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HOOD COLLEGE



Principals' Perceptions on Their Experience of the Framework
for Teaching Professional Development

A DISSERTATION

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Graduate School of Hood College

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by

Danny J. Rumpf

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Principals' Perceptions on Their Experience of the Framework for Teaching Professional Development

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ABSTRACT

The research question explored in this study was: What is the impact of the Framework for Teaching (FfT) (2013) professional development on high school principals? The primary purpose of this qualitative study was to examine principals' perceptions on their professional development (PD) related to the FfT using Guskey's (2000) theoretical model for evaluating PD. A secondary purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of high school principals regarding the usefulness and applicability of what they learned in their PD. Ten principals completed an organizational support survey, provided demographic data, and engaged in in-depth semi-structured interviews, a self-anchoring scale activity, and a ranking activity on the FfT PD experience. The findings of this study contribute to the field of research through supporting the paradigm shift occurring within school administration. The study supported being an instructional leader first, then being the manager of a building to increase students' achievement. Finally, the results informed the district studied of the principals' current perceptions regarding the use of the FfT. The District can use the principals' perceptions of the PD to develop a foundation for a conceptual framework centered around PD and possible modifications and considerations if the FfT PD were done again. Two key suggestions are to use time more effectively for school-based administrative teams to collaborate and to provide more common planning time for high school teachers. The literature included elements of effective PD, using the FfT to develop a common language, and adult learning theory.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Professional development (PD) for principals is highly essential as school leaders are expected to lead teachers to increase student achievement (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Goldring, Preston, & Huff, 2012). Fullan (2006) argued that school leaders are instrumental to school improvement, reform, development, and success. Moreover, Garet et al. (2017) claimed that performance evaluations are a potential tool for raising students' achievement through the increased effectiveness of the classroom teacher (p. 1). In addition, systematic reviews of data have found that school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). School systems constantly examine how PD enhances leadership's ability to use performance evaluations to improve productivity. Schools also analyze the balance between money spent on PD and the return on the investment. If school districts fail to evaluate PD based on student outcomes, how does the district justify the cost and effectiveness of the PD?

Problem Statement

A Mid-Atlantic school district had identified five aspirational goals to clearly explain the objectives, selected by the district, to lead to success within the next five years. District K (pseudonym for the actual school district) selected four strategies to enhance instructional leadership and accelerate academic achievement for all students. These strategies were 1) capacity building, 2) coaching, 3) conversations, and 4) courage. The district identified four initiatives to support the aspirational goals and the four strategies: 1) accelerating learning process, 2) cultural proficiency, 3) disciplinary literacy, and 4) the Framework for Teaching (FfT). The district is using these four initiatives to enhance instructional leadership and

accelerate academic achievement for all students, thus working toward eliminating the achievement gap. From 2016-2019, leadership meetings were dedicated to exploring these initiatives. The district believes the four initiatives, listed above, will create a culture of collaboration and thus improve the quality of instruction within every classroom daily. This research will focus on the initiative of the FfT.

To improve the quality of instruction, the superintendent invested in system-wide training for administrators using the Danielson FfT (2013) during the 2016-2017 school year. The District leadership regarded the FfT as providing a research-based common language for effective teaching that administrators would be able to use with teachers to increase overall teacher effectiveness. The Superintendent shared that she believed that with principals providing feedback to teachers using a common language, via the FfT, teachers would be able to eliminate the student achievement gap. Further, she believed principals would use the knowledge gained about the FfT through PD, which, in turn, would enhance the professional growth of teachers and enable the district as a whole to increase student achievement thus impacting the educational performance of all student groups.

The achievement gap represents the discrepancy in achievement between student groups by race, socioeconomic status (FARM), students with disabilities (IEP), 504 plans, and students who have limited English proficiency (LEP). Using data retrieved from the 2017 Maryland Report Card, the school district had seen inconsistent decreases in the student achievement gap in student performance on the Algebra I and English 10 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exams. From 2015 to 2017, the district decreased the achievement gap by 9.8% for Hispanic students and by 14.8% for African American students on the English 10 PARCC. The gap widened by 2.1% for Hispanic students on the Algebra I

PARCC exam. The district's scores also showed the achievement gap on the Algebra I PARCC had increased in the two subgroups as shown in table 1.

Table 1

Percent Change in Students Not Meeting State Expectations by Subgroup

	Percent Change	
	English	Math
FARM	-11.1%	+0.4%
LEP	-14.7%	+15.9%
IEP	-9.5%	-3.4%
504 Students	-17.4%	-4.5%

These percentages represent the students not meeting state expectations on the PARCC exam.

PARCC is a standardized assessment intended to measure students' understanding of identified indicators.

The district leaders were frustrated because the investment in system-wide training using the FfT failed to reduce or eliminate the achievement gap across all demographics. After two years of principals participating in the FfT PD program, the gap was increasing. According to the District's strategic plan , "The FfT is a tool used to support and enhance the growth of teachers as they work towards increasing student achievement; when using the FfT appropriately, a universal language is created that evaluators can use to engage in coaching conversations with instructors" (District K Leadership, personal communication, February 27, 2018). The district believed the FfT, when faithfully utilized, would enhance instruction across the district to increase student achievement and decrease the achievement gap.

This study explored the perceptions high school principals in one school district have regarding their use of the FfT-related PD. It was designed to seek insights on how future PD opportunities can be modified, if needed, to assist principals in applying their learning. Finally, the study explored what support, if any, is needed for principals to effectively implement the FfT.

Background

During the 2014-2015 school year, the coordinator for teacher evaluation in District K reviewed the teacher evaluation tool included in the 2007 edition of the Charlotte Danielson FfT. The FfT “identifies those aspects of a teacher’s responsibilities that have been documented through empirical studies and theoretical research as promoting improved student learning” (Danielson, 2013, p. 1). Educational Testing Service (ETS) compiled research to design the original FfT in 1996 as a result of the research the organization conducted for the development of the Praxis III: Classroom Performance Assessment, an observation-based evaluation of first-year teachers used for teacher licensing. Danielson (2013) expanded on the Praxis III work by reviewing research that focused on the teaching skills required for novice teachers as well as experienced practitioners (p. 1). Teachers, administrators, and policymakers accepted the framework due to its descriptions of good teaching. Examples of the components include selecting instructional goals, assessing student learning, and communicating clearly and accurately.

The 2007 edition of the FfT, which District K applied in 2014, included updates from the previous version. The 2007 version contained the same structure as the one published in 1996; both versions divided the work of teaching into four domains and 22 components. Most of the revisions from 1996 to 2007 were simple clarifications of the language used in the FfT.

However, the 2007 version included these significant changes: a) Student Assessment (1f) was assigned to Domain 1: Planning and Preparation, and b) Using Assessment (3d) was assigned to Domain 3: Instruction.

During the 2014-2015 school year, the district leadership identified the need to update the teacher evaluation tool principals used. The 2007 FfT model did not align with the district strategic plan. Leadership held that the 2013 edition of the FfT aligned more closely with the values and beliefs of the district's strategic plan. At the same time the district was evaluating the FfT, the leadership was aware that the state was adopting the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Table 1

Comparison of 2007 and 2013 FfT

FfT (2007)	FfT (2013)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domains – 4 • Components – 22 • Elements – 76 • Rubric for 76 elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domains – 4 • Components – 22 • Elements – 76 • Rubric for 22 components • Critical attributes • Examples of what observer might see in the lesson

The CCSS are a set of college and career-ready standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in English and mathematics. The standards aim to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to take college credit classes or enter the workforce. When fully implemented, the CCSS will supposedly have a substantial impact on American education. The creators of the CCSS envision students' engagement with essential concepts. As Danielson (2013) noted, "The CCSS stresses active, rather than passive, learning by students" (p. 2).

District leadership knew that the 2007 FfT did not provide principals with the tools needed to give adequate feedback to teachers to meet the changes necessary for CCSS implementation.

Teachers needed to acquire new instructional skills and practices to assist their students with meeting the CCSS demands. Danielson designed the 2013 FfT in response to the instructional practice changes of the CCSS. After speaking with district stakeholders, the district leadership decided to adopt the 2013 edition of the FfT. As leadership in the district planned the FfT training for administrators, it also received feedback from the teachers' association and from teachers, who stated that current teacher evaluation ratings were inconsistent. Teachers met in focus groups and shared concerns that school administrators were providing inconsistent feedback and coaching to teachers regarding the FfT.

In November 2017, the Board of Education for District K sent its strategic plan to the State Board of Education, affirming that while District K was proud of its accomplishments, the district also recognized achievement gaps for some student groups and would therefore continue to foster a mindset of continuous improvement. One of the district's aspirational goals is to "equip each and every student to be an empowered learner" (District K Leadership, personal communication, February 27, 2018). The district emphasized the wording *each and every student* and promised to ensure that students possess the skills necessary to thrive in the 21st century.

After reviewing the achievement gap data and feedback from stakeholders, district leadership used the strategic plan as a guide to create a new PD opportunity. The district leadership regarded the Charlotte Danielson FfT (2013) as an effective tool for principals in the district to use to support and enhance the professional growth of teachers, who continuously strive to enhance student achievement.

The district leadership provided the Teachscape (2014) system to school-based administrators as a source of PD. Danielson used Teachscape as a platform to deliver PD strategies to school districts in the 2013 model of the FfT. The leadership of the district viewed the training provided through Teachscape as a means to develop a fair and equitable approach to teacher evaluation. Teachscape supplied the principals with online training modules. These modules allowed administrators to calibrate their ratings on the FfT and to determine if administrators were in alignment with the Danielson Master Rater (Teacher Specialist for Teacher Evaluation, personal communication, March 16, 2018). A *Master Rater* is an individual who has extensive training in the application of the FfT. The training is provided through ETS. The Master Rater ensures that principals effectively and appropriately use the FfT. To ensure alignment, administrators have access to training, assessments, and calibrations to facilitate a thorough understanding of the FfT as their PD tool. The online format provides administrators with observer training, scoring practice, proficiency assessments, and calibration exercises.

The district used the online training module to help administrators increase their reliability and accuracy when identifying, categorizing, and scoring evidence of teaching effectiveness while observing teachers. In addition to the online platform, the principals were exposed to individual and group reflections, calibration exercises, and groups led by district directors to ensure principals were provided with the information in various formats which included online modules, small groups discussions, and school-based visits.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was twofold. First, it examined principals' perceptions on their PD related to the FfT (2013) using Guskey's (2000) theoretical model for evaluating PD. Second, this study explored the perceptions of high school principals regarding the usefulness

and applicability of what they learned in the PD. If the FfT is effectively implemented, the leadership of the district believes the district will see a reduction in the student achievement gap. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) maintained that an effective principal is necessary for a school to be successful (p. 5). The PD on the FfT was designed to enhance principals' effectiveness as instructional leaders, thus increasing student achievement.

Research Questions

The research questions explored in this study were derived from a review of the literature, particularly Guskey's (2000) research on evaluating PD.

- What is the impact of the FfT PD on high school principals?
 - Q1: How did the FfT PD align with the district's mission?
 - Q2: What were the principals' reactions to the FfT PD?
 - Q3: How have principals applied the FfT?
 - Q4: What, if anything, is needed to improve principal PD in order to effectively implement the FfT?

Significance of the Study

The study provided district leadership with information about high school principals' perceptions on their experiences of Danielson's FfT (2013) PD program and the usefulness and applicability of what they learned. The findings of this study informed the school district leadership of principals' current perceptions regarding the use of the FfT. The district can use the principals' perceptions of the FfT to assess the district's intended outcomes for the PD and actual outcomes. In the event the district noticed inconsistencies between the intended outcomes and the perceptions of principals, the district can address this problem in future PD opportunities. The district can also use the information gathered from this study to gauge whether the

conclusions align with the vision of the district. Specifically, based on the findings from this study, future PD programs can be redesigned, if needed, to ensure alignment with the vision and the needs of the school district. The information gathered in this study can be used to improve or plan future PD for principals. Improved PD for principals should have an impact on the teachers' instruction and should therefore impact students' learning.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to ensure uniformity and a common understanding of the terms that will be applied throughout the study.

Achievement Gap – The discrepancy in achievement between student groups by race, socioeconomic status (FARM), students with disabilities (IEP), 504 plans, and students who have limited English proficiency (LEP).

Danielson's four domains of evaluation – The professional practices of teachers are categorized in four areas: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibility (Danielson, 2013).

Elements – Danielson's domains are further divided into more specific items called elements (Danielson, 2011).

Evaluator – The person responsible for implementing the Danielson framework to assess teacher performance.

Formative evaluation – A means of assessing teachers that incorporates the Danielson framework to promote a teacher's growth to continually improve his/her performance (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003).

Framework for Teaching – Identifies aspects of a teacher's responsibilities to promote and improve student learning (Danielson, 2013).

Leadership – Influencing and directing subordinates toward the achievement of organizational goals (Renko et al. 2015).

Professional development – “Processes and activities designed to enhance professional skills, in turn, improving the learning of students” (Guskey, 2000, p. 16).

School-Based Administrator – An individual holding the position of Assistant Principal or Principal. For the purposes of this study, only high school principals will be considered.

Research Methodology

This qualitative study examined principals’ perceptions on the PD related to the FfT (2013) using Guskey’s (2000) theoretical model for evaluating PD. Qualitative research was selected for this study because of its ability to feature rich data with a strong potential for revealing complexity (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 11). The specific qualitative research approach used was phenomenology. This study is phenomenological because it is “one that focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience” (Patton, 2015, p. 117).

The participants in this study are current high school principals who have completed the two-year PD program on the FfT, which was led by the district during the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. Twelve high school principals were invited to participate in the study. All 12 principals were asked, in an email, to complete a questionnaire to assess organizational support. The questionnaire featured the organizational support survey, designed by Guskey (2000), to measure the extent to which the organization provided support to principals during the PD. In addition, respondents provided demographic data (years in the system, work experience, schools, and gender).

Principals were sent an email inviting them to participate in an in-depth semi-structured interview on their FfT PD experience, complete demographic data, and complete the organizational support survey. During the in-depth semi-structured interviews, participants were asked to complete a self-anchoring scale activity during which they had the opportunity to reflect on their FfT PD experience. They also completed an activity in which they ranked, from least valuable to most valuable, the modules completed as part of their FfT PD. They were then asked questions regarding their rankings.

For the self-anchoring scale activity, participants described their ideal PD as well as their concept of the worst possible PD. A scale from one (worst) to 10 (ideal PD) was created. The participants noted where they would place the FfT PD on that scale and where they would place their PD experiences received in a PD program in the five years immediately prior to the FfT. Participants also were asked what they believe PD will be like in five years. Finally, participants explained why they believe the numbers on the scale vary or remain the same.

I used methodological triangulation with the survey and interviews along with data source triangulation. Studies that use multiple methods and gather different types of data provide enhanced “cross-data validity checks” (Patton, 2015, p. 316).

Limitations

The following limitations may affect the understanding of the phenomena explored in this study:

1. This study was limited to high school principals in one Mid-Atlantic school district.
2. There were time restraints because the research institution’s program required the researcher to gather, analyze, present, and defend the data within a one-year time frame.

3. The respondents to the survey and the participants in the interviews lack diversity because the district's high school principals are of limited diversity. At present, District K has one high school principal who is a minority. In terms of the participants' gender, 50% are males and 50% are females.
4. Participants' perceptions may not accurately reflect their actual practices. Participants may have provided answers they felt the researcher wanted to hear and may not have shared what actually occurred.
5. The researcher is a colleague of the interviewees, which may have influenced their responses.

Organization of the Study

The report on this study consists of six chapters. This chapter (i.e., Chapter 1) presented the introduction, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the significance of the study, key terms, and the study's limitations. Chapter 2 provides an overview of research literature related to the Charlotte Danielson FfT and effective PD. Chapter 3 contains descriptions of the research methodology, sample, and tools used for data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 analyzes the data collected and presents findings. A discussion of the findings appears in Chapter 5, and conclusions, implications, and recommendations related to the study are included in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

This chapter provides an overview of the literature and research related to the FfT (2013), information on Thomas Guskey's (2000) theoretical model for PD, and a review of previous studies that have focused on effective PD. For the purpose of this literature review, the boundaries were limited to peer reviewed journals, articles, and textbooks. Seminal works were used for the theoretical framework and the Danielson FfT. In this review, I included studies that correspond to the research questions. These studies (a) explained the reliability, strengths, and weaknesses of the FfT, (b) applied qualitative and/or quantitative methods to analyze professional and leadership development, (c) defined effective PD, and/or (d) presented the benefits of effective PD.

The literature review consists of three main sections. The first section examines the current literature on the FfT that has addressed its history and importance. Supporting literature on the FfT is also considered. The second section presents literature and empirical studies on Guskey's (2000) theoretical model for evaluating PD. The final component of this literature review summarizes the research literature on PD in general, leadership PD, and effective PD.

Framework for Teaching

According to the Danielson Group's website, the FfT is a research-based set of components for instruction. FfT is aligned with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC)—a consortium in which states collaborate on the requirements for teacher standards. It supports a constructivist view of learning and teaching in which the focus of the teacher is on the delivery of the lesson rather than on the subject of the lesson. From the constructivist view, it is the learner who applies the content. For example, when planning a

lesson, a constructivist will create a lesson plan that emphasizes students' engagement in developing their own understanding as opposed to a lesson plan that merely addresses how the material will be presented. Charlotte Danielson's FfT considers the complexity of teaching and divides the responsibility into 22 components clustered into four domains (Appendix A). The components of the FfT are reflective of the many aspects of teaching. The components are unique but do impact each other. For example, planning affects instruction, and these are impacted by the teacher's reflection on the lesson. The FfT is a comprehensive framework that was developed based on Danielson's work with the Educational Testing Service (ETS).

