my classroom.

Table 18 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 5: An Enhanced Learning Environment  
through Teacher & PD Alignment*

Participant	Alignment	Quote
Gasha	Teaching Style	I felt, like, I was already doing Tribes in my room. I just wasn't using the language or. . . necessarily understanding everything . . . in a philosophical way.
Hilary	Teaching Style	. . . I do now without thinking about it. And I think it's something I've always done, even before I did Tribes.
Isaac	Teaching Style	It was pretty close to my teaching style already . . . it aligned with my personal philosophy towards education – fostering more of a community than just a classroom where we work.
Linna	Teaching Style	There's pieces of these things that I've done over the years. But what I like about Tribes is I just feel, like, it's all encompassing. . . I like that you can make it your own.
Kalyn	Teaching Style	I encourage a casual, yet respectful, environment. I see my class like a big family on a long bus trip. Sometimes we get grouchy at each other and sometimes we are singing road songs. I am at the wheel.
Naomi	Teaching Style	I originally took it because, um, _____ approached me. She had been in my classroom and seen my teaching style. . . . She said, 'Oh, this is right up your alley.' . . . So then I went online, and I researched it.
Pete imagine,	Teaching Style	I think students need that difference in styles. . . . I can't  uh, teaching the way _____ does every day. . . . The students get used to that type of teaching, but to me, there's a point which you start losing students because it's too repetitive. Uh, it gets almost boring. . . . That's why I do as much as I do. I try to do very much structured lesson and turn around and do something totally different.



*Relevant for learning or learner.* If the material does not relate to student learning or increased teacher practices, specifically one's own practices, then the material seems like a waste of time to learn. Having a relevant PD is included and required for an enhanced learning environment. Table 19 provides further support for theme five (i.e., Teachers recognize a variety of factors perceived as positively impacting implementation; together, this variety of factors creates an enhanced learning environment.)

Table 19

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 5: An Enhanced Learning Environment through Relevancy*

Participant	Quote
Annalina	[In reference to required PD] ~ I try to stick with it to see what I could possibly gain from it, even if I don't get it instantaneous. As part of the support staff, there are some things, types of professional developments we have, that are only geared towards teachers only geared to a certain grade. So other people are sitting there. It's almost like a waste of our time.
Jerica	[I want] the professional development that I can use immediately in my classroom . . . it's simple tips or techniques that . . . enhances my teaching, makes it easier to do – again, expedites my planning. . . . But I really like the thrust of the training to be useful ideas, methods, materials that I'm going to use right away and not forget how to use 'em.
Linna	[In reference to another self-selected PD] ~ I really learned so much from that because it was relevant, and it was important to me at the time.

Table 20

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 5: An Enhanced Learning Environment through Support*

Participant	Type	Quote
Naomi	Self	. . .Someone could be interested in something, but the minute you require them to do something, that's a put off. . . . I love ice cream, but the minute you tell me I have to eat ice cream, I'm not gonna wanna do it [laugh]. It really is about how you work it and how you sell it. . . . people would ask me. . . .And so I would just start talking about it. And then, um, it just kinda started a quiet rumble. . . . You quietly kinda just maneuver it into place.
Qiana	Collegial	It was just nice to know that, you know, teachers, um, were very supportive of . . . Tribes.
Mona	Admin.	My previous school . . . We had a very supportive principal, who liked for us to do the collaboration . . . He would give us time. He would even let us have subs to go and observe other people's classrooms. He would give us time to explore.
Edda	Parents Admin.	If parents – like, ya know – parents come with certain expectations when they come in. So if parents are more flexible with what's gonna happen in the classroom – I think, like, implementin' more and with admin support, too. Because it is a lot of movement, and there's a lot of – like, it's not the traditional classroom. So if somebody like a visitor comes in and they see your classroom and, ya know – and too many kids on the floor are doing something, ya know – with throwing an energizer ball, they'll be like what's happening here? Are you guys playing? Uh-huh – throwing balls around. But I think it's the support from the admins and then your parent – your parents supporting you and trusting you.
Fantina	Parents	. . .that definitely makes me feel, like, I'm doing the right thing. And then parents jumped onboard immediately here – anyways, I feel, like, I have more parent involvement that I ever did. . .
Gasha	Parents	I will say the parents have been very supportive . . . They love the real-life experiences. . . . They love that the children are actually coming home. . .using the language.

Note: Admin. represents the school's administrative team.

*Supportive.* Teachers recognize the importance of support: self-support (self-motivation to learn and implement), collegial support, administrative support, as well as parental support all have an impact on implementation of newly learned teacher strategies. Table 20 provides the final supportive participant views for theme five.

**RQ three: What factors are perceived as negatively impacting implementation of the PD?** Teachers are able to identify multiple factors which have a negative impact on implementation of newly learned material. The extensive list provides support for that idea evolving into theme six. Based upon the participant perspectives, these factors are individually presented in Table 21 and then the largest negative impact, based upon participant individual perspectives and then collectively viewed by frequency of those perspectives is presented as theme eight in Table 22. This question is furthered under three additional themes. In total research question three is answered under five themes (i.e., themes 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10).

***Theme six: Teachers recognize a wide range of negative factors contributing to an inadequate learning environment.*** The list of items working against the implementation of newly learned practices creates an extensive list from 17 participants. These inadequacies range from the individual (i.e., lack understanding, learning at frustration level, lack of willingness, lack of motivation, lack of habit, low relevance/need realized after taking PD) but are more extensive outside of the teacher's direct control (i.e., perhaps low relevance/need, different student needs from PD concepts, risky environment, hidden expectations, separated classrooms amongst grade level teachers, large school, lack of support, lack of collaboration, lack of follow-up, lack of materials, lack of adequate furniture, lack of space, curricular pitfalls, lack of time, inadequate student behaviors, lack of expert PD facilitator, lack of PD trainer having classroom experiences, few PD opportunities, and responsibility overload).

Table 21

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 6: Negative Factors Contributing  
To an Inadequate Learning Environment*

Participant	Type	Quote
Brigette	Risky Environment	You have to have a really risk-free environment. I'm seeing the [system] that we have now – at least my experience here – it's not a risk-free [one]. The school is not a risk-free environment. So I think people are fearful to try things; so they stick to what they know, and they stick in their rooms, to themselves. If people don't know what you're doing, then somebody can't tell somebody else, and you can't get in trouble.
Docilla	Hidden Expectations	I think sometimes there is this underlying sense of, 'We want it to be quiet.' If it's getting too loud. . . I don't know if it's just me or if other people feel that. But I feel like if my class is getting too loud, like, 'Oh my gosh, I'm going to be judged.' It's getting too loud, and it's getting out of hand. Even though they're still . . . magical things happening with learning.
Mona	Separated Classrooms Lack Collaboration	Sometimes we're separated. We're separated here. I know there's a lot more collegiality going on up on the hill. You kind of can't work together as much when you're split. . . . It's much easier to do something when you can just open up the door . . . 'Hey, why don't we do this?'
Isaac	Lack of Follow-up Lack Collaboration	There needs to be a follow-up, a little bit more. Yes, we have this PD training, and you have this wonderful class and you go back to your classroom and try it out. But maybe that group should reconvene . . . 'Hey, let's meet . . . over coffee and discuss what we did for Tribes.'
Charity	Lack Collaboration Lacking Support	If it was a <i>school wide</i> thing. . . have to be mandated because I know that at our school especially, not everyone would attend if it was a voluntary thing.
Brigette	Lack Materials	'Okay, now I really don't want to invest that much because you're not providing me with [materials]' . . . If it's going to be top-down, then good grapes - you need to have all the pieces there.

Table 21 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 6: Negative Factors Contributing  
To an Inadequate Learning Environment*

Participant	Type	Quote
Olga	Inadequate Furniture	We're in a brand new school. . . . We were given . . . 25 desks and a teacher desk and a rug. . . . And the desks are not square. So you can't really put them together in groups of four or sixes . . . a trapezoid. . . the bottom part is rounded. . . . You'd have to have, like, ten of these things or so to make it a circle. . . . The furniture makes it difficult.
Pete	Inadequate Space	Classroom space . . . that has been an issue.
Brigette	Lack PD Expert	They send people to do professional development, who are not good at it. . . . [They should] help people get to where they need to get. . . . they lacked the skill to be able to do that for people.
Edda	Lack Classroom Experience	Professional development, it has to be somebody who knows that field. It can't be just Suzie Q who's read about it and then talking about it or somebody who's just done
	Lack PD Expert	research and has no idea what it's like in the classroom 'cause you can tell, like, if they really know their stuff. . . . I like to see people who have actually used it and how they used it and how it worked and show the failures, too, not just all glamour.
Fantina	Lack PD Expert	[Pertains to Required PD] ~ The people that were presenting were not enthusiastic. They weren't friendly. They weren't passionate about it. . . . I know a lot of teachers
	Lack Differentiation	have grumbled and are upset. And they don't listen to what the complaints are to adapt and change the PD. So when they're doing that, then the PDs aren't gonna be as successful.
Hilary	Few PD Opportunities	. . . limited availability of classes here.
Fantina	Few PD Opportunities	. . . teachers in our profession where we work overseas don't get the same exposure to professional development like we did when we were stateside.

Table 21 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 6: Negative Factors Contributing  
To an Inadequate Learning Environment*

Participant	Type	Quote
Gasha	Inadequate Student Behaviors	The students being a challenge - behavioral, which makes it difficult to teach. . . .It's very frustrating. . . . I have literally, um been trying to do lots of different things,
	Responsibility Overload	with rewards and behavior contracts. . . . constant blurting out. . . You can only get just so much curriculum-wise [done] when your class is doing that.
Olga	Inadequate Student Behaviors	I really do have some nice kids – individually . . . but together, so many of them feed off of each other. . . . I'm trying . . . and I've tried so many combinations. . . . I'm
	Responsibility Overload	stuck right there. So I wanna go forward. Um, but I've got to get control over . . . this situation with these kids. . . . I just think that he can't control it. And I don't know how to get past this. . . he kind of dominates what happens.
Olga	Inadequate Student Behaviors	One of them has had a kid suspended from school five times because he's such a bully and does all kinds of things. So . . . we all have our burdens, ya know. I'm not
	Responsibility Overload	the only one . . . they feel, like, they're teaching kids on crack . . . 'cause their classes are crazy, too.
Pete	Student Needs	Student needs has an impact based on our classroom environment.
Olga	Responsibility Overload	I just turned in this kid's paperwork. . . it's like an entire write up. . . . It took me a while to get this stuff together. . . . all of the scores – everything – and it's not . . . scholastic . . . It's just the behavior part.
Olga	Lacking Support	You won't get any support from the parents.

Table 21 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 6: Negative Factors Contributing  
To an Inadequate Learning Environment*

Participant	Type	Quote
Linna	Lack of Willingness	. . . kinda set in their ways, and they're very territorial. . . .
	Responsibility Overload	a lot a teachers are like, 'I just wanna go in my room and teach my kids. Leave me alone. I don't wanna do all this other stuff.' So I think for some teachers, it's just oh, I need, ya know, five-credit hours every two years. So I'm just gonna take what I can and get my credit hours and then, ya know, be done with it.
Mona	Responsibility Overload	When you do something on your own, you'll say, 'I'm going to continue doing this. . . .' Then you get involved in other things. You have other priorities – teaching a different curriculum . . . That kind of takes priority over some of the things that you really would like to try to do.
Charity	Lack of Habit	I would say mostly time and remembering. If it's
	Responsibility Overload	not built into your lesson plan already, then you kind of push it off to the side or you forget about it.
Docilla	Lacking Support	It's challenging if it is not really supported <i>school-wide</i> . . . .
	Lack Collaboration	As a specialist I just feel like if the kids aren't really practicing that in their classrooms, it's hard to carry it over into my classroom.
Docilla	Responsibility Overload	I just think we get caught up in all the subject matter in the content, and we have to teach that. I think we just forget
	Curricular Pitfalls	that there's more to education than just stuff you have to teach. As a teacher, honestly I can say that I <i>forget</i> to do it, or I get tired where I'm planning lessons that's all academic content. And it's like, "I still have to plan for that." You just get <i>tired</i> , I think, or <i>overwhelmed</i> maybe.
Naomi	Responsibility Overload	The first time I took it, it was overwhelming.

Table 21 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 6: Negative Factors Contributing  
To an Inadequate Learning Environment*

Participant	Type	Quote
Kalyn	Responsibility Overload	Every day I am inundated with papers and information from all directions: administration, colleagues, students, or parents. Even when I have an organization system in place I am <i>quickly overrun</i> with more work as I take on more responsibilities, or have responsibilities thrust upon me.
Qiana	Lack of Willingness	I think what keeps teachers from implementing certain professional development is that, um, sometimes they think it might not be relevant to them. . . . Let's say they've been doing the same thing for ten years and it's worked for them. . . some teachers . . . they'd rather just stick to what they know. And they're comfortable with that.
Annalina	Lack Willingness Lack Motivation Lack Time	. . . set in their ways. Some people are negative Nancys. Some teachers are negative because they follow along. . . . Teachers, not buying into it . . . Sometimes it's easier to stick with what you know, rather than putting the effort into trying something new. They can get on <i>autopilot</i> . . . Sometimes they're just <i>burned out</i> and they just don't have the extra time to research. You know, it's time; just the effort it would take.
Naomi	Lack Willingness Lack Motivation Large School	If you're not driven, if you don't have that passion, then you probably won't [implement strategies learned in PD]. . . . The drive of teachers . . . dynamic[s] of teachers there. . . It's so big. There's so many personalities. . . . And with this school, it's smaller.
Pete	Lack of Willingness	A lot a teachers are very comfortable in the way they teach so therefore, they're not willing to extend too much. Uh, they're not willing to push too far outside that box – their box.



Table 21 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 6: Negative Factors Contributing  
To an Inadequate Learning Environment*

Participant	Type	Quote
Jerica	Lack of Willingness	I think sometimes they're just not comfortable teaching it. . . . Or, maybe you've had a <i>bad experience</i> with it, too. Like you had an evaluation come in when you were doing it and it was ugly or negative. And so then you don't wanna do that anymore. It gives ya a sour taste in your mouth. . . . it's so <i>overwhelming</i> and it doesn't make sense. . .
Pete	Low Relevance	Sometimes you're just looking for that one little part . . . that you wanna use . . . to adjust in your classroom.
Pete	Lack of Willingness	If you try to implement everything, you're really goin' away from the standard classroom environment. I don't think teachers are willing to do that. They're just looking for . . . certain areas.
Brigette	Frustration Level	I get frustrated with professional development when it's online – . . .; you've got to teach yourself. 'Okay, I can't teach myself. If I could have taught myself, I would have done it without this class. I need help. I want somebody to teach me.' I get too frustrated because I don't understand it. For me that kind of professional development is more frustrating. . . . I don't incorporate it because by the time I get done with it, <i>I'm so done</i> that I don't care if I ever do that again.
Jerica	Frustration Level	Some of them, I look at and I read it. And It's so complicated to do. I thought, 'Well, I'm never doin' that one either' [laughing].
Charity	Lack Understanding Frustration Level Lack Collaboration	. . . But if there were more guidelines for the timeline of how to do it and when to do it, I think that would help, too. Then you could sit down and say, 'Okay, by December, everyone should. . .' Then in December we talk about it.
Pete	Frustration Level	You get a lot of information in, and you're not gonna be able . . . [to] implement it all anyway at one time because it's just so much information. So you slowly implement things that you . . . find that work.

**Theme seven: Timing of PD matters.** As with adult learning theory, teachers want to be able to take what they have learned and immediately use it in the classroom. Both of these self-selected PDs took place during the second semester, closer to the end of the school year. Teachers felt as though it was too late to make changes with the classroom routines. Overall, if the timing had occurred directly before school started and continued in small amounts throughout the year to check for understanding, participants believed it would have been more productive towards increased and continued implementation.

Table 22

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 7: Timing of PD Matters*

Participant	Quote
Brigette	The end of the year is a difficult time to implement a new plan.
Charity	I was more willing to do it right after the training. It's kind of teetered off. . . . It takes more time than you would think or that it was said to take. So at the beginning of the year, I was [also] more willing to do these things because you're getting to know the kids. They're getting to know each other. You kind of need that bond to happen at the beginning. . . . I think it should have been a longer program . . . done over the summer so you can start it out as soon as you start school and then have a Saturday periodically throughout the school year to check to see what's working, see what maybe you are still confused about.
Docilla	I tried to implement some of the things there, but it was the end of the year and it was a little tricky to kind of get it going. It was the end of the year. The kids were pretty much just done.
Edda	I think the training was, like, in winter. So I think if I started from the beginning – like the first day it wouldn't be as much. But then since I had a routine going for first quarter and try implementing in second quarter, it was kind of hard. . . . it kinda died out.
Gasha	I found myself saying a few times . . . I wish I had learned this over the summer, ya know, before I had started my routines. . .

**Theme eight: Teachers lack time.** Theme six focuses on the variety of factors which decrease implementation of newly learned skills in teacher PD. Time is one of those negative factors; however, the common factor and most prominent negative factor, without hesitation, revolves around the lack of time. Table 23 provides the participant individual perspectives, in the form of direct quotes.

Table 23

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 8: Teachers Lack Time*

Participant	Quote
Annalina	So there were certain things that I could not ‘waste time’ on implementing because I didn’t have the time to implement. I have a short amount of time with students. . . . You know, it’s time; just the effort it would take. . . . They just don’t have the extra time to research. . . or see how it works.
Brigette	I feel such great pressure here about everybody being in the same place, and I’m always behind because of my teaching style. . . . So then I get anxious about that, and so I probably don’t do as much as I would like to.  I make my kids reflect, and I make my kids explain. When you are doing this: ‘Tell me what you were thinking,’ When you go through those things, it takes a dang long time. But I do think my kids end up with a deeper understanding. . . . They have to look and try to figure that out. Time-consuming! It will pay off for them in the end, but it doesn’t always pay off for you here. You don’t see the benefit of that, I don’t think, always. Sometimes- sometimes that light bulb goes on and you see it, but not always.
Charity	There are so many other things. I feel like I don’t have enough time to go back and read through the book to see what I should do for this or what I forgot about.
Docilla	I just don’t have the time. . . . I just think we get caught up in all the subject matter in the content, and we have to teach that. I think we just forget that there’s more to education than just stuff you have to teach. As a teacher, honestly, I can say that I forget to do it, or I get tired. . . And it’s like, ‘I still have to plan for that.’ You just get tired, I think, or overwhelmed maybe.
Edda	I think time . . . I did more on certain areas than the other ‘cause there was just no time. All the things that ya had to cover – and then after TerraNova, I think I was more into trying something new. But before that, I already had a system going. And it was hard to kind of do away with them ‘cause I knew what I had to cover.

Table 23 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 8: Teachers Lack Time*

Participant	Quote
Fantina	It takes much more time than we necessarily want take to implement it. And we get inundated with other things or say yes to other things. I know in – in my personal experience, um it takes a lot of time to start new things.
Gasha	I think the curriculum, too . . . - only so many hours in a day to fit even more in that day. And, um, it makes sometimes implementing things. . . into your schedule a little bit more difficult.
Hilary	The limited amount of time. . . limited time to take classes, . . . the limited time that we do have with students, the limited amount of time that we have to plan. Ya know, unfortunately, we spend hours upon hours of our own time. And that makes it hard to implement something that you're really excited about because you're already spending so much time doing what's just necessary. And then on top of that, to want to do above and beyond, you just don't have the time. It becomes exhausting and less exciting [laughing].
Isaac	Time is always an issue. . . . [At a small, private Korean school] ~ I had almost two hours of planning every day.
Kalyn	<p>Inevitably, I will get an email or a group of emails from parents or from different directions from admin., parents, colleagues. And then something else will land in my plate. And ya know, my prep time is gone. And I end up staying, ya know – I don't think that I ever leave in the time that my duty day is over. So I'm usually at school at least two hours. I mean, if I'm at school two hours after my duty day, that's a good day. And I've had to stay . . . – till 9:30.</p> <p>We don't have control over time. Nor do we have control over how much time it takes a child to process and retain information. . . . It'll peak and plateau. . . . We're doing our formative assessment. We're slowing down. We're re-teaching. And we're pulling students back. . . . We're not in control over time . . . this encompasses student development. . . . I don't know how to get more out of the day. Maybe if there was a smaller ratio of student – maybe that would be something.</p>
Mona	. . . right now when we're starting a new math, all of our time is sucked into this math. You can't think of anything else. That's it. You're just consumed by the things that you have to do. Trying to do different things or even exploring more things with Tribes. . . I have some things that I wanted . . . and I actually had them in my lesson plans to do some of the things. It was like, 'Okay, this isn't going to happen.' It sounds really great on paper when you really want to try some of the ideas . . . , but the reality is when you get the kids in here and you're working. . . You know, then those things that you really want to try- get pushed off to the side.

Table 23 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 8: Teachers Lack Time*

Participant	Quote
Linna	... in everything else we have to do, I just don't have time for that. So I'm kind of using what I already knew from before and trying to tweak it.
Naomi	And you have to allow extra time in your day. . . And you feel pressed for time already.
Olga	<p>We don't have, like, a social studies book or a science book or something to go by. We have this topic. And okay – and I don't – haven't been doing this. So that's what takes me so darn long. . . . I've gotta go and try to find things. . . What is really easy for them – they don't stay behind any day after school; they're gone. But then they've been doing it. And they had all their little stuff all lined up. But for me, it's – I have worksheets. Like, they gave me a worksheet on Polar bears. . . . – and yeah, you wanna do a good job. . . . And just still do fun things. But, I [am] still required to go look into things and try to find things. . . . it's just, like, a lot a time. . . . So I just feel, like – . . . you're treading water.</p> <p>I think it's just the obstacles of . . . classroom dynamics. I think sometimes what keeps us from fully implementing something that we're doing is just those obstacles. Like, I want to do this Tribes thing the way it's supposed to be. And I can't get across these roadblocks. . . to be able to go ahead and implement completely. . . . I haven't really talked to the other people doing Tribes. . . . We have our little class. . . . I think that all of us that are in the Tribes class we're all trying to implement it as much as we can or as much as we understand it. . . . But there's a lot that goes into . . . Tribes.</p>
Qiana	<p>Trying to schedule it during the day just so that there would be some kind of consistency. . . that's pretty much the – the challenge that I had. . . . I didn't get to that . . . only because, you know, the schedule was so tight during the day. We just had to – to teach all the subjects. And then not only with the subjects, you know, then have to fit in the counseling – and then sometimes, uh, because they were doing data . . . we were doing assessments. . . . Sometimes things arise where we had to, ya know, try to fit that in during the day. And then we had kids that were pulled out. And you know, it's just – not the whole class was there. And I really wanted all the kids to be there, um, to – to do that so we could build our community. . . the teachers, I can't blame them. . . . We get tied up with other things. . . . And they don't implement it in their classroom. . . . There wasn't enough time in the day. Or they just took the class just to take it. . . . And maybe they just didn't have . . . - a buddy system . . . where they can ask somebody . . . if something failed . . . so many failures that they think, 'This is not gonna work for me. So I'm not gonna do it anymore.</p>
Pete	Schedules definitely impact, uh – [implementation]. . . . They're pulled in and out so much that I think . . . they lose instructional time. . . . Time allotment has everything to do with it – instructional time, planning time and all that to implement. We just – within the paid day, we don't have near enough time.

**Theme nine: Teachers feel overloaded and do not feel valued.** The work day does not complete the educator's areas of responsibility. Table 24 provides participant perspectives relating to the daily demands of teachers.

Table 24

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 9: Teachers Feel Overloaded and do Not Feel Valued*

Participant	Quote
Brigette	[We] used to have a tremendous professional development program and we don't have one now, at all, I believe. . . . The teachers felt valued because they had that opportunity for professional development. . . . I think if we . . . were able to provide nonthreatening environments, then I think we would see much better implementation of professional development and people much more willing to jump in and say, "Yeah, I want to learn that," instead of saying, "You know what? I think I'm just going to stay here and close my door."
Olga	There used to be a whole lot more [of professional development]. And then they've cut down a lot. And now it's down to – it seems like the only thing that we get lately is things that have to do with . . . the [math] standards and . . . things that the district wanted us to do. . . . I don't think that we get asked what we would want . . . professional development on.
Linna	<p>Everyone has to stay abreast of what's going on in their field. And I think education needs to be the same way. I mean, new methods are happening all the time. Education's changing. Children are changing. And so if we're not knowing what's going on, then I don't see how we can be effective educators. So, um, I just wish . . . the current district . . . had better professional development offered.</p> <p>It's really important that the district . . . provides a lot of opportunity for professional development and a variety because . . . everyone's at a different place in their career.</p> <p>If . . . the district or the school provides a sub, I think the outcome . . . is worth more.</p>

Table 24 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 9: Teachers Feel Overloaded and do Not Feel Valued*

Participant	Quote
Docilla	<p>[At another school system. . .] . . . a group of grade-level teachers. . . we would meet. It was actually not during our plan time. . . .</p> <p>Sometimes it was after school. We would kind of develop lessons together, talk about our lessons. But then as a group, we would have to present one lesson to the group, and then we would meet afterward to talk about what we did during the lesson, what we like. It was all strengths-based, so we couldn't really focus on anything negative . . . 'This is what I learned.'</p> <p><i>The district would actually provide us substitutes for that.</i></p> <p>For example on the fifth-grade team, there were four teachers. They would come watch me give the lesson, and <i>there would be a substitute in their classrooms</i> for the duration of that lesson and then the discussion afterward. It was maybe about an hour, hour and a half . . .</p> <p>[Without request, moved to a different position] I did math support halftime, . . . Math is not one of my strong points, so I was very nervous teaching math support because I didn't feel like I had the expertise for that really. But it was an experience. . .</p>
Pete	<p>. . . they [non-classroom teachers, administrators, etc.] all should go back to the classroom sometime, ya know, for a year. They should go back and teach for a year, go back in and do their job again. I think principals need to be in a classroom. . . . after so many years, they need to spend a certain amount a time in the classroom . . . – it'd do them well to teach for a month in a classroom. . . classroom environments change over time. Then without [being] personally engaged in that environment, you don't know what teachers are going through. Uh, and it's hard to tell a teacher to do something if you've never done it before.</p> <p>. . .[The district] should put more effort into professional development- in those short, sweet classes. I don't know why we don't. I don't understand if you want us to utilize professional development, we should have a lot more classes provided . . . . And it could be easily done I think. . . . I think we waste money on smart boards when we could be teaching or utilizing professional development. They can almost guide their professional development . . . into areas they want by providing it for us – simple, short, to the point, . . . professional development.</p>

Table 24 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 9: Teachers Feel Overloaded and do Not Feel Valued*

Participant	Quote
Edda	<p>She came into my classroom to do the math . . . she only comes, like, one hour a week. It's like a substitute. They love the substitute. . . . But when you're with a class all day, okay, it's not so pretty. They don't listen to you attentively for, like, the whole day. . . . – it's just different . . . having the whole class, like, all year-round and somebody</p> <p>just coming in and popping in and doing this fantastic lesson and leaving, huh.</p> <p>And it's just <b>unrealistic</b>. Like yeah, ya might be a good teacher, but you're not here all the time like I am and seeing what I see. . . . that's one of the problems in education – is that people like . . . ' . . . you should set up your classroom like this. And. . . you should have centers here ... And you should do' – I was like [pounding noise] are you kidding me? Have you looked at all the curriculum that I have to cover, huh? Seriously. And have you graded any of those papers I have to grade and put them in GradeSpeed, huh? And that's the reality in the classroom.</p> <p>. . . especially, like, intermediate – like all the things that teachers have to do. 'Oh, you need to put the data together.' I'm like, 'Why don't you come in and put the data together?' I don't have time for that. . . . it's not, like, the teachers' fault. . . . But we don't have time for planning. And teachers don't get the respect . . . I think it's just difficult – there's something else to change. I think they should circulate specialists going back into the classroom. . . . That's my professional opinion, too. But they should know what it's like to be a classroom teacher.</p>
Olga	<p>I just turned in this kid's paperwork. . . it's like an entire write up. . . . It took me a while to get this stuff together. . . . all of the scores – everything – and it's not . . . scholastic . . . It's just the behavior part. . . . hopefully, she can come and shed some light. . . . It's hell in my classroom.</p>
Fantina	<p>. . . everybody's done some articulation on different components and doing that each time with how tedious it is; it is a waste when we could be sharing and collaborating ideas for lessons and activities that might be more beneficial. . . . They're obviously not taking the feedback [laughing] seriously and adapting to our needs, like teachers should.</p>



Table 24 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 9: Teachers Feel Overloaded and do Not Feel Valued*

Participant	Quote
Kalyn	<p>Organization is my weakness. Every day I am inundated with papers and information from all directions: administration, colleagues, students, or parents. Even when I have an organization system in place I am quickly overrun with more work as I take on more responsibilities, or have responsibilities thrust upon me.</p> <p>My classroom space also looks untidy at times; however, I make it a habit not to clean up after students. They are accountable for the state of the room as well and must clean up after themselves. Admittedly there are times when I have walked away from my own messy desk. Though organization is important, there is only so much time in the day and we must pick our battles. I would rather put more energy into my student interactions and spending time with my family than cleaning. Yet I do feel better in a tidy environment, so I continue to look for better ways to be organized.</p>
Linna	<p>I think being an educator now is . . . there's so much. . . .</p> <p>I wish there was more time or maybe they put less demands on teachers so there is more time. . . . I don't know what the right answer is. But I – I really am a firm believer in professional development, especially if it's relevant to the teacher. Um, but I have worked for districts where . . . there were so many different things offered. . . . It just really helped teachers stay competitive. . . .</p> <p>I found it to be successful. . .</p>
Mona	<p>My previous school . . . We had a very supportive principal, who liked for us to do the collaboration . . . He would give us time. He would even let us have subs to go and observe other people's classrooms. He would give us time to explore and give us time during the duty day to do that. I know we were a smaller school, but he made it happen no matter what. If you wanted to go and sit and watch a colleague do their lesson in the morning for an hour, he would make that happen – even if he would go and sit in our classroom himself. There were times where he would hire subs just for a whole day. . . 'Sign up when you would like some time, and you can go and work with your colleagues to do something that you're interested in.'</p> <p>That kind of gave us permission to come up with these ideas or . . . collaborative ways of working together. . . . To see it in action because just hearing about it sometimes is different than. . . watching.</p> <p>He also gave teachers who [were] struggling time to go in and observe other people too.</p>

Table 24 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 9: Teachers Feel Overloaded and do Not Feel Valued*

Participant	Quote
Mona	<p>When I came to this school, I was very excited to come to the Pacific. I had come from a school where we were really pretty much given free rein to do a lot of things. . . . here, they're like, 'Oh, no. We don't do that here.'</p> <p>So that was very surprising to me, to have that kind of feeling.</p> <p>Then you kind of shut down and take a step back.</p> <p>They implemented a new math curriculum . . . It was only our third year of using it, and now we're on a totally new math. You're just getting to where you felt comfortable using that, and then, 'Okay, that's out. Now we're doing this.'</p> <p>I know that they have to make changes and have to do things, but it's just been so poorly done. I think about when people above you have things that just are poorly planned and then you are the ones that are left to struggle in the classroom to implement their poor planning and their ideas and their structure, . . . it really leaves you the feeling like, 'Okay, just do the best you can. You're teaching the kids.' I've even gone back in doing some of the old curriculum, just because it's there. It's good. I have the book. I know the structure. I know the routines. I know what we're supposed to be doing. . . . It's kind of like our writing goal. We were kind of . . . pushed into our rubrics. . . . Even with that, we were pushed into a math goal a couple of years ago. We had to do a math goal, and then they changed it, and then they changed it again. It was not us. We had what we wanted on math, and then they changed it again. They said, 'No, that's not right.' They changed. . . . The whole year, we never got a solid goal or a solid statement of what we wanted because "above us" kept changing. 'No, you can have this one. It doesn't say this. Go back and rewrite it. You can't do that.' Now we've done away with that goal. It seems like it's the system. You just get started doing something, and when I like it, 'We're changing. Stop midstream. Turn you right around. Let's go do something else.' It doesn't give you a chance to feel comfortable with what you're doing.</p> <p>I was one of the people chosen to come back early and take a week full of training to do professional development. . . . I was very excited about that. . . . We were excited to be able to work together. . . . I was very disappointed . . . people were told . . . and forced into doing that with the group. So it kind of was everything against what we had learned . . . on developing . . . professional learning teams. . . . I thought that was very frustrating for me because it was a perfect example of what we could do to work on our own and work with a team of people, and we were all very excited about it. Then it just kind of fell apart. Nobody ended up doing really anything. It kind of made you want to not be part of the teams that were started.</p>

Table 24 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 9: Teachers Feel Overloaded and do Not Feel Valued*

Participant	Quote
Jerica	<p>They alienated people. It's going to be very difficult for people to buy into this program and to fully integrate it. I would have a hard time. . . . Because when people are angry, they're not gonna come to you. They're not gonna go to [the director]. They're going to come to me and my supervisor and say what a lousy job I've done, not you. . . . I am the – absolutely – this is where the buck stops: me. I'm the one that parents are gonna be angry at.</p> <p>I would rather have a nail stuck in my eye than go to another one of those training sessions with those people they brought in from the states ~ that we paid lots a money for. That's how I feel about that 'cause that was just painful and insulting to me . . . I walked outta those training sessions with not one lesson plan, not one idea on how to teach or present a lesson. And to me, how pathetic is that? . . . – I felt that was appalling to do that and to treat us like that.</p> <p>. . . he was quite condescending and said well, "Ya just have to click here." I said, "Well, we're havin' trouble with that." – ya know, like you're stupid 'cause we're elementary teachers. He goes on there, and it didn't work. And we were all thrilled, ecstatic. And, ya know, again, then you feel bad 'cause you're happy that he failed. . . . I said, "Thank you Lord for not lettin' it work for him." I know that's an evil prayer [laughing]. You shouldn't pray negatively [laughing]. But I was like thank you so that he could feel – feel my pain.</p> <p>Now you try doing that week after week and . . . in addition teach social studies, science, math, health and reading. 'You try that, buddy, and see how you do.' I can't imagine anything more appalling than what they've done to us and more degrading as professionals. They don't do that – any other profession they don't treat their people like that. And they have. They've treated us really ugly and like – we're sheep. We just have to do what they tell us to do? And, uh, that's unfair. I don't like it.</p> <p>They took something that we understood and knew how to do and – and made it difficult. That's what they've done by preceding the order and not made it easier and not made it successful. Everybody needs to feel successful, not just the kids but the teachers. They need to empower us to feel successful. And when we give 'em feedback, um, incorporate it. And they're not because we gave 'em feedback the first week of school. So then some people find ways to do it and just say, 'Well, this works; okay, I'm done. I did it.' And that's what's happening. That'll happen. Or people will just say, 'I'm not doin' this.' You'll get mutiny. 'We're not gonna do this – so make me. So what're ya gonna do, fire me? Okay. That's not gonna happen 'cause that's gonna take years.' So– this is ugly what they've done to us.</p>

***Theme 10: Current effective teaching practices for learning are often not provided for teachers' learning.*** Effective teaching practices, as discussed in Chapter Two, are those strategies in which research has shown to have a positive impact upon the students' learning. In educational PD, teachers are the students; yet these effective teaching practices are not commonly present within the teacher learning environment. Table 25 provides the participant accounts supporting theme 10.

