A STUDY OF THE VIEWS AND POSITIONS OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

TOWARD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by

GEORGE W. DARDEN IV

(Under the Direction of Diane B. Napier)

This multi-site case study focused on administrators who work in the schools of the Cobb County, Georgia, school system—one of the largest, most diverse, and most rapidly changing systems in the state of Georgia. The purpose of the study was to explore how school leaders in a diverse school district view professional development in an era of standards-based reform. My study was related to other studies on professional development and educational leadership, including those that focus on the design and implementation of professional learning programs, those that address issues of social justice in professional development, those that identify cross-national issues and dilemmas in professional development, and those that examine administrator behavior in general. The results showed that while all school leaders under study recognized the fundamental tenets of modern professional learning, not all were willing to or capable of implementing long-term, collaborative, classroom-based, participant-driven professional development programs. Administrators also differed in terms of who they believed should design professional development programs—people from inside the school or "outside experts." Teacher resistance was uniformly reported, but it seemed that those school leaders who stood up to teacher resistance ultimately gained teacher compliance. Other school leaders used teacher resistance to excuse the absence of a professional development program.

Administrators varied on whether there was a social justice motivation behind staff

development. Administrators universally spoke of the changes that have recently come to

American education, in terms of technology, policy, and professional development itself.

Interestingly, administrators who proved to have the clearest vision of the goals of professional

development and were able to rally their teachers around that vision were the ones who had

most directly adopted the District's focus on raising test scores. Finally, administrators showed

little awareness of cross-national issues in schooling and professional development, despite the

fact that most of the issues they discussed have also been documented in different settings

around the world. The study is of value to those who seek to understand how federal, state, and

local policies are implemented in schools, and how those policies are preserved or modified

when school leaders are given the prerogative to carry them out.

INDEX WORDS: Professional development, educational administration, social justice,
cross-national issues in education, policy implementation, standards-
based education, teacher resistance, No Child Left Behind, Georgia

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DEDICATION

My desire to become a better educator drove me to undertake a doctoral program, and this dissertation is the summation of those efforts. Accordingly, this dissertation is dedicated to the teachers, friends, family, and students who have inspired me to continue learning and growing. I dedicate this dissertation in particular to two people. First, this dissertation is dedicated to Keith Wilson, a passionately curious ninth-grader who tragically succumbed to brain cancer less than ten years after being in my class. Keith approached every endeavor with humility and good humor, and I know that he was bound for great things. I think of him nearly every day, and I am fortunate for having known him. Second, this dissertation is dedicated to my grandfather, Warren Candler Budd. Granddaddy Budd was the consummate educator, both as a preacher and as a grandfather. He never let an opportunity to teach slip by, and he continually remained gentle and sincere. I often hear his voice in my head, and I have endeavored to live my life by his example.

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There are several people without whose support this dissertation would have remained unwritten. Chief among my supporters are my patient and ever-helpful major professor, Dr. Diane Napier, and my committee members, Dr. Jo Blase, Dr. Karen Jones, and Dr. Myra Womble. In particular, Dr. Napier has been my advisor since my first day at the University of Georgia in 2003, and we have grown to know one another well through the turns that each of our lives have taken in the last eight years. Dr. Napier has stood by me and offered guidance throughout the many difficulties I have faced, and I am eternally grateful for that. Dr. Napier and the other members of my committee have served as my mentors, my cheerleaders, and my sounding board, and I am a better teacher for having been taught by them.

I have also benefited from the faith and support of my wife and family. My wife, Kacie, has repeatedly helped me to think through ideas and has patiently listened to me as I hashed out my research. More importantly, her confidence in me never wavered, even when I began to doubt myself. I would not have completed this study without her. My parents have shared my wife's conviction, and they have also provided crucial financial support over the last several years. Without my mother and father, I would have been incapable of sustaining the sacrifices that necessarily attend the completion of a dissertation.

Finally, I am indebted to the administrators and central office personnel who made this study possible. I offer them my sincere thanks.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study focused on administrators who work in the schools of the Cobb County,

Georgia, school system—one of the largest, most diverse, and most rapidly changing systems in

the state of Georgia. The purpose of the study was to explore how school leaders in a diverse

school district view professional development in an era of standards-based reform. My study

was related to other studies on professional development and educational leadership, including

those that focus on the design and implementation of professional learning programs, those that

address issues of social justice in professional development, those that identify cross-national

issues and dilemmas in professional development, and those that examine administrator

behavior in general. When combined with further research, the findings may be of value to

educators or educational agencies—both those that were a part of this study and those that are in

comparable situations—in advising policy directions, informing school- and system-level

decisions, and educating future school leaders.

Statement of the Problem

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 is the most recent in a series of

educational reforms dating back to the 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report. The reforms that

accompanied and immediately followed *A Nation at Risk* emphasized higher academic standards

and increased testing. NCLB, like many reforms before it, maintains a focus on standards and

testing, but also emphasizes professional development as a means of raising student

achievement. Consequently, NCLB contains its own prescriptions for professional

development. According to Title IX, Part A, Section 9101, professional development includes activities that increase teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach (thereby helping them to become more highly qualified), improve classroom management skills, provide the knowledge and skills necessary to reach students with special needs or limited English proficiency, enhance the use of technology in the classroom, promote communication with parents, show teachers how to use data in their classroom practices, and give teachers and administrators the skills they need to enact standards-based reform plans. They are, according to the Act, "high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused," and they are developed "with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators." Professional development, according to the Act, is to be "regularly evaluated for its impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement." (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002)

To fulfill the expectations of NCLB, the Cobb County School District prioritized professional development. In 2009, the District released its "Keys to a World Class School System." This document—subtitled "A Plan for Renewed Focus and Commitment to Excellence"—described the District's priorities as it approached 2014—the year by which all students must demonstrate proficiency in math and language arts, according to NCLB mandates. Among other things, the District committed itself to improving communication, effectively using technology, using data to drive all decisions, recruiting high-quality employees, and "maintaining a commitment to effective professional learning" (Cobb County School District, 2009, p. 4). With the publication of "Keys," the system required each individual school to submit a School Strategic Plan that outlined the means by which each of the 114 schools in the District would fulfill the system's goals, including the aim of providing "all

employees with high-quality professional learning opportunities to promote individual development and improved student performance" (Cobb County School District, 2009, p. 8).

Because each school in the Cobb County School District designed and implemented its own professional development program, there were potentially significant differences between the programs at each school. Not only did different schools in the District have vastly different student profiles and different staff development needs, but each school had different people who were empowered to diagnose those needs and implement individualized professional development programs. Besides being told that they must provide "high-quality professional learning opportunities," school leaders in Cobb County were able to do whatever they wished with regards to professional development. This provided an ideal opportunity to determine the individual views that school leaders formed with regards to professional development and to assess common themes in their descriptions.

Professional development is a standard component of educational reform programs around the world. Professional development features heavily in state and local policies around the country that have been written to conform to the mandates of NCLB. However, researchers have documented a wide variety of issues related to professional development in schools. This study sought to shed light on the views and positions of the school leaders—those empowered to enact professional development programs—in one school system. The goal was to determine what issues are evident in school leaders' descriptions of professional development.

<div style="text-align:center">Historical and Social Background to the Problem</div>

After its reconstruction following the Civil War, Cobb County, Georgia, suffered the same ills as the rest of the American south: a sluggish farm economy, low-wage industries, and one-party politics built on white supremacy. Cobb County was first chartered in the 1830s when

the neighboring settlement that would grow into Atlanta was only a few lightly-worn paths

through the woods. By the mid-twentieth century, the county was hardly known for much more

than a high-profile lynching that took place there in 1913 (Scott, 2003). In the last half of the

twentieth century, though, Cobb County became known for its rapid development and change.

The population of the metro-Atlanta county grew significantly in those decades, from 38,272 in

1940 to 607,751 in 2000, to 688,078 in 2010, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The change

in population between 2000 and 2010 represented a 13.2% growth rate. By 2010, Cobb was the

third-largest county in Georgia, and almost 80,000 firms, including the Home Depot and

Lockheed-Martin, were located in Cobb. Between 1970 and 2000, the county shifted from being

just over 70% urbanized to being 99.5% urbanized.

The county also diversified in the final decades of the twentieth century.

Demographically, it evolved from nearly all White in 1970 to just 56.3% non-Hispanic White in

2010. According to the 2010 census, 14.8% of the population was foreign-born—about half of

which was from Latin America—up from 11.6% in 2000. Some 14% of the total population

reported that a language other than English was spoken in the home, and about half of those said

that they could only speak English less than "very well." Some 75% of the foreign-born people

living in the county had come to Cobb between 1990 and 2000, be it from another country or

another part of the United States (Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, 2006;

Lang, Blakely, and Gough, 2005; Scott, 2003; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

During the 2010-2011 school year, when my study was conducted, the Cobb County

School District—the second-largest system in the state of Georgia—reflected the size and

diversity of the county. In that year, the district enrolled almost 107,000 students—44.5%

white, 31.2% black, 16.5% Hispanic, and 4.8% Asian—in 114 schools. In 2009, the District

had taken its own census and found that it was serving over 8000 ESOL students—what the District called "English Language Learners"—from over 130 countries. This was up from just 100 ESOL students from twenty countries in 1989. Further, while students in Cobb County schools in 1989 only represented about ten major languages, students in 2005 represented eighty-three major languages. Foreign-born students in 1989 were described by the district as "mostly Asian and Eastern European students with strong native language literacy skills," while 2009's students were described as "mostly Hispanic students, many lacking native language literacy skills" (Cobb County School District, 2011b, p. 1).

While student growth in the Cobb County School District was spread somewhat evenly throughout the county—that is, enrollments at nearly every school grew in the last decade—student diversity was not. Three high schools (Walton High School, Pope High School, and Lassiter High School) had less than 1% English Language Learners in the 2010-2011 school year, while another high school (Osborne High School) had 15%. Likewise, at Birney Elementary School, Argyle Elementary School, Fair Oaks Elementary School, and Belmont Hills Elementary School, English Language Learners comprised over 1/3 of the student population in the 2010-2011 school year, while Mount Bethel, Baker, and Sope Creek Elementary Schools had less than 5% English Language Learners.

In 2008, the most recent year for which data are available, 43% of the students in the district overall qualified for free or reduced lunch under federal guidelines. However, only 10% of the students at Simpson Middle School, 9% of the students at Dodgen Middle School, and 4% of the students at Dickerson Middle School qualified. On the other hand, 40% of the students at Barber Middle School, 53% of the students at Cooper Middle School, 72% of the students at Floyd Middle School, and 81% of the students at Campbell Middle School qualified

for free or reduced lunch in 2008 (Georgia Department of Education, 2008). Racial divisions in

the district are another feature; Frankenberg and Lee (2002) noted that the Cobb School District

was one of the most rapidly re-segregating school districts in the United States. In their study,

Frankenberg and Lee (2002) found that the typical black student in a Cobb County school went

to a school that had 40% fewer white students than it did in 1986. The typical Latino student

went to a school that had almost 46% fewer white students than it did in 1986. Figure 1 shows

the schools of the Cobb County School District (Cobb County School District, 2011c).
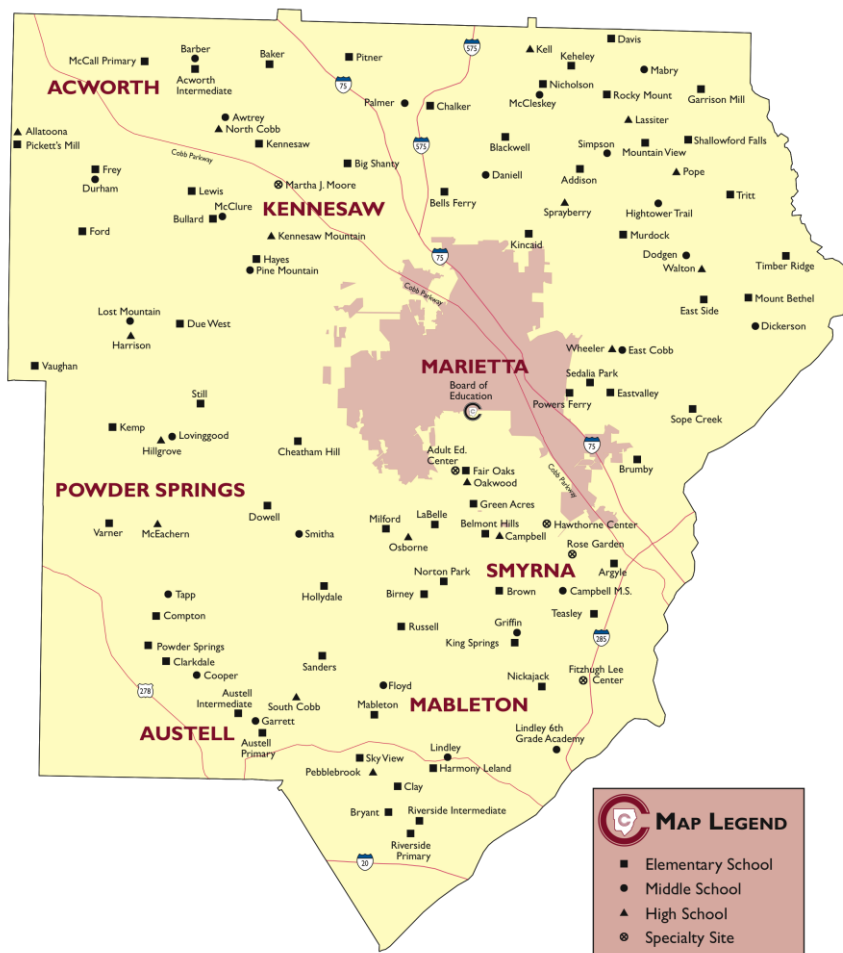
Figure 1. The Schools of the Cobb County School District

The changes to the county and to the School District in the past few decades were likely

to have an impact on the professional development programs in place in Cobb County. In

addition to managing the requirements of NCLB, teachers and administrators in the 2010-2011 school year were dealing with different students than they were twenty years prior, and one could expect an accompanying change in the shape and focus of professional development programs. However, given that student diversity was not equally spread among the schools in the county, it would be interesting to see whether school leaders in very different schools expressed similar views or brought up the same issues when speaking about professional development.

<div align="center">The Policy Background to the Problem</div>

As is the case with every other school system in Georgia and around the country, the schools in the Cobb County School District and the Cobb County School District itself are governed by the rules laid out in the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. The cornerstone of NCLB is Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In short, schools must meet progressively ambitious annual targets with the goal of having 100% of students proficient in language arts and mathematics by the target year of 2014. If schools and school districts fail to meet their annual targets, they face being labeled "Needs Improvement," thereby subjecting them to potentially reduced funding, tighter scrutiny from state and federal officials, and possible school restructuring. According to the law, states may determine their own means for measuring a school's progress and their own benchmarks for individual schools and school districts. However, state-defined AYP criteria must include the following elements:

- State standardized tests must be the primary factor in the state's measure of AYP;
- In addition to state tests, at least one other academic indicator of school performance is required, and additional indicators are permitted;

- For secondary schools, the other academic indicator must be graduation rate;

- The state must include separate measures for reading/language arts and mathematics;

- A state must measure not only the achievement of students in general, but also the achievement of students in four subgroups: economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, students with disabilities, and students with Limited English Proficiency;

- Each subgroup of students must meet or exceed the annual objectives set by the state for each year;

- At least 95% of students in the school as a whole and 95% of the students in each of the four subgroups must take the state tests. (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002)

Because the consequences of failing to meet AYP are potentially devastating, the tests that are normally used to measure AYP have been labeled *high stakes*. As 2014 approaches, the controversy surrounding NCLB's reliance on AYP and high stakes testing has grown. In 2011, the Secretary of Education himself asked Congress to restructure the law and rethink AYP, given that in his estimation, 82% of schools in the United States would soon fall short of their AYP targets and face remedial action (U.S Department of Education, 2011).

In the 2009-2010 school year, the Cobb County School District did not meet its AYP target. Even though more than 90% of the district's schools reached their own individual AYP goals, the school system as a whole fell short of its target with regards to the Students with Disabilities subgroup. Specifically, the District was required to have 67.6% of each of its represented subgroups meet or exceed State of Georgia standards in order to make AYP, and only 66.3% of its students with disabilities met or exceeded Georgia standards. As a result, the

system did not reach its AYP goal, and it was therefore subject to state and/or federal action if the scores on the tests that students took in the 2010-2011 school year did not improve.

<div align="center">Rationale and Significance</div>

The significance of this study is twofold. First, this research identified universal educational issues that are evident in school leaders' views in a time of "high-stakes" reform and rapid change. Additionally, it recognized issues that are unique to the Cobb County School District. Second, this research adds to the body of scholarly literature on school leaders and professional development.

School leaders in Cobb County today face challenges similar to those that administrators face all over the country and around the world. They are beset with profound expectations and responsibilities, including the routine tasks that attend running a school. School leaders are expected to design and execute professional development programs, manage school finances, raise funds, deal with unforeseen events, discipline unruly students, conference with parents and community members, conduct faculty meetings, perform teacher evaluations, and serve as a bridge between the school system and the school. Even though it is only one aspect of their jobs, managing professional development is by itself a huge task. School leaders must prepare teachers to deal with recent technological advances, increases in migration and immigration, globalization influences, the changing nature of the American family, and complex policy requirements. All of this must be done in an environment of high-stakes educational policy focused heavily on testing. School leaders are expected to transform professional development theory into professional development practice, and thus, they now have a role as instructional leaders rather than being simply business managers or disciplinarians.

In this context, it is worthwhile to take stock of what school leaders are thinking in regards to professional development. Gaining a sense of school leaders' views of professional development can shed light on the way that professional development programs are designed and implemented. In a larger sense, this helps us to understand not only how and why professional development programs come to be, but also why many professional development programs have little or no impact.

This study takes on additional significance in light of scholarly research on school leaders and professional development. Currently, there is a great deal of research on what constitutes a high-quality professional development program. At the same time, there is an equally impressive pile of literature that suggests that schools are *not* offering this sort of professional development. In addition, there is a great deal of literature on educational leadership. This literature is reviewed in Chapter 2. This study adds to the current body of literature in each area and helps us understand why schools are not offering—or more specifically, why school leaders are not implementing—the sort of professional development that research studies suggest they should.

Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of this study was to obtain information about school leaders' views and positions so that we could better understand the gap between ideal professional development and real professional development. By analyzing the various themes that emerge in administrators' views and positions in a variety of schools, we might gain a deeper understanding of why there is a difference between what researchers suggest professional development should be and what researchers find that professional development often is.

Prior to beginning my fieldwork, I researched the demographics of each school that would be a part of this study. My objectives during the pre-fieldwork off-site research were:

- To determine the size and structure (i.e. grade levels) of each school;

- To gain an understanding of the types of students that attended each school;

- To establish a profile of the faculty and administrative team at each school;

- To assess the AYP status of each school.

My aim in doing this pre-fieldwork off-site research was to be better able to anticipate the sort of issues that may arise at each site and to properly prepare for each interview.

Once the fieldwork began, my objectives were:

1. To determine the characteristics of the various professional development programs in place in the schools under study so that I could contextualize my interview data and determine the degree of professional development program implementation in the various schools under study;

2. To gain a sense of how school leaders in these schools in the Cobb County School District describe professional development in order to establish a contextual basis for their responses and to determine whether any universal issues are present.

3. To uncover school leaders' views and positions on the implementation of professional development programs in their schools in order to determine whether the issues faced by school leaders in the schools under study mirror national and international trends.

4. To better understand how school leaders see their role in the professional development of teachers so that I could better understand how professional development fits into school leaders' overall approach to administration;

5. To determine how school leaders describe the role of their school system in professional development in order to gain a sense of how the overall political and social context of the schools under study affects their school leaders and their professional development programs; and

6. To uncover how school leaders view the goal of professional development so that I could assess school leaders' goals versus the realities and outcomes in the schools under study.

The research questions described in the following section were developed based on these objectives.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

My inquiry into the views and positions of school leaders began with off-site research. In this initial phase, I surveyed the research on professional development with the objective of determining the professional development practices that were most common in schools around the country and had been shown to produce changes in teacher behavior. I also sought to establish the administrative behaviors that would lead to the greatest degree of teacher cooperation. Reviewing the scholarly work on educational leadership and professional development would help me to contextualize my on-site findings. The results of this initial research can be found in Chapter 2.

Once District approval was gained, I developed a profile of each school under study by using publicly available data from the Georgia Department of Education. Each profile included information on student demographics, teacher demographics, and test scores. Obtaining this information would help me to understand the social, political, and historical environment in which school leaders were working. This information can be found in Chapter 4.

Once gaining access to a research site, I interviewed either the principal from each school or a principal's designee in order to obtain the various views and positions that each school leader had in regards to professional development. I employed the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the professional development programs in the schools under study?

2. In a large, growing, and rapidly diversifying school system, how do the school leaders at school sites under study describe professional development in their schools?

   2.a. Are there issues of cross-national significance or social justice evident in their descriptions?

3. How do school leaders describe the implementation of professional development programs in their schools?

4. How do school leaders see their role in the professional development of teachers?

5. How do school leaders describe the role of their school system in professional development?

6. How do school leaders describe the goal of professional development?

These questions can be found in the research matrix in Table 1, along with the rationale behind each question and the specific data types that were employed in addressing the questions.

Table 1

Research Matrix

Research Questions	Rationale	Data Sources	Analysis Methods
1. What are the characteristics of the professional development programs in the schools under study?	1. To contextualize my interview data and to determine the degree of professional development program implementation in the various schools under study.	In-depth interviews Field Notes Documents Theoretical Memos	Constant Comparative Analysis Coding Inductive analysis Triangulation Informal Content Analysis
2. In a large, growing, and rapidly diversifying school system, how do the school leaders at school sites under study describe professional development in their schools? 2.a.Are there issues of cross-national significance or social justice evident in their descriptions?	2. To establish a contextual basis for their responses and to determine whether any universal issues are present.		
3.How do school leaders describe the implementation of professional development programs in their schools?	3. To determine whether the issues faced by school leaders in the schools under study mirror national and international trends.		
4. How do school leaders see their role in the professional development of teachers?	4. To better understand how professional development fits into school leaders' overall approach to administration.		
5. How do school leaders describe the role of their school system in professional development?	5. To gain a sense of how the overall political and social context of the schools under study affects their school leaders and their professional development programs.		
6. How do school leaders describe the goal of professional development?	6. To assess school leaders' goals versus the realities and outcomes in the schools under study.		

The research questions dictated the structure of my study, including the interview guide, which can be found in Appendix C. Once the data was gathered, I analyzed the interview data using content analysis and inductive analysis, and I categorized school leaders' responses by way of coding and constant comparative analysis. My objective was to determine the common themes that arose during the interview of each school leader. I also sought to uncover universal and cross-national issues in education that were evident in their descriptions of professional development, particularly with regards to social justice. These findings can be found in Chapter 4, and a discussion of the findings follows in Chapter 5.

While this study is limited in that it does not completely explain all aspects of professional development programs, it takes important steps in that direction. The most obvious limitation is the weakness inherent in any case study: it is difficult to directly apply the findings of this research to any other case. While the school leaders in the Cobb County School District face problems similar to problems that are faced by school leaders across the country and around the world, there are both small and large differences related to the uniqueness of each school and school system. Thus, while my findings here are instructive, they cannot be generalized to other sites and contexts.

Limitations

Additionally, there are limitations related to my approach to the research. I chose to concentrate on leaders' views because those views are formed as the result of several foundational influences (Eagly and Chaiken, 1992), and ultimately, school leaders' views will strongly influence their behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Thus, if we have a clear idea of school leaders' ideas about professional development, we shall have some indication of how they will act when implementing professional development programs. This approach, though,

has limitations: Brown and Herrnstein (1975) reminded us that it is common to find research subjects "talking on the high road and acting on the low road," (p. 289), and LaPierre (1934) pointed out that questions submitted to an interviewee are "symbolic" and as a result, "There is no necessary correlation between speech and action, between response to words and to the realities they symbolize" (p. 231). In other words, what school leaders told me may have no correlation whatsoever with what actually happens in their schools. Nonetheless, as Petty and Cacioppo (1981) pointed out, people's behaviors will at least generally reflect their values, so investigating school leaders' views should offer at least some glimpse of their practice. Even though I did not attend professional development sessions or formally interview teachers about their professional development experience, it is reasonable to presume that there is some coherence between school leaders' descriptions of professional development and the concrete, ongoing professional development programs in place in their schools. During the course of my research, I did learn about the general features of the professional development programs, albeit indirectly through interviews with school leaders and analysis of documents on school web sites.

In this chapter, I described the problem in which my study is situated. I summarized the main features of the study, including goals, objectives, and research questions. In the following chapter, I review the scholarly literature on professional development that serves as a backdrop for my study and that assisted me in understanding my findings.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

This study adds to the literature on professional development and educational leadership. In this chapter, I review selected research on these topics. In the first section, I review the literature on current educational policy and the literature on the high-quality professional development practices that are often referred to as *professional learning*. In the second section, I describe the philosophical roots of professional learning. In the third section, I review the literature on prevailing professional development programs in modern schools. In the fourth section, I review the literature that links professional development and social justice. In the fifth section, I review the literature on educational leadership, including the literature that demonstrates linkages between traits of school leaders and their leadership styles and the literature that describes effective school leadership behaviors. In the sixth section, I review the literature that links professional development and school-based factors such as grade levels and teaming. In the seventh section, I review the literature that identifies cross-national issues in professional development. All of this literature assisted me in designing my study and in understanding and contextualizing my findings.

The Policy Environment and Professional Learning

Principals are being asked to design and implement high-quality professional development programs at a time when professional development has become a de rigueur component of any school reform plan. The current emphasis on professional development began near the end of the so-called *second wave* of educational reform in the 1990s (Darling-

Hammond, 1997). The second wave was predicated on the 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report that

claimed that schools were utterly failing in their mission, and that all of the *first wave* reforms,

such as increased salaries, core-subject requirements, and an expanded academic calendar, were

insufficient to stem the "rising tide of mediocrity" in American education (The National

Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Instead, what the nation's schools needed was

to invest in their teachers to help them learn the knowledge and skills that would enable them to

do more meaningful work with a wider array of children. Prior to the second wave, enriching

teachers had not been a high priority. Darling-Hammond (1996) wrote:

> As recently as 10 years ago, the idea that teacher knowledge was critical for education
>
> improvement had little currency. Continuing a tradition begun at the turn of the 20th
>
> century, policymakers searched for the right set of test prescriptions, textbook adoptions,
>
> and curriculum directives to be packaged and mandated to guide practice. Education
>
> reform was 'teacher proofed' with hundreds of pieces of legislation and thousands of
>
> discrete regulations prescribing what educators should do. (p. 5)

During the first wave, it became clear that teachers could not be left out of the process and that

policymakers could not manage the job of education from afar. In a different piece, Darling-

Hammond (1998) captured the feeling of the second wave:

> Schools are being asked to educate the most diverse student body in our history to higher
>
> academic standards than ever before. This task is one that cannot be 'teacher-proofed'
>
> through management systems, testing mandates, or curriculum packages. At its root,
>
> achieving high levels of student understanding requires immensely skillful teaching—
>
> and schools that are organized to support teachers' continuous learning. (p. 7)

Since this type of professional development was a departure from old norms and models of professional development, some believed that a new term—professional learning—was necessary (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Since that time, professional learning has been frequently used as a means of distinguishing the sort of teacher-centered, ongoing, sustained, collaborative, and inquiry-based professional development that is advocated by research from the universalized, expert-led, one-time workshop style of professional development that was traditionally offered to teachers by schools or school districts prior to the second wave. Notably, the Cobb County School District used the term professional learning in the "Keys" publication described in Chapter 1.