In 1987, ETS started a project to provide states with a guide to determine a standard assessment for teaching licensure within each state. The Praxis I, II, and III exams were the outcome of the group's work. States use the Praxis I and II exams to determine if individuals have the academic background and content knowledge necessary for teaching. The Praxis I and II exams include computer-based questions regarding professional skills; these exams are related to the subject for which an individual seeks certification. The Praxis III exam was intended to be classroom observations of an individual's teaching; the observer would assess the actual teaching skills of the individual seeking a teaching license.

Danielson worked with ETS to prepare and validate the criteria the observer would use during the observation. According to Danielson (2007), the criteria used for the Praxis III were based on the formal analysis of essential skills required for novice teachers. Extensive fieldwork occurred, including pilot-testing the criteria and assessment process (p. vii). Through the process of training assessors for the Praxis III, Danielson noted that as assessors watched videos of lessons and engaged in reflective practices, the assessors incorporated best practices into their teaching methods. As Danielson (2007) stated, "[Due to] its impact on their own teaching, many

Praxis III assessors reported that the experience of training was some of the most powerful professional development they had participated in” (p. vii).

The FfT identifies aspects of a teacher’s responsibilities that have been documented in empirical research and theoretical research as improving student learning. These responsibilities are used to explain what teachers should know and do in order to enhance their professional knowledge and skills. The FfT is divided into 22 components clustered into four domains of a teacher's responsibilities:

- Domain 1: Planning and Preparation
- Domain 2: The Classroom Environment
- Domain 3: Instruction
- Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

Each of the 22 components defines an aspect of a domain. For example, Domain 1 has six components: Component 1a is demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy; 1b is demonstrating knowledge of students; 1c is setting instructional goals; 1d is demonstrating knowledge of resources; 1e is designing coherent instruction; and 1f is designing student assessment. Danielson (2007) stated that the four domains and 22 components (Appendix A) serve as a roadmap to help novice teachers determine their needs and to help veteran teachers enhance their practice (p. 1). As teachers reasonability changes, so too does the FfT, and the FfT has been the focus of past research.

In 2016, the U. S. Department of Education performed a study of emerging teacher evaluation systems within eight school districts. The eight school districts selected had designed and implemented their evaluation systems within the last decade. One of the four key findings in the study was that the FfT was the exclusive tool used in 50% of the districts (p. xiii). Districts

not using the FfT developed their own frameworks for evaluation. One district used Kim Marshall's (2012) research to develop its evaluation tool.

The FfT evaluates a teacher's performance in the four domains previously listed. Marshall (2012) argued that teachers should be evaluated based on three factors: classroom observations, student achievement gains, and feedback from students (para. 2). Danielson (2016) and Marshall (2012) agreed that principals need a tool and should have the ability to differentiate effective teaching from ineffective teaching. As Marshall (2012) stated, "MET [Measures of Effective Teaching] researchers have found that one classroom observation a year does not give an accurate picture of a teacher's work" (p. 50). Marshall (2005) also commented, "A principal who formally evaluates teachers for one full class period a year sees only a portion of the lesson" (p. 728). Marshall urged the districts to consider enhancing classroom observation practices, to include achievement data and feedback from students as part of the evaluation, and to enable teachers to have a stronger voice throughout the process (para. 18). Marshall shared a critique of the FfT is that it is done *to* teachers and not *with* teachers.

Danielson (2001) agreed that "traditionally, evaluation was an activity that was done to teachers" (p. 15) but also claimed that districts are transitioning into a new system of evaluation. The new system of evaluation is focused on promoting professional conversations and enhancing professional growth. Danielson's work did not indicate the number of times a teacher should be evaluated using the FfT; she instead shared that the FfT provides a structure for teachers to have a conversation, which is focused on a common language (Danielson, 2011). When conversations are centered on common language, teachers are able to learn from one another, thereby enriching their own teaching. Finally, Danielson's study did not mention including student achievement data or student feedback. Danielson believed that when the FfT is faithfully used, a teacher's

stronger voice is a by-product of the process. Due to the consistent application of the FfT, teachers often observe an increase in the quality of work students are producing. Moreover, the FfT provides a structure for teachers to reflect on their own practice and make improvements. This structure is in alignment with Guskey's (2000) theoretical framework that PD must have an emphasis on improving the individual to improve the organization.

Danielson (2013) continued to expand her work on the FfT by examining research that focused on the teaching skills required not only for novice teachers but for experienced practitioners as well. Teachers, administrators, and states' department of education accepted the FfT due to its descriptions of good teaching, including the levels of performance—unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished—for each of its 22 components. According to The Danielson Group's website, “the FfT has become the most widely used definition of teaching in the United States and has been adopted as the single model, or one of several approved models, in over 20 states”. Danielson's *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* has been cited over 3,300 times in scholarly texts. Since the FfT has become the most widely used teaching system in the United States, it is essential to ensure the proper training and PD of staff. As such, it is also critical to provide PD for leaders in terms of how to use the FfT. Additionally, districts need to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the PD program used.

Theoretical Model

Guskey (2000) posed the following question: How do schools evaluate the effects and effectiveness of activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge of educators so that they may improve students' learning? Researchers have tried for years to determine the true impact of PD. According to Guskey (1997), researchers are uncertain about which elements contribute the most to effective PD, the formats or specific practices that are the most effective,

and how PD contributes to improved teaching (para. 1). An essential part of Guskey's (2000) theoretical framework involves identifying and measuring the intervening PD processes that result in improved student learning. Guskey and Sparks's (2000) proposed model of the relationship between PD and improvements in student learning is shown in Figure 2.1. Guskey based his theoretical model for PD on the premise that a variety of factors influence PD. However, he regarded three significant categories—content characteristics, process variables, and context characteristics—as having an immediate and direct influence on the PD outcome.

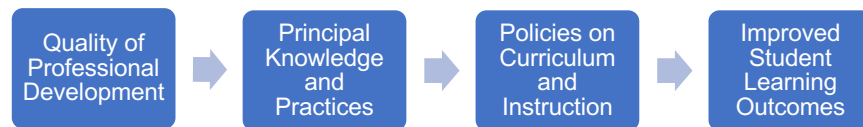


Figure 2.1. Guskey and Sparks's Model of the Relationship Between Professional Development and Improvements in Students' Learning

Content characteristics refers to the new knowledge, skills, and understanding that are the central focus of the PD. For this study, the FfT defined the content characteristics. District K planned for the FfT PD program to strengthen and deepen high school principals' understanding and use of the FfT. The process variables are defined according to how the district leaders deliver the PD. *How* refers to the model—i.e., the training, observation, study groups, and mentoring—of PD, as well as other components such as the way sessions and materials are planned, organized, and implemented. For the FfT PD, district leaders organized the principals into cohorts that worked on online modules. Guskey's last category is context characteristics. *Context* refers to the who, when, where, and why of PD. Context characteristics for the study included high school principals (who), a common location (where), and monthly leadership meetings (when).

Guskey (2000) used his model to demonstrate that the relationship between PD and improved student learning is complex rather than random (p. 76). According to Guskey, once the factors have been identified, they can be evaluated. His model for evaluating PD consists of five levels of evaluation that are hierarchically ranked, starting from the simplest to the most complex. Each level includes critical questions and how information can be used (Appendix B). The five levels are as follows:

1. Participants' reactions
2. Participants' learning
3. Organizational support and change
4. Participants' use of new knowledge and skills
5. Student learning outcomes

The first level of PD evaluation is one of the most common forms of evaluation: What were the participants' reactions to the PD? When seeking feedback, the facilitator asks questions designed to determine if participants liked the PD opportunity. Feedback given at this level can be used to improve the design and quality of future trainings. Participants' enjoyment of the PD is needed to ensure the application of skills or knowledge learned from the training (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007). Guskey (2000) stated that positive participant reactions are a necessary prerequisite for higher-level evaluation results.

In addition to the PD being an ideal experience, facilitators hope that the participants learned something from the PD. Level two focuses on evaluating the participants' understanding of the information presented. The question asked when assessing level two is as follows: Did participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills? Facilitators aim to determine if

participants can describe the key components of the training. To evaluate the PD at level two, the PD must have predetermined learning goals. These goals are used to plan, guide, and evaluate the PD. As Birman et al. (2000) explained, “By fostering a coherent set of learning [goals], a professional development activity is likely to enhance the knowledge and skills of the participants” (p. 29). This study did not examine levels one and two of the evaluation method because this information needed to be gathered at the end of the PD experience. At the time of the study too much time had elapsed since the PD experience, but this study does highlight key components based on principals’ perceptions about the FfT PD.

Level three shifts the focus from the participants to the organization. This level gathers information about the organizational support and changes. In particular, a lack of organizational support and focus can quickly offset the gains made in levels one and two . Therefore, as Guskey (2002) claimed, it is essential to gather information on these organizational aspects. Within this level, it is important to examine the organization and ensure adequate support is in place to implement the training. Tansky and Cohen (2002) performed an empirical study and concluded that organizational commitment and perceived support significantly correlated to employee satisfaction. Further, in a review of more than 70 studies, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) concluded that job conditions and supervisor support were two of three major categories (fairness was the third) associated with perceived organizational support. Level three evaluation is important to ensure the organizational conditions are appropriate for the PD; it also informs future change initiatives.

Level four evaluates if the participants are applying their new knowledge and seeks to answer this question: Did the participants’ learning make a difference in their professional practice? In an empirical study, Muijs and Lindsay (2008) concluded that participants’ use of

new skills and student outcomes are the least likely areas of the PD to be evaluated, with participant satisfaction being the most common form of evaluation (p. 1). Such data can be gathered in a variety of ways but are most likely to come from direct observations. Depending on the goals of the PD, questionnaires and interviews can also be used. However, unlike level one and level two evaluations, level four data cannot be gathered at the end of the PD session. Specifically, it cannot occur until after participants adopt new ideas and practices within their everyday environment. This study gathered level four data through high school principals' reporting of their subsequent use of the PD they received on the FfT.

In level five, the organization addresses the *bottom line*. In education, the bottom line is as follows: What was the impact on students' learning? Multiple measures must be used for evaluation at level five. If the focus is on a single measure, unintended results could be missed. For example, if an elementary school implements teaching Spanish, the school might limit itself to only reviewing students' Spanish performance data. However, the school would benefit from examining all aspects of student performance. For example, was time in other subjects impacted? Was student performance in other disciplines affected? Does it impact student performance in these disciplines? If the school only focuses on the effects of Spanish instruction, it may not identify other unintended consequences, both positive and negative.

Guskey's (2000) theoretical model for evaluating PD examines the link between PD and gains in students' learning. Guskey and Sparks (2004) examined the validity and appropriateness of the model by conducting five in-depth case studies of school-based PD programs. As noted previously, the authors concluded that the relationship between PD and student learning is complex. They also found the model offers guidance to those looking to make PD beneficial.

Finally, the model highlights the importance of a systemic approach to PD and a need to view PD reform from an organizational perspective.

The information gathered at each level is important and provides feedback to the facilitators of the PD for future activities. Although Guskey's (2000) model for evaluating PD has been applied to numerous settings, it has not been used to evaluate the effectiveness of FfT PD for high school principals. This study examined the FfT PD using Guskey's (2000) framework for PD to present District K with the principals' perception of the PD and how they are using the information gained from the PD.

Professional Development in Education

Although PD for school districts across the nation varies in complexity, size of the schools, content, and format, all school districts use PD for system initiatives. Such was the case for District K when leadership made the decision to provide the FfT PD to building level administrators. The district felt that the FfT was the appropriate model for eliminating the achievement gap. If the district sought to change the achievement gap, high school principals needed PD on the FfT.

James & Cobanoglu (2018) stated PD is one of the most effective steps towards continuous employee improvement (p. 9). PD continues to be at the center of business' organizational development; the field of education is no different (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017; Megginson & Whitaker, 2007). Wabule (2016) concluded that in the teaching profession, initial training is no longer sufficient given the ever-changing environment of technology and social structures; the ever-increasing diversity within the classroom also brings challenges (p. 141).

The purpose of PD is to change the current practice. Leaders want to deliver high-quality PD that will increase teacher effectiveness, thus leading to an increase in student understanding. As facilitators lead teachers through PD, the facilitators have to “reflect on [their] own practices to ensure [they] are making a positive impact” (Pendray & Crockett, 2016, p. 43). Reflecting on PD allows for adjustments during the PD or for future PD opportunities. One consideration during reflection should be the format in which the PD information was delivered.

Format. PD can occur in various formats. The following review of literature explores the five main formats of PD and includes a summary of each. The National Council of PD described *effective PD* as “intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice; [it] focuses on teaching and learning of content; [it] is connected to other school initiatives; and [it] builds a strong working relationship among teachers” (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009, p. 5).

Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) grouped PD into five models: 1) individually-guided, 2) observation/assessment, 3) involvement in a development/improvement process, 4) training, and 5) inquiry (p. 3). The first model, individually guided staff development, occurs when teachers learn concepts on their own. For instance, a teacher might read a scholarly article, talk about a lesson with a colleague, or try a new technique. For this first model, minimal structure is needed. A school might set aside time for teachers to work on PD, but all work is done in small groups or individually, and the tasks vary greatly throughout the school. The benefit of this model is that each teacher has input and control over what he/she does and learns. However, the disadvantage is that, even if the PD is effective, it is limited to the teacher's classroom and will not have a system-wide impact.

The second model, observation and assessment, is implemented when an individual or group visits a classroom to observe a lesson and provide feedback on the lesson. During the observation, the observer gathers data that can be used to assess the instruction and provide feedback to the teacher. In District K, observation was performed as a secondary method of PD. The principals were divided into groups of three and were asked to visit each other's schools, as a group, and perform a classroom observation. After the classroom observations, the principals discussed their assessments of the observation. The purpose of the groups' performing of the observation and assessment was for principals to see how their own assessment of and feedback for teachers compared to the other principals' assessment and feedback. The primary method was the systemic training high school principals experienced. The projected outcome of the training is that principals will all use the FfT effectively, thus leading to improved instruction that will in turn eliminate the achievement gap.

Writing curriculum and participating in a school-wide initiative are forms of the third model: involvement in a development/improvement process. The benefit to this form of PD is that teachers learn new knowledge or skills through participating in curriculum writing or a school improvement initiative. Participation in these activities can result in a teacher applying new skills and enhancing his/her instruction.

When individuals think about PD, the fourth model, i.e. training, typically comes to mind. For the purpose of this research, PD and training were not the same. Training involves a presenter or team of presenters sharing ideas through a variety of activities (Guskey, 2000, p. 22). *Training* is a workshop people attend that has a goal, objectives, and outcomes. The training has a speaker who is usually the expert on the topic discussed, and teachers are exposed to the topic. These trainings can have a variety of outcomes, such as the use of a new grading system or

behavior management system. Evaluating effective training can be limited to determining whether the participants enjoyed the experience or if they are likely to implement the training in their classrooms. *PD*, on the other hand, is defined as “processes and activities designed to enhance professional skills, in turn, improving the learning of students” (Guskey, 2000, p. 16). Both training and PD focus on changing teachers’ practices. For the purposes of this research, the researcher only focused on the PD of high school principals as it relates to the FfT because of their impact on eliminating the achievement gap.

The final model of PD is inquiry. In *inquiry*, a teacher poses a question to him/herself or to a group as a step in the action research process. The process of teachers participating in inquiry-based PD involves their search for information to answer the question and, based on the information, forging new ideas. *Professional learning communities* (PLCs), in which teachers work collaboratively on collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve (DuFour et al., 2016), can be used as a structured time for teachers to come together and discuss inquiry-based topics. Hord’s (2009) study determined that PLCs contribute to capacity building for teachers and schools (p. 42). During a PLC, teachers can analyze aspects of their teaching to gather data and draw conclusions.

In the context of this dissertation, high school principals were collaborating in a PLC during the FfT PD. The high school principals were given time to work with peers on challenges within individual schools. Each meeting had a specific purpose that included time for principals, as learners, to reflect on their learning and examine data comparing the use of the FfT from previous years. In this study, the underlying problem the researcher examined was as follows: If the FfT leads to higher level instruction and high school principals participated in a two-year PD in their PLCs, why was District K not closing the achievement gap? Through the principals

perceptions what factors, internal and external, may have affected the outcome? The purpose of this study was to understand the PD experience and not examine cause and effect of the PD.

The above elements can guide PD providers as they re-examine their PD practices and consider implementing changes to leadership's professional development. After investing the time in PD, possibly through one format or multiple formats as discussed above, how does the leader of the PD know if it was effective? Moreover, how does the leader know if the time invested in the PD was the best use of the participants' time? The only way a leader can know if the PD was effective is to continuously evaluate the PD. Once the PD has occurred, "assessment tools and techniques must be developed to operationalize key learning constructs" (Salas & Stagl, 2009, p. 73).