Table 25

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 10: Current Effective Teaching Practices for Learning Are Often Not Provided for Teachers' Learning*

Participant	Quote
Brigette	. . . this is not a risk-free environment. . . . Until it becomes that, people are afraid to change practices.
Edda	And it's like a family. . . . But it's different there. . . . You have to accept it <i>here</i> because it is a transit environment. People come and go.
Linna	[In reference to CCRSM Required PD] ~ And these PDs that we've been having, . . . I've learned nothing. And it's just like, here, take it back and use it. And it's just, like, 'Okay, I'm still not understanding it.' Like there's no active things happening. Like we're not working with kids or seeing someone do an actual lesson in progress. . . . It's more about the philosophy behind it instead of . . . implementation. So I'm kind of learning on my own, which is also frustrating because [slight laugh], ya know, in everything else we have to do, I just don't have time for that.
Olga	The math standards. . . the new math curriculum . . . it's so darn confusing. . . . we're getting packets this thick of what we're supposed to be doing for the next three weeks. And it's things that they've kinda put together from all kinds of things. And it's so confusing. And, like, I brought 'em all home this weekend to try to figure out what in the heck I [am] doing with some of this stuff. And some of the teachers are blowing it off, even though we're being told to do . . . we want something that's kinda cohesive and together. And this just looks like it's been put together. And it's so hard to follow. I don't know. For one lesson...for one day's math lesson is, like, ten pages of stuff. It's just kinda crazy. . . . But to internalize it all, it just takes a while to internalize it, ya know?

Table 25 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 10: Current Effective Teaching Practices for Learning Are Often Not Provided for Teachers' Learning*

Participant	Quote
Olga	<p>...you get what you get – ya know. You go to the professional development, and you try to internalize it yourself. Sometimes things don't make sense. And there's not time really to sit there and ask questions and to try to figure things out because they present it, go on to the next thing, present it, go on to the next thing. ... right now, our teachers are really frustrated with the whole system of what's going on. ... we're trying to muddle through this year.</p>
Charity	<p>If it was like checking, kind of like the checking for understanding for teachers – if there was more of that, I think it would be more effective. ... I think that would be helpful if everyone did it altogether throughout the year and there were checks. People who are experts ... go into your classroom and see how it's working. I don't know, some sort of way to check that it's going okay and you feel comfortable doing it. To be honest, I don't feel like I learned the actual putting them in TRIBES portion ... well enough to do it in my classroom. I would have liked to have been more involved periodically throughout. I didn't feel comfortable really putting them into tribes because I don't feel like I picked up enough of what I needed to do. You know what I mean? ... I forgot some of the things. So I kind of relied on my way in doing that.</p> <p>I really needed that timeline [too] – when should I do this? The answer was kind of not direct. I understand that, too, but it was like “In November, I need to set up TRIBES” or “In November, we should be doing this.” So I think that timeline could be beneficial to help build it into your lesson plan.</p>
Charity	<p>... I think the more you are involved in it and see it and see it multiple times and do it multiple times, then it kind of sticks more than if you just read it in a book and then you're supposed to go do it. I took a math course. We did lessons in the classroom. But because it wasn't continuous, it just was like, “That was cool.” Didn't ever do it again.</p>
Kalyn	<p>So you have to be very vigilant about ... your skills.</p>
Pete	<p>You get a lot of information in, and you're not gonna be able ... [to] implement it all anyway at one time because it's just so much information. So you slowly implement things that you ... fine that work.</p>

Table 25 (con't)

*Participant Voices Supporting Theme 10: Current Effective Teaching Practices for Learning Are Often Not Provided for Teachers' Learning*

Participant	Quote
Kalyn	I think this is true for most adult learners . . . we tend to gravitate towards things that are, um, considerate of our time. We tend to be more motivated- self-motivated. So, . . . I just want a schedule. Give me my deadline, . . . my syllabus. . . so that I can just, ya know, do it to fit my schedule. I need to know what I'm learning is practical and has purpose. I'm not in that place of exploration anymore. Everything I do has to have an end result– has to have a function, a purpose in what I'm doing.
Fantina	. . . it is a waste when we could be sharing and collaborating ideas for lessons and activities that might be more beneficial.. . . They're obviously not taking the feedback seriously and adapting to our needs like teachers should.
Naomi	<p>The first time I took it, it was overwhelming. And so I just decided, 'Okay, I'm going to take bits and pieces and implement the easy parts.' . . . I've added more and more to the Tribes process. This year, uh, and last year, I've added every aspect of it. . .I've seen a huge impact from that. . . . I would . . . find it in the book, reread it and figure it out and then say, 'Oh, okay, I understand this better now. . . . it just took me each year from going from a class that was super overwhelming to be able to go and kinda relearn it on my own and utilize it – that best fit my class at that time. . . . So, I just feel, like, I've become more of an expert each year because I've done my homework, so to speak.</p> <p>The focus group that I've been doing. . . it's really been interesting. . . . They want to make it a whole-school thing. Um, and so it's pretty imminent. It's exciting that they're so into it and seeing the value. And they're seeing a difference in their class, too, which is exactly what we want. So – pretty cool. . . .</p> <p>Most are taking the baby steps.</p> <p>I take away, like, oh, that 'aha moment.' And then you implement that one piece. But then as you reflect and you think and you think about it, then you're able to kinda go back and say, 'Oh, okay, I like this. I'm gonna try [that] now.'</p>
Jerica	They took something that we understood and knew how to do and – and made it difficult. That's what they've done by preceding the order and not made it easier and not made it successful. Everybody needs to feel successful, not just the kids but the teachers. They need to empower us to feel successful. And when we give 'em feedback, um, incorporate it.

### **Summary**

Chapter Four discussed the findings from this study to include participant overview, detailed participant introductions, and a thick description from each participant. The participant's written expression and verbal expression were used as a foundation for creating a poetic rendition, allowing others to experience this phenomenon related to experiences after educational professional development. These data sources, along with focus group and follow-up sessions, were also coded using the same process and then themed. Ten themes were identified and utilized in answering one of the three sub-questions for this study. Chapter Five will summarize the findings, provide appropriate discussion and implications, address limitations, and conclude with recommendations for further research and study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

“Without involvement there is no commitment.

Mark it down, asterisk it, underline it.

No involvement, no commitment” (Covey, 1989, p. 143).

### **Overview**

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study was to describe elementary educators’ on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected PD. Chapter Five provides a synthesis of the literature from Chapter Two along with the findings of this research, found in Chapter Four. This chapter is organized by sections: (a) summary of findings, (b) discussion and reflection of the researcher’s experiences related to two different PDs, (c) discussion surrounding the thematic findings from this research, (d) implications, (e) limitations, (f) recommendations for future research, and then ends with a final (g) summary of this study.

### **Summary of Findings**

A brief summary of the findings is first presented with the themes under each related research question. Three focused questions, used to narrow the direction of the overall research question are: 1) To what extent, if at all, has this PD been implemented? 2) What factors are perceived as positively impacting implementation of the PD? 3) What factors are perceived as negatively impacting implementation of the PD? After the themes are presented, then a summary of the findings is presented in paragraph form in answering the overall research question: How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development?



**Summary of Theme Findings for RQ One: To what extent, if at all, has this professional development been implemented?**

Through extensive coding of data from 17 participants, three themes evolved regarding implementation of PD. These themes are as follows:

1. Teachers value PD, especially when face-to-face and with colleagues.
2. Teachers want to implement.
3. Teachers focus on what seems practical and possible.

**Summary of Theme Findings for RQ Two: What factors are perceived as positively impacting implementation of the PD?**

Through extensive coding of data from 17 participants, two themes evolved amidst positive factors towards implementation of PD. These themes include:

4. Teachers believe collaboration is important, but it is limited.
5. Teachers recognize a variety of factors (i.e., an enhanced learning environment)

perceived as positively impacting implementation.

**Summary of Theme Findings for RQ Three: What factors are perceived as negatively impacting implementation of the PD?**

Through extensive coding of data from 17 participants, five themes evolved amidst negative factors towards implementation of PD. These factors include:

6. Teachers recognize a variety of factors leading to an inadequate learning environment.
7. The timing of PD matters.
8. Teachers lack time.
9. Teachers feel overloaded and do not feel valued.
10. Effective teaching practices are often not provided for teachers' learning.

**Summary of Findings for the Overall Research Question: How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development?**

Elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected PD in a positive manner, in that it holds value and is a necessary component in educators continuing to become better at their individual art of teaching. Although teachers want to implement newly learned strategies, the realities within the classroom cause the teacher to focus on parts of the newly learned material that seem practical and also possible for implementation. Overall, teachers recognize a sundry of factors leading to an enhanced learning environment for increased implementation. In this enhanced learning environment, social learning is desired. Face-to-face PD and day-to-day learning with colleagues is believed to be essential; yet, the amount of collaboration is limited. Teacher collaboration is seemingly circumscribed by the immense demands upon the educator.

These daily, reoccurring, demands create a magnitude of factors negatively impacting implementation of newly learned strategies and would seemingly have a negative influence on teacher efficacy. All of these negative factors ultimately spawn an inadequate learning environment, to include the often absence of effective teaching practices for teacher learning. As adult learners, educators want to immediately implement new material; therefore, the timing of the PD matters and should be aligned with the school calendar as well as aligned to the needs within the classroom. Overall, the pervasive lack of time was profound. This lack of time seeped into other areas, producing an environment where teachers do not feel valued, but instead feel overloaded.

## Discussion

This section revisits the conceptual framework, discusses the alignment between previous research and the findings in this study, including theoretical literature and empirical findings. Essentially, this section contains a synthesis of Chapter Two (i.e., the literature review) and Chapter Four (i.e., empirical findings of this research), along with discussion on my own reflective experiences.

Since increased teacher buy-in or support for the PD improves implementation and sustainability (Desimone, 2002) for overall purpose of improved student learning (Penuel et al., 2011; Sailors & Price, 2010), this research was designed with a specific focus on self-selected PD. At the same time, this research is also phenomenology which builds upon the voices of the participants involved. In this study open ended questions unintentionally elicited a blending of PD experiences even though the research focused upon a particular self-selected PD (i.e., Tribes) at the research site. Shortly after the IRB approval for this research, the required CCRSM PD (i.e., required math training) began, and it produced an unyielding edge, a profound shrill, and a deep desire to be heard. With repeated experiences shared, it became so profound that it could not be ignored by any ethical researcher conducting a phenomenological study.

These experiences relating to required PD demanded to be heard, primarily due to the overarching impact it seemed to heavily weigh upon the school's environment and overall school climate. This climate is also part of the experience for educators after the self-selected PD of Tribes.

The participants' voices are believed to be the insight, the truth of the phenomenon, and are viewed as a critical aspect within phenomenology. By listening to the participants' full

expressions and individual stories related to personal experiences after the PD, a deeper, more complete description of the phenomenon (i.e., educators' experiences after PD) was anticipated.

Historically, public schools and districts in the U.S. have typically provided PD for all staff. The staff would be involved in the same training with little or no follow-up and any subsequent training sessions were often on an unrelated topic (Wei et al., 2010). When the PD topic is required of an entire staff, motivation is often low (Avalos, 2011), creating a disinterested and unreceptive audience. For that reason, this research focused on self-selected PD (i.e., Tribes presented face-to-face at the research site) in order to decrease possible effects related to lack of buy-in.

Bottom-line, this type of PD is not supported by research (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009), yet many U.S. school systems continue to offer these one-shot, one-size-fits-all, type of PD with little or no follow-up (Butler & Gerkin, 2006; Wei et al., 2010). This traditional, yet still quite typical, PD is often forgotten or never implemented (Webster-Wright, 2009). Hence, these short workshops have resulted in few changes to the classroom environment (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

### **Discussion on Researcher's Reflections: Bringing the Two Together ~ Self-Selected PD Vs. Required PD**

In these two reflections (see Appendix P) from my, the researcher's experiences, time is a critical element in both. Desimone (2011) also acknowledged that time seemed to be the most difficult factor to overcome.

**Discussion on researcher's reflections: Required PD.** Essentially, of the two required PDs reflected upon, one of two was successfully implemented. One of two is 50%, which represents failure on the traditional report card; yet, it does illustrate progress. All in all, the story

(i.e., the qualitative means provided in Appendix P) provided a deeper, fuller, more detailed description towards implementation.

In the required PD, implementation occurred after both CCRSM (i.e., temporary, yet all new, math curriculum) and CSI goal (i.e., editing writing by use of Daily Fix-its within the current language arts curriculum) PDs. However, on-going daily efforts only continued when the implementation was easy or practical. The primary hardship with the new math implementation related to the materials not being readily available or difficult to obtain and requiring an increased amount of time to plan and prepare for each lesson. Likewise, DiPaola and Hoy (2014) recognized the importance of PD providing adequate time and resources in order for continued effective implementation.

The ease of implementing the Daily Fix-its came from the materials being readily available, the learning in the PD content being a small chunk of learning or review, and my positive perception towards the implementation. The materials (i.e., Daily Fix-its) have ease to access both electronically and within the teacher editions of the school's current language arts curriculum. A small piece of information was the only part emphasized from a large curriculum. A small piece of information for instruction is a well-known best practice in teaching and learning (Marzano et al., 2011; Marzano et al., 2012). Although teachers use many more components within the language arts curriculum, the focus of the PD was just that one, small focused area, or chunk (i.e., Daily Fix-its).

I did not utilize the Daily Fix-it component before the PD; however, I did not have any dislike of that component either. There simply is not enough time to complete every part of the language arts curriculum. In addition, there was no deep or complex learning demanded of me, per se. I simply needed to organize and plan for this implementation, which was brief, especially

with the shared efforts from another grade level teacher. Therefore, I had no ill-feeling towards implementing Daily Fix-its. In short, I perceived the implementation as both practical and possible (i.e., theme three). Burke (2013) also found PD with practical concepts to be useful and motivating for teachers.

Overall, I was not excited about implementing; yet it was something I recognized as being important for the school goal's success, and it wasn't something I was against either. In a similar manner, Slavit and Roth-McDuffie (2013) found the teacher's motivation, attitude, and awareness as critical aspects in PD learning and implementation.

In addition, the entire school's focus required this implementation. DiPaola and Hoy (2014) indicated a characteristic of effective PD to be collaborative with school-based goals. Since the entire school planned to utilize the Daily Fix-its, I did notice an increased, personal expectation to also utilize this facet of the curriculum. As Hulleman and Cordray (2009) indicated, accountability can be a type of implementation driver.

If however, the materials were not readily available or the implementation was not easy, therefore limiting time, as with the *required* math PD and implementation, a different outcome would be expected (DiPaola & Hoy, 2014). For example, my team tried to implement the new math curriculum, but it was not readily available or easy, taking hours to shuffle through in order to plan for classroom use.

At some point during the struggle of implementation, we lost the belief that implementation was practical and possible. In short, we experienced what Bakkenes et al. (2010) identified as problematic aspects of implementation for teachers: we encountered a hardship, strained to maintain new practices, avoided reverting back to old ways, and then attempted to avoid new learning on this concept (as cited in van den Bergh et al., 2015). Therefore, we

abandoned it for daily use after the first unit of instruction and returned to what we knew to be beneficial to student learning, practical for daily use, and possible. Instead, we depended upon the old math curriculum, while awaiting the permanent curriculum scheduled to be implemented next school year. All in all, this plan seems more practical to the classroom teachers.

Although in a negative way, this aligns with the social cognitive theory, in that individuals influence the environment (Bandura, 2002, 2003). In social cognitive theory it is believed that teachers' self-perceptions as well as the perceptions of the organization will influence individual actions in practice (Schechter & Tschannen-Moran, 2006). Together, we decided that the organization, or district, was misguided and not in touch with the needs of the classroom nor cognizant of the time restraints elementary educators face. Teachers were never asked or involved in the decision to implement a "new" math curriculum for one year, nor was teacher buy-in ever developed for the temporary, new math curriculum. So collectively, it was easy to abandon.

**Discussion on researcher's reflections: Self-selected, but required PD.** Kissel, Mraz, Algozzine, and Stover (2011) had similar findings, noting that when this type of PD is offered, where involvement is nothing more than listening, teachers usually return to their classroom unchanged, without transfer of content from the PD. Essentially, of the three partially, self-selected PDs reflected upon, none were successfully implemented. On any scale, zero of three represents failure. However, the story presented (see Appendix P) a fuller, more complete picture of the experiences.

All three short, workshop-style PDs, were self-selected from more than a dozen options much as a high school student would select classes. The selections had teacher buy-in (i.e., self-selected and of interest), were viewed in a positive way, and were believed to have value towards

student learning. Unlike Slavit and Roth-McDuffie's (2013) research where teacher motivation and positive attitude had benefits to teacher learning, these factors did not impact the teacher, or my transfer of knowledge into the classroom setting, in this case. Desimone (2002) also found increased teacher buy-in to improve implementation and sustainability; again, differently, buy-in did not impact implementation in this situation either. In short, the content aligned with my personality, teaching style, and was held in positive regards as I had interest in the content of the PDs.

Yet, these PDs were not aligned with the adult learning theory assumptions, for the immediate implementation of newly learned content is a crucial feature (Chan, 2010). Creating materials, or even provided with materials, for immediate implementation follows the adult learning theory. Adults want the learning to be beneficial and immediately useful, for their learning orientation is problem-centered, task-oriented, and life-focused (Chan). However, I did not leave with any materials or resources to use directly within my classroom, nor was time available to plan or to reflect upon any of the strategies presented during this PD day; therefore, none of the PD content was utilized or implemented into my classroom. Again, DiPaola and Hoy (2014) emphasized the importance of adequate time as well as adequate resources being available to support PD.

In addition, when PD has a short duration of time and lacks a connection to the contexts within the teacher's classroom situation, the training is fragmented (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). These self-selected, but required PDs were each less than an hour long and generic in nature, as not specific to one's grade level and not specific to academic structures.

Professional learning encourages the sharing of knowledge amongst colleagues and the emphasis on the reflection for learning (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; DuFour & Eaker, 1998;



Mourshed et al., 2010). Knowledge was shared amongst colleagues; yet there was no attempt for follow-up, no checks on understanding, no requirements for implementation, and no individualized reflection on learning or implementation accountability.

The other experience, provided a completely self-selected Tribes PD experience (i.e., offered at the research site and available for possible credit). Two Tribes PD sessions were offered, one in 2013 and one in 2014. Experiencing one of these two PDs was the exact PD experience required for participation in this study, as it was completely self-selected and held no obligation for participation. Although these are my real experiences and in my own reflective voice, pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of those involved within my experiences.

**Discussion on researcher's reflections: Completely, self-selected professional PD (i.e., Tribes).** The completely self-selected PD - which only included the Tribes PD at the research site- has been implemented. Yet full sustained implementation of all seven components has not occurred, at least not yet (i.e., not even three years after the initial PD). Even with taking the PD a second time, complete success has not been accomplished. I have implemented all components but have not mastered, nor consistently maintained all components.

The Tribes PD aligned, at least in part, with the social cognitive theory and the adult learning theory. Social cognitive theory stemmed from the social learning theory where learning is believed to occur directly and indirectly through social situations as we influence the environment around us (Bandura, 2002, 2003). Much of the Tribes PD utilized active learning through collaboration and cooperative learning groups. In addition, self-reflection and self-regulation are both critical components of both Tribes (Gibbs, 2006) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2003). Motivational self-efficacy is needed to stay focused in completing tasks, to

overcome self-doubt, and to continue working on a goal (Bandura, 1993), such as implementation of newly learned skills from any PD.

The actual PD also utilized the six assumptions for adult learners: (a) adults learners are self-directed; (b) adults have rich experiences to connect learning; (c) adults come ready to learn; (d) adults learn for immediate application; (e) adults are more internally motivated to learn than externally; and (f) adults need to know the value and purpose of learning (Chan, 2010). The class time was engaging, fun, and created much collegial conversations and reflections. As an educator and an adult learner, I felt valued for my own knowledge, opinions, as well as for my personal and professional characteristics.

In leaving the Tribes PD, materials were available for immediate use, as aligned with the adult learning theory, but not specifically aligned with grade level content needs. In fact, there were so many materials or options for lessons available that it was difficult to identify an adequate starting point for implementation. In reference to language arts PD and strategies, Brozo acknowledged, “it is perhaps because of this enormous variety that teachers find it difficult to know which ones are most relevant to their content and for their students” (p. 267).

Perhaps the large amount of Tribe components presented, rather than a small amount at a time, has also slowed my progress. Providing small, “digestible bites for students” (Marzano et al., 2012, p. 109) or chunks of new material with adequate student processing and reflection as the teacher monitors understanding and levels of attention are all considered best practices in teaching and learning (Marzano et al., 2011). The reflective component was most definitely included within the Tribes PD; however, the amount of content presented was quite vast, and somewhat overwhelming.

In addition, collaboration nor follow-up were embedded components of this PD. Wepner et al. (2012 as cited in Wepner, 2014) asserted that without the elements of collaboration and follow-up, teacher learning is not transferred into practice. It could be argued that collaboration was available; as the PD facilitator did offer open support as well as a weekly open collaboration time. However, this collaboration time was not embedded or required for the PD credit, nor required in any means. It is desired for PD to evolve into a collaborative effort among colleagues for that offers increased implementation (Bean & Swan Dagen, 2012). However, PD does not always evolve into a PLT (Stoll et al., 2006) for building an effective PLT requires planning (David, 2008), a willingness of the members to participate, and time (DuFour et al., 2010).

It could also be argued that follow-up was provided as well; the instruction took place over four Saturday sessions spanning over a two to three month time period. However, with seven components, or areas of learning, four days was not enough to master the depth of this learning.

Providing an adequate amount of time – both in duration and span of time are commonly agreed upon characteristics of effective PD (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone et al., 2002; DiPaola & Hoy, 2014; Hattie, 2009; Long, 2012). However those time factors are defined quite differently from research to research. The span of time is usually not defined rather just identified as an important factor, such as sustained over an extended period of time (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone, 2002; Desimone et al., 2002; Hattie, 2009; Wei et al., 2010), on-going (Long, 2012), and continuous (DiPaola & Hoy, 2014).

The duration of time has been identified as effective PD with as little as six hours per topic, yet also recognized as having a larger impact with the hours increased to 35 or more per topic (Long, 2012). Yoon et al. (2007) found student learning outcomes to be increased with

teacher PD lasting for at least 14 contact hours. Yet, Wei et al. (2010) found PD consisting of 49-100 hours per topic to be the most effective.

It is logical that different topics and different learners with different abilities would need different amounts of time to master a skill or topic of study; educators are confronted with this reality on a daily basis in the typical classroom. However, this leaves the critical component of time for PD without specific parameters for success.

For this self-selected Tribes PD, the training took place on four Saturdays for eight hours each day and another two hours distributed after school; the structured instruction or contact time equaled 34 hours. Text reading, homework assignments (i.e., if completed for credit), and any planning of lessons for classroom use was additional time. The overall span of time for the Tribes PD was a two to three month period. Based upon the previously discussed research findings regarding time, as indentified above, this Tribes PD could be identified as possessing an adequate amount of time for effective PD.

Except, does Tribes make-up one topic (i.e., the sum of Tribes) or seven topics (i.e., setting the environment, classroom agreements, energizers, reflective questioning, long-term groups, collaborative skills, and cooperative learning)? And from there, are all CL strategies included as one topic, or is each strategy a separate topic of study? In that context it is obvious that all CL strategies could not be adequately mastered within the previously discussed effective PD time specifications of six, 14, 35, 49, and doubtfully even in 100 hours.

As discussed, Long (2012) recognized 35 or more hours needed per topic, while Wei et al. (2010) recognized 49-100 hours needed per topic. This basic question can instigate deep reflection and further discussion. If Tribe components are considered seven topics, under the guidance of these research findings, teachers would expect 245 hours ( Long) to 700 hours (Wei

et al.) dedicated towards the learning of the seven components of Tribes. Related to these findings on time needed for real learning, it is estimated that it takes 10,000 hours to become an expert in any one domain (Newell & Simon, 1972 as cited in Merriman, 2014). Throughout research, there is little doubt that learning with deep understanding takes time.

My belief in the importance of these strategies has kept my motivation alive for Tribes. In addition, Tribes does align with my personality, natural teaching style- to some degree, and basic educational philosophy, yet my obvious lack of time has restrained my progress. All decisions toward implementation seems to come back to my constant lack of time, just as Desimone (2011) identified time as the most difficult constraint to overcome.

I do realize that my own educational goals require time, which restricts the time I am able to put towards any new material for myself and ultimately for my students. Yet I wonder, how many hours should I be expected to give of my own personal time? Without doubt, I consistently work at least 50 hours each week, not including the time I donate during the summer ‘break’ or spend actually working on “days off.” This number of work hours is consistent with OECD (2013) as the average number of total hours worked by U.S. primary educators in 2011 is recorded as 1,913 hours over 36 weeks (i.e., just over 53 hours weekly). Even with this type of schedule, I never feel completely finished with my daily and mounting responsibilities.

I won’t give up on this goal, but it sure has taken a long time; and yet, I still have not mastered all components of Tribes, specifically cooperative learning (CL). Soon I will have *more time* (i.e., once this research is formally completed). Although I now believe the U.S. educational system is deeply flawed, expecting too much of U.S. teachers’ personal time, I will continue until I have mastered the components of Tribes, specifically CL.

CL with reflection produces the best learning outcomes for students (Yager et al., 1986; Yager et al., 2001). And the basic reality is centered around the fact that newly learned educational strategies or skills, cannot be completely mastered on-the-job for most U.S. educators, as the system does not provide time for teacher learning or even for teachers to build new habits based upon updated and evolving research. Darling-Hammond (2010) found that teachers in the U.S. only have 20% or less of their workday scheduled as preparation and collaborative time (i.e., non-teaching time), compared to 40 to 60% for other leading nations' teachers.

Since I have a solid teaching practice of using reflective questioning, my next goal will be focused on systematically implementing CL strategies. Now, I have a deeper understanding, a realization of the pitfalls or negative factors decreasing implementation of newly learned or even complex strategies. Therefore, with focused time and reflection- daily implementation of a CL strategy until it has become habitual and a natural part of me, of my own teaching practice, before adding another strategy, and *hopefully* a teacher partner to collaborate with (i.e., since collaboration is a natural process developed between teachers and not scripted)- CL will become a daily occurrence in my classroom and a natural part of my repertoire or art of teaching.

### **Discussion on the Conceptual Framework**

Two theories were used as the “lens” in which to view the phenomenon, to set the foundation, and to guide this research. Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory and Malcolm Knowles’ adult learning theory comprised the conceptual framework for this research. Within this framework, phenomenology (i.e., empirical situations) provides a path to capture an “everyday kind of experience” from those who live it (van Manen, 2003) and to analyze “how

they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others” (Patton, 2002, p. 104).

**Social cognitive theory.** Social cognitive theory asserts that learning occurs in social situations, even through simple observations. It acknowledges that individuals do not have complete control over all choices but can influence the environment (Bandura, 2002, 2003). “\_\_\_ was so passionate about it” (Mona, personal communication, October 26, 2015) and “I really respect her as a person and her personality and how she gets kids involved” (Olga, personal communication, January 16, 2016). “It’s nice to have someone else who’s also doing it. . . .When you have a group of people who are all excited, . . . it makes it easy. . . and more fun” (Hilary, personal communication, October 26, 2015). This research completely aligns with the importance of social learning under the social cognitive theory. Participants searched out social learning situations, recognized benefits in learning together, desired to collaborate more, and acknowledged the importance of social learning for students as well. “If you don’t put that social learning in your class, where do they get those skills? . . . They don’t always have those natural social skills, collaboration skills, team work skills. Unless we do it- help them, I think they struggle” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015).

Social cognitive theory also asserts that teacher’s self-perceptions as well as the perception of one’s organization will influence individual actions in practice (Schechter & Tschannen-Moran, 2006). One’s level of efficacy not only influences the outcomes but also the initial goal setting (Bandura, 1993). Researchers have repeatedly noted the teacher’s self-efficacy related to that teacher’s level of challenge on goals, the effort they invest towards these goals, and overall willingness and motivation to try new strategies (Klassen et al., 2011 as cited in Tschannen-Morgan & Chen, 2014; Pajares, 1997).