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) listed several characteristics of this new sort of professional learning:

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

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

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

- It must be connected to and derived from teachers' work with their students;

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

- It must be connected to other aspects of school change. (p. 598)

Further, Darling-Hammond (1998) wrote that professional learning must conceptualize learning in a different way. Learning, she said, must be seen as part of process that would begin in pre-

service education, continue through the early years of practice, and extend throughout a teacher's career. Accomplished teachers would learn to systematically question the efficacy and effects of their teacher practice. A professional teacher, Darling-Hammond said, would be "one who learns from teaching rather than as one who has finished learning how to teach" (1998, p.11).

Even if one does not employ the term professional learning, there is widespread agreement on the type of professional development that is most likely to create a change in teacher behavior. Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Suk Yoon (2001), in a study of thirty schools in ten districts in all parts of the country, found that the individual teachers who exhibited the most change were the ones who had experienced professional development that was specific to their classroom needs, embedded in their classroom practice, participant-driven, collaborative, long-term, and coherent. Little (1988) found that the professional development most likely to change teacher behavior has five characteristics: collaboration, collective participation in training and implementation, focus on crucial problems of curriculum and instruction, sustainability over time, and congruence with professional habits and norms of collegiality and experimentation. Abdal-Haqq (1995) gave *eleven* key attributes of effective professional development, adding opportunities for feedback, recognition of teachers as professionals and adult learners, and constructivist pedagogy to Little's list. Putnam and Borko (2000), using cognitive science as a starting point, came to the same conclusion about the sort of professional development that creates teacher change. They argued that teachers, like students, are active and collaborative learners, they construct their own understanding based on their surroundings and past experiences, and they will only make sense of professional development activities to the degree that they can see the relation to their classroom (Putnam and Borko,

2000). A U.S. Department of Education (1999) report found that many teachers believed that longer-term, more in-depth, collaborative, classroom-based professional development had more impact on their classroom practice than short-term professional development programs that lack connection to the challenges teachers face in their classrooms. Levin and Rock (2003) found that teachers who engaged in activities built on these ideas became, in time, more reflective, critical, and analytical in regards to their teaching practice.

The type of professional development advocated by government agencies and professional organizations echo similar principles of effective professional development. The United States Department of Education laid out its idea of professional development in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. According to Title IX, Part A, Section 9101, professional development includes activities that increase teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach (thereby helping them to become more *highly qualified*), improve classroom management skills, provide the knowledge and skills necessary to reach students with special needs or limited English proficiency, enhance the use of technology in the classroom, promote communication with parents, show teachers how to use data in their classroom practices, and give teachers and administrators the skills they need to enact standards-based reform plans. They are, according to the Act, "high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused," and they are developed "with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators" (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002, p. 539). Professional development, according to the Act, is to be regularly evaluated for its impact on teachers and students.

One can also refer to the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement for an indication of how the federal government defines professional development. Even though the Center is not a government agency, it is a joint venture between the Department of

Education and Learning Points Associates, a not-for-profit educational consultancy, and it has

been fully funded by the Department of Education since its founding in 2004. It is, in effect, a

practice arm of the Department of Education. According to the Center, high-quality

professional development is research-based, aligned with long-term district goals, designed in

response to teacher-identified needs, collaborative, primarily school-based, sufficiently

equipped, ongoing, rooted in adult learning principles, and evaluated based on its impact on

teacher effectiveness and student learning (The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and

Improvement [CCSRI], 2006, p.1). The Center cautions against losing focus, and they

encourage school leaders to choose formats that are in line with the desired outcome.   In

summary:

> If district officials, principals, and school leadership teams keep all of these
>
> characteristics in mind when designing professional development with and for teachers,
>
> they are likely to create productive and satisfying growth opportunities that make good
>
> use of professional development dollars. . . .Professional development can move beyond
>
> its traditional focus on a series of activities to become an integral part of a thriving
>
> community of learners. (CCSRI, 2006, p.1)

Most states have professional development standards that echo the federal government's

definitions. In Georgia, the Professional Learning Services Unit of the Department of Education

has several standards for professional development. Professional learning is to be organized in

learning communities, supported by strong leadership, fully resourced, data-driven, research-

based, subject to continual evaluation, and collaborative. It is intended to improve the learning

of all students, deepen content knowledge, provide teachers with research-based instructional

strategies, and teach teachers how to involve families and other stakeholders (Georgia

Department of Education, 2007, p. 1-2). The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC)—the state agency in charge of credentialing teachers—formerly required professional development for teacher certification renewal. As a result, the PSC, also, publishes guidelines for professional development. The PSC defines professional development as activities that improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach; are related to school-wide goals; give educators the skills necessary to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards; improve classroom management; are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused; are not one-day or short-term workshops or conferences; advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies; are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators; give teachers of limited English-proficient children the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children; promote the use of technology; promote positive school/home communication; and are regularly evaluated (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2007, p. 36-37).

Several other states have standards for professional development similar to Georgia's standards. Perhaps North Carolina is most explicit, even though they concentrate on what professional development is *not*:

At one time professional development was synonymous with "sit and get" sessions in which relatively passive participants were "made aware" of the latest ideas regarding teaching and learning by so-called "experts." Current research has shown the error of this thinking. First and foremost, professional development is no longer viewed as something only necessary for teachers—everyone who impacts student learning must continually improve and refine their knowledge and skills to maximize student

achievement. Secondly, professional development is much more than "one size fits all" after-school workshops and training sessions. True professional learning is results-driven, standards-based, and job-embedded. Finally, professional development is something done "with" rather than "to" the learner. (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2004, p. 2)

North Carolina and Georgia both credit the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) with inspiring their standards (National Staff Development Council, 2001). The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) has also published professional development standards. Although they are organized differently, the ASCD's standards are essentially the same: professional development is to be directly focused on helping to achieve student learning goals, collaborative, school-based, job-embedded, long-term, differentiated for diverse teachers, and tied to district goals (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2007, p. 1).

This literature informed my study by way of describing the educational policy environment in which school leaders must operate. Clearly, professional organizations and state educational agencies expect administrators to provide a particular style of professional learning for their teachers, and this professional learning is different from traditional staff development. In my study, I was interested to see whether school leaders had accepted and implemented the professional learning that is advocated by scholars, governments, and professional organizations or if they clung to the traditional style of professional development.

<div align="center">The Philosophical Roots of Professional Learning</div>

Professional learning—or the type of modern professional development that is heavily advocated by the state and federal agencies, professional organizations, and scholars—appears

to apply non-traditional educational principles to staff development. In particular, professional learning seems to draw on progressive educational principles laid out by educators such as John Dewey. Foremost among these is the belief that learning be learner-centered—that the experience of the student (or, in this case, the teacher undergoing professional development) be the starting point of the educational enterprise. In 1900, Dewey wrote:

> [Traditional education] may be summed up by saying that the center of gravity is outside the child. It is in the teacher, the textbook, anywhere and everywhere you please except in the immediate child himself. . . . Now the change which is coming into our education is the shifting of the center of gravity. . . . In this case the child becomes the sun about which the appliances of education revolve; he is the center about which they are organized. (1900/1990, p. 34)

Dewey reiterated this idea throughout his career, and his ideas were echoed by Bode:

> The basic concern in this doctrine is rather to make education a process centering on the continuous reconstruction of experience in the direction of a total pattern which derives its warrant, not from externally imposed authority, but from the exercise of the pupil's own intelligence. (1938, p. 59)

Darling-Hammond struck a similar note when she argued that modern-day professional learning should be more teacher-centered:

> Such learning requires settings that support teacher inquiry and collaboration and strategies grounded in teachers' questions and concerns. To understand deeply, teachers must learn about, see, and experience successful learning-centered and learner-centered teaching practices. (1995, p. 598)

Lieberman (1995) said much the same thing when writing about professional learning for teachers in the modern age:

> The conventional view of staff development as a transferable package of knowledge to be distributed to teachers in bite-sized pieces needs radical rethinking. It implies a limited conception of teacher learning that is out of step with current research and practice. (p. 591)

Hargreaves (2000) also said that the center of gravity needs to be back on teachers:

> Professional development is usually most effective when it is not delivered by extraneous experts in off-site locations, but when it is embedded in the life and work of the school, when it actively secures the principal's or headteacher's support and involvement, and when it is the focus of collaborative discussion and action. (p. 165)

Moreover, Darling-Hammond also noted that modern-day professional learning must be active and collaborative, much like the Dewey's Laboratory School in Chicago once was:

> 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. In addition to a powerful base of theoretical knowledge, such learning requires settings that support teacher inquiry and collaboration and strategies grounded in teachers' questions and concerns. (Darling-Hammond, 1995, p. 598)

McLaughlin (1997) agreed, arguing that learning communities are by far the best way to bring teachers together so that they may collaboratively tackle problems.

A process that supports collaborative and critical inquiry such as the one that Darling-Hammond described would likely serve to make teachers into more thoughtful professionals and

ultimately into agents of social change. This is related to Dewey's overall goal of education.

According to Karier, "Dewey saw the function of the school as a vehicle for reforming society

by producing critical thinkers who as adults would make their own decisions" (1986, p. 146).

Paulo Freire shared the progressive's dedication to inquiry and social change, even though he

came from a different philosophical perspective. Freire's work and its link to developing

teachers appears later in this chapter. Freire emphasized the link between power and

knowledge, and he envisioned a fundamental reconstruction of society. Nonetheless, he, too,

advocated for ongoing professional learning, just as scholars do today:

> [Teacher development] is observed to the extent that, humble and open, teachers find
>
> themselves continually ready to rethink what has been thought and to revise their
>
> positions. . . . Teaching requires constant preparation and development on the part of
>
> teachers, as is made clearer and clearer by their teaching experience, if well lived and
>
> apprehended. Such development is based on a critical analysis of their practice. (Freire,
>
> 1998, p. 17-18)

This critical analysis of practice would lead to what Aronowitz and Giroux (1993) called

transformative intellectuals. Aronowitz and Giroux argued that such intellectuals would

become (and would help their students to become) "agents of civic courage" and they would

ultimately have the ability to "make despair unconvincing and hope practical" (p. 46). As such,

they would turn knowledge into something "meaningful, critical, and ultimately emancipatory,"

much as Freire had in mind (p. 46).

Understanding the philosophical underpinnings of modern professional learning gives

me a richer understanding of the goals and practices associated with this new form of staff

development. As a result, I will be better able to interpret the interview data I collect and

determine whether school leaders are committed to implementing high-quality professional development programs.

Modern Professional Development Programs

Amidst the literature about the form professional development should take, there is substantial literature about how rarely professional development actually meets these standards. In 1996, the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education published a report that indicated that for the majority of teachers, professional development was characterized by disjointed, one-time sessions in which they would sit and listen to outside experts. The teachers reported that the sessions covered topics they deemed inessential, and they learned little that applied to their classrooms (National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 1996). Corcoran, Shields, and Zucker (1998) found much the same thing when they researched the National Science Foundation's Statewide Systemic Initiative. Lord (1994) found that a great deal of professional development was informal— for example, in the hallways or around the lunch table. While such exchanges were authentic, Lord believed them to be random, unpredictable, and ultimately of limited value. Corcoran (1995) and Little (1989, 1994) both took note of the way that teachers generally regarded professional development as irrelevant and boring, consisting of outside experts who usually had very little understanding of what life was like inside the classroom. Lieberman (1995) characterized most professional development as "unconnected to classroom life," and referred to it as "a mélange of abstract ideas that pays little attention to the ongoing support of continuous learning and changed practices" (p. 594). The teachers Smylie (1989) interviewed ranked in-service training provided by their school districts at the bottom of a list of fourteen things that helped them become better teachers—well below

direct experience, consultation with other teachers, and study and research pursued on their own. He wrote:

> Criticisms of district in-service training programs are legion. Although strongly
>
> emphasized and relatively well supported in many school districts, in-service training for
>
> the improvement of classroom practice plays a small and ineffectual role in the
>
> professional lives of teachers. . . . Much staff development generally takes the form of
>
> one-shot, beginning-of the-year workshops without follow-up. There are few
>
> opportunities for ongoing work on specific classroom problems and few opportunities
>
> for practice and feedback. In addition . . . most formal in-service programs provided by
>
> schools and school districts serve a "maintenance" function where teachers are
>
> encouraged to change their behavior to assure compliance with preferred administrative
>
> routines or to support organizationally preferred modes of operation. In-service
>
> education that focuses on enhancing instructional practice is often unrelated to teachers'
>
> specific needs and concerns . . . and is likely to convey propositional knowledge that has
>
> few direct or relevant implications for practice or that does not relate to teachers' specific
>
> classroom experiences. (Smylie, 1989, p. 553-554)

These researchers painted a bleak picture of the professional development in American schools. Their findings were echoed by a three-year study conducted by Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Suk Yoon (2001). These researchers examined thirty schools in ten district in all parts of the country, and found that most school districts did not have the infrastructure, wherewithal, or political will to conduct effective professional development, and as a result, they did not.

However, the findings of Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Suk Yoon (2001) were not entirely negative. Even though they found that very little change takes place in schools as a result of professional development, a great deal of change would often take place *in individual teachers*. Likewise, Richardson (1990, 1994, 1998) found that teachers—despite their reputations as habit-bound individuals—were quite willing to change their practices, and they frequently did. In order for this to happen, first teachers had to be convinced that their professional development would help them to engage students more deeply, to be more in line with their own educational beliefs, or to establish the desired measure of classroom control. If teachers sensed that professional development would not help with one or more of those, they would disregard it, even if the professional development was the sort of collaborative, long-term, and classroom-based professional development described previously. Guskey (1985, 2002) also found a willingness among teachers to change their practices, as long as the professional development programs they experienced were properly designed. In short, Guskey argued that many professional development programs tried to change teacher attitudes and then expected their practices to change. This, he said, was backwards. Teacher attitudes would only change after teachers had experienced firsthand the effectiveness of certain practices. Teachers should therefore have been offered specific, concrete ideas that directly related to their day-to-day practice—things they could try in their classroom the very next day. After teachers—who were nothing if not practical, according to Guskey—saw the effectiveness of a particular practice, then they would open their minds to the broader principles and values embedded in the practice.

In addition, other research showed that different forms of professional development—practices that are more in line with scholarly recommendations—began taking off in the late

1990s and early 2000s. In particular, Levin and Rock (2003) and Catelli (1995) provided case studies of innovative professional development programs—in the form of collaborative action research—in American schools. Florio-Ruane and DeTar (1994, 2001), Thomas, Wineburg, Grossman, Myhre, and Woolworth (1998), and Wineburg and Grossman (1998) wrote enthusiastic reports of the growth that various teachers experienced as a result of taking part in book clubs. Bambino (2002) and Dunne and Honts (1998) sang the praises of Critical Friends Groups, in which collections of teachers would collaboratively review each other's lesson plans. Each of these studies demonstrated that professional learning was indeed underway at several schools. However, these writers pointed out that their case studies were limited and that the norm was still mass-scale sit-and-get professional development. Thus, it seems clear that even while most teachers in the first decade of the new millennium were still experiencing traditional staff development, there were some indications of a shift toward what scholars call professional learning.

Additional literature described the growth Comprehensive School Reform programs. As part of the contemporary *third wave* of reform, Comprehensive School Reform programs aim to overhaul schools from top to bottom, and in such programs, professional development is built-in. They were funded by federal grant money first appropriated in 1997, and they increased under NCLB. Included are commercially marketed designs like Success for All, What Works in Schools, and America's Choice. As described by Desimone (2002), Comprehensive School Reform programs focus on overall school improvement rather than on particular populations of students within schools. Comprehensive School Reform programs are not limited to particular subjects, programs, or instructional methods. In addition, under federal law, to qualify as a legitimate Comprehensive School Reform design—and to thereby be eligible for federal grant

money—designers must include a professional development plan. The plans vary; some designs take teachers off-site to undergo training while others have experts visit the schools. Although research is not clear on which Comprehensive School designs have the most successful form of professional development, Bodilly (1998) found that programs with whole-school training and on-site facilitators were more likely to see changes in teacher behavior, while Smith, Maxwell, Lowther, Hacker, Bol, and Nunnery (1997) found that proximity to the design headquarters and observing other schools where the model was in place made a difference. In contrast, Kozol (2005) wrote that the Success for All curriculum fostered teacher resistance in the schools he visited by virtue of its over-reliance on rote methodology and its under-reliance on teaching abilities.

This literature is very helpful in diagnosing the current state of professional development in the United States. In short, it appears that while professional development sessions have traditionally been very low-quality, there is some movement toward high-quality professional learning experiences in recent years. In addition, Comprehensive School Reform programs with built-in professional development have been introduced in the last decade. Having reviewed this literature, I was better able to situate the professional development programs at the schools under study in the larger context of professional development programs nationally.

<div align="center">Professional Development and Social Justice</div>

Several studies have demonstrated the efficacy of professional development programs in arousing cultural consciousness, promoting understanding, and ultimately creating positive social change. Reviewing this literature is pertinent given the growing diversity of the Cobb County School District and the increased need that teachers in the system have for training that will help them to reach racially, socioeconomically, and culturally distinctive students.

Lawrence and Tatum (1997a, 1997b) reported that when White teachers voluntarily took part in a series of professional development sessions on anti-racist education, it opened their eyes to the social power associated with being White, increased their understanding of institutionalized racism or White Privilege, and raised their consciousness of their racial identity. More than half of the teachers involved in one of their courses took action once they returned to school, including improving their relations with colleagues and community, transforming their curriculum, and advocating for changes at the institutional level. Similarly, Redman (1977), Sleeter (1992), and Washington (1981) found, like Lawrence and Tatum, that Whites who were formerly blind to issues of racial identity and privilege could have their awareness raised through a process of long-term and sustained professional development. Cranton (1994) and Inglis (1997) wrote that teachers who were enrolled in their adult education classes underwent significant cultural awakenings over the course of several weeks. Hollingsworth (1992) convened an all-female professional development group and had conversations about issues in teaching. Over time, the group became a form of *feminist praxis* when it became evident that a feminist political consciousness had emerged amongst the research group and in the researcher herself. Even though Sleeter (1993) found that many teachers in her study did not change their actions after undergoing training, she attributed this more to issues of structure and management than teacher intractability.

In rapidly diversifying school systems—such as the Cobb County School District—the need for such training has never been greater. As Gordon (1999) wrote:

High on the list of goals for education in a democratic society is the enablement of

intellective development and, ultimately, understanding of the diverse people of the

nation. . . . Increasingly, we in the United States are required to function in more than a

single language, adapt to the demands of more than a single culture, meet the behavioral

demands of more than a single situation, and understand the symbols and rituals of

people other than those with whom most of us have been socialized. (p. 171)

To compound matters, research shows that many teachers are not quite prepared for the job.

Valli (1995) found that White pre-service teachers tended to view color-blindness as a virtue,

and they thought that any recognition of differences between races was tantamount to racism.

Su (1997) found that many minority teachers were entering the profession for the sake of

fighting social injustice, while many White teachers, due in part to their sheltered educational

backgrounds, did not see teaching as a political enterprise and were less likely to see themselves

as change agents. Schultz, Neyhart, and Reck (1996) found that pre-service teachers, even those

who looked to work in urban areas, knew very little about the diverse cultural backgrounds of

the children they planned to teach. Vavrus (1994) found that most young teachers saw

multicultural education as an add-on to the standard curriculum rather than a fundamental

reinvention of teaching and learning.

Unsurprisingly, as a result of all of this, Pang and Sablan (1998) found that teachers'

confidence in their ability to teach African American children plummeted in their first few years

on the job, and Valenzuela (1999) found that many teachers and schools tended to employ

practices that stripped Mexican American students of their cultural heritage. Beyer (2001)

wrote:

Educational policies and practices too often provide teachers and pupils with images of

the good life, "necessary" beliefs and orientations, and "American values" through the

inculcation of attitudes, norms, values, and forms of knowledge that are included or

excluded as well as pattern of apathetic noninvolvement for many students. In short,

> educational institutions (and many other influences, of course) have been useful in
>
> reproducing forms of consciousness that help maintain social inequalities and forms of
>
> hegemony that support the status quo. . . . Are these the qualities and values we really
>
> want for our children and our schools? (p. 155)

Many scholars envision a different sort of schooling. Ladson-Billings (1995) called for culturally responsive pedagogy—a practice that

> . . . not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm
>
> their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that
>
> schools (and other institutions) perpetuate. (p. 469)

Teachers in Ladson-Billings's model would be encouraged to develop distinctive conceptions of self and others, more fluid and equitable relationships with students and other stakeholders, and different notions of knowledge than those of traditional teachers (1995, p. 479-481). Kumashiro (2000) called for anti-oppressive education, in which schools

> . . . recognize that there is great diversity among the student population, and, more
>
> importantly, that the majority of students—namely, all those who are not White
>
> American, male, hegemonically masculine, heterosexual, and middle-class or wealthy—
>
> are marginalized and harmed by various forms of oppression in schools (p. 29)

Teachers in Kumashiro's model would shy away from pedagogies that tend to benefit boys and marginalize girls, such as competitive debates. Banks (1993) called for a greater emphasis on multicultural education, which would restructure schools so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational equality. This would be accomplished by making changes in the curriculum and teaching materials, reinventing teaching and learning styles, changing attitudes and behaviors of teachers and administrators, rethinking

the school goals, and refocusing the norms and culture of the school (Banks, 1993).

Gruenewald (2003) advocated a critical pedagogy of place in which students would use their

historical and geographical environment as the starting point for deep inquiry into the

relationship between self and surroundings. Teachers in Gruenewald's model would be co-

investigators alongside students, and the end result would be increased criticality and empathy.

Each of these models imagined a different life for teachers inside schools, and as such, each

advocated some sort of professional development to help teachers to re-conceptualize and

recreate their role.

Each of these models is built on notions of critical inquiry and literacy. For theoretical

structure, many of those who advocate for a curriculum dedicated to social justice look to

Freire's emancipatory pedagogy and practice (1970). Freire saw education as an attempt to

restore the humanity that both oppressors and the oppressed lost over the course of history. In

order to do this, those involved in an educational endeavor first had to "perceive the reality of

oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which

they can transform" (Freire, 1970, p. 31). This sort of agency is denied in traditional forms of

schooling. Freire likened conventional educational practices to banking, in which education

"becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the

depositor" (Freire, 1970, p. 52). Teachers, concluded Freire, must reject the banking concept

entirely.

While professional development was not specifically addressed by Freire, implicit in his

ideas was the notion that teachers' own consciousnesses had to be raised, likely by some sort of

training. Other scholars echoed Freire's writing. McLaren and Farahmandpur (2001) called on

teachers to be *revolutionary intellectuals* by way of connecting theory with practice. Fullan

(1993) believed that teachers should be *change agents*. Aronowitz and Giroux (1993) thought that teachers should not be trained to be obedient civil servants but rather transformative intellectuals—professionals who employ forms of pedagogy that treat students as critical agents, maximize dialogue, and make knowledge meaningful, critical, and ultimately emancipatory, just as Freire envisioned.

Woven into this work on the links between teacher education and social justice is the presumption that teachers who endeavor to become change agents must be trained to do so. At the same time, of course, they must not simply be indoctrinated into an alternative way of seeing themselves, their students, and their practice. Zeichner (1993) cautioned against this, arguing that professional development served to "maintain the teacher's subservient position to those removed from the classroom with regard to the core aspects of their work curriculum and instruction," and should, therefore, be resisted (p. 6). To Zeichner (1993), most professional development was a charade, wherein the important questions about the purposes of education in a democratic society are lost. Instead, professional development needed not only to honor teacher voices, but also shed light on how teachers' everyday actions challenge or support various oppressions and injustices related to social class, race, gender, sexual preference, religion, and numerous other factors (Zeichner, 1993, p. 14). Until professional development reflected the principles Zeichner advocated, scholars such as Gitlin and Margonis (1995), believed that teacher resistance would be "good sense," given that in their estimation, the American educational system is designed to dis-empower teachers. These insights were to prove very valuable in my study, given the indications of teacher resistance I found.

Amidst all of this valuable philosophical writing on the links between education and social justice, there is precious little about the sort of professional development that practicing

teachers can do in order to become more active practitioners of critical and inclusive pedagogies and—more relevant to my study—how their training was influenced by the leader of their school. While scholars have agreed that teachers must conceptualize their roles in different ways and must radically transform their classrooms, there are only a few concrete suggestions about how to make this happen. Aronowitz and Giroux (1993) were helpful, as are Sleeter (1992, 1993), Nieto (1999), and Lawrence and Tatum (1997a, 1997b). Nonetheless, a teacher who is looking to become an advocate for connecting professional development and social justice would have a hard time determining what should be done first. In my study, it will be interesting to see whether schools offer teachers any staff development that might help them reach diverse students or become the emancipatory educators that Freire and his philosophical kin advocate.

The state of Georgia does not require any such professional development in order to be considered a highly qualified teacher. When the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002) required all teachers in core classes to be highly qualified, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) was tasked with working out the nuts and bolts of the law's implementation. The PSC defined core subjects as English, reading, language arts, mathematics, broad-field science (such as physics, biology, or chemistry), foreign languages, broad-field social studies (such as civics and government, economics, history, geography), and the arts (visual arts, music, band and chorus). The PSC designated the Georgia Assessment for the Certification of Educators (GACE) test as the federally required means for demonstrating content knowledge, required that each teacher hold a bachelor's degree in a subject area germane to the classes they were to teach, and determined that those with non-renewable certificates could not be classified as highly qualified. Finally, the PSC stated that highly qualified teachers were to participate in

high-quality professional development, which included, but was not limited to, activities that "give teachers of limited English-proficient children . . . the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children" and "provide instruction in methods of teaching children with special needs" (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2007, p. 36-37). Thus, there was a degree of awareness on the part of the state educational authorities that highly qualified teachers needed to have some knowledge of how to deal with the growing population of diverse students—specifically non-English speakers and those classified as special needs—in our state. At the same time, though, the PSC only required highly qualified teachers to undergo a minimum of professional development, and the PSC left teachers and school districts with the option not to offer professional development that addressed diverse students. In other words, professional development that specifically addresses the difficulties teachers face in reaching students of different nationalities *was recognized as valuable but not required*, and professional development that would help teachers reach students of different races, ethnicities, and sexes *was not even mentioned*. Therefore, it is entirely possible to be a highly qualified teacher in Georgia without having spent even an hour talking about the needs of diverse students. Likewise, there is nothing that the state of Georgia requires of administrators in terms of implementing such programs. Any staff development aimed at promoting social justice at the schools in my study will therefore be at the direction of the Cobb County School District or at the direction of the individual school leaders themselves. If I do witness such professional development programs, they will likely be in addition to the programs that are designed to achieve other goals.

Educational Leadership

The literature on educational leadership also informs my study given that my primary research subjects are school leaders. There has been a great deal of research conducted over the last few decades with regard to school leaders' views and positions. Recently, researchers have looked into administrators' views regarding various aspects of special education (Bailey & du Plessis, 1997; Center, Ward, Parmenter, & Nash, 1985; Cline, 1981; Payne & Murray, 1974; Praisner, 2003), beginning teacher induction programs (Brock & Grady, 1998), their work and co-workers (Miskel, 1977); marginal teachers (Mock & Melnick, 1991), teacher dismissal (Painter, 2000), vocational education (Barnett, 1984), site-based management (Lucas, Brown, & Markus, 1991), teacher evaluation (Peel & Inkson, 1993; Timperley, 1998), and child abuse (Romano, Casey, & Daro, 1991). However, very little work has been done that specifically catalogs administrator views and positions on the topic of professional development. Nonetheless, because my interest is in learning about Cobb County school leaders' views and positions on professional development and to explore how different foundational factors may be evident in their positions, the literature on administrator traits (i.e. the effect of race, experience level, and similar factors) and the literature on administrator behaviors are useful in contextualizing my findings.