Regardless of the format of the PD, Lawrence et al. (2008) stated that PD should provide a job-embedded approach, a coherent structure, practice tools, processes for daily work of leading change, a safe environment to hone and practice new skills, ongoing support through coaching, and an extended and sustained collegial network for consultation and problem solving. The literature on PD has demonstrated that PD can, at times, be ineffective (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995; Guskey & Huberman, 1995). If PD is going to be effective for high school principals, it needs to be relevant, sustained, job-embedded, and delivered in multiple formats to successfully lead staff and students (Courtney, 2019; Ingersoll, 2007; Lovo, Cavazos, & Simmons, 2006; Wong, Britton, & Gansor, 2005, as cited by G. Epps, personal communication, November 11, 2017). These are the components the FfT PD sought to achieve.

Leadership

According to Fullan (2006), school leaders are critical to school improvement, school reform, development, and success (p. 3). Fullan (2003) also argued that a leader's job is to

introduce change elements into schools that are bound to have a positive influence on behavior. For the principal to produce changes, he or she must be exposed to different approaches. As Tansky and Cohen (2002) stated, “People rarely change through a rational process of analyze-think-change” (p. 11). Every educational reform and school improvement plan must identify the need for and the incorporation of high-quality PD. The knowledge base within education is rapidly growing. As a result, principals need to change their skill sets and take on new responsibilities. Guskey (2000) stated the following:

Structural changes in the way schools are organized, shared decision making and alternative school governance policies, and efforts to encourage higher parent and community involvement all require educators to change the way they go about their jobs and redesign the culture in which they work. Professional development is necessary for administrators at all levels so that they can learn these new roles and succeed in them. (p. 3)

According to Croft, Cogshall, Dolan, and Powers (2010), teachers’ work requires extensive knowledge of learning and learners (p. 13). The knowledge needed requires time and training to achieve, as well as a willingness to change. If a principal aims to introduce change elements into the school he or she leads, PD is necessary.

Role of the leader. Increased federal and local expectations, concerned parents, discipline issues, emergency lockdown drills, and unexpected challenges are just some of the issues school-based administrators (SBAs) face daily. Recent studies have claimed that SBAs spend an average of 8% to 17% of their time, or three to five hours per week, being an instructional leader (Jerald, 2012; Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2009). Due to the limited amount

of time spent on being an instructional leader, SBAs need to maximize the time they have with teachers.

Hallinger and Heck (2010) reviewed 30 years of empirical research on school leadership and highlighted the indirect positive effects leaders have on student achievement through building collaborative learning, developing a positive culture, and providing effective staff development. Moreover, Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016) explored how leaders shape their school's culture to make a difference in student outcomes. Their findings indicated that a school's ability to show improvement, over the long term, was the direct result of the principal's leadership roles (Day et al., 2016, p. 257).

Leadership professional development. According to Williams (2008), the PD of principals is based on the skills approach leadership theory that "leadership can be learned." The skills approach leadership theory is leader-centered and emphasizes the importance of a leader's abilities for effective leadership performance. Effective leadership can be learned and improved through PD. PD activities implemented at the district level may impact the principal's ability to be an effective instructional leader, which in return impacts teacher behavior and, ultimately, student learning.

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) stated that effective PD involves participants both as leaders and as learners and allows for individuals to work through the uncertainties that correspond with each role. For example, workshops do not always offer coherence by connecting to daily tasks or developing collegial support networks. However, mentoring includes job-embedded training that is ongoing and tailored to the individual, and it is inclusive of a support network. PD that can provide characteristics like these may help principals grow professionally. It may empower principals to implement new strategies to help teachers improve instruction and

their students' learning. As Goldring et al. (2012) stated, "The importance of professional development for school leaders is paramount as school leaders are expected to lead teachers and students to achieve new levels of performance and learning" (p. 223).

School systems consistently examine how PD can enhance leadership's ability to use performance evaluations to increase work production. Educator performance evaluations are a potential tool for improving student achievement due to their aim to increase the effectiveness of the educator (Garet et al., 2017). Principals' observation of classroom teachers and their providing of feedback about the teaching are part of the evaluation process. In their study, Garet et al. (2017) concluded that the main goal of performance evaluations is to improve teachers' practices, principals' leadership, and, ultimately, student achievement (p. 937). Therefore, principals need to receive effective PD about the FfT that is aimed at improving teachers' performance and is also aligned with the evaluation process.

Multiple and complex variables impact the effectiveness of PD. Research on PD has yet to discover the most effective PD components because the individual components in each study have varied. However, there appears to be consensus on the features of effective PD. These features include job-embedded PD, mentoring/coaching, and a connection to organizational outcomes (Bredeson, 2000; Danielson, 2016; Fullan, 2009). Agreeing on the criteria for effectiveness and providing clear expectations that align with important initiatives ensure progress in improving the quality of PD (Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2003).

It is important for school and district leaders to contribute to the planning of PD and to provide ongoing leadership in order to have a substantial impact on the effectiveness of PD (Whitworth & Chiu, 2017). Numerous studies have examined the link between school leadership and student achievement. For instance, Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003), performed a

quantitative meta-analysis that examined 70 studies over a 30-year period. The study was conducted to determine the effect of educational leadership on student achievement. The researchers concluded that there was a definite direct-effect on the relationship between leadership and student achievement (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003, p. 6). Others have expanded on the impact of leadership on student outcomes. For instance, Robinson (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of 11 studies, which measured the relationship between leadership and student outcomes. Her results showed the magnitude of impact for different types of leadership behaviors ranging from small to large; notably, the leader had an impact in all 11 cases (p. 21). Moreover, in reference to their study, Dufour and Marzano (2011) stated, “One can glean from the research that the more skilled the building principal, the more learning can be expected among students” (p. 48).

Supovitz et al. (2009) analyzed the association between principal leadership and student achievement. Their study, which involved data from 52 schools, demonstrated a positive relationship between a principal’s influence and teachers’ instructional practice changes. The results from the study suggested that a principal, when focusing on instruction and the vision of the district, impacts teachers’ classroom practices (p. 31).

Conclusion

The FfT identifies the aspects of a teacher’s responsibilities, as demonstrated through empirical studies, to improve student learning. The FfT has been adapted throughout the years in response to updated education research and changes in educational standards. The CCSS created the most recent changes. A criticism of the FfT is that it should account for student feedback and students’ assessment scores. The FfT is not designed as a series of checkboxes to ensure teachers are performing effectively; it instead serves as a structure for teachers to have a conversation that

centers on a common language (Danielson, 2011). If the FfT is appropriately used, teachers will see an increase in the quality of work students are producing. The FfT provides a structure for teachers to reflect on their own practices and focus on how to improve them.

Guskey's (2000) theoretical model for evaluating PD explains that providing effective PD will improve knowledge and practice, which will improve curriculum and instruction and, ultimately, student learning. Improving student learning should be the focus of PD within the school system. I chose Guskey's (2000) theoretical model for this study because District K is encountering the issue of a widening of the student achievement gap. To eliminate the student achievement gap in the district and improve instruction, effective PD is needed. In his research, Guskey (2000) concluded that the relationship between PD and student learning is complex but not random.

PD in education can vary in terms of complexity, content, and format. Ingvarson (2005) assessed that PD is now recognized as a vital component to improve the quality of teaching (p. 64). PD can be delivered through a variety of formats such as 1) individually-guided, 2) observation, 3) involvement in the process, 4) training, and 5) inquiry. The purpose of PD is to change current practices. In that regard, school leaders are critical to school improvement (Fullan, 2006). Principals may have limited time to focus on improving instruction, which makes effective leadership PD of the utmost importance.

Chapter 3 explains the methodologies that were used to gather data on how high school principals' FfT PD is making a difference in their professional practices. In their empirical study, Muijs and Lindsay (2008) concluded that participants' use of new skills is the least likely of areas used to evaluate PD (p. 1). The methods described in Chapter 3 were used to examine the perceptions principals have regarding the PD they received on the FfT, how principals are

applying their new knowledge, and the support that is needed, if any, within the school district for principals to effectively implement the FfT.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Chapter 3 focuses on the methods and procedures that will guide this capstone dissertation. It details the purpose of the study and the research questions and includes a brief review of relevant literature. The sample population, data collection, and data analysis techniques will also be discussed in this chapter.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this qualitative study was to examine principals' perceptions of their PD related to the FfT (2013) using Guskey's (2000) theoretical model for evaluating PD. A qualitative approach was selected for this study because of its ability to understand a phenomenon through research methods that allow for an in-depth examination of the data. The specific qualitative research approach used in this study was phenomenology. It was selected because it is "one that focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience" (Patton, 2015, p. 117). Another purpose of this research study was to explore the perceptions of high school principals regarding usefulness and applicability of what they learned in the PD. As the researcher, I examined the perceptions principals had regarding the PD they received on the FfT. Finally, the study explored the forms of support needed to help principals effectively implement the FfT. This study thus explored the principals' perceptions regarding their experience of the FfT PD of high school administrators in one school district.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were derived from a review of the literature on Guskey's (2000) research on evaluating PD.

- What is the impact of the FfT PD on high school principals?
 - Q1: How did the FfT PD align with the district's mission?
 - Q2: What are the principals' reactions to the FfT PD?
 - Q3: How have principals applied the FfT?
 - Q4: What, if anything, is needed to improve principal PD in order to effectively implement the FfT?

Background Information on Survey Instruments

A review of literature was conducted to gain knowledge on the current research in the field of PD. For the purpose of this study, the Guskey (2000) text, *Evaluating Professional Development*, was one of the sources used to create the data collection tools. I selected Guskey's work because his theoretical model for evaluating PD examines the link between PD and improvements in students' learning.

Guskey and Sparks (2004) examined the validity and appropriateness of the model through five in-depth case studies of school-based PD programs. The researchers of the study concluded that the relationship between PD and student learning is complicated but not random (Guskey & Sparks, 2004). Second, they noted that the model offers guidance for those looking to make PD useful (Guskey & Sparks, 2004, p. 1). Finally, the model highlights the importance of a systemic approach to PD and a need to view PD reform from a systemic perspective.

Kilpatrick and Cantril's (1960) self-anchoring scale also factored into this study's methodology. A *self-anchoring scale* is an activity in which participants are asked to describe, in their own words, the top and bottom extremes of a phenomenon. For this study, the phenomenon was PD, with the two anchor points being ideal PD and worst possible PD. The next step is to create a scale between the anchor points. Participants were asked various questions about their

locations on the scale. A self-anchoring scale was used to gain a “first-person point of view, as opposed to the third-person point of view which assumes an objectively definable reality which, except for error, is the same for all” (Kilpatrick & Cantril, 1960, p. 158).

The Researcher

Patton (2015) described a researcher conducting a qualitative study as the instrument of the study (p. 22). Since the credibility of qualitative methods relies heavily on the skills of the researcher, I have provided information on my background, my qualifications to conduct educational research, any biases I may have related to the research, and how I planned to counter those biases.

I have noticed how the needs and learning styles of students have changed since I was a student. Teachers need to adapt their teaching styles in order to meet demands placed on them and their students because of the Common Core Standards (Danielson, 2013, p. 3). To help enhance the professional growth of teachers as they work toward increasing student achievement, the role of the principal has shifted from a building manager to now also being an instructional leader. With student performance being a driving force with education policymakers, principals are now being asked to develop new job skills pertaining to data analysis, understanding various curricula and pedagogies, and developing human capital. While the principal is now expected to be an instructional leader, he or she is still expected to perform the traditional tasks of a principal: In addition to the previously mentioned role of building manager, the principal is also a disciplinarian and is required to work with members of the community (Alvoid & Black, 2014, p. 1). Due to the fluid nature of schools and the accountability within the school system, I am aware of the PD needs for principals to improve teachers' instruction and have a positive impact on student achievement.

With a widening in the student achievement gap, the principals in District K are routinely asked about how they are improving student achievement through the FfT. I wanted to examine the perceptions principals had regarding the PD they received on the FfT. I also sought to explore what support was needed, if any, for principals to effectively implement the FfT.

My position as a building level administrator strengthened my role as the researcher in this study because I participated in the FfT PD. Being an assistant principal and having to use the FfT to evaluate teachers provided insight into the role of the principal and also allowed me to relate to the respondents and participants. I have a working knowledge of the role, and, due to my position, participants were willing to openly discuss their perceptions of their PD experiences with me.

Being a doctoral candidate provided me with opportunities to conduct qualitative studies. During the coursework at Hood College, I had multiple opportunities to practice and improve my interviewing, coding, and survey development abilities. As part of my coursework, I was able to conduct a pilot study of the data sources that were used in the research. The case study was useful for rewording confusing questions, eliminating duplicate questions, and ensuring the tools gathered accurate data.

The type of bias that might appear in the study is my belief that PD is important for anyone working in a school system and that it is particularly important for principals. I addressed this bias by asking the principals open-ended questions through which they could openly express their ideas. According to Patton (2015), "Open-ended interviews adds depth, detail, and meaning at a very personal level of experience" (p. 24). Another bias that may be present is that the FfT was a district initiative. The bias would have been wanting to display a positive result from the findings since the district promoted paid for this PD. Schools were not given the option to use the

FfT; they were instead told they must implement the new FfT model and train staff. As the researcher, I needed to be aware of personal bias during the study because my personal agenda about what I believe District K should have been doing for PD could skew my ability to analyze and present the findings in a trustworthy manner. I addressed this bias by asking participants what they liked and disliked about the PD and member checking their responses.

During the interviews, I was neutral but receptive to all of the responses given. I displayed what Patton (2015) referred to as “empathic neutrality.” As Patton (2015) explained, “An empathically neutral inquirer will be perceived as caring about and interested in the people being studied but neutral about the content they reveal” (p. 706).

Respondents and Participants

For the purpose of this study, the participants were high school principals in District K that went through the two-year FfT PD. There are currently 13 high school principals in school District K. One of the high school principals was excluded from the study because the individual is new to the district and did not participate in the FfT PD opportunity. The remaining 12 principals consisted of nine who work in traditional high schools and three who work in non-traditional high schools. The three non-traditional schools included one technical school, one virtual school, and one alternative school. These three were included in the study because the principals in these schools are expected to evaluate their staff using the FfT.

Of the 12 high school principals, six are male, and six are female. Only one of the 12 principals was an African American, and the remaining 11 are Caucasian. All principals in the study were in the role of principal or assistant principal for District K for at least four years. It is important for the principals involved in the study to have been in the principal position for at least four years because the participants of the study are those who evaluated staff using the FfT

before the two-year PD and are currently using the FfT for evaluation. All 12 high school principals were asked to participate in the interviews.

Data Sources

In this study, four different data sources were used to gather data. The first source was an organizational support survey (Appendix C) to obtain the principals' responses to the FfT's (2013) organizational support. Interviews, a self-anchoring scale, and a ranking activity were also used to gather data related to the research questions.

Organizational support survey. The organizational support survey will be given to all 12 high school principals. The survey took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. It consists of questions addressing different aspects of organizational support (see Appendix C). The organizational support survey was given to principals through the online platform SurveyMonkey, a cloud-based service company that offers free and customizable online surveys. SurveyMonkey was used to provide the participants anonymity. Based on a personal peer review of SurveyMonkey, I decided it is the best option for respondents to feel assured of the confidentiality of their responses. In the peer review of the survey and interview questions, my peers expressed concerns about using a paper and pencil version of the organizational support survey because of the small sample size and being able to identify handwriting. Google Forms was suggested as an option but was dismissed because the participants had to provide email information to access the survey. Because the reviewers of the platform believed that logging in to a Google account meant responses could be tracked, I assessed that respondents might not be forthright in their responses.

Interview protocol. The second data source used in the study was an in-depth semi-structured interview with the principals who agreed to be participants. The interviews were pre-

arranged so that participants knew in advance when and where they will be interviewed and how long the interview will last. All interviews were conducted in person at the principal's school. This location allowed for a more relaxed interview process because the principal was familiar with the environment in which he or she was interviewed. The participants responded to 14 questions (Appendix D). Participants answered questions such as "What do you believe were the key takeaways, if any, from the PD experience in regard to effective implementation in your building?" and "Which aspects of the FfT, if any, made it a powerful learning experience for you?" The principals participating in the interview had the option of one 50-60-minute interview or two 25-30-minute interviews. Principals were given the option to choose one or two interviews because a principal's time is limited throughout the school day. Providing the principals with options for interviewing allowed them to examine their schedule and determine a time that was best for them. Additionally, by having the principals select the time, they were less likely to rush through the interviews.

Ranking activity. The ranking activity (Appendix E) asked participants to examine the list of 14 modules that principals completed as part of their two-year FfT PD. They were prompted to select the two modules they found most helpful (1 as most helpful, 2 as the next helpful, etc.) and the two modules they found least helpful (14 as least helpful, 13 as the next least helpful, etc.) based on their contribution to the participants' understanding of the FfT. The modules provided principals with an understanding of how to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers based on each component of the FfT. The modules also are intended to help principals develop an understanding of implicit bias and to guide them on how to provide teachers with high-quality feedback. The second part of the ranking activity asked participants to rank the delivery methods from one (most helpful) to seven (least helpful). The delivery methods of the

PD include lectures, online modules, and journal reflections. Open-ended questions were posed, such as those that asked why the principals made the selections they did.

Self-anchoring scale activity. For the self-anchoring scale activity, participants were asked to describe their ideal PD and as well as their idea of the worst possible PD. A scale from one (worst) to 10 (ideal PD) was created. The participants were asked where they would place the FfT PD on that scale as well as where they would place their PD experiences within the last five years. Participants were also asked what they believe PD will be like in five years. Further, participants were asked why they believe the numbers on the scale vary or stay the same.