However in this study, teacher self-efficacy scores, each based upon the participant completing Schwarzer, Schmitz, and Daytner's (1999) Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (Appendix E), did not match the participant's description regarding effort, level of implementation, or continued efforts. In that, a participant with a rating of 29 may not have been less successful implementing Tribes components than one with a rating of 40. These self-efficacy scores were collected as a descriptive factor. Yet, in reflection of these scores along with the participant's description of implementation practices, patterns are not clear or immediately noticeable.

Participant scores ranged from 29-40 with 10-40 as the possible range. Two of the three participants who scored 40, the highest score possible, did not implement all components but were satisfied (i.e., confident) and deliberately only worked on implementation of the components personally valued; the components not used were purposefully not implemented (i.e., the participant did not value the component as important for student learning). In this manner, a high efficacy score indicating a high level of confidence aligns with the social cognitive theory. On the other end of the participant teacher self-efficacy scores, one of the two participants who scored 29, the lowest of the participant scores, continually felt unsure and remorseful for not implementing more. Again, this aligns with self-efficacy and one's confidence in a particular area being similar (Pajares, 1997; Zhang et al., 2015). However, other participants, with a varied range of teacher self-efficacy ratings (i.e., 29-40), also expressed this regret for not implementing more of the Tribe components.

Overall in this research, the self-efficacy scores of the participants do not provide an adequate description of the participants or their actions related to implementation of these PD components. Perhaps the scores (i.e., 29-40) all generally represent a positive teacher self-efficacy rating, and therefore do not provide any further implications.



Or perhaps, the gradual implementation (i.e., adequate pacing) coupled with successful implementation on each small step continually fueled the teacher's perseverance towards full and expert implementation. One participant implemented the components slowly until all components had been implemented and continues to actively work on improving the use of Tribe components:

After taking the Tribes professional development 3 years ago, I struggled on how to implement each component. The professional development days were long and the information was overwhelming. I felt a little confused with the whole process but managed to implement the Learning Agreements and Community Circle. I continued to study Tribes and with each new school year, I implemented another component. Even with simply implementing one or two Tribes components, I witnessed a positive impact on my students, which is why I kept studying and continued to perfect my Tribes classroom (Naomi, personal communication, January 14, 2016).

This participant indicated a high teacher self-efficacy score (i.e., 37), among the top third of participant scores, but not the highest (i.e., 40).

Overall, a complete pattern of teacher self-efficacy ratings related to the level of implementation are not present in this study. All in all, teacher self-efficacy ratings were used as a descriptive factor for each participant and only collected on the on-set of this research (i.e., not several times before the onset of the PD and throughout the implementation timeline), and therefore cannot be used for a complete comparative measure toward implementation practices.

**Adult learning theory.** Knowles' adult learning theory has six assumptions for increased adult learning. These six assumptions are presented with related participant comments.

- Self-Concept: Adult learners are self-directed, autonomous, and independent.

“I’m absolutely willing to learn. I have a love of learning” (Annalina, personal communication, June 11, 2015). “We’re supposed to be lifelong learners” (Gasha, personal communication, December 1, 2015).

- **Role of Experience:** Repository of an adult’s experience is a rich resource for learning.

Adults tend to learn by drawing from their previous experiences.

“All of that I do now without even thinking about it. And I think it’s something I’ve always done, even before I did Tribes” (Hilary, personal communication, October 26, 2015). “When I took the training, it was validating for me because many of the things that they talked about were things that I was already doing, so I liked that. And it was also [a]- shot in the arm because sometimes you forget the stuff that you know you should do. So it was a reminder. . . . it was an injection of, ‘Okay, I need to be thinking about these things.’ So it made me start being reflective again about practices and going back to tried-and-true. . .” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015).

- **Readiness to Learn:** Adults tend to be ready to learn what they believe they need to know.

“I really learned so much from that because it was relevant, and it was important to me at the time” (Linna, personal communication, November 30, 2015).

- **Orientation to Learning:** Adults learn for immediate applications rather than for future uses. Their learning orientation is problem-centered, task-oriented, and life-focused.

“I really like the thrust of the training to be useful ideas, methods, materials that I’m going to use right away,. . .the professional development that I can use immediately in my classroom” (Jerica, personal communication, November 16, 2015).

- **Internal Motivation:** Adults are more internally motivated than externally.

“I think it’s exciting to learn” (Mona, personal communication, October 26, 2015). “Professional development in its essence is good. It’s to help teachers grow, improve, gain new ideas, gain confidence . . . fine-tune your teaching, make your teaching go smoother, expedite your planning process” (Jerica, personal communication, November 16, 2015).

- Need to Know: Adults need to know the value and purpose of learning (Chan, 2010).

“There’s opportunities for professional development to be useful for teachers. . . . It really depends on the actual development itself and how it’s laid out and how it’s used” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015).

It is critical for the environment, the learner’s experiences, and the relevance of instruction to be considered and appropriately adjusted before instructing adult learners. Adults continue education as a lifelong learner, usually for skills in order to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Chan, 2010). Unlike child learners, adults evaluate the cost or hardship related to the learning; adults want to be successful, but they recognize other responsibilities to manage. Therefore in order for adults to choose any particular learning venue, they must recognize a necessary purpose or overall benefit for the learning (Finn, 2011). All in all, Knowles’ adult learning theory poses the educational setting as directed by the needs of the learner with a large emphasis on one being a self-directed learner. The six assumptions of adult learners are used to guide instructional practices in setting the best PD learning environment. Likewise, the self-selected Tribes PD provided a learning environment for adult learners and honored five of the six assumptions of adult learners. The only item lacking was the idea of leaving the PD with a direct, concrete plan for implementation with materials specifically aligned to grade level and appropriate content for immediate classroom implementation. And remember, materials were available in abundance

(i.e., from the textbook); however, nothing was specific to grade level or content. And there was not a clear path or order to implementation processes.

The basic implication is for the introduction of educational PD is to provide the benefits of the upcoming learning, the structures for learning, and connect the learner with the new learning. Then, upon exiting any educational PD, the teacher should have content-specific materials “to use right away” (Jerica, personal communication, November 16, 2015).

We tend to gravitate towards things that are . . . considerate of our time. We tend to be . . . self-motivated. . . .I just want a schedule. Give me my deadline. . . . I need to know that what I’m learning is practical and has purpose. I’m not in that place of exploration anymore. . . . My time is filled. Everything I do has to have an end result – has to have a function, a purpose in what I’m doing (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

### **Discussion on the Primary Research Question: How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development?**

With such a board overall question- certainly comprised of numerous and wide-spread experiences, three sub-questions were utilized in order to provide sufficient direction in answering the overall research question. Discussion regarding each is provided.

### **Discussion on RQ One: To what extent, if at all, has this professional development been implemented?**

At least two years after the self-selected PD, all 17 participants continue to use some part of the content learned in the Tribes PD. Two participants implemented all seven components with one continuing to implement and improve upon all components. The other chose to discontinue long-term groups and uses the other components as desired. Not all components

were implemented or maintained a common presence within the instructional environment by all participants.

Similarly, Cantrell and Callaway's (2008) indicated that all teachers implemented the PD in their research but at varying levels. Those with low efficacy scores gave excuses why a strategy did not work, whereas those with high efficacy scores continued to search for answers. Contrarily, in this research, no pattern relating to teacher self-efficacy was identified as a direct factor aligned with implementation. Moreover, the participant with the most implementation and continued daily efforts did not have the highest teacher self-efficacy score.

Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009) also found a mismatch between the amount of PD and the amount of classroom implementation. Some participants were satisfied with the current level of implementation and did not intend to implement any more than currently practicing. Yet there were other participants who had regrets for not implementing more.

These teachers expressed needing a follow-up or perhaps taking the class again. The importance on PD being on-going and continuous is well documented as a necessary component of effective PD (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone et al., 2002; DiPaola & Hoy, 2014; Hattie, 2009; Long, 2012), recognizing true learning as time consuming with repetitive occurrences needed. As also recognized in this research, DeGrip and Sauermann (2013) noted the actual amount of PD transfer or implementation of newly learned material from PD is difficult to measure. Three themes and appropriate discussion is provided in answering research question one.

**Discussion on theme one: Teachers value PD, especially when face-to-face and with colleagues.** "I love professional development" (Qiana, personal communication, November 5, 2015). Participants commented that "educators should never stop learning" (Annalina, personal

communication, June 11, 2015) and the importance of being “lifelong learners” (Gasha, personal communication, December 1, 2015) for “. . .once you stop learning, you’re gonna stop living” (Hilary, personal communication, October 26, 2015). There was a view that the purpose of PD being “. . .to help teachers grow, improve, gain new ideas, gain confidence” (Jerica, personal communication, November 16, 2015) and to keep them “updated in . . . practices” (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

***Social cognitive theory.*** As part of the conceptual theory of this study, social cognitive theory, in part, holds that learning occurs in social situations. These social situations are not always controlled by the learner, but the learner does influence this environment (Bandura, 2002, 2003). Social encounters, even simple observations, set the stage for learning.

All 17 participants expressed selecting this PD for at least one of the following reasons: (a) colleagues involved in the class, (b) a desire for school change, (c) an interest to learn the content of the PD, or (d) a desire to learn from face-to-face PD. But the most common reasons were clearly socially driven; teachers took the PD because colleagues/friends were also taking the PD and because the class was offered as face-to-face PD rather than on-line. Participants recognized that they took the PD because “colleagues talked [them] into it” (Fantina, personal communication, December 2, 2015) or “they gave . . . that extra push. . . [because] . . . it’d be even more fun to do it with them” (Gasha, personal communication, December 1, 2015). Tribes, “I think it built a community with me, . . . with you all because I- I’ve only been teaching there for one year. But because I built that – that relationship with you and the other teachers, I felt like, wow, I’m really part of this school – which was why I was so crushed when I left” (Qiana, personal communication, November 5, 2015).

In a similar manner, participants expressed, “online professional development is almost a waste of time,” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015) “not my favorite,” (Charity, personal communication, June 12, 2015), “isn’t necessarily helpful” (Isaac, personal communication, October 9, 2015) and “not as effective” (Charity, personal communication, June 12, 2015). “I get frustrated with professional development when it’s online; you’ve got to teach yourself. ‘Okay, I can’t teach myself. If I could have taught myself, I would have done it without this class. I need help’ . . .” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015). The overall thinking was “professional development is best done face-to-face” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015). Fisher, Schumaker, Culbertson, and Deshler (2010) found no significant differences in teacher learning between an on-line PD and in-person PD; however, face-to-face or in-person PD reported a higher satisfaction level (as cited in Hill et al., 2013). Although there was no comparison group of on-line PD in this research, participants in this study also expressed a desire and enjoyment with the selected PD being offered in a face-to-face environment (i.e., a social environment). In addition, research findings by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2014) indicated teachers recognize the value of collaboration, but also recognize the current collaborative experiences for educators as not being ideal.

**Discussion on theme two: Teachers want to implement.** Although only one participant is currently implementing and actively perfecting the implementation of all components of Tribes as presented in the PD, all 17 participants have implemented and continue to implement some components. One participant implemented all components but chose not to continue with long term cooperative grouping. Eight participants were satisfied with the amount of current implementation, although that implementation did not include all components of Tribes. Seven of the participants expressed a desire to implement more:

- “I didn’t even get a chance to do. . . a lot of the cooperative learning things that I wanted to do with the kids” (Qiana, personal communication, November 5, 2015).

- “I was really gung ho about it. And then with all the things that ‘ve been going on – [Tribes] has not been in the foreground. . . . I want to do [more] things” (Olga, personal communication, January 16, 2016).

- “It got me excited to try those strategies out. . . . At first when I was in the training, I did wanna implement everything. But realistically in the classroom with everything that I had to cover with my lessons, it was hard to just try everything out at once” (Edda, personal communication, November 30, 2015).

- “I wish I could implement it a little bit more consistently. . . .” (Docilla, personal communication, October 9, 2015).

Gegenfurtner (2011) found several factors to influence implementation, but the teacher’s willingness and overall attitude towards the PD were found to be critical factors (as cited in Kyndt & Baert, 2013). In a related way, this research also found several factors with the educator’s willingness and overall attitude as important. Different levels and desires related to the depth of the educator’s willingness to implement. In this study, all 17 participants acknowledged, at least initially, wanting to implement strategies learned in this self-selected PD.

Adult learning theory, in part, acknowledges that adult learners come to the PD ready to learn and expect the learning to be for the present. Whatever the objectives are of the PD, the adult learner wants to immediately implement (Chan, 2010). Theme two perfectly aligns with this portion of adult learning theory.

### **Discussion on theme three: Teachers focus on what seems practical and possible.**

Albeit teachers want to implement strategies learned in PD, they evaluate the new information



and then implement what is found to be practical and possible. “I can’t blame them [for not implementing]. . . . We get tied up with other things. . . . It’s challenging” (Qiana, personal communication, November 5, 2015). “I focus more on specific areas of Tribes – areas that I’ve implemented . . . work with my personality” (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Altun and Cengiz (2012) found that teachers expected PD, whether offered at their work location or offered from an outside source, to be practical for classroom implementation, rather than just theoretical (as cited in Baker, 2014).

If best practices or research has moved beyond what a teacher views as practical and possible, effort towards changing the teacher’s attitude or belief system may be critical for any implementation.

So I think it’s more of our attitude. And it’s more of our adaptability as teachers. So I don’t think we necessarily need professional growth to train us on specific technology or specific material. But we need the type of professional growth that helps us with the way that we see ourselves as teachers in our role as teachers, as facilitators more than lecturers – so that type of professional development. And it really is 21st Century skills (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

In short, teacher *buy-in* is recognized for improved implementation and longevity of the PD strategies (Desimone, 2002); however, learners may need relationships for the PD to be effective (DiPaola & Hoy, 2014).

As part of the adult learning theory, Knowles’ assumptions align with theme three: teachers focus on what seems practical and possible. Knowles’ assumptions include the idea that adult learners are self-directed, autonomous, and independent; they will immediately evaluate new learning. In addition, adult learners have a vast amount of experiences in which building

upon will further understanding of newly learned materials. Adult learners come ready to learn, need to know the value and the purpose of learning, and tend to be internally motivated (Chan, 2010). The adult learner uses prior knowledge and newly learned PD to ascertain what implementation components are possible.

“For me, the biggest thing was setting the environment . . . because I wanted to make sure that the environment was a safe place. As far as energizers, I didn’t have a lot of time for that” (Annalina, personal communication, June 11, 2015). The educator used independent thinking (i.e., self-concept) and prior experiences to guide choices toward implementation. In a similar manner, some teachers make a decision to only implement parts: “No, this worked for me. I am comfortable with this. I would have to do more work to implement XYZ. Instead I’d rather implement what I picked out and [have] chosen that I really like” (Fantina, personal communication, December 2, 2015). In this, the teacher’s internal motivation is also evident. Teachers often started with “the learning agreements . . . And . . . the community circle [as they were] easy to implement,” (Naomi, personal communication, January 14, 2016) making them *possible* to implement immediately. This desire to implement new learning immediately, to be task-oriented and life-focused (i.e., orientation to learning) as acknowledged in adult learning theory, is also evident.

A large part of Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory relates to one’s efficacy. Self-efficacy influences outcomes, but it also directly impacts the goals in which one is able to visualize and set. If the new strategy seemed too complex, too far from the individual teacher’s ability or willingness, the possibility of implementation decreased (Bandura, 2003). But successful implementation can increase efficacy (Bandura). “Okay, I want to learn. I like how

Tribes PD gave me that kind of reassurance that, ‘Hey, you can do it that way!’ . . .” (Isaac, personal communication, October 9, 2015).

“The reflective questioning, that came very difficult because . . . that’s something that you really have to put a lot of thought into and understand why you’re asking those questions” (Naomi, personal communication, January 14, 2016). “[It] is one of those you have to work at” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015). “I want it to be very natural. And what works for one person doesn’t [necessarily] work for another person” (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015). In review, teachers implemented what each viewed as the most important- yet also practical for their learners and possible – with consideration to the resources each had. “I have to immediately apply it to see if it works . . . [But] I definitely didn’t give ‘em all the same amount of effort . . .” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015) based on student needs and teacher preferences. “It was a little bit of a challenge. But . . . it was always a work in progress” (Qiana, personal communication, November 5, 2015). Overall, teachers evaluate newly learned strategies from the PD and implement what is perceived as both practical and possible.

Similarly, Brozo (2014) found success on a year-long PD with a specific focus, using reduced new practices. “. . .[A]lthough they were given exposure to and guided practice with nearly 20 instructional routines, they should focus first on adopting those that could more readily be incorporated into their subject matter and fit their teaching style” (p. 267). With teacher buy-in to fewer strategies, it was more manageable. In short, the teachers viewed it as both possible and practical.

## **Discussion on RQ two: What factors are perceived as positively impacting implementation of the PD?**

Teachers recognize collaboration and other factors creating an enhanced learning environment as critical elements to increase the likelihood of implementation within the classroom. This research question is discussed under theme four and theme five.

**Discussion on theme four: Teachers believe collaboration is important, but it is limited.** “That was so awesome when we got to learn from each other” (Annalina, personal communication, June 11, 2015). Teachers are typically social beings. “I love collaboration” (Isaac, personal communication, October 9, 2015). In fact many of the participants took the self-selected PD in order to learn and be with colleagues. “Collaborating is key;” (Gasha, personal communication, December 1, 2015) . . . “Collaboration is definitely key” (Linna, personal communication, November 30, 2015) for teachers; . . . “if you’re working together with a group of people, you’re more likely to continue working on something. You just don’t want to let your peers down” (Mona, personal communication, October 26, 2015) so you stay focused and stick with it. “Even talking with another teacher, -you’re collaborating” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015).

The one thing that helps me the most is talking with other people on my grade level. . . .

But that’s kinda what helps me the most. . . when I can get with those other teachers because some of them have been on the grade level for many years, and they’ve got more insight as to things that we’re doing. And I kind of rely on them right now (Olga, personal communication, January 16, 2016).

Jones and Dexter (2014) confirmed the importance of informal collaborations after PD in order for that learning to be utilized within the classroom setting. With “a learning team. . . I

think I would've kept going" (Edda, personal communication, November 30, 2015). Overall participants felt, "It's nice to have someone else who's also doing it. . . When you have a group of people who are all excited about it . . . It makes it easy. It makes it more fun" (Hilary, personal communication, October 26, 2015). " Just the fact that you both want to collaborate" (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015) is important "and it's rough not having other people to share ideas with or bounce ideas off of" (Fantina, personal communication, December 2, 2015).

However, even when an optional collaboration session was offered, little collaboration continued. "It's the whole time thing" (Charity, personal communication, June 12, 2015). And feeling comfortable in that particular group matters. "I didn't feel comfortable. I think if it was more like same grade level or people that have a similar style . . .[with] . . . consistency. . . . That would've been more effective" (Edda, personal communication, November 30, 2015). Teachers enjoy working together, but "life takes over; extracurricular activities take over and then college classes" (Fantina, personal communication, December 2, 2015). "The limited amount of time that we have and the [limited] resources that we have, I think sometimes we need that encouragement . . . to implement . . . within our daily schedules" (Hilary, personal communication, October 26, 2015). Overall, collaboration is viewed as a critical component for increased implementation after PD; however, the amount of collaboration is quite limited.

In a similar fashion and aligned with the findings of this research, research conducted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2014) reveal teachers' desire for well-structured collaboration. But Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) recognized educators having a lack of time for sharing knowledge and collaborating. In a similar way, DuFour et al. (2010) indicated the act of collaborating, although quite profitable, is also quite time consuming.

Collaboration, or the concept of a PLT is grounded in social cognitive theory where knowledge is found in everyday situations and believed to be best understood through reflection and dialogue with others who have also experienced this same situation; this social learning is an active engagement with colleagues and believed to increase professional knowledge, to improve the classroom instruction, and therefore to enhance student learning (Kudenko et al., 2011; Vescio et al., 2008). Overall collaboration is used as a catalyst for day-to-day professional learning with colleagues. However, PD does not always evolve into collaboration or into a PLT (Stoll et al., 2006). Building an effective collaborative situation or PLT requires planning (David, 2008), a willingness of the members to participate, and time (DuFour et al., 2010). “Teachers getting together . . . that they want to come together is a big part of that.” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015).

With frequent changes or moves between grade levels and schools, collaboration becomes even more challenging. “I loved the team that I had. . . it actually developed over the course of a couple years. The first year was rough though. And this year [at a new school] . . . is that year. . . it’s rough not having other people to share ideas with or bounce ideas off of” (Fantina, personal communication, December 2, 2015). “We love our team. And we do really work well together. This year [the second year working together] . . . a lot more. We just flow . . . We’re more of a unit” (Gasha, personal communication, December 1, 2015).

“[I]f you’re working together with a group of people, you’re more likely to continue working on something. You just don’t want to let your peers down” (Mona, personal communication, October 26, 2015). Although collaborative measures are imperative for educators, it is also quite time-consuming (DuFour et al., 2010). Teachers are not provided with the time necessary to collaborate, to share knowledge, to observe and learn from others in the

educational field, or to explore instructional possibilities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). “We never had time to do any collaborative work. We never had time to discuss student achievement, the assessments. There was never any time” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015). “We chat . . . and then once school starts, we kind of do not . . . anymore . . . I think life takes over; extracurricular activities take over and then college classes” (Fantina, personal communication, December 2, 2015).

**Discussion on theme five: Teachers recognize a variety of factors perceived as positively impacting implementation: Enhanced learning environment.** Teachers recognize many factors; those reoccurring in this research data include:

- teacher motivation,
- the alignment of the PD with the teacher’s personality, learning style and teaching style,
- relevant to the teacher’s specific duties, and
- in a supportive environment.

In the optimum learning environment all of these factors would be present in a positive fashion. Various factors such as emotional, cognitive, beliefs about one’s teaching, and motivational goals affect the outcomes of professional development (Postholm, 2012; Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014).

***Discussion on PD aligned with teacher.*** Just as research by Slavit and Roth-McDuffie (2013) indicated the importance of teachers’ motivation, attitude, attention, and awareness in PD learning. Participants recognized their own significance towards implementation. Similarly, Desimone (2011) recognized learning as an actively constructive process, as individual or personal in nature.

*Learner has motivation for learning and implementing.* “Motivation makes a difference. . . .when people take professional development because of a desire, . . . they do implement” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015). The learner (i.e., the teacher involved in PD) is viewed as having the ultimate power upon successful implementation. “I believe people have to truly believe in it in order for it to work” (Naomi, personal communication, January 14, 2016). “It’s more of our attitude” (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Aligned with the social cognitive theory and self-efficacy, the concept of one’s own thoughts, reasons, and desires play into PD selection, learning, and then implementing. “If it’s something I’m interested in . . . I just kinda do [it] on my own. . . . I just do it ‘cause I wanna learn. . . . it’s important to me” (Linna, personal communication, November 30, 2015). I want to “better myself as a teacher” (Isaac, personal communication, October 9, 2015).

Although there are mixed results in educational research (Desimone & Stuckey, 2014), there has also been significantly positive research results on student learning outcomes when the professional development has been self-selected, or on a voluntary bases (Penuel et al., 2011; Sailors & Price, 2010). These research findings add to the importance of educators selecting, having choice, having buy-in, and then having a positive attitude towards the professional development. “I love ice cream, but the minute you tell me I have to eat ice cream, I’m not gonna wanna do it” (Naomi, personal communication, January 14, 2016). Moreover, Taylor, Raphael, and Au’s (2011) review of PD research found the center of all seven successful PDs started with teacher ownership (as cited in Raphael, Vasquez, Fortune, Gavelek, & Au, 2014). The teacher’s perception toward the PD is critical for successful implementation. PD “shouldn’t . . . be force-fed” (Isaac, personal communication, October 9, 2015).



*PD matches learning style.* “I learn most effectively by doing, like on the job, not just sitting there” (Linna, personal communication, November 30, 2015) “If [you are] . . . actually doing it, then you learn more than if somebody gives you the book” (Charity, personal communication, June 12, 2015) to read. “I tend to absorb things when I actually do them” (Annalina, personal communication, June 11, 2015). “I’m definitely a hands-on, visual learner. If I can play with something, do something myself” (Fantina, personal communication, December 2, 2015) then I learn the most. In a similar fashion, Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) asserted effective PD provides opportunities for teacher’s active learning. This also relates to the teacher’s personality as a learner or preferred learning style.

DiPaola and Hoy (2014) indicated the importance of effective PD using a variety of formats, accommodating diversity, and promoting equality. “I like when they tell me how we’re going to do it. And I like where it’s a mix of visual, auditory, and hands-on. . . . And that’s what Tribes does. It has the kinesthetic, the auditory, the visual combined altogether with different components so that you reach every type of learner” (Jerica, personal communication, November 16, 2015).

*PD matches teaching style.* “When I took the training, it was validating for me because many of the things that they talked about were things that I was already doing, so I liked that” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015). “A lot of it aligned with my personal philosophy toward education” (Isaac, personal communication, October 9, 2015). A distinct match between the PD and the attributes of the teacher was present. “There’s pieces of these things that I’ve done over the years” (Linna, personal communication, November 30, 2015). The PD was not so different from the teacher’s personality as related to teaching style. “Oh, this is right up your alley” (Naomi, personal communication, January 14, 2016). As “it was pretty close

to my teaching style already . . . it aligned with my personal philosophy towards education” (Isaac, personal communication, October 9, 2015). Overall, the PD was aligned with personality, both as learner and as teacher.

***Discussion on relevancy.*** “I really learned so much from that because it was relevant . . . to me at the time” (Linna, personal communication, November 30, 2015). Participants expressed wanting “the professional development that I can use immediately in my classroom . . . it’s simple tips or techniques that . . . enhances my teaching, makes it easier to do – again, expedites my planning. . . . But I really like the thrust of the training to be useful ideas, methods, materials that I’m going to use right away and not forget how to use ‘em” (Jerica, personal communication, November 16, 2015).

Aligned with adult learning theory, teachers want the PD learning to be applicable today, to use the information for a current situation, to know the purpose behind the learning, and to know the value associated with the learning (Chan, 2010). “Some types of professional developments . . . are only geared towards teachers, only geared to a certain grade. So other people are sitting there. It’s almost like a waste of our time” (Annalina, personal communication, June 11, 2015).

Relevant learning is based upon learning outcomes and increased content knowledge. Much research supports professional development focused on improved learning outcomes (Hattie, 2009) towards increased content knowledge (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone, 2009; Desimone et al., 2002; DiPaola & Hoy, 2014).

***Discussion on a supportive environment.*** Teachers recognize the importance of support: self-support (i.e., self-motivation to learn and implement), collegial support, administrative support, as well as parental or community support. “It was just nice to know . . . teachers . . . were

very supportive” (Qiana, personal communication, November 5, 2015). Then, “parents jumped onboard” (Fantina, personal communication, December 2, 2015) and “have been very supportive. . . . They love the real-life experiences” (Gasha, personal communication, December 1, 2015).

“We had a very supportive principal. . . . He would give us time” (Mona, personal communication, October 26, 2015). “. . . The support from the admin[istration] and . . . your parents supporting you and trusting you” (Edda, personal communication, November 30, 2015) are critical for implementation to occur. Desimone (2002) found similar results of support from supervisors as influential for initial interventions and sustainability of the PD. Likewise, the principal’s positive attitude was important while the principal’s feedback was found to be a critical factor for implementation of PD (Delvaux, Vanhoof, Tuytens, Vekeman, & Devos, 2013). This feedback also has a positive influence on the teacher’s willingness to take PD (Tuytens & Devos, 2011 as cited in Delvaux et al.).

### **Discussion on RQ Three: What factors are perceived as negatively impacting implementation of the PD?**

“Barriers to teacher implementation of instructional best practice include professional development that falls short on the core features (e.g., too short, not enough practice, not coherent with other initiatives, no opportunities for feedback, not integrated into the curriculum)” (Desimone & Stuckey, 2014, p. 469). There are numerous factors perceived as negatively impacting implementation of PD. The perceived positive impact actualized two themes, while the perceived negative impact actualized five themes. There seems to be more factors, or at least more perceived factors, hindering PD implementation than encouraging it. Discussion regarding the five themes (i.e., themes 6-10) used to answer the third research question are provided.

**Discussion on theme six: Teachers recognize many negative factors leading to an inadequate learning environment.** As discussed earlier with the enhanced learning environment, there are many factors bringing together the learning environment. If one took the enhanced learning environment list and did just the opposite, an inadequate learning environment would emerge. However, the participants offered more insights toward factors negatively impacting PD implementation than those factors which positively impact PD implementation. This reflects the compilation of the data; howbeit, a pattern, an overlap, or repetition amongst the participants was required for any factor to be recognized.

*Discussion on a risky environment.* The need for a safe environment is well documented as the foundational component for all learning (Maslow, 1943; Maslow, n.d.). Participants expressed fear of using some of the Tribes active components, “Oh my gosh, I’m going to be judged. It’s getting too loud, and it’s getting out of hand” (Docilla, personal communication, October 9, 2015).

You have to have a really risk-free environment. . . . People are fearful to try things; so they stick to what they know, and they stick in their rooms, to themselves. If people don’t know what you’re doing, then somebody can’t tell somebody else, and you can’t get in trouble (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015).

Presented by Gibbs (2006), brain research shows that people do not remember when placed in high stress situations. “Minds are killed through loneliness, hostility and exclusion by peers” (p. 61). When providing ideas to the school “they’re like, ‘Oh, no. We don’t do that here.’ So that was very surprising to me, to have that kind of feeling. Then you kind of shut down and take a step back” (Mona, personal communication, October 26, 2015). “This is not a risk-free

environment” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015) where people are encouraged to try possibilities.

Making this theme more complex is the fact that individuals perceive an environment differently. During the same time period and at the same school, another feels excited to be there: “Oh, my God, if you were where I was at, you would think you’re in heaven right now. It is wonderful here” (Qiana, personal communication, November 5, 2015). With such extremes, it is important to recognize that every individual faces different experiences and perceives those experiences differently.

Although perceptions vary, creating a positive environment for learning is important. Overall, in order for PD to be successful, “leaders must create and sustain settings in which teachers feel safe to admit mistakes, to try (and possibly fail), and to disclose aspects of their teaching” (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011, p. 87).

***Discussion on lack of collective participation.*** “It’s challenging if it is not really supported school-wide” (Docilla, personal communication, October 9, 2015). “It would be helpful if everyone did it altogether” (Charity, personal communication, June 12, 2015). Desimone (2009) as well as DiPaola and Hoy (2014) acknowledged collective participation (i.e., school-wide participation) as a feature of effective professional development.

***Discussion on lack of collaboration.*** “We’re separated here. . . . It’s much easier to do something when you can just open up the door . . .” (Mona, personal communication, October 26, 2015). “We never had time to do any collaborative work. We never had time to discuss student achievement, the assessments. There was never any time” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015). Even when you are interested and want to implement, “when

you do something on your own, you'll say, 'I'm going to continue doing this. . . .' Then you get involved in other things" (Mona, personal communication, October 26, 2015).

Lack of collaboration and the lack of follow-up creates the lack of implementation (Wepner et al., 2012; Willis, 2002 as cited in Wepner, 2014). In agreement with the importance of collaboration, Aspfors et al. (2015) also emphasized the importance of collaboration "to promote continuous learning, the creation of sustainable arenas for communication is crucial" (p. 412). "There's gotta be some kinda way to let professional development teams develop . . . without . . . interference." (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015). Overall, collaboration is viewed as an important component for all educators, yet challenges in generating effective collaboration are immense.

***Discussion on lack of follow-up.*** "There needs to be a follow-up" (Isaac, personal communication, October 9, 2015), "checking for understanding" (Charity, personal communication, June 12, 2015). "Maybe I'll do it again this year because you just need those refreshers . . . if you're not constantly doing it" (Docilla, personal communication, October 9, 2015). Participants recognized this 'review' on practice as often missing. Many researchers indicate the importance of sustained PD with follow-up (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; DiPaola & Hoy, 2014; Hattie, 2009; Long, 2012).

