A Descriptive Case Study of Teacher Study Groups and Teachers' Perceptions of the Impact of Study Groups on Professional Growth

Rita Henriquez-Roark
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A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY OF TEACHER STUDY GROUPS
AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF
STUDY GROUPS ON PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Rita Henriquez-Roark
August 1995
"A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY OF TEACHER STUDY GROUPS AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF STUDY GROUPS ON PROFESSIONAL GROWTH"

A dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

by

Rita Henriquez-Roark

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To my husband, Michael, Mom and Dad, Berto and Bevi
and Ligia and Lonna who are always
there for me.
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ABSTRACT

A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY OF TEACHER STUDY GROUPS AND TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF STUDY GROUPS ON PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

by

Rita Henriquez-Roark

Chair: William H. Green
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY OF TEACHER STUDY GROUPS AND TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF STUDY GROUPS ON PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Name of researcher: Rita Henriquez-Roark

Name and degree of faculty chair: William H. Green, Ph.D.

Date completed: July 1995

Problem

Few studies have focused on defining and delineating the essential characteristics of veteran teacher study groups or the perceptions of teachers about how study groups affect their professional growth.

Purpose

The purposes of this study were to: (1) define and delineate the essential characteristics of existing study groups; (2) describe the effects of study groups on the professional growth of the teacher in the workplace and; (3) explore the implications of ongoing study groups on school change, school improvement, and staff development.
Methodology

This study used a descriptive, qualitative case study method based on interviews, observations, surveys, documents, and records to describe teacher study groups.

Three schools and nine primary informants, which were identified by using purposive sampling, provided the means for comparing and contrasting the concept of teacher study groups from more than one perspective. The Growth States Interview and The Gregorc Style Delineator supplied the basis for constructing the profiles of the primary informants.

Findings and Conclusions

In this study the themes of community, cooperation, and culture represent one scheme for isolating and naming the most salient and recurring themes of study groups. Teacher study groups develop, flourish, and create an environment where cooperation and true community have become established norms of the school's culture. Within this culture teachers experience social, professional, and personal growth. As a result, teachers perceived that organizing the faculty into study groups (1) reduces participants' feelings of isolation and stress; (2) provides time to integrate the study of new teaching strategies into the work day; (3) helps develop meaningful interchange among colleagues; and (4) leads to the professional growth of teachers.

Since this was the first descriptive study of whole school teacher study groups conducted in the Richmond County School District, an Innovation Configuration of the program was developed. Interviews of the program developers, and users
(teachers), and observation of teacher study groups helped in delineating 13 critical components. As a result of teacher study groups, schools can become learning organizations that (1) nurture the professional within them; (2) promote long-term change; and (3) result in teachers, students, and parents, once again, becoming excited about learning.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

"In Britain and Australia, they call it teaching. In the United States and Canada, they call it instruction. Whatever terms we use, we have come to realize in recent years that the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement" (Hargreaves, 1991, p. ix).

Fullan claimed "that the crux of change involves the development of meaning in relation to a new idea, program, or set of activities. But it is individuals who have to develop meaning" (1982, p. 79). How do teachers develop meaning? "Meaning and understanding are developed by individuals in conversation with each other in their common attempts to understand other persons and things, others’ words and actions" (Anderson & Goolishian, 1988, p. 390).

In spite of the knowledge that teachers are the ones to effect change and that meaning is directly proportional to the number, frequency, depth, and duration of direct personal contact, common teacher complaints still include isolation and lack of community (House, 1974). Joyce (1983) agrees and adds, "It is tragic that teaching provides so little interpersonal support and close contact with other teachers, because classrooms are terribly isolated places (p. 21). In a report on a series of surveys, Profiles 87, 89, 91, and 93 (Brantley, 1993), given to teachers in Seventh-day..."
Adventist schools, a recurring finding was that teachers felt professionally isolated. Brantley concluded that this situation works against the awareness and use of excellent curriculum practice. Joyce, Wolf, and Calhoun found (1993) that "research is gradually establishing a clear connection between the mental health of the organization and the people in it and the growth of the students" and confirm that "isolation is dangerous to our health" (p. 25).

Lortie (1975) in his book, *School Teacher*, explains that throughout the long, formative decades of the modern school system, schools were organized around teacher separation rather than teacher interdependence. Today, teachers still feel isolated, lonely, stressed, and separated. They have a desperate need to become part of a community. The ability to cope is determined not by the amount of stress a teacher is under, but by the balance between stress and support. Johnson and Johnson (1994, p. 54) explain that cooperation typically produces less anxiety and stress and more effective coping strategies to deal with anxiety.

The benefits of interdependence and cooperation are certainly not new. What is new, perhaps, is the idea that the problem of teacher isolation is addressable, and the stigma of isolation need not be endured. Inspiration from the Bible reinforces the importance of mutual support in any context; the educational environment is no exception. The Bible gives this advice:

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken (Eccl 4:12).
In the Seventh-day Adventist educational system, with many one-room schools and long distances between schools and the central offices, teachers experience feelings of isolation, lack of empowerment, and opportunity to grow and to contribute to the organization. We have not, in the past, been able to solve this dilemma. How can schools provide support for teachers? How can schools be organized around teacher interdependence instead of teacher separation?

A search for answers to this dilemma led me to Richmond County, Georgia, where 6 years ago Joyce and Showers (Murphy, 1991) restructured and organized teachers into collegial study groups. The following is a brief overview of their effort.

Richmond County School District

The Challenge

In March 1987 the state of Georgia passed an initiative that linked staff development to school improvement. This initiative provided $600,000 for the Richmond County School District, a district of 54 schools serving 33,000 students (Murphy, 1991, p. 63), to improve its schools. The district chose to become involved in Models of Teaching (MOT), a long-term training and development program focused on increasing participants' repertoire of teaching strategies. On June 15, 1987, the long-term MOT training program began with three schools and 164 participants.

Despite previous staff development endeavors and the district office's efforts, student achievement remained a concern. The district chose to focus on improving student achievement. What should be done? How should it be done? Who should do
it? What process would make it any different from other attempts?

The previous year, Murphy, the director for staff development for the Richmond County School District, had attended the National Staff Development Council's annual conference in Atlanta. The keynote speaker, Joyce, a nationally renowned staff developer, had created a vision. He emphasized the possibility of bringing about student gains in achievement through teacher training in specific instructional strategies (Joyce & Showers, 1988).

The decision was made to invite Joyce and Showers to serve as trainers and consultants for the MOT training program. During the initial planning, meetings were held between the consultants and the administrative staff. Information and articles were shared and discussed regarding increasing teacher repertoire in selected models of teaching, the design of the training, peer coaching, and implementation strategies. Together, the consultants and administrators outlined their goals and objectives.

The proposal presented to district administrators by Superintendent John Strelec was accepted on February 5, 1987. Joyce and Showers were invited to lead in the MOT training program for the next 2 years.

The Selection

Principals from 13 schools were invited and acquainted with the plan for school improvement. These principals were asked to submit applications from which three schools would be chosen for training that first year. Twelve of the 13 principals submitted applications.
One middle school and two elementary schools were selected based on the interest of the teachers from each school and the willingness of more than 90% of the faculty from each site to make a written commitment to:

1. Attend all training sessions during the summer and to complete all assignments
2. Prepare and do demonstration teaching during the intensive 2 weeks of summer training and practice with peers regularly throughout the summer
3. Employ the new teaching strategies regularly throughout the 1987-1988 academic year
4. Work with peer study groups during the academic year in planning lessons and visiting one another in classrooms
5. Participate in regular training activities during the school year
6. Make videotapes of their teaching on a regular basis
7. Participate in a similar program in the summer of 1988-89 school year

(Murphy, Murphy, Joyce, & Showers, 1988).

By May, 104 teachers from the three schools had registered. In addition, the other nine schools, which had applied but not been accepted, were invited to send a team of teachers and administrators to become a part of a training cadre. This cadre of teachers would eventually train other teachers and administrators. Special educational directors and personnel from testing, curriculum, staff development departments, and Chapter 1 were also invited.

The total number of participants was 164, including 18 principals, 12 assistant principals, 66 K-5 teachers, 38 level-6-8 teachers, five 9-12 teachers, three media...
specialists, three counselors, five Chapter 1 teachers, six special education teachers, 11 coordinators, and five directors.

The Training

The following is a list of four related innovations that were used as a framework for organizing the training (Murphy, 1991, p. 63).

1. Teachers were organized into study groups to examine teaching, curriculum, and academic content. (For a description and definition of study groups see chapter 4.)

2. A group of teachers and administrators would be trained with the aim of eventually being able to train other teachers and administrators themselves.

3. Teachers would receive training in research-based models of teaching to improve student achievement.

4. Building administrators and teacher councils would collect site-based information on learning climates and select an area for improvement.

The training began with an introduction to five models of teaching (Joyce, Murphy, Showers, & Murphy, 1989). The models included cooperative learning, mnemonics, concept attainment, inductive reasoning, and synectics. The training model developed by Joyce and Showers (1987) was used as a framework for training. This included a discussion on theory, which was followed by demonstrations, then practice by participants with feedback and coaching. Participants were required to practice the strategies at least 30 times by the end of October. The study groups met once a week. Between meetings they visited each other to make observations, give
feedback and study children’s responses.

The trainers scheduled 10 days to visit the district spaced throughout the year to continue the training. Other teaching strategies were introduced in the spring.

The Implementation

As teachers and administrators became immersed in learning the strategies, which included ways for students to respond, they wondered if their students would respond. These strategies required cooperative learning and inductive thinking. The teachers did not believe the students could learn using these techniques (Murphy, et al., 1988). Even research-based information was not enough to convince them that it would make a difference with the students. Many of the teachers believed that their ability to bring about student achievement was limited by factors beyond their control such as family background, parental influence, and home environment. This attitude has come to be labeled "teaching efficacy" (Weber & Omotani, 1994). Nevertheless the consultants continued to encourage them with "You can do it and you can teach the students to do it" (Murphy et al., 1988). This attitude, the belief in the teacher’s own ability to influence students' learning, is known as "personal efficacy" (Weber & Omotani, 1994).

The participants continued to meet during June and July to plan lessons for the school year. Then in August, all participants attended another intensive week of training. The principals and assistant principals also attended a 2-week training session conducted by Joyce and Showers.

As teachers took their new-found knowledge to the classroom, they were
supported by study groups, teachers observing each other and the trainers. The process was new and not always comfortable, but they kept practicing and meeting together. The middle school felt rewarded when, after their first year, its out-of-school suspensions dropped from 150 per semester, in a population of 550 students, to 35 suspensions.

By 1989 Joyce and his colleagues wrote an article, "School Renewal as Cultural Change," where they discussed the remarkable gains students had made not only in behavior but also academically.

**Rationale for this Study**

These remarkable gains reported by Joyce and Showers (1988) impressed me, and I realized that the improvements were a result of using teacher study groups. Could teacher study groups also provide a solution for teachers’ feelings of isolation and lack of empowerment? Could teacher study groups provide an opportunity for professional growth? Too often after workshops or inservice sessions the question is asked. "Why can’t staff development be practical? Why doesn’t it revitalize our thinking and result in increased student learning and achievement?" Teachers have frequently asked these questions. As a teacher I often asked the same questions. Now, as an associate superintendent responsible for staff development, I needed to find the answers, so my search intensified.

I found practical answers to some of my questions in one of my graduate classes on improving instruction. I was introduced to the Joyce and Showers (1987) training model of effective staff development. We discussed how to organize staff
development programs, so teachers working in collaborative study groups would learn research-based teaching strategies that would produce increased student learning.

We were organized into study groups. We discussed and learned theory. We saw demonstrations. Practice was followed by feedback and coaching. I could see the potential of study groups as a vehicle for increasing student achievement, decreasing teacher isolation and providing practical staff development. I began to ask even more questions about study groups and training. My goal became to expand my own teaching repertoire and to develop a broader vision for staff development through an extensive inquiry of study groups.

Gaikwad (1991) described the effectiveness of study groups he observed in Iowa. He also recommended an in-depth investigation of study groups in order to define their structure and explore how they actually work. I searched, but found very little. I also realized that information on teachers’ perceptions on the effect of study groups upon their professional growth, and how these groups can serve as a vehicle for school improvement, was limited. The organization, structure, and impact of study groups on teachers became the focus of my study.

The Problem

Through this search I became aware of Richmond County School District and its experience with study groups. Although Murphy had written several articles on its experience, I still had many questions about study groups: What is the size? What do they do, specifically? Who is involved? How does one start one? What are the perceptions of teachers about how study groups affect their professional growth and
their teaching performance? I knew there was a wealth of information in Richmond County that could help to describe the structure of study groups, to examine how they actually work in practice, and to define teachers' perceptions about how study groups affected their instructional performance and professional growth.

Purpose

The purposes of this study are to: (1) define and delineate the essential characteristics of existing study groups; (2) describe the effects of study groups on the professional growth of teachers in the workplace; and (3) explore the implications of on-going study groups on school change, school improvement, and staff development.

Questions to Be Answered

Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What is a study group?
   a. What is the structure of a study group?
   b. What is the size of the study group?
   c. How often do the teachers in the study group meet?
   d. What is the length of each meeting?
   e. When do the teachers in the study group meet?
   f. What do the teachers do in a study group?
   g. Who is involved in the study group?

2. What are the perceptions of teachers about how study groups affect their professional growth and their teaching performance?
3. What are the implications of study groups on school change, school improvement, and staff development?

Benefits of the Study

This study has the potential to benefit society, the educational field, schools, teachers, and students. It promises to extend the knowledge base in the implementation of innovations and in the area of staff development and training.

Detailed descriptions of the operation of study groups can provide a framework for others who are interested in school change to view their own efforts. It can assist staff developers and others to forecast attitudes, frustrations, and triumphs. It can represent a shift in how we construe and promote learning. Ultimately, this study has the potential of fostering long-term change, which can result in students, teachers, and parents becoming excited about a place called school.
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

My case study on study groups took place in the Richmond County School District in Georgia. I selected this district because it has had the most continuous experience with the Joyce/Showers model of study groups in the nation, both in terms of time and number of school staff involved. In this regard it is unique and special.

To find out what this innovation looks like in actual practice and to determine which components are essential for successful implementation, I used the Innovation Configuration (IC) (Hall & Loucks, 1981) process. I also used the Growth States Interview (Joyce, McKibbin, & Bush, 1982) not only to get acquainted with the participants, but as a source of information of teachers' perceptions of the effect of study groups on their professional life. A qualitative case study method is used to describe and define teacher study groups. The qualitative approach is designed to study the process and the context of a particular situation. "If qualitative inquiry in education is about anything, it is about trying to understand what teachers and children do in the settings in which they work" (Eisner, 1991, p. 11). Too often what is suggested to teachers and administrators is said independently of context and often a detailed description of the practices being used is essential to improve schools and practices (Eisner, 1991, p. 11).

12
Case Study Design

A case study is an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group (Merriam, 1988, p. 9). In this study I investigated the concept of study groups by examining teacher study groups in three schools in Richmond County, Georgia. Specifically, this inquiry examines the structure of study groups, the perceptions of teachers about how study groups affect their professional growth, and the implications of study groups on school change.

The decision to use a qualitative case study design is based on my interest in insight, discovery, and interpretation, rather than hypotheses testing. The case study design allows one to be as close to the object of study as possible and provides a rich source of data. In my case, I was able to focus on people and their affects as opposed to their behavioral outcomes. My interest was focused more on the process than outcomes, on context than specific variables, on discovery than confirmation. I wanted to know how study groups develop. What are the perceptions of teachers about how study groups affect their professional growth and the growth of their schools?

The case study is used to develop a better understanding of the dynamics of a program in order to evaluate and decide its future use. It is a particularly suitable methodology for dealing with critical problems of practice and extending the knowledge base of various aspects of education. A case study is often the best approach for addressing problems in which understanding is sought in order to
improve practice. It would help me answer the question, "What are the implications of study groups on school change, school improvement, and staff development?" By concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity—study groups in this instance—the case study aims to uncover the interaction in the situation. The case study seeks holistic description and explanation (Merriam, 1988). It is a design particularly suited for this research where it is difficult to separate the phenomenon's variables, the teachers, the study groups, and the school from their context.