Demographic information form. When the principals were completing the organizational support survey, they were also asked to complete a demographic information document (Appendix F). Demographic data was only used to create an aggregate that described the group being studied. It was necessary to describe the group since an aim of qualitative research is to provide potential transferability. For this study, a participant's demographic data were not shared individually.

Procedures

The interviews were pre-arranged so that participants knew in advance when and where they would be interviewed and how long the interview was anticipated to last. Unless a participant requested a different location, all interviews were conducted in person at the participant's (i.e. principal's) school. Conducting the interviews in the principal's school allowed for a more relaxed interview because the principal is familiar with the environment in which he or she is being interviewed. The principals selected for the interviews had the option of one 50-60-minute interview or two 25-30-minute interviews. Principals were given the option to choose one or two interviews because a principal's time is limited throughout the school day. Providing

the principals with options allowed them to examine their schedule and determine a time that was best for them. Additionally, by having the principals select the time, they were less likely to rush through the interviews.

Once a convenient time was set, the interviews occurred. Before each interview began, I read the informed consent form (Appendix G), asked if I could audio record the interview, and asked if the participant had any questions. When all questions had been answered, I asked the participant to sign the consent form and then provided him or her with a copy of the form. After consent was given, I asked the participant (i.e., principal) to select a pseudonym for the interview. I explained that I would use the pseudonym to disguise his or her identity and for quotes in a report on the findings from the interviews. Participants were encouraged to select a pseudonym that no reader would associate with him or her. Along with using a pseudonym, I disguised any identifiable information about the participant. Identifiable information such as ‘the longest serving principal in the district’ or ‘the principal from a different district’ was not used in the study.

At the start of each interview, I thanked the participant for her or his time and briefly explained the purpose of the interview. I explained that she or he could pause the interview and ask for a question to be clarified. Additionally, the participant did not have to respond to all of these questions and could end the interview at any time and could stop the interview at any time. I asked the participant to sign the informed consent document and asked permission to audio record the interview. I then explained that the recording would only be used to recall information from the interview. If the participant wanted to continue the interview, I asked the participant a series of open-ended questions (Appendix H). I did not provide the participants the questions prior the interview in order for me to gauge their initial reactions.

If the participant selected two 25-30-minute interviews, I asked the first seven interview questions. At the conclusion of the seven questions, I walked the participant through the self-anchoring scale activity and wrote down her or his words for each anchor (Appendix I). For the second interview, I asked questions eight through 12, and the participant completed the ranking activity to determine which FfT module the most helpful and which module was the least helpful. I then asked questions 13-14. If the participant selected one 50-60-minute interview, the same order was used: questions 1-7, the self-anchoring scale, questions 8-12, the ranking activity, and, finally, questions 13-14.

After conducting a pilot study of the self-anchoring activity, I decided to limit the reflection on PD experiences to the last five years, which is question number six in Appendix I. Some of the participants in the pilot study had over 30 years of experience and asking them to recall all of the PD experiences they had been exposed to in their career was time-consuming. Based on the pilot study, five years was chosen because this time period allows the participants to think about their PD experiences before the FfT. In District K, all of the PD conducted in the last two years was focused on the FfT. Asking about the past five years enabled the participant to focus on what was done prior to the FfT and to identify the best and worse qualities of that PD.

An email inviting principals to participate in the study was sent late summer and a reminder email was sent in the early fall. When principals volunteered to participate, they were given access to the organizational support survey through a link in the email, and the interviews were conducted between late summer and early fall at a mutually agreed upon time that was best for the participant and me.

Data Collection

I sought approval for this data collection from human participants through the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) of Hood College and District K. The collection of data began with the in-depth semi-structured interviews from late summer to early fall, which the organizational support survey of 10 high school principals followed. This survey was delivered through SurveyMonkey, an online-based survey software.

An email was sent to all high school principals asking them to be a volunteer participant in the study. The email (Appendix D) also explained the purpose of the study, the use of the data, and the anonymity of those participating. If they chose to participate, the participants were asked if they preferred to meet twice for 25-30 minutes or once for 50-60 minutes to complete all of the interview questions, the self-anchoring scale, and the ranking activity.

The email sent in the late summer asked participants who agreed to an interview to email me so that a convenient time and location to meet could be set up. A follow-up email was sent two weeks later as a reminder to send me their response. After two weeks, if people still had not responded or did not agree to be interviewed, I started the data collection process with those who did volunteer to participate.

Data Analysis

The purpose of gathering data from interviews, a self-anchoring scale, a ranking activity, and an organizational support survey was to triangulate the responses from the four data sources to determine the current perceptions of and the possible gaps within District K's PD. The data gathered were coded and analyzed using the charting method. According to Saldana (2016), "Charting enables the analyst to scan and construct patterns from the codes, to develop initial

assertations or propositions, and to explore the possible dimensions which might be found in the range of codes” (p. 229).

Trustworthiness

I addressed the clarity of the survey instrument and data sources by establishing a pilot study of individuals who completed the FfT PD. The test group consisted of two elementary school principals, one middle school assistant principal, and two central office employees. The two central office employees were both former school-based administrators with over five years of experience. One elementary principal had over five years of experience as a principal, and the other had fewer than five years of experience as a principal. The assistant principal in the study had fewer than five years of experience as an assistant principal. These individuals were selected because of their diverse experiences and roles within District K.

All members of the pilot study reviewed the interview questions, self-anchoring scale, ranking activity, and organizational support survey for clarity and content. Based on the group’s feedback, appropriate changes were made to the data collection survey and data sources. For instance, to achieve commonality among participants’ responses, I asked all participants the same 21 questions one-on-one, in person, in a quiet setting. The participants’ selection of the interview location provided them with a sense of comfort.

I used triangulation to corroborate the data collected. Mathison (1988), who viewed triangulation as effective, stated “that research and evaluation will be improved by such a practice” (p. 13). In addition, according to Denzin (1989), “the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another: and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each while overcoming their unique deficiencies” (p. 302). I used interviews, self-anchoring scales, ranking activities, and an organizational support survey as appropriate multiple data sources that resulted

in more trustworthy research findings. Triangulation was also used with the two methods, i.e. interviewing and surveying. Further, triangulation was used to minimize errors, such as loaded interview questions and biased responses, within the methods. Patton (2015) explained that using multiple methods provides “cross-data validity checks” (p. 316).

Conclusion

The data collected in this study on high school principals’ perceptions of the FfT PD provided District K with a better understanding of principals’ view of their experience with the FfT PD. The participants for this study were current high school principals who had completed the two-year PD led by District K. Twelve high school principals were invited to participate in the study. Principals completed a questionnaire to assess organizational support. The questionnaire was adapted from an organizational support survey designed by Guskey (2000) to measure the degree to which the organization supported the PD. Respondents also completed demographic data (years, work experience, and gender) as part of the organizational support survey.

The principals who volunteered to be part of the study participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews in which they discussed their FfT PD experiences. Regardless of whether a principal selected one interview or two, he or she was asked the same 14 questions (Appendix H).

During the in-depth semi-structured interview, the participants were also asked to complete a self-anchoring scale activity. The activity asked participants to reflect on their knowledge of the FfT before the training on a scale from one to 10 ; it also required them to assess their current understanding of the FfT. In addition, participants were asked why the numbers on the scale were different or why they stayed the same. The final data collection tool

the principals participated in was a ranking activity that included the list of 14 modules from the FfT and a section on the preferred method for delivery of the information.

The researcher triangulated the data from the organizational support survey, the coded interviews, the rankings, and the self-anchoring scale activity. The data sources were triangulated to find commonalities in the participants' responses to the data and to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the research questions based on the collected and analyzed data explored in this study. As discussed in the previous chapter, this study used semi-structured interviews, ranking activities, and a self-anchoring scale. I conducted the interviews and research activity in each participant's office after regular school hours. Each participant's name and school were given a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. Coding, including the application of the charting method, was used to determine the findings and to summarize and compare the data collected in this qualitative study.

The Analysis Process

In order to chart and code the data, I organized each interview question and activity according to the participants' transcribed responses. After organizing the information, I read all of the responses and highlighted words or phrases that could be used as codes for the questions, such as 'collaboration' and 'time.' After I coded the transcriptions, I used a chart to quantify codes (Appendix J). I then used the charts to identify patterns within the codes and to determine which codes that could be combined. For example, I combined 'collaboration' and 'meeting with peers' because they both involve working with others. Once I compiled the charts, I wrote an executive summary of each response/activity and summarized the themes that emerged based on what principals shared with me. Finally, I organized the charts according to the research questions using Table 2 (below) and determined the concepts that emerged for each research question.

Charting was used to examine the data and discover patterns that were used to develop themes for the research questions. Themes from the data set determined the concepts, explained what was happening, and suggested why something was done a particular way based on the words of the participants. The table below shows the alignment between the particular research question and the qualitative method(s) applied. The complete set of questions is found in Appendix H.

Table 2

Research Question and Data Collection Matrix

Research Question	Data Collection Instrument
How did the Framework for Teaching professional development align with the district's mission?	Q7, Q9, Q10, Q12, organizational support survey
What were the principals' reactions to the Framework for Teaching professional development?	Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q10, Q11, Q13, Q14, Self-anchoring scale, Ranking activity
How have principals applied the Framework for Teaching?	Q6, Q7, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Q14, Self-anchoring scale
What, if anything, is needed to improve principal professional development in order to effectively implement the Framework for Teaching?	Q7, Q9, Q10, Q12, Q13, Q14, Self-anchoring scale, Ranking activity

Key: 'Q7' refers to Interview Question #7; Q1, Q2, and Q8 were warm-up questions.

The Participant Demographics

The participant group for this study included five males and five female high school principals. Participants in this study needed to have completed District K's two-year FfT PD. Of the current 13 high school principals, 12 had completed the PD, and 10 volunteered to participate. For the ethnicity portion of the survey, three chose not to respond, and the reported ethnicities were six Caucasian and one African American. Participants in this study group included one participant new to the role of being principal, but who had completed the FfT PD,

five principals with 3-5 years of experience, and four principals with 10-15 years of experience. All the participants shared that their sole experience as a principal has been with District K.

Research Question 1

Does the professional development align with the district's mission?

The first research question explored the principals' perceptions regarding how the FfT PD aligned with the district's mission. To answer this research question, I used Guskey's (2000) organizational support survey (see Appendix C) and included questions in the interview protocol and activities.

Principals Reported High Alignment in the Survey

The survey questionnaire was designed to measure the degree to which the organization supported principals' PD. Through the online platform SurveyMonkey, I asked high school principals to indicate the degree to which they agreed with each statement (from "strongly agree" (6) to "strongly disagree" (1)). Table 3 displays the weighted mean of the responses.

Table 3

Organization Support Weighted Mean

Survey Question	Weighted Mean (n=8)
The culture in our school building allows for teachers to try new instructional practices without the fear of criticism should initial efforts fail.	5.38
A culture of continuous school improvement exists in our school that recognizes that learning about best practices in our profession is never finished.	5.13
Principal professional development activities are aligned with our school mission, goals, and objectives.	5.00
Leaders in our school advocate, encourage, and support professional development through incentives and resources.	4.75
The administration, faculty, and other staff members of our school work together to plan professional development activities.	4.63
Central office personnel help guide our professional development planning efforts and assist in implementation.	4.38
The administration and faculty in our school have studied the change process to assist in planning and implementing effective professional development activities.	4.00
We have access to expertise when implementation problems or difficulties are encountered.	3.88
The resources required to implement new practices are considered during planning and are built into our school budget.	3.63
Provisions for follow-up support are included in all of our professional development plans.	3.50
Central office professional development programs and activities are thoughtfully planned and complement our school-level efforts.	3.50
Funding for professional development is a line item in our school budget.	3.13

Based on the principals' responses, as indicated in the chart above, the PD was in alignment with District K's mission and value statements. Additionally, a culture existed within the schools and district that supported risk-taking to try new things, and schools were encouraged to focus on continuous improvement. However, the perception of the high school principals was that the district did not provide funding or resources for the schools to implement the PD. The responses also indicated principals' follow-up support for PD sessions was an area of weakness.

Principals Expressed High Alignment in the Interviews

The first research question addressed in this study focused on the principals' perception of the alignment between the PD and the district's mission. The district leadership believed the FfT was providing a research-based common language of effective teaching that administrators would be able to use with teachers to increase overall teacher effectiveness. Principals would use the knowledge gained through the FfT to increase student achievement. The following section provides an overview of the principals' comments about the PD's alignment with the district's mission.

Principals Appreciated the PD

Through the interviews, the principals expressed their appreciation of the district for limiting school-based initiatives during the FfT PD. The closing statement of Matt's interview supported the PD's alignment with the district's mission:

[District leadership] came in and said, "Hey we are going to pick, we are going to find out what are the three things essentially that are going to be most important, and then we are going to stick with them."

During the self-anchoring activity, Josh shared that he ranked the FfT PD higher than past and future PD because the district was focused only on the FfT. In his description of the worst possible PD activity, he described typical PD as having too many district initiatives:

Here's the information. Get it out. And now find somewhere later to take this back and make sense of it, instead of saying, "Okay. Let's not have six other opinions on the agenda. Let's focus on [the FfT] alone."

The leadership of District K combined the FfT PD with other district initiatives; it was not a standalone experience. Josh wanted material presented to be interactive and broken into smaller topics.

Principals Valued the Focus on a Common Language

During the interviews, principals mentioned working with their staff to develop a common language as useful information gained from the PD:

I think just having a common language....but you do a lot of writing, and you end up repeating a lot of the same praises. (Matt)

As somebody who then writes an end-of-year evaluation for a teacher who may have been observed by three different administrators, having comments getting all the administrators on one page and being able to have the level of comment and the feedback for the teachers was super helpful. (Jessica)

When they interact with other core four [subject] teachers or core five [subject] teachers if you want to include the arts. I think good teaching is good teaching, and they're able to share their experiences, in some instances with the same jargon. (Greg)

The FfT served as a structure for teachers to have a conversation that centered on a common language with their evaluator. The district leadership presented the FfT to principals to establish a common language of effective teaching that administrators would be able to use with teachers to increase overall teacher effectiveness. The superintendent shared that she believed that with principals providing feedback to teachers using a common language, via the FfT, teachers would be able to eliminate the student achievement gap.

In response to being asked what her key takeaway was from the PD, Jessica suggested that "a common dialogue and expectations [will] help teachers move forward with regard to change." She then expanded on her perspective:

I think the common dialogue; the common expectations help you move forward with regard to change. It also helps teachers because if you've got one administrator writing the classroom was good, and then you've got this other administrator writing a paragraph about this is what's going on in your classroom.... the teacher is like, "What's my expectation? Because admin is not consistent."

When asked about key takeaways from the PD, John and Ashley shared the importance of a common language when teachers are communicating with other teachers:

We really tried to look for the common language. One of the things I thought worked well with our staff last year was [that] we took the rubric, and we did the activity ... have them first go through all [of] the rubric and highlight the keywords that changed.
(Ashley)

When asked what made the PD a powerful learning experience, Amanda gave this response:

I would say that it was one of the trainings we've done that really went in depth and didn't try to cover this huge breadth of information. It was very focused on this observation model and what each of these domains mean[s].

The first research question of this study focused on how the FfT PD aligned with District K's mission. Through the multiple data collection methods, the principals shared that there was an alignment with the district's mission and the FfT PD. The district wanted to provide PD that would enhance principals' feedback to teachers, thus improving instruction. Through improving instruction in the classroom, students would have an increased chance to experience academic success.

Research Question 2

What were the principals' reactions to the Framework for Teaching professional development?

The second research question of the study examined the principals' reactions to the FfT. Various data collection methods, interviews, self-anchoring scale, and the ranking activity, were used to research the principals' perception on the effectiveness of the PD. One method I used to examine the research question was the self-anchoring scale. While completing the self-anchoring scale, all principals ranked the FfT compared to their ideal PD and then to PDs in the past five years. They also assessed what they felt PD would be like in five years. I used this activity to support principals interview responses.

Principals Provided Praise for PD Structure in Interviews

The overarching response from principals was that effective delivery of the FfT PD had occurred. Principals praised the district for purchasing the complete FfT training, for providing small group time for principals to collaborate, and for limiting initiatives for the two-year timeframe. Themes that emerged from the research about the principals' reaction to the FfT PD were a) the principals appreciated the various delivery methods of the content, b) the time to collaborate with colleagues, and c) the applications to their roles as principals.

Various delivery methods. All but one principal in the study shared how valuable and enjoyable it was to view the video lessons through Teachscape during the PD. In the interviews, the self-anchoring activity, and the ranking activity, the principals conveyed that the videos were a helpful tool for their learning and their teaching to staff:

The PD was made up by the people that we used. The videos were actual teachers. We were discussing it as administrators, and how it worked in our role at the job. (Jessica)

I liked how we looked at the calibration videos. I thought that was helpful. I enjoyed the real world [connection]. (John)

I really enjoyed the opportunity to see real classes [through the videos] and to have an opportunity to compare my scoring and the rationale for my scoring with other folks including the expert group. (Ryan)

In addition, Jessica shared in the interview that the videos were helpful because when working on a domain of the FfT, she was able to watch a video of that specific domain and see the expert rater from the Danielson Group score the observation and take notes on the observation.