Administrator Traits

Several studies have been conducted on the link between various administrator attributes and school culture, teachers, and student achievement (Barth, 1986; Boyan, 1988; Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983; Eberts & Stone, 1988; Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990; Kowalski, Reitzug, McDaniel, & Otto, 1992; Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1992; Thomson, 1992). These scholars are among those who have demonstrated that the experience level, sex, race, and

educational background of school leaders influence the sort of educational environment they established in their schools. In turn, many scholars argue that the improvement of the school culture and high-quality professional development go hand-in-hand. However, very little research has been conducted on the specific link between administrator attributes and the nature of professional development programs. That is, while there is research on the impact of administrator experience, education, sex, race, and style on a school's culture, few studies follow it through to determine whether those attributes truly affect professional development. Thus, I was interested to consider whether or not the differences in the views of the school leaders in my study can be attributed to observable differences in the school leaders themselves.

In the last two decades, there has been a great deal of research on gender and educational leadership. In a study of several hundred principals from the Midwestern United States, Eckman (2004) and Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1990) found that female principals tended to spend more years in the classroom before becoming principals compared to male principals, and that female principals obtained their first administrative jobs at a later age than male principals. Gross and Trask (1976) and Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1990), found that women began careers in education because they hoped to serve others, while men began careers in education for financial reasons and/or upward mobility.

Many scholars (Josefowitz, 1980; Morsnik, 1970; Pitner, 1981) alluded to female administrators' greater ability to form relationships with their co-workers. The importance of cordial working relationships should not be underestimated, as evidence of the need for good relationships between administrators and teachers can be found throughout the literature (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Josefowitz, 1980; McLaughlin, 1994; Meier, 1995; Morsnik, 1970; Sizer, 1992a, 1992b). Fullan (2002) wrote,

The single factor common to successful change is that relationships improve. If

relationships improve, schools get better. If relationships remain the same or get worse,

ground is lost. Thus, leaders build relationships with diverse people and groups—

especially with people who think differently. . . . Efforts to motivate and energize

disaffected teachers and forge relationships among otherwise disconnected teachers can

have a profound effect on the overall climate of the organization. Well-established

relationships are the resource that keeps on giving. (p. 18)

Fiore (2002) and Pawlas (1995) detailed the importance and difficulty of maintaining a positive

relationship with the community. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) wrote of the importance for

administrators not only to find allies in the school community, but to keep close tabs on those

stakeholders who might oppose their initiatives.

Another fundamental difference between male and female leaders related to their focus

on instructional tasks. Pitner (1981) found that female school leaders spent more of their

unstructured time working on curriculum and instruction. Other scholars (Adikison, 1981;

Glasman, 1984; Gross & Trask, 1976, Hallinger and Murphy, 1985) also found that male

principals tended to be less focused on instruction than female principals. Leithwood, Begley,

and Cousins (1990) wrote that female administrators tended to see themselves more as

curriculum and instructional leaders while men tended to view themselves as general managers

(p. 26). Clearly, these gender differences suggest implications for professional development

positions and styles, and as a result, I expected to find some differences between the views of

the male and female school leaders in my study.

There is an emerging body of research on race and educational leadership in the post-

segregation period. With the closing of Black schools in 1960s and 1970s came the firing of

thousands of African-American teachers and the demotion of almost all African-American principals (Walker, 2003). African-Americans only began to regain positions of leadership in schools in the late 1970s and 1980s (mostly in predominantly African-American schools), and as a result, the first systematic studies on African-American school leaders did not come until the late 1980s (Franklin, 1990; Lomotey, 1989). Nonetheless, some of the scholarly literature on race and educational leadership can help to explain the difference between the ethos of African-American-led schools and White-led schools, and similarly, the different views that African-American school leaders in my study may have related to White school leaders. In a case study of three African-American principals, Lomotey (1989) found that each principal appeared to demonstrate a commitment to the education of African-American children, an understanding of the communities in which they work, and a confidence in the ability of African-American children to learn. Likewise, Reitzug and Patterson (1998) found that African-American principals exhibited a form of caring that helped students to find ways of addressing the difficulties they faced. Both of these studies suggest that there may be a link between a school ethos of caring and the race of the administrators leading the school, therefore possibly connecting to professional development position, type, and style.

Not every administrator trait is as well-researched as sex or even race. Regarding administrator experience, Strauss (2003) found that the experience of school administrators had very little effect on student performance. Strauss, however, did not consider the link between administrator experience and professional development, which interested me as a possible ingredient in my study. Other scholars (Aaronson, Barrow, & Sander, 2007; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2004; Hanushek, 1971; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004) considered the experience levels of teachers, but not of school leaders. Regarding educational levels, Baker

and Cooper (2005) studied the teachers that were hired by well-educated principals and found

that principals tended to hire teachers who had attained roughly the same educational level.

Clearly, there are significant gaps in the literature with regards to the differences in school

leaders with varying years of experience and educational levels.

Administrator Behaviors

With the advent of the standards and accountability movement, there has been a

corresponding change in the role of school leader. No longer can principals expect simply to be

passive managers of adults or a stern disciplinarian of children. Rather, they are expected to

promote an educational environment that facilitates teaching and learning and contributes to

student and teacher growth. Glasman and Heck (1992) summarized the changes well, even as

the shift from manager to instructional leader was beginning:

> Over the past decade or so, the role has evolved from manager to street-level bureaucrat,
>
> instructional manager, instructional leader, and transformational leader, as well as
>
> several other images that describe changes in perceptions about the role. The changing
>
> role conceptualizations may result from increasing external demands for educational
>
> accountability and reflect the reform of a system moving from closed (emphasizing
>
> management and centralized control) to open (emphasizing leadership and decentralized
>
> participation). (p. 7)

The implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act has hastened this shift in the role of the

principal, and recent scholarship has focused on the behaviors that are to be expected of modern

school leaders.

Several scholars (Blase and Blase, 2004; Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; DuFour, 1991;

Fiore, 2002; Fullan, 1992, 1993; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Guskey, 1985; Hallinger and

Heck, 1998; Hargreaves, 1994; Heifetz and Linsky, 2002; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986;

Manasse, 1983; McLaughlin, 1994; Meier, 1995; Nanus, 1992; Pawlas,1995; Sizer, 1992a,

1992b; Starratt, 1995; Waters, Marzano, and McNulty, 2003) studied administrator behaviors

and the effect that they have on teacher morale and behavior. In 1998, Hallinger and Heck

reviewed the research on principal behaviors and student achievement that had been published

between 1980 and 1995. In 2003, Waters, Marzano, and McNulty undertook a similar study,

circulating a meta-analysis of seventy studies on principal behaviors published since 1978.

Both studies concluded, in short, that high-quality educational leadership mattered, and that

successful school leaders across the country exhibited many of the same characteristics and

behaviors. In my study, I was interested to see whether or not school leaders who demonstrated

an awareness of effective administrative behaviors also exhibited many of the same views and

positions on professional development.

Among the common behaviors of successful school leaders was visibility. Waters,

Marzano, and McNulty (2003) defined visibility as "high quality contact and interactions with

teachers and students" (p. 4). Whitaker (1997) wrote:

> Effective instructional leaders must make it a point to visit classrooms daily. These visits
>
> should be structured to show that they have meaning and purpose. They validate the idea
>
> that the classrooms are where the truly important activities in a school occur and that
>
> instructional leadership is the most critical responsibility of the school principal. (p. 156)

Heck (1992) found that high-performing schools have principals who make regular classroom

visits more often than those in low-performing schools. Blase and Blase (2004) supported the

importance of visibility in their study of over 800 teachers in public elementary, middle, and

high schools in the Southeastern, Midwestern, and Northwestern United States. Blase and Blase

(2004) found that principals who made informal visits to classrooms were viewed very favorably by teachers, and that focused interactions with teachers enhanced teachers' motivation, self-esteem, sense of security, and morale. Likewise, Blase and Blase (2004) found that administrators could not choose to simply remain invisible: teachers who never saw their leaders felt abandoned, and they had many more favorable things to say about principals who were visible when compared to those who were not. In my study, I was interested to see whether school leaders who emphasized visibility also emphasized high-quality professional development programs.

A visible administrator must endeavor not to be a bullying administrator or take what Blase and Anderson (1995) called a *control-oriented* leadership style. While some may consider such forcefulness a virtue, such an approach to leadership can sour into abuse if teachers remain resistant. Blase and Blase (2002) have shown that abuse can take a variety of forms, all of which can result in feelings of shock, disorientation, humiliation, loneliness, injured confidence, damaged self-esteem, and guilt. Long-term, teachers may experience fear, anxiety, anger, or even depression, each of which can result in a range of physical and psychological problems for the teacher and educational problems for the school.

According to several scholars (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Blase & Anderson, 1995; Blase & Blase, 2004; Blase, Blase, & Phillips, 2010; Marks & Louis, 1997; Moye, Henkin, and Egley, 2005; Rhodes, Camic, Milburn, & Lowe, 2009), another common behavior of successful school leaders was the maintenance of a collegial environment. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) wrote that an effective school leader had to be able to establish and maintain a school culture that fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation. Likewise, Newman, King, and Youngs (2000) found that schools with principals who were dedicated to

promoting a cooperative school culture were more likely to have comprehensive professional

development programs. DuFour (1991) wrote that actively promoting a productive climate that

encourages and rewards those who take steps toward shared goals is a hallmark of an effective

school leader: "One of the very best indicators of instructional development," DuFour wrote,

"is the presence of an ongoing, school-based staff development program and a school climate in

which that program can flourish" (1991, p. 10). The National Staff Development Council

(NSDC) agreed that establishing a productive school climate should be at the top of a school

leader's list of priorities:

> Skillful leaders establish policies and organizational structures that support ongoing
>
> professional learning and continuous improvement. . . . They make certain that employee
>
> contracts, annual calendars, and daily schedules provide adequate time for learning and
>
> collaboration as part of the workday. In addition, they align district incentive systems
>
> with demonstrated knowledge and skill and improvements in student learning rather than
>
> seat-time arrangements such as courses completed or continuing education units earned
>
> (2007, p.1).

Deborah Meier, famed founder of the Central Park East schools in New York City, attributed

much of the success she has had with downtrodden students in Harlem to the collaborative

environment present at the schools. "Schools," she said, "must create a passion for learning not

only among children but among their teachers" (1995, p. 140). She continued:

> We will change American education only insofar as we make all our schools
>
> educationally inspiring and intellectually challenging for teachers. . . . Schools in which
>
> teachers are in frequent conversation with each other about their work, have easy and
>
> necessary access to each other's classrooms, and have the time to develop common

standards for student performance are the ones that will succeed in developing new

habits in students and their teachers. (Meier, 1995, p. 143)

Clearly, research suggests a link between a collaborative environment and the implementation

of a functional professional development program. Thus, it was of interest to consider whether

the school leaders in my study spoke of the importance of a collaborative environment when

they described their views of professional development.

Another common behavior of successful school leaders is focusing on clear goals and

directing school activities toward those goals. According to Waters, Marzano, McNulty (2003),

an effective leader establishes clear goals and keeps the school's attention focused on those

goals. Several scholars noted of the importance of focus, or what some researchers called

"vision." Several scholars (Blase, Blase, and Phillips, 2010; Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986;

Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986; Manasse, 1983; Nanus, 1992; Starratt, 1995) argued that

effective leaders must have some solid idea of where the organization should go, why it should

go there, and what route the organization should follow. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) wrote that

leaders lead by galvanizing effort around ambitious goals and by establishing conditions that

support teachers and that help students succeed. Nanus (1992) said that vision is the defining

characteristic of an organization and that employees will not feel unified without one. Likewise,

Sizer (1992b) added, "People like to know why they are asked to do things. They value an

enterprise whose purposes are clear" (p. 123). Blase, Blase, and Phillips (2010) found that high-

performing principals possessed the ability to maintain their focus in the face of continuous

distractions, especially from daily managerial responsibilities which may distract even the most

well-intentioned principals. This avowed importance of vision is a key ingredient of effective

leadership, and by extension, it could have implications for the kind of professional

development a given school leader offers and supports. Thus, I was interested to see whether the views on professional development of the school leaders in my study reflected any kind of vision.

<div align="center">Professional Development and School-Based Factors</div>

School leaders' views and positions on professional development may also be conditioned by factors related to the schools in which they work. In particular, there is some evidence that teachers' professional development experience is influenced by the level of their school. Choy, Chen, and Bugarin (2006) noted a decrease in professional development in the upper grades, and cited various reasons why professional development programs may fall apart as students get older. Among these factors, they argued, is that schools become larger. The scholarly literature is mixed on whether there is a link between school size and poor professional development. In a study of professional development for science teachers in 666 schools, Supovitz and Turner (2000) found that school size had almost no effect on teachers' professional development experiences. However, Supovitz and Turner's average school had just over 500 students, and the largest had less than 1500 students—about 50% fewer students than the largest schools in my study. Bullough, Kauchak, Crow, Hobbs, and Stokes (1997), on the other hand, found that in large schools, the effects of professional development are swept away by the sheer size of schooling, which would lead to such problems as inefficient communication (p. 63). At the same time, Bullough, Kauchak, Crow, Hobbs, and Stokes (1997) found that small schools could be completely overwhelmed by the additional responsibilities that attended the implementation of a professional development program. Thus, while Bullough, Kauchak, Crow, Hobbs, and Stokes believed that school size mattered, it did not follow that a larger school would necessarily have a less functional professional development

program than a small one. Choy, Chen, and Bugarin (2006)—in the same study that argued that professional development peters out in the upper grades due to the larger schools—reported that elementary school principals were more likely to follow up on professional development activities if they worked at large schools than if they worked at small schools. Thus, according to the authors, a large school size appeared to have a positive impact on professional development programs at the elementary level.

A second reason that Choy, Chen, and Bugarin (2006) offered for the faltering of professional development programs as students got older had to do with the organization and departmentalization of subjects in the upper grades. There is a great deal of research on departmentalization and students. Lee and Smith (1993) found that teaming at the middle school level led to a higher degree of student engagement and achievement at the middle school level. Likewise, Bryk and Thum (1989) found that a diverse but disjointed curriculum such as is found in the upper grades led to greater levels of student absenteeism and dropping out. Simmons and Blyth (1987) have argued that the organizational differences between primary schools and secondary schools can be very traumatic for students, thereby leading to greater feelings of alienation and stress:

> In elementary school, children usually have one teacher and one set of classmates; in the
> larger junior high, the adolescents' teachers, classmates, and even rooms are constantly
> being changed. While the elementary school resembles the comfortable primary-type
> context as does the family, the junior high with its impersonality, specialization, and
> greater emphasis on rules corresponds more closely to a bureaucratic environment. (p. 6)

There is also a great deal of literature on teaming and teachers. McLaughlin (1993) reported that teachers in teams exhibited high levels of innovativeness, and high levels of energy and

enthusiasm. He furthered reported that those teachers felt supported in their attempts to grow and learn. Consequently, according to McLaughlin, teamed teachers demonstrated a high level of commitment to teaching and to all of the students with whom they worked. Mills, Powell, and Pollack (1992) found that after only three months in teams, teachers felt less personally and professionally isolated. Husband and Short (1994) found that teachers organized into teams felt a greater sense of empowerment with regards to decision making, status, impact, and professional growth than teachers who were organized into departments. While some scholars (Kruse & Louis, 1995; Silva & Mackin, 2002) have reported that being on teams can lead to an inability to deal with school-wide issues, for the most part, literature tends to suggest that formal teacher grouping by grade level rather than by subject matter has a positive impact on teachers.

High-quality professional learning is, by definition, collaborative, so teachers in any good professional development program should be grouped. Working together, as Sandholtz (2000) argued, will allow for support, ideas, and criticism, all of which combine to promote the improvement of teachers' practice. Teaming by grade level, such as they do at the elementary and middle school level, can—but will not necessarily—lead to a more existent and high-quality professional development program, while teaming by subject matter, such as they do at the high school level, will not. At the same time, though, being separated into particular groups—be they teams or departments—may serve to thwart school-wide professional development programs by obscuring whole-school coordination of goals.

Although not mentioned by Choy, Chen, and Bugarin (2006), professional development programs may decline as students age perhaps because of some inherent, indefinable differences in elementary, middle, and high schools. Numerous scholars have noted differences between various levels of education, all of which may serve to thwart professional development

programs. Marks (2000) found that student engagement in classroom activities was affected by a wide variety of factors, but in general, it dwindled as students get older. Lynch and Cicchetti (1997) found that young people reported less positive relationships with adults and more positive relationships with their peers as they get older. Midgley, Anderman, and Hicks (1995) found that middle school teachers and students believed the school culture and teacher instructional approaches were more performance-focused and less task-focused in middle schools than they were in elementary schools. Adams and Christenson (2000) found that parents tended to trust middle school teachers less than elementary school teachers, and high school teachers less than middle school teachers. Regarding school leaders, Johnson and Holdaway (1990) found that elementary principals often were more personally involved in planning and instructional supervision, while secondary school principals were more likely to delegate those responsibilities. Larsen and Harty (1987) also noted a difference between elementary and secondary principals in terms of the behaviors that were expected of each. The researchers concluded that teachers and administrators have vastly different expectations of an elementary school principal than they do of a secondary school principal. While each of these studies did not consider professional development, their findings certainly support the fact that there are myriad fundamental differences between primary schools and secondary schools, many of which may serve to influence the shape and character of professional development programs. Thus, this literature helped me to contextualize my findings and to consider the complexities of the professional development landscape in schools.

Cross-National Issues in Professional Development

Finally, the literature on cross-national issues in professional development informs my study. It is clear that countries look to one another for ideas, and often, they face the same dilemmas with regards to professional development. As such, this literature—whether it pertained to pre-service training, ongoing training for practicing teachers, or the pursuit of higher degrees—is useful in contextualizing my findings.

At the turn of the last century, Michael Sadler, the British historian and public schools champion, said,

> The practical value of studying, in a right spirit and with scholarly accuracy, the working
>
> of foreign systems of education is that it will result in our being better fitted to study and
>
> to understand our own. (Sadler, 1900, quoted in: Higginson, 1979, p.50)

Sadler likely had no idea how widely he would be quoted more than one hundred years later, but he probably could have guessed that countries today would still be borrowing educational practices from one another. Heidenheimer, Heclo, and Adams (1990) suggested that countries look to one another in order to get fresh ideas, to gain a deeper and clearer perspective on one's own situation, and to understand other countries better. On the other hand, Halpin and Troyna (1995) wrote that international policy borrowing is simply a political ploy borne out of policymakers' desire to look activist and thereby shore up their power. Regardless of the reasoning, Phillips and Ochs (2003) said that borrowing is so common that it is central to the work that comparative scholars do. Phillips and Ochs argued that there are four stages in the education policy borrowing process: *cross-national attraction*, in which the policies of one country appeal to another country due to such impulses as internal dissatisfaction, political changes, or new economic orders; *decision*, in which the governments begin the process of

change by putting the big pieces in place; *implementation*, in which the foreign model changes as it adapts to realities in the borrower country; and *indigenization*, in which a policy becomes part of the system of education of the borrower country, and its effects can be readily felt (2003, p. 452-456). This pattern extends to professional development practices borrowed from abroad.

In an era of ever-increasing globalization, examples of educational policy borrowing can be found everywhere, and professional development practices today move across international boundaries. The American political scientists Chubb and Moe (1992) wrote, "The fact is, virtually everything . . . about the politics of British education applies straight across the board to the politics of American education. Only the names have to be changed" (p. 49). This includes the literature on professional development, and indeed, it seems as if there is a great deal of borrowing between the two countries in this area. The British researchers Boyle, Lamprianou, and Boyle (2005) performed a three-year longitudinal study in Britain of the effect of the sort of high-quality professional learning described previously. They wrote:

> These 'reform' types of PD activities include: study groups in which teachers are engaged in regular, structured, and collaborative interactions around topics identified by the group; coaching or mentoring arrangements where teachers work one-on-one with an equally or more experienced teacher; networks which link teachers or groups, either in person or electronically, to explore and discuss topics of interest, pursue common goals, share information, and address common concerns; immersion in inquiry, in which teachers engage in the kinds of learning that they are expected to practice with their students. . . . In comparison to the traditional 'one-hit' workshops, these types of activities are usually longer in duration, allow teachers the opportunity to practice and

reflect upon their teaching and are embedded in ongoing teaching activities. (Boyle,

Lamprianou, and Boyle, 2005, p. 5)

Over the course of three years in the early 2000s, Boyle, Lamprianou, and Boyle measured the

prevalence of such professional learning practices and found that while there were incremental

increases in the number of reform types of professional development, the prevailing model in

Britain was still a one-time workshop—much like the professional development experiences in

United States.

With the prevalence of international borrowing, scholars have often researched various

professional development practices that could potentially be borrowed. Fernandez (2002) wrote

of the effectiveness of Japanese lesson study, in which practitioners collaboratively reflect on a

given class. Hussein (2006) researched the process of Critical Practitioner Inquiry, which has

been shown to transform passive educational practitioners into powerfully reform-minded

intellectuals in some African settings. Holloway (2001) described a collaborative professional

development experience called the Beginning Teachers' Induction Program in Canada in which

some 96% of beginning teachers and 98% of experienced teachers reported having had a

positive experience in the program. Jarvinen and Kohonen (1995) reported comparable results

of a non-traditional professional development program in Finland, and Ho, Watkins, and Kelly

(2001) and Walker and Cheong (1996) wrote of yet more similar programs in Hong Kong.

Darling-Hammond (1996) described innovative teacher preparation procedures in Japan, China,

Taiwan, Luxembourg, and Germany when trying to persuade policymakers in the United States

to give teachers more say in educational processes. Clearly, professional development as an

important and needed component of educational improvement is a universal issue.

In addition to the scholarly research on policy and practice borrowing, there is a body of research conducted in foreign countries that may help to inform the formulation of professional development policies here in the United States. A great deal of literature focused on professional development as further study for higher degrees and other purposes, versus professional development on the job. For instance, Nasser and Fresko (2003) examined the higher learning and professional development of teachers in Israel, and found that earning an advanced degree did little with respect to the acquisition of new knowledge and professional skills and thus did nothing to change their classroom behavior. At the same time, though, advanced study went a long way in helping teachers maintain their interest and commitment to the profession. Given high levels of teacher attrition in Israel, the authors concluded that higher learning was useful as in preventing teacher burnout (Nasser and Fresko, 2003). Edmonds and Lee (2002) also studied advanced degree programs, but in England. They found that teachers in England often chose advanced degree programs because they were looking for more choice in their professional development in an attempt to find options more relevant to their specific practice. Edmonds and Lee (2002) found that advanced degree programs ultimately made teachers more confident, but the authors were unclear about whether this confidence led to any changes in their teaching practice. While neither Nasser and Fresko nor Edmonds and Lee specifically drew comparisons to the United States, their findings could be used to inform similar research in American sites.

Along the same lines, some international scholars describe issues and dilemmas in professional development that may have cross-national applicability. One such issue is the linkage between staff development and broader educational goals. Brook (1996) demonstrated

the way that poor staff development has served as a *blocking factor* to the fulfillment of educational and societal goals in post-apartheid South Africa (p. 218). Often, Brook wrote,

> Opportunities are lacking for the upgrading of teacher professionalism, the inculcation of commitment to multiculturalism and postnational identity, and the staff development needed to assist teachers to cope with linguistically and culturally diverse classes. (p. 219)

When there were such professional development opportunities, Brook (1996) said that they were poorly coordinated of very little value to teachers. Edwards and Spreen (2007) reported similar findings in South Africa almost a decade later, arguing that when combined with the ease with which South African teachers can find jobs in other countries, poor professional development was leading to a severe teacher shortage, further stymieing post-apartheid educational goals. Likewise, Napier (2010) found that fifteen years after the official end of apartheid schooling, South African teachers continued to view professional development activities as "woefully inadequate" and "out of touch with school realities" (p. 40).

Another issue prevalent in the research with cross-national relevance is the approach of various countries to influxes of immigrants. Alidou (2000), Gay and Howard (2000), and Weisman (2001) all described the vast knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to work with children of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Norberg (2000) described the ways that Swedish teachers have dealt with the arrival of immigrant students. Among other things, Norberg found that educators and parents had different visions for how to deal with the cultural practices and knowledge that immigrant children brought with them. Further, Norberg found that teachers normally did not receive any professional development that would help them

address the needs of immigrant students. Rather, teachers in Norberg's study were mostly left to their own devices.

Similarly, some scholars addressed the relationship between immigration in the United States and professional development. Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond (1997) argued that the growth of immigrant students in the United States required those who designed teacher education programs to employ the principles of professional learning described previously. Citing The International High School in New York City as a model, they argued that teachers must be given time to work in collaborative groups in which they would discuss ways of not only helping students acclimatize to the United States, but keep a strong tie to their native language and culture. Also, Ross (2001) described the Newcomers Entering Teaching program in Maine. The program sought to train and certify immigrants, many of whom were educators in their country of origin. The State of Maine, Ross reported, saw this as a positive initiative, given that immigrant teachers were better able to respond to the needs of immigrant students. At the same time, though, Ross (2001) did not report any formal means by which the immigrant newcomers could share their knowledge and experience with already established teachers by means of collaborative, in-service professional development.

The increase in policy and practice borrowing that has accompanied globalization in the last two decades has resulted in what many scholars see as a global educational system, and several scholars have provided analysis of the growing cross-national approach to education in general. Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) and Kirk and Napier (2009) wrote that the advent of the global system has increased emphasis on particular subjects like mathematics and science and has heightened global reliance on standardized tests. Henry, Lingard, Rizvi, and Taylor (1999) thought that there were certain ideological features woven into the emerging global system, such

as "commitment to market-based provision of services; encouragement of an individualized consumerist ethos; and a derisory view of the 'nanny state'" (p. 88). The results, they wrote, were a decline in public funding for education and an increase in privatization of schools and other services. Singh, Kenway, and Apple (2005) echoed these arguments, adding that in their estimation, the World Bank was intent on creating a global system of education designed to create a generation of uncritical citizens who were unwilling or unable to question the fundamental tenets on which the World Bank was building the new world order. Marginson (1999)—who noted the "the growing dominance of a singular global model of good education, especially university education, centered on the American models"—was likewise concerned about using schools to indoctrinate the world's youth in the ways of western capitalism (p. 28).

To the degree that a global system of education is indeed emerging, it seems to follow that a global system of professional development is similarly materializing. In this context, the relevance to my study of research literature describing cross-national professional development policy borrowing and international professional development dilemmas is clear. Despite the fact that much of this research was performed in places far away and in contexts much different from Cobb County, Georgia, the professional development practices and difficulties still apply. Consequently, this literature helped to contextualize my findings and make sense of my interview data just as much as the literature that is based on studies in more directly comparable research arenas.

In this chapter, I reviewed the scholarly literature on professional development that serves as a backdrop for my study and that assisted me in understanding my findings. In the next chapter, I will describe the methods I employed in the study and the theoretical perspective that informed my approach.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe the design and methodology of my research. I explain the theoretical foundations of my approach to research and analysis, and I provide the research questions that guided my data collection. I also describe the data types I chose, how I accessed data sites, and the issues I faced as a researcher in terms of bias and perspective. In addition, I describe the step-by-step process by which I arrived at my findings, and I detail the methods I undertook to ensure reliability and validity.

Research Design

I developed this multi-site case study focused on administrators who work in schools in the Cobb County, Georgia, school system. The purpose of the study was to explore administrators' views and positions with regards to professional development in an era of standards-based reform and rapid societal change. I also sought to shed light on the way different foundational factors play out in administrators' views and positions.