In summary, a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit (Merriam, 1988). In this study, I describe the concept of teacher study groups operating in three different schools and report the findings in a thematic form. Like Merriam (1988), I maintain that research, such as case studies which focus on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied, offers great promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education.

**Selection of Schools**

Purposive sampling was used to select the schools for this research study. Purposive sampling refers to hand-picking the sample needed in order to learn from those that best exemplify what is being studied. It is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, and gain insight about a particular case. Chien (1981) compares it to expert consultants being called to a difficult medical case.

These consultants--also a purposive sample--are not called in to get an average
opinion that would correspond to the average opinion of the entire medical profession. They are called in precisely because of their special experience and competence. (p. 440)

Purposive sampling requires that one establish the criteria for units to be included in the investigation and then select the sampling according to these criteria.

I selected four criteria to identify the teachers, schools, and teacher study groups with the most experience and competence. These were:

1. Study groups that had been in operation for 5 to 6 years
2. Study groups that had members who have participated in the group from the beginning of the innovation
3. Informants willing and capable of participating in the study
4. Study groups within schools that had good implementation and high fidelity to the purpose and function of study groups.

Using the above criteria, three schools were identified based on purposive sampling or what Goetz and LeCompte (1984) call the reputational case selection. They were chosen on the recommendation of the director of staff development and the associate superintendent. I selected three schools because I wanted to compare and contrast the concept of teacher study groups from more than one perspective. My goal was to identify the common characteristics of study groups and discuss the effect of study groups on teacher growth.

At each school the principal and two other teachers were selected as primary participants of the study. The principal identified those teachers who met the following criteria:
1. Teachers who had been members of a study group for 5 to 6 years (As we discussed the choice of teachers with one of the principals, we decided to add a teacher who joined a group after 2 years, to obtain a different perspective.)

2. Teachers who belonged to a study group that modeled the purpose and function of study groups

3. Teachers who were good informants. Anthropologists and sociologists speak of an informant as "one who understands the culture but is also able to reflect on it and articulate for the researcher what is going on" (Merriam, 1988, p. 75).

Data-Collection Techniques

This study employed a variety of research techniques: (1) semi-structured interviews. (Growth States Interview, Joyce, et al., and the Innovation Configuration interviews. Hall & Loucks, 1981, pp. 46-58), and informal interviews; (2) observations and field notes; (3) surveys; (4) documents and records.

Interviews

Next to direct observation, interviews are some of the most powerful sources of information in the qualitative case study design. When the aim is to understand what is happening, "we need to listen to what people have to say about their activities, their feelings, their lives" (Eisner, 1991, p. 183). Interviews are essential to find out participants' perceptions, feelings, ideas, and interpretations of events. Often these cannot be observed. The information is invaluable because it provides a
more intimate level of understanding.

Interviews also give information regarding past events that influence and give meaning to specific situations. Patton suggests:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe.... We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world--we have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. (Patton, 1980, p. 196)

"The semi-structured interview is guided by a set of questions and issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of questions is predetermined" (Merriam, 1988, p. 86). Growth States Interviews and the Innovation Configuration were administered to selected informants. The Innovation Configuration process will be reported in more detail in chapter four.

Growth States Interviews

The Growth States Interview (see Appendix A) consists of a semi-structured interview protocol involving four categories. The four categories are (1) why one becomes a teacher, (2) one's involvement in formal staff development, (3) informal contacts, networking, and (4) outside classroom activities that influence professional duties. The use of this instrument provides a framework that can be used in painting a detailed picture of the use of growth activities by each participant.

Because participating in growth activities involves time, effort, and energy, the amount and variety of activities can be used as a rough guide to whether energy is
being added or subtracted from the participant's environment. Although it is not possible to categorize orientations toward growth into distinct categories, the following prototypes have been identified by Joyce, Hersch and McKibbin (1983):

1. Omnivores or initiators use every available aspect of the formal and informal systems available to them. Their lives are rich with sports, travel, and workshops or classes. Omnivores increase the overall energy of the school.

2. Active Consumers have less initiative than the Omnivores, but are still very active in one or two domains.

3. Passive Consumers are there when opportunity presents itself but rarely seek or initiate new activities. Their degree of activity depends on who they are with.

4. Entrenched Consumers are not likely to seek out training. When they do take training, it is in areas where they are already feeling successful. The concept of "change" to them means that they are not already doing a good job. Entrenched Consumers subtract energy from the school.

5. Withdrawn Consumers expend energy pushing away opportunities for growth.

**Informal Interviews**

In this study the informal interviews included three types of questions: descriptive questions, structural questions, and contrast questions (Spradley, 1979). Descriptive questions are intended to encourage an informant to talk about a particular scene. "Could you tell me how a study group works? What do you do?" are sample descriptive questions used in this study. Structural questions enable the researcher to
discover more specific information about a particular subject. It also allows us to find how informants have organized their knowledge. "Are there different types of study teams? What are they?" are samples of structural questions. Contrast questions help to clarify what the informant means. They identify dimensions of meaning used by the informant. "How is a study group different from a faculty meeting? How is a study group different from a committee meeting?" are sample contrast questions that are used in this study.

I conducted a minimum of four interviews with each participant. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour; however, there was ample opportunity to probe for clarification and ask questions appropriate to the study and the informant's knowledge and involvement at other times.

Observations and Field Notes

An important source of information in qualitative research comes from direct observation. It is difficult to understand or give meaning to situations one has not experienced or observed. In my research I was interested in getting below the surface, getting in touch, in appraising, in interpreting, in defining and describing: (1) the essential characteristics of the study groups; (2) the effect of study groups on the professional growth of teachers in the school setting and; (3) the implications of ongoing study groups on school change, school improvement and, staff development.

"The human instrument," Merriam (1988) says, "is capable of understanding the complexity of human interaction" (p. 13). Fifteen observations of study groups in action, five at each of the schools selected, were completed. Each observation lasted
between 45 minutes and 1½ hours. Other observations included general school operations, faculty meetings, staff development sessions, and classroom visitations.

Surveys

Surveys are another source of data used not only to gather more information but also to confirm emerging findings. I administered a survey, Study Group Questionnaire (see Appendix B), developed and used by Showers (1993), to all the faculty of the three schools involved in this study. I also administered the Gregorc Style Delineator (1982b) to the primary informants involved in the study in order to provide additional contextual information.

Gregorc Style Delineator

In describing the environment in which innovations exist, it can be instructive to look at ways in which the adults in school environments tend to think and learn. Much has been written about how children in schools learn best, and it can be just as important to describe how the adults think and learn, who in great measure determine the boundaries of the context in which children learn. One way to describe this phenomenon has been developed by Anthony Gregorc (1982a). He calls his instrument the Gregorc Style Delineator.

Gregorc believes that thinking and learning capabilities consist of at least two distinct abilities: perception and ordering. Perception abilities are how information is grasped. He posits that perception can be displayed in the two qualities of abstraction and concreteness. These two qualities form a continuum.
Ordering abilities are ways in which information is arranged, systematized, and referenced. These abilities emerge as a continuum from sequentialness to randomness, which is shown graphically in Appendix C. Gregorc's Style Delineator is a self-reporting instrument that allows a person to map his or her abilities. One can score high or low in: concrete/sequential (CS), abstract/sequential (AS), abstract/random (AR), and concrete/random (CR).

People who score high in one or more of the abilities listed above tend to utilize those abilities in their learning and processing. Characteristics in each category can be compared to those in other categories (Gregorc, 1982a).

These characteristics can be used to describe the ways adults think and learn in a particular environment. In this study, the Gregorc Style Delineator was administered to the primary informants in each school. This information helps in describing the context within which the innovation, the teacher study group, was spawned and nurtured.

The instrument consists of 10 different sets of descriptive words that are scored by the participant, with 4 being most descriptive of himself/herself, to 1 being least descriptive of himself/herself. The recommended time for word ranking is 4 minutes. The combined total scores of CS, AS, AR, and CR are then calculated and graphed to represent the dominant (27-40 points), intermediate (16-26 points), and low (10-15 points) styles. A description of the construct validity and reliability for the instrument can be found in the administrative manual (Gregorc, 1982b).
Documents and Records

Documents such as Study Group Logs (1991) found at each school, a Strategic Plan manual for 1991-1996 for Richmond County Public Schools (1993), and a binder of study group materials prepared by Carlene Murphy for Roland Barth, a consultant from Harvard, were used to help understand the history of the innovation in Richmond County School District County.

Data-Analysis Techniques

Data analysis and data collection are often a simultaneous process in qualitative research. This allows the researcher to develop a database that is focused and relevant. In this study I analyzed the data by using the following guidelines suggested by Joyce, Weil, and Showers (1992):

1. Identifying critical relationships
2. Exploring relationships

These steps helped me organize, code, categorize, and analyze the data for content and meaning.

In content analysis, social communications are examined to establish categories so that the data collected can be organized and systematically compared (Berg, 1989). The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology defines content analysis as "the analysis of the content of communication, which involves classifying contents in such a way as to bring out their basic structure" (Abercrombe, Hill, & Turner, 1984, p. 52). Merriam

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(1988) proposes that "data analysis is the process of making sense out of one's data" (p. 127).

In analyzing my data I intended to accomplish three goals. First, I identified the structure and essential attributes of study groups and how they actually work. Next, I described teachers' perceptions of the influence of study groups on their personal and professional growth. Lastly, I explore the relationship between on-going study groups and school change.

The method of collecting and analyzing the data in order to accomplish these goals, as outlined in Berg (1989), Merriam (1988), and Eisner (1991), includes the following: searching for patterns, themes, and concepts in the data; developing and coding categories as the patterns emerge; and organizing the data into these categories. Finally, content analysis is completed by identifying relationships and describing new understandings, concepts, relationships, and/or insights discovered.

The Role of the Researcher

My role in this research project was one of non-participant observer. Non-participant observation is a method of qualitative research, drawn from interactionist sociology (Silverman, 1985), which is "characterized by a prolonged period of intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects, in the milieu of the latter, during which time data, in the form of field notes, are unobtrusively and systematically collected" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 3).
Organization of the Study

The study is organized using a framework suggested by Eisner (1991). It involves the use of themes, descriptions, interpretations, and evaluation. Besides the introduction, the setting, conclusion, and a chapter on Innovation Configuration, the study is organized into chapters based on themes.

The phenomenon under examination is the teacher study group as described and developed in Richmond County, Georgia. The actual case study is reported in chapters 3-7. Chapter 3 presents a description of: (1) the setting where the research took place and (2) a portrait of the primary informants who participated in describing teacher study groups.

Chapter 4 deals with the operational definitions and descriptions of teacher study groups. It connects the ideals and the realities of teacher study groups and tries to display their components in tangible and observable ways.

Chapters 5-7 are based on descriptions of the most salient themes that I felt had the most explanatory power and were derived from the collected data about teacher study groups in the Richmond County School District. The themes consist of: (chapter 5) community; (chapter 6) cooperation; (chapter 7) satisfying basic needs through culture. Each chapter also includes: (1) a discussion of the relevant research and theoretical foundations necessary for understanding the context and concepts; and (2) a depiction of the perceptions of teachers about how study groups affect their professional growth. Chapter 8, the final chapter, provides a summary, as well as conclusions and recommendations from the research findings.
The names of the schools and all participants have been changed to assure anonymity of all responses and confidentiality of all records. Throughout this document quotations from participants are taken directly from the surveys or interviews and are referenced as a volume and page number in my field notes.
CHAPTER III

THE SETTING AND THE INFORMANTS

This chapter includes (1) a description of the three schools: Lincoln Elementary School (LES); Dynasty Elementary School (DES); and Crown Point Elementary School (CES) where the research took place; and (2) an introduction and profile of the nine primary informants who participated in the study. The introductions and profiles of the three primary informants from every school are presented after each school description.

Lincoln Elementary School (LES)

The sources of information used for describing Lincoln Elementary School include the following: (1) interviews with the principal; (2) the researcher's observations; and (3) two school publications titled, Development of Student/Community Profile (1994) and Lincoln Elementary School: History Update (1992-1993) which are available at the school.

Lincoln Elementary School serves a community made up of mobile homes, several apartment complexes, rental homes, single family houses, and an area of low-income housing. It is located on two acres of land on a corner city block off a busy main highway. The building, with an early-50s flat roof, is a quarter of a mile long.
brick-framed, 24-classroom structure. It has a main wing with two ells going out to the back of the property. The main wing and each ell contain eight classrooms. The office and lunch room space were added to the left side of the main wing.

In 1953, when Lincoln was established, it was the largest school in Richmond County, Georgia, with 900 students in a first-through seventh-grade program. Due to the opening of Murphy Middle School in 1981-1982, LES became a K-5 program. In the 1993-1994 school year, a pre-kindergarten program was added for 20 students. Another pre-kindergarten program was added at the beginning of the 1994-1995 school year with another 20 students.

During the past 10 years, the student enrollment has fluctuated between 600 and 750 students. The highest enrollment was 752 from 1991-1992, and the lowest was 629 during the 1985-1986 school year. The enrollment for the 1994-1995 school year was 668 students.

The professional teaching staff at DES consists of 31 teachers. Their years of experience range from 0 to 30 years. Out of these, 24 are regular classroom teachers, while the other 7 teachers are support staff in special education, physical education, music, and media/library.

All the professional staff hold college degrees. Ten have master's degrees and one has a doctorate in education. The administrative staff is composed of the principal, who holds a doctoral degree in education, and a half-time assistant, who holds a master's degree with leadership/administration certification.

Each classroom in pre-kindergarten through third grade has a teaching
assistant. Fourth grade shares two teaching assistants among four classes. Fifth-grade teachers have no teaching assistants. There is one self-contained special education class.

Students with single parent families represent a major portion of the school population. Eighty percent of the students (540) are on the free or reduced-cost lunch program.

There has been a significant increase in the number of African American children, from 55% 6 years ago to 69% in 1994. The Hispanic and Asian populations have shown a small increase, from 1 to 3% of the population, while the White population has significantly decreased, from 44 to 27%.

Faculty Organization Before Teacher Study Groups

Dr. Clayton Smith has been the principal since 1985. I asked him to describe how the faculty had been organized before the school used teacher study groups. He explained that the school had been organized by grade levels. Each grade level had a representative who met once a month with the principal, the assistant principal, the head custodian, the lunchroom supervisor, and representatives from the other four grade levels. "The meetings dealt mostly with administrative type activities--budget, student activity involvement such as contests, field trip activities, PTA planning and support activities. We also talked about some instructional activities but these were fewer and usually dictated by the county" (Vol. 1, p. 186).

The meetings were held during the school day, usually in the morning. The
grade chairs would also meet once a month with teachers of the same grade level to pass along and share information from the meeting with the principal. Meetings with the principal lasted from 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Grade level meetings lasted 30-45 minutes. Although some grade level meetings were held after school, the majority of the grade level meetings were held during the school day, while faculty meetings were held once a month. Clayton explained that these were the main vehicles used for communicating. At times, special committees were also formed for specific tasks such as an upcoming event.

LES Informants

The three primary informants from LES were: Clayton, the principal; Nancy, a fourth-grade teacher; and Michelle, a second-grade teacher.

Clayton

Clayton did not think of becoming a teacher until he was asked to tutor in the math department in Augusta College during his senior year. He enjoyed the experience so much he decided to take some education classes. Originally, he was enrolled in a pre-engineering program. When Clayton graduated in 1986, he was hired to teach math at the high-school level. After teaching math for 8 years, he was invited to become the assistant principal at another high school where he remained for 7 years. In 1985 he was asked to become principal of Lincoln School, an elementary school.

Clayton had planned to stay at the elementary school for only 6 years, but
once he became involved with Models of Teaching he made a long-term commitment and now, 10 years later, Clayton is still at the school.