Though principals spoke of enjoying the use of videos, some complained that the videos lacked diversity in age of the children, classroom size, and content. When asked if there were any dislikes about the PD Ashley shared:

A lot of math, a lot of science, a lot of English [videos]....You got to see a few, but there were very few elective based videos because when you're looking at a Framework for Teaching, I think those can be some of your most challenging subjects...we would like to see how the Framework for Teaching would be broken down by the experts.

When asked what he enjoyed about the PD John commented on how he enjoyed watching the various levels in the videos:

What I heard from my colleagues along the high school side is "Why am I watching elementary school? Why am I watching middle school?"....., the calibration was good. I liked how they broke us up into smaller groups, so we could talk to colleagues about it.

When asked what about the PD made it a powerful learning experience Matt provided the following information about the videos:

What works for Teacher A may not work at all for teacher, B but they're both good teachers. So, I think that seeing it, seeing the video and watching that was good. They were able to pick out things that even [they could use]. It's like a musician. You may not be the same type of musician as this other person, but you're both good musicians. There're things you can appreciate about someone else's musical ability that you either don't have or approach in a different way.

Overall principals shared they enjoyed the different levels when watching the videos because the principals were able to focus in on a specific domain and look for the characteristics of that domain:

If we were working on a specific indicator or domain you would watch the teacher for that specific domain and those indicators, so you could really just concentrate on what is the teacher doing. (Jessica)

Another delivery method the district used that principals enjoyed was the Danielson FfT evaluation instrument book. The book explained critical elements and indicators for each element in each domain. The book provides each reader with an explanation of the element, critical attributes, and possible examples for every level—unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished—for each element. When asked what useful information he gained from the PD experience Matt shared this view:

I think with the observations and evaluations right away I bought the book for both AP's [assistant principal]. We were able to speak the same language right away..

When asked about resources provided from the district, Amanda gave this response:

I just like the framework for teaching in the book. I found that very helpful. I found that being able to go back and look at some of the tapes and the video segments, because there for a while they took back [access to the videos].

Principals shared that the rubric helped to guide feedback and have conversations with teachers.

When asked about the rubric, principals said the following:

When you do those post-conferenceswe at least want to have the same understanding of the rubrics, so when I go in to observe you,So, the rubric is where you get a lot of the common language from. (John)

This rubric is applicable to all teachers...It really fit[s] into the constant theme of 'you guys are teachers who happen to teach, in some cases very specialized programs' it's applicable to just about any subject or topic. (Greg)

It became easier to identify attributes and be accurate... screen out kind of when you're observing distractors. I think that that just helped with understanding the language of the rubric and eliminating distractors. (Ashley)

Providing the textbook to principals allowed them to share the content with teachers in the post-observation conference. Information provided in the textbook enabled principals to explain to teachers what adjustments were needed in a lesson for it to be a distinguished lesson instead of proficient. Ashley shared the following about the information gained from the PD:

The specificity in the language, looking at keywords and separating them into categories, was something principals never had before.

Part of the interview process involved asking principals to select the two modules they felt were the most applicable to them as a leader and the two they viewed as the least applicable. There was variability in terms of which of the 14 modules principals preferred, as shown in Table 4 (below). See Appendix A for the definitions of 2c-3d.

Table 4

Principals' Responses to Ranking Activity

Module	Most Applicable		Least Applicable	
	1st	2nd	13th	14th
Minimizing Bias	3			
3c: Engaging Students in Learning	2	3		
Calibrations & School Visits	2	2		
3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques	1	1	1	1
HQ Feedback		2		
3d: Using Assessment in Learning		1	1	1
2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport			1	
2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning				1
2d: Managing Students Learning			1	
Putting It All Together			1	
Courageous Conversations			1	1
Coaching & Professional Conversations			1	1
2c: Managing Classroom Procedures			1	3
TOTAL PRINCIPALS RANKING MODULE	8	9	8	8

However, there is consistency regarding the reason for selecting the module. All of the principals selected a module they felt was the most helpful for their role as a principal based on working with teachers. The least helpful modules were ones principals felt they already knew or that their staff was well versed in during the time of the training. Principals shared that they selected the most helpful modules for these reasons:

They were able to have good conversations about it. I think if I had to pick one though that was probably most instrumental to our staff, [it] is creating an environment [of] respect and rapport. (Matt)

The two that I found to be the most helpful: collaborations and school visits. Both of these because that's what I'm pushing my staff to do. (Josh)

During the ranking activity, when the principals were asked why certain modules scored low, they expressed the following reasons:

Managing classroom procedures ...that's a fundamental piece....For the most part, my teacher is doing it. I didn't see that I got anything new from it. (Josh)

I would put managing classroom procedures, just because we're so far ahead of people [in] that regard. (Amanda)

Probably courageous, only because that's something I've never had a hard time doing.... That's something I'm naturally comfortable doing. (Ashley)

Further, when asked to identify the two least helpful modules in the ranking activity, the principals expressed appreciation for the phrasing of the question as the 'least helpful' and not the 'worst.' The principals shared they were all helpful, and they always looked for some form of takeaway from each training, but some did not provide as much. When asked to choose which ones were the least helpful John shared the following:

I think they're all helpful, so to say "least helpful" it's not that I think they were bad, it's just least helpful.

The principals commented that the presentations that were not applicable were topics they already knew, that they could teach the lesson themselves, and/or that their staff was already achieving a certain module at a satisfactory level. When asked why they selected the modules as the 'least helpful,' the principals gave these responses:

High-quality feedback, probably because I felt that I was already doing that. (John)

I just didn't see it as being a key area that we need to address here in the building. (Josh)

That's something I've never had a hard time doing. (Ashley)

Because I felt like I could have taught those components. I already knew that. (Ryan)

According to the ranking activity, the two areas that were the least applicable to principals were 2C: managing classroom procedures and courageous conversations. Domain 2C ensures teacher implement a structure and schedule into every lesson. Veteran teachers, even ones that are not superior, have established routines and classroom procedures. Amber shared

that 2C was not needed because it is an area principals spend a considerable amount of time on with new teachers on. Moreover, once a teacher earns tenure, it is generally not a concern anymore. Before a teacher is granted tenure, more time is devoted to focusing on classroom routines in District K. School-based mentors, administration, curriculum specialists, and district-based new teacher specialists are used to help teachers with classroom routines.

The final area, courageous conversations, was one that scored low. As one principal asked, “If you are not going to have courageous conversations with people, why did you become a principal?” The low scoring could have also occurred because during the year before the FfT PD, District K started PD on eliminating the achievement gap. Part of the yearlong training focused on having courageous conversations with oneself and others. Lastly, in the interviews, the principals shared that the district had used the term ‘courageous conversation’ for years prior to the achievement gap and the FfT. Principals, as leaders, must be comfortable having courageous conversations. They have conversations with teachers regarding transfers, the non-renewal of contracts, and building-based decisions. When asked during the interviews to select which modules they would rank as the least helpful, all of the principals had to stop and think about which modules to select. At no time did the principals become animated about or quickly convey a particular module they disliked. All of the principals appeared to reflect on their experiences with the modules during the ranking activity.

Opportunities for collaboration. Principals enjoyed the opportunity to calibrate their ratings with the expert raters. *Expert raters* are individuals who have had extensive training in using the FfT. Principals showed support for this statement by sharing the following when asked what they liked about the FfT PD:

[Calibrating] our evaluations of the staff was beneficial. I thought it did a great job providing an opportunity to compare; you could compare your response. (Sarah)

Trying to calibrate the way we see things and going through a number of activities and scenarios classroom experiences and then offer[ing] our perspective on it....I thought [it] was something that was probably well overdue. (Greg)

In further support of this claim, three of the 10 principals selected calibrations as one of the top two, out of 14 modules, that they found most helpful during the PD. When asked why calibrations were the most helpful, two of the principals gave these explanations:

It was interesting to see where people.... how they view things, and then what actual feedback that you might give to a teacher. I found that very helpful (Jessica)

Reframe what you're doing, restructure. [People]need to feel like they're promoting themselves and being an expert, so learn from each other. (Josh)

The PD not only allowed principals to calibrate their ratings with an expert rater but also provided them with the opportunity to form small groups and share how and why they rated the observation the way they did. In the past, they had not applied the practice of calibrating occurrences during an observation, according to some principals. Greg, one of the administrators in the study who had been a principal the longest, shared that principals were conducting formal and informal observations in various ways”

Some principals were doing verbatim observations, while others were doing more technical and holistic interviews and making sure that we see things somewhat in the same language was extremely beneficial.

When principals were asked to rank the seven FfT PD delivery methods (one being ‘most helpful’ and six being ‘least helpful’), small group discussions had a weighted mean of 1.7 (see Table 4). All but two principals selected small group discussion as one of their top two most helpful PD delivery methods. Finally, when asked to describe their ideal PD, through the self-anchoring scale, principals used words such as *discussions*, *conversations*, *group interaction*, and *collaborative discussions*. Of the 10 principals who completed the self-anchoring scale, all but three used a phrase to describe collaboration in their ideal PD.

In order for the small groups to be effective, principals needed to collaborate. When I asked principals, what made the PD a powerful learning experience, the general response was the time for principals to collaborate with other principals and curriculum specialists, who are also responsible for evaluating teachers. The time to work with peers enabled principals to calibrate their observation scores and gather feedback with others in an environment where principals could share their thoughts without fear of being judged. During the interview, when asked what made the PD a powerful learning experience, Greg stated the following:

In the beginning, my group was very apprehensive about sharing how they scored observations.... [Collaborating over multiple times] was powerful to see; people were very open and honest about sharing their thoughts [with the group].

Additionally, when asked what made the PD a powerful experience John offered this comment:

It makes me feel good when I say something and somebody of Jessica's caliber is going, "Yep, I agree." I'm like, okay, I know my stuff here. It was good to hear that I was on the right path... and just the power of those conversations.

Application to the Role of a Principal

Principals appreciated that the PD applied to the job of being an instructional leader. The effective use of the FfT was one of the foci of the FfT PD. One take away theme of the PD was using a common language. Principals shared they changed the way they went about performing observations. Moreover, they changed the purpose of the observations to focus on what the students are doing and how the teacher is responding to the students. As a result, they provided improved feedback to teachers through the observation process. When asked what made the PD a powerful experience, two of the principals stated the following:

Show me how you've prepped for this class and planned for this class with these things in mind, which helps me have... more targeted conversations with teachers. (Jessica)

I think because we were able to immediately employ what we were being trained to do. (Ryan)

Ashley shared the following as a benefit to the PD:

Retraining our brain. I enjoyed, kind of, taking 10 steps back and starting over with the observation process to move away from those preconceived notions of what we thought good teaching was.

Ashley also shared the gain she viewed as the most significant:

Shifting the mindset from taught behavior to student behavior....I can tell you, since the Framework for Teaching, my whole observation tactic has changed. I'm looking at students; I'm listening to students.

The self-anchoring scale responses further support the interest in PD that applies to the role of a principal. This interest had the second highest frequency, following collaboration, when principals described their ideal PD. The principals used words and phrases such as *applicable*, *real-world examples*, *personally engaging*, *fits a self-identified need*, *focused on improving learning*, and *relevant* to describe their ideal PD experience.

The second research question of the study examined the principals' reactions to the FfT. Based on the two data collection methods and four data sources used in this study, there is support showing effective delivery of the FfT PD. Principals praised the district for providing a PD with various delivery methods and planned time into the PD for principals to collaborate. While doing the self-anchoring scale, all principals ranked the FfT closer to their ideal PD than PDs in the past five years. The FfT had an average placement by principals of an 8.1 on a ten-point scale. During the self-anchoring scale, Ryan shared he ranked the FfT higher for this reason:

It was interactive, and you had a chance to learn alongside others, and you were encouraged to compare your work to others. And other PD is often "let's all sit in a room. We're all going to get it." But then you're going to go off and do nothing.

Research Question 3

How have principals applied the Framework for Teaching?

The purpose of the FfT PD was to provide teachers with skills to improve their instruction. For a PD to be effective, the principals needed to apply what they were learning into their role as a principal. The role of a principal is to be an instructional leader. As the principals shared during the interviews, an instructional leader ensures high quality instruction is happening within the classrooms. The following section focuses on the principals' ability to immediately apply what they learned through the PD.

Principals Could Immediately Apply Learning from the PD

All of the principals interviewed shared they could immediately introduce the common language obtained in either the Danielson FfT rubric or the Danielson book. These resources provided principals with "look-fors," which Danielson describes as exemplary examples within each domain. The principals used them while performing observations. Principals also discussed using the rubric in their conversations with teachers. For instance, when asked what useful information came from the PD experience, Jessica stated that she appreciated the rubric:

When I can say to a teacher [using the rubric] you were proficient in this area and that was really good, but if you want to move up to distinguished....this is what distinguished means.

The use of a common language and the Danielson rubric were takeaways the principals believed they could use immediately in their roles as principals. They shared the following about information they gained from the PD experience:

The whole rubric is all about rigor, and I really like how the rubric explicitly spells it out for each category, and it totally changed how I went in to do an observation. (John)

The rubric and the language ... The specificity in the language, looking at some of those keywords. (Ashley)

Probably the language was more succinct in the rubric, and I felt that I had a better understanding of what I was observing. (Sarah)

Allowed me to give them two or three bulleted items about what they could do to move to that next level and distinguish, and how to go about doing it. (Greg)

When asked about the useful components of the PD, the principals shared that the common language of the rubric helped to guide feedback and have conversations with teachers:

I think it helped me provide feedback to teachers who may have had questions about how to receive a different ranking or just more of tangible, concrete feedback for teachers. (Greg)

The rubric and the training provided support in providing feedback as far as what was good within that description and what kinds of things people could do to improve. (Sarah)

The specific language, so when you were working with a teacher, and they gave some resistance on why am I not distinguished or why am I only emergent. (Ashley)

The language was more succinct in the rubric, and I felt that I had a better understanding of what I was observing. The rubric provided support in providing feedback as far as what was good within that description. (Sarah)

Applicability to the role of the high school principal was the focus of the third research question. Throughout the interview process, the principals continued to express how the FfT PD, which focused on working with teachers to improve instruction, changed how they behave as an instructional leader. Instructional leadership involves monitoring teachers' effectiveness. When asked what they believed the primary role of a high school principal was, the responses varied. However, in general, the principals wanted to make sure that they had the right people doing the job and that they, as principals, were staying out of their way. Amanda summarized the role of a principal:

The primary role of a high school principal right now in our county is trying to stay on top of quality instruction.

Research Question 4

What, if anything, is needed to improve principal professional development in order to effectively implement the Framework for Teaching?

The fourth and final research question explored the forms of support needed to help principals successfully implement the FfT. During the interviews, I asked the principals if anything impacted their implementation of the PD. The responses in the following sections indicate their desired types of support .

Principals Shared Time Was a Factor to Improve Implementation

The theme that emerged from the data analysis was time. Time took on multiple meanings within the research. Time, within the interviews, referred to as needing time to revisit the FfT with staff and teachers and as limited time to train teachers on the FfT. Applying the Danielson (2013) framework was a change for principals and teachers.

Time to revisit the framework. The two-year FfT PD ended for principals during the 2016-2017 school year. The principals trained teachers on the FfT during the 2016-2017 school year, and principals used the new framework for the 2017-2018 school year. Principals felt an impacting factor of implementing the FfT was no time to revisit the framework with teachers. When asked if she had any final comments, Ashley gave this response:

It is the 5th of October, teachers have been in front of students for six weeks, and we haven't talked Framework for Teaching yet because we've been talking about everything under the sun that's mandated at a county and state level. Wouldn't it make sense that this is the refresher that we start every year with?

In her closing comments, Ashley shared that due to all of the required training and initiatives that high schools have to perform, there is little to no time during the day to perform aspects of the training.

In addition, Sarah suggested District K should consider establishing a PD committee that would help the district examine how principals can best combine initiatives, review the school calendar, and offer recommendations to principals. She also conveyed this opinion:

[The district] has a lot of good stuff going on....but it just needs sort of a holistic approach, and then break it down, and more time needs to be considered for some of these things.

John also commented that the FfT is a topic principals and teachers need to continue to review and revisit. In his closing thoughts about the FfT, PD John conveyed this view:

We got off it too quickly, and we need to come back and visit it again and again and again and again and again. Because it just drives everything we do.

Ashley's comments were in alignment with John when she stated the following:

The other piece is, let it play its course. Let's keep it around for a while. Let's not jump onto something else that we think is going to be the next big thing.

Time with administrative teams. When I asked the principals if support was needed for implementation they conveyed that more time was needed for administrative teams at each building to collaborate and do calibrations. Moreover, John shared this dislike related to the PD:

I wish that there was enough time in the day that we could really do that calibration here, but [getting] all three of my APs and me into the same classroom is nearly impossible.

I also asked the principals how the PD activity helped them think about the change process. In response, Jessica provided a story regarding how her administrative team had a different process for observing and evaluating. She had to spend time getting everyone in sync with how the process would work:

I had two assistant principals that were veteran assistant principals and one that was relatively new. getting just the administrative team on the same page with regard to this is the level of detail of feedback that we need for teachers. A teacher who may have been observed by three different administrators... having all the administrators on one page and being able to have the level of comment and the feedback for the teachers was super helpful.