The study was designed as a multi-site study with individual schools representing the sites in the overall case. Given that the nature of my study is exploratory and does not seek to determine the prevalence or frequency of particular phenomena across the school district, the case study approach is appropriate. As Creswell wrote, case study research is ideal for "exploring in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals" (2003, p. 15). A case study design is additionally suitable given that I was interested in the way

different factors beyond my control and beyond the control of my research subjects influence the views and positions of the school leaders in my study. As Yin (2009) wrote,

> You would use a case study method because you wanted to understand a real-life phenomenon in depth, but such understanding encompassed important contextual conditions—because they were highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study. (p. 18)

In my study, these contextual conditions—i.e. the high stakes policy environment, the rapidly growing and diversifying nature of the school district, the recent shift in the role of the school leader—are of the utmost importance. Thus, a case study approach was merited.

While case studies may be qualitative or quantitative, I chose to employ qualitative methods so I could, as Bogdan and Biklen (1992) suggested, "understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations" (p. 34). As is common in qualitative case study research, my flexible design allowed for modifications during the course of the research, but the research never warranted any significant overhaul of my approach or research questions. This flexibility enabled me to adjust my lines of inquiry to take into account unforeseen data. It further enabled me to modify my approach to schools and principals when I ran into difficulties while attempting to schedule interviews.

<div align="center">Philosophical and Theoretical Perspectives</div>

The design and implementation of this study were informed by pragmatism. The philosophy of pragmatism was useful for two reasons. First, pragmatism was helpful for its description of the construction of meaning. In particular, pragmatists like Dewey (1929) and Mead (1934) were heavily focused on the way contextual factors could influence one's thinking. Because my research was focused on the views and positions of school leaders as opposed to more tangible items, pragmatism was useful in conceptualizing how those views and positions

develop in relation to the research subjects' environment. Over time, our thoughts, wrote

Dewey (1929), are "filled with interpretations [and] classifications" and they are "saturated with

the products of the reflection of past generations and by-gone ages," (p. 37). With this in mind,

according to Dewey, the goal of research is to understand the various personal, environmental,

and historical factors that may distort one's point of view (1929, p. 37). In my research study, it

was important to keep in mind that the way a school leader viewed professional development

could not be separated from the high stakes policy environment in which he or she had to work

or from the rapid changes that were afoot in the Cobb County School District.

Second, pragmatism advocates use of the theory and methods that are most practical.

That is, pragmatic philosophy judges the value of a theoretical approach based on how well it

serves the purpose of explaining the phenomena that emerge out of research data. Because of

this, pragmatism endorses an eclectic theoretical and/or methodological approach, even to the

point of merging seemingly contradictory theories. While this flexibility has led critics to claim

that pragmatism is undisciplined, its opposition to dogmatism freed me to blend the most useful

parts of different theoretical approaches. As a result, I was able to create a unique blended

theoretical perspective that was suitable for my multi-site case study of the Cobb County School

District. For my purposes, I found it useful to employ elements of critical theory, structural

functionalism, and comparative theory. In addition, my methodology was heavily informed by

the work of grounded theorists, even though I did not create grounded theory. This pragmatic

blend of theoretical and methodological approaches fit the flexible design of my case study

research, and it helped me to organize the large amount of data I gathered in a systematic

fashion.

While pragmatists would reject the rigid Marxist foundations of critical theory, pragmatists would not rebuff the critical approach entirely, as long as it proved useful. In my study, critical theory was indeed instrumental in analyzing my interview data. Critical theorists—like pragmatists, in fact—believe that mindsets are conditioned by multi-faceted historical, political, cultural, and social conditions, and that facts can never be taken out of the context in which they were formed (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994). All culture, they argue, has served to promote a *false consciousness*. Writing of culture, Adorno said, "It impedes the development of autonomous, independent individuals who judge and decide consciously for themselves" (as quoted in Held, 1980, p. 106). This is applicable to my study given that there likely were instances in my study when school leaders were exhibiting a consciousness heavily influenced by contextual factors. In addition, it required me to consider the environment in which research subjects were speaking with me when I analyzed the interview data and established my conclusions.

Pragmatists like Dewey and Mead would dispute the critical theorists' belief that humans lose their ability to judge and decide consciously and that false consciousness was borne entirely out of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. However, pragmatists would readily acknowledge the influence that social, political, and economic factors have on the views and positions of research subjects. Therefore, pragmatists would not criticize my use of the critical notion of false consciousness in analyzing my data. In addition, because I was interested in issues of social justice and injustice, critical theorists' focus on these issues was also very useful.

In addition to critical theory, I found that elements of structural functionalism were useful. As a functional theory, structural functionalism conceives of society as an organism

with interrelated parts. Further, as a biologist studying a natural organism would, structural

functionalists explore each individual organ in a society in order to determine its constituent

parts and its contribution to the whole. As a structuralist theory, structural functionalism is a

top-down theory that sees overarching social structures as the primary determinants of

individual thought and behavior (Ritzer, 1992). As described by theorists such as Herbert

Spencer and Talcott Parsons, structural functionalism seeks "to impute, as rigorously as

possible, to each feature, custom, or practice, its effect on the functioning of a supposedly

stable, cohesive system" (Bourricaud, 1981, p. 94). Even though structural functionalism has

fallen out of wide usage (Kingsbury and Scanzoni, 1993), I was obliged to recognize the reality

of the top-down bureaucracy of the Cobb County School District within that of the Georgia

Department of Education and the United States public school system. Likewise, I was obliged

to consider the place of each individual research site in the larger educational picture. Taking

these factors into account was important when I considered the realities of how school leaders

operate, the obligations they have, and how these factors influence their views and positions.

On a related note, my data analysis was also aided by employing a comparative

approach. By considering how the views and positions of my research subjects reflected

universal issues in education, I was able to consider the role that my research sites were playing

in the emerging global system of education. In addition, I could also consider the effect the

global system of education had on the research subjects working in my sites. As Dervin (2003)

argued, employing a comparative perspective kept my research from becoming simply "random

marks on a page," and instead made my findings stronger and more enduring (p. 62). While I

was cautious not to claim that my findings had universal applicability, it helped me to consider

whether other researchers had noted similar phenomena in research sites around the world and the conclusions those researchers had drawn.

In addition to applying critical theory, structural functionalism, and a comparative approach, my research methods were informed by grounded theory. While I did not construct grounded theory as part of my study, I was able to draw on the ideas of grounded theorists as a means of systematically organizing my approach to research. Because grounded theory shares with pragmatism and critical theory the underlying belief that research subjects are heavily influenced by their surroundings—Corbin and Strauss (1990) wrote that grounded theory seeks "to determine how the actors respond to changing conditions and to the consequences of their actions"—it was appropriate to rely on the methods of grounded theory (p. 5). Thus, as grounded theorists suggested, I began coding as soon as my first interview was complete, and I continually adjusted my approach as different themes arose throughout the research study. This ensured that I was constantly vigilant and that my ultimate findings were drawn directly from the data I collected. My overall philosophical and theoretical perspectives and their relationship to my methodology can be seen in Figure 2.

Structural
Functionalism

Critical Theory

Grounded Theory

Pragmatism

Blended
Theoretical Perspective

Methodology

Comparative
Perspective
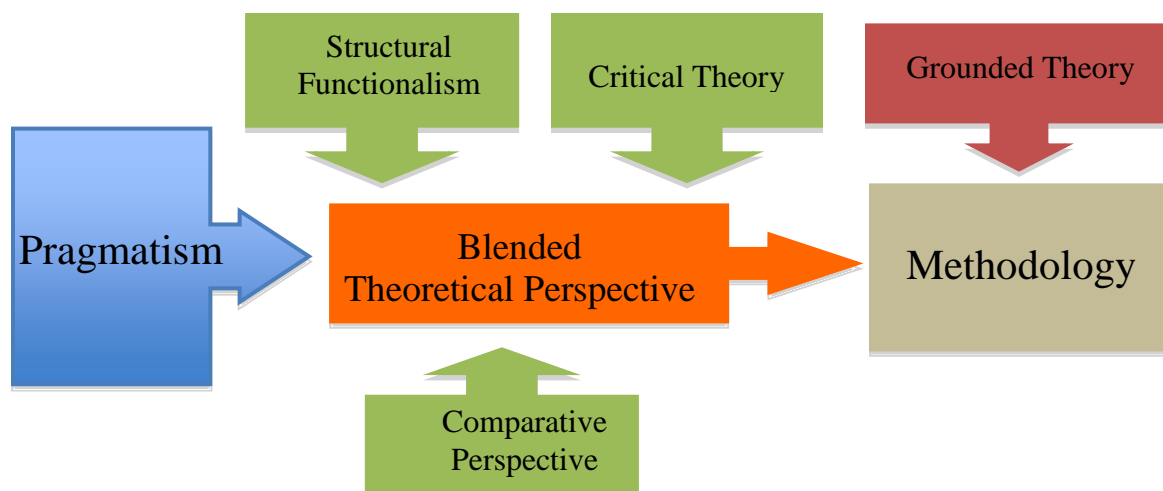
Figure 2. Philosophical Perspective, Theoretical Perspective, and Methodology

Ultimately, I used this blended theoretical and methodological approach to create a descriptive

thematic study, using the approach described by Arronson (1994).

Research Questions

The overall goal of this study was to obtain information about school leaders' views and

positions so that we may better understand the gap between ideal professional development and

real professional development. Prior to beginning my fieldwork, I researched the demographics

of each school that would be a part of this study to better anticipate the sort of issues that may

arise at each site and to properly prepare for each interview. While gathering interview data, I

focused on the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the professional development programs in the schools

   under study?

2. In a large, growing, and rapidly diversifying school system, how do the school leaders at

   school sites under study describe professional development in their schools?

2.a. Are there issues of cross-national significance or social justice evident in their

descriptions?

3. How do school leaders describe the implementation of professional development

programs in their schools?

4. How do school leaders see their role in the professional development of teachers?

5. How do school leaders describe the role of their school system in professional

development?

6. How do school leaders describe the goal of professional development?

These questions can be found in Table 1 in Chapter 1, along with the specific rationale for each

question, the data sources, and the analysis methods.

Data Types

My case study began when I selected eighteen school sites that I felt would provide a

snapshot of the Cobb County School District. I chose the schools based on the level of

schooling, the demographics of the student body, recent test scores, and characteristics of the

school leaders themselves. I believed that by conducting interviews of school leaders in at least

six of these schools, I would be able to reach theoretical saturation (Corbin and Strauss, 1990).

Beyond six schools, I would likely not gather any additional data that could be generalized

across the case study. By applying to eighteen schools, however, I maintained the option to

perform research at more than six schools in the event that saturation was not reached.

Of the initial eighteen research sites, the Cobb County School District allowed me

access to eleven schools. That number was soon lowered to nine when two of the principals at

the approved schools refused to take part. Nonetheless, I was left with a diverse enough array of

sites to create a multi-site case study that would yield sufficient data to achieve saturation. Over the next several months, I would gather a variety of data.

School District and School Data

I began researching the diversity and demographics of the Cobb County School District in the summer of 2007. I used that data to write my initial research proposal and to gain IRB approval. The IRB approval can be found in Appendix D. When the Cobb County School District released its own demographic data in 2009, I updated my data, and when the U.S. Census Bureau released its census data in 2011, I once again updated the demographic data I have employed as a backdrop to this study. In addition, I continually updated my findings with regards to the demographic, test score, and AYP data that were available from the Georgia Department of Education to the point that my data were entirely current when I began my interviews.

Once the specific research sites were identified, I developed a profile of each school, including student demographics, teacher demographics, and test scores, by means of off-site research. A description of each school can be found in the findings in Chapter 4. Each research site's demographic and test score information was publicly available and was compiled on the web site of the Georgia Department of Education. In addition, the web site of the Cobb County School District itself contained a great deal of demographic and test data, all of which was provided to the public, free of obligation.

Interviews with School Leaders

My interviews began in December of 2010 and continued until June of 2011. Over the course of that time, I conducted six interviews, each of which lasted roughly thirty minutes. The first interview was with a middle school principal. The second interview was with an

elementary school instructional coach. In that instance, I was directed to the instructional coach by the school principal. The third interview was with a middle school assistant principal. In that instance, I was directed to the assistant principal by the school principal. The fourth interview was with a middle school principal who was accompanied by the instructional coach. The fifth interview was with a high school principal. The sixth interview was also with a high school principal. At the school leader's request, one interview took place at a restaurant near the school under study. The remaining interviews all took place on school grounds. Although each interview took roughly the same amount of time, they moved at varying paces. These interviews were my primary source of data during the study. During each interview, I sought to gather information on the views and positions of school leaders with regards to professional development. I previously described the overarching research questions, and the specific interview questions can be found in the interview guide in Appendix C.

Field Notes

During each interview, I took notes in a field notebook. My field notes not only contained the research subjects' comments, but also my record of their tone of voice, their facial expressions, or any other cue that would add to the meaning of their specific words. In addition, when possible, I took note of my reflections related to their comments.

At the conclusion of each interview, once I had excused myself from the premises, I went to a local coffee shop or library to immediately type up my field notes. On each occasion, I supplemented the notes with my own reflections from the interview. In addition, I considered the broader themes in the interview and how they related to themes that had emerged in other interviews. A sample page from my field notes—with the markings I used while coding the data—can be found in Appendix E.

After careful consideration, I chose to use field notes rather than tape record my interviews. I felt that employing a tape recorder would unnerve research subjects and thereby create an artificial barrier between the subjects and me. While I knew that not having a taped recording of each interview might mean that I missed some details, I felt that in the long run, I would be able to access more interview data if I did not use a recorder.

Research Log

Throughout the process, I kept a research log, which can be found in Appendix A. In the research log, I kept track of each contact I had with research sites, whether by phone or e-mail. The research log does not contain the dates and times that I conducted the off-site research or the specific days and times I spent analyzing my data and writing my conclusions. Because it lists each time that I contacted each school, it is helpful in recounting the data collection process. In addition, it provided a means of accounting for myself as a researcher. Because the research log made clear the number of times I had contacted each location and the interval between each contact, I could make certain that I did not overly focus on one site at the expense of another, and I could ensure that I was complying with IRB and Cobb County School District regulations.

Theoretical Memos

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, I wrote what Strauss and Corbin (1990) called *theoretical memos*. These memos often took the form of short, informal notes that I would attach to my field notes in order to denote common themes that emerged across the interview data. On three occasions near the end of the data collection process, I compiled these short memos into longer, more comprehensive lists of the data commonalties that had arisen. In addition, I often integrated theoretical memos into my field notes while I was writing my

interview findings. Two examples of theoretical memos can be found in Appendix F and Appendix G.

Data Types Not Used

Pursuant to my IRB application and my agreement with the Cobb County School District, I did not tape record the interviews. As such, there are no transcripts or physical recordings of the interview data. I did not take any photographs of the school sites under study. Research subjects were not asked to fill out a particular questionnaire or respond to a survey.

In addition, I had no interaction with students besides the incidental contact that may have taken place while I was waiting to speak with an adult. I did not observe any classes in session or any staff meetings. I also did not speak with any teachers in the schools under review. My focus in this study was entirely on the school leaders' views and positions, and this did not necessitate speaking with subjects besides the school leaders or attending meetings outside of the interview meetings with the school leaders. While focusing solely on the interview data limited some of my findings, it also provides several paths for future research.

Access, Logistics, and Data Collection Procedures

Collecting the interview data required a great deal of logistical coordination. I was obliged to pay close attention to organization and data collection procedures in order to maintain the integrity of the data and ensure that my conclusions were sound.

Access Issues

Data collection was not a straightforward process. While it was fairly simple—albeit very time-consuming—to develop a profile of each school community using off-site research, gaining access to interviewees was extremely difficult. I ran into trouble first with gaining approval from the Cobb County School District. This initial setback stretched out over several

months. Once I received the approval letter from the Cobb County School District, I found that the District, without explanation, refused me permission to conduct research in nearly half of the schools for which I had applied to do research. As a result of the system's dictates, rather than having eighteen schools to choose from, I had eleven. That number was reduced to nine less than a week later when I was notified that two principals in approved schools refused to take part in the study. The limited pool of potential research sites only became a problem when I actually began contacting schools. As Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggested was possible, my official permission to conduct the study was nearly "sabotaged by the subjects" (p. 76). Over the course of several months and after dozens of phone calls and e-mails, I continued to find, with two notable exceptions, that school leaders and their secretaries evidently placed a very low priority on my contacts. The specific dates and nature of my contacts are described in the research log in Appendix A.

I was heartened to find several examples in the literature of researchers likewise having a difficult time conducting research. Diamond (1964) famously recounted how he was kicked out of Nigeria in the midst of his fieldwork, and Clarke (1975) wrote of qualitative researchers who panicked, went insane, or simply lost the initiative to go into the field. My problems were not nearly that severe. The advice of Wanant (2008) on how to get past gatekeepers not only gave me comfort but encouraged me to adjust the way I introduced myself to the school secretaries and parent volunteers who normally answered my calls. Argyris (1952) helped me to make sense of why it was so difficult to get phone calls returned by offering various reasons that a research subject might refuse an interview. These included an unwillingness to submit to the researcher (p. 25) and "important organizational influences against the research (e.g. the boss doesn't like it)" (p. 24). Relevant to my research, Argyris (1952) also wrote,

> The day by day experiences of subject may be filled with crises. . . . If the respondent is thrust into an interview suddenly, one of these factors may be in his mind. If the interview "hits" the respondent at such a time, there may be a tendency to look upon the research as a "big nuisance." (p. 28)

Argyris also explained a variety of ways that research subjects may stonewall researchers, including silent treatment or feigned ignorance. One tactic—giving the researcher the runaround—was painfully reminiscent of a day when I followed a particular principal to two different schools, only to then be told that he was out of town.

Interviewing Procedures and Field Notes

As mentioned previously, after failing to establish contact with school leaders several times, I began to modify my approach. Initially, I introduced myself as someone who had been approved by the Cobb County School District to perform research about professional development. During my second round of calls, I realized that that introduction came off as threatening and even haughty, and I therefore began introducing myself as a Ph.D. student from the University of Georgia. When that approach seemed to bear little fruit, I appealed to our common status as educators, casually but calculatedly referring to myself as a teacher. It was only then that I felt that I was able to establish some rapport with the school personnel to whom my call was routed. Nonetheless, given the time constraints that we all faced, it was extremely difficult to find a time to conduct interviews.

Ultimately, I found time to meet with school leaders from six sites, and I gathered interview data from each research subject. Each interview took roughly thirty minutes, and it conformed to the interview guide in Appendix C. In each interview, I kept the questions from my interview guide in mind, but the interviews tended to take on a more conversational tone.

As suggested by Patton (2002), I did not directly ask my research questions, but rather simply made sure that by the end of each interview, I had enough data to address each one. While I sought to speak with school principals, two of the six principals I contacted had me speak instead with other school leaders—an assistant principal in one case and an instructional coach in another. On one occasion, the instructional coach accompanied the principal, but the instructional coach had no data to offer. These interview data supplemented the off-site data collected from the Cobb County School District web site and the Georgia Department of Education web site.

As described above, I chose to take notes in a field notebook rather than tape record my interviews. I felt that recording my interviews could possibly compromise the rapport I worked to establish with my subjects. My field notes contained the research subjects' comments, the subjects' tone of voice, their facial expressions, and any other cue that would add to the meaning of their specific words. I gathered both direct quotations and indirect quotations. In addition, when possible, I took note of my reflections related to their comments. At the conclusion of each interview, I promptly transcribed my notes and added reflections from the interview. A sample page from my field notes—with the markings I used while coding the data—can be found in Appendix E.

<div align="center">Roles of the Researcher, Bias, and Perspective</div>

The roles I fulfilled as a researcher began from the very first off-site research I performed. As such, from the outset, I had to be mindful of biases and perspectives that would affect my research.

Roles of the Researcher

As the sole researcher in this study, I was the key person in obtaining and analyzing data. Of the many roles described by Creswell (2003), I was most clearly acting as what Denzin and Lincoln (2000) called a *researcher as instrument*. As such, there was the possibility that my own biases and worldview could color the interview data, influence the study's conclusions, and potentially sabotage the entire research study. Because the researcher is instrumental in collecting and analyzing data—it is through the researcher's "facilitative interaction that a context is created where respondents share rich data regarding their experiences and life world"—refusal to recognize the researcher's preconceived notions about the research subject can cause the downfall of a research project (Poggenpoel & Myburg, 2003, p. 418). To avoid this, it was critical for me, as Creswell (2003) argued, to explicitly identify my biases, values, and personal interests about the research topic.

Analysis was ongoing, and as Pope, Ziebland, and Mays (2000) suggested, it was inevitable that I would start thinking about what I saw and heard as soon as I walked away from the first interview site. It was as the interviewer and data analyst that I was most likely to be an instrument—i.e. to insert my own ideas into the data set. While interviewing and analyzing, I had to be cautious to be the reporter of my findings and not the constructor of my findings. As Mitchell (1977) pointed out, "The sociological observer must exercise sufficient discipline on himself to ensure that it is indeed the *actors'* meanings that are recorded in this notebook and not merely his own" (p. 116). Likewise, Kirk and Miller (1986) wrote, "The field researcher is at the mercy of the world view of his or her subjects" (p. 31).

My theoretical and methodological perspectives also helped me to navigate my role as an instrument. As Willig (2001) pointed out, there are differences in the extent to which

theoretical perspectives and qualitative methodologies see the researcher as being the author, as opposed to the witness, of their research findings. Amongst the different research traditions, critical theory and grounded theory methodology are exceptionally condemnatory of a researcher's inserting his own worldview into his findings. In particular, critical theorists denounce the way that privileged researchers may pass off their own views as the views of their less privileged research subjects. Thus, I was especially mindful of my role as an instrument given my employment of critical theory and grounded theory methodology.

Bias

Considering my role as an instrument led me to examine my own biases. As Strauss and Corbin (1990) argued, a precondition of high-quality research is to begin without a preconceived theory in mind. Early in the research, I found that I did indeed have two preconceived ideas. First, based on my review of the literature and my stint as a teacher in the Cobb County School District in the 2000-2001 school year, I was convinced that I would find very low-quality professional development programs at each of the schools I visited. During my second interview, I found that this initial preconception—which had been confirmed by my first interview—was, in fact, erroneous. I realized then that I had not entirely expected to conduct research in a school where the sort of professional learning that I had heavily researched would in fact be taking place. Kirk and Miller (1986) wrote that the fieldworker

> draws tentative conclusions from his or her current understanding of the situation as a whole, and acts upon them. Where, for unanticipated reasons, this understanding is invalid, the qualitative researcher will sooner or later (often to the researcher's intense dismay) find out about it. (p. 25)

My research confirmed to me that my understanding of the situation as a whole was, in fact, a misunderstanding, and I was forced to mentally adjust my approach to my remaining research sites. In addition, I had to re-consider my initial analysis of my first research site. Ultimately, even though my research sites still predominantly offered the sort of low-quality, traditional staff development that research literature led me to believe was ubiquitous, I found that I could not enter into research sites with the preconceived notion that high-quality professional development was nonexistent everywhere.

Second, I found that my ideas about particular parts of Cobb County were conditioned by my having been raised in the county seat of Marietta. While I was never a student in the Cobb County School District—but rather a student in the Marietta City Schools—I had nonetheless developed notions about the people and institutions of the greater County. Many of these preconceptions were out-of-date or simply rooted in stereotypes; nonetheless, I had to be extremely wary of letting them color my research or my analysis. In order to keep my biases from affecting my data, I acknowledged my biases in writing at the start of the project and then again prior to each interview. In addition, throughout the data analysis, I made certain to triangulate my data, and I wrote theoretical memos whenever I felt that a particular conclusion could possibly be the result of my own prejudices rather than a result of my data. I also discussed my research with close colleagues and trusted fellow educators to ensure that my conclusions were sound.

Insider/Outsider Issues

My status as a native of Cobb County offered me a mixed perspective, much like that described by Shores (2000), who researched the sociology and language patterns of his hometown. I was both an *insider* and an *outsider*, given that I had an acquaintance with some

people in the District, but I was not employed there. In addition, my status as a fellow educator—which I exploited as a means of gaining access to data sites—may well have also led research subjects to treat me as an insider. At the same time, I was mostly an outsider given that I had never worked or even entered any of the schools where I was performing research. With my status as an outsider in mind, I often sensed that my research subjects felt it necessary to portray themselves in a particular way—mostly by employing popular educational buzzwords like "data-driven" and "accountability."

Further, three of my research subjects were women, and two of them were African-American. Only two of my research subjects were white males like me. While my educational status did not seem to set me apart—all six of the research subjects had at least as much schooling as I had—my race and gender set me apart from some of my research subjects. As a representative of a traditionally privileged group—white men—it was important that I was mindful of the critical theorists' admonition against putting words in the mouths of the research subjects from traditionally less-privileged groups.

<div align="center">Reliability, Validity, and Triangulation.</div>

Issues of reliability and validity are of key concern to any qualitative researcher. Without reliability and validity—or what Lincoln and Guba (1985) called credibility and trustworthiness—research data are worthless. As a result, several scholars have tried to offer formulas that would lead to an increase in research reliability and validity. Many qualitative researchers—particularly those who take a grounded theory approach—believe that sound methodology will ensure research reliability and validity. Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, Spiers, and Hon (2002) advocated *methodological coherence*, and argued that it was vital to take strategic action during the research process to ensure validity rather than leaving readers to

judge a completed project. Silverman (2005) offered five strategies for increasing validity during the process, including the employment of constant comparative analysis. Kirk and Miller (1986) argued that asking poor questions was the source of most validity errors. Thus, they argued, safeguards against the wrong questions are critically important to the researcher. Creswell (1998) proposed several ways to increase validity, including triangulation, peer review, and clarifying researcher bias. Finally, Corbin and Strauss (1990) likewise argued that if sound research methodology is employed, a study's outcome would be considered valid.

In my study, I paid close attention to methodology, clarified my biases, triangulated my data when possible, carefully considered and re-considered my research questions, employed peer review, and meticulously engaged in constant comparative analysis. As described previously, I heavily informed my research and analysis approach with the methods promoted by grounded theorists, even though I did not generate grounded theory as part of my study. Among the safeguards built in to grounded theory methodology is sharing works-in-progress with other researchers (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). Pope, Ziebland, and Mays (2000) echoed the need for bringing in additional analysts to increase data reliability, particularly where researcher bias is especially likely to be a problem. As a result, I shared my findings and discussed my research will several colleagues at various stages of the fieldwork and analysis process. By disclosing to colleagues my impressions, my coded research categories, and my findings, I was able to ensure that my methodology was sound and that I was not allowing my personal biases to seep into my study.

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

During my gathering of information to develop a profile of each school site, I used informal content analysis to reduce the collected information to a set of features for each school

profile. Once I began the interview process, my initial level of data analysis consisted of

reviewing (a) my interview notes taken during each interview, and (b) the additional notes,

reflections, and memos that I wrote. I followed this with subsequent analysis to generate themes

in the responses, key issues, and preliminary findings. More specifically, I conducted my data

analysis as follows.

To analyze my interview data, I employed two types of coding advocated by Corbin and

Strauss (1990): open and axial. In the initial stages of the research, immediately following the

first interview, I used open coding of my notes as a means of identifying and naming categories

of data. In short, my initial open coding was intended to break down the data into manageable,

comparable bits, as described by Creswell (1998). For example, following my first interview, I

considered various things that stood out in my interview data: the interviewee's talk of teacher

resistance; a lack of time to conduct professional development; his recognition of the changes

that have come into public education in Cobb County in recent decades; and other issues. I

resolved to look for the same issues in subsequent interviews. These initial categories appear in

Figure 3.

Figure 3. Initial Categories that Resulted from Open Coding of Interview Data.

As my research continued and I conducted more interviews, I continued to review and refine the data categories and began to probe the linkages between them. At that point, I began to employ axial coding, which involved relating the categories to one another and formulating subcategories representing sub-topics or sub-dimensions. For example, with regard to time, I began to notice that school leaders spoke of time not only in terms of not having enough time, but in terms of scheduling meetings and taking time to conduct professional development during the school day. This is mapped below in Figure 4.