Clayton's experience with Models of Teaching changed his personal and professional behavior and aspirations. Now Clayton is interested in becoming an associate superintendent or superintendent because he has a vision of what staff development should be. Clayton's scores in the Gregorc Style Delineator indicate that he is strongly oriented in the concrete random style. Clayton likes change and is willing to take risks. He is inclined to seek new ideas and new ways of doing things. These qualities match Clayton's professional activities and orientation to life.

Clayton was involved in the first training group for Models of Teaching. He became a disciple of Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers, the trainers for Models of Teaching. If Bruce suggested it, Clayton did it. Clayton practiced the models and became one of the presenters and trainers, not only in the Richmond County School District, but in numerous places such as California, Toronto, Florida, Atlanta, and numerous other sites in Georgia.

Before his experience with Models of Teaching (MOT), Clayton described himself as a non-reader. Now Clayton describes himself as a prolific reader. As he worked with Bruce and Beverly, he saw them model the importance of reading. According to Clayton, "Bruce and Beverly's idea of reading is to have 70 books over here, just in case I'm somewhere where I can't find a book." Clayton explains that he is not a fast reader but he really has learned to enjoy reading and now reads three or four books a month just for fun. As far as magazines are concerned, he mostly
reads *Consumer Reports* and professional journals. His professional reading includes educational magazines and books as recommended by the staff development center and his networking colleagues.

Since being introduced to MOT, Clayton has continued to use the training model in his school. When the school district discussed using the whole language curriculum program, it was Clayton's school that became involved in learning the new methods and later in training other teachers in the county in the use of whole language. Besides the duties at his school, Clayton continues to teach some classes for Augusta College. He usually teaches at least one class a year in the teacher training program. At first, he taught only math or physics classes. Since his experience with Models of Teaching, he has taught a variety of classes, including some in cooperative learning and classroom management.

Clayton has coached football as well as track and field. Currently, he is involved in maintenance jogging at least two or three times a week. In the past, he has jogged as much as five miles at a time, four times a week and has been involved in several long-distance races. One of his goals is to become more active in jogging.

Clayton plays the trombone in a band and knows how to play the guitar. He watches ball games because he supports his son who is in the high-school band and his daughter who is a cheerleader.

Clayton watches TV an average of 2 hours in the evening. Primarily, he enjoys watching TV movies. As far as videos are concerned, he watches an average
of two a month. He enjoys good art and will visit museums or art galleries when 
they have been recommended. Since Clayton owns a time-share, he takes a vacation 
every year to enjoy the benefits of ownership.

Clayton is very much influenced by those around him. He became a teacher, 
a coach, a jogger, a reader, and a trainer because of friends who suggested, 
encouraged, modeled, and joined him in the activities. Clayton describes himself well 
when he says he is an active consumer. He enjoys innovation and is willing to take 
risks. In the area of staff development, Clayton is an initiator who has been forever 
changed. Clayton has a very clear vision of effective staff development and is eager 
to continue with his commitment to school improvement. Because of Clayton’s 
experience with Models of Teaching, he brings a commitment, focus, and energy to 
the school environment in which he works.

Nancy

Nancy says she went into teaching for the wrong reasons. She was married 
young and felt that teaching, specifically teaching in special education, was a great 
profession to get into because she would not have to worry about being employed. At 
that point, special education was an open field and she would have been able to get a 
job immediately. Once in the educational field, Nancy found she really enjoyed 
teaching. She received her B.A. degree from the University of Georgia in 1979. In 
1984, she earned her M.A. degree from Augusta College. She continued studying 
and completed her Early Childhood Educational Specialist degree at Augusta College
in 1989, and is currently working on her Ph.D. in Administration and Supervision at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina.


Nancy's scores in the Gregorc Style Delineator indicate that she prefers a well-organized, orderly environment. Nancy has a group of professionals with whom she continuously networks. She communicates with them at least three to four times weekly. Nancy is an avid reader. During the school year she reads a monthly average of three professional books and three to four books for pleasure. During the summer months this number doubles. She subscribes to a variety of professional and news magazines such as National Geographic, Newsweek, Kappan, Educational Leadership, Journal of Staff Development, and the Cooperative Learning Journal.

Between video rentals and going to the movies, Nancy watches an average of eight movies a month. Nancy uses both her reading and movie watching to enrich her professional life. She uses clips from movies like "Kindergarten Cop" for staff development training. Often she is able to use the books she reads as a way to build rapport with teachers.

Nancy is an initiator who dramatically raises the energy in her environment. She is an active consumer and borderline omnivore who uses the formal and informal
systems available to her. She is active in improving the schools in which she works and uses her energy toward growth. She is energetic, happy, and self-actualizing.

Physically, Nancy enjoys staying fit. She started competitive swimming when she was 6. Now she jogs at least three to four times a week.

Nancy feels that keeping a balance between her professional life and her personal interests helps to keep her more relaxed. It is easy for her to become frustrated when she does not see change happening as quickly as she would like to see it take place.

Michelle

Although Michelle's grandmother and mother were teachers, Michelle graduated with a business degree and worked in banking and finance for 5 years. However, once her children started school, she began to feel that she could do a better job of teaching than her children's teachers were doing. She decided to go back to school and earn a degree in education. From the time she made the decision, it took her only 6 months to start the program.

After she graduated, she accepted a teaching position in Augusta. She became involved in staff development and during her first year was asked to teach some math classes. At the same time, Michelle also decided to continue her own professional growth by completing a master's degree in early childhood. After finishing her master's degree, Michelle continued and still continues to take at least two classes from staff development each summer. She also teaches two classes for
staff development each summer.

Michelle's scores in the Gregorc Style Delineator indicate that she is open to ideas, she likes new things, and enjoys being around people. Michelle networks with at least 20 teachers each week. She says this is because she has people from different counties, from different school systems, and different schools within the system come and observe in her classroom. She also networks extensively with the teachers on her grade level because they have become "real close" since working as a teacher study group.

Michelle has become an MOT leader as well as a model for using whole language in the classroom. She not only has many visitors observe her classroom, but she has also been invited to make numerous presentations.

Michelle is very confident in her abilities as a teacher and is very willing to share her expertise. The first 3 years she concentrated on math. During 1 school year, she even taught all the math for the primary grades at her school. The students did very well, but she felt she needed more of a variety. Now her emphasis is in introducing whole language in her school.

Besides meeting weekly with her own teacher study group, Michelle also meets weekly with other teachers who do presentations with her. Her networking involves the teachers she works with on a daily basis and those with whom she does presentations.

As far as hobbies are concerned, Michelle says her children are her hobbies.
The family travels every summer. She loves country music and antiques. She visits antique shops at least once a month.

Michelle loves to read mystery novels. During the school year she seems to have little time. She does read the weekend newspaper but spends most of her time reading "tons" of children's books. She reads many journal articles and subscribes to several such as Instructor Magazine, Reading Teacher, and the Language Arts Journal.

Michelle watches three or four TV programs a month. She usually rents six videos a month, four for the kids and two for herself. Michelle also enjoys taking her kids to baseball games. She is not very active in sports but she does exercise 15 minutes each day.

Michelle is a borderline omnivore. She is an initiator who adds energy to her environment. Her life is rich with children's books, travel, workshops, and the offerings of the school district. She has found professional colleagues with whom she is close and can exchange ideas. She is active in attempting to improve the schools where she works. Michelle's energy is oriented toward growth and self-actualization.

Michelle uses her reading, antique shopping, video watching, staff-development classes and networking to increase her repertoire of classroom activities. She wants school to be a fun, worthwhile experience for the students and teachers.

Dynasty Elementary School (DES)

The sources of information used for describing DES include: (1) an interview.
with the principal; (2) the researcher's observations; and (3) a pamphlet published by the Richmond County School District (Richmond County Public Schools, 1993).

DES consists of two buildings, the main building and the annex. Both are rectangular-shaped brick buildings. The main building has 23 classrooms which surround the library, office, and cafeteria. The annex has 11 classrooms. The school is located on approximately two and one-half acres of land in the outskirts of the city, about seven miles from Fort Gordon, a large military base. The school rests on a large grassy area with a large playground in back, which belongs to Richmond County Parks and Recreation Department. The other two sides of the school are surrounded by wooded areas.

DES was built to accommodate the children living on the post at Fort Gordon. Five hundred students were enrolled at DES the first year it opened in September 1970, in Grades 1-7. At the end of the year, 725 students were attending. The Dynasty School area was rapidly expanding. Several housing projects were built in the area. After the first year, DES was forced to go on double sessions for four years. In 1975, 11 new classrooms were built, so DES could house 1,000 students. The addition is now called the Annex.

In the early 1980s a middle school was built. Then school zones were changed and military students from Fort Gordon no longer attended DES. Private schools and a magnet school opened in the county, which contributed to a decrease in the Dynasty School population. During the past 7 years, the highest enrollment has
been 736 students from 1989-1990. Its present enrollment is 570 students.

Seven years ago, 15% of the school population was White and 84% of the population was African American. Presently, 98% of the student population is Black. There are two pre-kindergarten classrooms and five kindergarten, first-, and second-grade classrooms. There are also four third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade classrooms, two self-contained special education classrooms, and a special education resource room.

Each classroom in pre-kindergarten through third grade has a teaching assistant. This year one of the fourth grades has a teaching assistant. The other fourth and fifth grades have no teaching assistants.

The professional teaching staff at DES consists of 40 teachers. Their years of experience range from 0 to 18 years with an average of 9 years. Out of these 40 teachers, 33 are regular classroom teachers while the other 7 teachers are support staff in special education, physical education, music, and the media/library.

All the professional staff hold college degrees. Five teachers have master's degrees and five are enrolled in masters' programs. The administrative staff is composed of the principal, who holds a doctoral degree in Supervision and Administration, and a half-time assistant, who holds a master's degree in Supervision and Administration.

Students from single-parent families represent a major portion (64%) of the school population. Eighty-five percent of the students are eligible to receive free/reduced-cost lunches. Seventy percent of the parents hold blue-collar jobs,
20% hold white-collar jobs, and 10% are unemployed. Sixty-five percent of the parents have a high-school diploma. Fifteen percent of the parents have earned a college diploma or technical school diploma.

**Faculty Organization Before**

**Teacher Study Groups**

Dr. Bevi Hansen was the principal at DES from 1985-1993. I asked her to describe how the faculty had been organized before the school used teacher study groups. She explained that the staff met as a faculty once a month with the principal. The meetings dealt mostly with administrative type activities—budget, student activity involvement such as contests, field trip activities, PTA planning, and support activities. Faculty also talked about instructional activities, but these were fewer and usually dictated by the county. For example, they would talk about test scores and asked teachers to report on the weaknesses and strengths of their programs in relationship to the results. Teachers were then asked to plan to strengthen their program. "The planning however, was done individually and in isolation" (Vol. 2, p. 105).

The occurred were during the school day and lasted from an hour to 1 1/2 hours. Bevi explained that this was how the faculty communicated. At times, special committees were also formed for specific tasks. These committees functioned for the duration of the project and were then dissolved.

**DES Informants**

The three primary informants from DES included: Bevi, the principal; Jeanne.
Bevi’s mother and grandmother were both teachers. They often told her as a child, "Bevi, you’re going to be a teacher." As a result Bevi often would play school with her dolls. Besides the family’s expectations, the Methodist school Bevi attended offered two main options, education or ministry.

Although some people tell Bevi that she missed her calling and should have been an attorney, and even though from time to time she has fantasized about becoming an entertainer, Bevi explains, "I don’t have any regrets about going into teaching and entering education because it has served me well."

Bevi graduated with a degree in Elementary Education in 1965. She married a man who was active in the military and stationed in Panama. She traveled with her husband and taught for 3 years in Panama before returning to the United States. Bevi and her husband were stationed in her hometown where Bevi was hired as a Chapter 1 reading teacher.

All Chapter 1 teachers were expected to have a master’s degree. Bevi did not have one, but was hired because of her teaching experience, with the stipulation that she would begin to work on a master’s degree in reading or in elementary education. When the district created a position for instructional reading teachers, Bevi applied for the position and became an instructional reading teacher. This position required Bevi to take other courses in order to become certified. The district brought in
different trainers and Bevi became more aware of the significance of certification.

Bevi continued to take classes and completed an Administrative and Supervision certification. She also finished her master's degree in 1977 in Elementary Education. She continued working and completed an Educational Specialist degree in Curriculum and Instruction. One of Bevi's professors encouraged her in her studies and after a 2-year break, Bevi took 3 years to finish her doctorate in Administration and Supervision and graduated in 1986.

It was immediately following her graduation that Richmond County School District County became involved in the Models of Teaching project with Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers. Bevi was very much involved with the project. She was a member of the original group, the cadre, which received training and was expected eventually to train all the teachers in the district. Bevi also served on the district's Staff Development Council as a representative for elementary school principals.

Bevi keeps in close contact with the Staff Development Personnel. In fact, she speaks to some of them on a daily basis. She also networks with other principals and is a member of the Richmond Principals Association and the League of Professional Schools. Bevi is often asked to make presentations for and with the Staff Development Personnel.

All of the professional reading Bevi does is either from the literature the Professional League of Schools sends to her, from the projects her school is pursuing, such as cooperative discipline, or from the organizations she belongs to,
such as the National Education Association and the Georgia PTA Association.

Bevi scans the newspaper and watches about 2 hours of TV on the weekend, and 5 hours during the week of news-related programs such as CNN and CBS's "60 Minutes." She is not a movie lover and watches about four movies a year.

Bevi is a member of a sorority and during the 80s was a sponsor in a women's group known as the "Women of the '80's." Currently she has contracted to be the director of a federal program during the summer for youth ages 15-21. This group's goal is to help these youth find work.

Bevi occasionally goes to plays and concerts. She is a member of her church choir and enjoys singing. Bevi did a lot of traveling with her husband when he was in the military. She has traveled to places like Germany, Luxembourg, Paris, and Switzerland. Now, Bevi's travel is mostly work-related. She feels she really has only one hobby, which she pursues avidly, and that is shopping.

Bevi became a teacher because of family influences, in particular her grandmother, and because, as an African American woman, it was an acceptable vocation. She believes that the match between teaching and her abilities and characteristics is a good one, even though she fantasizes about being a rich and famous entertainer.

She has in the past been very active in formal staff development activities, dealing mostly with completing advanced degrees and improving her chances for promotion. She continues to be involved in staff development related to her school activities. She is a good model to others in regard to formal staff development activity.
Bevi has a network of colleagues she contacts in regard to school-related ideas. Her contacts tend to be local and school related.

Her personal activities are varied but not extensive. She is active in church musical groups and does attend concerts and other artistic endeavors. Her reading consists primarily of job-related materials. Her energetic commitment to a wide variety of activities is borne out by her Gregorc Style Delineator scores, which show that she is strongly oriented in the Abstract Random style.

Bevi adds energy to her environment, primarily in her modeling of formal staff development growth. She does not dramatically raise the level of energy in her school environment, but does add to the energy available in formal staff development.

Jeannie

Although there were no teachers in her immediate family, Jeannie always played school when she was a little girl. She was always the teacher and she loved teaching. She decided to become a teacher when she was in high school. She felt it would be a good profession because she enjoyed working with people and with kids. Jeannie has been teaching for 28 years and says she has never regretted her decision.

Jeannie taught in the regular classroom for 15 years. Since then she has been a Chapter I math teacher. Her goal has been to help students understand math. In order to accomplish this goal, she has been willing to try innovations and take as many courses as possible. Many times she spends nights thinking of how she can present concepts in a more practical and interesting way.
Jeannie usually takes two classes each summer through the staff development center. Once she joined the Chapter I program, the county had consultants who offered a variety of workshops during the school year. Jeannie was also a member of the Models of Teaching cadre and therefore was in the first group of teachers to be trained by Joyce and Showers in the Models of Teaching project. Even though she had been teaching for quite a while and had experienced different forms of staff development, she says that the methods taught by Joyce and Showers were more provocative than any she had previously experienced, and were extremely good for her professional growth. She also remembers that other teachers looked to her for direction and support when they were formed into teacher study groups.