***Discussion on lack of habit.*** "I tend to forget" (Qiana, personal communication, November 5, 2015). Just" . . . remembering. If it's not built into your lesson plan already, then you kind of push it off to the side or you forget about it" (Charity, personal communication, June 12, 2015). Teachers have many obstacles to tackle all at once. "As a teacher, honestly I can say that I forget to do it, or I get tired . . ." (Docilla, personal communication, October 9, 2015). This

study is in agreement with Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001): teacher's instructional practices take time and are often difficult to change.

**Discussion on lack of teacher willingness.** “A lot of teachers are very comfortable in the way they teach, so therefore, they're not willing to extend too much” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015) “Let's say they've been doing the same thing for ten years and it's worked for them . . . they'd rather just stick to what they know” (Qiana, personal communication, November 5, 2015). Or, “they're just not comfortable teaching it . . . or, maybe . . . a bad experience” (Diane, personal communication, November 16, 2015). There are so many reasons, positive and negative, for a teacher lacking willingness to implement newly learned PD. Some teachers are “set in their ways. Some people are [just] Negative Nancys” (Annalina, personal communication, June 11, 2015). A lack of willingness to implement could also be the result of poor understanding of the concept or even a low teacher efficacy score.

Perhaps, it may not be what the teacher needs for students. “Sometimes you're just looking for that one little part . . . to adjust in your classroom” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015). In addition, “. . . it's easier to stick with what you know, rather than putting effort into trying something new. They can get on autopilot . . . and don't have the extra time to research. You know, it's time- [and] just the effort it would take” (Annalina, personal communication, June 11, 2015).

**Discussion on lack of understanding.** When “it's so complicated to do. . . I'm never doin' that one” (Jerica, personal communication, November 16, 2015) . . . When “I get too frustrated because I don't understand it . . . I don't incorporate it because by the time I get done with it, I'm so done that I don't care if I ever do that again” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015). In some cases there was confusion on how to implement. “You get a lot of

information” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015) without “guidelines for the timeline of how to do it” (Charity, personal communication, June 12, 2015). Similarly, “the first time I took it, it was overwhelming” (Naomi, personal communication, January 14, 2016). Expressed areas of confusion included: moving the environment through “The Tribes Trail” (Gibbs, 2006, p. 74) of inclusion, influence, and community as well as creating the tribe. “I don’t feel like I picked up enough of what I needed to do” (Charity, personal communication, June 12, 2015).

Some participants also expressed difficulty with reflective questioning techniques, not only with the increased time required, but also with utilizing the technique. However, deeper discussion with participants, made it apparent of a misunderstanding of the *terms*: content, collaborative, and personal reflection. In theory, the name of the reflective piece is taught and expanded upon; however in the practical sense, the name of the reflective piece is not the important factor. The importance is on utilizing reflective questioning itself, rather than getting caught up on the three types or *terms*: content, collaborative, and personal.

Marzano et al. (2012) focused on the use of reflective questioning being used as a method to increase retention of learning. In 1986 a foundational study by Yager and colleagues had profound results on long-term student learning with the use of a reflective process related to their own work and goal setting for improvement coupled with the use of CL strategies. Gibbs (2006) views reflective questioning as perhaps the most important component of Tribes for increased student learning. Although I recall this being discussed during the PD and also in reading the text, five participants did not implement reflective questioning techniques. This lack of implementing reflective questioning illustrates a lack of understanding reflective questioning as a critical component for learning and perhaps an overload of information during the PD. “You get



a lot of information in, and you're not gonna be able . . .[to] implement it all . . .at one time” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015).

And perhaps more latent in nature, there were unrealized misunderstandings associated with CL. Any new program can be difficult to implement (Short & Greer, 2002); however with more than 20 years of documented struggles, CL has shown to be excessively difficult for teachers to master (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Kagan, 1990; Sharan, 2010).

Historically, the strategy of CL has had challenges with implementation not being consistent (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Yet, although CL has been a struggle for educators for more than two decades, no participant expressed any struggle with it at all. Alexander and van Wyk (2014) noted survey results indicating that educators viewed their lack of understanding CL a challenge. Similarly, one participant commented on how often times “teachers give cooperative learning a bad rap by not implementing it properly” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015), using it more like group work.

Even when asked directly about CL, most participants had little to say about this strategy, yet every participant discussed setting the environment, implementing classroom agreements, and utilizing energizers in detail. These three components are considered the easiest to implement. Although not simple, but many participants viewed collaborative skills as critical life skills, therefore the participants tended to implement this component and discussed it as well.

This lack of complete understanding having a negative impact upon implementation of PD aligns with Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002). Spillane et al., indicated the complexity of any change imposed on schools may be impacted by:

- Teachers’ perceptions of a policy may not aligned with the intent of the policy;
- Teachers may lack the background, experience, or skills to implement a new policy;

- Teachers may not understand the value that a new policy will have on their classrooms (as cited in Hargreaves, 2014).

**Discussion on few PD opportunities.** Participants expressed having “. . .limited availability of classes,” (Hilary, personal communication, October 26, 2015) and having limited “exposure to professional development” (Fantina, personal communication, December 2, 2015). Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) acknowledged that quality educational professional development is rare and that few U.S. teachers have access to regular opportunities for intense learning.

**Discussion on lack of expert PD facilitator.** “They send people to do professional development, who are not good at it” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015; before required PD). “The people that were presenting were not enthusiastic. They weren’t friendly. They weren’t passionate about it” (Fantina, personal communication, December 2, 2015; in reference to required PD). The learning environment and teacher-learner relationships are connected, and both have an impact on learning outcomes (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Professional development, it has to be [provided by] somebody who knows that field. It can’t be just Suzie Q who’s read about it and then talking about it . . . and has no idea what it’s like in the classroom- ‘cause you can tell. . . . I like to see people who have actually used it . . . and show the failures, too, not just all glamour (Edda, personal communication, November 30, 2015; after required PD).

Overall, “it depends on the trainer . . . . If the trainer really knows what they’re doing, . . . then they’re gonna deliver a much more meaningful professional development than someone else who is . . . just going with the flow and checking that box” (Naomi, personal communication, January 14, 2016; after required PD). But “the ones that I gained the most from . . . were from teachers who were doing it already. . . . I wanna know . . . how this looks in a classroom” (Pete, personal

communication, October 31, 2015). Teachers want the truth, good and bad; they want the facts related to the PD in a practical sense.

Alake-Tuenter et al. (2013) found four characteristics of effective teaching. These characteristics included: (a) high level of subject matter knowledge, (b) high level of pedagogical knowledge, (c) positive attitude, and (d) competencies connected in complex ways.

Anyone providing educational PD should have an understanding of the characteristics of effective teaching and of Malcolm Knowles' adult learning theory.

I think this is true for most adult learners . . . we tend to gravitate towards things that are . . . considerate of our time. We tend to be more motivated, self-motivated. . . I just want a schedule. Give me my deadline. . . . What is the criteria . . . to fit my schedule. I need to know that what I'm learning is practical and has purpose. I'm not in that place of exploration anymore. . . . My time is filled. Everything I do has to have an end result – has to have a function, a purpose in what I'm doing. (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015)

Quality PD provided by expert facilitators are critical components for teacher PD. They should “help people get to where they need to get. . . . They lacked the skill to be able to do that” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015). PD facilitators need content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge regarding adult learners. These are imperative components for the successful teaching and later implementation of PD.

Quality teachers recognize from their own daily varied teaching practices that good teaching is not necessarily associated with one particular teaching approach; instead, teaching quality resides within the educator making prudent choices and adjusting strategies for different students, all for increased student learning (Creemers, Kyriakides, & Antoniou, 2013 as cited in

Kyriakides et al., 2013). In order to compensate for the differences in teacher ability, teacher motivation, and teacher self-regulation towards learning, there must be an expert PD facilitator capable of providing tailored feedback to the learners (van den Bergh et al., 2015).

***Discussion on lack of necessary materials.*** “The furniture makes it difficult” (Olga, personal communication, January 16, 2016). And truly, “classroom space . . . that has been an issue” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015). “Okay, now I really don’t want to invest that much because you’re not providing me with [materials] . . . If it’s going to be top-down, then good grapes, you need to have all the pieces there” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015) in reference to required PD). Likewise, DiPaola and Hoy (2014) recognized the importance of PD providing adequate resources in order for effective implementation to occur.

Lacking necessary curricular materials or having the wrong materials may create hardships within the classroom setting and negatively impact the teacher’s efficacy. “We just got SMART tables, and I’m still learning how to use it. . . . Because I don’t feel super comfortable with it, um, I know I’m not utilizing it to the best that I can. . . . Therefore, my kids are not getting the best benefit out of it. . . . I am kind of doing somewhat of an injustice . . . - by having a SMART table in my room and not really using it” (Gasha, personal communication, December 1, 2015). Poorly structured PD and lacking resources can decrease a teacher’s efficacy, resulting in damage to teacher motivation (Tschannen-Moran and McMaster, 2009 as cited in Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014).

***Discussion on maximized student needs and poor behaviors.*** “The students being a challenge – behavioral, which makes it difficult to teach. . . . It’s very frustrating” (Gasha, personal communication, December 1, 2015). Teachers want to help all students, but at times

there are problems which need additional support. “I really do have some nice kids – individually . . . but together, so many of them feed off of each other. . . .I’m trying. . . . He kind of dominates what happens” (Olga, personal communication, January 16, 2016). Overall, individual “student needs . . . impact . . . our classroom environment” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015). One student with high needs can completely alter the classroom environment. In some situations, “you won’t get any support from the parents” (Olga, personal communication, January 16, 2016), causing more stress.

**Discussion on theme seven: The timing of PD matters.** Teachers felt as though the timing of the PD had an impact upon implementation. “The end of the year is a difficult time to implement a new plan” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015). Both PDs on Tribes were offered over midway through the school year. “I tried to implement some of the things there, but it was the end of the year and it was a little tricky to kind of get it going” (Docilla, personal communication, October 9, 2015). “If I started from the beginning – like the first day, . . . but since I had a routine going . . . it was kind of hard. It kinda died out” (Edda, personal communication, November 30, 2015). Overall, “I wish I had learned this over the summer; ya know, before I had started my routines” (Gasha, personal communication, December 1, 2015).

In the beginning I was . . . “more willing because it was fresh in my mind, and it was right after the training . . .so I remembered most of it. . . . As time has gone on, I have forgotten a lot of it, not because I don’t like it, but because there are so many other things. I feel like I don’t have enough time to go back and read through the book to see what I should do for this or what I forgot . . . I was more willing to do it right after the training. It’s kind of teetered off since then (Charity, personal communication, June 12, 2015).

Overall, the timing is important. One assumption aligned with the adult learning theory states that adults learn for a current situation (Chan, 2010). This would also match the idea of the learner being more willing to implement at the beginning.

**Discussion on theme eight: Teachers lack time.** The most intensely perceived factor negatively impacting implementation of PD was the element of time, or more precisely the lack of time. “I just don’t have the time” (Docilla, personal communication, October 9, 2015). Throughout this research, both in written and oral form, educators expressed that, “time is always an issue” (Isaac, personal communication, October 9, 2015).

Inevitably, I will get an email or a group of emails from parents or from different directions from admin, parents, colleagues. And then something else will land in my plate. And ya know, my prep time is gone. And I end up staying, ya know – I don’t think that I ever leave in the time that my duty day is over. So I’m usually at school at least two hours. I mean, if I’m at school two hours after my duty day, that’s a good day. And I’ve had to stay . . . -till 9:30 (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

“I, too, need to find a healthy balance. With moving into the new school later than expected, it’s been so rushed” (Naomi, personal communication, January 14, 2016). The daily feeling “. . . in everything else we have to do, I just don’t have time for that. So, I’m kind of using what I already knew from before and trying to tweak it” (Linna, personal communication, November 30, 2015). Even when the implementation is pre-planned and prepared for, often times it still does not occur.

. . . right now when we’re starting a new math, all of our time is sucked into that math. You can’t think of anything else. That’s it. You’re just consumed by the things that you have to do. Trying to do different things or even exploring more things with Tribes . . . I

have some things that I wanted . . . and I actually had them in my lesson plans . . . . It was like, ‘Okay, this isn’t going to happen.’ It sounds really great on paper when you really want to try some of the ideas . . . , but the reality is when you get the kids in here and you’re working . . . You know, then those things that you really want to try – get pushed off to the side (Mona, personal communication, October 26, 2015).

Educators have many aspects to consider for the best use of time: student needs, student ability, classroom diversity, standards, curriculum, materials, local elements, and the list could seemingly go on and on.

“We don’t have control over time. Nor do we have control over how much time it takes a child to process and retain information. . . .We’re doing our formative assessments. We’re slowing down. We’re re-teaching. And we’re pulling students back” (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Time is both valuable and irreplaceable; so choices for managing that time are critical for student learning. “Trying to schedule it during the day, just so that there would be some kind of consistency . . .that’s pretty much the –the challenge. . . . The schedule was so tight . . . . We just had to – to teach all the subjects” (Qiana, personal communication, November 5, 2015). Teachers feel great pressure due from the lack of time, with the abundant curricular demands and individual student needs. “We don’t have time for a lot of different training to match up with how quickly technology changes, so . . . our attitude and . . . our adaptability as teachers” (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015) may make the difference in the quality of teacher we become.

The limited amount of time . . . to take classes, . . . with students, . . . limited amount of time that we have to plan. Ya know, unfortunately, we spend hours upon hours of our own time. And that makes it hard to implement something that you’re really excited

about because you're already spending so much time doing what's just necessary. And then on top of that, to want to do above and beyond, you just don't have the time.

It becomes exhausting and less exciting (Hilary, personal communication, October 26, 2015).

The bottom line is that there are "only so many hours in a day" (Gasha, personal communication, December 1, 2015). "I don't know how to get more out of the day" (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Even when teachers were initially excited about implementing something new, other demands created a lack of time. This lack of time became a colossal negative factor upon implementing newly learned strategies from the PD. These findings are in unison with Desimone's (2011) findings of time being the most difficult constraint to overcome.

**Discussion on theme nine: Teachers feel overloaded and do not feel valued.** Theme eight (i.e., lack of time) seeps, no bleeds, directly into this theme of teachers feeling overloaded and not valued. In reading the educator's experiences related to the lack of time, there is a deep underlain message, a latent message in which no one directly said, but the implications are very much there: educators are tasked out!

Every day I am inundated with papers and information from all directions:

administration, colleagues, students, or parents. Even when I have an organization system in place, I am quickly overrun with more work as I take on more responsibilities, or have responsibilities thrust upon me (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

The sum of teachers' experiences are based, in part, upon high expectations, an ever growing curriculum, a high work load, varied student needs, and a lack of quality professional development opportunities. In a similar way, Knight (2009) recognized teachers' daily routines



on-the-job as complex (as cited in Martin et. al, 2014). Overall, teachers often feel pulled in many directions.

We “used to have a tremendous professional development program and we don’t have one now, at all, I believe. . . . The teachers felt valued because they had that opportunity for professional development” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015). “There used to be a whole lot more. And then, they . . . cut down a lot. . . . I don’t think that we get asked what we . . . want” (Olga, personal communication, January 16, 2016) anymore.

“It’s important that the district . . . provides a lot of opportunity for professional development and a variety because . . . everyone’s at a different place in their career” (Linna, personal communication, November 30, 2015). The district “should put more effort into professional development” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015). At my last school, “the district would actually provide us substitutes for that” (Docilla, personal communication, October 9, 2015). “We had a very supportive principal . . . He would give us time to explore and give us time during the duty day to do that “ (Mona, personal communication, October 26, 2015).

When I was in [my last district], I had really awesome professional development opportunities. I think it is definitely necessary, and I think it is useful and beneficial. But I also think that it has to be good professional development . . . See, my whole gripe with the professional development that we have here is that it’s not professional development. I don’t feel that a teacher . . . telling me what they’re doing in their classroom . . . is professional development. For me, professional development should offer some sort of advancement and growth in my profession – not only in what I can apply in my classroom, but also toward being able to renew my certification. Other than that, I don’t think it’s professional development. I don’t think it’s fair to call it professional

development if it's not something that we as teachers can get some kind of credit for and if it's not done by a certified professional (Docilla, personal communication, October 9, 2015).

And sometimes, "types of professional developments we have, that are only geared toward [classroom] teachers, only geared to a certain grade. So other people are sitting there.. It's almost like a waste of our time" (Annalina, personal communication, June 11, 2015). If the PD is not relevant to the educator's needs, is it development? "I understand the importance of having everybody come to work . . . [but sometimes] 'I will just call in that day,' because I [feel] as though I could be doing other things" (Annalina, personal communication, June 11, 2015) more beneficial.

We don't have as many opportunities to observe other classes. . . . We're stuck in our rooms. . . . We just need to freshen our skills. We need to get new ideas. And ya know, I'm always open to anything that is going to be collaborative, something that is positive and benefits the students. I'm gonna be in that class with those children all day. . . . I want it to be positive for everybody. I don't wanna have to struggle. I want to enjoy going to work. I don't want them to feel, like, coming to school's a drag. .. Ya know how much – [what] percent of our life - we are in that classroom? . . . There's no reason we should have to suffer through that (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

"These children are supposed to come in with these standards mastered. But the truth of it is they all won't" (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Classroom teachers must take the students from wherever they are academically. "We, the teachers, have to fill in the blanks. So I think the reality versus the . . . theoretical sometimes stands in the way. . . . Teachers have to make a lot of decisions" (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

They implemented a new math curriculum . . . It was only our third year of using it, and now we're on a totally new math. You're just getting to where you felt comfortable using that, and then, 'Okay, that's out. Now we're doing this.' . . . it really leaves you the feeling like, 'Okay, just do the best you can. You're teaching the kids.' I've even gone back in doing some of the old curriculum, just because it's there. It's good. I have the book. I know the structure. I know the routines. I know what we're supposed to be doing. . . . It's kind of like our writing goal. We were kind of . . . pushed into our rubrics. . . . Even with that, we were pushed into a math goal a couple of years ago. We had to do a math goal, and then they changed it, and then they changed it again. It was not us. We had what we wanted on math, and then they changed it again (Mona, personal communication, October 26, 2015).

"The greatest problem faced by school districts and schools is not resistance to innovation, but the fragmentation overload, and incoherence resulting from the uncritical acceptance of too many different innovations" (Fullan, 1991, p. 197 as cited in Tallerico, 2014). On the other hand, empowering teachers through the development of continual educational collaboration, rather than constantly changing learning towards various trends, could promote effective teaching (McGhee & Lew, 2007 cited in Baker, 2014).

Changes in the curriculum, changes in grade level, changes in room placement, changes in school goals, as well as changes to a new school are all time consuming. "I know that they have to make changes . . ., but it's just been so poorly done. . . . When people above you have things . . . poorly planned . . ., you are the one . . . left to struggle in the classroom" (Mona, personal communication, October 26, 2015).

When there are frequent changes, it can be overwhelming and frustrating at the same time. Perhaps all of the administration, school and district level, should spend time back in a classroom. “It’d do them well to teach for a month, . . . [to] know what teachers are going through” (Pete, personal communication, October 31, 2015). Change breeds chaos, and “when the instructional module is created by somebody who . . . didn’t have experience with elementary education and doesn’t know how that looks in the real world” (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015) that can create some difficulties for the classroom teacher.

We never got a solid goal . . . of what we wanted because “above us” kept changing. . . . It seems like it’s the system. You just get started doing something, and when [you] like it, “We’re changing. Stop midstream; turn you right around!” It doesn’t give you a chance to feel comfortable with what you’re doing (Mona, personal communication, October 26, 2015).

Educators must prioritize; “I just wanna go in my room and teach my kids. Leave me alone. I don’t wanna do all this other stuff” (Linna, personal communication, November 30, 2015).

Overall, teachers feel overloaded and do not feel valued.

**Discussion on theme 10: Effective teaching practices are often not provided for teachers’ learning.** “Recent education reforms have urged teachers to foster collaboration, debate and reflection among students, in order to develop cognitive processes like those called for in the new standards. Ironically, districts rarely apply these same learning techniques to developing teachers” (Gulamhussein, 2013). Teachers are expected to use effective teaching practices within the classroom for student learning, yet those same practices, researched for increased learning, are often not provided for teachers’ learning. Brozo (2014) acknowledges :

Teachers need time to work with professional developers in workshops and in the classroom setting to plan, conduct, analyze, and refine new literacy instructional practices. This is a critical aspect of reform work because it must be recognized that teachers need scaffolding for change just as much as their students do (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006).

An effective learning environment includes well structured lessons with challenging goals, adequate pacing, and insightfulness on problems related to content and understanding. In the process of teaching, the effective teacher also has strong classroom management skills with an emphasis to express care and empathy for the students (Hattie, 2009). Overall, effective teaching includes a wide repertoire of strategies, styles, and techniques for presenting instructional content, with a focus on the best strategies for that particular educational setting (Darling-Hammond, 2006) in order to optimize learning outcomes (Ding & Sherman, 2006; Marzano et al., 2012).

Collaboration, even informal collaborations, after PD helps to bring that learning into the classroom (Jones & Dexter, 2014). Follow-up and collaboration are two critical components of professional development, yet these critical factors are not consistently embedded within the PD (Wepner et al., 2012 as cited in Wepner, 2014). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) noted that effective PD should be embedded in the current curriculum; yet, one-size-fits-all PDs continue to be the usual form of PD in the U.S. (Wei et al., 2010).

Moreover, PD for teachers is often incomplete regarding effective teaching practices. For example the Training Model is often used in PD; the PD facilitator often utilizes direct instruction or expert lecturing with a large group. However, the Training Model has four critical steps for increased learning transfer. These steps include:

- the theory or rationale that defines the importance,
- demonstration or modeling by the expert,
- opportunities for learner practice (i.e., supervised, over time, and in a natural setting), and
- follow-up or continued coaching on a long-term basis.

Often a step or structure from this effective Training Model may be eliminated. When these structures are decreased or eliminated, it often has a negative impact upon implementation (Tallerico, 2014).

As not a new concept, actually quite rudimentary as also instruction for writing and presentation in basic speech or presentations, the presenter (i.e., PD facilitator) must start with the audience in mind. If the correct audience is not targeted upon, the entire message is likely to be mislaid. All teachers and also PD facilitator should base the learning or training upon the student (i.e., the audience receiving the content). In this research, the participants shared a desire to learn together (i.e., social learning). “That was the greatest day. That was so awesome when we got to learn from each other” (Annalina, personal communication, June 11, 2015). “We came together and talked . . . We learned from each other about our own practice” (Brigette, personal communication, June 12, 2015). “I took it . . . mostly because it was a face-to-face type of course . . . it’s easier for me to learn that way” (Charity, personal communication, June 12, 2015).

Related to presenting information with the correct audience in mind, the PD facilitator should have an understanding of adult learners as well as a repertory of learning theories. Since educational PD is grounded with adult learning in mind, thoroughly understanding and utilizing the six assumptions of adult learners is critical. Adult learners are:

- self-directed, autonomous, and independent learners;
- have rich resources for learning by connecting new learning to vast experiences;

- ready to learn what they believe they need to know;
- learning for immediate applications rather than for future uses;
- more internally motivated than externally; and
- need to know the value and purpose of learning (Chan, 2010).

“I wanna know what I’m going to learn” (Jerica, personal communication, November 16, 2015).

The expert PD facilitator should understand and know how to adjust for the adult learner.

Concisely reiterated:

We tend to gravitate towards things that are . . . considerate of our time. We tend to be . . . self-motivated. . . I just want a schedule. Give me my deadline. . . What is the criteria . . . to fit my schedule. I need to know that what I’m learning is practical and has purpose. I’m not in that place of exploration anymore. . . My time is filled. Everything I do has to have an end result – has to have a function, a purpose in what I’m doing (Kalyn, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

In a meta-analysis of 167 studies, Kyriakides et al. (2013) found a dynamic model of eight teaching factors to have a moderate association with achievement. These include:

- orientation (i.e., providing opportunities to engage in activities),
- structuring (i.e., summarizing, gradually increasing difficulty level, and connections),
- questioning (i.e., process or reflective questioning with feedback),
- teaching modeling (i.e., showing, giving strategies),
- application (i.e., opportunities to practice, apply, and transfer knowledge),
- classroom as a learning environment (i.e., opportunities to interact in diverse ways and the relationships within the classroom),
- management of time (i.e., minimizing transition time and maximizing time on task), and

- assessment (i.e., frequency of testing, formative use of testing, and reporting data).

In this meta-analysis, an integrated approach of effective teaching is empirically supported. As well, the findings suggest the use for all learners, to include adult learners and in PD.

In a similar way, Lutrick and Szabo (2012) indicated emerging themes for professional development needing to be data-driven, interest-driven (i.e., self-selected), interactive, on-going, and collaborative (cited in Quatroche et al., 2014). Overall,

Teachers learn by doing, reading, and reflecting (just as students do); by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see. This kind of learning enables teachers to make the leap from theory to accomplished practice (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011, p. 83).

**Discussion~ Compilation of the themes towards: How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development?**

Elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected PD in a positive manner, in that it holds value (i.e., part of theme one) and is a necessary component for educators continuing to become better at the art of teaching. Although teachers want to implement newly learned strategies (i.e., theme two), the realities within the classroom cause the teacher to focus on parts of the newly learned material that seem practical and also possible for implementation (i.e., theme three). Teachers recognize a sundry of factors leading to an enhanced learning environment (i.e., theme five) for increased implementation. In this enhanced learning environment, social learning is desired. Face-to-face PD (i.e., part of theme one) and day-to-day learning with colleagues is believed to be essential; yet, the amount of collaboration is limited (i.e., theme four). Teacher collaboration is seemingly circumscribed by the immense demands upon the educator (i.e., part of theme eight and nine).



These daily, reoccurring, demands create a magnitude of factors negatively impacting implementation of newly learned strategies (i.e., part of theme six, eight, nine, and 10). The negative factors ultimately spawn an inadequate learning environment (i.e., theme six), to include the often absence of effective teaching practices for teacher learning (i.e., theme 10). As adult learners, educators want to immediately implement new material; therefore, the timing of the PD matters (i.e., theme seven) and should be aligned with the school calendar as well as aligned to the needs within the classroom. Overall, the pervasive lack of time was profound (i.e., theme eight). This lack of time seeped into other areas, producing an environment where teachers do not feel valued, but instead feel overloaded (i.e., theme nine).

Although the themes seem extensive, if themes eight, nine, and 10 were adequately addressed, all other themes with a negative impact would also be addressed. These three themes are also typically directly related; the increase in one will likely increase the others. The primary themes to address include:

- theme eight – teachers lack time;
- theme nine – teachers feel overloaded and do not feel valued; and
- theme ten – effective teaching practices are often not provided for teachers' learning.

**Discussion: Cycle of lack of time, overload, lack of time, lack of effective teaching practices for teacher learning, lack of time, lack of feeling valued . . .**”The quest for greater teacher quality is universal . . .” (Rasmussen & Holm, 2012, p. 68). Yet teacher learning environments are not so universal. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) acknowledged that quality educational professional development is uncommon for U.S. teachers. “Rarely has the federal government sponsored professional development sessions conceptualized as something ongoing . . .” (Long, 2014, p. 26) even though PD research indicates the importance of ongoing and

continuous professional learning (Desimone et al., 2002; DiPaola & Hoy, 2014; Hattie, 2009). Systemic changes are needed in the U.S. education system. “Sustained change in teachers’ learning opportunities and practices will require sustained investment in the infrastructure of reform” (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011, p. 83).

Darling-Hammond and Rothman (2011) provided three recommendations for professional learning: 1) cutting the amount of time teachers spend instructing, especially during the first few years of teaching; 2) implementing systematic approaches to ongoing professional learning; and 3) continuing to train teachers to create their own evidence of success through lesson study and action research methods. Together these three recommendations for systematic reform move teachers from teaching in isolation to teacher collaboration. In a similar way, other leading educational countries vest in the quality of lessons by providing time to the educators.

For example in Finland, teachers spend only 60% of the time teaching that U.S. teachers do. In Singapore, teachers are guaranteed up to 20 hours a week in ongoing professional development (Darling-Hammond & Rothman). Scheduling time, as part of the teacher’s daily work requirements, for these collaborative measures are common practice in Japan, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). U.S. educators are typically provided less time for PD and have fewer PD opportunities than their international counterparts (Darling-Hammond et al.; Johnson, 2014).

### **Discussion: Key Research Findings to Consider for Practical Implications**

Even with a desire to change educational practices, it takes continued efforts and time to deeply develop the resources for permanent change in teaching practices (Schoenfeld, 2011). Similarly, Desimone’s (2011) findings of ‘time’ being the most difficult constraint to overcome aligns with the findings of this research. Overall, changing a school’s learning environment and

instructional routines is multi-faceted, difficult, and time consuming, usually taking many years for new teaching strategies to become permanent practices of the teachers' routines (Guskey, 2003; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Rose, 2010). In a similar fashion, Brown and McCracken (2009) found 'time' to be a key component in formal learning (as cited in Kyndt & Baert, 2013).

Educational PD is related to daily learning that is intense, ongoing, and connected to practice. Furthermore, it focuses on teaching and learning of specific academic content connected to school initiatives, and it builds strong work relationships among teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). The building of relationships becomes critical for a school's effectiveness. When teachers feel comfortable with other teachers, a collaborative atmosphere is more likely to exist (Landsman et al., 2008). An effective work environment must have teachers who set high expectations, teach with a shared sense of purpose, and believe in their common ability to make a difference in the students' lives (Schleicher, 2011).

When the learning environment is safe, supportive, and threat-free, a learning environment is promoted by supporting memory function, emotional stability, resiliency, and self-efficacy. Just as the classroom climate and teacher-student relationships are connected and impact learning (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009), the relationships amongst teachers matters for a collaborative environment to exist (Landsman et al., 2008). In addition, a teacher's trust, collaboration, and collective responsibility (i.e., social capital) shared within a community are important factors for student learning. "While it is always important to attract and retain strong individual human capital, it is improvement in social capital among existing teachers as professional communities that will yield the greatest and most immediate returns" (Hargreaves, 2014, p. xv).

## **Implications**

This section provides the implications or inferred positions for key stakeholders, based upon the sum of research. Theoretical situations are guided by theories but may be hypothetical or speculative in nature; whereas, empirical situations are guided by or derived from experience or observation (i.e., the participants' voices for this research). And similarly, practical situations involve actions within ordinary activities or those naturally occurring within our daily lives. In total, the theoretical, empirical, and practical situations previously discussed in this research become the connecting component for the implications for key stakeholders.

Ample PD research indicates that PD is not consistently being implemented into the learning environment (Antoniou & Kyriakides, 2013; Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gravani, 2007; Guskey, 2002; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; Webster-Wright, 2009). However in a practical sense, PD is only truly “development” if it has a positive impact on teaching practices and, more importantly, positive impacts on student learning (DiPaola & Hoy, 2014). Therefore for this research, practical implications must focus upon improving the quality of educational PD for the overall benefit of student learning.

The overarching implication is that changes in PD and time usage for U.S. educators are needed. In order for changes to occur all stake holders (i.e., policy makers, district leaders and administrators, expert PD facilitator, curriculum publishing companies, and teachers) must make improvements; these changes will require collaborative efforts for success.

It is the hope of researchers that the compilation of data yields findings and implications for others to learn from. “A sage person once noted that, though it is useful to learn from one’s own mistakes and experiences, it is even wiser to learn from those of others” (Darling-Hammond, 2014, p. 9).