Time

No time for professional development

Meetings
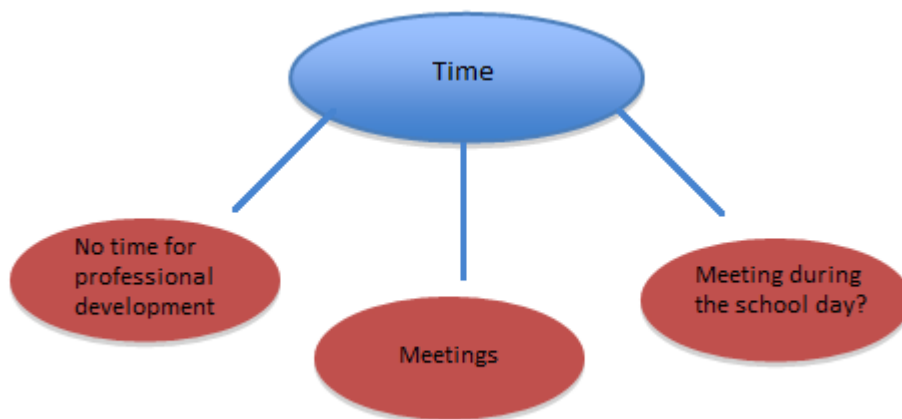
Meeting during the school day?

Figure 4. One Group of Subcategories that Resulted from Axial Coding: Dimensions of Time. Similar figures can be found for each of the categories and subcategories the resulted from open and axial coding in Chapter 4.

The coding process was animated by constant comparison. The categories that resulted from the coding of data were not static, but were under continual scrutiny. Further, they were continuously compared to the other categories, particularly once axial coding began. As Tesch (1990) wrote:

> The main intellectual tool is comparison. The method of comparing and contrasting is used for practically all intellectual tasks during analysis: forming categories, establishing the boundaries of the categories, assigning the segments to categories, summarizing the content of each category, finding negative evidence, etc. The goal is to discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns. (p. 96)

This comparison could not be done hastily or carelessly; in fact, it was the defining aspect of constant comparative analysis (Glaser, 1965). Once I categorized and compared one data set, I had to gather additional data based on the emergent theory and its evidentiary requirements. I immediately and systematically categorized and compared new data to the data that had been

collected already. I accounted for patterns and variations, and I made certain that the

developing theory was flexible enough to accommodate changes and unforeseen data.

Throughout the process, I wrote theoretical memos in order to stay on top of the increasingly

complex categorizations, and I continually redeveloped and verified my coding.

As I categorized data, I took note of the site at which each particular theme emerged, and

I tracked the frequency of its emergence. In addition to tracking the frequency of the major

coding categories at each site, I also tracked the frequency of each sub-category at each site. An

example of how I categorized data for comparison with new data is shown in Table 2, and the

full table of data can be found in Chapter 4.

Table 2

The Frequency of the Category of "Time" with the Sub-Categories that Resulted from Axial Coding

Category	Frequency (Site and Number)	Sub-Categories (Number and Sites)
Time	Site 1: 3 Site 2: 2 Site 3: 3 Site 4: 4 Site 5: 1 Site 6: 1 Total: 11	Meetings: 9 (Sites 1, 2, 3, 4, 6)
		Taking time during the school day: 1 (Site 1)
		No time: 4 (Sites 2, 3, 5)

In the coding process, I found that there was some overlap between categories. For

example, I found that three school leaders spoke of differentiation as a means of warding off

potential teacher resistance. Given that my open coding had categorized differentiation and

teacher resistance separately, I wrote a theoretical memo to account for this unique crossover.

This theoretical memo can be found in Appendix F. In addition, I also wrote a theoretical memo

in the event that a seemingly minor issue emerged. For example, at School One, the school

leader described book studies that had been launched at her school. Because this was an innovative and unexpected professional development practice, I made a theoretical memo advising myself to be on the lookout for additional non-traditional professional development practices. This memo can be found in Appendix G. During data analysis, I considered that memo. According to my data, though, no other school in my study was employing non-standard professional development practices. Rather, each school leader described programs that consisted of teachers' attending meetings and going to conferences. As such, I determined that this non-traditional aspect of School One's professional development program was unique to School One, and I discarded it.

Throughout the process, I shared my work with several colleagues who had an understanding of my study and its goals. I trusted this small group of fellow educators to tell me where I may have overlooked patterns in the data, formed categorizations sloppily, or allowed biases to creep into the data collection or analysis. I encouraged these colleagues to review my categories and data charts. After each interview, I had colleagues assess whether my assignment of different pieces of data to particular categories was thorough, and whether my decision to add or not to add another category or sub-category was sound. After my sixth interview, my colleagues and I agreed that there were no further categories to be added. Having conducted interviews at every level of schooling and in a variety of schools—in terms of student demographics, principal characteristics, and AYP status—I determined that I had reached theoretical saturation, and I began to draw conclusions.

The conclusions I drew were based on the data I gathered and the categories and sub-categories I had created. Constant comparative analysis is inductive. Unlike deductive

reasoning, inductive reasoning seeks to create general rules based on the details of a particular

case. As Goetz and LeCompte (1981) wrote,

> [Constant comparative analysis] combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous
>
> comparison of all social incidents observed. . . . As events are constantly compared with
>
> previous events, new topological dimension, as well as new relationships, may be
>
> discovered. (p. 58)

As a result, it is crucial that the details be accurately and meticulously recorded. When proper

attention is paid to the constant comparative methodology, themes, and categories of analysis

"emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis"

(Patton, 1990, p. 390). From the categories I created, I drew my conclusions. However, it was

important that I did not lose sight of the limitations of case study research when drawing my

conclusions, particularly given that I approached my research from a critical theory perspective.

According to critical theorists, researchers should claim "no absolute validity in time and space

. . . only relative, historically conditioned meaning" (Held, 1980, p. 30).

In this chapter, I described the research and analysis methods that I employed in my

study of the Cobb County School District. I described the theoretical perspective that informed

my approach, and I provided an overview of the data analysis approaches I used. In addition, I

detailed each step of the research process, from the initial gathering of off-site data, to the

formulation of research questions, to conducting interviews, and finally to analyzing data and

generating findings. In the next chapter, I will describe my findings.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, I detail the findings of my multi-site case study on the administrators

who work the in schools of Cobb County, Georgia. I begin by describing the demographic and

test score data of each site that I uncovered as part of my pre-interview off-site research.

Included in this section are the characteristics of the school leaders who I interviewed. Then, I

describe the various themes and issues that arose in my analysis of the interview data in

reference to my research questions. Finally, I describe the additional themes and issues that

emerged in the data analysis apart from the research questions.

Pre-Interview Research Findings: Profiles

As described in Chapter 3, my first step was to create a profile of each school site under

study by means of off-site research. I accomplished this by relying on the publicly available

data from the Georgia Department of Education. In addition, some other preliminary

information—such as the race, sex, and years of experience of the interviewee—are included in

this section, even though I gathered of this information in the opening stages of the interviews.

In all, this multi-site case study included school leaders at three middle schools, two high

schools, and one elementary school. Like the overall District—which has 54% non-White

students—five of the six schools had *majority-minority* student populations, ranging from 82%

non-White students at School Two to 96% non-White students at School One. The only school

without a majority-minority population was School Five, which had only 22% non-White

students. Five of the six schools were eligible for Title I funding based on their population of

students who received free or reduced lunches. Only School Five was not eligible for Title I funding, given that only 10% of their students were eligible for free or reduced lunches. Five of the six schools met AYP last year, even though three of them had to do it based on special provisions of the law. Only School Six did not make AYP. (Georgia Department of Education, 2010a, 2010b) One of the schools, School Three, employed a Comprehensive School Reform program. Of the school principals, four were men and two were women, but of the leaders interviewed, three were men and three were women. The principal of each school in the study had at least one degree beyond a Bachelor's degree, and two of the principals had doctoral degrees. Two more of the school principals were working on their doctoral degrees. Three of the school principals had less than ten years experience, while the remaining three each had fifteen or more. Finally, three of the principals of the schools where research was conducted were African-American, and three where White. Of those school leaders interviewed, two were African-American and four were White. (School One, interview, March 8, 2011; School Two, interview, May 26, 2011; School Three, interview, March 10, 2011; School Four, interview, March 25, 2011; School Five, interview, December 20, 2011; School Six, interview, June 27, 2011) Figure 5 is a map of the research sites.

Figure 5. Map of the Research Sites, Cobb County, GA.

In the following section, I provide a profile of each school site. Information about the principals

in each school and the school leaders I interviewed—if the interviewee was not the principal—is

summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Characteristics of the Research Subjects

Site	Person Interviewed	Years of Experience	Education Level	Race	Gender	Other
School One	Instructional Coach	Principal-15 IC-3	Principal-Specialist IC-Master's	Principal-White IC-White	Principal-Male IC-Female	None
School Two	Principal	Principal-11	Principal-Doctoral	Principal-White	Principal-Male	Principal was leaving school
School Three	Assistant Principal	Principal-15 AP-30	Principal-Specialist AP-Master's	Principal-Black AP-White	Principal-Female AP-Female	None
School Four	Principal	Principal-27	Principal-Specialist (Doctoral in progress)	Principal-Black	Principal-Female	Principal spent 3 years in central office
School Five	Principal	Principal-30	Principal-Doctoral	Principal-White	Principal-Male	Principal spent 3 three years in central office; 8 years in business; principal was retiring
School Six	Principal	Principal-7	Principal-Master's (Doctoral in progress)	Principal-Black	Principal-Male	School did not make AYP

Note: IC=Instructional Coach; AP=Assistant Principal

School One

Information on each of the school sites was publicly available from the Georgia

Department of Education web site. I accessed two different areas of the web site during my pre-

interview data gathering. First, I accessed the Cobb County School District's AYP status

(Georgia Department of Education, 2010a). At that location, I could also determine the AYP

status of each individual school using a dropdown menu. Second, I accessed the student and teacher demographic data for the system (Georgia Department of Education, 2010b). Once again, I was able to access the demographic data of individual schools using the Schools tab and a dropdown menu.

School One was an elementary school in the southeastern part of Cobb County. It was located in one of the older portions of the County, and it had been open for nearly half a century. In 2010, School One enrolled 634 students. 48% of the student body was Latino, 46% was African American, 4% was White, and 2% was Asian. Of these students, 8% was categorized as Students with Disabilities, 35% was categorized as Limited English Proficiency, and 85% was eligible for a free or reduced lunch under federal guidelines, thereby making School One a Title I-eligible school. In 2010, the school made AYP in each category, exceeding the district target of a 67.6% pass-rate. The sixty teachers at School One were over 90% female and 73% White. There were no Latinos on the staff. 69% of teachers had a Master's degree or higher, and they averaged 11.8 years of experience. (Georgia Department of Education, 2010a, 2010b). Student and teacher demographic data for School One and each additional school in the study are described in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4

Student Demographic Data at Each Research Site

Site	Number of Students	Race of Students	FRL	SWD	LEP	AYP Status
School One (Elementary school)	634	4% White 46% A-A 48% Latino 2% Asian 0% Multiracial	85%	8%	35%	Met AYP
School Two (High school)	2240	18% White 53% A-A 23% Latino 5% Asian 0% Multiracial	60%	12%	7%	Met AYP on enhanced math scores
School Three (Middle school)	836	13% White 73% A-A 12% Latino 1% Asian 0% Multiracial	66%	15%	4%	Met AYP on enhanced math scores
School Four (Middle school)	848	5% White 65% A-A 30% Latino 1% Asian 0% Multiracial	83%	13%	12%	Met AYP on safe harbor provisions
School Five (Middle school)	1134	78% White 17% A-A 3% Latino 2% Asian 0% Multiracial	10%	9%	1%	Met AYP
School Six (High school)	2113	17% White 68% A-A 13% Latino 1% Asian 0% Multiracial	65%	12%	5%	Did not meet AYP

Note: A-A=African-American; FRL=Free or Reduced Lunch; SWD=Students with Disabilities; LEP=Limited English Proficiency.

Table 5

Teacher Demographic Data at Each Research Site

Site	Number of Teachers	Race of Teachers	Gender of Teachers	Education Level of Teachers	Experience of Teachers
School One (Elementary school)	60	73% White 27% A-A 0% Latino 0% Asian 0% Multiracial	90% Female 10% Male	37% Bachelor's 50% Master's 23% Specialist's 0% Doctoral 0% Other	11.8 years
School Two (High school)	160	69% White 25% A-A 7% Latino 0% Asian 0% Multiracial	63% Female 37% Male	37% Bachelor's 51% Master's 8% Specialist's 3% Doctoral 1% Other	10.8 years
School Three (Middle school)	65	46% White 45% A-A 8% Latino 1% Asian 0% Multiracial	69% women 31% men	37% Bachelor's 47% Master's 15% Specialist's 0% Doctoral 1% Other	7.7 years
School Four (Middle school)	69	29% White 67% A-A 3% Latino 0% Asian 0% Multiracial	78% women 22% men	50% Bachelor's 43% Master's 6% Specialist's 0% Doctoral 0% Other	8.1 years
School Five (Middle school)	71	91% White 6% A-A 3% Latino 0% Asian 0% Multiracial	85% women 15% men	45% Bachelor's 39% Master's 13% Specialist's 3% Doctoral 0% Other	12.9 years
School Six (High school)	145	68% White 29% A-A 3% Latino 0% Asian 0% Multiracial	59% women 41% men	36% Bachelor's 41% Master's 18% Specialist's 3% Doctoral 2% Other	10.8 years

Note: A-A=African-American

Prior to beginning my interview at School One, I took notice of the age of the school, its

large minority population, and its large indigent population. In addition, despite having over

90% non-White students, the staff was predominantly White (73%). I wondered whether the interview data would reveal any programs designed to help teachers bridge the cultural and racial gaps between themselves and their students. Ultimately, there was not. Further, despite the fact that the staff was predominantly female (90%), the school principal was a male. I was interested to see how these issues might affect the interview data. I eventually found that having a male principal did seem to influence the ethos of the school.

School Two

School Two was a high school in the southeastern part of Cobb County. In 2010, School Two enrolled 2240 students. 53% of the student body was African-American, 23% was Latino, 18% was White, and 5% was Asian. Of these students, 12% was categorized as Students with Disabilities, 7% was categorized as Limited English Proficiency, and 60% was eligible for a free or reduced lunch under federal guidelines—thereby making School Two a Title I-eligible school, although the school received no Title I funding. Although the school fell below District test score targets in nearly every category, the school was able to make AYP through the safeguards woven into the law. In this case, enough students passed the enhanced portion of the math section Georgia Graduation Test. The enhanced portion of the test consists of a small sub-section of questions inside the math section of the test. Because enough students at School Two answered these particular questions correctly, they were considered proficient enough in math to successfully pass the test even though they incorrectly answered enough questions on the remainder of the math section to earn a failing grade. The 160 teachers at School Two were 69% White, 25% African American, and 7% Latino. The staff was 63% women. 62% of the staff had Master's degrees or higher, and the teachers averaged 10.8 years of experience. (Georgia Department of Education, 2010a, 2010b)

The principal of School Two was a white male who had been at the school for two years. He earned an Ed.D. in 2004. He was previously a principal at another Cobb County high school for four years, and prior to that, he was an assistant principal at a Cobb County high school for five years. Prior to becoming an administrator, he was a special education teacher for two years. Despite his depth of experience with the Cobb County School District and the solid reputation he enjoyed in the community, the principal of School Two was planning to leave the school at the end of the school year for a job as a principal in a neighboring school district. (School Two, interview, May 26, 2011)

Prior to beginning my interview at School Two, I noted its size. With over 2200 students and 160 teachers, the principal would certainly have a lot on his plate. My research showed that indeed the principal was very busy, and as a result, professional development was pushed to the side. The AYP status of the school was also conspicuous. Even though the school had made AYP, it barely scraped by, and I was interested to see whether this showed up in the interview data. It did not. Finally, because the principal was leaving the school after a very short time there, I wondered how this might affect the interview data. Ultimately, I found that School Two was one of the sites where very little professional development took place; this may well have been a result of the principal's very short time there.

School Three

School Three was a middle school in the southwestern part of Cobb County. In 2010, School Three enrolled 836 students. 73% of the student body was African-American, 13% was White, 12% was Latino, and 1% was Asian. Of these students, 15% was categorized as Students with Disabilities, 4% was categorized as Limited English Proficiency, and 66% was eligible for a free or reduced lunch under federal guidelines—thereby making it a Title I-eligible

school. In the study year, School Three made AYP for the second year in a row, thus removing

it from the Needs Improvement list. Even though it fell short of the district target for students

with disabilities, School Three was able to make AYP based on enhanced mathematics scores.

The sixty-five teachers at School Three were 45% African-American, 46% White, and 8%

Latino. The staff was 69% women. 62% of the staff had Master's degrees or higher, and the

teachers averaged 7.7 years of experience. (Georgia Department of Education, 2010a, 2010b)

Success for All, a well-known comprehensive school reform program now in place in several

Georgia schools, began at School Three in 2009 (School Three, interview, March 10, 2011).

The principal of School Three was an African-American woman with a Master's degree.

She had fifteen years of experience, plus several years as a math teacher prior to becoming an

administrator. The principal pointed me to an assistant principal—a White woman with nearly

forty years of experience, all in Cobb County. The assistant principal had been at School Three

for seven years, and was previously an assistant principal in another Cobb County middle school

for five years. Prior to becoming an administrator, she was a classroom teacher for twenty-six

years, including stints at schools much different from School Three. Because the principal

referred me to the assistant principal, my interview was with her, and the assistant principal was

the primary data source and key informant for School Three. (School Three, interview, March

10, 2011)

Prior to entering School Three, I was interested to see whether the staff's relatively low

average experience—7.7 years—would be a factor in the interview data, particularly given that

the administration was filled with extremely veteran educators. Indeed, I ultimately found that

there was some tension between the staff and the administrators. The school leader reported

that she often faced teacher resistance, and that there were several teachers who did not "want to

be here" (School Three, interview, March 10, 2011). In addition, I was interested to see whether having a Comprehensive School Reform program in place would affect the interview data. I found that even though the Success for All provided one professional development session a week, they were not a solid presence in the school and thus did not affect the data.

School Four

School Four was a middle school in the south-central part of the County. In 2010, School Four enrolled 848 students. 64% of the student body was African-American, 30% was Latino, 5% was White, and 1% was Asian. Of these students, 13% was categorized as Students with Disabilities, 12% was categorized as Limited English Proficiency, and 83% was eligible for a free or reduced lunch under federal guidelines—thereby making it a Title I-eligible school. In 2010, School Four made AYP despite having fallen below district targets with regards to Students with Disabilities and students with Limited English Proficiency. Like School Two and School Three, School Four was able to nonetheless make AYP based on enhanced scores. In addition to the enhanced scores, School Four made AYP based on the safe harbor provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act, which stipulated that a school that made at least a 10% reduction in the number of students deemed to be non-proficient *and* made improvement in one other indicator—in this case, attendance—would not be subject to sanctions. The sixty-nine teachers at School Four were 67% African-American, 29% White, and 3% Latino. 78% of the staff was women. 51% of the staff had Master's degrees or higher, and the teachers averaged 8.1 years of experience. (Georgia Department of Education, 2010a, 2010b)

The principal of School Four was an African-American woman with nearly thirty years of experience. She first taught middle school in Tennessee, and she became an administrator in 1992. She was brought to School Four three years ago, and it was her first job in Cobb County

after administrative stints at three other schools, all in Tennessee. The principal had a Master's

degree in leadership, and she was nearing the completion of her Ph.D., focusing on

faculty/administrator collaboration in elementary and middle schools in Cobb County. The

instructional coach joined the principal and me for the interview, but all of the data on School

Four came directly from the principal. (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011)

Prior to beginning my interview at School Four, I took note of the extremely high non-

White population at the school: over 95%. In addition, I took note of the high percentage of

African-American teachers: 67%. I eventually found that this might have influenced the school

ethos, as described below. As in other schools, I was also interested to see whether having

barely made AYP would affect the interview data. Indeed, the principal reported to me that she

felt greater pressure from the school district to perform. There was also a strong focus on test

scores at School Four, which may have also been linked to their tenuous AYP status.

School Five

School Five was a middle school in the northwestern part of the County. In 2010, School

Five enrolled 1134 students. 78% of the student body was White, 17% was African-American,

3% was Latino, and 2% was Asian. Of these students, 9% was categorized as Students with

Disabilities, 1% was categorized as Limited English Proficiency, and 10% was eligible for a

free or reduced lunch under federal guidelines—thereby making School Five ineligible for Title

I funds. In 2010, School Five made AYP in each category, exceeding the district target of a

67.6% pass-rate. The seventy-one teachers at School Five were 91% White, 6% African-

American, and 3% Latino. 85% of the staff was women. 55% of teachers had a Master's

degree or higher, and they averaged 12.9 years of experience. (Georgia Department of

Education, 2010a, 2010b)

The principal of School Five was a White male with an Ed.D. He had thirty years of experience. He first taught and coached at the Cobb County high school from which he was graduated. He was there for five years before a stint away from schools running a business. He returned to schools as an assistant principal in Cobb County in 1986. The principal of School Five worked as an administrator in a neighboring district for four years before returning to Cobb as an assistant principal in the 1990s. In the mid-2000s, he held a job in the Cobb County School District central office. The principal was in his last year as an educator, as he was planning to retire at the end of the school year. (School Five, interview, December 20, 2010)

Prior to entering School Five, I was interested to see whether the fact that it had a more privileged student population would affect the interview data. It was also an overwhelmingly White school, both in terms of the staff—89%—and the students—78%. The staff was also more experienced—12.9 years average experience—than the staff at the remainder of the research sites. Ultimately, I found that this school had very little formal professional development, and they felt virtually no pressure from the school system to institute a comprehensive professional development program. Prior to gathering interview data, I was also interested to see whether the experience level—thirty years—and the educational level of the principal—Ph.D.—affected the interview data. After the interview, it was my sense that the principal—and the school in general—were fairly complacent in terms of professional development, and this may have been partially due to their comfortable status as experienced teachers of privileged and high-achieving students.

School Six

School Six was a high school in the south-central part of the County. In 2010, School Six enrolled 2113 students. 68% of the student body was African-American, 17% was White,

13% was Latino, and 1% was Asian. Of these students, 12% was categorized as Students with Disabilities, 5% was categorized as Limited English Proficiency, and 65% was eligible for a free or reduced lunch under federal guidelines—thereby making School Six a Title I-eligible school, although the school, like School Two, received no Title I funding. In 2010, School Six did not make AYP due to the school having fallen short of district targets in five of six categories. Only White students met the district target. The 145 teachers at School Six were 68% White, 29% African-American, and 3% Latino. 59% of the staff was women. 62% of teachers had a Master's degree or higher, and they averaged 10.8 years of experience. (Georgia Department of Education, 2010a, 2010b)

The principal of School Six was a black male who was working on a doctoral degree. This was his first job as a principal, and he had just completed his second year at School Six. Prior to this job, he was an assistant principal for four years at another Cobb County high school, and prior to that, he was a teacher in a neighboring school district for five years. Our conversation took place in his office, and he was the primary source of data and key informant for School Six. (School Six, interview, June 27, 2011)

As was the case with the other high school in the study, School Two, I immediately took note of the size of School Six—over 2100 students and 145 teachers—and I was interested to see how this might affect the interview data. I found that as in School Two, the principal struggled to establish a professional development program in the midst of his other responsibilities. In addition, I was interested in the low experience level of the principal, who was in his second year of being a principal. As was the case in School Two, which also had a school leader who was fairly new to the building, the principal at School Five seemed not to have had enough time to realize his professional development vision. Finally, I was keenly

interested in whether the fact that School Six did not make AYP would affect the interview data. As described below, the principal of School Six would be the only research subject who would vehemently criticize the school system's focus on test scores.

Findings from Interviews

In the following section, I present my findings that emerged from the interviews with the key informant in each school site. The findings are aligned with the research questions, and they emerged as a series of themes. In addition, other themes emerged as I analyzed the data. I interspersed the discussion of some of these themes throughout the chapter as appropriate, while I saved the discussion of other emergent themes for the latter part of the chapter. These emergent themes relate to the categories of data that resulted from the axial coding as I described in Chapter 3.

As described in Chapter 3, I created categories out of the data that I collected during interviews. Further, I tracked the frequency that each category arose in the interview data gathered from each site. The categories that emerged from the data analysis and the frequency in which each category was present in the interview data from each site are in Table 6.

Table 6

Categories that Emerged from the Data Analysis and the Frequency of Each Category in the Interview Data from Each Site

Category	Occurrences (Site and Number)	Sub-Categories (Site and Number)
Changes	Site 1: 4 Site 2: 2 Site 3: 4 Site 4: 2 Site 5: 3 Site 6: 3 Total: 18	To professional development: 8 (Sites 1, 2, 3, 4, 6) To school community/students: 6 (Sites 1, 3, 4, 5, 6) To teachers/teaching: 1 (Site 5) To educational policy: 1 (Sites 5) To technology: 2 (Sites 1, 3)
Designers	Site 1: 3 Site 2: 1 Site 3: 3 Site 4: 1 Site 5: 2 Site 6: 2 Total: 8	Designer from outside school: 5 (Site 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) Designer from inside school: 2 (Site 1) Design team: 4 (Sites 1, 3, 5, 6)
Time	Site 1: 3 Site 2: 2 Site 3: 3 Site 4: 4 Site 5: 1 Site 6: 1 Total: 11	Meetings: 9 (Sites 1, 2, 3, 4, 6) Taking time during the school day: 1 (Site 1) No time: 4 (Sites 2, 3, 5)
Resistance	Site 1: 3 Site 2: 2 Site 3: 2 Site 4: 3 Site 5: 3 Site 6: 1 Total: 14	Regarding implementation: 10 (Sites 1, 2, 3, 4, 6) Excusing the absence of professional development: 4 (Sites 2, 5, 6)

Category	Occurrences (Site and Number)	Sub-Categories (Site and Number)
Differentiation	Site 1: 3 Site 2: 2 Site 3: 1 Site 4: 3 Site 5: 4 Site 6: 2 Total: 13	Purpose—Importance: 3 (Site 1, 5, 6) Purpose—Reducing resistance: 3 (Site 1, 4, 5) Means—By grade level or content area: 6 (Site 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) Means—By attending conferences: 1 (Site 4)
Role of System	Site 1: 1 Site 2: 1 Site 3: 1 Site 4: 2 Site 5: 2 Site 6: 2 Total: 9	As a provider of professional development: 2 (Sites 1, 5) Strategic plan: 3 (Sites 2, 3, 5) Pressure: 3 (Sites 4, 6) As financier: 1 (Site 4)
Role of School Leader	Site 1: 2 Site 2: 1 Site 3: 2 Site 4: 5 Site 5: 1 Site 6: 2 Total: 12	Manage the process: 3 (Sites 1, 4, 6) Make operational changes: 2 (Sites 2, 6) Run meetings: 2 (Sites 3, 4) Monitor: 5 (Sites 1, 3, 4) Serve as conduit between system and school: 1 (Site 5)
Social Justice	Site 1: 2 Site 2: 1 Site 3: 3 Site 4: 2 Site 5: 1 Site 6: 2 Total: 11	Presence of a teacher-led design team: 4 (Sites 1, 3, 5, 6) Lack of faith in teachers/Need to control: 3 (Sites 2, 3, 4) Goals that serve social justice: 4 (Sites 1, 3, 4, 6)

Category	Occurrences (Site and Number)	Sub-Categories (Site and Number)
Goals	Site 1: 2 Site 2: 1 Site 3: 1 Site 4: 1 Site 5: 1 Site 6: 1 Total: 7	Raising test scores: 3 (Sites 1, 4, 5) Vague goals: 4 (Sites 2, 3, 5, 6)
Awareness of Cross-National Issues	Site 1: 0 Site 2: 0 Site 3: 1 Site 4: 1 Site 5: 0 Site 6: 0 Total: 2	Recognition of the presence of international students: 2 (Sites 3, 4)

The Existence or Non-Existence of a Professional Development Program

My first research question sought to shed light on the characteristics of the professional development programs in the Cobb County School District. At the most basic level, the on-site research revealed that not every school had a well-functioning professional development program in place. While each school was required to include a professional development plan in the strategic plan they submitted to the central office, data gathered from school leaders at three of the six schools made it clear that very little formal professional development was happening at the school level. At School Six, a high school, the principal said that he had tried to get a professional development program working when he first arrived at the school, but teacher resistance had rendered it ineffective. A year later, professional development consisted of little more than intermittent e-mail messages exchanged between teachers and an outside consultant in which teachers would ask questions about their teaching practice (School Six, interview, June 27, 2011). At School Five, a middle school, the principal said that informal

professional development goes on "constantly, I hope," but that there was no formal

professional development, because in his experience, "pull-out professional development

programs just don't work." He justified the absence of a formal program of professional

development by claiming that professional development was "job-embedded" and took the form

of "collaboration [and] collegial conversations" (School Five, interview, December 20, 2010).