Jeannie networks daily with her co-workers and monthly with other teachers. However, she admits that this networking seems to largely consist of other teachers calling her for ideas and suggestions.

She exercises every day by walking three or four miles. Her other hobbies include her four children and reading. Besides professional books, she reads mostly books and magazines on health. Jeannie says she reads an average of four books a month. Most of her time is spent organizing herself and her family. Jeannie likes to know exactly what she is doing and how she will accomplish any given task. However, her Gregorc Style Delineator indicates no strong preference toward any specific style. This in turn seems to point to adaptability toward most learning environments.
Jeannie is learning to play the piano and has sung in the church choir. She does not enjoy watching TV or movies. She does belong to a neighborhood club and also enjoys membership in a number of educational organizations.

Jeannie enjoys traveling and has been to most of the states. She visits museums when there is an opportunity but does not do so on a regular basis. She has worked with ceramics but says that with her busy schedule she only has time for walking, reading, and working. Jeannie feels that all her activities enhance her teaching. She is always searching for new ideas. Jeannie feels satisfied with her accomplishments. "When teachers are satisfied," Jeannie adds, "they do a better job of teaching."

Jeannie is socially active in networking. She is a moderately active reader. She seems to like to try new ideas, and so she is willing to be included in professional initiatives. Jeannie is proactive enough to add some energy to the school environment. She is moderately active professionally. She is viewed as a resource and a leader by a number of peers.

Jeannie’s mind style scores tend to be indicative of her Growth States activities. She seems to be moderately active in three main areas: formal staff development, informal networking, and personal and social activities outside of the school.

Kelly

Kelly has always loved school. In elementary school she had very good
school experiences and enjoyed most of her teachers. Ever since she was young, Kelly could remember wanting to be a teacher. Any time she and her friends played school, Kelly was the teacher.

Once in high school, Kelly also considered becoming a journalist or a nurse. However, she felt she was not a good public speaker, and her mother, who is a nurse, convinced her not to take nursing. Besides, Kelly realized that in spite of people telling her that teachers made too little or that people only went into teaching if they could not do anything else, she loved kids and wanted to work with them. She also knew she had the grades to do whatever she wanted to do.

Since Kelly graduated from college in the middle of the teaching year, she decided to begin her master’s program. She also worked at a store as a training director. During high school she had worked at another store and was offered a position in personnel when she finished college. But when a teaching job opened up the next year, she accepted and has been teaching for 7 years. She taught first grade for 5 years and has been teaching kindergarten for the last 2 years.

Kelly’s scores in the Gregorc Style Delineator indicate that Kelly is strongly oriented in the Abstract Random and Abstract Sequential styles. She likes to read and likes ideas. School, parents, and teachers provide the social interactions Kelly prefers.

Kelly has not continued to work on her master’s degree but has been involved in the staff training offered through the staff-development center. The last 2 years her
school has been working on classroom management using cooperative discipline. Last year Kelly was also active in the League of Professional Schools. Her school is a member of the league and Kelly served as the chairperson representing the school. This year she is no longer the chairperson and is much less active in the organization.

Kelly networks regularly with the teachers in her school and in her grade level. Although she has other friends who are also teachers, they do not teach kindergarten, so Kelly feels they do not understand many of her challenges. Lately, when these friends meet and talk about school, they mostly complain. So when Kelly has questions and concerns, she talks to the teachers in her grade level who are willing to share ideas and give each other suggestions.

Kelly claims her only hobby is reading. She reads about 300 books a year. She reads much more in the summer than during the school year. Her reading is limited to suspense stories. She buys a newspaper twice a week and reads the Sunday paper. She watches TV the last 2 hours before going to bed, but has no specific favorite shows. Kelly also enjoys cooking and bike riding. She does enjoy music and played the piano often in her parents' home but does not own a piano now. Kelly attends church regularly but is not involved in any extracurricular church activities.

Kelly subscribes to a few professional magazines like Mailbox Magazine, which have many ideas and games for her classroom.

The only area that Kelly is truly active in is reading and most of her reading is light recreational reading. In most other areas Kelly could be characterized as
borderline passive-active. Kelly does not add a lot of energy to the environment, but at the same time, she does not discourage activity.

Crown Point Elementary School (CPES)

The sources of information used for describing Crown Point Elementary School include: (1) an interview with the principal; (2) the researcher's observations; and (3) a pamphlet published by the Richmond County School District (Richmond County School district, 1994). Crown Point Elementary School is located on five acres of land off a busy main highway. The building with a late-50s flat roof is a brick-framed, 22-classroom structure. The school plant has an H-shape design with a cafeteria/kitchen complex and library. The front wing consists of the main office, the cafeteria, a nurses' clinic, a teachers' lounge, and 6 classrooms. The back wing consists of 14 classrooms. The middle wing consists of the library and 2 other classrooms.

CPES is named in honor of Dr. Cameron Point, the son of Rev. and Mrs. Steven Jefferson Point. In 1901, Cameron graduated from Walter Baptist Institute completing his formal education. Later, he was awarded an honorary doctoral degree in Humanities from Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina.

Dr. Point was one of the co-founders of the first Black-owned insurance companies and also developed the Crown Point housing subdivision. The Crown Point housing subdivision was the first subdivision in the Augusta area that offered Africa Americans the opportunity for home ownership.
CPES opened its doors in 1960. The school is a true neighborhood school with no busing. All of the students come from the East Augusta Area. In the beginning, the school served students in Grades 1-7. Today, the school serves students from pre-kindergarten through fifth grades.

There are two pre-kindergarten classrooms, three kindergarten and first-grade classrooms and two classrooms for each grade in the second through fifth grade. Every grade has a full-time teaching assistant except for the fourth and fifth grades, which have half-day teaching assistants.

During the past 5 years, the student enrollment has fluctuated between 350 and 400 students. The highest enrollment was 442, from 1991-1992. During the 1993-1994 school year, CPES experienced decreased enrollment as a result of the relocation of some students due to the major renovation of the Delta Manor Housing Project. Its enrollment for the 1994-1995 was 340 students, considerably less than capacity.

The professional teaching staff at CPES consists of 24 teachers. Their years of experience range from 0-32 years. Out of these, 16 are regular classroom teachers while the other 8 teachers are support staff in special education, physical education, music, and the media/library.

All the professional staff hold college degrees. Five have master's degrees and six are currently working on completing their master's degree. The administrative staff is composed of the principal who holds a specialist degree in
Seventy percent of the students live with step-parents, grandparents, or only one parent. Ninety-eight percent of the students are on the free- or reduced-lunch program. Fifty percent of the parents have a high-school diploma. Ten percent of the parents have earned a college diploma.

Five years ago, 5% of the school population was White and 95% of the population was African American. Presently 100% of the student population is African American.

Faculty Organization Before Teacher Study Groups

Lonna Archbold has been the principal since 1982. I asked her to describe how the faculty had been organized before becoming involved with teacher study groups. She explained that the faculty was organized by grade levels. Each grade level had a representative, who met once a month with the principal. These meetings lasted from 45 minutes to one hour. The meetings took place after the principal returned from an administrative meeting. Administrative meetings occurred once a month when the superintendent met with all the principals. After the grade level chairs met with the principal, they would hold grade level meetings. The majority of these meetings were after school. During the grade level meetings, the chairpersons reported to the teachers the decisions that had been made. The teachers were not involved in discussions and had no voice before decisions were made.

Faculty meetings were also held once a month. According to the principal, "We talked mostly of administrative issues, testing, adopting textbooks or whatever
the administrators felt was important" (Vol. 3, p. 186a).

CPES Informants

The three primary informants from CPES were: Lonna, the principal; Kara, a third-grade teacher; and Betty, a fourth-grade teacher.

Lonna

Lonna does not remember any particular person influencing her to become a teacher. However, she does remember always wanting to be a teacher. While Lonna was growing up, many children did not have the opportunity to go to college. Opportunities were limited because of segregation. Blacks who went to college were perceived as special people.

Lonna dropped out of college and married. After several years, Lonna's husband took care of the children so that she could complete her degree in education. After teaching for 9 years, Lonna was chosen as a lead-teacher because of her implementation of the curriculum. As a result of her training, she worked as a reading specialist for 5 years. Next she worked as an assistant principal for instruction at the high-school level for 5 years.

In 1981 Lonna was selected as the assistant principal of the year for Richmond County School District. The principal recommended Lonna for a principalship, which she received the next year. One year later, Lonna asked for a transfer and became principal at CPES. She has been at CPES for the last 9 years.
CPES was not selected the first year as one of the schools in the Models of Teaching project. However, five of the teachers were selected as part of the cadre and the school became involved in the MOT program 2 years later.

Lonna is very active in staff development. She takes classes and was involved in the training given in the MOT project. She has taken training for at-risk students, and with the faculty has been studying and focusing about "Quality Schools" and the concept of ungraded schools.

Lonna has only a 10-month program at her school but, although she is not paid, she runs remedial programs during the summer in math and reading.

Lonna has been instrumental in community businesses adopting different classrooms. She has initiated mentor programs to give the boys in the school a positive role model and has become involved in a variety of programs to enhance student learning.

Lonna networks with the personnel at staff development, other principals, and business contacts. She talks to them as often as three times a week. However, she is willing to call people whenever she has questions or needs advice.

Lonna reads a variety of books and articles related to the programs she finds herself involved in. She reads an average of four professional books and one pleasure book a month. Lonna spends 3 hours a week watching TV. She watches the "Cosby Show," children's specials, PBS, and CNN. She watches an average of two movies a year and one video every two months.
Lonna attends two plays a year, and enjoys sewing, traveling, and music. Lonna has toured Mexico, Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, the Bahamas, and California. She plays the piano for her own enjoyment and is active in her church. She is a Sunday School teacher, the instructional leader for the mission lessons, and a member of the church-planning committee.

Lonna is and has been involved with several organizations. She has served as a cluster leader for the United Way, co-chairperson for the United Negro Fund, and president of her alumni association. Lonna says she is a poor loser and therefore stopped participating in sports. She usually walks three times a week and rides a stationary bike, although she admits this year she has not kept up with that schedule.

Lonna’s scores in the Gregorc Style Delineator indicate that Lonna is strongly oriented in the Concrete Sequential and the Abstract Sequential style. Lonna’s highest score of 31 in the Concrete Sequential category means she tends to be comfortable with well-organized, orderly, step-by-step oriented environments. Her high score in the Abstract Sequential category indicates Lonna likes to read and likes ideas.

Lonna is a borderline active consumer as she fulfills the dictates of her environment in light of what she has accomplished. She has a tremendous drive to please and to be looked up to and respected.

Lonna does not add energy to the environment but she does not take it away. She maintains the energy that the environment gives to her.
Kara

It was because of her teachers that Kara decided to take elementary education. She had fun, motivational teachers in elementary school, high school, and college. These teachers cared and were concerned about their students. While in class, Kara would think, "I want to be just like them."

As a college freshman, Kara had decided to take music and become a music teacher, but at the end of her freshman year she made up her mind to go into elementary education.

Kara has now taught for 12 years. The last 8 years she has been a third-grade teacher. Kara has taken six classes towards a master's degree in Early Childhood. However, the last 4 years she has been involved in training and implementing the Models of Teaching. She also took one other class from the staff development center in multi-cultural education.

The classes for her master's degree were taken either at Augusta College or through the University of South Carolina. She hopes to begin the classes again in the spring and continue until she finishes her degree. Kara says she enjoys her classes and training because it has increased her teaching repertoire. She likes to try a variety of techniques to reach her students.

Kara keeps in touch with several friends who are also in the educational field. She usually talks to them two or three times a month. She asks them for advice and is also willing to share her classroom experience with them. Since becoming involved
with Models of Teaching, the teachers in her study group visit each other's classroom at least twice a month. Kara has really appreciated the input she has received from these visits.

Kara’s scores in the Gregorc Style Delineator indicate that she tends to be comfortable with well-organized, orderly, step-by-step oriented environments. Her scores in the other categories do not vary much and are not low, indicating no strong preferences in those areas.

Besides school, Kara is very involved in her church. Not only does she sing in the choir, but she also preaches at her church on a regular basis. She likes all types of music and, except for when she is concentrating on lesson plans, Kara is listening to tapes or the radio. Kara feels that her love for music helps her to be a joyful person, which translates into her being able to create a happy classroom.

Kara reads an average of four magazines and one book a month. She enjoys suspense novels. The magazines are usually educational magazines like Instructor, which she borrows from the library. She enjoys keeping current and using the bulletin board activities that are found in the magazines.

Kara spends 2 or 3 weeks traveling with her family in the summer. As far as exercise and sports, she is a spectator because both her children are very active in sports. She is active in the summer and walks two to three times a week. However, during the school year she cannot seem to find time to do it.

She watches 6 hours of TV during the week. This helps her relate to her
students when they talk about the different shows and movies they see.

Kara enjoys attending the theater and art museums when there is an
opportunity. She loves the different designs and colors. Her love for art helps her
create a bright, colorful classroom.

Kara seems to enjoy what she does. Music is a special interest. She says it
"gives her joy." As music invigorates her, she adds energy to her school. She
engages in a moderate amount of activity other than her daily school duties. She
reads, like to travel (even though she has not done a lot of it), likes to watch sporting
events, and is active in her church as a choir member, teacher, and assistant pastor.
Her personality is upbeat, and she tends to be open to new ideas from others even if
she is not the initiator.

Betty

Betty is one of nine children. She says her teachers in elementary and high
school influenced her to become a teacher. As a little girl she played school all the
time and her father would tease her and call her by the principal's name. He felt she
would make a perfect teacher. Betty, who was also the oldest child, felt as if her
parents wanted her to be a model for her younger brothers and sister by going to
college.

Betty graduated with a B.S. degree from a college in South Carolina and
earned her master's degree from the University of South Carolina. She is presently
working on a specialist degree through Augusta College.
Betty first started teaching in a Catholic school. She taught in a multi-grade combination classroom and enjoyed the many positive qualities she observed in that school. After teaching there for 3 years, she married and moved to Augusta. She started her career by substituting and then became a classroom teacher. She has been at the same school for 13 years. Besides teaching children, Betty also is involved with adult education three evenings during the week.

Betty is also busy taking workshop and classes throughout the year. She feels it is important to be on the cutting edge. The last four summers she has been involved with the Models of Teaching. She has attended workshops and even gone out of state to participate in workshops offered by Bruce Joyce. The Staff Development Center and Betty's school have had her involved in training other teachers during the summer with the Models of Teaching. In her school Betty and another teacher have training sessions once a month with the teachers.

Betty has been in leadership positions all through her career. She is a part of the school improvement committee; she was director of a child-development center; she is involved in adult education; she is responsible for training teachers for her school and for her county; she works with a Girl Scout group, serves on the usher's board, and is on the board for the Christian Women Alliance at her church. Betty keeps up with her three children and all their activities. She and her family are also members of the Jack and Jill organization. The Jack and Jill organization is a nonprofit, family organization whose goal is to help parents expose children to social and
cultural types of activities that parents normally might not be able to do. Families are expected to participate once a month in activities such as dramas, concerts, and a variety of exhibits and conferences.

When it comes to networking, Betty says she talks to colleagues on a daily basis. She is willing to give advice and to seek advice. She knows the experts in the different fields and calls them when needed. Her family and especially her children have often given her some great ideas to try in the classroom.

Betty’s scores in the Gregorc Style Delineator indicate she is comfortable with change processes and questioning the status quo. Her second highest score in the Abstract Sequential style shows a tendency towards liking ideas, concepts, and use of words. Her lowest score in the Concrete Sequential style indicates a disinclination to ordered, step-by-step activities. None of Betty’s scores, however, were really high or low.