## **Implications for Policymakers**

Decades of legislation, intended for increased student achievement through professional development for teachers, has not yielded impressive results. Perhaps this is due to the PD not being aligned to best practices and updated research on how teachers learn and increase professional skills (Kragler et al., 2014). Policymakers must encourage better practices for teacher learning. Overall, U.S. teachers are not provided with adequate time for learning or time to collaborate with other educators (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Johnson, 2014). Yet, educators pave the way for our future, the future of our country. For the government to truly support the concept of expert teachers, it comes down to financial incentives. Everyone wants expert teachers with daily dynamic lessons, but there is a price tag attached. In order for the educational system to truly change, teachers must be given consistent time to collaborate with other educators and consistent time to prepare for these dynamic lessons.

“Sustained change in teachers’ learning opportunities and practices will require sustained investment in the infrastructure of reform” (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011, p. 83). Policymakers must attend to the issue of our educational system not providing U.S. educators with time and real opportunities for growth, as is provided to our international counterparts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Johnson, 2014). Policymakers have opportunities to support our future’s investment by offering financial incentives for those districts who make a drastic change in providing consistent and on-going time for teachers’ learning and teacher collaboration.

So eloquently written, Reutzel and Clark (2014) offer insight, “if our students are to become globally competitive . . . , then their teachers will require world-class support in learning and applying evidence-based practices and developing team-based problem-solving skills . . . . We simply must invest in professional learning for our nation’s teachers . . .” (p. 78).

## **Implications for Educational Leaders and Administrators**

Leaders, outside of the classroom, initially hold the biggest responsibility in working towards this potential change. Yet, it is actually a dynamic change in teacher practices, the improvement of the daily classroom presentation, indirectly being sought. Jaquith et al. (2010) acknowledged teachers as the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement. Therefore, how teachers are prepared and supported throughout their careers are vital to on-going student success. One's perception of being in a safe environment creates that required foundation for learning (Maslow, 1943; Maslow, n.d.). In supporting teachers, educational leaders must focus on building positive relationships (i.e., improving the perception of value), in part by protecting teacher time and providing opportunities for professional growth.

**Build positive relationships.** “Effective executives know that they have to start with what a man can do rather than with what a job requires” (Drucker, 2006, p. 83). In a similar context, Jaquith (2014) discussed support on the tenet that policies do not create change, people do. Therefore people must be the focus of any change. People listen to trusted colleagues and accept their influence (Kouzes & Posner, 2007); so these positive relationships are an important factor behind any change.

A nurturing school environment can become the catalyst for collaboration and improved teacher motivation or willingness. Educational leaders must view themselves as a relationship builder. Positive relationships are more than a peaceful environment, for they are the perpetual energy driving collaboration.

We know that people don't stay in one job forever, nor should they. . . . No matter. The point is that fostering collaboration is so crucial to the success of teams, companies, and communities today that every significant relationship should be treated as if it'll last a

lifetime – as if it will be important to all parties’ mutual success in the future (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 242).

This view of longevity, rather than viewing people as temporary, is critical, especially for a fluid system or one having continual change in personnel. People want to belong. Even if an individual is expected to work only one year, treat the individual with mutual respect, with importance, with longevity and belonging.

Kouzes and Posner (2007) characterized years of research on leadership as recognizing that leadership is a relationship, and the quality of that relationship determines the outcomes. “A leader-constituent relationship that’s characterized by fear and distrust will never, ever produce anything of lasting value. A relationship characterized by mutual respect and confidence will overcome the greatest adversities and leave a legacy of significance” (p. 24).

**Provide opportunities for quality PD.** When teachers are provided with quality professional development by an expert facilitator following best practices for teacher learning, they are vested in. The teachers will feel vested in as well. This personal investment encourages positive relationships and breeds a positive environment.

However, traditional approaches to PD may be fragmented, lack productivity, be inefficient, and lack follow-up (Lucilio, 2009 as cited in Baker, 2014). Poorly structured PD can decrease a teacher’s efficacy, resulting in damage to teacher motivation (Tschannen-Moran and McMaster, 2009 as cited in Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014) and damage to relationships within the educational setting. Therefore it is imperative for the educational leaders to ensure quality PD is available to educators, each and every time. Decades of research indicates that it requires 20-25 practice times or more over eight to 10 weeks to transfer new teaching skills appropriately and consistently until becoming habitual use (Joyce & Showers, 1995, 2002 as cited in Tallericco,

2014). This indicates that PD cannot be large amounts of information, rather it should be methodical - slow, progressive, purposefully thought-out, and practiced.

Although PD research often varies on the details related to effective PD, there are features considered essential for implementation of PD strategies. DiPaola and Hoy (2014) identified essential features of PD as:

- improving teacher content knowledge and increasing pedagogical skills,
- providing adequate time and resources,
- being on-going and continuous,
- being collaborative with school-based goals,
- providing supervision and evaluating for effectiveness,
- using a variety of formats, accommodating for diversity, and promoting equality,
- clarifying understanding of meaning and relationships between concepts, and
- using student data to drive PD.

In addition, teachers' motivation (Slavit & Roth-McDuffie, 2013), positive buy-in (Desimone, 2002), teacher collaboration (Bean & Swan Dagen, 2012), embedded follow-up (Wepner et al., 2012 as cited in Wepner, 2014), active teacher involvement (Jaquith et al., 2010), and support by administrators who provide relevant expertise (Hattie, 2009) are other critical features associated with effective PD.

Collaboration will only transpire in a positive environment anchored with positive relationships, for “at the heart of collaboration is trust” (Kouzes & Postner, 2007, p. 224). Empowering teachers through the development of on-going educational collaboration, rather than constantly changing learning towards various trends, could promote effective teaching



(McGhee & Lew, 2007 cited in Baker, 2014) and have positive effects on relationship building within the school environment.

**Protect teacher time.** “Time is the scarcest resource, and unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed” (Druker, 2006, p. 51). Another way to build positive relationships relates to time. Educational leaders, at all levels, must protect teacher time by providing adequate and complete materials, limiting change, limiting distractions, and effectively using time. Time in small increments is ineffective; “large chunks of time” (p. 49) are needed for productivity. Killion (2013) noted a weekly block of three to four hours should be dedicated to collaboration and coaching amongst educators.

Overall, effective schools have effective leaders that are able to manage time and recognizes it as being a valuable resource (Drucker, 2006). Without the valuable resource of time, change is unlikely to happen. Yet, truly more time cannot be created; time can only be managed through workload and the use of other resources.

The supply of time is totally inelastic. No matter how high the demand, the supply will not go up. . . . Moreover, time is totally perishable and cannot be stored. Yesterday’s time is gone forever and will never come back. Time is, therefore, always in exceedingly short supply. Time is totally irreplaceable . . .there is no substitute for time (Druker, 2006, p. 26).

***Protecting teacher time through quality and complete curricular materials.*** Teachers often spend a lot of time assembling a variety of curriculums in order to meet student and standard expectations. In addition, time is wasted for teachers as they hunt for the necessary materials and also copy items for guided practice which could easily be provided to the teacher.

Overall, educational leaders can manifest value for the teachers' time by providing quality and complete learning materials for student learning.

***Protecting teacher time by limiting change.*** “The greatest problem faced by school districts and schools is not resistance to innovation, but the fragmentation overload, and incoherence resulting from the uncritical acceptance of too many different innovations” (Fullan, 1991, p. 197 as cited in Tallerico, 2014). Change- in new learning, new curriculum, a different classroom, a different grade level, or a different school – all create negative implications upon time. Even if the teacher wants the change, it still requires extra time during the initial adjustment period.

Overall, change is time consuming. Continual change may leave educators feeling helpless, without value and overloaded. However, empowering teachers through the development of continual educational collaboration, rather than constantly changing learning towards various trends, could promote effective teaching (McGhee & Lew, 2007 cited in Baker, 2014).

***Protecting teacher time by limiting distractions.*** Drucker (2006) identified some time-wasters as ineffective large-sized meetings, the overuse of meetings, and information shared with the wrong staff members (e.g., emails going to the entire staff instead of only going to those directly related). He also emphasized the importance, yet time-consuming, efforts necessary to build personal relationships; “there is little doubt that the more people have to work together, the more time will be spent on ‘interacting’ rather than on work and accomplishment” (p. 31). With this in mind, although collaboration is critical for teacher development, leaders should encourage and utilize small groups for collaboration, as larger groups are typically less efficient.

Tallerico (2014) identified effective administrators responsibility to take stock of updated professional development for teachers, to streamline fewer professional development priorities, and to focus professional development on deepening teachers' pedagogical content knowledge in selected curricular areas. In decreasing the PD priorities, providing focus, and eliminating unnecessary content, distractions are decreased; that is, time is not consumed by the unnecessary components, providing a smaller chunk of information and a clearer path to utilize the concept.

### **Implications for PD Facilitator**

Kyriakides et al. (2013) noted that without effective instruction, learning would not occur. Professional development activities must therefore build on teachers' own knowledge and beliefs, perceived problems, and classroom practices (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Overall, learning must start with the needs, abilities, and beliefs of the learner.

As PD can increase teacher efficacy (Bruce et al., 2010), poorly structured PD, lacking resources and lacking follow-up coaching can decrease a teacher's efficacy, resulting in damage to teacher motivation (Tschannen-Moran and McMaster, 2009 as cited in Tschannen-Moran & Chen, 2014). The expert PD facilitator holds the responsibility to follow effective teaching practices, to know the needs of the learners, to use updated research findings regarding PD, and to utilize the assumptions within the adult learning theory. Overall, PD facilitators are tasked to make the PD useful for teachers' learning by ensuring the use of effective teaching practices and updated research regarding PD.

### **Implications for Curriculum Creators and Publishing Companies**

Publishing companies can alleviate some of the stresses within the classroom environment by providing quality, standards-based, and inclusive curriculum for elementary

grade levels. Teachers are busy and often forget strategies, so including reminders, etc. for the educator would be helpful. Key items to include in this inclusive curriculum are:

- Integrating literature based subject areas  
(i.e., reading, writing, spelling, grammar, penmanship, health, science, and social studies),
- providing varied effective teaching options (i.e., energizers, choices for reflection, collaborative learning structures with all materials for the structure to be utilized, etc.),
- providing for differentiation,
- providing appropriate rubrics and options for assessments,
- aligning topics with the typical school-year calendar and holidays, and
- including an appropriate amount of learning for one academic year.

All of these pieces must be pulled together and structured for the entire year; currently, the teacher must spend time doing this, insuring all standards are met, in all subject areas, for all students with varying abilities, needs, and learning styles- with an assortment of materials rather than a centralized curriculum. A large part of this year plan involves the skill of making it all fit within one school year.

The materials should also be organized well with an appropriate font for easy use and management, perhaps organized in units, and should be *all inclusive* so that the educator does not need to hunt for the right materials in order to conduct the lessons. An all inclusive curriculum would also reduce the amount of time the teacher currently uses transitioning between various student books and teacher manuals.

A large time consumer for elementary teachers is often related with needing to compile a variety of curriculums, aligning concepts with holidays or special occasions, and then locating the necessary materials in order to accomplish the lessons. Teachers will always need to make

decisions for individual learners; however, if the curriculum was all inclusive with a variety of learner and teacher options, the foundation for learning becomes more substantial and less of a burden upon the classroom teacher.

### **Implications for Educators**

Teachers are so busy that little thought typically goes into extensive PD. Yet, teachers want and understand the need for continued learning. Teachers must help put into place best learning practices for themselves as well. For instance, when learning is too broad or too intense for students, the teacher alters the plan so that understanding can be developed. Teachers know best teaching practices, such as adequate pacing, relating new learning with prior knowledge, chunking of information, checking for understanding, guided practice, review of concepts, collaborative learning, cooperative learning strategies, reflective questioning practices, and so forth. Teachers need to reflect upon personal learning and implement what they know to be best for true learning. In fact, if teachers do not focus on best teaching practices for their own learning, it is unlikely for new strategies to be utilized, especially with an overload of information provided at once.

In addition, teachers should vigilantly devote time reading updated research and literature. Although teachers, as noted in this research, prefer to learn in social settings, there is an abundance of information online. In order to include the social learning component, a small group of teachers could come together on a regular basis and share updated research. Searching for educational research does have the potential to be yet another time-consumer – ‘wandering around to find information;’ however, find a few sites of useful, updated research and continue to use those specific sites on a regular basis. This will build consistency, creating a habit, and will decrease the time spent ‘wandering’ around on-line.

In a similar way, Guskey & Yoon (2009) encourage educators to use What Works Clearinghouse, sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and federally funded, for empirically valid findings on educational research. As that is one option, there are many quality options available.

- Education Commission of the States (ECS) provides an updated website as a comprehensive knowledge resource for various educational topics and legislation, to include topics related to teacher professional development, with data organized by topic or state (2015).
- Institute of Education Sciences National Center for Education Statistics informs the public regarding the academic achievement of U.S. students with over 40 years of data (NCES, 2013, 2015).
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provides a forum for different governments to work together, share experiences, and solve problems to common issues. International data is collected and analyzed to predict future trends.
- Center for Public Education (CPE) in an initiative of the National School Boards Association and provides a forum for teachers to access current educational topics.
- Learning Forward is a professional learning association for educators devoted to high-quality professional learning.
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) provides resources for effective education and professional development for its members.
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is another source funding research regarding educational and other areas.

Mansour, Heba, Alshamrani, and Aldahmash (2014) emphasized the significance of teachers' reflecting upon their own professional learning and needs (as cited in van den Bergh et al., 2015). Teachers should surround themselves with positive relationships and colleagues who share a passion for students, a desire for continued excellence, and a fire for learning. In this type of environment, teachers, as well as students, have the greatest benefits.

### **Implications for All**

“In the end, it must be the administrators, curriculum specialists, reading coaches, and classroom teachers who are the instigators and supporters of their own professional development (Sturtevant et al., 2006)” (Brozo, 2014).

### **Limitations**

Creswell (2007) indicated the critical instrument used in qualitative research is the “human instrument” (p. 38). Yet, “because the researcher is the instrument of qualitative inquiry, the quality of the result depends heavily on the qualities of that human being” (Patton, 2002, p. 513). The amount of time- dedicated to reviewing, rereading, re-digesting the exact words of each participant, and then creating a poetic rendition to represent each participant's voice- was enormous. As the researcher, I deeply wanted to represent the participants' collective voices and therefore adequate time was devoted. “But exploring possibilities can also become an excuse for not finishing. There comes a time for bringing closure to analysis and getting on with other things. Taking too much time to contemplate creative possibilities may involve certain risks . . .” (Patton, 2002, p. 515). I took risks, devoted extra time, and contemplated over many reflections throughout conducting this research. I believe my work, this study, is a solid piece of qualitative research and is correct, in that it represents the voices of the participants who have experienced educational PD. Yet, I am human; that fact alone, provides space for limitations.

It is possible that a participant elevated the self-efficacy score. I am a colleague and have varying degrees of a personal relationship with each participant. Therefore, I can imagine a participant wanting to have a good score on the teacher self-efficacy rating. However, the teacher self-efficacy score was only utilized as another descriptive measure of each participant. I did analyze each score in relationship to implementation, as to view the related content of teacher self-efficacy through the lens of social cognitive theory. Yet none of the themes, findings, or implications were based upon the teacher's self-efficacy score.

The criteria for participants included completion of self-selected PD (i.e., voluntary PD, researched-based PD, on-site, and PD had a university credit option) with elementary teaching experiences (i.e., provided classroom instruction) after the PD. In order to narrow the focus of post-PD on-the-job experiences, this investigation was bound to the self-selected PD to PD provided at Salter's Elementary School during 2013, 2014, or 2015. Since on-site, self-selected PD at Salter's Elementary School was limited during this time period, this investigation was further bound to Tribes PD.

These bounded areas, parameters, or delimitations were set in order to narrow the scope of the study. During the research these delimitation became a limitation due to participant's strong emotions towards the current required math PD. In phenomenology research, it is critical to listen to the participant's voice. Therefore although open-ended questions were directed towards the Tribes PD, it was obvious at times that the participant was discussing the required math PD. The implementation of this required math PD was unknown when this research was planned. Once I heard of this upcoming implementation, I hoped to complete all interviews before this required PD began. However in waiting for IRB authorization and full district approval for conducting research, this prevented the interviews from taking place during the



summer before the required math PD began. Nevertheless, these PD experiences provided beneficial participant experiences towards answering the research questions.

Similar demographics and teacher attributes could be a limitation of this research as well. In reading the participant descriptions, it becomes evident of the participants having similar attributes. This was not planned, but since Tribes focuses on building rapport and relationships, it is understandable that the kind of person who enjoys helping others would be the ‘common’ participant for Tribes PD. However, even with this increased alignment with teacher personality and PD content, there was not an increased amount of sustained PD training transfer.

Another limitation connects to teachers’ lack of time, especially at the beginning of the school year. I had to be very patient and wait for the participants to provide the written responses. The written responses were expected to take up to one hour for each participant; yet, the beginning of any school year, is not the best time to expect educators to “donate” time, not for interviews and especially not for written responses, produced on each participant’s own time without any collaborative measure.

It was a concern that participants who were relocating may present a problem for the research. Again, before the interviews could be completed, 10 of the 17 participants relocated. Most were countries away and some even continents away. Although experiences would have been different if the participant had remained at the research site, these relocations within this school district are common and these experiences related to PD were still consequentially the participant’s experiences. Contacting the participant through electronic means (i.e., through Google Hangouts, Face Time, or Skype) required preplanning but was not a great challenge.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe elementary educators' on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected PD. My focus was to first gather the views of educator's post-PD experiences, overlap similar experiences, and then encapsulate the collective voices in answering the research questions. These voices were captured through written and verbal expressions.

However, it may be more beneficial to give other options (i.e., a second interview or observation). This also provides differentiation for teacher learning. A participant who loves to write and finds emphasizing her voice in written expression, still could. However, if a participant would prefer to have a second interview or observation in emphasizing her voice through verbal expression, she could do that as well. Ideally, if the data collection best matches the participant's learning needs, the data would seemingly be of utmost quality. It would still be important to have triangulation, so at least three different data sources are important for each participant.

It is possible for the researcher to offer various options for obtaining this data. For most teachers it was not as difficult to speak with individually, if I came to the participant's classroom. However the written responses found to be painful with collection being from only 15 of the 17 participants, after waiting for nearly six months. It seems teachers would rather meet and discuss verbally, and even more so, teachers are very busy (i.e., lack time).

"Eeeekkkk!!!!!!! I keep forgetting to send you the information . . . UGH. I am so sorry. My brain is not working lately with so much inside!! I need a secretary for my brain" (Naomi, personal communication, January 14, 2016). This idea of participant choices for data collection aligns with four themes in this research as well: teachers lack time; teachers believe collaboration is important; teachers enjoy learning with each other, face-to-face; and best practices for learning

are often not provided to teachers. Differentiation offers a best teaching practice. This collaborative, face-to-face, discussion also aligns with social cognitive theory as participants learn from each other.

Another recommendation for future research is to repeat this study in 10 years. It would be even more fascinating to use the same participants in order to compare growth and compare changes in the attributes of educators, in a longitudinal type of study.

A third recommendation for future research is to gather more data points with the teacher self-efficacy rating before PD, throughout the PD class, and throughout the implementation process. Although the research questions would be quite different from this research, it would allow for a deeper comparison of the teacher self-efficacy ratings in relationship to success or failure of implementation throughout the PD.

And a fourth recommendation for future research, utilizing the findings in this research more completely, is to enact the implications in which the researcher can control and utilize the themes and implications, accordingly. “Timing matters” is one of the themes of this research, and even in this research ‘timing mattered.’ In that, the worst time to expect data collection from teachers is at the beginning of the school year. For this, the time for data collection could be altered. This could have the potential to increase descriptions regarding the PD experiences. Features that were not included in this research relating to an enhanced learning environment (e.g., Tribes PD extended over an entire year or two) and with effective teaching practices (i.e., those not already utilized in this Tribes PD) of chunking or learning of small amounts of material at one time, guided practice, continual checking for understanding, providing a timeline for clear implementation, follow-up, and collaboration with a peer or small group could be added to the

research requirements. With these requirements along with teacher buy-in, I would expect the consistency and quality of implementation to be much improved.

A fifth recommendation for future research would include embedding the researcher into the day-to-day experiences of teachers in Finland, Singapore, or another national leading educational system. In gaining true insight on the complete educational system from student behaviors, teacher expectations, parent perspectives, teacher perspectives, political influence, standards, pacing, strategies utilized, materials used, daily schedules, time allocations, and so forth, a complete picture could emerge and perhaps be utilized to improve the U.S. educational system. I wonder, what are we, as a nation, truly missing? Is it possible to fix our broken system through a thorough case study focused upon what is believed to be a leading educational system?

### **Summary of Research**

The purpose of this hermeneutical phenomenological study was to describe elementary educators' on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected PD, specifically, Tribes PD. Three sub-questions were constructed in order to provide direction in answering the board overall question: How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected PD?

This study “encourages a certain attentive awareness to the details and seemingly trivial dimensions of our everyday educational lives” (van Manen, 1990, p. 8) for educators. I started this study with a deep desire to describe and bring true meaning to the phenomenon, to provide others with the opportunity to experience it, as the educator. I focused upon how elementary educators experience self-selected PD and “–how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others” (Patton, 2002, p. 104).

For this study, the educator's experiences were gathered through written expression (i.e., essay responses, experience writings, and artifact collections) and oral expression (i.e., through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews). The interviews were transcribed, member checked for accuracy of meaning, pre-coded, and then taken through varied stages of coding for meaning, or the essence of the phenomenon (i.e., educators' experiences after PD), to evolve. These verbatim transcriptions were weaved into a poetic rendition in order to share each participant's individual voice. Participant data was also collected from a focus group and follow-up sessions.

Each experience layers deeper understanding, making the mass experience more clear. As the hermeneutical researcher, I allowed my own experiences related to the phenomenon to be viewed in a reflective manner in order to make an unbiased interpretations. This interpretation materialized through each participant's perspective, then through the collection of participants' shared experiences, along with my own reflective experiences (van Manen, 1990, 2003). I recognized my experiences and interactions with others, yet each unique perspective was valued and first analyzed for its own merit or specific importance towards the phenomenon (Lodico et al., 2010) before analysis of commonalities in theme development towards answering the research questions. In viewing the totality of these experiences, 10 themes emerged under the three sub-questions, in order to answer the primary research question: how do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected PD?

Overall, elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected PD in a positive manner, in that it holds value and is a necessary component in educators continuing to become better at the art of teaching. Although teachers want to implement newly learned strategies, the realities within the classroom cause the teacher to focus on parts of the newly learned material that seem practical and also possible for implementation.

Teachers recognize a sundry of factors leading to an enhanced learning environment for increased implementation. In this enhanced learning environment, social learning is desired. Face-to-face PD and day-to-day learning with colleagues is believed to be essential; yet, the amount of collaboration is limited. Teacher collaboration is seemingly circumscribed by the immense demands upon the educator.

These daily, reoccurring, demands create a magnitude of factors negatively impacting implementation of newly learned strategies. The negative factors ultimately spawn an inadequate learning environment, to include the often absence of effective teaching practices for teacher learning. As adult learners, educators want to immediately implement new material; therefore, the timing of the PD matters and should be aligned with the school calendar as well as aligned to the needs within the classroom. Overall, the pervasive lack of time was profound and gushed into other areas, drowning the professional educators and producing an environment where teachers do not feel valued, but instead feel overloaded.

Policymakers are charged with the task of investing in professional learning for our nation's teachers. For this investment to be fully embraced, open dialogue and encouragement for better practices for teacher learning, nor policies will be enough. A sustained change in teachers' learning opportunities and specifically a change in how teachers utilize time will require an on-going financial investment.

The most profound implications are directed towards educational leadership. For changes to immediately take hold, leaders – at all levels- outside the classroom must first and foremost have a vision to build positive relationships. These positive work-place relationships can transcend negative restraints, creating a true collaborative, professional learning environment. In building positive work-place relationships, educational leaders should ensure opportunities for

quality professional development and relentlessly protect teacher time, while using financial resources to further support this vision. Hargreaves (2014) acknowledged that teachers' professional development is being noticed once again, but cautions that PD being deployed cheaply would cause the focus to disappear without real change.

Educators, PD facilitators, and all educational leadership are tasked to demand quality PD for teacher learning. Even with decades of research on effective components for teaching and learning as well as data on critical elements for successful educational PD, these findings are commonly not utilized for teachers' learning. Whether it due to financial restraints, time restraints, or more realistically- due to both, the educational community must realize that more is not necessarily better. The educational community must use knowledge of effective teaching and learning, updated professional development research, and knowledge of adult learning to guide collaborative and on-going learning for educators. "In the end, it must be the administrators, curriculum specialists, reading coaches, and classroom teachers who are the instigators and supporters of their own professional development" (Sturtevant et al., 2006 as cited in Brozo, 2014). Educational professionals should open their doors, take steps towards collaboration, and must personally take ownership for professional learning.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

## LIBERTY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 19, 2015

Cindy L. Manzanares

IRB Approval 2064.051915: A Phenomenological Investigation of Elementary Educators' On-The-Job Experiences after Self-Selected Professional Development

Dear Cindy,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

**Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.**

*Professor, IRB Chair*

**Counseling**

**(434) 592-4054**

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**Appendix B: Research Site Approval Letter**Cindy Manzanares  
[REDACTED]

August 26, 2015

Dear Cindy Manzanares,

The research committee has completed their review of your revised proposal “A *Phenomenological Investigation of Elementary Educators’ on-the-job Experiences after Self-selected Professional Development*” and we are happy to issue support for your research in [REDACTED]. Specifically, you have permission to recruit approximately 24 staff members who participated in the Tribes PD at [REDACTED] in 2013, 2014, or 2015.

Please be aware that activities related to your research must occur outside the normal duty day, to include solicitation of participants, distribution or completion of surveys, or interviews. Any additional information you request from schools or individuals or any deviations from your original proposal should be cleared through [REDACTED] HQ and your university IRB. Permission from [REDACTED] HQ does not compel any individual(s) to participate in the research; participation by individuals, including school principals and students, is strictly voluntary.

As specified in the research agreement, you may not refer to the specific school, district, or school system [REDACTED] in any way in any written reports generated from this research, including your dissertation, and that you should contact the [REDACTED] Office of General Counsel before presenting or publishing your findings. A final electronic copy of your research report is to be submitted to the [REDACTED] Research and Evaluation Branch via email or regular mail. Best of luck with your research, if you have any further questions please feel free to contact me via email or phone at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

[REDACTED] PhD  
Chief, Research and Evaluation



### Appendix C: Recruitment Letter and Email

Dear Tribes Colleague,

I am conducting research related to on-the-job experiences of elementary educators after professional development (PD), specifically the optional Tribes Training provided at our school, during the years of 2013, 2014, and 2015. Since you completed this self-selected professional development on Tribes and have had elementary teaching experiences after the PD, I am requesting your participation in this research. Overall, I am interested in your on-the-job experiences, *your story*, after professional development.

The overall purpose of this study is to describe the elementary educators' on-the-job experiences after completing a self-selected PD. To narrow the focus, this research will utilize the Tribes PD experiences.

Each participant will answer a short 10 question teacher-efficacy scale, will answer 3 writing prompts, will write at least three experience writings regarding your experiences related to PD, will be individually interviewed and audio recorded, will view the interview transcription for accuracy, and will participate in a small group meeting towards the end of the research, after all interviews are complete, or will participate in a follow-up conversation with the researcher. The time requirement for completion of these items is anticipated to be three to five hours, over the course of the research. A journal to document your *Tribal Journey*, posters, and other materials related to TLC will be available for each participant; however, after the completion of the 3 writing prompts and the 3 experience writings regarding your PD, use of these items is completely voluntary and not required for participation in this research. The experience writings can be from any time after your Tribes PD (i.e., 2013-2015). Both, the essay prompts and experience writings may be handwritten or typed.

Each participant's identity and related data will be kept confidential. This research has been approved by Liberty University's Institutional Review Board and follows [REDACTED] requirements. You have no obligation to participate and may also withdraw at any time without consequences. Although there is no financial benefit to you, you will be contributing to educational research and sharing your experiences related to PD.

This letter will also be mailed to you electronically via your school email. That email will have an electronic vote/response button attached. Please indicate your willingness to participate in this research via that vote button or speak with me. Should you have any questions, I will be available to discuss this with you. All questions should be answered before signing the required consent form.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cindy Manzanares, Doctoral Candidate  
Liberty University, School of Education

## Appendix D: Informed Consent

The Liberty University Institutional  
Review Board has approved  
this document for use from  
May 19, 2015 to May 18, 2016  
Protocol #2064.05

### Informed Consent (page 1 of 4)

#### Title of Study

A Phenomenological Investigation of Elementary Educators' On-The-Job Experiences  
After Self-Selected Professional Development

Principal Investigator's Name: Cindy L. Manzanares, Doctoral Candidate

Liberty University, School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study related to professional development (PD). This is a qualitative research study of teacher perceptions regarding on-the-job experiences following PD on Tribes Learning Communities. You were selected as a possible participant because you completed the Tribes PD training offered at the research site sometime during 2013-2015. I ask that you read this 4 page form of consent and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

#### Background Information

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to describe the elementary educators' on-the-job experiences after completing a self-selected PD on Tribes in order to better understand the phenomenon of teachers' post-PD experiences.

#### Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you agree to: (a) complete a teacher self-efficacy scale by rating 10 statements on a one to four scale (estimated time of 5-10 minutes), (b) provide a written response to 3 prompts (estimated time of 40-60 minutes) (c) write at least three experience/narrative responses regarding your experiences (estimated time of 40-60 minutes), (d) complete an audio recorded interview conducted by the researcher regarding work and/or personal factors experienced after the self-selected professional development on Tribes (estimated time of 40-60 minutes), (e) review the interview transcripts for your intended message and for accuracy (estimated time of 10-20 minutes), and (f) attend one group discussion meeting or follow-up conversation regarding PD (estimated time of 30-60 minutes). The interview protocol and semi-structured guide will be provided to you at least three days before the scheduled interview. The amount of time required to complete these items is *anticipated* to be between three to five hours, throughout this research, in which data collection is expected to conclude by the end of 2015.

The three written responses to the provided prompts and three narrative experience writings regarding your personal experiences may be handwritten or typed. A journal will be provided for this data as well as an electronic version. Examples will be provided; however, the length, and specific details are open for your judgment.

The provided prompt responses will be collected towards the beginning of the data collection period. Further writings or documentation, collaboration, learning teams, lesson plans, or

## Informed Consent (Page 2 of 4)

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implementation of TLC may be helpful but is not required in order to take part in the study. If further journaling or any other documentation is available, the researcher will ask to copy these items for further data analysis. Any artifacts collected will be confidential, analyzed using qualitative methods, and the originals returned to you within three days. The experience writings and any other artifacts will be collected at least one day before the interview; however, I will later ask all participants, via email, who may have additional artifacts, to let me know by sending a reply. I will then collect those additional artifacts, copy for analytical research use, and return all your original documents within three days.

### **Risks and Benefits of Taking Part in this Study**

This study has minimal risks which should not exceed any more than you would encounter in everyday life. Participants are not expected to receive a direct benefit, but the benefits to participation in this study may include further discussion on Tribes TLC, the opportunity to share your experiences related to professional development, the possibility of better understanding professional development, and the opportunity to contribute to educational research.

### **Compensation**

Participation in this study is purely voluntary. No monetary or physical compensations will be paid for participation.

*Although there is no financial benefit to you, you will be contributing to educational research.*

### **Confidentiality**

The records of this study will be kept confidential. Participant's privacy and complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed during the group meeting, during any open forum sessions, or during open conversations. It is possible for other participants in the study to indirectly identify you. Participants may choose to refrain from discussion in order to protect confidentiality during these times. A pseudonym will be assigned to each participant and the school site. Participant-pseudonym identification will be secured in a separate locked file from the data itself. Your identity, the identity of the school, and all participants will be kept private. Therefore, if the results of this study are published or presented publically, no information will be included that would make it possible for the general public to identify you as a participant.

Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to these records. Transcribed interviews and all research data will be kept in a locked location when not

## Informed Consent (Page 3 of 4)

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being analyzed by the researcher. All data will be shredded or electronically erased three years after the completion of this study.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University, your school site, or colleagues. If you decide to participate, you are free to pass/skip any question or to withdraw from the research at any time without affecting those relationships and without having any personal repercussions.

### **How to Withdraw from the Study**

You have the full right to withdraw from this study. If at any time you decide to withdraw from this research, you may contact the researcher with this information via email, phone, or in person. The data collected up to that point will remain confidential and securely stored; however, the data will not be included in the analysis and findings of this research.

### **Contacts and Questions**

The researcher conducting this study is Cindy L. Manzanares.

You may ask any questions you have now or feel free to contact the researcher as needed.

If future questions arise, you are encouraged to contact her by phone at 010-6286-8058, by email at cindymanzanares@aol.com or at the school email address, on Skype (cindymanzanares7), on Hangouts (Cindy Manzanares), on Face Book (Cindy L. Gaines Manzanares), or in person.

The advisor for this study is Dr. Leonard Parker; he may be reached at [lwpark@liberty.edu](mailto:lwpark@liberty.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

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Signature of Researcher

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Date

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## Informed Consent: Statement of Consent (Page 4 of 4)

I have read the prior three pages regarding my rights related to this research on professional development. This consent form, to include four pages, was provided for my own records. Any questions regarding this study have been answered by the researcher. I understand that if I become uncomfortable with the research, I am free to withdraw further participation. I also understand that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure. However, the researcher has taken reasonable steps to minimize- known risks and other potential, yet unknown, risks.

***Please initial in each box acknowledging the research requirements of you as a participant.***

- ☐ I agree to rate 10 statements on a one to four scale (5-10 minutes).
- ☐ I agree to complete three written response prompts (40-60 minutes).
- ☐ I agree to complete a pre-interview checklist (10-20 minutes).
- ☐ I agree to write at least three experience writings regarding PD (40-60 min).
- ☐ I agree to be ***audio recorded*** and interviewed by the researcher (40-60 min.).
- ☐ I agree to review the interview transcription for accuracy (10-20 minutes).
- ☐ I agree to attend one group meeting or follow-up conversation (30-60 min.).
- ☐ I agree and give consent to participate (5-10 minutes) in this study  
(with a total *estimated time* investment of three to five hours).

Check your ***preferred method*** of contact by the researcher, to you, for purposes of this research:

- ☐ Email at \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ In Person at \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Call at \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Skype \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Hangouts \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

### Appendix E: Teacher Self-Efficacy

Based on your feelings as a teacher, mark one category for each of the ten statements.	Not at all True 1	Barely True 2	Moderately True 3	Exactly True 4
1. I am convinced that I am able to successfully teach all relevant subject content to even the most difficult students.				
2. I know that I can maintain a positive relationship with parents even when tensions arise.				
3. When I try really hard, I am able to reach even the most difficult students.				
4. I am convinced that, as time goes by, I will continue to become more and more capable of helping to address my students' needs.				
5. Even if I get disrupted while teaching, I am confident that I can maintain my composure and continue to teach well.				
6. I am confident in my ability to be responsive to my students' needs even if I am having a bad day.				
7. If I try hard enough, I know that I can exert a positive influence on both the personal and academic development of my students.				
8. I am convinced that I can develop creative ways to cope with system constraints (such as budget cuts and other administrative problems) and continue to teach well.				
9. I know that I can motivate my students to participate in innovative projects.				
10. I know that I can carry out innovative projects even when I am opposed by skeptical colleagues.				

**Name of Participant:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Adapted from "General Self-Efficacy Scale" by Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995). In J. Weinman, S. Wright, & M. Johnston, *Measures in health psychology: A user's portfolio. Causal and control beliefs* (pp. 35-37). Windsor, UK: NFER-NELSON.

*Permission granted to use the General Self-Efficacy Scale for non-commercial research and development purposes. The scale may be shortened and/or modified to meet the particular requirements of the research context.*

Professor Dr. Ralf Schwarzer [www.ralfschwarzer.de](http://www.ralfschwarzer.de) <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/selfscal.htm>

## Appendix F: Essay Prompts

Directions: Answer each bold-faced prompt as completely as possible with a *descriptive approach (details, details, details), based on your experiences*. Be sure to use *your words, your voice*, in your descriptive response. The sub-questions are there to help guide a response, but are not provided as a strict requirement; *answer the bold prompts as freely as you like in order to capture your story, your experiences*.

You may write your responses in the journal or you may type them on this page.

### 1) Describe yourself.

- What are your character traits, strengths, and weakness, both personally and professionally?
- How have you evolved as a teacher?
- What are your goals and plans for the future?

### 2) Describe your feelings regarding professional development.

- Use situations from your experiences to support your answer. (Explain from your experiences.)
- What has been useful to you?
- What has not been helpful?
- What should or should not happen for teacher professional development?
- In your view, what needs to change in professional development? Why? How?

### 3) What have been your on-the-job experiences after completing the professional development on Tribes?

- To what extent, if at all, have you implemented the professional development or any of the Tribes components:
  - setting the environment,
  - implementing classroom agreements,
  - utilizing energizers,
  - practicing reflective questioning techniques,
  - maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups,
  - teaching collaborative skills,
  - implementing cooperative learning strategies? Explain.
- Explain any positive or negative changes you have noticed after taking this PD.
  - In you (due to this PD)?
  - In other teachers (due to this PD)?
  - In students (due to this PD)?

## Appendix G: Lived-Experience Descriptive Writing

### **Protocol:**

Each participant will be provided with this protocol, including an example, both in hardcopy and electronic version. However, the specific content, length, and style are completely open to interpretation by each participant. It is the goal for these lived-experience descriptive writings to provide *a means for the participant to share his/her story and individual voice related to post professional development experiences*, specifically those experiences after completing the self-selected Tribes professional development offered at the research site in 2013, 2014, or 2015.

These descriptive experience writings will be based on experiences after this professional development, possibly before the start of this research collection time frame or during this research. The researcher will attempt to collect the participant's descriptive experience writings and any other possible artifacts (not required) the day before the one-on-one scheduled interview. However, if the participant needs more time, the time frame may be extended for up to two weeks after the interview.

Each participant will write three experiences post Tribes PD. The participant may handwrite or type the descriptive accounts. Experience writing is in narrative form focused on the experience. For this research, the central phenomenon relates to teachers' post-PD experiences ~any time after the participant's Tribes PD.

Max van Manen (1990) provided some suggestions for producing a lived-experience description:

- 1. Describe the experience as you lived it ~ using descriptive details and your voice.**  
**Avoid explanations, generalizations, interpretations, and reflections.**
- 2. Describe the experience from close to far, including your feelings, mood, and overall emotions from your story.**
- 3. Focus on something specific.**
- 4. Try to focus on a vivid example from your experiences as if you are experiencing it for the first time.**
- 5. Try to include a description from your senses related to your experiences.**
- 6. Avoid adding unrelated details that do not give a clear experience.**



*Example:*

*I'm frustrated with myself. I spend the time to copy materials, to prepare, but then I don't follow through with my plans. I have so much to do, and I want all of my students to be involved in the energizers; yet, my classroom is like the forever opening sub-way doors during peak times. I have all of my students during the half hour before lunch (every day) and from 1:00-1:30 (3 days per week). Neither, of these times, is great for energizers. Maybe I should just focus on the correct time ~ not when all students are there, but the correct time as in when the energizer is needed. That should happen, but I still want to include all of my students, especially for community building.*

*I wish I had that close colleague to learn and "do" with. I want to be more creative, more dynamic with my teaching; but wanting to be creative and dynamic has not yet made me that way. I am frustrated and overall disappointed with my growth. I know I can do better; I just feel as though there are too many requirements ~ too many students, too many levels, too much curriculum ~ and not enough time for planning, for completing, and for enjoying. I am not giving up though; I can be and will be more creative and dynamic in my practice, one step at a time.*

**Lived-Experience Descriptive Writing:** Please write a direct on-the-job account of a personal experience as you lived through it ~ related to Tribes professional development.

Avoid explanations, generalizations, interpretations, and reflections ~ instead write a detailed and specific description of your lived experience ~ using your story and your individual voice.

Please provide three separate experience writings.

You may hand write these in journal form or type in this document.

**Experience #1**

**Experience #2**

**Experience #3**

## Appendix H: Pre-Interview Checklist

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** A Phenomenological Investigation of Elementary Educators' On-the-Job Experiences after Self-Selected Professional Development

**Purpose:** Areas perceived as having a positive or negative impact on PD implementation may be identified from responses provided on this pre-interview checklist. However, the primary purpose of this checklist is to facilitate the participant in recalling details related to all seven areas of the TLC components and to facilitate the researcher in asking precise open-ended questions during the interview. The open-ended questions are designed to gather more descriptive data in preparation for telling the participant's story of on-the-job experiences after self-selected professional development.

**Protocol:** The researcher will ask the participant the following checklist items, before starting the audio portion of the interview. This is provided to help guide the detailed, descriptive portion of the interview.

### Possible Environmental Influences

1. Do you have *access to materials needed* for implementation of each TLC component?

- |   |                           |                          |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • setting the environment                           | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing classroom agreements                 | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • utilizing energizers                              | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • practicing reflective questioning techniques      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • teaching collaborative skills                     | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing cooperative learning strategies      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

Access to materials

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Notable Impact
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------

2. Do you have *enough classroom space* to implement each TLC component?

- |   |                           |                          |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • setting the environment                           | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing classroom agreements                 | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • utilizing energizers                              | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • practicing reflective questioning techniques      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • teaching collaborative skills                     | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing cooperative learning strategies      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

Classroom space

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Notable Impact
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------

3. Does your *classroom furniture* promote the use of each TLC component?

- setting the environment ☐ Yes ☐ No
- implementing classroom agreements ☐ Yes ☐ No
- utilizing energizers ☐ Yes ☐ No
- practicing reflective questioning techniques ☐ Yes ☐ No
- maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups ☐ Yes ☐ No
- teaching collaborative skills ☐ Yes ☐ No
- implementing cooperative learning strategies ☐ Yes ☐ No

Classroom Furniture

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Notable Impact
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------

4. Do you have enough *flexibility with your teaching schedule* to promote implementation of each TLC component?

- setting the environment ☐ Yes ☐ No
- implementing classroom agreements ☐ Yes ☐ No
- utilizing energizers ☐ Yes ☐ No
- practicing reflective questioning techniques ☐ Yes ☐ No
- maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups ☐ Yes ☐ No
- teaching collaborative skills ☐ Yes ☐ No
- implementing cooperative learning strategies ☐ Yes ☐ No

Flexibility with teaching schedule

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Notable Impact
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------

5. Do you have *enough planning time* to implement each TLC component?

- setting the environment ☐ Yes ☐ No
- implementing classroom agreements ☐ Yes ☐ No
- utilizing energizers ☐ Yes ☐ No
- practicing reflective questioning techniques ☐ Yes ☐ No
- maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups ☐ Yes ☐ No
- teaching collaborative skills ☐ Yes ☐ No
- implementing cooperative learning strategies ☐ Yes ☐ No

Enough planning time

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Notable Impact
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6. Did you participate or plan with other teachers on Tribes? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Does the school climate support Tribes implementation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

### Possible Personal Factors

8. Have you *implemented* each TLC component?

- |   |                           |                          |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • setting the environment                           | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing classroom agreements                 | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • utilizing energizers                              | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • practicing reflective questioning techniques      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • teaching collaborative skills                     | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing cooperative learning strategies      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Notable Impact
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------

9. Do you feel prepared to teach each Tribes component *in your class*?

- |   |                           |                          |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • setting the environment                           | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing classroom agreements                 | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • utilizing energizers                              | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • practicing reflective questioning techniques      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • teaching collaborative skills                     | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing cooperative learning strategies      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Notable Impact
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------

10. Would you be comfortable teaching and sharing your knowledge of TLC components *to colleagues*?

- |   |                           |                          |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • setting the environment                           | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing classroom agreements                 | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • utilizing energizers                              | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • practicing reflective questioning techniques      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • teaching collaborative skills                     | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing cooperative learning strategies      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Notable Impact
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------

11. Do you think each TLC component is beneficial to students and important for *student learning*?

- |   |                           |                          |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • setting the environment                           | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing classroom agreements                 | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • utilizing energizers                              | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • practicing reflective questioning techniques      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • teaching collaborative skills                     | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing cooperative learning strategies      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Notable Impact
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------

12. Have TLC components had an impact on *your teaching strategies*?

- |   |                           |                          |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • setting the environment                           | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing classroom agreements                 | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • utilizing energizers                              | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • practicing reflective questioning techniques      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • teaching collaborative skills                     | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing cooperative learning strategies      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Notable Impact
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------

13. Do you think these components have had an impact on *student learning in your classroom*?

- |   |                           |                          |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • setting the environment                           | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing classroom agreements                 | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • utilizing energizers                              | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • practicing reflective questioning techniques      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • teaching collaborative skills                     | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing cooperative learning strategies      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Notable Impact
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------

14. Was your *initial judgment* of each TLC component positive (viewed as important for student learning)?

- |   |                           |                          |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • setting the environment                           | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing classroom agreements                 | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • utilizing energizers                              | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • practicing reflective questioning techniques      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • teaching collaborative skills                     | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing cooperative learning strategies      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Notable Impact
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------

15. Is your *current judgment* of each TLC component positive (viewed as important for student learning)?

- |   |                           |                          |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| • setting the environment                           | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing classroom agreements                 | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • utilizing energizers                              | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • practicing reflective questioning techniques      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • teaching collaborative skills                     | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| • implementing cooperative learning strategies      | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Notable Impact
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------

## **Appendix I: Definitions and Key Points**

Available for Participant Review During Interview and Focus Group

### **Research Title**

A Phenomenological Investigation of Elementary Educators' On-the-Job Experiences after Self-Selected Professional Development

### **Research Questions**

This phenomenological investigation is guided by one overall question with three sub-questions.

### **How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development?**

1. To what extent, if at all, has this professional development been implemented?
2. What factors are perceived as positively impacting implementation of the PD?
3. What factors are perceived as negatively impacting implementation of the PD?

### **Seven Components of Tribes**

1. setting the environment
2. implementing classroom agreements
3. utilizing energizers
4. practicing reflective questioning techniques
5. maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups
6. teaching collaborative skills
7. implementing cooperative learning strategies

### **For purposes of this research, use the following definitions:**

**Tribes** – Also referred to as TLC. Tribes Learning Communities was developed by Jeanne Gibbs. More than a program, Tribes is a process enacted within a learning environment. Tribes incorporates several best educational practices and has the following seven key components (Gibbs, 2006).

**1. Setting the Environment** – Tribes uses three stages of group development; this community focus is created through: inclusion, influence, and further community building (Gibbs, 2006). There are many components in building this safe environment for learning, mostly related to establishing a positive learning environment yet usually not related to any particular standard or academic focus, but it also includes the physical arrangement of the desk (Gibbs, 2006). Therefore, for this research, setting the environment will include the focus on building classroom relationships as well as the physical arrangement of the learning environment.

**2. Implementing Classroom Agreements** – Tribes presents four basic norms, or agreements, and the option for a fifth, site specific norm, to be established within the classroom/school setting. These agreements are much like the “rules,” yet stated in a positive manner. The agreements are: showing mutual respect, showing appreciations/no put downs, practicing attentive listening, having the right to participate/pass, and giving personal best/being a quality producer. Although implementing these

agreements can also be included as setting the environment (as described above), for this research, implementing classroom agreements will be independently classified.

**3. Utilizing Energizers** – Energizers provide a quick physical activity for the purpose of adding energy back into the learning environment. Energizers can also refocus concentration, to regain the connection between students, and increase enjoyment for learning (Gibbs, 2006).

**4. Practicing Reflective Questioning Techniques** – Reflective questioning to enforce the learning process is a common best practice in educational settings (Marzano et al., 2012). TLC focuses on three levels of reflective questioning: content, social, and personal. Content is directly related to the lesson. Social, or collaborative, reflective questioning relates to the group dynamics and interactions within the group. Personal types of reflective questioning relates back to the individual learner's experience. The teacher can pose reflective questions as a quiet time to think, a group share opportunity, a class share opportunity, or a writing time.

**5. Maintaining Long-term Cooperative Learning Groups** – These groups of three to six students are teacher assigned groups for times of learning and working together. This group is referred to as a tribe. The tribe is consistent in order to develop social skills within each tribe.

**6. Teaching Collaborative Skills** – Collaborative skills focus on success of the group by “. . . working together with others from diverse backgrounds, solving problems, assessing for improvement, and celebrating their achievements” (Gibbs, 2006, p. 90). These social skills can be purposefully guided through instruction.

**7. Implementing Cooperative Learning Strategies** – Cooperative learning is an instructional strategy, with many techniques yet all require student centered learning and interaction. Small groups of students work together to accomplish academically motivated goals. The teacher structures the lessons and provides direct guidance for student interactive learning.

**Self-Efficacy** – Efficacy is one's belief in his/her ability to be successful, to make a difference, and to keep going even when something becomes hard. Efficacy levels are different from topic to topic and can be influenced to change.

**Environmental Influences May Include But Are Not Limited to:**

- materials available
- classroom space
- classroom furniture or organization
- student needs
- schedule flexibility
- time allocations / instructional time / planning time
- PD class / PD experience
- school climate
- collaboration / PLT

**Personal Factors May Include But Are Not Limited to:**



- teacher experience
- teacher efficacy
- teaching-style
- educational philosophy
- general personality
- perceived difficulty level in implementing
- intention for taking the PD
- planning time available
- willingness to implement
- collaboration / PLT
- initial judgment of TLC components or strategies
- strategies for learning

## **Appendix J: Interview Protocol**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this interview is to gather elementary educators' perceptions related to on-the-job experiences after self-selected professional development. Phenomenology will provide a means for the educators to share details, providing a glimpse- of their lived experiences related to this PD. Through educators' on-the-job experiences after PD, teachers may provide insights on what PD components were implemented, if any, and factors perceived to help and factors perceived to hinder implementation of PD.

Individually, educators' perceptions post-PD on-the-job experiences related to various components (i.e., setting the environment, implementing classroom agreements, utilizing energizers, practicing reflective questioning techniques, maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups of three to six students, teaching collaborative skills, and implementing cooperative learning strategies) of Tribes may provide insights on educational professional development.

### **Ethical Considerations**

1. Participation is voluntary.
2. As aligned with the Tribes agreements, participants may elect to pass or skip a question.
3. The fact of digital audio-recording taking place will be emphasized to the participants as well as the fact of each participant being anonymous.
4. Participants will receive a copy of the transcribed interview to check for accuracy in transcription and meaning. Any participant requested changes of transcriptions provided within a week from participant receipt will be permanently modified for analysis purposes.

### **Greeting and “Show Appreciation”**

The interview protocol will be reviewed before starting the formal interview. The researcher will follow the TLC's way by showing appreciation throughout the interview.

### **Format**

1. The semi-structured interview guide will be provided to the participant at least three days prior to the interview.
2. The semi-structured interview guide will enforce consistency in exploring all related topics, yet it will allow flexibility for participants to describe experiences.
3. The interview guide with standardized topic focus (e.g., bold print on Appendix K) will require some key topics to be asked to all participants.

4. The pre-interview checklist will give basic information to the researcher and may aid the participant in recalling specifics related to each of the seven components of Tribes; however it is primarily intended to guide for more specific interview questions for that participant.
5. Interview questions or responses requested start off broad in nature in order to procure the participant's full story or perspective. Then questions may become more focused or specific based upon the participant's responses.
6. During the interview, participants will have TLC definitions and key research points (see Appendix I) as well as the semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix K) available for review. This will facilitate focus towards the research questions, the use of the same definitions for the seven TLC components, as well as, increase the likelihood that all seven components are included. In addition, the interview guide will provide direction for the participant.
7. Participants will be assigned an individual pseudonym for anonymity purposes.
8. The interview will be digitally-audio recorded and later transcribed by the researcher or professional transcriptionist.
9. The transcribed interview will be provided to the participant for a check on accuracy, related to both transcription and overall meaning. If any data is incorrect or unclear, it can be modified for overall improved accuracy. Any modifications noted by the participant will be accepted for permanent data record for research analysis, if provided back to the researcher within one week from receipt of transcriptions.
10. If a participant is not available in person for the interview, a one-on-one electronic interview (i.e., Google Hangouts, Skype, Face Time, etc.) is acceptable with audio-recording.

## Appendix K: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

**Protocol:** In order to fully analyze your on-the-job experiences, this interview will be *audio-recorded* for later transcription by the researcher or professional transcriptionist. As the interviewee, you will have visual access to this semi-structured interview guide. The bold font represents the standard prompts, for all participants, with the bulleted items under it acting as possible probes. You, the interviewee, have the right to pass on any topic or area of questioning.

The pre-interview checklist with yes/no responses (See Appendix H) will be discussed before starting the descriptive interview portions (i.e., before starting the audio-recorded portions). The primary purpose of the checklist is to facilitate the participant in recalling details related to all seven areas of the TLC components and to facilitate the researcher in asking more precise open-ended questions during the interview. The open-ended questions are designed to gather descriptive data in telling the participant's on-the-job experiences post self-selected PD.

Again, the interviewee has the right to pass on any topic or area of questioning but is encouraged to elaborate with details on any and all topic areas. After oral review of Interview Protocol, completing the checklist, and answering any possible questions from the participant, the researcher/interviewer will record start time and start the audio recording device.

Start time: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Describe your teaching career.**

- Personality
- Your General Teaching Style
- Your Classroom Environment
- Your Class/Teaching Structure
- Your Overall Educational Philosophy
- Your Total Years of Teaching
- Grades Taught
- Your Educational Level
- How have you evolved over time?

**2. How much of an impact do you think teachers have on student learning outcomes? Explain.**

- How much of an impact does *our school* have on student learning outcomes?
- How much of an impact do *you* have on student learning outcomes?

**3. Describe your perspective regarding professional development.**

- Is professional development necessary for teachers?
- Is professional development useful for teachers?
- How is it beneficial?
- What works for teacher professional development?
- How has professional development changed?
- Why do you continue professional development classes?

4. **Describe your on-the-job, post Tribes professional development experiences.** Describe it so that anyone, even a non-teacher, might understand your specific experiences.
  - What is your typical week/day like?
  - What works for you? Why? Explain with detail.
  - What doesn't work? Why? Explain with detail.
  - What are your experiences with social learning?
  - What are your experiences on collaboration?
  - How do you learn most effectively?
  - Have you always learned in this way best or have there been changes? Explain.
  - What insights have you discovered?
  - How do you feel about Tribes?
  - Overall, how do you feel about this professional development?
5. **Why did you select this professional development?**
6. **Describe how you learn most effectively.** (This may be answered under Q3 or Q4.)
  - Have your primary learning strategies stayed the same or changed over time?
  - Do you learn differently than your students? If so, explain.
  - Describe your reasons for wanting to take the Tribes PD.
  - Is Social Learning important to you? Explain.
7. **What professional development experiences do you perceive as useful?** (This may be answered under Q3.)
8. **To what extent, if at all, has Tribes professional development and components of Tribes been professionally useful?** (Guided by checklist and Q4)
  - Was this professional development beneficial to you? To your students? To the school? Explain.
  - Explain your willingness to share your knowledge of Tribes with colleagues.
  - Describe any collaborative participation and/or your personal learning preferences related to this Tribes professional development.
9. **To what extent, if at all, have components of Tribes been implemented into your classroom post Tribes professional development?** (Guided by checklist and #4)
  - Explain any on-the-job experiences related to Tribes.
  - How have you used Tribes?
  - If not used, explain why.
  - Explain your effort in implementing each component? Effort overall?
  - Explain your initial judgments on Tribes.
10. **Describe your views of Tribes.** (Guided by Checklist and other Q)
  - In what ways, if any, does Tribes match your teaching style, classroom set-up, and/or educational philosophy?
  - Describe your level of willingness to implement Tribes:
    - During the professional development? Now?
    - If this willingness to implement has changed over time, why? In which ways?

- Describe your *overall effort* in implementing Tribes.
- Describe your effort vested in implementing each component:
  - setting the environment
  - implementing classroom agreements
  - utilizing energizers
  - practicing reflective questioning techniques
  - maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups
  - teaching collaborative skills
  - implementing cooperative learning strategies
- If your *efforts vested* in each component were not equivalent, why? Explain.
- Describe your views on the *ease or difficulty* in implementing Tribes Overall and with each component of Tribes. Explain.
  - Overall
  - setting the environment
  - implementing classroom agreements
  - utilizing energizers
  - practicing reflective questioning techniques
  - maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups
  - teaching collaborative skills
  - implementing cooperative learning strategies

**11. From your perspective, has this professional development on Tribes impacted your classroom instruction and student learning? Explain.** (Guided by checklist)

- If so, to what extent and which components? Explain.
  - Overall
  - setting the environment
  - implementing classroom agreements
  - utilizing energizers
  - practicing reflective questioning techniques
  - maintaining long-term cooperative learning groups
  - teaching collaborative skills
  - implementing cooperative learning strategies

**12. Describe any factors or influences that you perceive as helping you to implement this PD?** (RQ)

**13. Describe any factors or influences that you perceive as hindering or preventing you from implementing this PD?** (RQ)

**14. Describe your perceptions of why PD components (of Tribes) may not have been implemented by all participants.**

**15. Is there anything more you would like to share regarding your on-the-job post-PD experiences?**

At the ending of the Interview, the Interviewer will:

- Write down the interview end time\_\_\_\_\_
- Stop audio-recording device
- Show appreciation to participant (i.e., Thank you)
- Remind participant of the next steps:
  - If I have any artifacts of yours to copy, I will return them within 3 days.
  - This interview will be transcribed. The transcription will be given to you, the participant, for checks on accuracy of both transcription and meaning. If there is anything you would like changed, please advise me of these changes within seven days from the day you receive the transcription. All interview and other research data collection is confidential; therefore a *pseudonym will be assigned* in the reported data in order to maintain anonymity.

**Would you like the transcribed interview in hard copy format or email format?**

---

**Would you like it delivered to you at work or another location? If other location, where?**

---

## Appendix L: Researcher's Analytical Memoing/Reflective Note Taking Sample

November 28

I have 1 participant intro. completed and 5 interviews to complete. I am feeling good about having 12 interviews complete – to step 23! Now, hopefully, I can get the other 5 interviews complete by the 7<sup>th</sup> of Dec.

I need to save my updated documents to Liberty & check my email; oh, and sign up for next semester. ☹  
It is OK though. I am making progress . . . 1 year behind . . . But still making progress.

I want to review the list of codes . . . and consolidate.

I see the data beginning to repeat without any new codes coming in, but I don't know if I need to still complete the last 5 interviews. I do feel as though 2 of those interviews (Gasha – low efficacy & Naomi – so positive) may offer different insights; based upon this, I will continue with the interviews and same data collection process - 5 to go.

December 15

Just as many participants noted about themselves, it is basically true collectively as well that the selection of Tribes as a PD, drew in a certain sector of the teaching population. All those in attendance happen to be the “touchy-feely” kind of personality; they are the kind who already focuses on relationships within the classroom. I believe this is why so many of them were willing to be participants; this is their natural personality – to help.

January 1

The poetic rendition is fun. I enjoy it; but it is so time consuming. I wish I didn't have 17 participants now! However, the depth and quantity of experiences does strengthen this research.

I've noticed that the upper grade levels are the ones who mentioned classroom space being an issue, not having enough space.

The selection of social learning and adult learning theory is actually perfect. Teachers tend to want collaboration, want to learn socially with their colleagues (Social learning); yet, teachers are also self-directed (adult learning) . . . and internally motivated – most took PD bc another colleague was taking it. One interesting thing . . . for Tribes Self-selected PD, every teacher who took the class, in some way – all of them -PD- MATCHES TEACHER PERSONALITY.

I wonder what participants would say regarding “cooperative learning groups.” . . . I feel that most did not include much of this . . . or know the qualifiers . . . I feel as though they have implemented group work instead . . . but now I am not sure how to inquire on this. Although I am curious, perhaps this would best be served through follow-up research as it does *not directly* answer the research questions.

Something more to think about...

January 4

Adult learning – assumption 5 Internal Motivation: Adults are more internally motivated than externally. I also see this as a major impact on future implementation; teacher's motivation or attitude will determine if implementation is even attempted and continually attempted over time. Many participants have noted this as well.

Perhaps due to a lack of time and a lack of feeling valued (quality self-selected PD is no longer offered by district) . . . PD implementation is also decreased?

Latent meaning ~ maybe PD classes should focus on fewer pieces at once?

Latent meaning ~ If only the focus is at the beginning of the year, then the focus is only on setting the environment. (See Charity)

It doesn't appear that anything is stronger than the negative feeling of “Not enough time.” Participants tended to noticed this. ~ Is this a reality or a teacher's or school's state of mind?

Docilla makes a good point . . . she believes PD should not focus on the classroom but it should also “count” for re-certification. Now that brings me to a thought . . . the district requires PD credits for re-



certification . . . so they value and require continue learning, but why do they not allow collaboration or collegial coaching as a way to earn re-cert credits? Why does it “have to be” University/College driven PD? The district is requiring 45 minutes of collaboration – which is teacher time. Maybe it wouldn’t be fought so much if [REDACTED] (the system) also showed a value in this – by offering re-cert credits by doing this?

I keep going back to the idea that teachers feeling valued – through a district providing high quality PD & time for teacher learning - is a critical foundational piece. Leading countries in education do just this. It seems so clear, yet it still isn’t happening in my country.

January 10

Teachers, for the most part, say that they implement cooperative learning strategies; yet, they don’t really talk about those experiences. They talk about setting the environment, Implementing Agreements, Energizers, and some . . . reflective questioning techniques. I notice that those are the easier components. I wonder if truly, cooperative learning strategies have been implemented, with fidelity. This is the hardest to implement . . . yet, no one chooses to discuss this?

I’ve went back through verbatim of significant statements – poetic rendition – and tightened the codes, using same verbiage when having similar meanings. It took some time, but I think when I am finished with the poetic rendition, the list of codes with headings will be very “tight” and helpful in composing ch. 4.

The poetic rendition started out taking 10-12 hours to complete one transcription; I think I am down to about 5 hours each. I need to start documenting that, not because it is important for the research, but just because I like to know. I am not leaving anything out; rather, I have just perfected my craft throughout the process.

I’m noticing that during the earlier interviews (before the required math PD) nothing was mentioned about required PD. However the later interviews, after some of the required PD, even though questions were not posed about Required PD, only on Self-Selected PD, the teachers felt so passionate, so emotion-ridden that they spoke about it. I feel as though I need to do a follow up – compare / contrast Self-Selected & Required . . . just to get that clear experience separated.

February 15

LEARNING FOR RESEARCHER- My Reflection:

1. “Essay” has a negative connotation.
2. Checklist was not very helpful; at times I had to cut participant’s off bc I needed them to say those things in the interview. I can see where this may be more helpful if completed after the data collection and analysis . . . guided by the findings, then to add to the understanding of those findings. Also, if I had been permitted to use it as a questionnaire, without my presence, I feel as though the information would have been more beneficial for the participants - as in drawing their focus to various aspects of Tribes and to me, as the researcher - as in gaining a quick peak without explanation (saved specifically for the interview).
3. Interview Questions and narratives need to be very different. Although it gave me flexibility, if I didn’t get the information in one forum, I usually got it in the other, however, I do feel as though it was redundant for thorough participants. I think asking the personal questions, used to help guide the introductions, should have been provided separately. It would be nice to have soon after the consent form; however, it does take time to properly craft (and even out the word count to be similar for all) the introduction. I would not have wanted to waste this time . . . and if a participant dropped out of the study, it would have been wasted. So, perhaps asking for this information, in narrative form, after the interview would be best . . . yet then you have data analysis and introduction writing to do at the same busy time. I wrote my participant introductions before the interviews, however, I did wait on one because I was fearful that I was going to lose her from being a participant. . . .But I didn’t.