The school leader at School Two, a high school, admitted that his school "miffed it" and that his

vision for a high-quality program of professional development simply "fell by the wayside"

amidst the numerous other responsibilities that he and the other adults in the building had

(School Two, interview, May 26, 2011). Thus, even though all six schools were each required

to have professional development plans, School Six, School Five, and School Two had not

enacted a functioning professional development program.

Time

An emergent theme that arose in reference to the first research question concerned the

issue of time. Interestingly, in two of the three schools where no ongoing formal professional

development program was in place, the school leaders claimed that there was simply no time.

This leaves to question why two of the schools in the study did not have enough time to conduct

professional development, but three other schools—where there were extensive programs

operating—did. This issue of time was recurrent throughout the interviews also in terms of

when professional development sessions should happen. Specifically, interviewees disagreed

about whether there were enough hours in the workday to get it done. School leaders also spoke

extensively of the time that they took for professional development meetings in their schools. In

one of the schools with a functioning program, School Four, teachers met every Monday during

their planning periods. In addition, new teachers at School Four met before school on

Wednesdays, and teachers who co-taught with special education teachers met again after school on Fridays. Also at School Four, substitute teachers were provided so that teachers could attend conferences, and each of their teacher workdays were filled with professional development. At another school, School Three, teachers met with school leaders on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during planning periods, before school once a month, and after school twice a month. The school leader at School Three admitted that "it's hard to do a lot of professional development during the school day" and that "teachers probably believe we have too many meetings" (School Three, interview, March 10, 2011). However, at School One—which had an extensive professional learning program—the principal insisted that professional development work should *only* be done during the school day. In short, the leader at School One explained, "We don't stay late for professional development" (School One interview, March 8, 2011). Rather, teachers at School One used one planning period a week, and they had constant access to an instructional coach who would research lesson plans or co-teach. In addition, School One had secured several grants to hold on-site seminars and workdays where teachers could focus entirely on professional development. There was wide variance among the schools under study with regards to time, both in terms of how much time professional development should take and when professional development sessions should actually be held. I illustrate these themes in Figure 6.
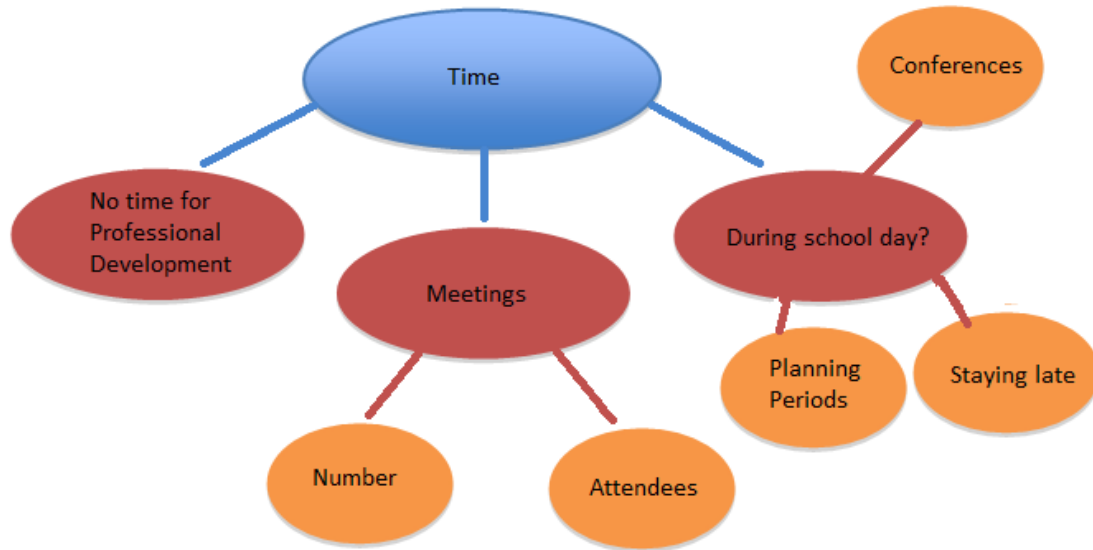
Figure 6. The Theme of Time.

Designers of the Professional Development Program

Finally with regards to the first research question and the structure of professional development programs, each school leader spoke about who designed and conducted the programs in their schools. In four schools, school leaders spoke of a design team made up of teachers and administrators who determined professional development needs and then charted the professional development course. (In the one outstanding school, School Four, the school principal alone determined what students and teachers needed in terms of professional development.) In the five schools with professional development design teams, teachers had a hand in deciding what would be addressed and how it would be addressed. There was disagreement, however, over whether outside professionals or teachers already in the building should lead professional development. Most school leaders seemed to think that it was important to "bring in" professional development rather than have teachers in the building conduct it themselves. One leader said that they would take "whoever we can get. . . . We will take any help" (School Three, interview, March 10, 2011). Another explained that bringing in

an outside expert was "ideal," given that "it's hard to be a prophet in your own church" (School Two, interview, May 26, 2010). One school leader, though, was adamant that only teachers from the school should lead professional development. The leader explained that they were interested in "building teacher-leaders" and "there is enough experience in our building that we don't have to look outside" (School One, interview, March 8, 2011). This theme is illustrated in Figure 7.
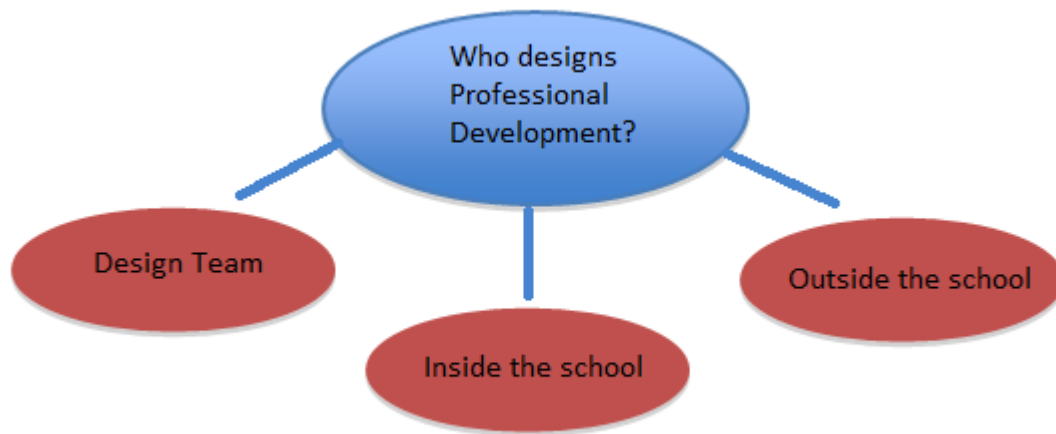

Figure 7. The Theme of Designers of the Professional Development Program.

Professional Development and Social Justice

The second research question sought school leaders' descriptions of the professional development program, and specifically, it asked whether there were issues of social justice evident in their descriptions. The matter of deciding who will design and conduct professional development programs, described above, can be construed as a social justice issue, and as such, it addresses the second research question. By giving teachers the opportunity to design professional development, school leaders were thereby recognizing and validating what some scholars have termed "teacher voice" (Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1990; Miller, 1990; Zeichner, 1993). In doing so, the school leaders in all but one research site—School Four—were

recognizing that teachers in their buildings indeed had something to offer and could be trusted to make good decisions. As such, they were upending traditional authoritarian structures and demonstrating a more collegial and egalitarian approach to school governance. However, school leaders' general reliance on people outside the building seemed to contradict their willingness to empower teachers. While school leaders appeared to believe that teachers were capable of determining the professional development they needed, school leaders appeared to simultaneously believe that teachers were incapable of actually conducting professional development sessions. There were also hints that some school leaders—even those in schools where teacher-led professional development design teams were in place—did not have faith in the teachers that worked in their buildings. One school leader—the principal of School Four, where there was no design team—spoke of how she would move from class to class during the school day almost constantly, because "when you think no one's watching, you won't do right" (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011). The school leader at School Three stated flatly, "We don't always got teachers who want to be here" (School Three, interview, March 10, 2011). The school leader at School Two spoke of his not wanting to give teachers too many tasks, because they would simply "go through the motions" and professional development would become an "exercise in compliance" (School Two, interview, May 26, 2011). Every school leader with a functioning professional development program spoke of the need of "monitoring" teachers for the sake of ensuring that the practices honed in professional development sessions were indeed implemented in the classroom. Thus, it seems clear that while some steps were taken to ensure teacher participation, school leaders in the study tended to maintain their traditionally dominant role.

School leaders also demonstrated an awareness of the link between social justice and professional development when they spoke of the issues they expected professional development to address. Most school leaders in the study believed that the professional development program at their schools—whether they actually had a program going or not—should in some way help teachers to lessen the difficulties faced by traditionally under-served populations. Specifically, school leaders spoke of poor students, transient students, African-American students, and Latino students. With the right training, school leaders reasoned, teachers would be better able to reach those populations, thereby helping them succeed in school and ultimately achieve social uplift. The school leader at School Six felt that many of the students in his school were unsuccessful because of the "blockers" that they had developed during their difficult lives. These "blockers" prevented students from forming good relationships, and without the ability to form good relationships, students would not be successful upon graduation. That school leader was hoping to gear the entire professional development program for the coming school year around teacher-student relationship-building in hopes that teachers could learn to get through the "blockers" and ultimately become "advocates" for students (School Six, interview, June 27, 2011). Even at School Five, where the population was exceedingly White and well-to-do, the principal admitted that his community's social situation had some bearing on the professional development program. Because the community at his school was "school-centered," he presumed that students were easy to reach. Consequently, there was not much that teachers had to learn, and thus, there was not a great deal of professional development that needed to take place (School Five, interview, December 20, 2010). By far, the most explicit recognition of the link between social justice and professional development came from the assistant principal at School Three. She scoffed at teachers and

administrators who worked at places like School Five, claiming that their job was "easy."

"Here," she said, "God put me here. . . . Our kids need us." The assistant principal explained

that with the ever-increasing importance placed on academic success, she and her colleagues

needed to make a "fast difference," and thus, "professional development had to change." She

said that teachers thus learned "more strategies to keep kids involved" and on track. "We want

them to see their future—that they can graduate from high school, that they can go on to college

or technical school. Life isn't where they are right now." In sum, she said, "We do professional

development on what's going to help our teachers help our kids" (School Three, interview,

March 10, 2011). In my study, I gathered data from all six sites that had a bearing on issues of

social justice, be they data about a teacher-led design team, data about a need to control or

monitor teachers, or data about the goals of professional development.

Awareness of Cross-National Issues in Professional Development

While many issues that arose during data analysis were issues that other scholars have

noted in schools outside of the United States, school leaders did not express any awareness of

the significance of international issues in professional development. This was one of the foci of

the second research question. Two school leaders—at School Three and School Four—

mentioned the large populations of Latino students at their schools, but they subsequently

lumped those students in with other traditionally troubled groups, such as economically

disadvantaged students or African-American students. This is not to say that school leaders

were blind to their foreign-born students, but rather that they did not seem to appreciate how a

student's national origin and immigrant status would cause a student particular problems. The

challenges that international students may face were not distinguishable from the challenges that

poor or African-American students may face. Rather, in the eyes of the school leaders under

review, a struggling student was a struggling student, and the cause of an individual student's difficulties did not seem to factor in to the decision-making process. The school leaders' approaches seemed geared to addressing the effects of student disengagement—like misbehavior or poor academic performance—but not to addressing the cause. Thus, no school leader in the study mentioned any professional development initiative in their school that was aimed at specifically addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

In addition, school leaders did not speak of the international educational marketplace when describing professional development. There was no talk of borrowing and no consideration of what might be learned from schools in similar situations in other countries. Almost certainly, schools abroad face issues related to student transience, poverty, and limited language proficiency just like the schools under review do. In fact, a great deal of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 supports the idea that there are cross-national issues that affect schools in Cobb County and schools in other countries. However, there was no indication that school leaders in Cobb were looking outside of the southeast region of the United States for ideas on how to address their problems.

Teacher Resistance and Implementation of Professional Development

The third research question addressed during on-site interviews concerned the issues related to the implementation of professional development programs in Cobb County Schools. Teacher resistance emerged here. In addition to the issue of time described above, school leaders also described the ways that teachers would resist the implementation of a new and extensive professional development program. In fact, each school leader referred to teacher resistance in one form or another, either as a means of describing their program's implementation or as a means of excusing its non-existence.

Several school leaders said that they faced difficulty in implementing professional development programs because of teacher resistance. One school leader, at School Four, described the teacher cooperation at her school as "incredible," although it took three years to get to that level. "At first," she said, "folks felt like it was too much work" (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011). Over time, though, they grew accustomed, and teachers became more self-sufficient. The same school leader used new teacher meetings in order to train new teachers to create and apply the sort of lesson-plans and instructional methods that were at the core of their professional development. She claimed that teachers who transferred from other schools would marvel, "So this is what collaboration looks like" (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011). Another school leader, at School Three, admitted, "Teachers probably feel we do too much," but wrote off the resistance: "Teachers are always going to complain about another meeting" (School Three, interview, March 10, 2011). The school leader at School One experienced the same sort of resistance, given that the principal prior to her arrival was not a "meeting person." "The year before I got here," she said, "I don't know if they did anything" (School One, interview, March 8, 2011). Nonetheless, the school leader at School One said that everyone in her school was "on board" with the increased meetings, accountability, and professional development responsibilities within three months, and now, three years later, they "really love it" (School One, interview, March 8, 2011). It seems that while teachers at the schools under review were initially resistant, they tended to ultimately conform to the expectations of the school leader if the school leader implemented a professional development program.

However, as described above, not every school leader implemented a professional development program, and those who did not have high-functioning programs of professional

development cited teacher resistance as a crucial factor in the non-implementation of professional development. One high school—at School Two—leader spoke of the difficulties he faced when he tried to organize professional development portfolios by department. While some departments put a great deal of time and effort into their portfolios, other departments did nothing. The school leader seemed to be at a loss as to how to handle such variance. "If you start requiring more," he reasoned, "They'll say we're giving them too much" (School Two, interview, May 26, 2011). Another school leader—at School Six—claimed that his first attempt at instituting a program of professional development at his school was completely thwarted by teacher resistance. As a result, he backed way off the following year and at the time of the study, there was very little formal professional development in School Six. The school leader at School Five—who, like the other two mentioned here, had very little formal development in his school—seemed to agree with teachers who complained that professional development was irrelevant. While he bemoaned the fact that teachers had difficulty understanding "standards-based instruction and grading," he also said that most of his own educational training had been impractical, and he could "honestly say that . . . I didn't apply" a lot of what he learned in his educational studies (School Five, interview, December 20, 2011). It was clear that some school leaders were wary of encountering teacher resistance, and thereby used it as a justification for not instituting an extensive professional development program. The theme of teacher resistance is illustrated in Figure 8.
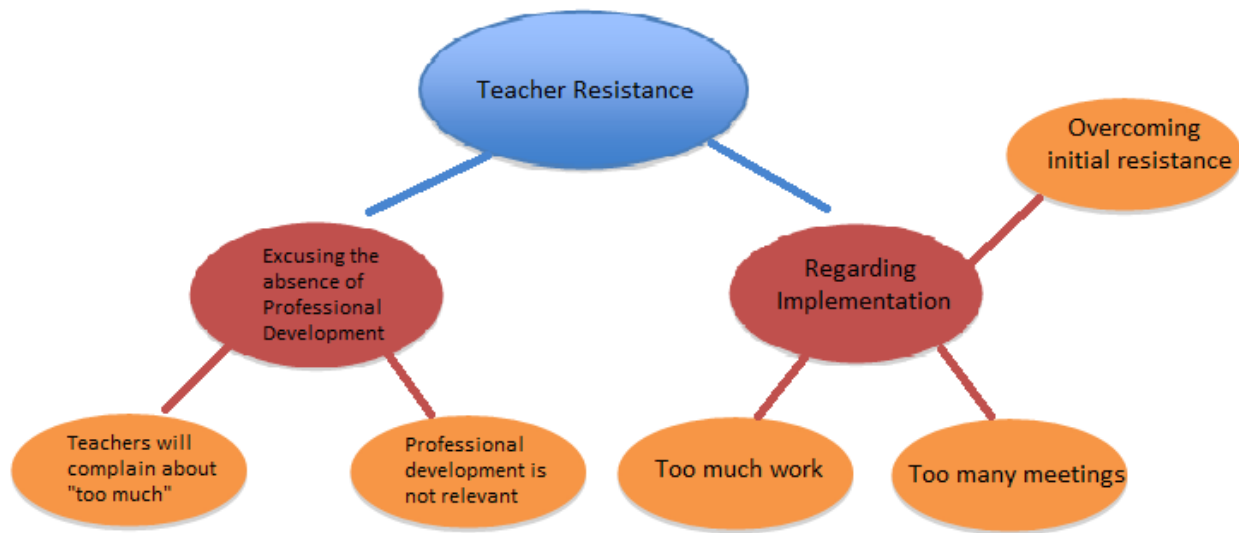
Figure 8. The Theme of Teacher Resistance.

The Role of the School Leader in Professional Development

The fourth research question concerned the role of the school leaders in professional development. Of course, this varied from school to school, and the role of the school leaders in professional development was certainly much different in schools that had functioning professional development programs versus those that did not. Amongst the three schools with functioning professional development programs—School One, School Three, and School Four—school leaders took an active role in professional development. In School Three and School Four, the principal herself took an active role in professional development. In School One, the principal hired someone—an instructional coach—specifically for the job of managing professional development. Taking an active role included attending and/or chairing meetings, reviewing lesson plans, coordinating outside experts, securing funding, insuring curricular continuity across grade levels, and monitoring teachers. One of these school leaders explained that it was important to be visible: "In the past, teachers didn't see administrators." Now, the teachers in her building would often say, "You are everywhere" (School Three, interview,

March 10, 2011). It was clear that in schools with highly functioning professional development programs, school leaders were very much involved in the daily professional lives of the teachers in the building.

On the other hand, school leaders in the schools with no strong professional development programs in place admitted to rarely attending grade-level or department-level meetings. In two of the three schools without extensive programs—Schools Two and Six—the school leaders had made changes to the master schedule so that teachers of the same subject could informally collaborate and trade ideas. The school leader of School Six had also added an advisement period every day during which teachers and students would focus on getting to know one another. The involvement of the school leaders in the schools with no strong professional development programs was thus fairly passive and was limited to tinkering with the daily operations of the school rather than introducing themselves into teachers' professional lives in any significant way. Clearly, the leaders in Schools Two and Six saw themselves as the general managers that Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1990) and Bullough, Kauchak, Crow, Hobbs, and Stokes (1997) described. Even though Glasman and Heck (1992) argued that there had been a shift in the role of school leaders from that of a business manager to that of an instructional leader, that change had not yet taken place in all of the schools in my study.

The Role of the School District in Professional Development

The fifth research question concerned the role of the Cobb County School District itself in the creation and implementation of professional development programs. By all accounts, the school district played some part in the design and implementation of professional development programs. However, the system allowed schools some leeway. That is, while each school leader interviewed claimed that they alone had the power to determine the shape and character

of their own professional development programs, each school leader assigned some responsibility for the nature of their programs to the central office. As one school leader said, "We have to do it, but they don't dictate what must be done" (School Three, interview, March 10, 2011). According to the school leaders in this study, the Cobb County School District has not always been so flexible. In particular, when the state of Georgia shifted to using the "Georgia Performance Standards" as the basis for teaching and learning a few years ago, the District determined that each teacher in the District needed specific training—in this case, training in the use of the new standards. Nonetheless, at the time of my research, the District was leaving the particulars of professional development to individual schools. However, even though school leaders could design their own programs, they were not free of District influence.

The District was able to influence the focus of professional development programs in two ways. The first of these was through each school's strategic plan, which school leaders were required to submit at the start of each school year. Four school leaders spoke of the District-approved school strategic plans. Strategic plans were required to include a section on professional development, and during the approval process, the District would make sure that school goals and system goals were linked. For example, the school leader at School Five reported that the professional development program laid out in his strategic plan had to focus on mathematics, because that was a system priority. The second way that the District influenced professional development programs was through funding. For example, the school leader at School Six described the pressure that comes from the system to use professional development money on things that will improve instruction rather than address students' affective or emotional needs (School Six, interview, June 27, 2011). It was clear that by requiring schools

to submit an approval-worthy strategic plan and by controlling funding for professional development, the District made sure that schools did not stray too far from the District line.

It also seemed clear from the interviews that the most significant effect that the Cobb County School District's influence had on professional development programs was to center them on data. In each interview, without exception, school leaders spoke of "accountability" and "using data" to determine the direction of their professional development programs. Each school leader also said that the system advocated a data-driven approach, and consequently, each school leader said that utilizing data was a key part of their professional development process. Accordingly, given the preeminence of data, the research sites with sub-par test scores reported being under increased scrutiny, while those with traditionally successful students reported almost no interaction with the central office. The leader at School Four, which had a history of underachievement, said "I have to do more because there's more pressure" (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011). In contrast, the leader from School Five, which had always met annual targets, said, "For the most part, they have left it up to us" (School Five, interview, December 20, 2011). Most school leaders seemed accepting of or at least resigned to the system's focus on test data. Only one school leader—the leader of School Six, the only school that had not met AYP the previous year—seemed to question the school system's reliance on test score data: "As much as I don't like standardized tests, we still have to deal with it." The school leader explained that "as a principal, I am obligated to look at test scores . . . [and] I can't say that AYP is crap. . . . [However,] a test given to one-third of our students is not a good reflection of your school" (School Six, interview, June 27, 2011). This one school leader notwithstanding, it seemed clear that the system's goals and priorities—particularly the system's emphasis on quantifiable data—had become each school's goals and priorities.

The Cobb County School District's focus on data is not unique. As described in Chapter 1, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002) mandates the use of quantifiable measures of student achievement. As a result, the use of test data has become a cornerstone of state and local educational policies around the United States. In addition, Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) and Kirk and Napier (2009) wrote of heightened reliance on standardized tests around the world. Thus, the principal of School Six is not likely to find much relief from his school system's preoccupation with test scores. Additional discussion of the Cobb County School District's focus on data can be found in Chapter 5.

The Goals of Professional Development

The sixth and final research question to be addressed in on-site interviews concerned school leaders' ideas about the goals of professional development. Predictably, given the District's accentuation on data described above, many school leaders talked about desirable outcomes in terms of test scores. The school leader at School One straightforwardly said, "The overall goal is to align staff development to student performance on standardized tests." Even though much of her actual work involved helping teachers with logistics and procedures, she felt that ultimately, her efficacy would be measured on state and local tests (School One, interview, March 8, 2011). Other school leaders' emphasis on test data was a bit more veiled. For example, the leader of School Five said that it was not only for students to learn, but also to be able to "demonstrate that they comprehend and can apply" (School Five, interview, December 20, 2010). The leader of School Four spoke of helping teachers to "become smarter teachers," which could be measured by changes in student test scores (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011). In service of raising test scores, school leaders reported having their teachers undergo

professional development on instructional strategies, lesson planning, and integration of technology, among other things.

Notably, neither of the two high schools in the study—School Two and School Six—spoke of the importance of raising test scores, while school leaders at other levels did. However, it is likely that this omission is related more to the absence of a functional professional development program at each high school than it is to the school level.

Otherwise, school leaders often spoke of vague, generally unassailable goals for professional development. In typical fashion, the leader of School Five said, "The overall goal should be to make schools better schools by making teachers and administrators better educators that impact student learning and achievement" (School Five, interview, December 20, 2010). The same school leader—who, as explained above, did not have a functioning professional development program in his school—expressed a desire to create a "collaborative planning environment" and to make professional growth "a part of the culture" (School Five, interview, December 20, 2010). Another school leader—the principal of School Two, who also did not have a functioning professional development program in his school—echoed the desire to "create a community of learning." He additionally hoped that professional development would serve to lessen the "obvious gaps that exist," although he offered no means by which that could be done (School Two, interview, May 26, 2011). The leader at School Three said, "We do professional development on what's going to help our teachers help our kids" (School Three, interview, March 10, 2011). Likewise, the school leader at School Six said that the goal was "better instruction." When pressed, he said that professional development would help teachers master the "keys of good instruction" (School Six, interview, June 27, 2011). While each of these outcomes is laudable, they are notably unspecific.

Additional Themes

In addition to the issues that resulted from addressing the research questions, there were

some themes that emerged apart from the research questions. These findings were

unanticipated, yet their recurrence renders them significant to the study.

Differentiation

All six school leaders spoke of the need to differentiate professional development. That

is, school leaders recognized that individual teachers had particular professional development

needs and desires, and every one of the school leaders in this study spoke of the importance of

insuring that their professional development program addressed those specific requirements. As

the school leader of School Two succinctly explained, "Different teams have different needs.

. . . No one size fits all." "The idea," he continued, "was to differentiate professional

development for the forty different teams just the way that a teacher differentiates for thirty

students in the classroom" (School Two, interview, May 26, 2011). Another school leader—at

School Six—echoed that sentiment, calling professional development "a moving target." It is

"always a challenge," he said (School Six, interview, June 27, 2011). Interestingly, there was

some crossover between differentiation and teacher resistance. According to the school leader at

School One, differentiation was necessary because teachers would otherwise wonder, "Why am

I sitting through this again?" (School One, interview, March 8, 2011). This sentiment was

echoed by the school leader at School Five, who said that professional development "needs to

be focused on what they [teachers] need to do right then," lest teachers disengage and resist

(School Five, interview, December 20, 2010).