She is always perusing magazines such as Educational Leadership, Phi Delta Kappan, Mailbox, and Macmillan Kits, looking for ideas. She often adapts them to her needs but is always interested in what is new. She always reads to her students and is proud to be a model for them. Once a week her students receive the newspaper, which she has ordered for them out of her own money. She has taken the time to teach them how to use the newspaper through a variety of activities. Betty enjoys romance novels but only reads one a month during the school year. During the summer she reads three to four books a month.
Betty does not enjoy sports but loves to travel and to dance. She is not at all musically gifted, but her children sing and play different instruments. Betty enjoys watching the "soaps" during the summer when she does take the time to watch TV for 3 hours a day. During the spring the family always goes on a family trip.

Betty is active in formal staff development. She has taken courses and seeks out other training offered by her district on a regular basis. She became involved early in the Models of Teaching training program and has been active in presenting these methods to her colleagues. She tends to be active in other areas as well, including family activities which may take some of her energy away from her school, but she seems to make connections to her professional duties regardless of what she is engaged in. Betty adds a moderate amount of energy to her school environment and is an advocate of classroom-oriented change.

Summary

The data from the Growth States Interview indicate that the primary informants from each school, with the exception of one, are active and add energy to the environment. Change is more likely to occur with individuals like these who are active with their interactions with the environment. A summary of the results is shown in Table 1.

The results of the Gregorc Mind Styles Delineator indicate that two out of the three LES informants are high concrete randoms. Usually these individuals are risk-takers who are comfortable with change. In DES, the abstract random mind style is
predominate. These individuals are comfortable with social interactions which are helpful in the change process. At CPES two out of three primary informants have strong concrete sequential orientations. These individuals prefer an orderly, predictable environment and are comfortable when change is directed. A summary of the results is shown in Table 2.

**TABLE 1**

**GROWTH STATES INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

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<th>Names</th>
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<td>Nancy</td>
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<td>Michelle</td>
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TABLE 2
GREGORC MIND STYLES DELINEATOR SCORE

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CHAPTER IV

INNOVATION CONFIGURATION

In descriptions of innovations it is the attributes, goals, and implementation requirements that are often described. Although these criteria are important, it is also critical to be able to describe innovations in clear, operational terms. To be truly helpful to teachers, one must be able to describe how a program will look in actual practice in the classroom.

Hall and Loucks (1977) also observed that persons who claimed not to be using an innovation were actually practicing many of the same things that persons who claimed to be users were doing. In addition, many different people who claimed to be users were not. These findings led to the concept of innovation configuration (IC), the identification of "minimum criteria" necessary for being a user.

An innovation configuration focuses on the behavioral and structural characteristics of that innovation. It breaks down the innovation into discrete parts and identifies critical components that can be operationally described. The focus is on what people actually do, as well as the materials, behaviors, and processes essential for implementing the innovation.

As I searched for information about teacher study groups, there was a lack of concrete descriptions of what users do when implementing study groups. Heck,
Stiegelbauer, Hall, and Loucks (1981) identified the lack of concrete descriptions as one of the reasons why implementation and long-term change are so difficult.

After Hall and Loucks defined the characteristics of several innovations through the use of the IC, they concluded that a lack of success in implementation could be due to the participants not using the minimum criteria necessary for success. The concept of IC allows the emphasis to be placed on the concrete and more tangible operational form of the innovation.

Using an innovation configuration will help to identify the critical components of a teacher study group providing a picture of the fidelity to the model. It will be helpful in providing a record of what teachers actually do when they participate in study groups. In order to identify the components, or parts, of an innovation and to answer the question, "What is it?" Heck et al. (1981) developed a tool: the IC component check list.

Before describing the procedure for developing a checklist to identify the configuration of an innovation, it is important to explain some of the basic terms frequently associated with the innovation configuration.

**Basic IC Terminology**

**Components:** Refers to the major features or operational parts of any innovation. The components of instructional innovations usually include materials, teacher behaviors, and student activities.

**Critical components:** Refers to components that have been determined essential to innovation use.
Related components: Refers to components that are not considered essential but are recommended by the developers.

Variations: Refers to the different ways in which a teacher can put a component into operation in the classroom.

Fidelity: Refers to how consistently and completely the critical components are implemented by users.

Checklist: Refers to a tool for identifying specific components or parts of an innovation and the variations that might be expected as the innovation is implemented in classrooms and schools.

The Procedure

The basic procedure used to develop an IC involves forming a checklist of components and variations. Descriptions of the procedures can be found in several sources: Gaikwad, P., 1991; Heck et al. 1981; Hord, 1986; Hord & Hall, 1986. The general procedures for developing an IC checklist are summarized in the flow chart (Hord, 1986) in Figure 1.
Figure 1. Procedures for identifying innovation configurations.
Step 1: Identifying Innovation Components

I started by reading as much descriptive material about teacher study groups as I could find. Books and articles read included Student Achievement Through Staff Development (Joyce & Showers, 1988), "Reculturing Schools and Districts Through Study Groups" (Murphy, 1992a), "Staff Development: A Vehicle for Building Self-Renewing Organizations Through Study Groups (Murphy, 1992c), "Teacher Study Groups: Exploring Literacy Issues Through Collaborative Dialogue" (Short, 1993), "Lessons From a Journey into Change" (Murphy, 1991), and The New Meaning of Educational Change (Fullan, 1991).

Next I interviewed the developers of teacher study groups, Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers, and the director of staff development in the Richmond County School District School District, Carlene Murphy. The following questions were used in the interviews to identify study group components:

1. Would you describe teacher study groups to me?
2. What do teacher study groups look like when implemented? What do teachers do? What would I see if I were to visit a teacher study group?
3. What are the essential components of teacher study groups?

I also included some contrast questions to help clarify and identify different dimensions of meaning. The checklist that emerged, identifying teacher study group
components as a result of completing step 1, is shown in Table 3. This list represents an initial list of components and variations of each.

**Step 2: Identifying Additional Components and Variations**

Additional components and variations were identified by observing study groups in action. Besides observing the study groups, I also interviewed nine study group participants. The questions asked were the same as the questions asked in the previous step. Additional components and variations began to emerge.

**Step 3: Enlarge Pool of Components and Variations**

During this step I continued to collect data by observing more study groups in action. This produced a database for use in the analysis of components and the delineation of the innovation configuration. Through this process I was able to also identify a number of additional variations.

**Step 4: Checklist Construction**

A checklist with the major components of the program was developed and sent to the developers, the project director, and one principal and two teachers who were participating in the study. They were asked to evaluate the checklist and to write down beside each component any changes they made in the components.
TABLE 3
INITIALLY IDENTIFIED COMPONENTS OF TEACHER STUDY GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Consists of a group of four to six teachers. (There can be a minimum of three and a maximum of six.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>There is a common focus and a common purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The focus is to implement an innovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The innovation is typically focused on instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Specific times are scheduled for study groups to meet. Meetings are regularly scheduled during school day: There is a definite time investment. The teacher study groups meet once a week for 1 hour. (There are variations in time. Some meet bi-weekly for 2 hours, or once a month for 4 hours.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>There is an agenda, written or agreed upon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Leadership is important but may vary. Responsibilities can be rotated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Assignments are given to participants as part of the study group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Involvement of administrative personnel is necessary in study groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Work climate consists of collaboration, cooperation, demonstrations, practice, feedback, coaching, freedom to express and share ideas, information, lessons, and experiences, with an emphasis on results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Provides a relatively risk-free, supportive environment for implementing new strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Provides for follow-up training which gives a framework and direction to future activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 5: Mark Users' Checklist

After receiving the checklist from step 4, changes were made and the checklist was given to all study participants for corrections, additions, and other feedback.
Step 6: Analyze Data

Further observations and interviews to clarify observations were used to develop the Innovation Configuration Checklist. The checklist includes the component variations that are ideal, variations that are acceptable and variations that are unacceptable. (See Table 10 in Appendix D.)

Results of the IC Procedure

The implementation of the IC process resulted in a definition and delineation of the key characteristics of existing study groups in the Richmond County School District. Specifically, the IC in this study represents the essential attributes of teacher study groups as described and observed in the Richmond County School District experience. The IC not only defines the structure of these teacher study groups but it also describes the components of study groups in a concrete and tangible way.

Through the IC process, I was able to distinguish 13 particular components of an ideal teacher study group:

1. A teacher study group consists of a group of four to six teachers.
2. There is a long-term common focus and a common purpose.
3. The focus is to implement an innovation.
4. The innovation is focused on instruction, which results in increased student achievement.
5. Specific times are regularly scheduled for study groups to meet during the school day.
6. There is an agenda, written or agreed upon that is followed.

7. Leadership responsibilities are essential and pre-determined. Roles can vary and may be rotated.

8. Assignments are given to participants and reported back as part of the study group process.

9. Administrative personnel participates in study groups.

10. Work climate includes modeling, demonstrations, practice, feedback, and coaching, with an emphasis on student results.

11. The work environment is relatively risk-free and includes high levels of cooperation and collaboration.

12. Initial training is given that provides a framework and gives direction to future follow-up training activities.

13. Teacher study groups meet once a week for an hour or more. (There can be variations in weekly scheduling. Some teacher study groups meet bi-weekly for 2 hours, and others meet once a month for 4 hours.)

**Summary**

This chapter presented: (1) the concept of innovation configuration; (2) the procedures for developing an innovation configuration; and finally, (3) identified an innovation configuration checklist for teacher study groups as described in the Richmond County School District.

Through this process I was able to provide answers to the first research...
question:

What is a teacher study group?

a. What is the structure of a study group?

b. What is the size of a study group?

c. How often do the teachers in the study group meet?

d. What is the length of each meeting?

e. When do the teachers in the study group meet?

f. What do the teachers do in a study group?

g. Who is involved in the study group?
CHAPTER V

COMMUNITY

This chapter deals with "community," a significant characteristic of teacher study groups I perceived as I observed teacher study groups in action.

First, I describe the background of community. Next, I used the answers from the surveys and teachers' perceptions to organize the data about how study groups promoted and encouraged community.

Lastly, a teacher study group session is compared to a community in action where members support each other professionally and emotionally.

The Beginnings of Community

Scott Peck, the psychiatrist and popular author, in his book, The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace, states that nothing is more important than building community. "In and through community lies the salvation of the world" (Peck, 1987, p. 17). Is it possible that in and through community lies the salvation of our schools?

The need for community and the theoretical foundations supporting the concept of small group processes have evolved as a sub-discipline of social psychology. The writings of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, Jacob Moreno, and Morton Deutsch provide the
basis for small group research.

Social Growth

John Dewey, along with Kurt Lewin and Jacob Moreno, emphasized the social aspects of learning. For Dewey, the goal of education is to develop socially responsible citizens who can work together to solve problems. Life in the classroom, according to Dewey (1930), should be a democracy in microcosm. Students can then learn to make choices, carry out projects collaboratively, and learn to relate to people by empathizing with others, respecting the rights of others, and learning to work together.

Gordon Allport, the social psychologist, said, "If Dewey could be termed the outstanding philosopher of democracy, Lewin was surely the major theoretician and researcher of democracy among the psychologists" (1924, p. 3). Dewey’s philosophy was supported by the research conducted by Lewin and Moreno. Both of them introduced the techniques for improving small group processes that are still used today. Moreno’s most significant contributions to the classroom are the development of methods of sociometry and role playing (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1992).

In their book, Group Processes in the Classroom, Schmuck and Schmuck (1992), explain that group dynamics, which began with the contributions of Lewin and Moreno, developed into a viable and legitimate domain of study after World War II. It embellished Dewey’s democratic philosophy by gathering evidence on the functions, operations, and processes of small, face-to-face groups. (p. 4)
Dewey’s primary contribution developed from his focus on the process of learning rather than its content (Archambault, 1964; Coughlan, 1976; Dykhuizen, 1973). For Dewey, Moreno, and Lewin, the validity of group dynamics depended on its usefulness for restructuring social relationships.

The group movement always had a social action element; the beginning of the National Training Laboratories in 1948 with Lippitt, Bradford, and Benne, for example, focused on some of the intergroup social problems facing communities and institutions in the United States. (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1992, p. 4)

**Personal Growth**

The National Training Laboratories (NTL), currently known as NTL: Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, which focused the application of group research and emphasized the improvement of personal learning and organizational processes, was instrumental in the changing trends of public education in the 60s and 70s. The training group or T-Group became very popular. However, these group exercises emphasized personal growth rather than the understanding of interpersonal relationships.

Although much of the action research, until the mid-1950s in social psychology, took place in industry, government, and social agencies, there were some published works on group dynamics in the classroom and school settings that helped to translate Lewin’s social-psychological theory into classroom practice. These included (1) Miel’s study of 75 teachers at the Horace-Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation, *Cooperative Procedures in Learning* (1952); (2) Thellen’s...
Education for the Human Quest (1960); (3) Miles's Learning to Work in Groups (1959); and (4) Gronlund’s Sociometry in the Classroom (1959), which also highlighted Moreno’s ideas.

Application of Group Processes to Educational Settings

In the 1960s, increased emphasis was placed on the application of group processes to educational settings. The 59th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (Henry, 1960) presented social-psychological theory about classroom groups and proposed a way of using research findings to improve instruction. One year later, in 1961, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) sponsored a conference on the topic, "Effects on Mental Health of Interaction Within the Classroom."

After the AERA conference, there were numerous publications endorsing the application of social psychology to the study of education (Backman & Secord, 1968; Bany & Johnson, 1975; Deutsch & Hornstein, 1970; Glidewell, 1976; Guskin & Guskin, 1970; and Lesser, 1971). All of these books emphasized the importance of interactions within the classroom setting.

It was Lewin's action research applied to face-to-face groups that influenced educators' views of classrooms and was instrumental in developing a systematic theory of how people behave in groups. Ronald Lippitt, one of Lewin's students, applied those ideas of action research in the classroom. Jacob Kounin, also Lewin's
student, applied the ideas to classroom management and discipline, while another student, Morton Deutsch, concentrated his research on preventing destructive conflict and initiating cooperation in the classroom (Deutsch, 1973). In 1975, one of Deutsch’s students, David Johnson, with his brother Roger, published the first major work on cooperative learning, *Learning Together and Alone: Cooperative, Competitive, and Individualistic Learning*.

There were many more studies and books published about group processes between the 1960s and 1980s, not only because knowledge in the field was growing but also because of increasingly available funds. Both the federal government and foundations funds increased tenfold in the 1950s and 1960s (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1992).

**A Nation at Risk**

During the 1980s, a marked leveling off of funding for school improvement occurred. In 1983, the Committee on Educational Excellence, appointed by the president of the United States, reported that our nation is "at risk" because of the mediocrity of its educational system (Committee Report). That report was the beginning of demands for reform and restructuring that are still being sought after today.

**The Effective School Movement**

The demand for reform resulted in the effective school movement. Rutter in
England and Edmonds in the United States claimed that different school cultures resulted in different student achievement levels. The variables making up the culture of the school included social climate factors such as degree of academic emphasis by the staff, the amount of supportive, interpersonal relations among staff, and staff morale (Rutter & Edmonds, 1979).

Research in business and industry paralleled the research on effectiveness in schools and found that high-quality business cultures were characterized by supportive social climates where workers were experiencing social support, positive reinforcement, and feelings of power and achievement (Green, 1985; Kanter, 1983; Schien, 1985).

Yet, as each school district planned for school reformation, the literature on improvement focused on the cognitive processes and academic achievement. Typically provided were lists of characteristics and not detailed descriptions of what the reform looked like without emphasizing the affective processes and the interpersonal relationships (Adler, 1983; Goodlad, 1984; Lightfoot, 1983; Sizer, 1984).

Continued Demand for School Improvement

In the 1990s, the continued demand for school improvement and increased academic standards has led to criticism of teachers and teacher preparation programs. Many also claim that the educational system has not improved, despite so much spending of funds. Schmuck and Schmuck (1992) believe that
substantial school improvement has not occurred because the interpersonal relationships and collaborative working relationships within schools remain ignored. Even though educators have learned much about organizational effectiveness, . . . there remains the problem of achieving such a state of organizational effectiveness in practice. What do principals and teachers do during the daily life of a school to convert a less effective school into a more effective one? How do they behave? Where do they start? (p. 12)

Peck, in a conversation with Stafford (1991), calls the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous the greatest event in the 20th century because it was the first example of a support group that became a community. Support groups are now available for singles, drug addicts, single parents, school children, married couples, and eating disorders. The list of support groups is almost endless.