When discussing key takeaways from the PD, Ryan's supported the idea of time with the administrative team as valuable and needed:

You really had to collaborate with other observers. We've done two exercises now with our administrative team where we have checking for score checking. We've done that as a group. And we've learned that we are more comfortable assessing in our subject area of expertise.

The principals did offer praise for the resources the district provided because they aided in aligning administrative teams' observations and feedback, to an extent. In their responses, the principals stated that the detailed rubric, videos, and time to collaborate with peers were all beneficial:

The rubric is applicable to all teachers in [the district]. It really fit into the constant theme of 'you guys are teachers who happen to teach, in some cases very specialized programs.' (Greg)

I think that that just helped with understanding the language of the rubric and eliminating distractors. (Sarah)

When we had the rubric for each of the domains. It was a great opportunity to sit down with staff. (Josh)

During the FfT PD, principals' evaluations were compared to the Danielson master rater and, at times, from principal to principal. However, District K did not plan for calibrations between a principal and his/her administrative team. When performing the self-anchoring scale, Amber did not rank the FfT PD as a perfect PD because of the lack of time with administrative teams:

We don't have much [of a] chance to network as administrators and talk about what are we doing, how are we approaching the framework, and how are we implementing it...there's just not enough time for colleagues to get together.

When asked about what was needed to support and implement the FfT, John commented that time was an issue, but, as he explained, time may always be an issue:

I don't think it's even time that the system can provide us they can pull us out of the building, but then the mess that's [going to] be waiting for you when you get back. There's just not enough time to truly sink your teeth into it.

Throughout the interviews, the issue of time was a theme shared as being a concern with focusing on the content within the videos. John shared that he wished there would have been more time to do the calibrations with his administrative team, talk about what they were observing, and determine how they would have scored the lesson. Amber shared in the interview that one of her dislikes was not enough time:

I felt like if we had more time to expand on some of the activities.... that they could have a deeper understanding of the framework.

More time with administrative teams was not the only discussion of time in the interviews.

Time with teachers. Time with the teachers is an item principals felt was needed. The principals were spending approximately five hours a month on each learning module but only had, at most, two and a half hours a month to work with teachers at their schools. The two and a half hours is also time shared with other schools and district initiatives. According to the principals, the main barrier to the effectiveness of implementation was the current PD structure in District K's high schools. To increase the effectiveness of the FfT, principals had the following ideas to share in reference to time to train teachers:

Forty-five minutes for two meetings a month is not enough. I think high school, we're our own worst enemy. And [teachers] say, "Well, I have so much content to cover. I can't give up more of my planning." (John)

At the middle school level, I did have several times during the week where I could meet with teachers during the school day that is built into their schedule. At the high school level, we only have the two collaborative meetings, and then we [have] the faculty meeting. (Jessica)

We were doing it during collaboration, and a 100% were there. Like, if you did it after school, you have coaches, and sick people, and sick kids, and appointments, and things like that. But I thought that time was the major factor. (Amber)

The barrier focused on time with teachers. In District K's high schools, principals currently have three opportunities a month for school-based teacher PD. The first is a 60-minute faculty meeting, and the last two are two 45-minute PD sessions based on a teacher's planning period. The sessions total two and a half hours a month during which principals can plan PD for their staff. District administrators were spending over three hours a month at their meetings on the FfT. In addition, as the principals shared, PD time is based on a teacher's planning, so this limited principals scheduling of a department-focused discussion. For example, if curricular area principals had been able to participate in the PD, they could have discussed what student engagement looks like in tech classes versus math classes.

The final research question in the study examined what, if anything, is needed to improve PD to effectively implement the FfT. Through coding and analyzing this question, time was the resource principals described as necessary in order to increase effectiveness. In particular, principals would like to have more time to meet with and train their teachers on the FfT. Principals would also like more time to collaborate with their administrative teams who conduct the observations at the school to ensure teachers within the building are receiving consistent feedback. Finally, principals would like time to revisit the FfT and collaborate with other principals to see how they are implementing the FfT and their successes with the FfT.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of this qualitative study related to the FfT PD's impact on high school principals. From the data collected, several themes emerged about principals' perceptions on the FfT PD. The following themes emerged: District K can continue to

support high school principals through PD that is job-embedded, research-based, contains diverse delivery methods, limiting other District K initiatives, and providing time for collaboration. Chapter 4 analyzed the data collected and presented the findings on the FfT's impact on high school principals. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the conclusions of the study and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore principals' perceptions on their experiences with the Danielson's FfT (2013) PD. District K invested in the FfT PD as one of the four initiatives to eliminate the achievement gap within the district; as a result, the district observed a reduction in the student achievement gap in some areas, but not all student subgroups were closing the achievement gap. The theoretical model that guided the design of this study was Guskey's (2000) evaluation of PD, which is based on the premise that a variety of factors influence PD. Guskey's model consists of five levels of evaluation that are hierarchically ranked from the simplest to the most complex. The levels are 1) participants' reactions, 2) participants' learning, 3) organizational support and change, 4) participants' use of new knowledge, and 5) student progress.

This chapter will discuss the findings through Guskey's (2000) theoretical framework. The following participant reactions will be addressed: an appreciation for various delivery methods and learning that uses a common language; organizational support in regard to the alignment between the PD and District K's goals; and participants' new learning in relation to the applicability of the PD to the role of a principal. Student progress is not discussed, as it is outside the scope of this research. The discussion below is based on this exploratory study and focuses on the group being studied. Therefore, it is true only for this group and cannot be generalized. The chapter is divided into four main sections: (a) alignment with the district's mission, (b) an appreciation of PD, (c) recommendations to enhance PD, and (d) questions the findings prompted.

Alignment with District Mission

Throughout the interviews, the participants expressed their appreciation for District K's limiting of initiatives in the schools in order to focus on the mission of improving instruction through the FfT. The district provided the principals with a clear and compelling reason—i.e., eliminating the achievement gap—for the PD and the characteristics needed for the success of the FfT. Principals conveyed that was one of the better PDs they had experienced within District K. They praised the district for purchasing the complete FfT training, for providing small group time to collaborate, and for limiting initiatives for the two-year timeframe. Due to not rushing the PD, the principals had time to collaborate on how to improve instruction through the use of the FfT. The findings below expand on how principals felt the PD was in alignment with District K's mission through organizational outcomes and the development of a common language.

Organizational Outcomes

District leadership identified four initiatives to support the mission of eliminating the achievement gap: 1) accelerated learning process, 2) cultural proficiency, 3) disciplinary literacy, and 4) the FfT (2013). The FfT was the initiative focused on in this study. Previous research on PD had not determined specific components—videos, lectures, and online content—to include in PD in order for it to be effective. This is primarily because the individual components in each study varied. However, in reviewing the literature, there is consensus on the features included in an effective PD. One set of research studies concluded that one feature of effective PD is a connection to the organizational mission (Bredeson, 2000; Danielson, 2016; Fullan, 2009).

District K applied a systematic approach to the FfT PD. The district shared with the principals that the FfT was the PD focus for the next two years. It was important for the district to explain to principals that the FfT was a systemic focus and that it would continue to be such a

focus in the coming years as it provided principals with the district's vision for the future.

According to Guskey (2000), without a systemic approach, variables could slow or prevent the progress of the PD even if the individual aspects of the PD were delivered effectively (p. 20). A systemic approach to PD allows for the participants—in this study, the principals—to see the PD has improved not only them as leaders but also the system as a whole. Through the interview process principals spoke of being able to see how the PD supported their role of instructional leaders, how the role of instructional leader improves teacher practices, in turn leading students to a better understanding of content and thus working towards eliminating the achievement gap.

As the participants expressed, one reason PDs do not achieve their intended goal is that the alignment between the PD and the mission a district is trying to achieve is unclear due to inadequate planning or a poor presentation. As a result, some participants are left wondering, “What was the purpose of the PD?” and “How does the PD align with what we are trying to accomplish?” Developing a PD that has a clear purpose and that aligns with a district's mission can also ensure the organization does not have self-imposed or procedural barriers in place to limit the success of the PD.

Development of a Common Language

One of the characteristics that participants reported that helped support individuals and District K was the development of a common language to use with teachers when discussing a classroom observation. It was a theme for which all of the participants expressed praised in regard to the FfT PD. As Danielson (2001) stated, “Traditionally, evaluation was an activity that was done to teachers” (p. 15). However, she also observed that districts were transitioning into a new system of evaluation that was focused on promoting professional conversations and enhancing professional growth. The FfT provides a structure for teachers to have a conversation

centered on a common language (Danielson, 2011). When conversations are centered on such a language, teachers can learn from one another, thereby enriching teaching.

During the interviews, the principals shared that developing a common language was beneficial when discussing an observation with a teacher. Discussing observations with a common language keeps evaluations consistent for the teacher, no matter who is doing the evaluation. All principals have a different methodology for performing an observation. Some principals perform concrete observations in which the observer is taking notes verbatim, while some observers take notes holistically about what is being observed. Either method of observation is acceptable, but consistent feedback should be provided from one individual to another.

The PD was focused on effectively applying the FfT, including the use of a common language when discussing a lesson with a teacher. Principals changed the way they went about discussing observations. Their observations became more focused on what the students were doing, how the teacher was responding to the students, and how feedback was provided to teachers through the observation process. As the principals reported, their conversations with teachers were more targeted. Principals, using the FfT rubric, could provide feedback with examples to enhance the lesson for students' learning. Principals also shared that the common language changed their focus from the teacher to the students.

Through the development of a common language, the conversation is consistent across all schools, regardless of the principal. The FfT is not designed as a series of checkboxes to ensure teachers are performing effectively; it instead serves as a structure for teachers to have a conversation that centers on a common language (Danielson, 20011, p. 3). If the FfT is appropriately used, teachers anticipate seeing an increase in the quality of work students are

producing. The FfT provides a structure for teachers to reflect on their practices and focus on how to improve.

Appreciation of Professional Development

The professional development for the FfT was delivered in various formats. District K integrated seven different methods for delivering the PD: (a) lecture, (b) viewing online modules, (c) journal reflections, (d) small group discussions, (e) large group discussions, (f) calibration through collaboration, and (g) providing various texts for reference. When coding the interview transcripts, I noticed that all principals had an appreciation for the various delivery methods planned for the FfT PD. The principals conveyed their appreciation of the various delivery methods because, like students, they learn in different ways, based upon past experiences and their current understanding. In addition to the theme of various delivery methods, I noted two other common themes: relevancy to the role of a principal and the time to participate in small group discussions. Each of these themes is further addressed below.

Various Delivery Methods

Throughout the interviews, principals identified specific components and critical takeaways from the PD experience. The components mentioned in the interviews were a) make the PD applicable, b) ensure appropriate timing, c) grouping of the topics, and d) allow for collaboration. During the interviews, principals praised the FfT PD because they could immediately see the applicability to the role of a principal. Based on the principals' responses, it was clear they knew they were responsible for ensuring teachers were delivering effective instruction, and they viewed the FfT as a way to help teachers improve their practices. The timing of the training was appropriate for the framework of the PD for two reasons. The first is the district had never provided PD on the FfT and had only used the 2007 edition of the FfT.

Secondly, the change in the Common Core State Standards and the focus on student engagement meant it was time to change the way principals were observing teachers. The last two components, grouping of the topics and collaboration, were mentioned in the interviews together. The principals were all focused on one module of the FfT, and that was the only focus until the next month. Having one module a month allowed principals to experience the training, reflect on the training, and then collaborate with colleagues about what they observed and how are they interpreted the module.

I believe these components were consistent in the interviews because the timespan of the training was two years. In that time period, the principals were exposed to a significant amount of material, inclusive of 14 modules, but they had time to process and reflect on each module, which allowed them to see how the learning material was applicable to their role as a principal. Having the time to learn material through an ongoing process involving collaboration allowed principals to connect their learning to their role of instructional leaders. The National Council of Professional Development, which has conveyed support for these identified components, described effective PD as “intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice..., and [it] builds a strong working relationship among teachers” (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009, p. 5).

Principals appreciated the videos because they provided them with options in terms of which content to view. For each topic, there would be at least three videos , each of which included specific content and a focus on a particular grade level. Providing multiple videos for each topic provided the principals with self-direction and allowed them to have a voice in what they were viewing and, therefore, in their learning process. Offering options also let the principals make a decision based on their past experiences. For example, high school principals

appreciated being able to view high school lessons. When principals were viewing and critiquing a lesson, they then could compare their evaluations to the master rater's critique of the lesson. Principals could add to their previous knowledge of conducting high school observations and build upon that understanding through this process.

Another resource used to enhance the principals' understanding of the FfT was the use of the FfT textbook accompanying the PD. The text provided principals with content that specifically applied to their role as a principal. The FfT PD was focused on the principals' role in providing feedback to teachers about improving instruction. The FfT text provided principals with a common language they could use in working with teachers to help develop a deeper understanding of increasing achievement through student engagement within the classroom. The FfT text and developing a common language helped principals apply what they were learning in the PD through problem solving with teachers. Both allowed the principals to have a conversation *with* a teacher and not *to* a teacher. Every conversation with a teacher presented principals with a new focus, so they could not rely on a generic response to what was observed in the classroom.

The principals' appreciation for the various delivery methods of PD is in alignment with Malcom Knowles' (1970) theoretical framework: andragogy or adult learning theory. Knowles's framework recognizes that adults learn differently than children. He developed this framework to maximize the various learning styles and strengths of adult learners. There are five assumptions related to adult learners and four principles of adult learning theory. According to McGrath (2009), andragogy is based on five key areas: (1) adults need to be aware of why they are learning what they are learning, (2) the learner's concept of himself or herself, (3) based on the

experience of the learner, (4) adults want to learn, and (5) promote a safe environment for effective learning (p. 102). The FfT PD addressed all of these critical areas.

Principals understood the “why” behind the transition to the new Danielson framework. As they conveyed during the interviews, teacher effectiveness was no longer measured by what the teacher does; instead it is measured by what the students are doing and how they are engaged. The principals were aware of why the district made the change, thus contributing to their preparedness to learn. Second, the PD was designed in a way that the principals could apply self-understanding, which allowed them to more engaged in the learning process. The third concept the PD addressed was the assumption that principals could draw upon their own knowledge based on their vast experiences. The small group discussions were a time where principals could share their understanding of the topic and connect new learning to previous learning. According to McGrath (2009), “The andragogical model states that adults need to be able to use their experiences...if they want to learn” (p. 103). Fourth, the principals attending the FfT PD wanted to learn, as evident in their positive comments about the FfT PD in the interviews. All of the principals in the study were at one time teachers and assistant principals. Once someone has dedicated the time and work to be a principal, they have reached a point where they want to make a difference, thus having personal value in the field of education and a readiness to improve the field. Finally, the PD provided a safe environment. The FfT PD was implemented for one year before taking effect. The first year of the PD was focused on principals developing an understanding of the new FfT and time to practice using the FfT without it impacting teachers’ final evaluations. Having a no-fault year—a time where using the FfT did not impact teachers’ evaluations—provided an opportunity for principals to participate in the learning experience without the fear of failure.

Scheduled Times to Collaborate

Principals shared they felt the FfT PD was better than previous district-led PDs because it was applicable, job-embedded, and provided adequate time to learn the material separately or combined with other district initiatives. During the interviews, the principals repeatedly commented on the need for an adequate amount of time to learn and implement the FfT. Participants shared that as a result of not rushing the PD, they had time to collaborate. This collaboration time provided an opportunity to converse about topics related to the PD and develop a common language when discussing observations with teachers. Collaborating with District K evaluators about a common language results in consistent evaluations for teachers, regardless of who is performing the evaluation. FfT was a powerful learning experience for principals because it offered principals time to collaborate with other principals as well as curriculum specialists, who are also responsible for evaluating teachers.

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) expressed support for time for collaboration during PD. They stated that effective PD involves participants both as leaders and as learners and allows individuals to work through the uncertainties that correspond with each role (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, p. 4). During collaboration, principals enhanced their learning through an inquiry-based process in which they posed a question to the group, the group discussed the question, and the discussion led to a deeper understanding of the information presented.

Relevancy to Principal Role

Instructional leadership involves setting clear goals, managing curriculum, allocating resources, and monitoring teachers' effectiveness. All 10 of the participants interviewed identified at least one of these tasks as their primary role as a principal. For instance, one

principal felt her primary role involved evaluating all of the non-tenured teachers in her building and serving as the primary person who provided PD for staff. Of the 10 principals, four said they believed their role was to deliver PD in a way that reflected the mission of District K but respected the workload of teachers. For example, the principals stated that they would examine the PD that needed to be offered and determine if it had to involve a face-to-face PD session or if it could be done virtually. The same four said that they felt it was their responsibility to determine how to remove roadblocks for the teachers and provide support for the initiatives. All of the principals interviewed shared that the FfT PD could immediately be implemented into their daily role of principal. For principals to be effective instructional leaders, PD needs to align with their needs.

Principals appreciated that the PD applied to the job of an instructional leader. As previously mentioned, the PD was focused on applying the FfT effectively with the use of a common language. In the interviews, the principals shared that they had changed the way they performed observations. Specifically, they changed the focus of the observations to what the students were doing and how the teacher responded, and they improved the way feedback was given to teachers through the observation process. The idea of job-embedded PD as beneficial is supported in the work of Lawrence et al. (2008), who stated that PD should provide a job-embedded approach to extend the collegial network and allow for consultation and better problem-solving (p. 36). Principals' responses regarding the FfT PD were overall positive, but they did provide some recommendations to enhance future PDs.