Schools differed in the ways that they differentiated their professional development. The

leader of School Four differentiated by encouraging teachers to look into various conferences in

the area and propose which ones they would like to attend based on teachers' own needs and desires (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011). The leader at School Three said that a recent change had been implemented in the name of differentiating professional development and thereby making it more relevant and meaningful for teachers: "We used to do full staff professional development, but now it's all done in clusters [i.e. grade levels]" (School Three, interview, March 10, 2011). The school leaders at School One, School Two, School Three, School Four, and School Five all described ways that they had attempted to differentiate by grade level or content area. Clearly, making sure that professional development met the individual needs of teachers was a priority. This theme is illustrated in Figure 9.
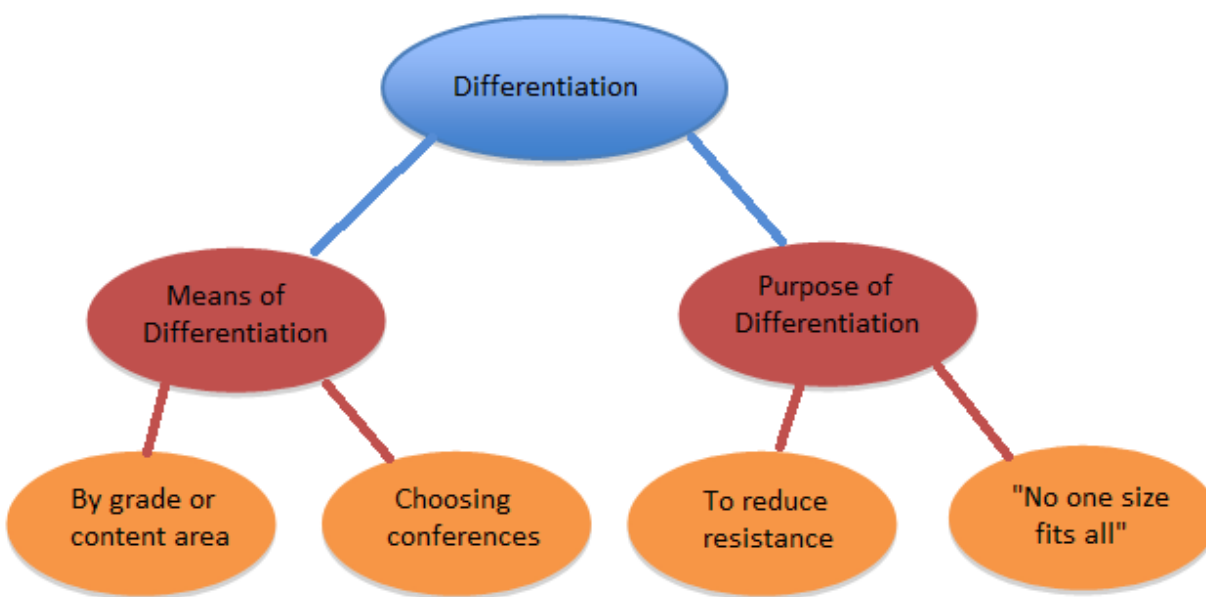

Figure 9. The Theme of Differentiation

Change

Another major emergent theme was change. Several school leaders spoke of the way that their schools and the professional development programs at their schools had changed in recent years. Two school leaders—from School One and School Three—spoke of the influx of

technology in recent years and the need for staff training in how to use it effectively. Another leader, from School Five, cited the changes that resulted from federal policy. "No Child Left Behind has brought a lot," he said. For all of its negative publicity, "there have been a lot of positives," he said. Specifically, the leader of School Five reported that teachers were today more "learning-focused" and "goal-oriented" as a result of greater teacher and administrator accountability. "Teachers do a much better job of teaching than we did when I was in the classroom in the 1970s" (School Five, interview, December 20, 2010). Some school leaders mentioned the changes that have specifically come to professional development programs, both in terms of substance and in terms of frequency. The leader at School One cited the changes to the professional development program in her school, saying that in the three years since she arrived, professional development went from "fluffy stuff to down and dirty" (School One, interview, March 8, 2011). The leader of School Three added, "A few years ago, our teachers would have just learned by going through the motions" (School Three, interview, March 10, 2011). Three of the six school administrators—all of whom had been at their current schools for less than five years—attributed major changes to the change of leadership that took place when they were hired. Said the leader of School One, "The year before I got here, I don't know if they did anything" (School One, interview, March 8, 2011). The leader of School Six said that he found no evidence of a professional development program when he arrived. The leader of School Four said that before she arrived, a state review board had concluded that her school was "all messed up." There was "no teaching, no lesson planning, and no higher order thinking." She instituted an aggressive program of staff development and now, according to the school leader, her school was recognized as one of the country's "most improved middle schools." As a result, they have hosted several visits from national organizations, all of which "wanted to

know how we did it" (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011). Even though teachers often resisted the changes, it was plain from school leaders' testimonies that schooling in general and professional development in particular has changed a great deal in the last decade, just as described by Darling-Hammond (1996), Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995), Putnam and Borko (2000), Little (1988), and Abdal-Haqq (1995). This theme is illustrated in Figure 10.
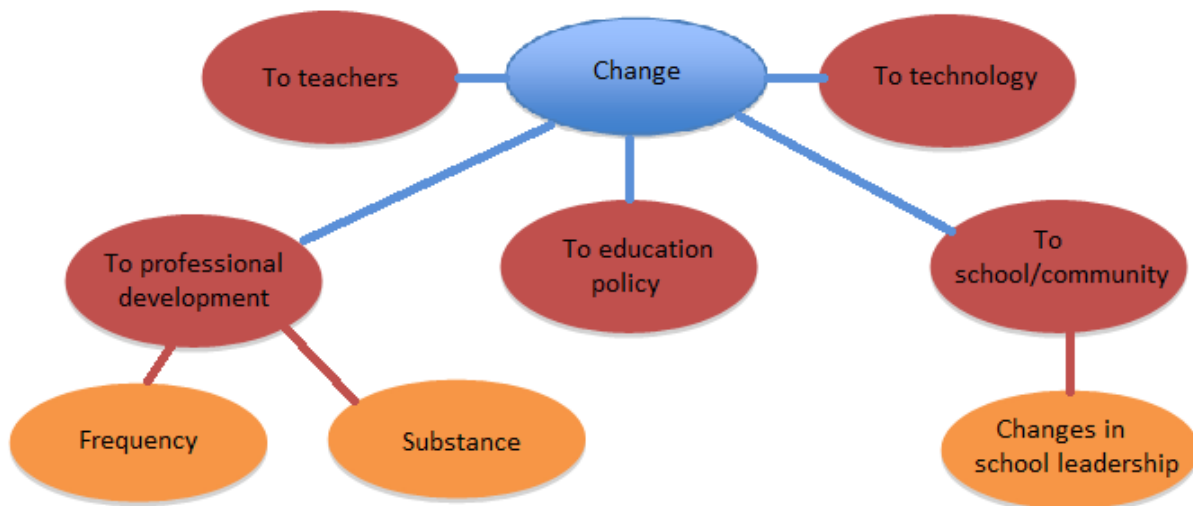

Figure 10. The Theme of Change.

Non-Findings

Amidst all that emerged from my interview data, I anticipated a few themes that simply did not surface. First, I was surprised that school leaders did not speak of international policy borrowing. While I did not expect school leaders to quote research on the nature of the international educational marketplace, I did expect to hear more about the broader goals and issues of education. Rather, school leaders spoke to me solely about the issues that they faced in their particular schools. Second, I expected to hear more about pre-packaged professional development programs. I presumed that many schools would be employing mass-marketed,

pre-fabricated programs such as the ones that I have experienced as a teacher. In fact, there was only one school—School Three—that mentioned anything about the use of a national program. Finally, I expected a more significant role for the school system. I was surprised to hear that the school system largely leaves schools to design and implement their own professional development programs. Although two schools—School Four and School Six—described the pressure that they felt from the system, they did not report that system officials were taking steps to ensure that the professional development plans that they included in their strategic plans were followed. System officials maintained their distance from the schools under study, both literally and figuratively. School leaders reported no significant intervention from the system, and they did not report ever having to meet with system officials. I was particularly surprised by this lack of concrete oversight given that the Cobb County School District, as a system, did not make AYP the year before the study was conducted. The American tradition of local school control was still very much evident in Cobb County. This hands-off approach seemed to trickle down to the large schools, such as School Two, where the principal told me that teaching was "their [the teachers'] business" and not his (School Two, interview, May 26, 2011).

In this chapter, I described the findings and major themes that were present in the interview data. Most of these issues were related to the research questions, but some unanticipated themes emerged. In the next chapter, I will discuss the implications of these findings and link them with universal issues in education. In addition, I will discuss potential directions for future research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, I discuss the implications of the research findings described in Chapter 4 and link them to larger issues in education. The findings have implications in light of what other scholars report. I also provide some thoughts as a retrospective on my study, and on directions for future research.

Professional Learning—Ideal versus Real

As described in Chapter 1, this study was initially motivated by my desire to obtain information about school leaders' views and positions to better understand the gap between ideal professional development and real professional development. By analyzing the various themes that emerge in administrators' views and positions in a variety of schools, I hoped to gain a deeper understanding of why there is a difference between what researchers suggest professional development should be and what researchers find that professional development often is. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, formal professional development was largely nonexistent at three of the schools in the study: School Two, School Five, and School Six. In contrast, formal professional development programs were existent at the other three schools in the study: School One, School Three, and School Four. However, based on the data collected, only the program at Schools One and School Four seemed to meet the criteria of a high-quality professional learning program described in Chapter 2 (pages 18-29). Only School One and School Four offered a program that was ongoing, collaborative, classroom-based, and tied to school and district goals. In my study, School Three, despite their determination, seemed to

offer a kind of traditional, uncoordinated professional development that was heavily criticized in the scholarly literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Thus, there were essentially three tiers of professional development programs observed: schools that offered professional learning (School One and School Four), schools that offered traditional professional development (School Three), and schools that offered no staff development at all (School Two, School Five, and School Six).

Interestingly, regardless of the implementation level at their schools, it was clear that every school leader was aware that traditional forms of professional development were no longer adequate. All six school leaders spoke of the changes that have come to education in general and professional development in particular in the last two decades. One, the leader of School Five, attributed the changes to policy. Others, the leaders of School One and Three, attributed the changes to technology. The leader of School Three also attributed the changes to students and teachers themselves. The leaders of School One, School Four, and School Six all attributed changes in professional development to changes in school leadership. Regardless of the cause, there was broad awareness and consensus that professional development should not simply involve the sit-and-get sessions that characterize traditional professional development. In addition, school leaders in my study were well aware of the changes in their responsibilities as school leaders. While they each reacted to the changes differently, every school leader knew that they had instructional responsibilities that they would not have had thirty years ago, in addition to their managerial responsibilities.

Further, each administrator demonstrated an awareness of the need to differentiate professional development for individual teachers. A high-quality professional learning experience, as described by Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995), is participant-driven and connected to and derived from teachers' work with students. Abdal-Haqq (1995) believed

that professional development had to be constructivist—which, by its very nature, is individualized. Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Suk Yoon (2001) argued for professional development that was specific to individual classroom needs, embedded in particular classroom practices, and participant-driven. Putnam and Borko (2000) said that to be effective, professional development activities had to be easily related to specific classroom practices. Professional organizations like the ASCD and government organizations like the Department of Education all advocate differentiated professional development. Similarly, school leaders in my study seemed to be aware that professional development could not be offered as "one size fits all," as the leader of School Two said (School Two, interview, May 26, 2011). Nonetheless, only two of the schools in my study seemed capable of or willing to implement programs that were tailored to specific teacher needs.

While it was clear that not every school in my study was enacting the principles of professional learning so widely advocated by scholars, the school leaders at each school were cognizant of at least a few of the fundamental tenets. It stands to reason that a lack of awareness is not sufficient to account for the implementation or non-implementation of high-quality professional learning programs and that there are other factors at play. With this finding, my study adds to the literature on professional learning and on program implementation described in Chapter 2.

<center>Visibility</center>

As I described in Chapter 2, several scholars demonstrated that effective school leaders exhibit many of the same behaviors. Thus, it was of interest to me to determine whether there was any link between those behaviors and the sort of professional development programs that were implemented in the Cobb County School District.

Among the behaviors of effective administrators is *visibility*. Several scholars (Blase and Blase, 2004; Heck, 1992; Waters, Marzano, and McNulty, 2003; Whitaker, 1997) argued that school leaders who make themselves seen in their buildings are likely to engender higher teacher morale, more powerful teacher motivation, greater levels of teacher self-esteem, and stronger teacher senses of security. These scholars wrote that being a visible administrator sends the message to teachers that good instruction is valued. In my study, two of the three schools with existent professional development programs—School Three and School Four— were led by principals that took an active role in the school by way of attending and/or chairing meetings, reviewing lesson plans, coordinating outside experts, securing funding, insuring curricular continuity across grade levels, and monitoring teachers. In the third school with an existent program—School One—the principal hired an instructional coach to be visible on his behalf. As the leader in School Three explained, "In the past, teachers didn't see administrators." Now, the teachers in her building would often say, "You are everywhere" (School Three, interview, March 10, 2011). By contrast, school leaders in the schools with no strong professional development programs in place—School Two, School Four, and School Six—admitted to rarely attending grade-level or department-level meetings, and did not describe any significant interaction with teachers throughout the course of the school day. With this finding—that visible school administrators tend to implement professional development programs—my study adds to the literature on effective administrator behaviors described in Chapter 2.

At the same time, a visible administrator should not be a bullying administrator or take what Blase and Anderson (1995) called a control-oriented leadership style. Blase and Blase (2002) showed that such an approach to leadership, over time, can sour into abuse that would

wreck both the teacher and the school. One school leader in my study—the principal at School Four—seemed to take this approach. Her control orientation was best typified by her rationale for spending time in classrooms: "when you think no one's watching, you won't do right" (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011). Even though the principal of School Four gave teachers the opportunity to exercise some control over which conferences they attended, the principal determined and dictated the required format for lesson plans, the sequence of classroom events, and the focus of all instructional activities—in this case, raising test scores. She required teachers to attend several meetings a week, and said that Monday was a day for "no dentist appointments" [i.e. that no one could miss school on Mondays] (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011). Anyone who did not make it to work for their professional development meeting on Monday was required to make up the meeting at 7:00 a.m. on Friday morning. While the leader of School Four felt that she had a gargantuan task in front of her— before she arrived, by her own account, a state review board had classified the school as "all messed up," and School Four was considered one of the "most violent schools in America"—I wonder whether her unbending approach was not damaging to the long-term culture of her school (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011).

The School Ethos

Several scholars (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Blase & Anderson, 1995; Blase & Blase, 2004; Blase, Blase, & Phillips, 2010; DuFour, 1991; Marks & Louis, 1997; Meier, 1995; Moye, Henkin, & Egley, 2005; Newman, King, & Youngs, 2000; Rhodes, Camic, Milburn, & Lowe, 2009, Shephard, 1996; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003) wrote that successful school leaders also establish and maintain a school culture in which collaboration and professional

growth can flourish. Based solely on the words of the school leaders in my study, it is difficult

to determine whether this sort of environment was established at each of the schools I visited.

The school leader who spoke most openly about collaboration was the leader of School

Four—the school leader who also expressed such the hard-core control orientation described

above. At the time of the interview, she was working on her Ph.D., and was writing a

dissertation focused on teacher/administrator collaboration. By her own account, new teachers

would marvel when they first came to work at School Four: "So this is what collaboration looks

like" (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011). The other two schools with functioning

programs of professional development also spoke of collaboration. The leader at School One

spoke of the interactivity of their professional development meetings, and she described the

principal's dedication to creating a school filled with teacher leaders (School One, interview,

March 8, 2011). At School Three, the relationship was a bit more strained, given that some

teachers, according to the interviewee, "did not want to be here." Nonetheless, she considered

"helping teachers" to be her primary responsibility, and she felt that most teachers in the

building had been called upon to work with troubled students (School Three, interview, March

10, 2011). All three school leaders pointedly used the term "we" when speaking of professional

development.

By contrast, the three school leaders in schools without professional development

programs—School Two, School Five, and School Six—spoke of teachers using the terms "they"

and "them." Nonetheless, the leaders at two of the three schools where almost no professional

development took place—Schools Two and School Five—spoke of the importance of

establishing a collaborative environment. Concerning the goals of professional development,

the leader of School Five expressed a desire to create a "collaborative planning environment"

and to make professional growth "a part of the culture" (School Five, interview, December 20, 2010). Likewise, the principal of School Two—who also did not have a functioning professional development program in his school—echoed the desire to "create a community of learning" (School Two, interview, May 26, 2011). In light of the lack of formal collaborative structures in School Two and School Five, their leaders' claims to desire a collaborative environment rang hollow.

In addition, the leaders of School Two, School Five, and School Six—the three schools without functioning professional development programs—seemed incapable or unwilling to alter the culture of their schools. When asked what changes each had made to implement professional development programs, the leader of School Five hesitated, and then he suggested that he was not the best person for me to interview. The leaders of School Two and School Six both cited changes they had made to the school schedule—the implementation of common planning time for teachers who teach the same subjects. As Fullan (1993, 2002) argued, the leaders of Schools Two and Six were putting too much faith in rearranging schedules and instituting meetings, and they ignored the larger culture of non-collaboration. "*To restructure is not to reculture*," Fullan wrote. "Changing formal structures is not the same as changing norms, habits, skills, and beliefs" (Fullan, 1993, p. 49). Blase, Blase, and Phillips (2010) made this same distinction, pointing out that both reorganizing and re-culturing are necessary. They argued that doing one without the other is fruitless. Ultimately, unless the leaders of School Two, School Five, and School Six do more to promote an environment of cooperation, they will likely not be able to get a professional development program off the ground.

With this finding—that there is indeed a link between establishing a collaborative environment and implementing a high-quality professional development program—my study

adds to the literature on professional learning described in Chapter 2. However, this finding is limited because it is based on school leaders' reports and not on an actual examination of the school culture. My study also reinforces the literature that argued that reorganizing and re-culturing a school are not the same thing.

School Based-Factors

Some of the differences in school ethos may be attributable to school level given that School Two and School Six were both high schools. Choy, Chen, and Bugarin (2006) noted that professional development programs tend to be less extensive in the upper grades. Some scholars suggested that this might be related to the size of the school (Bullough, Kauchak, Crow, Hobbs, and Stokes, 1997), departmentalization of subjects in the upper grades as opposed to interdisciplinary teams (Husband & Short, 1994; McLaughlin, 1993; Mills, Powell, & Pollack, 1992; Sandholtz, 2000), or some other less definable difference between elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. In my study, there did appear to be some link between the level of schooling and the sort of professional development that took place. School One, an elementary school, had an extensive, high-quality professional development program. The middle schools in the study—School Three, School Four, and School Five—were mixed, given that School Four had an extensive, high-quality professional development program, School Three had a lower-quality program, and School Five had no program at all. Finally, neither School Two nor School Six, both high schools, had functioning professional development programs.

With regard to size, School One—the elementary school with a functioning, high-quality program of professional development—enrolled 634 students and employed sixty-one teachers during the school year under review (Georgia Department of Education, 2011b). Schools Two

and Six, the two high schools with nonexistent programs, each enrolled over 2,000 students and employed about 150 employees during the school year under review (Georgia Department of Education, 2011b). With almost three times the number of employees and students, the school leaders in the high schools under study presumably faced more operational and managerial issues, as Bullough, Kauchak, Crow, Hobbs, and Stokes (1997) found. However, each high school also employed at least five times as many administrators as School One. Thus, it stands to reason that there were enough administrators in Schools Two and Six to handle the increased number of logistical tasks that attend a larger student population and still have enough time to focus on crafting a high-quality professional development program.

With regards to departmentalization, School One—the elementary school with a functioning, high-quality program of professional development—every teacher taught every subject, and teachers were grouped into teams according to grade level. At the two high schools—Schools Two and Six—teachers taught only a particular subject, and there was no grouping of teachers based on grade level. In the middle schools—Schools Three, Four, and Five—there was a combination: teachers taught particular subjects, but teachers were grouped into interdisciplinary teams according to grade level. The departmentalization found in the upper grades serves to divide teachers into subject areas rather than grade levels. As a result, they are encouraged to collaborate with the teachers who teach the same subject rather than the teachers who teach the same grade (and thus, the same students). Indeed, in both high schools in my study—School Two and School Six—the school leaders reported having modified planning time so that teachers who teach the same subjects, rather than teachers who teach the same grade, could collaborate. Further, students were required to move between teachers and student groups that may have no connection to one another besides being in the same building.

The results of my study support the literature that suggests that professional development programs are less prevalent in schools that serve older students. My results also substantiate the literature that suggests that larger schools are less capable of focusing on instructional tasks, and my results point to a link between departmentalization and the absence of professional development. However, I must concede that my sample size is to small to draw any definitive conclusions.

Gender and School Ethos

On a related note, many scholars (Josefowitz, 1980; Morsnik, 1970; Pitner, 1981) have argued that female administrators have a greater ability to form relationships with their co-workers. In turn, other scholars (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; McLaughlin, 1994; Meier, 1995; Sizer, 1992a, 1992b) have argued that relationships are one of the most important ingredients of establishing a collaborative environment. In addition, several scholars (Adikison, 1981; Glasman, 1984; Gross & Trask, 1976, Hallinger and Murphy, 1985; Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins, 1990; Pitner, 1981) found that that male principals tended to be less focused on instruction than female principals. In my study, the principals of the three schools with functional professional development programs—School One, School Three, and School Four—were a man, a woman, and a woman, respectively. Interestingly, at School One, the male principal at School One appointed a woman to be his instructional coach and thereby be the primary school leader in charge of establishing a collaborative environment. Thus, at all three schools in my study with functional professional development programs, a female was in charge of making sure that teachers communicated and that high-quality instruction was taking place.

Likewise, the three schools where little to no professional development was taking place—Schools Two, School Five, and School Six—were all led by men. Each of these leaders

clearly saw themselves more as business managers than instructional leaders. The principal of School Two characterized teaching as "their business," as if what happened in the classroom was not also his concern (School Two, interview, May 26, 2011). The principal of School Five belittled the educational courses he took as part of his Doctoral program, saying that his class on School Law was the only one "of use." He consistently referred to his "running the school," suggesting that he was simply insuring its smooth operation rather than actually steering (School Five, interview, December 20, 2010). Further, these three male principals seemed to think that their instructional leadership was confined to shuffling schedules rather than actually taking part in discussions about classroom practice. The male principals of School Two and School Six said that they had recently shifted the daily schedule and aligned certain teachers' planning periods in order to promote more collaboration. Their instructional leadership stopped there.

Certainly, my findings seem to substantiate what other scholars have found with regards to the differences between male and female school leaders. However, I must concede that my sample size is probably too small to draw any definitive conclusions as to whether men or women are more likely to establish good relationships, build collaborative environments, and thereby offer higher-quality professional development programs.

Race and School Ethos

Some scholars (Lomotey, 1989; Reitzug & Patterson, 1998) found African-American principals established a different school environment than White principals by virtue of their greater faith in African-American children and an overall more caring disposition. In my study, the interview data did indeed seem to reflect a difference in the ethos of the African-American-led schools and the White-led schools. In the three schools where Whites were in charge— School One, School Two, and School Five—there was little talk of the affective domain. That

is, School One, School Two, and School Five were all very businesslike. This is not to say that they were ineffective; School One had a very high-quality professional development program, and all three schools consistently met their AYP goals. However, during interviews, talk of student needs and emotions never arose. Rather, school leaders focused on the importance of unpacking standards, student achievement, and other cut and dried goals. The school leader at School One said that she spends most of her time working with teachers on "logistics and procedures" (School One, interview, March 8, 2011). Only at schools with African-American principals was there any discussion of how difficult it is to be a young person. "Kids still need somebody. . . . Our kids need us," said the school leader at School Three (School Three, interview, March 10, 2011). At School Four, the principal spoke of the struggles that her students face, be it with language, broken homes, or simply growing up (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011). At School Six, the principal staunchly defended his students and his school, which had not made AYP the prior year. In addition, he spoke of the "blockers" that many of his students have toward school and teachers, and he said that his goal was to train teachers to be "advocates for children" (School Six, interview, June 27, 2011).

In addition, the vehement rejection of AYP and standardized testing by the African-American principal of School Six may also be explained in terms of race. Recalling the double-consciousness theory of DuBois, Jackson (1988) suggested that African-American administrators were forced to navigate two cultures simultaneously. That is, African-American principals were obligated to serve the needs of the African-American community, while at the same time, African-American principals had to manage the expectations of a predominantly White society. It can be argued that the principal of School Six was caught between his need to graduate the students at his predominantly African-American high school and the fact that

nearly a third of his African-American students were not passing the state-mandated graduation test. Being pinched between the African-American community's need for high school graduates and the predominantly White policymakers' testing requirement may have inspired his ardor on the subject. Only one other school leader—the leader at School Three, a school which also had an African-American principal—expressed any reservations at all about the testing focus of the state of Georgia and the Cobb County School District.

These findings regarding African-American principals are compelling given that my findings reflected the broader trend in the scholarly literature. Again, however, I must concede that my sample size is probably too small to draw any definitive conclusions as to whether African-American principals are more likely to establish a more caring and/or collaborative environment.

<div align="center">Vision/Focus</div>

Several scholars (Blase, Blase, and Phillips, 2010; Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Manasse, 1983; Nanus, 1992; Sizer, 1992b; Starratt, 1995; Waters, Marzano, McNulty, 2003) argued that effective leaders must have some solid idea of where the organization should go, why it should go there, and what route the organization should follow. This is often referred to as *vision* or *focus*, and it has to stand up to numerous factors that threaten to distract school leaders and compromise their goals.

Interestingly, the school leaders in my study with the clearest vision seemed to be those who had adopted the Cobb County School District's values. In other words, those who have followed the District lead in rallying around raising test scores seemed to be the most focused. Further, it was in those schools—School One and School Four—where the highest levels of

professional development and professional learning were taking place. When asked about the goal of professional development, without hesitation, the school leader at School One replied, "The overall goal is to align staff development to student performance on standardized tests" (School One, interview, March 8, 2011). Likewise, the leader of School Four spoke of helping teachers to "become smarter teachers," which she said would be measured by changes in student test scores (School Four, interview, March 25, 2011). In addition, each school had implemented an extensive series of rituals—meetings, observations, assignments—that were geared around insuring that the school's priorities remained at the front of teachers' minds. School Three— which had a functioning program of professional development but was not as well-drilled as School One or School Four—lacked the razor-sharp focus on test scores that was found in School One and School Four. Rather, School Three split its focus between raising scores and dealing with students' affective needs. While this is certainly laudable, the lack of focus at School Three seemed to manifest itself in a shortage of purposeful action.

Along similar lines, two of the leaders in schools without functioning professional development programs—School Two and School Five—spoke of benign, vague goals for professional development. The leader of School Five cryptically said, "The overall goal should be to make schools better schools by making teachers and administrators better educators that impact student learning and achievement" (School Five, interview, December 20, 2010). The leader of School Two, who also did not have a functioning professional development program in his school, hoped that professional development would serve to lessen the "obvious gaps that exist," although he offered no means by which that could be done (School Two, interview, May 26, 2011). While each of these goals is praiseworthy, they do not reflect a vision that can be used to inspire teachers. Rather, they come off as shallow or even trite. It may well be that by

focusing on test scores, the District has facilitated the effective leadership of its principals and has provided a goal around which administrators can rally teachers.

This is possibly the most significant finding of the research study, but it is also potentially the most troubling. This finding undoubtedly adds to the literature on administrator behaviors, and it supports the literature that universally agrees that a clearly focused administrator is more likely to effectively implement educational programs. Likewise, in my study, those leaders who had a clear focus were most successful at quashing teacher resistance and implementing a highly functional professional development program. At the same time, my findings indicate that the school leaders with the clearest vision were the ones who had most blindly adopted the District's preoccupation with standardized testing. While the leadership is effective, it may be leading teachers and schools down the wrong path. At only one school—School Six—did a school leader openly question the school District's focus on data, yet he seemed to lack any clear vision of his own. In each remaining site, school leaders were content to focus on raising test scores, regardless of whether teaching to the test could potentially result in a generation of students who were less capable of critical thought or a generation of teachers who lacked the skills to inspire students to do anything more than achieve high test scores. If resisting the hegemony of standardized testing would indeed be good sense, as Gitlin and Margonis (1995) suggested, then there is very little good sense amongst the school leaders at the schools in my study. In addition, the only school leader who demonstrated any good sense lacked the requisite vision to be an effective school leader. Thus, my results indicate that vision is indeed a vital component of effective school leadership as the literature suggests, but my results also indicate that school districts can implant vision in school leaders. Those implanted visions may serve to promote effective leadership, but they may also take the school and the

school district down a regrettable path—in this case, toward a system more focused on raising test scores and less focused on meeting other student needs. I disappointedly submit that this is a significant addition to the literature on effective administrator behaviors.