Why are these groups so much in demand? Why have they become so prevalent? Is it because members of these groups have become a part of a community? They frequently testify that they have gone from lonely people to individuals who learn how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to work together (Peck, 1987). As they become a community, members experience personal growth.

In a presentation at the 1993 American Educational Research Association annual meeting (Short, 1993), comments from teachers indicated that the most valued aspect of teacher study groups was in creating a stronger sense of community within a particular school. The teachers talked about the isolation they experienced as teachers, their lack of knowledge about other teachers' beliefs and practices, and the
lack of trust between teachers. Through the study group, they developed personal and professional relationships that gave them a sense of community.

The data from my research indicated that teacher study groups fostered interpersonal and collaborative working relationships among teachers. Following are examples which illustrate that as they work together, study group members experienced a positive, supportive school climate and a sense of community.

Teacher Study Groups Promote and Encourage Community

I administered a survey developed by Showers (1993) to the faculty of all three schools. The survey was open-ended, and although there were 30 surveys returned from Dynasty Elementary School (DES), 30 surveys from Crown Point Elementary School (CPES), and 40 surveys from Lincoln Elementary School (LES), participants at times left some answers blank or did not answer questions in the same way. The numbers and figures in every chapter refer to the respondents who answered in a particular way. Sometimes participants provided more than one answer and have been counted more than once.

Dynasty Elementary School

In the Richmond County School District, it was the teachers' perception that study groups promoted and encouraged a sense of community. In the DES, 27 out of 30 (90%) teachers perceived that the organizational structure of teacher study groups

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in the school encouraged teachers to work together. Explanations given as to how the
organizational structure of the school encouraged teachers to work together fell into
three main categories.

Of 30 teachers, 10 believed that the frequency and the way the faculty was
organized into study groups encouraged teachers to work together. One teacher
replied, "Yes, [we are encouraged to work together] because we have grade level
study groups, the Instructional Council, Grade Managers' Study Groups, and House
Study Group Meetings. The emphasis being to work together" (Vol. 2, p. 121).

Seven other teachers felt that "study groups help teachers get to know each
other so that the sharing of ideas and materials is easier" (Vol. 2, p. 121). They
believed the organizational structure of the school provided "a healthy working
environment because you come in contact with other individuals you would not
normally come into contact with" (Vol. 2, p. 121). The concept is that more teachers
are able to express more ideas, which ultimately helps to build a positive school
morale. One teacher expressed this feeling by saying, "Since we [the faculty] share
information, there is a sense of cohesiveness that otherwise would not exist" (Vol. 2,
p. 121).

Finally, five teachers reported that the organizational structure required
"cooperation and cooperativeness." Examples given included the fifth-grade teachers
working cooperatively "regarding units of study, discipline, and extra-curricular
activities," as well as teachers deciding as a group about different tasks (Vol. 2, p. 121).

Crown Point Elementary School

Of the 30 teachers in CPES, 26 (87%) felt that the organizational structure of the school encouraged teachers to work together. Two teachers did not respond to this question, two did not believe the organizational structure encouraged teachers to work together, and although three other teachers indicated that the organizational structure encouraged teachers to work together, they did not give any explanations as to how this was accomplished. Explanations given by the 26 remaining teachers as to how the organizational structure of the school encouraged teachers to work together fell into three main categories.

First, 7 teachers explained that time is given during work hours for the staff to meet together as a group. Second, 15 teachers felt they were encouraged to share lesson plans and ideas as much as possible. Finally, 4 teachers stated that the summer workshops and staff development programs encouraged teachers to work together. One teacher commented, "We have met during four summers to further enhance our skills. We have had staff development and resource persons to visit and offer suggestions" (Vol. 3, p. 163).

One teacher responded to the question by saying, "Togetherness lends itself to
a more conducive school climate and respect for each other seems to prevail" (Vol. 3, p. 163).

Lincoln Elementary School

At LES two teachers did not indicate whether the organizational structure of their school encouraged teachers to work together, and one teacher responded "yes" and "no" to the question. However, of the 38 teachers who answered the question, 38 out of 38 (100%) agreed that the organizational structure of the school encouraged teachers to work together. One teacher explained, "Before we started study groups, each teacher basically did his/her own thing and we didn't have lots of contact with one another" (Vol. 1, p. 172). Out of 38 teachers, 17 believe that the study group structure, which is endorsed and supported by the principal, is what has encouraged teachers to work together. The principal provides time during school hours and expects teachers to meet together at least once a week. "Teachers are asked to meet at least once a week. The administration feels that we can better serve our students in this way" (Vol. 1, p. 172).

Not only is time provided for teachers to meet, but Grades 1-4 have teaching assistants who stay with students so the teacher study groups can meet. One fifth-grade teacher explained that fifth-grade teachers did not have teaching assistants. For them it was more difficult to find time to meet during the school day. Often this fifth-grade group had to meet after school hours. Because of this, her answer to this question was "yes" and "no."
Besides organizing teachers into study groups, allowing time for study groups to meet, and providing teaching assistants, 16 reported that the principal also encouraged teachers to visit each other's classrooms and advocated teachers planning together and sharing ideas and materials. One teacher commented, "Our principal encourages cooperative teaching and supports working in unity" (Vol. 1, p. 172).

Although 38 out of the 38 (100%) teachers who answered the question agreed that the organizational structure of the school encouraged teachers working together, 1 teacher confided that even though they were expected to meet every week, how much they worked together depended on how much teachers chose to share. Study group members observed that some teachers were more willing to share than others (Vol. 1, p. 173).

**Barriers to Collegiality**

Gladder (1990) studied two senior high schools that were restructuring to achieve more collegial interaction among teachers. Her results showed that seven conditions constrained teacher collaboration: (1) the class schedule, i.e., the teachers were organized by discrete, subject-matter disciplines and the day was divided into 50-minute segments; (2) the physical facilities, i.e., except for communicating with departmental colleagues, the teachers were isolated and did not talk with other teachers; (3) too little time existed for collaborative problem solving and decision-making; (4) group norms of privacy and isolation, a culture in which teachers believed that they alone were responsible for their classes; (5) the primary teacher
rewards came from students and administrators and not from colleagues; (6) teacher autonomy to make decisions about how they would spend their planning periods was lacking; and (7) being congenial meant not interfering with the work of a colleague.

These conditions, which inhibit teachers from achieving more collegial interactions at the high-school level, also exist at the elementary level. The exception is that elementary teachers, unlike high-school teachers, rarely have any planning periods during the day. If elementary teachers did want to meet together, it would require a significant change in the structure of the workplace.

Eisner (1988) also pointed to the barriers that inhibit teachers from collaborating with one another and concluded that they are the daily class schedule, the physical isolation of the classrooms, the structure of the curriculum, and the fragmentation of the day. Tye (1987) described these common school attributes as the "deep structure of schooling" implying that these characteristics are difficult to change. Although changes are difficult, at DES, CPES, and LES where entire faculties are organized into study groups the workplace has changed. At these elementary schools, collegial interchange and action have become the norm instead of the exception.

Steps to Collegiality

Although Tye felt it would be extremely difficult to change those attributes, Rosenholtz (1989) noted that innovative principals can provide an environment where collaborative efforts are encouraged. According to Schmuck and Schmuck (1992), the principal has the most potential influence in the school. After a nationwide study of
elementary principals, Gross and Herriott's study of elementary principals (1965) concluded that "principals' leadership influenced staff morale, innovativeness, professional performance, and student learning." Today, "principals are viewed as the single, most important element in the successful adoption of innovations, as instrumental in giving school meaning and direction, and as providing continuous school improvement through staff development" (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1992, p. 312; see also Blumberg & Greenfield, 1984; Fullan, 1991; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982).

Principal's Leadership

Principals who were most influential (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1992) (1) had constructive suggestions for teachers about classroom problems; (2) displayed interest in improving the quality of school programs; (3) gave teachers ideas about how to improve student achievement; and (4) made meetings a valuable educational event.

The results from the Richmond County School District indicate that principals who organized the faculties into teacher study groups are viewed by teachers as having the qualities identified above. When asked to give examples of how principals supported study groups, all three schools reported that the principals provided: (1) time for the teacher study groups to meet during the day and (2) constructive feedback and suggestions. (See Table 4). Principals had the opportunity to demonstrate these qualities because of their relationship with the teacher study groups.

Dynasty Elementary School

For example, at DES when asked how the principal supported study groups,
teachers shared four different ways. These consisted of: (1) encouraging study groups to meet by giving them time to meet, scheduling the meetings, and including the meeting dates on the calendar and was reported by 6 out of 26 respondents; (2) assigning topics for discussion was referred to by 5 out of 26 respondents; (3) visiting study groups and sharing ideas was shared by 4 out of 26 respondents; and (4) reading recommendations, addressing concerns, giving feedback and providing resources and funds was included by 12 out of 26 respondents.

**TABLE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Time N</th>
<th>Feedback N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dynasty Elementary School</td>
<td>16 (26)</td>
<td>12 (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Point Elementary School</td>
<td>10 (25)</td>
<td>14 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln Elementary School</td>
<td>15 (30)</td>
<td>16 (30)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Number in parenthesis represents total number of respondents.

One teacher commented, "She [the principal] provides written/verbal input on our ideas and finds ways to help us implement certain learning programs/activities" (Vol. 2, p. 129). Three teachers did not respond to this question and one teacher said she did not know how the principal supported study groups at the school.
Crown Point Elementary School

One hundred percent of the 30 teachers at CPES felt the principal supported study groups. Five teachers did not explain how the principal supported study groups. However, 25 out of the 30 (83%) teachers identified three main ways the principal supported study groups at their school. Some teachers identified more than one way and have been counted more than once.

First, according to 10 teachers the principal provided time for meetings during school hours and encouraged the group to meet regularly.

Second, 14 teachers explained that the principal was available when needed and attended meetings where she gave input, planned lessons, shared ideas, and distributed educational literature.

Finally, two teachers reported that the principal attended and actively participated in her own study group. Two other teachers commented that the principal "made" them participate in study groups (Vol. 3, p. 168).

Lincoln Elementary School

In LES, it is obvious to the teachers that the principal encouraged, supported and expected teachers to be a part of a study group. One of the teachers said, the principal "encourages them [teacher study groups] greatly. It was one reason I took the job" (Vol. 1, p. 178).

Teachers identified three main ways the principal encouraged or supported study groups: (1) 15 out of 30 respondents reported that time is provided for all teachers to meet with their study groups during the school day; (2) 9 respondents
included that the principal meets once a month with the selected study group representative from each study group to share information and materials, and give advice and suggestions: (3) 16 shared that the principal gives feedback and provides opportunities for teachers to give feedback to each other. He monitors in-class procedures, expects progress reports, and praises group effort. Typical comments included these: "[The principal] allows us time and support to meet. He also encourages us to come together to help each other, even to the point of observing each other in our classroom environment as we teach lessons in order to lend verbal praise or help," and "[He] constantly encourages us to work and plan together, allowing us to meet during school hours, praising group efforts" (Vol. 1, p. 178).

Four teachers did not respond to this question and six teachers indicated that the principal encouraged them to participate in teacher study groups but did not give any explanations as to how he supported them.

Collaboration an Essential Attribute of Community

Developing collaboration requires mutual goals among teachers, and administration, individuals caring for one another, helpful exchanges between teachers and joint planning and evaluation of the curriculum. The attributes that encourage collaboration are the same attributes found in Peck’s (1987) definition of community:

"a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their mask of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to rejoice together, mourn together, and to delight in each other, make others’ conditions our own" (p. 59). See Tables 5 and 6.
### TABLE 5

**PERCENTAGE BELIEVING THAT STUDY GROUPS ENCOURAGE WORKING TOGETHER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dynasty Elementary School</td>
<td>27 (30)</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Point Elementary School</td>
<td>26 (30)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln Elementary School</td>
<td>36 (36)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Number in parenthesis represents total number of respondents.

### TABLE 6

**REASONS STUDY GROUPS ENCOURAGE WORKING TOGETHER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/Reason</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dynasty Elementary School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of meetings (time)</td>
<td>10 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to know each other</td>
<td>7 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Point Elementary School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled time for meetings</td>
<td>6 (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing and planning together</td>
<td>15 (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln Elementary School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled time for meeting</td>
<td>17 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing and planning together</td>
<td>16 (38)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Number in parenthesis represents total number of respondents.
Community in Action

Lincoln Elementary School

Following is a description of a teacher study group session I observed during my research at LES. To me, it represents community in action.

The scene is unusual; five teachers are sitting in a tight circle to one side of the hallway while students file past them on their way to their usual rendezvous. Although the teachers can't help but notice the activity around them, they seem to have their own agenda. The conversation begins with announcements relating to school business: i.e., Christmas program, decorations, dinner, and PTA personnel. Members of the group intermittently ask questions and receive answers. The group discusses how the "Wee Deliver" (having to do with writing, processing, and the delivering letters) program is working. Since this is the teachers' first involvement with this program, they talk about adjustments that can be made.

Next, the group is given information concerning three upcoming conferences. The atmosphere is noisy, comfortable, trusting, informal, but focused. This study group, made up of second grade teachers, has something to accomplish. The meeting continues with a question, "Does everyone have their tiles?" While one teacher goes to get his, the teacher who is leading at this time explains they are finishing a discussion on the use of math tiles. When all the teachers have their tiles, the presenter begins to share different ways of using them in the classroom. The activities range from making simple numbers to developing specific patterns.

Since I'm a visitor, the teachers tell me, "It's a way to involve all the students with a hands-on activity. It's simple too. All you need are pieces of venetian blinds to make the tiles."

The teachers try several ideas, performing the activities themselves. The presenter then asks if anyone has used tiles in the classroom. Two teachers say they have, and the children love to use them. These teachers are asked to share how they use them. Several interject ideas and make comments. The presenter inquires, "Do you have any more questions, concerns or comments?" In the ensuing conversation, questions are asked, specific ideas are shared, and suggestions are given. Everyone participates.

The group agrees meeting in the hallway isn't ideal, but the benefits of working together are. They are continuing the training model initiated by Joyce and Showers (1987). They study together, learn together, plan together, have fun together and share their joys and frustrations. (Green & Henriquez-Roark, 1993, pp. 28-29)
Crown Point Elementary School

Teachers from the other schools also perceived the teacher study group as a community in terms of the support it offers them. One teacher from CPES said, "The study group is very helpful in providing support where necessary" (Vol. 3, pp. 157-158). Other teachers explained how helpful it was to listen to people with similar problems, to exchange feelings about lessons and their effectiveness or failures. Another teacher admitted she "would have had a difficult time using Models of Teaching if it had not been for the study group" (Vol. 3, p. 157).

Dynasty Elementary School

As in Lincoln Elementary School, DES teachers expressed receiving professional, academic, and emotional support from teacher study groups. One teacher summarized it well when she said that the purpose of study groups was "to give fellow teachers support and to share ideas as well as find solutions to problems together" (Vol. 2, p. 113).

Another teacher explained, "The purpose [of study groups] is to improve the atmosphere of the school--to build a sense of camaraderie--a feeling that we are working together to bring about change and to help each other" (Vol. 2, p. 113).

A third teacher shared, "The social climate has made me feel real good" (Vol. 2, p. 132). As a result, teachers felt more comfortable, had gained new friends, and the experience "made communication with each other easier" (Vol. 2, p. 132).
Summary

Throughout this chapter, the experiences of the teachers and principals in my study were used to illustrate how the organizational structure of study groups resulted in creating a community. It begins with teachers and principals meeting together, talking together, and planning together. It requires a common focus, a shared commitment, and a shared vision. Ultimately, the teacher study group structure creates a culture of interdependence rather than isolation where learning, change, and reform can take place.
CHAPTER VI

COOPERATION

Cooperation is one of the salient characteristics of teacher study groups that I repeatedly observed. It was a recurring theme, and a pervasive quality that informants identified in describing teacher study groups. In my observations, teacher study groups provided the structure necessary for practicing, experiencing, and learning cooperation.