4. Q 2 and Q 3 – at times I am unsure whether to put the characteristic or finding under which question . . . Meaning, if I recognize a positive quality, not having it becomes a negative quality – the other question.

5. There were no changes to the interview questions after the pilot . . . so really, the data should be used in the findings. I understand not using them if changes were made, but they were not made. Plus, that participant had a unique view based upon her position.

6. Data continues to roll through my brain during the coding and analysis process. It is like every moment, waking and sleeping, are focused on “specific words.” One morning I had worked on 1 participant’s data – poetic rendition – when I went to work a few hours later, I saw that participant. I paused. I felt as though I had just had a conversation with her. It was an awakening feeling . . . recognizing that I was focused on each participant’s words . . . and bringing meaning to each and truly knowing my participant’s words, phrasing, and attachment to each perspective - before coming to any collective meaning to their overall experiences.

March 8

I have been using my research composition book for notes, so be sure to look & code that as appropriate. When I am really trying to understand a concept or to organize more clearly, I find that writing it out - handwritten expression- works best for me (i.e., better than electronically).

I am thinking about creating a wordle for each research question.

Currently I am going through each participant and adding quotes under the stated themes. I’m starting “C” (#3 of 17). The last 2 took more than 2 hours. I think I need to try to limit the number of quotes per participant . . . maybe if I only did this for an hour each . . . let’s see. I want the complete story but I think it could easily get lost if it is too much. I need to weave these together somehow. It seems like a table would be better. Would a table organize it better?

March 10

I need to go fast (i.e., to capture only a thin description). I’m in the middle of taking quotes from participants & adding into the collection under the themes, as another method of verifying the themes based upon the participants. I want to go “thin” here since the poetic structure provides the “thick” use of description. . . . I am finishing up Jerica now & then moving forward . . . J-Q.

### **Reflective notes were completed after each interview, after each 1st Coding (Initial), and after each 2nd Coding; sample:**

#### **Annalina / after 2nd coding**

She has a love of learning, but wants the material to be relevant to her needs, so that it helps her students. She focuses on a safe environment – implemented setting the environment & implementing classroom agreements (& some collaboration).

POS – PD MATCHES TEACHER PERSONALITY (latent level)

Although she sees value in all pieces of PD, she has not implemented much due to “lack of time” in a fixed schedule. (latent level)

NEG – LACKING TIME (amount of time with students, time and effort in researching new lessons/strategies, Believing in the PD isn’t enough to positively impact implementation. (latent level)

NEG – perceptions toward PD implementation:

-limited time,

-LACKING WILLINGNESS

-some educators are stuck in their ways;

-no teacher buy-in;

-some are “negative Nancys” – always finding fault,

-some are followers,

-some take it personally – when it is actually PD needed for all,

- some are on autopilot,
- easier to stick with what you know,
- some just burned out, . . .

Within the different data sources, there were some discrepancies on what was actually implemented. I feel as though she actually implemented very little of 4 . . . but perhaps she couldn't remember exactly what everything was until after we started talking more about them . . . causing her to reflect differently over time . . . over the completion of various data pieces. Perhaps the PD had too many components for the teacher to process all at once. I will follow-up on this, as appropriate, during the follow-up, since Annalina has relocated and won't be available for the focus group.

#### **Brigette / after 2nd coding**

Brigette has a wealth of knowledge on PD. She feels as though the negative school climate negatively influences PD by teachers not willing to take it for fear of the unknown. Many teachers just want the credits, never planning to implement . . . not wanting it over time or to talk about it . . . just wanting it over – never for any real improvement. She thinks this hurts other teachers bc it decreases the possibilities of collaboration. Brigette sees PLTs as a wonderful opportunity to learn from each other – but a positive environment is required 1<sup>st</sup> and administration cannot mandate it; PLTs must evolve naturally from positive relationships. Most learning for her has been due to necessity – having a situation that she needs to find an answer for (true relevance). She also sees poor quality of PD presenters and on-line classes that expect you to teach yourself – as a negative influence to implement . . . No one will want to implement if the process of learning was so frustrating & stressful.

#### **Charity / after initial coding**

Charity did give a lot of “her voice” in this interview. Overall, she feels as though PD would be more beneficial when it is face-to-face (even though she likes technology and uses it with ease), over time- perhaps all year, with teacher collaboration (talk about what works), and with checks for understanding / how it's working because teachers do what they know already and teachers have a lot to do . . . so they will forget without the continual checks (accountability). She wanted to implement more but felt short on time, both student learning time, teacher learning time, and teacher planning time. Her desire to implement was given more effort in the beginning, but without someone to collaborate with and no follow-up, it was easy to convert back to her known and comfortable strategies.

#### **Docilla / after interview**

Docilla is frustrated with the school system and feels that the system is very broken. She would like to move on, but her husband enjoys his job, and she does have good benefits. She feels that our school system offers very poor PD, and most of what is “called” PD is not; it is just a waste of time. She feels that collaboration is a great tool to use but time limits that as well. When other teachers “share” she does not consider that PD- it doesn't count for teacher continuing credits either . . ., so it is *just* collaboration.

#### **Edda / after interview**

Edda has a wide variety of teaching experiences & likes change. I find that she believes all educators should return to the general classroom after a few years . . . just to remember what it is like, not to lose touch with “reality.” She expressed how she is out of the “Honeymoon Phase” – as she is now a Media Specialist.

No Time / PD came at a poor time bc routines were already established in the classroom / Flexible Parents Needed / Admin. Support Needed / Collaboration – with one who has a similar personality is critical / Full-day is way different than “Pop- In” for a lesson / likes to learn from a trusted colleague, hands-on, and from an expert who . . . is still in the classroom.

#### **Fantina / after 2<sup>nd</sup> coding**

Fantina has a lower efficacy scale number, but she doesn't “sound” like that. She shares her ideas, helps others, and loves to plan Science activities. She has a deep love for science.

During the PD, she already “knew” what she would utilize and what she wouldn't. She does not apologize for items not implemented, she simply believes that she should pick & choose what she likes best & what works for her students. I need to go back & reread some of her data; I think she 1<sup>st</sup> said that she didn't like teachers teaching teachers . . . but then during the interview, she loved it because that day she had a successful response to her teaching teachers on a science topic. (Yes, that was the case.) Hhmmm? This positive experience must have changed her view and... it would also increase her teaching self-efficacy.

**Gasha / after interview**

She felt nervous, thinking I expected something specific. After expressing that not being the case – several times, she finally seemed to relax a little. The interview was longer but did not seem to give any extra “meat” to the data. Overall, she feels that teachers have limited time to teach and limited time to plan. These factors, both around time, are the primary negative impact upon implementation. She also felt the class was offered at the wrong time. For during the class, it seemed more difficult to implement because of class routines already being established. Also... It is easier to implement new components when the teacher has a strong parent support system. Collaboration is slow; it takes time to build time trusting relationships. So moving to a new school slows down collaboration, and therefore slows down implementation of newly learned PD.

**Hilary/ after initial coding**

Hilary has a fun spirited personality; she laughed often. . . . Typical day . . . “Chaos” . . . as she laughs some more. She naturally builds community. Tribes “fits” her nature personality. She sees helping others . . . “their neighbor” . . . as an important “life skills.” Teachers will implement more if they have the 1- time and 2- support. “It’s nice to have someone else who’s doing it.” She took it for credit . . . but her initial motivation was curiosity.

**Issac / after initial coding**

Isaac enjoys PD when it is in a collaborative method with the teachers close to him in location. He sees PD as needing to have choices but the school environment must “move” together / learning towards the same goals. Community building is important in his classroom and amongst colleagues as well. He has implemented all components but has tweaked them for his/students needs. Tribes “fits” his natural teaching style and philosophy. \*\*\* When he said that collaboration should happen more . . . “Hey, let’s meet on this day over coffee, and discuss what we did for TRIBES in our classroom.” . . . I got a mental image of a school having a relaxing lounge . . . imagine a sauna, massage, favorite drinks & snacks . . . this could be an awesome addition to schools . . . A place where teachers want to meet & collaborate. \*\*\* He also spoke about extending PD with more follow-ups. The Tribes PD facilitator offered “Think Tank Wednesdays” – yet no one went when the option was there. It was directly afterschool . . . many teachers also had afterschool activities to conduct. ???

**Jerica / after initial coding**

She also felt that the presenter was a critical piece of PD being successful or not – the PD trainer needs to be a master in the field and an expert in presenting. PD forum should: set the purpose, provide an overview of what’s to come, provide a variety of means to instruct: audio, visual, presentation, and kinesthetic with some hands-on.

**Kalyn / after 2<sup>nd</sup> coding**

Kalyn has a power voice for conveying meaning – both orally and in writing; so be sure to go back to her writing for significant statements.

Overall, Kalyn implemented all components except long term groups. Although different than Tribes’ thinking, she views her entire class as one large group; within that group, all students work together. This is different from Tribes’ groups of 3-6 students being placed within a tribe.

She feels that time is the main factor – since we have a large curriculum and teachers do NOT control the amount of time it takes a student to learn & retain learning. Teachers also have limited time for PDs and have an overwhelming amount of work, organization, and demands on a daily basis.

She feels that if it aligns with the teacher personality, then that will increase the likelihood of PD implementation.

**Linna / after interview**

Didn’t really “buy in” to Tribes in the beginning, but took it for the PD but her colleagues had more of an impact of her taking the PD. She loved her team, but has moved to a new school. She has experienced some wonderful PD in other districts; in these powerful PDs . . . she still uses these. They had a full “lesson” for teachers . . . Introduction, discussion, demonstration with real students and real problems, practice, observation of her doing the strategy, feedback, reflection, and continual availability of PD expert concerning questions, etc. The PD was a daily focus. The PD was also broken down into small groups, based on grade level, and also specific to a teacher’s needs. Nearly a decade ago, and she still uses these strategies . . . they are now part of who she is as an educator. With Tribes, when collaborating with her team, the PD strategies were implemented more.

Big idea . . . the PD must be relevant to the teacher. The teacher left with lessons, strategies, and materials to use immediately in the classroom. Another big idea . . . PD was more practical when it was offered during the work day, with a substitute teacher used for classroom coverage.

#### **Mona / after initial coding**

She included a lot of “catchy” phrases & visual “pictures” . . .

Pos . . . Sees PD as needing to be: a choice, teachers need buy-in, collaborative in nature with others the teacher chooses, NOT forced, supportive administration with a risk-free environment for learning, and the flexibility of administration to give teachers sub-time to learn from each other, and overall the “opportunities” to explore and learn from each other.

Negative . . . too much curriculum, poor planning by admin. For teachers to implement . . . “left to struggle . . .” / Lack of student-instruction time with the large amount of curriculum / Lack of teacher time for planning / Lack of teacher time for collaboration / . . . WO collaboration, it is too easy to stop . . . because of the lack of time & due to having so many other things required.

#### **Naomi / after interview**

Naomi has started a Tribes focus group. She completed the paperwork through the University of San Diego . . . I believe. She has 20 in the group . . . which may be a little big . . . but they meet every other Monday for 2 hours, discuss a Tribes component, what worked, what didn’t, and then right a reflection – for 2 hours of recertification credit. I think it is more successful than the “Think Tank” because once the credit is attached, it is required. Teachers are always so busy; it is easy to back out of something that is not required . . . even if initially you wanted to go.

#### **Olga / after interview**

Olga is totally stressed with a lot of hard cases. I know her character; she is a hard worker and has a wonderful personality. I know she does the reflection naturally, but she doesn’t “see” it as being reflective. She is! I hope she finds the time to build her classroom with Tribes inclusion. I think this will help her, rather than just pushing the curriculum. I didn’t mean to make her cry; she is such a reflective soul. I miss being around her presence at school. ☺ I need to code this interview after I get over the emotional state of our discussion - when I can be more objective as the researcher, instead of wanting to help fix her problems.

#### **Pete / after initial coding**

I’m surprised that he doesn’t think teachers have a massive impact on learning. I do think I understand it though; he really believes that students will learn no matter what environment they are put in. I agree with that, but I do think teachers learn from their teacher’s art of teaching whereas he feels that students will learn in spite of teachers . . . no matter what. I do too-to some small degree . . . but I do believe teachers set the environment for the best learning . . . or not. I believe, as he does, that teachers have a huge impact on students’ attitude toward learning. Although this goes against efficacy beliefs, I don’t feel as though it impacts him in that way. It seems that he just describes it differently; but, he still works hard to make an impact and to teach his students.

I’m surprised . . . it didn’t seem like he wanted to say anything bad about the PD at our school. Instead of our normal conversational ‘talk,’ Pete seemed to form his thoughts before he responded, seeming more reserved than his normal personality with me. Perhaps this relates to his current personal situations, or perhaps he knows the efforts and time I will spend over this- perhaps he merely wants to contribute his best. That sounds like Pete!

His overall feelings . . . ISS, curriculum specialist, other specialists/ support staff, even admin. . . . should go back to the classroom from time to time . . . so not to forget the everyday struggles there. . . . I agree with his thinking . . . This maintains their credibility for teaching PD. I can only recall of one other participant mentioning (see Edda... and maybe Brigitte) this importance of teachers maintaining a presence in the classroom setting.

#### **Qiana / after 2<sup>nd</sup> coding**

Qiana really viewed the schedule as the main obstacle in implementing newly learned PD. The schedule being too full – really is determined by large curricular requirements. She also saw the importance of collaboration and working with another teacher to help work through difficulties. Although she has implemented all components (except long term groups), she expressed not implementing cooperative learning groups enough . . . wanting to implement more, yet lacking time with large curricular requirements – or as she put it lack of control over the “schedule.

## Appendix M: Focus Group Protocol and Sequence

Participants Present:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Focus Group # \_\_\_\_\_ of 2

### Protocol


1. Two Focus Group Sessions will be scheduled for completion at a time after each participant has completed the individual interview and also member checked the interview transcription. Participants will be asked to attend one focus group session.
2. If a participant is unable to attend either scheduled focus group, a follow-up meeting will be scheduled individually. The same content of discussion from the focus group will be discussed.
3. The two focus groups sessions will follow the same protocol and sequence of events.
4. Focus groups will be held at the research site as to provide ease of access to the majority of the participants.

### Sequence of Events

1. As participants arrive at the focus group, each will place the colored stickers on the poster size list of seven Tribes components and a “Pass” component (i.e., a Tribes agreement which provides an option to pass). Participants will place the stickers to represent the individual’s perspective. Each component may be categorized by more than one response; that is, more than one sticker may be placed on the same component, from the same participant. This is a reflective exercise; there is no right or wrong answer. Participants will be reminded to make the selections based upon personal experiences. If a participant does not have an answer, she may place the stickers on “Pass.” The color of the stickers represents:
  - Green – You view this as the easiest component for you to implement.
  - Red – You view this as the hardest component for you to implement.
  - Yellow – You view this as your most successful implementation area.
  - Blue – You view this as your least successful implementation area.
  - Pink 1/ Pink 2– You view this as being the most important components of Tribes to teach. Pink 1 is perceived as the most important TLC component. Pink 2 is viewed as the second most important TLC component.
  - Orange – You view this as the least important TLC component to implement and teach.

2. Once the colored stickers have been placed, participants will sit in the pre-arranged chairs to form a community circle.
3. Remind participants of the Tribes agreements with emphasis on the right to pass. Also remind participants of the risk of responding in an open forum. Other participants will hear all verbal comments in this focus group forum; confidentiality cannot be guaranteed during this time. If the participant is concerned about this, she should feel free to pass with an additional option to write down any information to share privately or speak with me individually.
4. Provide a brief moment of reflection. Reflect on stickers:
  - a. Do you see any commonalities? (Self-reflection time)
  - b. Short inclusion activity: share with your partner a success story or learning experience, you have had with Tribes in the past month. After two minutes, remind colleagues to show appreciation. Then complete a mental reflection question: think about how sharing your experiences made you feel.  
(i.e., social and personal learning with reflection)
5. Whole group: Poster Writing. Each participant is provided with a different color writing utensil in order to fill in the compare/contrast diagram. Compare and Contrast your feelings on self-selected PD and Required PD.
6. Community Circle: Give an Appreciation, Apology, or an “Aha” Moment
7. The Focus Group will end with an appreciation / words of gratitude by the researcher.

## Appendix N: Data Collection Forms for Focus Group

Components of Tribes	Basic Description  (Use as Ratings: Did Not Implement / Least Important / #1 Importance / #2 Importance / Most Successful / Least Successful / Easiest / Hardest) 	Ratings:  (use those descriptions - under basic description to characterize your experience)	Write a word or phrase to characterize your efforts towards implementation
Setting the Environment	Tribes uses three stages of group development; this community focus is created through: inclusion, influence, and further community building (Gibbs, 2006). It includes community circle and creating a safe environment for learning.		
Implementing Classroom Agreements	Tribes presents four basic norms, or agreements, and the option for a fifth, site specific norm, to be established within the classroom/school setting. These agreements are much like the “rules,” yet stated in a positive manner. The agreements are: showing mutual respect, showing appreciations/no put downs, practicing attentive listening, and having the right to participate/pass.		
Utilizing Energizers	Energizers provide a quick physical activity for the purpose of adding energy back into the learning environment. Energizers can also refocus concentration.		
Practicing Reflective Questioning Techniques	Reflective questioning to enforce the learning process is a common best practice in educational settings (Marzano et al., 2012). TLC focuses on three levels of reflective questioning: content, social, and personal.		
Maintaining Long-term Cooperative Learning Groups (tribes)	These groups of three to six students are teacher assigned groups for times of learning and working together.		
Teaching Collaborative Skills	Collaborative skills focus on success of the group by working together. These social skills can be purposefully guided through instruction.		
Implementing Cooperative Learning Strategies	Cooperative learning is an instructional strategy, with many techniques yet all require student centered learning and interaction. Small groups of students work together to accomplish academically motivated goals. The teacher structures the lessons and provides direct guidance for student interactive learning with accountability.		
PASS			



## Teacher Perceptions

Self- Selected Professional Development Tribes	Of Professional Development	Required Professional Development CCRMS
Similarities of Both Types of PD		
What Were Your Perceptions Before the Professional Development?		
What Were Your Perceptions During the Professional Development?		
What Were Your Perceptions After the Professional Development? ... Characterize Implementation.		

## Appendix O: Data Collection and Analysis Steps

Purpose: I was involved with various steps of the data at any given time. Notes were carefully maintained on the step in which the data had progressed, for each participant. At any given time, the researcher was directly involved in data collection and analysis with multiple participants, at various stages of the research. This numbered list of steps was critical in organization and maintaining sequential procedures regarding the data needs. Some coding strategies and various organizational methods were first attempted, during the pilot study. As determined necessary or better for this research, some coding strategies and organization tools were adjusted during this time. Overall, this list was created and adjusted during the pilot study and then aided the researcher in maintaining the same procedures for all participant data.

1. Recruitment ~ Invitation to Participate
2. Informed Consent Signed
3. Self-efficacy scale – use as a descriptive factor of participant
4. Essay Prompts – 3.
5. Lived-Experience Descriptive Writing – 3
6. Pre-interview checklist – to help guide the interview
7. Research checklist for the collection of participant data with all participant pseudonyms and required pieces of data (i.e., consent, self-efficacy scale, essay prompts, lived-experience descriptive writing, interview, transcription sent, transcription completed, researcher checked, member checked, approval of introduction material, and follow-up or focus group.) - for research organization
8. Audio recorded individual interview
9. Analytical memoing ~ reflective note taking **after** each interview while listening to the audio (i.e., Maintain updated and frequent researcher records related to the steps completed, the upcoming steps to do, thoughts, reflections, summary and reflections after each interview, after each initial coding, and after each 2nd coding cycle, etc.)
10. Audio converted to intelligent verbatim transcription (professional transcriptionist was utilized).
11. Check the transcription for accuracy while listening to the audio (1<sup>st</sup> reading of transcript).
12. Read through each transcription twice (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> reads)
13. Place transcriptions with a 2 inch right margin for hand coding space and a header with the participant's pseudonym and page \_ of \_\_ - this helped in maintaining organization of the many pages of data (up to 30 pages per participant for the interview transcription alone).
14. Email transcription to the participant for an opportunity to change anything which the participant felt needed an improved or altered meaning: (No changes were requested.)
15. After Member Checked, complete Pre-coding Cycle

- a. Read (4th time reading interview transcript) and pre-code a paper copy of the transcription by underlining what is identified as key points, important data related to the research questions, and interesting word choices (“codable moments” worthy of attention (Boyatzis, 1998 as cited in Saldana, 2013, p. 19).
  - b. Add Holistic Coding (chunking of broad topic areas for an “overview”) during the same cycle of coding.
16. Initial Coding = First coding cycle = Open coding – complete at least 1 day after pre-coding. Begin coding with the transcribed interview and move to that participant’s other data sources.
- a. Attribute coding – for increased organization of data; add onto each data piece with each cycle of coding: Data Format \_\_\_\_ & Type of Coding \_\_\_\_
  - b. Descriptive coding- with one word or short noun phrases identifying the topic. Write a word or short phrase (in the 2 inch margin) every few lines, in a more splitter or middle order approach to similar to Holistic coding. This word or short phrase was the main idea or key point of the text.
  - c. Process coding - gerunds used to connote observable and conceptual actions in the data and perhaps a powerful verb attached  
**(Note: Simultaneously code using Descriptive and Process Coding– during the 5<sup>th</sup> Reading of transcript. This Simultaneous coding was selected in order for the researcher to select the most appropriate word choice. I coded using a single or short phrase focused on topic-related nouns, gerunds, or powerful verbs.)**
  - d. Magnitude Coding - Reading of transcript (6<sup>th</sup> time reading transcription)
    - 1.) Impact towards Implementation: POS / NEG
    - 2.) Levels of Efficacy: HIGH / LOW
  - e. In-Vivo code by electronically highlighting (in yellow) exact words identified as key points or important data related to the research questions and interesting word choices (“codable moments”) – (7<sup>th</sup> reading of transcription)
17. Compare the pre-coding stage of underlined codable moments with the 1<sup>st</sup> coding cycle of electronically highlighted codable moments. If an item, participant’s words, or idea was not identified in both coding cycles, reflect on that to further understanding and direct further decisions. Items nearly always completely overlapped, but a few were different by a fragment of the total selected words.
18. Code the other documents/data collected from that particular participant: prompts, checklist, written experiences, and artifacts - in the same ways, as appropriate.
19. Maintain a list of codes in a separate word document.

20. Complete analytical memoing and reflective note taking after the Initial Coding for each participant.
21. Second Coding Cycle – Recode, compare, reflect, complete analytical memoing.
  - a. Eclectic Coding - a refinement of the First Cycle of codes
  - b. In Vivo Coding - Copy the highlighted words (quotes from transcription) and paste into another word document (the in vivo document) with a header that matches it with the participant for increased organization in data.
  - c. In Vivo Coding - On this direct quotes from transcript document, split the quotes to smaller pieces, to get to more precise codes; highlight these “key” quotes or phrases within the quotes in aqua-blue. Add text boxes for coding.
  - d. In text boxes, Simultaneously Re-code using Descriptive Coding and Process Coding (i.e., nouns and gerunds)
  - e. Focused Coding or Pattern Coding - Look for common codes and frequency of those commonalities
22. Complete analytical memoing and reflective note taking after the Second Coding for each participant.
23. Complete all 2<sup>nd</sup> Coding Cycle (i.e., except Focus Group Data) before moving on . . .
24. Create the Poetic Rendition using In Vivo Codes – keep writing data and interview data separate, under each participant heading for increased participant story.
25. Complete and Code Focus Group/Follow-up Data using the same process.
26. On-going, but make a point to check accuracy (i.e., similarities of data) from different data sources.
27. Complete the full story of the researcher’s experiences.
28. Use codes and clusters of codes to develop Themes related to each Research Question.
29. Check themes by placing related participant quotes under each developed theme.

## Appendix P: Researcher's Story: My Experiences with PD

*My Real Story ~ My Partially Self-Selected but Required PD Day . . .*

*Typical, yet anything but Practical*

*As I try to process everything I need to do. I have a list. I have a long list. It first started in my head, but it became too large. So, I wrote it down before I left home. This list included seven multi-step items. I need to prioritize these, because the sad truth is that I probably won't finish. I already know this, even if I start my work day early. However, I'm still willing to try!*

*4:30 a.m.*

*I came to work early, hoping to clear some of these pending items off my prioritized list. And I am off to a good start . . . one done, two done, three done . . .*

*7:00 a.m.*

*Teacher chatter begins to fill the hallways. I enjoy visiting with my colleagues, but it could be another distraction. Instead, I try to stay in my room, knowing if I keep my door closed, I will be able to check more items off my prioritized list.*

*"Well, maybe I should check my email in case there have been any updates to our professional development schedule," flutters through my mind. I mistakenly follow, getting me off-task, taking me off 'my list.'*

*By going to Outlook . . . "Now, my outlook starts appearing bleak." I've always made a habit of deleting emails as soon as I've completed the task or responded. That task in itself is becoming more and more difficult; my inbox is perpetually littered with unattended "work" needing my attention.*

*I know this, and yet I still got distracted from 'my prioritized list' just to check this monster, named "Outlook." I immediately regret my decision, but in all reality, it is another daily, sometimes hourly, task that I am expected to accomplish. It is the main form of communication between teachers, from administration-both high above and local, with parents, and others. And yet, so many times, I hear teachers saying, "I didn't know." This lack of common information is probably provoked by the messenger ~that is, the information coming in one of the **many** electronic deliveries. In fact, it is probably one of those emails, just sitting, waiting, stalking, and haunting me with its unattended presence.*

*I must chuckle to myself as I recall community members wondering about, "No school November," agreeing that students do have a lot of days off this month.*

*Yes, today is a professional development day. Seemingly an easy day, right?*

*No, it is not an easy day; I wish I had my kids here instead. First of all, this semi-prioritized list will continue to hi-jack my thoughts. In fact, I will bring some "seat work" along with me . . . just in case I have an opportunity to sneak some of it in, from time to time. And then another challenge, I'm expected to sit still and learn. We all know that our students struggle with this. I also know that on a normal day, I only sit down on rare occasions~ quite sporadically and in brief moments. But today, I'm the student; I'm expected to sit and learn. When the boredom is too intense, I will attempt to sneak bits of other necessary work into the environment. I don't want to be rude or disrespectful, but I always have so much to do; and, let's face it, teachers are great multi-taskers!*

*7:30 a.m.*

*Helen, a new colleague comes in and asks about today's agenda. I tell her that I just printed it. She expressed her inability to read, let alone respond, to all her electronic mail. Her frustration is my reality as well.*

*I fumble through the papers, looking for the agenda. "I know I just printed it," blares through my racing mind. I continue shuffling through the many stacks, which I thought, actually just hoped, would be filed, graded, taken care of – even if by a magician! At this point, that is what I will need . . . a magician or perhaps a miracle!*

*"OK . . . here is the agenda." We grapple through it together, having some brief small talk along the way. Overall, the day is broken into three required district selected sessions before lunch and two or three required, but self-selected PD selections after lunch.*

*7: :40 a.m.*

*We are in the school library, where everyone meets. Oh, and the best part of the day . . . seriously, the best part is sharing good food and good conversation! Our awesome PTO has provided a yogurt and fresh fruit breakfast bar. Teachers do view the presence of "food" as a highlight to the PD Day! The line starts. Teachers congregate in various discussions, mostly related to students or to the classroom in some way, but some conversations also have a glimpse of personal content as well.*

*As I glance around, teachers stand, huddled in small groups, chatting, smiling, and creating relationships. I find this quiet moment of reflection to be inviting. Teachers do not usually have this time to talk with colleagues, to create these valued professional friendships, and especially don't have time to think about them.*

*Morning, Part 1 – CSI (Continuous School Improvement) writing goal, focused upon using Daily Fix-its 8:05 a.m.*

*We are a little behind schedule, as usual. The conversations may seem unimportant to some, probably to most adults not associated with the educational world. Most adults are able to converse with their team of co-works on a daily basis, but teachers rarely communicate with colleagues, other than the daily greetings of, "Good morning," and "Have a nice evening."*

*I've always had calm, working relationships with my colleagues, but we are all so different. My first year, I, but more concrete - my classroom, was physically separated from the other grade level teachers. I felt separated too. There was no conflict, but it was obvious that I was "the new kid on the block." But now – year four, I finally feel as though I can connect with members on my team and have for two to three years now. We, at least three of us, sit together, and I feel like I belong. The other five team members are not sitting together, yet they are not far away either.*

*We sit in the front and joke about putting ourselves 'in the front' so that we will pay attention. We do. I never get to start my "seat work," because I am completely engaged in the C.S.I. ~ the required professional development. This is the required part of my job; it is the "stuff" that I am required to do, working towards our school goal. It can be the boring part, but since we have a new goal, there is work to be done!*

*And at least two of my, non-grade level, colleagues have put a ton of continued efforts into this. For their efforts, I especially want to value it more. Besides, I love writing! It is one of those areas in which I feel as though I could excel, truly excel. More importantly, my students could excel if I focused daily time and did not allow other content areas to rob from the allotted writing time. Although the Daily Fix-its are not quite the authentic type of writing I enjoy, I recognize the easy and small amount of classroom time needed to implement this editing component. Yet, it too, will eventually rob time from authentic writing.*

### *Morning, Part 2 – Grade Level Collaboration*

9:00 a.m.

*This is valuable time, but when there are so many – eight of us now – it is difficult to find a common ground. Most times, we simply agree to be different. The Grade Level Chair disseminates school information, and then we discuss the new math curriculum (or should I say, “Lack of curriculum”). In the beginning of the year, seven of us, teamed on the new math lessons. Just obtaining the “required” lessons were a chore in itself. We accomplished Unit One, yet we were exhausted, frustrated, and out of time. It seemed that the one teacher who continued using last year’s materials and last year’s pacing was the wisest of us all. He knew the path, the student learning expectations, and had all the materials to properly implement. The rest of us seemed to be teaching piecemeal and were flustered with the lack of accessibility to the materials, lack of time to create the needed materials, lack of time to study and organize the hundreds of pages of required lessons which were written in multiple formats, and the lack of lessons matching students’ needs. We all feel, what the district office is requesting from us, are unrealistic requests and lack value for teacher-time. At this point, we have all abandoned the “required” lessons. It is not out of lack of trying, rather the abandonment is primarily due to lack of time.*

### *Morning, Part 3 – New Math Standards*

10:00 a.m.