Teacher Resistance

As critical theorists, Gitlin and Margonis's assertion that resistance was good sense was rooted in their estimation that the American educational system is designed to dis-empower teachers (1995). Zeichner (1993) echoed this sentiment when he wrote that most professional development programs served only to "maintain the teacher's subservient position to those removed from the classroom with regard to the core aspects of their work curriculum and instruction." (p. 6). Zeichner, too, thought that teachers were correct in refusing to cooperate with administrators in activities that he believed would destroy teacher autonomy and creativity. These scholars would be glad to know that each of the six school leaders I interviewed spoke of teacher resistance as an impediment to the implementation of their professional development programs.

On the other hand, there was little evidence in my study that school leaders felt that professional development programs should question traditional forms of pedagogy or school governance. In fact, the opposite seemed evident. School leaders at the schools with the most extensive professional development programs—Schools One and Four—were eager to use the buzzwords of the day: data-driven, accountability, and standards. Among the school leaders in my study, there was no resistance to the push from above to focus on test scores, save from the principal of School Six—whose school, interestingly, was the only one of the six schools under study that was not making Adequate Yearly Progress.

In the three schools with professional development programs, the school leaders spoke with pride of having overcome initial teacher resistance. In Zeichner's analysis, this may not have been a good thing for the long-term well-being of the teachers or the long-term success of their students. Further, it suggested that teacher resistance was fleeting. School leaders who weathered teacher resistance could ultimately compel teachers to act as the administrators desired. In both School One and School Four, the leaders spoke of having stood up to complaining teachers. Said the leader at School One, teachers were initially resistant, but "now they really love it" (School One, interview, March 8, 2011). This, too, was troubling. I would prefer to imagine teachers as the transformative intellectuals that Aronowitz and Giroux (1993) described. Rather, it appeared that after some initial complaining, teachers at the schools in my study tended to fall into line and adopt the hegemonic viewpoint. In fact, my study even showed that if a school leader was forceful, he or she could ultimately stamp out any resistance and transform every teacher into a vehicle for raising test scores. Given this, it seems that the wariness of teacher resistance that the leaders of School Two and School Six used as an excuse for the absence of a professional development program was ill-founded. Had those school leaders held fast, perhaps the teachers at their schools would have let go of their good sense. With this upsetting finding—that teacher resistance can be overcome if school leaders act forcefully—my study adds to the literature on administrator behaviors.

<div align="center">Cross-National Issues and Awareness</div>

Several studies have indicated that there are myriad cross-national similarities and challenges for educators around the globe. No matter their location, teachers and administrators have similar thoughts on education in general and on professional development in particular. Some scholars (Boyle, Lamprianou, & Boyle, 2005) wrote of prevailing models of professional

development in other countries which closely mirrored similar studies in the United States. Other scholars (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Fernandez, 2002; Ho, Watkins, & Kelly, 2001; Holloway, 2001; Hussein, 2006; Jarvinen and Kohonen, 1995; Walker & Cheong, 1996) wrote of innovative international practices that could be borrowed and applied here. Still other scholars (Brook, 1996; Edwards & Spreen, 2007; Napier, 2010) described universal educational issues and wrote of the dilemmas that educators around the world have faced in implementing educational reform in general and professional development programs in particular. Finally, many scholars (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; Henry, Lingard, Rizvi, & Taylor; Kirk & Napier, 2009; Marginson, 1999; Singh, Kenway, & Apple, 2005) wrote of the rise of a global system of education with many universal features, including many of the same difficulties.

Certainly, the issues that emerged in my data analysis—ideal versus real differences in professional development, teacher resistance, a focus on data, change, the need for differentiation, and effective administrator behaviors—are all issues that might well have emerged in one form or another had I conducted my study in some place besides Cobb County. The school leaders in my study, however, did not seem to be aware that administrators around the world echoed their views and positions on professional development. In fact, at no point during any interview was there talk of foreign countries, international comparisons, or cross-national policy borrowing. Educators in my study limited themselves to the southeastern United States when attending conferences or seeking outside experts. In fact, the school leaders in my study each suggested that their problems were unique, and thus, only a tailored program of professional development would be suitable. The narrowly-focused comments of the principal of School Five were typical: "Professional development needs to be focused on what they [teachers] need to do right then" (School Five, interview, December 20, 2010). While school

leaders cannot be criticized for being committed to focusing on teachers' needs, this non-recognition of the broader universal context suggests a very limited view of education and a generally narrow perspective. None of the themes regarding implementation of professional development programs that arose in my study of Cobb County are absent from the scholarly literature on other countries. School leaders in my study or others may feel as if they are unique, but clearly, they are not alone in the challenges they face. It is my hope that their lack of mention of cross-national issues is not an indication that they take a provincial and small-minded approach to education in general. With these findings—that the school leaders in my study mirror international trends yet do not recognize their shared challenges—my study adds to the international literature on policy implementation and educational administration.

Reflections on the Study

Looking back on the study affords me the opportunity to reconsider my study design, my methods, my theoretical perspective, and my actual management of the study. Overall, I am content with what I accomplished.

Employing a multi-site case study design was, I believe, appropriate for this study. I was eager to interview principals and code the data that resulted from our interactions. However, as I analyzed my data, I found myself wanting a bit more quantitative data. For example, when I took note of the difference between the school ethos in the schools led by men and the schools led by women, I was forced to concede that I did not have sufficient evidence to draw a conclusion—specifically, that there is indeed a difference in male-led and female-led schools. I was very eager to draw this conclusion, but my study's design simply did not yield the data necessary to make such a sweeping claim. In the future, I may be more satisfied with a mixed-methods design. A mixed-methods approach would enable me to gain the rich

understanding that comes from gathering qualitative data, but still draw the broad conclusions that are only valid when many subjects are taken into account. When reflecting on the study design, I may also regret not having chosen to apply for additional research sites inside the Cobb County School District. I did not anticipate having my potential pool of sites reduced by half prior to gathering interview data. While this ultimately did not affect my ability to gather enough data, it did make it significantly more difficult. Having such a severely limited number of research sites meant that I had to establish contact with nearly all of them. As such, gathering interview data took several months longer than anticipated.

Regarding my methods and my theoretical perspective, I am likewise very happy with what I chose to use. Throughout the research process, I employed aspects of pragmatism, critical theory, structural functionalism, comparativism, and grounded theory, and each proved valuable. In the early stages of my study, pragmatism and critical theory were both very useful in conceptualizing the way that contextual factors influence one's view and positions. In short, both theoretical traditions argue that a research subject's thoughts cannot be separated from a research subject's environment. Thus, I was obliged in this study to pay attention to the historical, social, cultural, and political backdrop against which I collected my interview data. This, I believe, strengthened the study. While gathering data, the methods of grounded theory proved to be extremely useful, even though I did not form any grounded theory. The methods of coding and comparison that are a fundamental part of the grounded theory approach offered me concrete techniques that I could apply systematically, thereby ensuring that I did not corrupt my data or draw unsound conclusions. Finally, in the analysis phase, critical theory, comparativism, and structural functionalism all proved very useful. Employing a comparative perspective helped me to make sense of the data I was gathering, and it broadened the range of

literature I could consult. That is, not limiting myself to studies performed in American schools

meant that I could consider a much wider range of possibilities, and I could perform a much

deeper analysis of the interview data I collected. Structural functionalism, with its focus on the

influence of the overall system on the individual actors, helped me to evaluate the political

environment in which school leaders in Cobb County had to operate. In particular, it helped me

to make sense of the District's influence on the views and positions of the school leaders. In the

analysis phase, critical theory was once again useful, both in inspiring me to pay attention to

issues of power and social justice and in encouraging me to be mindful of my role as a

researcher.

Employing a blended theoretical perspective also enabled me to adjust my approach as

the study progressed. I believe that this was particularly useful for this, my first research study.

As I become a more seasoned researcher, I may find that a stricter theoretical perspective is

more appropriate. In this initial phase of my career as a researcher, though, I am happy for

having given myself the leeway to employ various perspectives as I needed them. In addition,

given my newness as a researcher, I believe that following the detailed guidelines of grounded

theorists, even though I created no grounded theory, was very helpful. As I continue to

research, I imagine that I will discover through trial and error which methods yield the richest

and most valid data. At this point, though, it was very helpful to have a step-by-step guide such

as the ones that were provided by the grounded theorists.

Finally, with regards to my own personal management of the study, I learned a few

things about myself as a researcher. First, I realized how much I enjoy interviewing educators.

I relished the opportunity to spend time with educators in schools besides the one where I

currently work. At the same time, however, it was important that I remained focused on taking

field notes during the interview. At times, I felt myself slipping into a relaxed conversation with a research subject, almost as if we were in a class together at the College of Education. While I believe that this sort of rapport yielded better data, my lack of focus could potentially have resulted in my failing to record important moments. In the future, I will be challenged to maintain the geniality that helps research subjects feel comfortable while simultaneously keeping enough distance to be able to soberly execute the task at hand. Second, I learned that it was vital to compile my interview notes immediately following my interview. While I never failed to do this, I could see how it would be detrimental. On more than one occasion, when I returned to my notes a month or two after an interview, I found that there were details I had noted that I had otherwise forgotten. Had I waited to transcribe my field notes, I would have lost that data. Third, I wonder whether I might have been better served by taping the interviews. While I believe that my field notes were sufficient and that having a tape recorder could potentially have served as a barrier to honest exchange, my physical ability to transcribe all that is happening is limited. Fourth, I believe that I was able to guard against allowing my biases to color my judgment when I was conducting interviews. However, I realized that it was just as important to ensure that my own biases did not enter into the data analysis phase—particularly in this case given my insider/outsider status as described in Chapter 3. I had no trouble turning off my preconceived notions when I entered a school to conduct an interview. When reflecting on the interview at my desk, though, I found that I would often revert back to my long-held and mostly incorrect preconceptions.

Gaps, Limitations, and Directions for Future Research

As described in Chapter 1, there were limitations to this study. Predictably, there are several questions that are left unanswered. These can form the basis for future research projects in the Cobb County School District or in other districts.

The most obvious gaps in the evidence are a result of the inherent limitations of case study research. Even though I interviewed subjects at a variety of Cobb County schools, there are nonetheless several things that simply could not be researched in Cobb County. For example, the Cobb County School District has virtually no Native American students. As a result, the data gathered in this study do not shed any light on how different school leaders may approach professional development in schools with large Native American populations. For another example, Cobb County is now almost entirely urbanized. There is almost no farmland left in the county, and teachers and administrators need not worry about the issues that attend rural school districts. For yet another example, some of the things that attracted me to Cobb County in the first place—its size, its diversity, and other factors—could also be seen as limitations. This study provides no data on the views of school leaders in small, homogenous, or rural school districts. Thus, obvious gaps are bound to exist in this data due solely to the fact that it is a study of schools in only one school district: a large, suburban one.

Gaps that are specific to the study also exist. The most glaring gap is the lack of any actual data that would substantiate administrator claims about professional development in their schools. This gap stands out particularly with regards to teacher resistance and the effect of their professional development program. As described above, each administrator spoke of teacher resistance as a factor that influenced the implementation of professional development programs in some way. While some school leaders asserted that teacher resistance was a thing

of the past, others said that it was a primary reason that there was no solid professional development program in their schools. However, in this study, I gathered no data from teachers themselves, and as a result, it is impossible to determine the level of teacher resistance in the schools under study. It is possible that a school leader who brushes off teacher resistance actually inspires a great deal of it. It is equally possible that a school leader who faults teacher resistance for the non-implementation of a professional development program actually works with very cooperative teachers who would welcome the opportunity to grow professionally. Along similar lines, administrators in nearly every case—particularly those in schools with extensive programs of professional development—were very confident that their professional development work was paying off. While test data might show an improvement—and that may well be precisely why school leaders were so confident—it is impossible to determine using this data exactly the effect of the professional development. Are teachers feeling stifled by burdensome professional development meetings and thereby feeling less enthusiastic about their careers? Have additional professional development responsibilities forced teachers to cut corners in other parts of their professional or personal lives? Do teachers feel as if they are growing intellectually or simply becoming more automatic? None of these questions can be answered with the data gathered in this study. They are questions for future research.

In general, the teacher experience with professional development in the Cobb County School District is absent from this data. This not only casts some doubt on the claims of school leaders—i.e. whether school leaders views of the situations in their schools do in fact cohere with the reality in their schools—but also leaves out a major piece of the professional development puzzle. Only after gathering the data in this study did I realize how important it is to obtain the views and positions of those actually being developed in addition to those doing

the developing. This yawning gap in the data opens the door to several future avenues for research.

In the decades to come, both in these schools and in schools worldwide, professional development is likely to remain one of the prominent issues linked to educational reform and implementation. I am interested to see the direction that professional development will take next, and whether the ideal notion of professional learning can ever become the real experience for teachers in Georgia, the United States, and around the globe. I am likely to be one of many researchers who will remain interested in the issues related to professional development, both in terms of what is advocated and in terms of what is implemented.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research Log

October 13, 2010—The Cobb County School District notified me that I had been tentatively approved to conduct research in eleven of the eighteen schools for which I requested access. Final approval would be left to the principals at the individual schools.

October 13, 2010—The University of Georgia Institutional Review Board notified me that my research was approved.

October 20, 2010—The Cobb County School District notified me that two of the principals at the eleven approved schools declined participation, taking the site pool to nine schools.

November 22, 2010—I called the nine schools that had agreed to participate, leaving messages at all nine schools.

November 29. 2010— I called the nine schools that had agreed to participate, leaving messages at all nine schools.

December 9, 2010—I received a message from the principal of School Five. I returned his call, spoke with him, and set a meeting date.

December 9, 2010—I received a message from the secretary at School Three, and I returned her call. I left her a message.

December 9, 2010—I received a message from the secretary at School Four, and I returned her call. I left her a message.

December 13, 2010—I received a message from the secretary at School Four, and I returned her call. I left a message.

December 13, 2010—I called and left a message for the principals of School One, School Two, School Three, School Six, School Seven, and two other schools.

December 20, 2010—I conducted an interview with the principal of School Five.

January 18, 2011—I called and left messages for the principals at School One, School Two, School Three, School Four, School Six, School Seven, and two other approved schools.

January 19, 2011—I received a message from the secretary at School Four. I returned her call and left a message.

February 1, 2011—I called and left messages for the principals at School One, School Two, School Three, School Four, School Six, School Seven, and two other approved schools.

February 4, 2011—I received a message from the instructional coach at School One. I returned her call and left a message.

February 8, 2011—I received a message from the secretary at School Four. I returned her call and left a message.

February 15, 2011—I called and left messages for the principals at School One, School Two, School Three, School Four, School Six, School Seven, and two other approved schools.

February 22, 2011—I received a message from the instructional coach at School One. I returned her call and set up an interview date.

February 24, 2011—I received a message from the secretary at School Three. I returned her call and set up an interview date.

February 25, 2011—I received a message from the secretary at School Four. I returned her call and set up an interview date.

February 28, 2011—I spoke with the secretary at School Six, and she requested that I fax her the interview guide, consent form, and District approval letter.

February 28, 2011—I called and left messages for the principals at School Two, School Seven, and two other approved schools.

February 28, 2011—I faxed the interview guide, consent form, and District approval letter to the secretary at School Six.

March 3, 2011—I conducted an interview with the instructional coach at School One.

March 10, 2011—I conducted an interview with the principal at School Three.

March 17, 2011—I called and left messages for the principals at School Two, School Six, School Seven, and two other approved schools.

March 25, 2011—I conducted an interview with the principal of School Four.

March 26, 2011—I decided to focus my efforts on School Two, School Six, and School Seven. The two other approved schools would not add any diversity to my study, and I had never received any communication from personnel at those schools.

March 30, 2011—I called and left messages for the principals at School Two, School Six, and School Seven.

April 2-10, 2011—Spring Break

April 12, 2011—I called and left messages for the principals at School Two, School Six, and School Seven.

April 18, 2011—I spoke with the secretary at School Seven, and was advised to write an e-mail to the principal.

April 18, 2011—I wrote an e-mail to the principal at School Seven.

April 19, 2011—I received a return e-mail from the principal at School Seven asking if I had received District approval. I responded that I had.

April 20, 2011—I wrote an e-mail to the principals at School Two and School Six.

April 27, 2011—I wrote an e-mail to the principals at School Two, School Six, and School Seven.

April 27, 2011—I received a response from the principal at School Two. He copied his secretary and advised her to set an appointment.

April 28, 2011—I sent an e-mail to the secretary at School Two.

May 5, 2011—I spoke with the secretary at School Six, and she requested that I fax her the interview guide, consent form, and District approval letter (as I had in February).

May 12, 2011—I spoke with the secretary at School Six, and she said that she was working on an appointment time.

May 12, 2011—I wrote an e-mail to the principal at School Seven.

May 19, 2011—I wrote an e-mail to the secretary at School Two, and I received a response from her. We traded two more e-mails that day and set an interview date.

May 19, 2011—I wrote an e-mail to the principal at School Seven.

May 24, 2011—I called the principal at School Seven and left a message.

May 26, 2011—I conducted an interview with the principal at School Two.

June 7, 2011—I wrote an e-mail to the secretary at School Six.

June 7, 2011—I called the principal at School Seven and left a message.

June 8, 2011—I wrote an e-mail to the principal at School Seven.

June 14, 2011—I called the principal at School Seven and left a message.

June 14, 2011—I wrote an e-mail to the principal of School Seven.

June 23, 2011—I wrote an e-mail to the principal at School Six, and he responded. We set an interview date.

June 23, 2011—I wrote an e-mail to the principal at School Seven.

June 27, 2011—I visited School Seven, but the principal was not available to see me and I was unable to set up a future appointment.

June 27, 2011—I conducted an interview with the principal of School Six.

June 29, 2011—I wrote an e-mail to the principal of School Seven. I received an away message that the principal would be out of town until July 6. I decided to discontinue my pursuit of an interview with the principal of School Seven.

July and August, 2011—Analysis of results and first draft of dissertation

September and October, 2011—Revisions of dissertation

Appendix B: Consent Form

I, _____, agree to participate in a research project titled "A Study of the Views and Positions of School Administrators toward Professional Development," conducted by George Darden from the Department of Workforce Education, Leadership, and Social Foundations at the University of Georgia. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can stop taking part without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to document and describe the various views and positions that school leaders have with regards to professional development. The study also hopes to shed light on the relationship between those views and positions and other school-related factors, such as student and faculty demographics, the program of study, and the relationship of the school to the school system.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things in an informational meeting that will last about thirty minutes at the most:
1. Answer questions about my job and role in the school, particularly with regard to professional development;
2. Answer questions about what I think about professional development;
3. Answer questions about how teachers in my school normally undergo professional development;
4. Answer questions about the particular issues my school faces with regards to professional development;
5. Answer questions about how professional development has changed or has not changed over the last several years;
6. Direct the researcher to other school-level personnel who may be of assistance (if applicable).

The researcher may ask me to clarify information or ask for a follow-up discussion. My information is to be kept confidential. No risk is expected, but if I experience some discomfort or stress during my conversations or interactions with the researcher, I can ask that the interview be ended. I understand that I am under no obligation to offer my opinions if this makes me feel uncomfortable in any way.

No information about me or provided by me during the research will be shared with others without my written permission. Anything I say or offer will be kept in the strictest of confidence and my name will not be used in association with the perception or opinion I offer. I understand that the researcher is only interested in the issue of professional development as seen by me as a faculty member or administrator at the school.

The researcher will answer further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent for my records.

___George Darden___   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Signature   Date
Telephone: 404-862-4580
E-mail: gwdiv@uga.edu

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Signature   Date
                    Please sign both copies, keep one, and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia, 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-mail address IRB@uga.edu

Appendix C: Interview Guide
Interview Guide for Study entitled:
"A Study of the Views and Positions of School Administrators toward Professional
Development."

Opening statement and questions:
- The researcher will introduce himself as visitor, researcher, educator, native of the area; description of the study; reason for interview
- The researcher will present consent form to interviewee; ask interviewee to sign consent form, provide copy

Interviewee information:
- Name (not to be used)
- Job title and role in school
- Educational and professional background (number of years in education; prior jobs in education and other fields)
- How long have you been at the school?
- What are your main duties in the school?

General questions:
- Has this school changed much in the last decade? How? How has the school community (the teachers, the parents, the administrators) responded to those changes?
- Are there any "big issues" that the school faces?
- Can you tell me about the students who go to this school?
- Can you tell me about the course of study that students take at this school?
- Can you tell me about the teachers who work here?
- How often do teachers undergo professional development here?
- Can you tell me about the sort of professional development teachers undergo here?
- Who determines what will happen in a professional development session?
- Who develops the professional development sessions? Do teachers have input?
- When do teachers undergo professional development?
- Where are the professional development sessions held?
- How often do teachers undergo professional development?
- How long do professional development sessions last?
- How do teachers here normally feel about professional development?
- What is your role in the professional development program?
- What do you see as the goal of professional development?
- Can you tell me whether the professional development here accomplishes that goal?
- How has professional development changed here in the last several years?
- What has caused changes to professional development here in the last several years?
- Is there anything else that you would like to tell me?

Close of interview:
- Thanks
- Follow-up?
- Suggestions for other people to talk to? Meetings to attend? Materials to review?

End interview

Appendix D
IRB Approval Form

The University of Georgia

Office of The Vice President for Research
DHHS Assurance ID No. : FWA00003901

Institutional Review Board
Human Subjects Office
612 Boyd GSRC
Athens, Georgia 30602-7411
(706) 542-3199
Fax: (706) 542-3360
www.ovpr.uga.edu/hso

APPROVAL FORM

Date Proposal Received: 2010-05-19   **Project Number:** 2010-10863-0

Name	Title	Dept/Phone	Address	Email
Dr. Diane Brook Napier	PI	Workforce Education, Leadership, and Social Foundations 221 River's Crossing 706-542-7399	706-227-0166	dnapier@uga.edu;welsf@uga.edu
Mr. George Darden	CO	WELSF 221 Rivers Crossing 404-862-4580		gwdiv@uga.edu

Title of Study: A Study of the Attitudes and Perceptions of School Administrators toward Professional Development

45 CFR 46 Category: Administrative 2
Parameters:
None;

Change(s) Required for Approval:
Revised Application;
Revised Consent Document(s);

Approved : 2010-10-13   **Begin date :** 2010-10-13   **Expiration date :** 2015-10-12
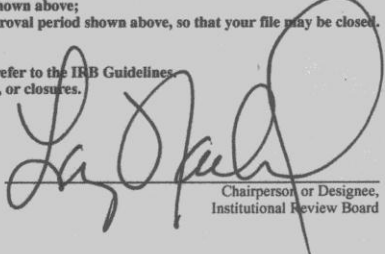
NOTE: Any research conducted before the approval date or after the end data collection date shown above is not covered by IRB approval, and cannot be retroactively approved.

Number Assigned by Sponsored Programs: **Funding Agency:**

Your human subjects study has been approved.

Please be aware that it is your responsibility to inform the IRB:
... of any adverse events or unanticipated risks to the subjects or others within 24 to 72 hours;
... of any significant changes or additions to your study and obtain approval of them before they are put into effect;
... that you need to extend the approval period beyond the expiration date shown above;
... that you have completed your data collection as approved, within the approval period shown above, so that your file may be closed.

For additional information regarding your responsibilities as an investigtor refer to the IRB Guidelines.
Use the attached Researcher Request Form for requesting renewals, changes, or closures.
Keep this original approval form for your records.

Chairperson or Designee,
Institutional Review Board

Appendix E
Sample Page of Field Notes with Coding Categories

The scanned page below is from my field notes made during my interview at School Three on March 10, 2011. I transcribed them immediately following the interview. During coding, I used the markings that are visible. I used "#1" when the school leader spoke of the goals of professional development. I used "#2" when the school leader spoke of resistance. I used "#3" when a school leader spoke of the designers of the professional development program. I used "#4" when the school leader spoke of the role of the system. I used "#6" when the school leader spoke of changes. I used "#7" when the leader spoke of their role. I used "#8" when the school leader spoke of time. I used "SJ" when the leader spoke of social justice. Also, I made a reference to Theoretical Memo #11 in the lower left corner. It was this memo that grew into the discussion of vision that can be found on pages 135-138.

"In that respect, professional development had to change . . . we learned more strategies to keep kids involved, because it was different from the way that we went to school."
**Cobb wanted to be a top school district, but the rapid diversification was making it hard.
"Professional development had to change to help us."
Determining professional development: "what is going to be the biggest bang for the dollar." "We had to make a fast difference."
Surveys are taken at the end and the beginning of each year.
"We try to get teachers in, because some of them have good ideas."
"We decide what happens in professional development [not the district]." We have to do it, but "they don't dictate" what must be done.
How often does p.d. take place?
Cluster meetings twice a month. Instead of faculty meetings, they have clusters by grade level during planning time.
Tough to get buy-in: "Teachers are always going to complain about another meeting." "If we can just make it relevant to what the teachers needs are . . ."
"Teachers probably feel we do too much."
Meets with teachers all day on Wednesdays. "It takes all day." Three teachers from each grade level, plus two remedial teachers.
Once a month, the subject meets totally together—all three grade levels.
To make it clear: weekly meetings, over an hour. Monthly meetings, 8:00-8:50. Tuesday's planning is for professional development for whole school, 2x a month, during cluster.
In addition, there is the Wednesday meeting where they go over data.
Some of the Tuesday meetings will be conducted by Success for All.
"We do a lot of professional development during pre-planning. Lots." They try to bring in a speaker during pre-planning.
We try to get teachers to go to conferences, and they share at cluster.
"We used to do full staff p.d., but now it's all done in clusters."
In meetings, they work with reading scores and on remediation for students in math and language arts. They go over student data and grades. They assess what students are missing. They recently started having twenty minutes every morning to focus on literacy across grade levels. They focus on strategies, literacy, block scheduling, etc. Look at benchmark data and concepts, things that need to be repeated, united planning.
A lot of technology professional development
Some instructional development on things like openings and closings.
"We do professional development on what's going to help our teachers help our kids."
"By 2014, all students will be at 100% [laughs]!" The tests scores are not the focus of professional development. The kids are the focus. ** "We want them to see their future—that they can graduate from high school, that they can go on to college or technical school." "Life isn't where they are right now."
She conducts a lot of focus walks to make sure things are going the way they are supposed to. She takes teachers with her.
Bring in outside people—"whoever we can get." "We will take any help." Other times,

Appendix F
Sample theoretical memo

TM#4
3/8/11

POTENTIAL CROSSOVER: Differentiation as a means of warding off teacher resistance

The instructional coach at School 1 said that a big goal was to differentiate professional development so that teachers won't say, "Why am I sitting through this same thing again?" This came on the heels of a conversation about teacher resistance, where she said that there was a lot of initial resistance, but "now they love it."

The principal at School 5 said something similar on 12/20/2010. P.d. needs to be focused on "what they need to do right then." This also came on the heels of some talk about teacher resistance.

UPDATE, 5/26/11

The principal at School 4 said that she has specific meetings for new teachers in order to get them "on board." This is in addition to other meetings. LOTS of other meetings.

Appendix G
Sample Theoretical Memo

TM#5
3/8/11

At School 1, the instructional coach described book groups. She said that they have been very effective. "It's affected the communication skills and trust, and it bleeds into their instructional meetings."

Keep this in mind. I have scholarly literature on book clubs and other innovative practices. Are there other schools that are doing non-traditional practices?