This chapter contains a brief overview of the beginnings and benefits of cooperation in schools. It explains why the use of cooperative learning is difficult and suggests a vehicle for the effective implementation of cooperation among teachers.

Finally, it describes the perceptions of teachers about how study groups promoted cooperation and affected their professional growth and their teaching performance.

Beginnings of Cooperative Learning

The theme of cooperation in human endeavors is mentioned early in written history. As early as the first century, Quintillion maintained that students could benefit from teaching one another. The Roman philosopher Seneca with his saying 93
"Qui Docet Discet" (when you teach, you learn twice) understood the advantages of cooperative learning. Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1679) maintained that students would excel both by teaching and by being taught by other students (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). As I mentioned in chapter 1, the Bible also recommends working together.

In the late 1700s, Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell established cooperative learning groups in England, and the idea was brought to America when a Lancaster School was opened in New York City in 1806 (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). Between 1875-1880, when Colonel Francis Parker was superintendent of the public schools in Quincy, Massachusetts, he averaged more than 3,000 visitors a year to observe his extensive use of cooperative learning procedures (Campbell, 1965).

In 1924, John Dewey encouraged the use of cooperative learning groups in his quest for democracy in education and directly promoted cooperative learning methods in his book *Experience and Education* (1938). Dewey's philosophy, as mentioned in chapter 5, was reinforced by the research conducted by Lewin and Moreno. Since then, the benefits and advantages of cooperation and cooperative learning have been well established through the research studies of Morton Deutsch, the social psychologist who pioneered research in this field, David and Roger Johnson, Spencer Kagan, Robert Slavin, Richard and Patricia Schmuck, and Alfie Kohn, to mention a few.
Benefits of Cooperative Learning

The benefits of cooperative learning among students can be organized into three main categories: (1) academic growth, (2) social growth, and (3) personal growth. The influence of cooperative learning on these three areas is explained in the following sections. A description of the benefits of cooperative learning among students can provide a framework for fostering teacher growth, which can result in increased teaching skills and increased student achievement.

Academic Growth

Spencer Kagan, author of the book Cooperative Learning (1992), states: "Cooperative learning promotes higher achievement than competitive and individualistic learning structures across all age levels, subject areas, and almost all tasks" (p. 3:1).

Robert Slavin (1983) analyzed 46 controlled research studies that were conducted in elementary and secondary schools. Sixty-three percent (63%) showed superior outcomes for cooperative learning, 33% showed no differences, and only 4% showed higher achievement for the traditionally-taught comparison groups. Achievement gains were found in almost all (89%) of the studies that used group rewards for individual achievement.

Johnson and Johnson (1994) in their research of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning observed:

That working together to achieve a common goal produces higher achievement
and greater productivity than does working alone is so well confirmed by so much research that it stands as one of the strongest principles of social and organizational psychology. (p. 56)

This conclusion was based on 375 studies reviewed by the Johnsons between 1980 and 1989. The meta-analysis showed that the average cooperating student performed at two-thirds a standard deviation above the average student working in traditional competitive or individualist situations. The average person in a cooperative situation achieved at the 80th percentile compared to students working in traditional or individualistic situations. If it works with students, it should work with adults. More importantly, when teachers can model expected behavior, it facilitates student learning.

Social Growth

Research studies have found that cooperative settings, when compared to competitive settings, promote more mutual liking, more sharing, and more positive relationships among students. When students and adults are allowed to work together, they develop increased positive peer interactions (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Slavin, 1990). Johnson, Johnson, and Maruyama (1983) conducted a statistical analysis of 98 studies published between 1944 and 1982. Their findings indicate that

Cooperative experiences promote more positive relationships among individuals from different ethnic backgrounds, between handicapped and non-handicapped individuals, than do cooperation with intergroup competition, interpersonal competition, and individualistic experiences. (p. 23)

In another series of 10 studies conducted by the Johnsons (1983) it was found
that "cooperative learning experiences . . . promoted greater cognitive and affective perspective taking than do competitive or individualistic learning experiences" (pp. 136,137).

In summarizing the findings of the effect of cooperative learning on an individual's social development, Kagan (1992) observes:

Dozens of studies have demonstrated that when students are allowed to work together they experience an increase in a variety of social skills: students become more able to solve problems which demand cooperation for a solution, better able to take the role of the other, and are generally more cooperative on a variety of measures, such as willingness to help and reward others (p .3:2)

Another important finding of the research is that cooperative learning situations promote more frequent, effective and accurate communication than do competitive and individualistic situations. This may be one of the basic reasons it may be so powerful a teaching/learning environment.

Personal Growth

Slavin (1990) reported that 11 out of 15 studies showed a positive impact of cooperative learning on self-esteem among students. In another analysis of research conducted by Johnson and Johnson (1989), only 1 study showed that competition had a positive effect on self-esteem while eighty-one studies showed that cooperation had a significantly stronger impact on self-esteem than did competitive or individualistic situations.

In a later analysis, Johnson and Johnson (1994) found that cooperative situations encouraged values of self-worth "believing that others see one in positive
ways, comparing one’s attributes favorably with those of one’s peers, and judging that one is a capable, competent and successful person" (p. 67).

The cooperative learning structure allows individuals the opportunity to be accepted and liked by his/her peers, to contribute to the group and feel successful, and to conclude that he/she is a competent, vital part of the group.

**Alfie Kohn**

Alfie Kohn writes and speaks widely on human behavior, education, and social theory. He is a former teacher who now lectures at universities and to managers, teachers, and parents across the country.

Kohn received the American Psychological Association’s National Psychology Award for Excellence in the Media for his book *No Contest: The Case Against Competition* (1992). Kohn extensively used previous research to present a clear argument against competition. After reading his book, I found it was much easier to understand the challenges that educators face in implementing cooperative learning among themselves and among students.

**Challenges in Implementing Cooperative Learning**

Kohn (1992) refers to competition as the "number one obsession" and the "common denominator of American life" (p. 1). Competition is modeled at school, on the playground, at work, and at home. For 2 centuries our educational system,
according to psychologist Elliot Aronson (1976), has been based upon competitiveness:

If you are a student who knows the correct answer and the teacher calls on one of the other kids, it is likely that you will sit there hoping and praying the kid will come up with the wrong answer so that you will have a chance to show the teacher how smart you are. (p. 153)

Kohn concludes that "the message that competition is appropriate, desirable, required and even unavoidable is drummed into us from nursery school to graduate school; it is the subtext of every lesson" (p. 25). It is not surprising that teachers who have grown up in this environment, exposed to competition, experiencing competition, and practicing competition are having a difficult time implementing an innovation such as cooperative learning.

Requirements for Successful Implementation

Research indicates that sustained change in curriculum and instruction depends heavily on a shared understanding about the nature of the innovation and what it can accomplish (Fullan, 1982). According to the findings reported by the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education (R&DCTE) (Hall & Loucks, 1978), the reason so many innovations have been rejected is not because the programs were not as good as was claimed, but often the innovation was discarded because there was a problem with the process being used to change schools. Change is a process occurring over time, usually a period of several years. Recognition of this is an essential prerequisite of successful implementation of change (Fullan, 1982, p. 287).
R&DCTE based its research about change on the Concerns-Based Adopted Model (CBAM) (Hall & Loucks, 1979). Another premise of the CBAM is that the single most important factor in the change process is the individual who will be affected by the changes. The feelings, thoughts, and reactions individuals have about a new program or innovation exert a powerful influence on the implementation of change (Hall & Loucks, 1979). CBAM identified six different levels of concern and concluded that the pattern and intensity of concerns experienced by individuals involved in an innovation are directly influenced by the amount of assistance and support provided.

Training Model

The training model developed by Joyce and Showers (1987) describes a process that provides assistance and support and encourages the implementation of innovations and long-term change. The model involves four distinct steps: a discussion of theory or rationale and the content of the innovation, demonstrations of the innovation, practice and feedback, and coaching through the use of study groups. One of the key elements of this model is the use of small groups called study groups.

The study group is a team of four to six teachers who meet together and follow the four steps of the training model. The smallness of the group encourages participation and involvement of each member. As they participate, practice, give feedback, and coach, teachers begin to develop meaning, skills, and the ability to transfer the new practice into their normal teaching repertoire.
Study groups provide the necessary structure essential for acquiring new teaching skills and strategies. Joyce and Showers (1983), in their studies of teacher training, and Fullan and Pomfret (1977), in their studies of curriculum implementation, agree that transfer of skills and strategies requires substantially more training than is typically provided.

Besides providing the practice necessary for the transfer of skills and strategies, study groups exert the pressure and motivation required to continue to practice. Research on training (Fullan, 1993; Joyce, 1983; Joyce & Showers, 1988) and on the change process (Hall & Loucks, 1981) has demonstrated that transfer does not happen without a social system in place to keep a practice going. The findings showed that only 5-15% of teachers who received training without support, in teaching strategies substantially different from their usual teaching method, were able to transfer learning over time. However, when coaching is added to the theory, demonstration, practice and feedback, 80% of teachers can transfer the new skill.

These findings concur with teachers who have tried to introduce cooperative learning in the classroom and have concluded:

We must not ....make the mistake of expecting that cooperative group behavior and thinking for oneself will occur in the absence of classroom instruction and practice aimed at these specific goals...We can't order it to work; we have to make it work. We have to teach children the skills of working thoughtfully and responsibly together..." (Wassermann, 1989, p. 201-205).

Before we can teach the children, we must teach the teachers who teach the children. Mary Male in a newsletter of the International Association for the Study of...
Cooperation in Education (1989, p. 4) estimated that only 5-10% of participants in Cooperative Learning workshops will continue to use the approach over time if ongoing support and coaching are absent.

In the Richmond County School District, teacher study groups have provided the essential support and coaching necessary for change and professional growth to take place. The following sections from my research describe how study groups promoted and stimulated this professional growth. The numbers and figures in every chapter refer to the respondents who answered in a particular way. Sometimes participants provided more than one answer and have been counted more than once. Quotations from the participants that are used throughout this study are taken directly from corrected field notes, surveys, or interviews and are referenced to a volume and page number.

**Teacher Study Groups Promote Professional Growth**

Teachers in all three schools--24 out of 30 (80%) from the DES, 24 out of 30 (80%) from the CPES and 36 out of 40 (90%) from LES reported experiencing professional growth as a result of participating in study groups. (See Table 7.)

**Dynasty Elementary School**

The majority of teachers, 17 out of 28, felt that the purpose of study groups was to plan, to share new ideas, and to solve problems. One teacher summarized it
well when she said that the purpose of study groups was "to aid in our professional growth" (Vol. 2, p. 113).

### TABLE 7

<table>
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<th>Professional Growth</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>24 (30)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>Crown Point Elementary School</td>
<td>24 (30)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>Lincoln Elementary School</td>
<td>36 (40)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Note: Number in parenthesis represents total number of respondents.

Expanding the Teaching Repertoire

When asked what they had learned or added to their teaching repertoire since becoming a member of a study team, 18 out of 27 teachers reported they had added new ideas and strategies such as MOT (Models of Teaching) lessons, whole language lessons, and cooperative discipline strategies.

Of the 27 teachers, 8 explained that they had learned better team skills. One teacher explained, "We learned how to work cooperatively as a team to improve the workplace" (Vol. 2, p. 115). Another teacher stated she had learned that "teachers who work together as a team tend to establish a better rapport among each other and oftentimes learn from each other" (Vol. 2, p. 115). As they worked together,
teachers gained insight into what other teachers thought on a variety of subjects and realized that "other teachers are a good source of information. We have a group that shares problems, provides encouragement, and support" (Vol. 2, p. 115).

**Emphasis on Curriculum and Instruction**

Out of the 30 teachers, 19 reported they worked more with other teachers on curriculum and instruction as a result of the study group structure. Some comments from these teachers included that they worked "more and more effectively," because, added another teacher. "I'm not afraid to borrow from my peers," and I work "more due to instructional innovations" (Vol. 2, p. 120).

**Improved Teacher Interactions**

Of the 30 teachers, 18 felt the content of the interaction between teachers was different and improved because of the study group structure. Teachers believed that one of the reasons for the improvement was because the interaction in the teacher study group was more meaningful than the interaction teachers experienced before becoming members of study groups. One teacher reported, "Yes, we must interact in-depth in study groups. Sometimes it is uncomfortable because teachers are used to working solo. Now we have to learn negotiation skills" (Vol. 2, p. 123).

Negotiation is a vital skill in learning cooperation (Johnsons & Johnson, 1994, p. 232).

Teachers shared that the organizational structure of the study groups which
holds teachers accountable, (2) allows teachers to meet at specific times on a regular basis, and (3) involves all teachers with a common focus, was a reason for the difference in teacher interactions. "Yes we meet more regularly--in a helpful, defined and outlined problem-solving group process. Problems are targeted with defined interactions and roles" (Vol. 2, p. 123).

**Stimulating Better Teaching**

Teachers felt they were becoming better teachers. One teacher reported that she had learned "teaching methods and strategies for more effective behavior and learning" (Vol. 2, p. 132). Another teacher stated that the study group has "made me a better teacher. I can now take criticism and am willing to try new approaches" (Vol. 2, p. 132). Being able to accept criticism is also essential to cooperation.

**Added Professional Benefits**

Besides reinforcing the benefits already enumerated in the surveys, Kelly stated, "I've learned a lot" from sharing with other teachers. "Sharing ideas with other teachers kind of opens up the school" so that teachers are not afraid to go into other teachers' rooms to see what they are doing (Vol. 2, p. 110).

Jeannie admitted that teacher study groups have helped her grow professionally for several reasons: (1) she reads much more; (2) she's not afraid to share her challenges and problems; (3) she is willing to share her good ideas and try others' ideas. "Prior to this [participating in teacher study groups] you felt like you were the
only one with problems and were afraid to let people know that you had problems" (Vol. 2, pp. 106-107). Teachers did not want the administration to hear about the problems and think that they could not handle their jobs. But now Jeannie feels free to share her problems and her ideas. In the past, she kept the good ideas to herself in order to receive praise from others, but now she does not mind sharing and saying, "I have a good idea, would you like to use this?" (Vol. 2, pp. 106-107).

Bevi, the principal, outlined three added benefits she experienced since organizing the faculty into teacher study groups. First, she acquired "a certain amount of security" (Vol. 2, p. 105a). In the past, she explained that she often wondered if she was making the right decision. Sometimes, after making a decision without others' feedback she found out that her perception had been incorrect and the decision was not workable. "Then, you end up having additional problems. Using the study group process, you know that your thinking will be supported" (Vol. 2, p. 105a).

Another advantage is that through cooperation the teacher study group structure opened up lines of communication between the principal and the teachers. There is more professional dialogue both formal and informal, which leads to better relationships and added support. Cooperation builds bridges and fosters positive relationships (Kohn, 1992, p. 150).

Lastly, Bevi adds, "I no longer feel pressured to make decisions hastily" (Vol. 2, p. 105a). The study group structure has provided more time to make decisions and
has made people comfortable with using time as an asset in the decision-making process. "You do not have to make a decision then and there. Instead, the notion exists that we can gather the information, take time to talk about it and then make a decision" (Vol. 2, p. 105a). Bevi and the staff have learned a process for decision-making that allows them time to internalize information before having to make decisions. The cooperative study group structure promotes trust and perspective taking. "People tend to see things from the other person’s point of view when they are working with . . . each other" (Kohn, 1992, p. 150). As a result, the teachers are more willing to take the time to listen to others’ points of view.

Crown Point Elementary School

Seventy percent of the teachers, 21 out of 30, indicated that the purpose of a study group was to cooperate in sharing ideas and materials, and to learn a variety of teaching strategies in order "to better the teachers and ultimately the students" (Vol. 3, p. 151).