Recommendation: Confronting the Barrier of Time

According to the participants, one way to improve the PD focused on the *barrier of time*. Specifically, they recommended more time for administrative teams to collaborate and more time

to train teachers on the FfT. District K was going through an organizational change during the FfT PD. The change process will always present challenges, and such challenges can prevent growth from occurring. One of the challenges Senge et al. (1999) identified is not enough time (p. 66). They referenced in a pilot group they led that lacked flexibility, with which they found that control over one's own time and priorities is what prevents a change from gaining momentum (Senge et al., 1999). The pilot group mentioned they cannot commit to new initiatives because of the current demands on them within the workplace. The group mentioned feeling disjointed and never being allowed to focus or complete one task before being assigned to something new. Study participants felt their time was being consumed by goals/tasks forced on them by management, and that they had little time to pursue to other tasks. As they confirmed, "Every successful learning initiative requires key people to allocate hours to new types of activities: reflection, planning, collaborative work, and training" (Senge et al., 1999, p. 67).

Based on the interviews conducted, I believe that time was not a hinderer for the change to the FfT; it was more of a barrier. The principals did not state that there was not enough time to the FfT PD; in fact, they collaborated with teachers to find the time to do the PD. Principals would modify faculty meetings or have email-based faculty meetings to allow time for the FfT PD. In the interviews and ranking activities, participants shared specifics that aligned with all six of Senge et al.'s (1999) strategies to combat time: (a) integrate initiatives, (b) schedule time for focus and concentration, (c) trust people to control their own time, (d) value untrusted time, (e) eliminate busy work, and (f) say no to political games (p. 72). Administrators are asking for more time with colleagues and teachers to collaborate and implement the common language of the FfT.

More Time for Administrators to Collaborate

Principals were highly appreciative of the time to collaborate with other principals and experience further learning through collaboration with colleagues. Since they experienced a more in-depth understanding of the FfT through collaborating with other principals, the participants recommended finding time to collaborate with their administrative teams and assistant principals on the FfT and to develop a common language within their school. In addition, two suggestions came out of the interviews regarding time already built into District K's calendar. The two suggestions were using the two-hour early dismissal days and the all-day teacher workdays as a time for administrative teams to get together at a district-wide meeting to discuss the FfT.

Teacher workdays are days built into the school calendar when there are no students in the building and teachers focus on finalizing grades. On these days, administrators are not typically dealing with a student issue or needing to help teachers with questions they have about what is going on in the classroom. At the time of this study, administrators used this time to get caught up on paperwork or as administrative time to discuss upcoming events, pressing issues, and managerial questions.

Having the district plan for system-wide meetings where administrative teams can meet off campus and discuss how the FfT shifts the focus on being a manager to being an instructional leader. During the initial FfT training, principal evaluations were compared to the Danielson master rater and, at times, one principal evaluation was compared to another principal evaluation. However, calibrations between a principal and his/her administration team were not done. The district-wide meetings would provide time to network with administrators and talk about how school-based teams approach the FfT. In the interviews, the principals noted that expectations

can be inconsistent without the time for school-based administrators to collaborate. Inconsistency regarding expectations causes teacher confusion.

More Time for Teacher Training

The principals shared that a challenge to the delivery of the FfT to their staff is the current structure the high schools, which impacts teachers' time. They referred to these impacting factors in the current high school structure: 1) limited time to revisit topics and plan PD, 2) the 2.5-hour PD time had to be shared with other district initiatives such as testing, surveys, and cultural proficiency, 3) not enough time to dive into the content, and 4) no time to deliver PD by department.

The first impacting factor is the time of year district initiatives are released. Receiving district initiatives late in the summer had an impact on principals and how they were planning for the school year. One principal had to redo her entire PD plan due to receiving a notification about delivering modules to staff late in the summer. Had principals known about the modules sooner, they would have planned accordingly and could have seen where initiatives could have been condensed or combined.

The second factor shared was the limited time within the high school schedule to have PD. At the high school level, teachers are only required to go to PD for 45 minutes two times a month for a total of 90 minutes a month. The time allocated for PD for teachers at the high school level is drastically less than that at the elementary and middle school levels. On average, an elementary school principal is getting 40 minutes a week, or 160 minutes a month, to do PD with teachers, and middle school principals average 50 minutes a week, or 200 minutes a month, for teacher-based PD. These figures do not include faculty meeting times contractually required of all teachers for 60 minutes a month. Not only do high school principals have 50% less time for

teacher PD than the other levels, but teachers also have less common planning time. At the elementary and middle school levels, teachers have, if the principal chooses, common planning time. Common planning time for content areas at the high school level is virtually impossible with the various curricular needs of the students within a high school.

The impacting factors principals addressed are not new problems in the high school structure. Therefore, principals were happy to offer recommendations to help limit the negative impact. One suggestion was using the time during the day when students have a study hall block and classroom teachers are responsible for student supervision and tutoring. It was also suggested that a group of staff members not assigned to study hall, such as guidance counselors or special education teachers, should set up a rotating schedule where they would go in and supervise the study hall and thus allow time for teachers to collaborate.

The final recommendation from principals was for District K to consider what PD could be delivered through an online format or email. One example principals mentioned during interviews was test training. Instead of having principals give up PD time, which is already limited, the teacher could watch a video or listen to a podcast about the test requirements. The district currently provides online modules for training associated with bullying, tobacco use, child abuse, and mandatory reporting; the principals expressed a willingness to expand the amount of PD that could be completed through an online format.

Questions the Findings Prompted

The process of collecting, coding, and interpreting data and reporting on the findings has raised two questions. The first is what is District K doing for new principals about the FfT training? If the district hires from within, —such as a current assistant principal, it is likely that the individual went through the FfT PD as an assistant principal, but what if that is not the case?

What is the district currently doing or planning on doing when the candidates for principal have not gone through the two-year FfT PD? At the time of this study, a leadership PD team that could train the principals on the FfT did not exist. How does the district plan to continue to grow the FfT knowledge base and replenish the knowledge that will be lost when current principals retire or move on to a different position? What is being done to revisit the FfT? After investing two years of time and resources in the FfT, it is important for the district to revisit the FfT with staff to ensure it is still being implemented with the same common language and expectations.

The second question that emerged from the study was the use of the Danielson book as a guide for having conversations with teachers about how they can be distinguished. A book was provided to each principal and assistant principal within the district. Principals shared that the book was helpful because there was not always time for school-based teams to calibrate and review observations. With the book, the team at least had the same understanding of the rankings for observations. Principals also shared that the critical attributes discussed in the book were helpful when explaining to teachers how the rubric would be used and how observations would be ranked. The book contained the rubric for each domain's components, inclusive of a description, critical attributes (look-fors), and examples. One critical attribute to relay to staff is that it is not what the teachers are saying to the students, but how the students are responding to the classroom environment.

With all of the positive comments about the book provided to principals, I wonder if the book coupled with examples would have provided enough support for teachers to, in turn, give appropriate feedback to teachers about the observation. The PD presented to principals over two years had two parts: 1) how to effectively observe a lesson and 2) how to provide useful feedback to the teacher. The textbook does not address the first part of PD but does address the

second part of providing feedback to principals. Throughout the interviews, principals mentioned having their book out when they were writing observation and when they were discussing the lesson with teachers. Therefore, I wonder if the second part of the PD could have been shortened, which would have allowed more time for administrative teams within the same building to collaborate and calibrate observations.

Conclusion

The chapter had four main sections: (a) alignment with the district's mission, (b) appreciation of PD, (c) recommendation: confronting the barrier of time, and (d) questions the findings prompted. Findings in the study were compared with literature on PD aligned with the organization's mission, using the FfT to develop a common language, and adult learning theory. The chapter also presented recommendations to enhance PD by using time more effectively for school-based administrative teams to collaborate and providing more common planning time for high school teachers.

Finally, in this chapter, I discussed the principals' perspectives on the effectiveness of the FfT PD using the five levels of Guskey's (2000) theoretical model. I was impressed with the principals' willingness to comment on their positive experiences with the FfT, the knowledge they gained from the PD, how they felt supported by the district, and how they are applying the knowledge gained from the PD. No matter how many years the participants had with District K, they spoke of the importance of the FfT and the impact a principal has on student learning. The principals' sharing of their experiences with the FfT PD led to recommendations for future PD that will be discussed in Chapter 6. Chapter 6 will also address the significance of the study implications for practice and provide recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

This chapter will present my final thoughts on the study. This chapter is divided into four sections: (a) overview of the study, (b) significance of the study, (c) implications for practice, and (d) recommendations for future research. The implications and recommendations discussed in this chapter will support future PD in District K as well as the notation of a paradigm shift for building leaders. A building leader can be regarded as a manager who ensures a school runs smoothly. While that is part of the role, the building leader is also an instructional leader. In this latter role, he or she is responsible for improving instruction to create a positive impact on students' learning.

Overview of the Study

District K identified four initiatives to support their aspirational goals: 1) accelerating learning process, 2) cultural proficiency, 3) disciplinary literacy, and 4) the FfT (2013). The district believed these four initiatives would create a culture of collaboration and thus improve the quality of instruction within every classroom on a daily basis.

Ten high school principals participated in the study and conveyed their perceptions on the FfT PD based on their experiences and considered the effectiveness and applicability of what they learned. This qualitative study incorporated Guskey's (2000) theoretical model for evaluating PD. Qualitative research was selected for this study because of its ability to feature rich data with a strong potential for revealing complexities (Miles et al., 2014). The specific qualitative research approach of phenomenology was used in order to focus on a description of what principals experienced (Patton, 2015).

The study discovered that principals appreciated the various delivery methods used in the FfT PD, the opportunity to collaborate with other principals, and the content applicability to their role as a principal. The various delivery methods used in the FfT PD allowed the principals to experience learning through different formats, but the most often cited format was the use of video lessons. When principals were viewing lessons, they could add to their previous knowledge and build upon that understanding.

The principals' knowledge base was also expanded after viewing the videos when they met with other principals to discuss what was observed and how they would have scored the lesson. Specifically, collaboration provided an opportunity to discuss observations of teachers, thus leading to the development of a common language to be used with teachers. Using a common language allows for consistent evaluations for teachers and set expectations, no matter which administrator is performing the evaluation. The collaboration led to the FfT PD being a powerful learning experience for principals because it offered the principals the time to collaborate with other principals and curriculum specialists, who are also responsible for evaluating teachers.

Finally, the principals shared that the content being discussed in the FfT applied to their job. The principals had changed the way they perform observations and provide feedback to teachers. For observations, focus changed to what the students were doing and how the teacher responded. This change reinforces the paradigm shift of principals from managers only to managers *and* instructional leaders. The job-embeddedness of the PD contributed to an extended collegial network of principals and better problem solving.

Significance of the Study

This study's significance will be discussed in two areas: 1) contribution to the development of a PD conceptual framework in District K and 2) the contributions made to the field of study. First, by using the concepts discussed in this study, both through the coding of data and the literature presented, District K can begin to develop its conceptual framework for principals' PD. The framework will not serve as a series of checkboxes that can be used when delivering future PDs but instead will allow for modifications according to the PD participants. Based on the findings discussed in this study, the conceptual framework for District K should include various delivery methods, allow time for collaboration, and apply to the role of the participant.

Second, this study added to the field of knowledge. This study supports the paradigm shift with school-based leadership. For years, principals have been the figureheads and managers of buildings, and some continue to view that as their role. While there is still a need for principals to manage, they should also serve as instructional leaders. As a manager, a principal is responsible for making sure teachers are prepared to work, ensuring teachers have the supplies they need, and serving as a figurehead for the building. As an instructional leader, a principal performs each of those duties but also manages curriculum, monitors lesson plans, and evaluates teachers to promote student success. Being an instructional leader means being a manager that oversees finances and hires staff as well as providing support for staff and students.

To address this paradigm shift, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) developed the Professional Standards for Educational leaders (PSEL) in 2015. According to the NPBEA website the PSELs are student-centered and focus on the principles of

leadership that can increase student learning and achievement. The following statement appears on the NPBEA website:

The new Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), formerly known as ISLLC standards, aims to ... improve student achievement and meet new, higher expectations. They are intended to help challenge the profession, professional associations, policymakers, institutions of higher education, and other organizations that support educational leaders and their development to strive for a better future.

Two significant conclusions of this study were explained in the context of extending understanding through further research. First, this study was significant because it presented a qualitative study of high schools principals' perceptions of the FfT PD. The significance of this study is merited because the information gained from principals' perceptions of PD can be used to develop characteristics contributing to a conceptual framework for the district's PD. This framework for PD can be modified based on new phenomena. This conceptual framework does not seek to predict what PD will be like in the future; instead, it aims understand what principals are currently reporting as beneficial. The framework would include conclusions from the study, such as principals' appreciation of various delivery methods, opportunities to collaborate, and the applicability to the role of a principal.

Implications for Practice

Implications of this study will be discussed in three categories: 1) the added benefit of a leadership PD division in the district, 2) laying the foundation of a conceptual framework, and 3) modifications and considerations of the FfT PD. First, I would recommend that the district add staffing to plan, implement, and evaluate leadership PD. According to Guskey (1997), researchers are uncertain about which elements contribute the most to effective PD, the formats

or specific practices that are the most effective, and how PD contributes to improved teaching (para. 1). Since research to date has not determined what makes PD effective, the individual in charge of the leadership PD would be responsible for planning, delivering, and modifying leadership PD as needed. This individual would also be responsible for continuing to gather data and research to contribute to the development of the PD conceptual framework.

In District K, no person or division is currently responsible for leadership PD; instead, this task is shared throughout different departments within the district. The current setup for PD in the district is to have various departments present their information at meetings. The leadership division would be responsible for communicating and coordinating with all the departments to ensure a smooth transition and eliminate the inclusion of various topics. Finally, the division responsible for leadership PD could ensure that when the various departments present PD to principals, the PD aligns with the conceptual framework.

Second, this study lays the foundation for the development of a conceptual framework for PD in the district. Jabareen (2009) stated that a conceptual framework can be developed through qualitative analysis and can be modified as needed through the evolution of the phenomena being studied (p. 58). This study was conducted using various types of data to describe the FfT PD phenomenon. The qualitative analysis of high school principals provides a foundation for the district's framework due to their sharing of what they enjoyed about the FfT PD and what they found valuable about the experience, as well as their perception of it as one of the most effective PDs District K has done. Principals reported the FfT PD was better than past PD because of the various delivery methods, collaboration, and relevance to their work. The concepts that principals shared factor into the foundation of a PD conceptual framework.

Finally, implications of this study include possible modifications and considerations if the FfT PD is presented in the future. The first consideration is to examine what modules principals found the least helpful and add alternatives for these modules. One should also assess whether these modules be done through an online format through which principals self-select if they want to view the content or skip it if they feel they already have a strong understanding of it. If there are modules that are less relevant and could be done through a small group conversation or an online format, this could streamline the PD, thus allowing more time for collaboration. If the PD can be streamlined, it can save time for future PD to collaborate, or the streamlined version of the PD can be used to revisit the FfT PD or train new administrators on the FfT. This streamlined module or online modules could also become a guide or model for other districts or other states using the FfT and wanting PD for their leadership.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future studies are based on the assumption that administrators went through the FfT PD Teachscape (2014) as a source of PD. If this study were to be replicated, I would suggest expanding the participants to include both principals and assistant principals at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, curriculum specialists, and teacher specialists because all of these positions are responsible for observing and providing feedback to teachers. Replicating the study with a larger sample size with all the participants responsible for evaluating teachers will help to provide further guidance in developing a conceptual framework for PD. Expanding the sample size will also lead to an increased depth of participants' perceptions of the FfT PD.

A second recommendation is to replicate this study in a different district. Conducting the study in a different district could allow for a more diverse sample. The diversity of the sample is

not limited to race; it could be based on demographics, years of experience, or promoted from within the district or hired from outside. If this study were to be replicated within a different district, I would recommend the following change: conduct two separate interviews, with the first interview featuring the ranking activity and participants' responses to the interview protocol and the second interview for the self-anchoring activity. Doing the self-anchoring as a standalone activity would allow the researcher to probe deeper into why participants feel PD will increase, decrease, or stay the same in the next five years. It would also be beneficial during the self-anchoring scale for the researcher to ask the participants to elaborate on their meaning of ideal PD. For example, participants in this study all mentioned collaboration as being part of their ideal PD. Including the self-anchoring scale as a standalone interview would allow for a more in-depth understanding of what collaborations look like for the individual, whether it varies based on experience or level, and whether collaboration with large groups, small groups, or partners is preferred.

I would recommend further exploration of the barrier of time in future research. Time is a barrier in any organization going through change. Future studies should examine if there are organizational practices placing constraints on the success of PD. Could these hindrances be modified or removed to improve the time lost? Also, if the study were to be replicated, one could examine how the conversations between observers and teachers have changed since the PD. If principals say they are instructional leaders, how have their conversations with teachers changed? Has the conversation shifted from a conversation to the teacher about comparing the good versus bad of the lesson to a conversation about the lesson?