*This is the frustrating part. I recognize others have worked to put these lessons together; but, I cannot see the end. I am the one responsible for teaching my students these academic skills, not someone putting together a binder.*

*And then, it is so time consuming to even get these lessons. After using my entire prep one day last week, I stopped without accomplishing anything, except increasing my frustration. Another colleague was able to get into the Schoology account and made the lessons more readily available by placing them on the school drive, yet only the current unit is available. I cannot see the long-term goal (which is very bothersome).*

*Now I have to find more time. My plan and prep time is about 45 minutes each day. This time is to grade, to plan, to prepare lessons, to read and respond to emails (Yeah, right!), to collaborate, but . . . **There is never enough time!** These lessons take so much time to physically get, so much time to read, so much time to prepare for the lesson, and so much paper!*

*Unit 4 alone – 437 pages! I only get 500 sheets of paper for my 25 students every week – to cover all subjects; my copy alone is over 400 pages (i.e., to cover in just 4-5 weeks?). I understand this is a new way of understanding math. Perhaps the first step would be to use this data provided, in this paragraph alone, to explain how exactly this should be accomplished within the teacher work day.*

*I don’t mind working over when it is best for my students, is realistic, and isn’t a detriment to my own family. However, I already work at least 50 hours weekly. I know colleagues who work even more on a regular basis. When is enough, really enough?*

11:00 a.m. ~ Lunch

*The grade level decides to go together. I know this time is important, yet my prioritized list is calling, no blaring at me by now. I decided to mute the now screaming prioritized list and go to lunch with my grade level team. We talk. We laugh. We recognize the struggles of others, and we support each other. For at least that moment, I feel connected to each member and value each unique position in our team.*

### *Afternoon Sessions ~*

*These sessions were provided by colleagues who volunteer to share an area of expertise. There were several options to select. Each teacher was required to select two but could select three. I had selected three, now regretting my overzealousness. Now I feel that I really could utilize that block of time to work on my list!*

*(Actually, my son was sick on the initial sign-up day last week, so I wasn't at school. Since the number of participants for each PD session was limited, I feared being forced to attend just any open topic. So early sign-up day, I had texted Jeanne, my colleague, asking her to sign me up. I gave her my selection of four or five topics and requested that she sign me up for the ones she was also interested in and attending. I was a little anxious, wanting to attend a topic of interest and of relevance to my current needs, and a little excited, to finally have a friend to sign-up with and spend the day learning with. We do share students, so learning similar strategies would be of great benefit, especially for our students.)*

#### *Afternoon, Session 1 Selection ~ GoNoodle and Drums Alive*

*12:00-12:45 p.m.*

*The website of GoNoodle is explored. We interact and have fun. I jot down some notes, for later use. GoNoodle essentially provides "Energizers" as presented in Tribes. GoNoodle is just an electronic form. I leave with an idea to possibly implement tomorrow. The website of Drums Alive was watched. I am amazed, but immediately I know that I will not use this due to the complexity of the materials needed. "Wow, Drums Alive would make an awesome afterschool activity," meanders through my personal reflection.*

*Although the presentation had a couple minor electronic hiccups – which are Not so uncommon at our school, I felt pride for the presenters. Kate is a fairly new teacher, yet she was able to expand herself and perhaps go outside of her comfort zone. And Amelia is a specialist who I've noticed taking a real leadership role at our school this year; she seems to be involved in a lot of areas, especially this year. I am happy for their success.*

*Jeanne and I go to session 1 and session 2 together, discussing possibilities along the way.*

#### *Afternoon, Session 2 Selection ~ Interactive Notebooks*

*12:50-1:35 p.m.*

*Again, I felt happiness for Shelby, the teacher who prepared this session; she is a confident teacher, yet she is also new to our school this year. Her energy seems contagious!*

*During session two, another grade level colleague attended the same PD. Although Barbra and I have very different teaching styles, I have come to truly enjoy her company. This relationship took a couple of years to foster. In many ways, she reminds me of my Mother, whom I miss dearly. I value Barbra's friendship, value her experiences, and recognize her soft, giving spirit towards her students. Barbra, Jeanne, and I sit together and discuss possibilities with Interactive Notebooks related to our fourth grade curriculum.*

*Before signing up for this session, I already had a knowledge base for interactive notebooks. In fact, I like them a lot! However, I wanted to add to my learning and investigate someone else's thinking. Currently my biggest problem in using interactive notebooks revolves around my lack of materials. I wish more materials were readily available, for I do not have a lot of interactive notebook materials. The presenter also shared that most of her materials have been purchased from Teachers Pay Teachers. Although I like this site, I know I do not have time to explore and to "shop." I actually had shared and copied, much earlier in the year, many interactive notebook pieces related to our social studies curriculum. I completed all of those already, not Barbra or Jeanne.*

*I leave with a couple of generic vocabulary templates and a continued desire for readily available materials related to grade level standards.*

#### *Afternoon, Session 3 Selection ~ Programs for use on Google Accounts*

*1:40-2:25 p.m.*

*I attend all 3 self-selected, but required, professional development sessions. I enjoy each one and am happy that I attended while I am there. However, during the third session, I sit blankly and daze at the*



computer screen. Am I on information overload? My brain hasn't shut down though; in fact, possibilities are racing: How can I utilize this information without slowing down the learning for my students? I instantaneously recognize that it is my learning that needs to speed up. I become internally overwhelmed. I want this information; I want to implement these strategies and new pieces of technology. But, I have a physical need to eat, to sleep, and an emotional need to be with my family too.

I am actively involved in this session, but I do not have time to write down any notes. Yet even at that moment, I realize these 'non-existing' notes will be critical . . . for returning and repeating these steps.

Again, I recognize the ambitions of Michelle, the teacher presenter. She is also a new specialist to our school this year. I have found her to be quite helpful, energetic, and willing to share her knowledge. I know she would help me in any new learning endeavor requested, but I just don't feel as though I can add anything new, not even one extra thing, to my already overflowing plate ~ at least not right now.

2:45 p.m.

I walk back to my room. I see the stacks. I start to organize the PD items; instead they go in another stack. I look at my prioritized list, still only having three items completed, and then add six more items to the list. Now, the once, at least, semi-prioritized list has no order at all. I stare ~ at everything~ and at nothing. I want to be finished. I want to go home. I want to relax and feel as though today was a success.

3:00 p.m.

Instinctively, I go back to the time-inhaling monster, named "Outlook." I don't want to, but I know I am expected to. I click on each new email, 24 in total. I respond to those 17 needing quick replies, and then delete them. That gives me at least a small feeling of success. I skim the other seven. Two are started and notes are made on my once prioritized list; the other five are left in my mailbox – with the previous 20 nagging emails - still needing my attention. But quite honestly, some are probably already outdated without my attention ever being properly given.

3:50 p.m.

I begin the process of cleaning up, not completing, merely putting away the work I had earlier hoped to complete. I must now focus on simply preparing for tomorrow, preparing for my students' immediate learning. I write tomorrow's date, agenda, and objectives on the dry erase board. I pass out morning work as I mourn the death of my hope towards a completed list. I organize the materials needed for the next day as well as for the week.

I wonder, "Will I ever get caught up? Will I ever be truly finished?"

5:40 p.m.

I turn out the lights, lock the door, and walk home disgusted and exhausted. I keep thinking, "How can I have more on my list then when I started this day, this day without students?" I came in early so that I could leave with a cleared list. Instead, I have more, and none of that has anything to do with my learning today. My 'learning' was completely put on hold, simply by its now resting place . . . in one of those many stacks, pleading and competing for my attention. I want to implement those items from today's PD, but it is NOT the priority. It will more than likely stay in one of the stacks until I no longer know what it relates to. At that point it usually goes into "File 13" ~ also known as, the trash!

### **Update: 2 Months Later . . . A Reflection:**

The only topic in which I have implemented from this professional development day is the required use of Daily Fix-its, in working towards our C.S.I. writing goal. I know it isn't the "required" factor which completely influenced the implementation because I am also "required" to implement the new math curriculum (aka . . . the binder) that was never provided to me in hardcopy form. Rather, I think easy

*access to the materials, easy process of implementation, and my willingness are the factors for this implementation success of Daily Fix-its. The materials are provided within the Teacher Manual, and the instruction during the professional development simply focused on this one component of an entire language arts curriculum. Easy! And yes, I viewed it as very possible to implement without costing me hours of personal time (i.e., practical as well).*

### ***My Real Story ~ My Completely Self-Selected PD Experience . . .***

#### ***My Own Time, My Own Money, & My Own Choice***

*I am so excited about taking the Tribes training. I remember pieces of it from my time teaching in Hawaii. Teachers had already been trained before I came on board, but I did gain some of the basics from colleagues then. Primarily, I remember the focus on relationship building. I do this naturally; it is part of my personality. However, learning more of the foundations and having a full understanding of Tribes is warranted. In addition, I have always wanted to become better at implementing cooperative learning groups. That is not so natural for me; yet, I see the value. I believe with continued efforts as a dedicated learner, I will master cooperative learning strategies for daily use. I am excited!*

### ***A Year Later ~ Enrolled in my 2<sup>nd</sup> Tribes Professional Development . . .***

*I'm still excited. I have implemented all of the Tribes components since my first Tribes professional development, yet I am not pleased with my performance on each component. I love Tribes! Yet, my love and belief in Tribes for the benefit of student learning and my desire to implement has not been influential enough to create a complete Tribes classroom. I am a teacher who focuses on positive relationships and a positive classroom environment. However, I am also very driven to teach my students; I believe education is the key for each student to be successful in any life endeavor. Therefore, I push. Often times, I become exhausted, losing sight of relationship building, as I push the large curricular requirements.*

*I am continuing to strive for my Tribes classroom. I have implemented round tables rather than the individual desks. It isn't a complete fix; the tables seriously need an area for holding student materials. And I think a square table would be better; but, I don't have square tables with a compartment for holding student materials. So, this is the best compromise. I know, individual desks can be placed in this arrangement and would include that compartment. However, my room is quite small. I had 29 students last year and 30 this year! If I want any kind of community area for gathering, the student individual work area must be compact.*

*Every session before, I left with my Tribes book with activities, several hand-outs, and basically an overwhelming amount of ideas and components to implement. The implementation plan was not clear to me, yet I experimented with it and found some success. I hope that this process will become clearer, more precise, more directive with details . . . rather than ideas and simple possibilities. I want the plan provided to me! Annie, the professional development facilitator and true Tribes Expert has continued to be available; however, I don't usually have the time to meet and discuss my growth, my plan. She is a great resource, yet I have not utilized her knowledge simply because I have many other items which dominate my time.*

*The creation of the long-term peer group, called a tribe, was the one area that I did not see benefits from. I lost flexibility. However, if I implement that again, which I probably will, next time, I will not have them sit in their tribe. Instead, it will be a group that gets together for a particular learning endeavor. I never clearly understood that option during implementation; it was only during a reflective moment later that it came to me. I think that will be more effective, yet I haven't tried it yet.*

*Still, my main area of weakness revolves around cooperative learning. I have not given up, but it is a challenge. I can easily forget; then, I don't work on it at all. Once I realize, I go back and try again. Until I am able to practice this daily, I don't feel as though it will become a natural teaching strategy for me. If*

*only I had a colleague, close in proximity, and one that we, both, enjoyed working together on this . . . then, I think it would become part of my natural teaching repertoire.*

*I also recently took a Kagan PD. This focused precisely on CL. Just like with the first Tribes PD, I greatly enjoyed the class itself. However, I was overwhelmed later. I didn't know which CL strategies to pick; there are just so many. I can quickly eat-up all my time, just exploring possibilities; but possibilities don't always become reality.*

*I want to truly have the components of Tribes as a natural, muscle-memory, part of my teaching repertoire. This has not been easy for me. I haven't given up though . . . round two . . . here I come!*

### ***A Saturday in February . . .***

*I wake up at my usual early time. I like to get up and start my day! Although I would prefer a warm, welcoming day, I will bundle up!*

*8:00 a.m.*

*I arrive in my classroom after completing the, usual 10 minute- but today, challenging, ice filled walk from home. I quickly gather my book and a few of my favorite writing utensils, and some post-its before heading to the main building. The room is quite inviting.*

- *Colorful posters with information ignite my curiosity.*
- *Soft music permeates throughout, creating a relaxed environment.*
- *Chairs are arranged in a perfect circle.*
- *Tables are set with large paper, markers, and green folders, each labeled with a name.*
- *And, yes, there is a food table!*
- *Teachers meander in, usually in pairs.*
- *Conversation and laughter engorge the room.*

*8:30 a.m.*

*Annie, the professional development facilitator begins to ask for participants to take a seat in the circle of chairs. The day starts with warm welcomes, real smiles, and positive attitudes.*

*The facilitator provided an outline for the four days of training. She provided a varied presentation of research, the Tribes components, and then hands-on activities related to that material. The learning always began with a quick inclusion activity, moved into a cooperative learning strategy, and afterwards ended with an appreciation for the others in the learning group along with some type of reflective questioning.*

*12:00 p.m.*

*Lunch ~ many teachers went to lunch together, seemingly in carfuls. Several teachers also stayed in the room, as I did, eating from the assortment on the food table and continuing with discussion on possibilities for a Tribes classroom.*

*1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.*

*An understanding of the four Tribes agreements laid the foundation for the atmosphere of this PD. The hands-on, engaged learning continued. We reviewed prior learning, set expectations, and then worked towards that. The environment was constantly academically driven and socially engaged.*

*4:50 p.m.*

*After completing a written reflection, we are dismissed 20 minutes late. Although it was no big deal at the time due to the class being fun and engaging, later that evening I wished I had that 20 minutes back. I always have so much to do!*

#### ***Four, 7-hour Days of Professional Development . . .***

*Each seven hour day of professional development followed this same basic sequence of events.*

*I was happy to attend.*

*I wanted to learn and came ready to learn.*

*I had a fun-filled, engaging learning environment focused on social learning.*

*I left with plenty of materials,*

*But nothing- or little- directly ready for implementation.*

*I left without a clear plan and timeline for implementation.*

*I left with too many ideas.*

*Too much, can be overwhelming, slowing the implementation process.*

*My work environment is FULL,*

*Always full . . .*

*Never enough time for my learning.*

*Never enough time for all the required student learning.*

*Never enough time to plan.*

*Never enough time to collaborate.*

*Never . . . enough . . . time.*

#### ***Update: 2 Years Later . . . A Reflection:***

*Truly, as I re-read, not much has changed. I still want to implement. I still try to implement.*

*I haven't given up, but I haven't totally succeeded in building my own Tribes classroom either. It doesn't matter how much I want this, if I don't have time to learn, time to plan, time to reflect on the process . . . then the implementation of any professional development won't happen. Only now do I fully accept this reality. I've often been frustrated with myself for not doing a better, more consistent job, especially with cooperative learning.*

*For me, I see critical influences on implementation as:*

- *easy access to the materials, even classroom furniture,*
- *teacher support – from parents, administration, and through colleague collaboration,*
- *teacher desire to implement and overall attitude towards the new strategy,*
- *classroom stresses (such as a large curriculum, large student reading range, and a large number of students would have a negative impact upon implementation), and*
- *time availability or restraints (restraints in most cases).*

*However, even if these factors are kept in a positive ratio, I cannot implement anything new if I don't have time. For me, time is the number one critical factor. I am a confident, hardworking teacher. I push hard towards student learning, and I care about the classroom environment. I want what is best for my students. However, I cannot create time or dictate the amount of learning to occur for all students within any specific time allotment. If I don't have my own professional time for learning and time to plan, then I won't, I can't have time to implement new strategies **introduced** in PD.*

*Once this, my formal research, is complete; my next goal will be a systematic implementation of cooperative learning strategies. With focused time and hopefully a teacher partner to collaborate with, cooperative learning will become a daily occurrence in my classroom and a natural part of my repertoire or art of teaching.*

#### ***Bringing the Two Together ~ Self-Selected PD Vs. Required PD***

*In these two reflections from my, the researcher's experiences, time is the critical element in both. In the required PD, the only implementation occurred when the implementation was both required and easy.*

*The ease came from the materials being readily available, and the content being a small piece of a large curriculum. Only the small piece was emphasized. Although teachers use much more, the focus of*

*implementation was just that one, small focused area of implementing Daily Fix-its. I did not currently use the Daily Fix-it component; however, I did not have any dislike of that component either. Overall, I was not excited about implementing, but it wasn't something I was against either. Since the entire school's focus required this implementation, I had no ill-feeling towards implementing.*

*If however, the materials were not readily available or the implementation was not easy, like with the required math implementation and professional development, a different outcome would probably have occurred. My team tried to implement the required math, but it was not readily available, taking hours to shuffle through, and it was not easy to implement. Therefore, we abandoned it after the first Unit of instruction.*

*The self-selected PD which was offered as required options was not implemented. All three short, workshop-style PD, were interesting and believed to have value. However, I did not leave with anything to directly implement, nor have I had time to plan, to reflect, or to implement any of them. Once a PD is shared, there should be time attached to actually create or develop a lesson related directly to my students' learning. Then, I would implement what I planned.*

*The completely self-selected PD -which only includes the Tribes PD at my school- has been implemented, but I have not mastered all components. My belief in the importance of these strategies has kept my motivation alive for Tribes, but my lack of time has restrained my progress. Perhaps the large amount of Tribes components rather than a small piece at a time has also slowed my progress. However, it always seems to come back to the fact of my constant lack of time. I won't give up on this goal, but it sure has taken a long time; and yet, I still have not mastered all components of Tribes.*

## Appendix Q: Sample of Researcher Coding Records for One Participant

### DATA FORMAT: INTERVIEW

IN VIVO CODING (+ATTRIBUTE CODING ~ DATA FORMAT: \_\_\_\_\_ and TYPE OF CODING)

I do feel it's necessary for teachers. . . .we can be updated in our practices. . . . – I guess we're really not going to be preparing our students for the world that they're going to enter – the job market, which is now global. . . .Uh, retaining information is necessary. But it's actually not as necessary as it has been in the past.

I can apply directly to my classroom – . . . I get the most use out of practical application – . . . , learning about things that I can directly implement.

adjust it to see what is, uh – what works for me.

I don't know that there is a typical day

whenever I plan for something and I think that I have prepared, um, inevitably, I will get an email or a group of emails from parents or from different directions from admin, parents, colleagues. And then something else will land in my plate. And ya know, my prep time is gone.

And I end up staying, ya know – I don't think that I ever leave in the time that my duty day is over. So I'm usually at school at least two hours. I mean, if I I'm at school two hours after my duty day, that's a good day. And I've had to stay, ya know, since – till 9:30 sometimes, depending on if something happens. Uh, because you just – every year is different.

adult learner. So – and I think this is true for most adult learners is we tend to gravitate towards

things that are, um, considerate of our time. We tend to be more motivated – self-motivated.

So we, uh – we just need – I just want a schedule. Give me my deadline. Give me my, um – ya know – my syllabus. Give me my deadlines. What is the criteria so that I can just, ya know, do it to fit my schedule. I need to know that what I'm learning is practical and has purpose. I'm not in that place of exploration anymore. Everything I do – you know – my time is filled. Everything I do has to have an end result – has to have a function, a purpose in what I'm doing. You know, if I'm taking classes now, it's because I know that I'm working towards a degree and the specific purpose of the class is to be able to implement XYZ in my classroom.

we don't have as many opportunities . . . – we're stuck in our rooms. . . . I'm always open to anything that is going to be collaborative – . . . I want it to be positive for everybody. I don't wanna have to struggle. I want to enjoy going to work. I don't want them to feel, like, coming to school's a drag. I just – ya know how much- percent of our life- we are in that classroom? we should have to suffer through that . . .

I always see the classroom like a family. . . . even if it's tough love and you have to be hard on somebody. You do it because you have, um, their best interest at heart. So I'm just always looking for a way so that different personalities that we don't have control over can find a way to get along or at least find a way to be positive . . . not dread going to school or work.

DATA FORMAT: INTERVIEW

DESCRIPTIVE CODING (noun) / PROCESS CODING (gerunds or verbs)

Social Cognitive Theory (efficacy / social learning)

COLLABORATION

Adult Learning Theory

IMMEDIATE USE

CONSIDERATE OF OUR TIME

WANTING A SCHEDULE

KNOWING THE DEADLINE “Do it to fit my schedule.”

PRACTICAL / PURPOSEFUL “My time is filled.”

Experiences

DAILY CHANGES

OTHER THINGS CONSUMING PREP TIME

NEEDING TO EDUCATE PARENTS

Professional Development for Teachers

NO CONTROL OVER THE AMOUNT OF TIME LEARNING TAKES

READING UPDATED RESEARCH

NO TIME FOR PD

TEACHER ATTITUDE MATTERS

EXPERT NEEDING CURRENT CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES

1. Implementation

PLANS ALWAYS CHANGING

TEACHERS USING BEST JUDGEMENT

TEACHERS MAKING MANY DECISIONS

2. Positive Impact

PD MATCHING TEACHER PERSONALITY

3. Negative Impact

NO TIME

CAN'T CONTROL CURRICULUM AMOUNT

CAN'T CONTROL AMOUNT OF TIME NEEDED FOR LEARNING

DATA FORMAT: INTERVIEW

MAGNITUDE CODING

### Impact towards Implementation

POS

“I do feel it's necessary for teachers.” (PD)

“... we need to have professional development so we can be updated in our practices.”

“I focus more on specific areas of Tribes – areas that I've implemented that I think work with my personality.”

NEG

“We are set in our work.” ... “...not everybody is really in touch with the skills that are going to be needed for our children when they get out of school.”

### Levels of Efficacy

HIGH

LOW

DATA FORMAT: PROMPTS

DESCRIPTIVE CODING (noun) / PROCESS CODING (gerunds or verbs) / (MAGNITUDE CODING)

#### PD ~ Useful (POS)

Practical, applicable, innovative, necessary, align with my teaching practices and philosophy

#### PD ~ Not Useful (NEG)

“If mandated without buy-in, implementation may not be executed properly and then something good, becomes bad.”

What was Implemented . . . “Tribes did enrich how I shape the environment and develop the classroom culture. It is important to implement, especially about ¾ throughout the school year, when students are comfortable and start being a little rude to other students. Tribes works in easily at the beginning of the year, but as the year progresses it seems to get harder and harder due to the many benchmarks, required assessments, and over load of requirements.”

Setting the environment . . . “I encourage a casual, yet respectful, environment. I see my class like a big family on a long bus trip. Sometimes we get grouchy at each other and sometimes we are singing road songs. I am at the wheel.”

Implementing Agreements

Utilizing Energizers - limited “newness” to 5 so that they do not take too much learning time

Reflective Questioning Techniques

Maintaining Long-term cooperative learning groups - prefers flexible groups to increase socialization within the entire class / views entire class as the long-term group

Teaching Collaborative Skills

Implementing Cooperative Learning Strategies – yes, but limited

“Organization is my weakness. Every day I am inundated with papers and information from all directions: administration, colleagues, students, or parents. Even when I have an organization system in place I am quickly overrun with more work as I take on more responsibilities, or have responsibilities thrust upon me. My classroom space also looks undity at times; however, I make it a habit not to clean up after students. They are accountable for the state of the room as well and must clean up after themselves. Admittedly there are times when I have walked away from my own messy desk. Though organization is important, there is only so much time in the day and we must pick our battles.”



## DATA FORMAT: EXPERIENCES

DESCRIPTIVE CODING (noun) / PROCESS CODING (gerunds or verbs)

Setting plan but overloaded, plan changed

Much to do

Social learning is important – but it takes more time

Teacher's attitude toward learn makes a difference

Collaboration helps to keep me on track

Building a family like community is important for liking school / more fulfilling to me too

Class = large learning group

Harder bc not school wide . . . but the team working together, that makes it easier

“Also with so many things in the air, we are forgetting to give our appreciations. Still I am often pleasantly surprised when a student comes up to me and tells me how another classmate made them feel better. It is all-the-more sweeter when I did not have a hand in the outcome.” . . . Oh, but she did!

. . .”while students share I quickly call the nurse to check on a student. I have had to remind myself to maintain my interactions and listen attentively.”

Refreshers are needed!

## DATA FORMAT: CHECKLISTS

DESCRIPTIVE CODING (noun) / PROCESS CODING (gerunds or verbs)

Any Collaboration: Yes, part of grade level

School Climate Support Tribes: Unsure – Not completely

What was Implemented

Setting the environment

Implementing Agreements

Utilizing Energizers

Reflective Questioning Techniques

~~Long-term cooperative learning groups~~— sees entire class as large group

Teaching Collaborative Skills

Implementing Cooperative Learning Strategies

Not Implemented – Long-term cooperative learning groups

Prepared to Teach components in class: YES / all

Prepared to Share with colleagues: YES / all

Initial judgment: All positive

Current judgment: All positive

## DATA FORMAT: CHECKLISTS

## MAGNITUDE CODING

POSITIVE IMPACT ON IMPLEMENTATION:

Access to materials

Classroom space

Classroom furniture

NEGATIVE IMPACT ON IMPLEMENTATION:

Flexibility with teaching schedule

Enough planning time

## Appendix R: Sample of Researcher Records Towards Theme Development

**How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development?**

### 1. To what extent, if at all, has this professional development been implemented?

Setting the environment

#, 1, 2, 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 – ALL

Implementing Agreements

1, 2, 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 13 14 15 16

Utilizing Energizers

1, 2, 3 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 13 14 15 16

Reflective Questioning Techniques

#, 1, 5-some, 6 8 9 10 11 13 14 15 16

Maintaining Long-term Cooperative Learning Groups

13 15

Teaching Collaborative Skills

#, 1, 2, 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Implementing Cooperative Learning Strategies

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 13 15 16

BELIEVING IN PD CONTENT – STILL LITTLE IMPLEMENTATION #

REMINDER OF PRIOR EXPERIENCES

FEELING VALUED THROUGH QUALITY PD (They VESTED in you.)

WANTING SOCIAL LEARNING / COLLABORATION

TEACHER WILLINGNESS (Teacher Attitude)

PD –MORE EFFORT IN BEGINNING it's been harder to implement. 2

ROUGH AT FIRST / EFFORT NEEDED 5 9 13

Community Circle 5

FIT WITH CURRICULUM 9

Collaborative/Cooperative Grouping – Hard to Implement 12

**How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development?**

### 2. What factors are perceived as positively impacting implementation of the PD?

ENHANCED-ADEQUATE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 2 4 5 12 16

ADJUSTING PD – TO FIT YOUR NEEDS 5 11 12 16

(all have done this - must be self-efficant to do this & may allow for “some” implementation when PD INSTRUCTION is at Frustration Level, especially when too much material is covered)

ACCOUNTABILITY/CONSISTENCY 1 2 3 4

SUPPORT (PARENTAL/ADMIN) 1 4 5 13

TEACHER DESIRE TO LEARN (buy-in /Teacher Attitude) # 1 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 13 16

PASSION FOR CONTENT 5

IMPROVED OR NEW SKILLS WANTED 10 11 12 13 16

RELEVANT (useful / beneficial) # 1 6 8 9 11 12 16

PD MATCHES TEACHER PERSONALITY # 1 2 3 5 6 7 8 9 11 12 13 14 15 16

PD MATCHES TEACHER LEARNING STYLE # 1 2 3 5 6 7 9 11 13 14 15

HANDS-ON # 1 2 7 9 11 15

SOCIAL/COLLABORATIVE # 1 2 3 4 6 11 12 13 14 15 16

PD FACE-TO-FACE 1 2 4 8 11 15

TEACHER COLLABORATION (belief of importance) 1 2 3 4 5 6 8 11 12 13 14 15 16

PD JOB-EMBEDDED 1 2 3 11 12 13

WITH REFLECTION 1 2 11 12 13 14 16

OVER TIME (Refreshers) 1 2 3 11 16

SCHOOL-WIDE 2 11

COACHING 1 3 11 12 13

COMMUNICATION 8 16

FEELING VALUED THROUGH QUALITY PD 1 3 9 11 12 15

REMINDER OF PRIOR EXPERIENCES 1 3 4 5 6 7 11 12

TEACHER ATTITUDE:

PRE-DETERMINED MIND-SET 5 6 7 10 11 12 13 14 15

Latent Discovery: SMALL CHUNK OF LEARNING AT A TIME (NOT AT FRUSTRATIONAL LEVEL)

**POSITIVE ...**

**Theme            Teachers believe in the importance of teacher collaboration, yet collaboration is limited.**

TEACHER COLLABORATION (belief of importance) 1 2 3 4 5 6 8 11 12 15 16

PD JOB-EMBEDDED 1 2 3 11 12

WITH REFLECTION 1 2 11 12 16

OVER TIME (Refreshers) 1 2 3 11 16

SCHOOL-WIDE 2 11

COACHING 1 3 11 12 13

COMMUNICATION 8 16

**Theme**            **Teachers focus on a variety of factors perceived as positively impacting implementation; all of these factors evolve around an enhanced learning environment.**

### **ADEQUATE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT 2 4 5 12 16**

#### **Motivation**

TEACHER DESIRE TO LEARN (buy-in /Teacher Attitude) # 1 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 12 16

PASSION FOR CONTENT 5

IMPROVED OR NEW SKILLS WANTED 10 11 12

TEACHER ATTITUDE:

PRE-DETERMINED MIND-SET 5 6 7 10 11 12 15

#### **Alignment with Teacher: Personality / Learning Style / Teaching Style**

ADJUSTING PD – TO FIT YOUR NEEDS 5 11 12 16

PD MATCHES TEACHER PERSONALITY # 1 2 3 5 6 7 8 9 11 12 13 14 16

PD MATCHES TEACHER LEARNING STYLE # 1 2 3 5 6 7 9 11 15

HANDS-ON # 1 2 7 9 11 15

SOCIAL/COLLABORATIVE # 1 2 3 4 6 11 12

PD FACE-TO-FACE 1 2 4 8 11

REMINDER OF PRIOR EXPERIENCES 1 3 4 5 6 7 11 12

#### **Relevant**

RELEVANT (useful / beneficial) # 1 6 8 9 11 12 16

#### **Supportive**

ACCOUNTABILITY/CONSISTENCY 1 2 3 4

SUPPORT (PARENTAL/ADMIN) 1 4 5

FEELING VALUED THROUGH QUALITY PD 1 3 9 11 12

**How do elementary educators describe on-the-job experiences after completing self-selected professional development?**

### **3. What factors are perceived as negatively impacting implementation of the PD?**

**LACKING TIME # 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16**

LACK OF FLEXIBILITY WITH TEACHING SCHEDULE #

LACK OF FLEXIBILITY WITH PULL-OUT SCHEDULE 1 2 16

NOT ENOUGH PLANNING TIME # 1 2 7 10 11

NO TIME TO COLLABORATE (relationship building- time) # 1 4

LARGE CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS # 1 3 4 6 7 10 16

NO CONTROL OVER AMOUNT OF TIME NEEDED FOR LEARNING 10

NO TIME TEACHER LEARNING 10 11 16

**LACKING TEACHER WILLINGNESS # 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 11 13 14 16**

RIGID PERSONALITIES # 1 4 5 10

EASIER TO STICK WITH WHAT YOU KNOW # 1 2 5 9 10 11

LACK OF HABIT / FORGET 2 3

POOR MOTIVATION (only for PD Credit / required) # 1 2 4 9 11 13

OVERWHELMED 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 13 14

**INADEQUATE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT # 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 11 12 15**

REQUIRED PD – NO RELEVANCE # 5 11 16

PD TOO SHORT 2 4

TIMING OF PD NOT MATCHING BEST IMPLEMENTATION TIME 2 3

RISKY ENVIRONMENT 1 3 9 12 15

UNFAIR ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES 1 4 5 12 15

TEACHERS NOT FEELING VALUED # 5 9 12

INSTRUCTION AT FRUSTRATIONAL LEVEL 1 2 4 9 10 15

PD ONLINE – PD NOT FACE-TO-FACE 1 2 7 8 15

PD PRESENTERS LACK SKILL # 1 3 4 5 9 11 15

LACKING MATERIALS 1 2 5 7 11

LACKING ACCOUNTABILITY / NO EXPECTATION TO IMPLEMENT 1 3

LACKING COLLABORATION 5 6 16

LACKING CONSISTENCY 4 16

NOT REQUIRED FOR ALL / NOT SCHOOL WIDE 2 11

FEW PD OPPORTUNITIES 5 10

BELIEVING IN PD CONTENT – STILL LITTLE IMPLEMENTATION (when lacks time) #

LACK OF CONSISTENT FOLLOW-UP 8 11

#### Example of Process

In reducing the number of codes, codes with similar meanings were changed to ONE CODE. For example, RIGID PERSONALITIES / STUCK IN OLD WAYS / POOR TEACHER ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOMETHING NEW became one code using “RIGID PERSONALITIES”

PD – POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS and PD PRESENTERS LACK SKILL became one code using PD PRESENTERS LACK SKILL .

LIMITED TIME WITH STUDENTS and LARGE CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS became one code using LARGE CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS (yet under the category NO TIME).

TEACHER ATTITUDE – changed to TEACHER WILLINGNESS