A final recommendation would be to add various quantitative and qualitative measures to the study so that it becomes mixed methods research. For instance, adding a questionnaire that

asks respondents to complete a Likert scale based on their experience with the FfT PD would expand the sample size. Once the Likert scales are complete, the researcher could use a t-test to determine if there is statistical significance between different subgroups such as elementary versus middle versus high schools or veteran administrators versus new administrators. Another option is to add focus groups to the study. Focus groups could be used to develop a deeper understanding of participants' perceptions of the FfT. Focus groups allow for the participants to respond to questions asked and to present new issues and additional topics. Such groups are beneficial because what one participant shares might spark the thinking of other participants. Finally, if the study were conducted while participants are involved in PD, I would suggest adding a reflection journal for participants. Their journal entries would serve as a way to document the participants' behaviors, reactions, and implementation of the PD; they would also serve as a reflection tool for the participants.

Conclusion

Conducting rich, in-depth interviews with 10 high school principals in District K proved to be a valuable experience. Through the qualitative study, I listened to their experiences of going through the PD. I could feel their passion for being leaders when they discussed using a common language to improve instruction. I also sensed their frustrations at times and gained a better perspective of how principals lead their buildings. Of significance was the principals' deep appreciation that the district spent the funds to purchase the FfT PD and valued limiting other initiatives during the two-year PD. They shared how knowledge was gained from collaborating with their colleagues and that collaborating is something that had been missing from PD in the past.

Reflecting on the principals' responses, I must acknowledge that each of them continuously asked questions and sought to improve their understanding of the FfT in order to increase student achievement. I am particularly impressed with their mindset regarding the FfT. Through the interviews, it was clear that all of the participants supported eliminating the achievement gap and regarded the FfT as one of the changes leaders needed to incorporate into their everyday work. Moreover, the participants referred to the need to overcome the barrier of time and discussed how they would ensure the FfT was infused into every staff-based PD, faculty meeting, and teacher observation. This study has improved my own observation practices and the conversations I have with teachers. Finally, by conducting this study, it is my hope that I have conveyed principals' perspectives on the effectiveness of the FfT PD and that this study provides insight to the hard work of high school principals.

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Appendix A

Charlotte Danielson's 2013 Framework for Teaching Domains and Components

Domains	Components
1- Planning and Preparation	a – Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy b – Demonstrating Knowledge of Students c – Setting Instructional Outcomes d – Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources e – Designing Coherent Instruction f – Designing Student Assessment
2 – The Classroom Environment	a – Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport b – Establishing a Culture for Learning c – Managing Classroom Procedures d – Managing Student Behavior e – Organizing Physical Space
3 – Instruction	a – Communicating with Students b – Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques c – Engaging Students in Learning d – Using Assessment in Instruction e – Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness
4 – Professional Responsibilities	a – Reflecting on Teaching b – Maintaining Accurate Records c – Communicating with Families d – Participating in a Community of Practice e – Growing and Developing Professionally f – Showing Professionalism

Appendix B

Guskey (2000) Five Levels of PD Evaluation

Evaluation Level	What Questions Are Addressed?	How Will Information Be Gathered?	What Is Measured or Assessed?	How Will Information Be Used?
1. Participants' Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did they like it? • Was their time well spent? • Did the material make sense? • Will it be useful? • Was the leader knowledgeable and helpful? • Were the refreshments fresh and tasty? • Was the room the right temperature? • Were the chairs comfortable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires administered at the end of the session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial satisfaction with the experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve program design and delivery
2. Participants' Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper-and-pencil instruments • Simulations • Demonstrations • Participant reflections (oral and/or written) • Participant portfolios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New knowledge and skills of participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve program content, format, and organization
3. Organization Support & Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the impact on the organization? • Did it affect organizational climate and procedures? • Was implementation advocated, facilitated, and supported? • Was the support public and overt? • Were problems addressed quickly and efficiently? • Were sufficient resources made available? • Were successes recognized and shared? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District and school records • Minutes from follow-up meetings • Questionnaires • Structured interviews with participants and district or school administrators • Participant portfolios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization's advocacy, support, accommodation, facilitation, and recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To document and improve organizational support • To inform future change efforts
4. Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did participants effectively apply the new knowledge and skills? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires • Structured interviews with participants and their supervisors • Participant reflections (oral and/or written) • Participant portfolios • Direct observations • Video or audio tapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree and quality of implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To document and improve the implementation of program content
5. Student Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the impact on students? • Did it affect student performance or achievement? • Did it influence students' physical or emotional well-being? • Are students more confident as learners? • Is student attendance improving? • Are dropouts decreasing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student records • School records • Questionnaires • Structured interviews with students, parents, teachers, and/or administrators • Participant portfolios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student learning outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cognitive (Performance & Achievement) – Affective (Attitudes & Dispositions) – Psychomotor (Skills & Behaviors) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To focus and improve all aspects of program design, implementation, and follow-up • To demonstrate the overall impact of professional development

Appendix C

Framework for Teaching Organizational Support Adapted from Thomas R. Guskey (2000, p. 170)

Voluntary Nature of This Study

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the school district or Hood College or any of its representatives. If you decide to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting those relationships.

Your Consent

By completing this survey, you consent to allowing your responses to be used for the purpose of this study.

Directions: Please indicate below the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement below in reference to the Framework for Teaching professional development. Indicate your answer on the blank line next to the item.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

1. _____ Principal professional development activities are aligned with our school mission, goals, and objectives.
2. _____ Funding for professional development is a line item in our school budget.
3. _____ The administration, faculty, and other staff members of our school work together to plan professional development activities.
4. _____ Leaders in our school advocate, encourage, and support professional development through incentives and resources.
5. _____ The administration and faculty in our school have studied the change process to assist in planning and implementing effective professional development activities.
6. _____ The culture in our school building allows for teachers to try new instructional practices without the fear of criticism should initial efforts fail.
7. _____ Central office personnel help guide our professional development planning efforts and assist in implementation.
8. _____ Provisions for follow-up support are included in all of our professional development plans.

9. _____ A culture of continuous school improvement exists in our school that recognizes that learning about best practices in our profession is never finished.
10. _____ We have access to expertise when implementation problems or difficulties are encountered.
11. _____ The resources required to implement new practices are considered during planning and are built into our school budget.
12. _____ Central office professional development programs and activities are thoughtfully planned and complement our school-level efforts.

Appendix D

Participant's Interview Invitation

Dear Mr. /Ms. _____,

I am enrolled in Hood College's Doctor of Organizational Leadership program. You are invited to participate in a research study about *Principals' Perceptions on the Framework for Teaching Professional Development*. This is a qualitative study designed to gather your perceptions of the Framework for Teaching (FfT) professional development program and the usefulness and applicability of what you learned. I, Danny J. Rumpf, am conducting this study in affiliation with Hood College.

I am seeking volunteer responses from all principals using a Survey Monkey questionnaire designed to gather data on the FfT. Furthermore, I am asking for volunteers to participate in an in-depth semi-structured interview where you can share your perceptions on the professional development. If you are willing to participate in the semi-structured interview, please read the information below. A link to the questionnaire is at the bottom of this email. By clicking on the link and completing the survey, you consent to allowing your responses to be used for the purpose of this study. The survey should take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete and will consist of questions addressing different aspects of organizational support related to the FfT. All information pertaining to this study will be kept private. Your name or school's name will not be used.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the school district or Hood College or any of its representatives. If you decide to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting those relationships.

Interview Structure:

You will be asked to share your perceptions regarding your experiences on the FfT professional development program (PD) and the skills and concepts, if any, you have found useful in your work since the FfT PD. You will be asked open-ended interview questions and be asked to complete a self-anchoring scale activity, in which you will reflect on your vision of an ideal PD and the worst possible PD. Additionally, you will take part in a ranking activity related to the components and delivery methods in the FfT PD.

Duration:

You have the option to participate in two 25-30 minute interviews or one 50-60 minute interview. As a token of my appreciation, I will provide you with a \$15 gift card. The interview will focus on your perceptions of the FfT professional development and will include questions such as *which aspects of the FfT made it a powerful learning experience for you?*

Procedures:

If you agree to be in the study I am asking you to do the following:

- Complete the electronic questionnaire at a location and on a device of your choosing
- Reply to this email letting me know if you would prefer two 25-30 minute interviews or one 50-60 minute interview. I will coordinate a time and location that is best for your schedule.

Anonymity:

All records pertaining to this study will be kept private. Your name or school's name will not be used. You will be asked to select a pseudonym at the start of the interview. All data will be stored on my personal computer which requires a username and password to access. Published reports and/or presentations will not include any information that will make it possible to identify participants.

Questionnaire Link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2WSGTLX>

Thank you for your time and please let me know a good time to set-up the interview.

Sincerely,

Danny Rumpf

Doctoral Candidate at Hood College

Appendix E

Ranking of Framework for Teaching Professional Development Modules

Below are the 14 modules school-based administrators participated in as part of the Framework for Teaching professional development. Please select the two modules you found most help (1, most helpful, 2, next helpful) and the two modules you found least helpful (14, least helpful, 13 next least helpful) based on their contribution to your understanding of the Framework for Teaching.

- ___ Minimizing Bias
- ___ Component 2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- ___ Component 2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning
- ___ Component 2d: Managing Students in Learning
- ___ Component 3c: Engaging Students in Learning
- ___ Component 3a: Communicating with Students
- ___ Component 2c: Managing Classroom Procedures
- ___ Component 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques
- ___ Component 3d: Using Assessment in Learning
- ___ Putting It All Together
- ___ Calibrations and School Visits
- ___ High Quality Feedback
- ___ Courageous Conversations
- ___ Coaching and Professional Conversations About Observations

Below are the delivery methods used for the Framework for Teaching professional development. Please rank them from 1 (best, most helpful) to 7 (least helpful) based on their contribution to your learning of how to use the Framework for Teaching.

- ___ Lectures
- ___ Viewing online modules
- ___ Journal reflections
- ___ Small group discussions (fewer than 10 people)
- ___ Large group discussions (more than 10 people)
- ___ Calibration activities
- ___ Books regarding the Framework for Teaching

Appendix F
Demographics of High School Principals

Ethnicity: _____/Prefer not to answer

Gender: M F Prefer not to answer

Age: _____ Number of years as a high school principal in the district: _____

Total years in education: _____ Total years as an administrator: _____

Highest degree earned (major, degree, and year): _____

Appendix G

Participant's Informed Consent

Introduction

You are invited to be a participant in an interview that will be used in my capstone dissertation at Hood College. The research study is about *principals' perceptions on the framework for teaching professional development*. You are one of the selected principals, within the school district, to participate in this study. To be part of this study, you should have participated in the two-year Framework for Teaching professional development opportunity. This is a qualitative study to examine principals' perceptions of the professional development high school principals received on the Framework for Teaching (2013) using Guskey's theoretical model for evaluation of professional development (2000). I, Danny J. Rumpf, am conducting this study, in affiliation with Hood College.

Duration and Location

The interview process will consist of either two 25-30-minute interviews or one 50-60-minute interview. You, as the participant, will select the interview option that is best for you. The interview(s) will be conducted at a location of your choosing.

Procedures

You will be asked a series of questions related to your perceptions of the Framework for Teaching professional development conducted during the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. You do not need to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable answering. I will ask for your permission to agree to my audio-recording of the interview. I would prefer audio-recording the interview(s) so that I can focus on listening to you rather than trying to write down your responses.

Risks and Benefits

There are no foreseeable risks involved in the study. The beneficial outcome I anticipate is that you may gain an increased understanding of principals' perceptions on the topic being explored. While I do not have any funding for this study, I would like to provide you with a \$15 gift card to a local restaurant.

Anonymity Assurances

Your identity will be protected using a pseudonym. Any identifying information (e.g., your school) will be revised in the final report. All records for this study will be kept private. Specifically, all information will be collected, stored, and analyzed on a non-school system computer. Transcription of the interviews will be done by a professional company not affiliated with the research institution or district. In addition, all data will be stored on my personal computer, which requires a username and password to access. In any report that this study is published or presented (e.g., at a conference), I will not include information that will make it possible to identify participants.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the school district or Hood College or any of its representatives. If you decide to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting those relationships. However, the data I collect prior to your decision to leave may be used in this study. If you have any question about this study, please contact me at [djrr6@hood.edu](mailto:djr6@hood.edu) the Hood College IRB chair, Dr. Diane Graves, at, graves@hood.edu, or contact my committee chair, Dr. David Steinberg, at steinberg@hood.edu.

I understand the terms described above and agree to participate in this study.

Participant _____
Date _____

I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview.

Participant _____
Date _____

I have explained the terms described above and I believe the participant fully understands them.

Researcher _____
Date _____

Appendix H

Interview Protocol #1	
Date: _____	Location: _____
Participant's Pseudonym _____	Time: _____

- 1) How long have you been a high school principal, both in and out of the district?

- 2) How many different high schools have you been the principal of, both in and out of the district? (Probe: Have all of your years of service been with the current district?)

- 3) What, if anything, did you like about the Framework for Teaching professional development? (Probe: What did you enjoy?)

- 4) What were your dislikes, if any? (Probe: What, if anything, could have been eliminated?)

- 5) Which aspects of the FfT made it a powerful learning experience for you, if any?

- 6) What useful information did you gain from the PD experience? (Probe: What could you use immediately?)

- 7) What do you feel, if anything, is/was needed to support your implementation and understanding? (Probe: What did the district provide that was helpful? What wasn't provided that you feel you needed?)

Participant will now complete the self-anchoring scale activity

Interview Protocol #2

Date: _____

Location: _____

Participant's Pseudonym _____ Time: _____

- 8) What new information, if any, would you like to share that you have thought about since our first interview?
- 9) Considering that professional development programs involve changes in practice, how did the professional development activity that was offered help you think, if any, about the process of change and prepare for changes within your school? (Probe: What help was offered to implement the FfT in your school?)
- 10) What do you believe were the key takeaways, if any, from the professional development experience in regard to effective implementation in your building? (Probe: How have you started using the FfT concept of a common language in your building?)
- 11) What do you feel, if anything, affected the effectiveness of implementation of the PD? (Probe: How did you feel about the amount of time you gave to the Framework for Teaching PD?)
- 12) What do you feel is the primary role of a high school principal? (Probe: In your day-to-day work, how does that stay a priority? How does that role connect to the Framework PD?)

Participant will complete the ranking activity

- 13) Why did you choose _____ as the most helpful? (Probe: what were the key components that worked for you?)
- 14) Why did you choose _____ as the least helpful? (Probe: Why were they not helpful?)

Appendix I

Self-Anchoring Scale Activity

Adapted from Kilpatrick and Cantril (1960)

Guidance directions:

- 1) Elicit phrases to describe his or her ideal professional development.
- 2) Write the phrases at the top of a sheet of paper (using the exact wording of the participant).
- 3) Elicit phrases to describe the worst possible professional development.
- 4) Write these phrases at the bottom of the same sheet of paper.
- 5) Draw a ladder on the left side of the page connecting the bottom of the page and the top of the page.
 - a. Use equidistant slash marks for ten steps on the ladder.
 - b. Number the steps from 0, at the bottom of the page, to 10 at the top.
- 6) Ask the participant to think about his or her professional developments experiences in the last five years and then to indicate the step number of each of these past and future professional developments.
 - a. Write that number to the right of the ladder and write “PD” next to the step.
 - b. Write that number to the right of the ladder and write “FD” next to the step.
- 7) Ask the participant to indicate at which step he or she would place the Framework for Teaching professional development. Write that number to the right of the ladder and write next “FfT” next to the step.
- 8) Ask the participant to explain why the numbers differed (or stayed the same) for “PD” and “FfT.”

Ask the participant to explain why the numbers differed (or stayed the same for) “FD” and “FfT.”

Appendix J

Question: What, if anything, did you like about the Framework for Teaching professional development? (Probe: What did you enjoy?)

	Videos for referencing	Calibrations with experts	Small group discussions	Flexible to the needs of the learner	Transition from old model to new model	Visiting other schools
1. Jessica	X			X		
2. John	X	X	X			
3. Matt	X			X	X	
4. Josh	X		X			
5. Amanda	X		X			X
6. Ashley	X		X			
7. Ryan	X	X				
8. Sarah	X	X				
9. Amber				X		
10. Greg	X	X				
Totals	9	4	4	3	1	1

Executive summary: All but one principal in the study shared how valuable the video lessons of teachers were an enjoyable experience during the PD. Sarah shared that when she used the videos as a resource, it "[launched] discussions" about what was observed in the videos. Jessica commented that when working on a specific domain of the FFT, a person was able to watch a video of that specific domain and see the expert rater, from The Danielson Group, rate the observation. However, some participants mentioned that the videos were not always representative of school levels (elementary, middle, and high). John and others stated that they did not mind watching videos that featured the different levels because after watching the lesson, the principals were divided into small groups to discuss what they observed, and, from their perspective, good teaching is good teaching at any level. Others shared that they enjoyed the different levels because when watching the videos, the principals were focusing in on a specific domain and looking for the characteristics of that domain. The principals also commented that they enjoyed the opportunity to calibrate their ratings with the expert raters, who are regarded as the experts on using the FFT. The PD not only allowed for principals to calibrate their ratings with an expert rater but also provided opportunities for principals to form small groups and share how and why they rated the observation the way they did. Giving the principals the opportunity to calibrate occurrences during an observation was overdue, according to some principals.

Gregg, one of the administrators in the study who had been a principal the longest, shared that principals were conducting formal and informal observations in various ways: "Some principals were doing verbatim observations, while others were doing more technical and holistic interviews."