Expanding the Teaching Repertoire

When asked what study group members had learned or added to their teaching repertoire since becoming cooperative members of the group, responses could be organized into three main categories: learning teaching strategies, learning how to teach students, and learning team skills.

First, 12 out of 25 teachers reported adding a variety of strategies to their
teaching repertoire. Specifically, Inductive Thinking, Concept Attainment, Memory Assist, Cooperative Learning, and Synectics were identified. Often these were referred to as MOT strategies.

Next, 9 out of 25 teachers emphasized the effect the study group had on their students. Two teachers reported teaching students to work cooperatively while another teacher admitted that she learned how the students felt when they did not know the material. Another teacher added, "I've learned different ways to capture the children's attention--ways to help them learn" and "I have been able to use some of the strategies discussed in the MOT study group to strengthen my students' abilities to retain information in an exciting, innovative way by making learning fun" (Vol. 3, p. 153).

Finally, 9 out of 25 teachers indicated they had learned to share ideas, techniques, and materials, work cooperatively within a group, and "face a problem and deal with it" (Vol. 3, p. 153).

Emphasis on Curriculum and Instruction

Out of the 28 teachers, 19 (68%) reported they worked more with other teachers on curriculum and instruction as a result of the study group structure. One teacher suggested that it was "because we are able to share ideas." Other teachers commented: "Teachers have become more receptive to being observed by their peers" as well as more willing to accept suggestions from others (Vol. 3, p. 162).
Improved Teacher Interactions

Out of 25 teachers, 14 believed the content of the interaction between teachers was different and improved because of the cooperative nature of the study group structure. The differences teachers noticed included three main areas:

1. They felt more comfortable, less inhibited, and were able to share and discuss educational matters more freely. One teacher admitted she can now say, "I don't understand. What did you do to accomplish a certain project?"

2. They felt their improved interaction helped them learn how to work together and to use their time wisely.

3. Teachers felt they focused more on student needs (Vol. 3, p. 164).

Stimulating Better Teaching

Out of 25 teachers, 15 (75%) reported they had experienced professional growth as a result of learning new strategies and finding a variety of materials to enhance the learning process in the classroom.

Ten out of the 15 teachers felt they had become better teachers because they now had a resource for good ideas; they were wiser in dealing with students and had gained more knowledge in using strategies effectively.

The remaining five teachers each shared a different way the study group had affected them. These included receiving some academic credit, becoming a team player, lesson planning becoming more fun and less tedious when developed in a
study group, and finally, as one teacher shared, "It gives me motivation" (Vol. 3, p. 171).

Seven teachers described their actions as more open and more cooperative. They were more open to suggestions, more willing to share ideas, and more patient with each other. As a result, they learned better cooperation and team skills (Vol. 3, p. 171).

**Added Professional Benefits**

Betty explained that her professional reading has doubled because of her involvement with teacher study groups (Vol. 3, p. 148). Kara says she reads two or three times more than before:

I study more now. I feel freer to read in a journal. . . I realize the more I know about a subject, the more comfortable I feel. Study groups have enlightened me to go into depth with the need of an individual and to share my concerns and discuss problems with others. We learn from each other. I always gain from people who have been to workshops and am able to go back to the class and apply it. (Vol. 3, p. 144)

The principal, Lonna, says that as a result of teacher study groups she has learned more about people and how they think. She now understands that every teacher will not have the same attitude or want the same things. Teachers see things from different perspectives.

Lonna has also learned that the change process really takes time. It takes time for "any new process to become a part of a person's total character. Teachers need
to be a part of the decision-making process for change to be positive" (Vol. 3, p. 142).

Lincoln Elementary School

One hundred percent of the 30 teachers recognized the professional advantages of study groups and indicated that the purpose of study groups included: (1) sharing ideas, materials, and information; (2) helping teachers in their instructional planning; and (3) working cooperatively to meet the teachers' and students' needs. As a result, they would be able to create a good learning environment for students, enhance the educational process, and improve teachers' skills and teaching strategies (Vol. 1, p. 159).

Expanding the Teaching Repertoire

When asked what they had learned or added to their teaching repertoire since becoming a member of a study team, 28 (93%) out of 30 teachers reported they had added new ideas, experimented with different methods of teaching, and learned a variety of innovative strategies such as Models of Teaching and cooperative learning. One teacher explained, "My teaching has improved because I am pulling ideas from a wide selection." Another teacher added, "Because of the teacher study group, I've tried things that I otherwise might not have tried; and I found they worked" (Vol. 1, p. 187).
Emphasis on Curriculum and Instruction

In Lincoln school the majority of teachers, 32 (80%) out of 40, believed they work with other teachers on curriculum and instruction much more as a result of the study group structure. Some explained that the study of curriculum was more intense and in-depth during the time the school was focusing on the Models of Teaching.

One teacher stated she worked less on curriculum (developing materials) but much more on instruction (teaching strategies). Another teacher commented that they worked together more because they were forced to do so. She felt her group did not work well because they were "individualized people" (Vol. 1, p. 26c).

Out of the 32 teachers who felt they worked more on curriculum and instruction because of participating in study groups, 4 indicated they worked more on curriculum and instruction because they planned together more. They now all have a common goal. Another teacher wrote, "I feel I work with other teachers much more. In other schools I have been in, your classroom is like being in your own little world --and no one knows what is going on" (Vol. 1, p. 171).

Improved Teacher Interactions

Although 4 out of 35 teachers did not report a difference in teacher interaction compared with earlier, less formal interactions, 31 (88%) out of the 35 teachers felt the study group structure had a positive effect on teacher interaction. Some felt the meetings were more on a professional level. "It is more of a serious meeting."

During the meetings, "we set goals and time limits." Prior interaction, they felt,
tended to be superficial with teachers complaining. Now, "the professional talk is more constructive" (Vol. 1, p. 174).

Thirteen teachers suggested that the difference in interactions is not only because they have specific goals but because they now have a set time to meet and focus on curriculum and instruction. "We never worked together to plan lessons and units before." Another added, "Before this, we were pretty isolated from one another with very little sharing of ideas" (Vol. 1, p. 174).

Out of the 35 respondents, 14 also felt the teacher study group structure had helped them become "more relaxed and more productive." There is more interaction between teachers and they are more open and willing to share what they have. One teacher commented, "Meeting together and working cooperatively really makes a difference. Before study teams, we did not share ideas or discuss student problems with one another. We also did not plan lessons together" (Vol. 1, p. 174).

Stimulating Better Teaching

Of the 33 teachers who answered the question, "How has the study group affected you?" 14 believed they had become better teachers as a result of participating in the study groups. There were several reasons for these feelings:

1. Teachers felt more accountable, motivated, and excited about teaching: "I’m more excited, not as burned out." Another explained, "The group encouraged additional study and pushed me to do so" (Vol. 1, p. 182).

2. Teachers were able to add to their repertoire of teaching strategies. They were
able to learn and implement many new ideas and interventions: "This [the teacher study group] has been a great vehicle for introducing new ideas and concepts to staff members in a more personalized setting" (Vol. 1, p. 182).

3. Teachers became more confident: The study group "has helped me realize that I am not making as many mistakes as I thought I was, and therefore, has made me a more confident person." Another admitted, "Professionally, I’m thinking more."

Another teacher reported, "I have a variety of lessons and units of study that I can use in my classroom. I feel that I have more input into my plans and the grade level plans" (Vol. 1, p. 183).

4. Teachers realized that teachers are a rich resource. One teacher admitted: "It [the study group] has opened the possibility that other teachers may be able to teach me how to be more effective in my work." Others concurred they had come to the conclusion that "teachers were a teacher’s best resource" (Vol. 1, p. 183).

5. Planning was easier and less time-consuming. One teacher explained that working and developing lessons together was faster and easier. She shared that the second grade teachers use learning centers that they plan together. "Everyone brings materials they have on a topic, and we can put together 14 centers in one hour" (Vol. 1, p. 54).

**Added Professional Benefits**

In her interview Michelle did not point out any additional professional benefits other than those already emphasized in the surveys. She attributed her professional
growth to the many ideas she had learned from her colleagues. She reported, "We share a lot more curriculum-oriented ideas" (Vol. 1, p. 149).

Nancy believed the study groups helped to establish a more professional atmosphere in the schools. This happened only after "we got past the individual competition that we all experienced in our study group" (Vol. 1, p. 190), which is what all cooperative groups have to overcome.

Nancy reported that for the first 3 weeks the study group did not function well because there was so much competition. It was not until teachers understood the purpose of the study groups that they were able to make progress. Then there was a change of attitude that enabled them to cooperate instead of compete.

Of all the informants, Clayton had more to share on how the experience with Models of Teaching, and specifically, participating in teacher study groups, had added to his professional growth.

The benefits Clayton experienced from participating in the study groups can be organized into three main categories: (1) changing conceptual beliefs; (2) discovering leadership qualities; and (3) becoming an instructional leader.

*Changing conceptual beliefs*

Clayton explains that more than anything else he experienced a change in his "basic philosophy about staff development" and how he "operated within the school setting" (Vol. 1, p. 140). He now had a vision of what staff development could be and should be.
In his new-found vision, staff development became something that was conducted locally, teachers became involved in a continuous learning process, and learning was shaped by a common focus and purpose.

Discovering leadership qualities

When the faculty was organized into study groups, more teachers had the opportunity to become involved in leadership as they assumed their roles of teacher study group leaders. Clayton admits, "That gave me the insight that there are more people in my school community who are capable of sharing in the decision-making process than I thought before" (Vol. 1. p. 140).

Clayton discovered there were many teachers who became "experts" in certain areas and "it turned out that it wasn't the same person" each time. According to Clayton, within their own school setting they had Models of Teaching "experts," Cooperative Learning "experts," whole language "experts," etc. Until then, Clayton had not realized the leadership potential of the teachers in his school (Vol. 1. p. 140).

Becoming an instructional leader

Initially, Clayton says he had a specific idea of what his job was in terms of the school setting. Although he was referred to as the instructional leader, he saw himself more as a manager. After all, "most everybody else in the school had a better understanding of what was going on in the individual classrooms than I did" (Vol. 1. p. 142).
However, once Clayton and the teachers started to study and learn together, Clayton went into the classrooms and practiced the different strategies. He says he became "just as much, if not more experienced, working with the strategies than the teachers" (Vol. 1, p. 142). He concludes by explaining, "So not until I worked with the Models of Teaching strategies and the study groups did I feel like I was actually an instructional leader" (Vol. 1, p. 142).

As an instructional leader, Clayton became involved in outside teaching and training that he normally would not have been involved in. He attended numerous conferences, made presentations, and "sent off a proposal to a cooperative learning conference in California, which was accepted." Clayton continues that this "would have been, of course, absolutely unheard of from me two or three or four years earlier" (Vol. 1, p. 143). Clayton acknowledges that "the whole process was a learning process" (Vol. 1, p. 142).

**Summary**

This chapter provided a brief overview of the beginnings and benefits of cooperation. I then showed why resistance to the implementation of cooperative learning and other innovations exists and shared how teacher study groups can serve as one way to surmount this resistance.

I described how the collegial and cooperative climate, developed through study groups, promoted teachers' and principals' professional growth. Improved teacher interaction and continuous support stimulated practical learning and better teaching.
For a summary of the main reasons teachers shared for experiencing professional growth see Table 9.

As principals and teachers take time to think together, practice together, and learn together they are able to gain the confidence and vision necessary to create a self-renewing organization where school becomes a learning center for everyone (Joyce et al., 1993).

**TABLE 9**

WAYS STUDY GROUPS PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Dynasty Elementary School</th>
<th>Crown Point Elementary School</th>
<th>Lincoln Elementary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expanded Teaching Repertoire</td>
<td>18 (27)</td>
<td>12 (25)</td>
<td>28 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasized Curriculum and Instruction</td>
<td>19 (30)</td>
<td>9 (28)</td>
<td>32 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Teacher Interactions</td>
<td>18 (30)</td>
<td>14 (25)</td>
<td>31 (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulated Better Teaching</td>
<td>15 (30)</td>
<td>10 (15)</td>
<td>14 (33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Number in parenthesis represents total number of respondents.
CHAPTER VII

CULTURE

Many people associate culture with art galleries, museums, festivals, and particular events, but culture has a much broader meaning. Garcia explains that "the total history of a group, combined with its present modes of living, coalesces to form its culture" (Garcia, 1991, p. 68). Seelye (1993, p. 16) in his book, Teaching Culture, defines culture as "patterns for living which enable individuals to relate to the social order to which he is attached." Woolfolk (1993, p. 159) defines culture as "the knowledge, values, attitudes, and traditions that guide the behavior of a group of people and allow them to solve the problems of living in their environment."

School culture can be defined as the rules and norms that guide teachers' beliefs, values, habits, and assumed ways of doing things. What we have come to realize is that one of the reasons lasting change has not occurred in schools is because educational improvement has seldom affected the basic culture of schools (Barth, 1990; Goodlad, 1984; Liberman & Miller, 1984; & Joyce et al., 1989; Sarason, 1982).

In my observations of teacher study groups, I was fascinated by the willingness of teachers to meet in the middle of school hallways, in bustling libraries.
and in cramped spaces. It was even more remarkable, when at the end of the session, there was a noticeable atmosphere and feeling of accomplishment and fulfillment.

As I interviewed group members and continued to observe the sessions, I came to realize that this atmosphere of accomplishment and satisfaction existed because through teacher study groups a sub-culture had been developed that encouraged collegiality and simultaneously was meeting teachers' basic human needs.

This chapter provides: (1) a brief overview of basic human needs as posited by the psychologists Maslow and Glasser; (2) a description of teachers' perceptions of how study groups can enable the building of a sub-culture in schools that promotes collegiality and personal growth, and finally, (3) a discussion on the implications of study groups on school improvement and staff development.

**Basic Human Needs**

Abraham Maslow

Abraham Maslow has influenced the field of psychology in general and the psychology of motivation in particular. Maslow (1970) has suggested that humans have a hierarchy of needs. These needs have been identified as lower-level needs and higher-level needs.

In Maslow's theory, the lower-level needs include: (1) the need for survival and safety; (2) the need for love and belonging; and (3) the need for self-esteem, which must be satisfied before humans will pursue the higher-level needs. The higher-level needs are: (1) the need for intellectual achievement; (2) the need for
aesthetic appreciation; and finally (3) the need for self-actualization. Self-actualization is another term for self-fulfillment, the realization of personal potential. Maslow's theory holds that it is the fulfillment of these needs that motivates individuals. The lower-level needs for survival and safety are the most essential. Once these physical needs are met, we strive to fulfill our social needs for love, belonging, and self-esteem. Finally, when these are satisfied, we turn to the higher-level needs for intellectual achievement, aesthetic appreciation, and self-actualization.

Glasser's Control Theory

In 1985, William Glasser developed another prominent theory of motivation: Control Theory (Glasser, 1986). In addition to the needs of survival, Glasser proposes five basic psychological needs that people have in common: (1) the need for love; (2) the need for belonging; (3) the need for power; (4) the need for freedom; and (5) the need for fun.

Safety

Before individuals can grow personally, they have a need to feel psychologically safe. Fears of ridicule and feelings of inadequacy reduce the individual's comfort level and inhibit academic as well as personal growth.

Besides fulfilling one of the basic human needs as described by Maslow, the feeling of safety has also been identified as essential before individuals are willing to share freely and be themselves.
We have already established that schools have been organized around teacher separation rather than teacher interdependence (Lortie, 1975) and that in spite of teachers' complaints about isolation little has been done to improve the situation.

Peck (1987) describes our entire society and culture as made up of "extraordinarily lonely people." One of the antidotes Peck prescribes for this loneliness is the ability to share freely what we have in common: "our weakness, our incompleteness, our imperfections, our inadequacy . . . our lack of self-sufficiency" (p. 58).

However, individuals are not willing to speak freely unless they feel safe. "It takes a great deal of work for a group of strangers to achieve the safety of true community" and yet, "once a group has achieved community, the single most common thing members express is that they feel safe" (p. 67).

Peck has identified some of the factors that promote safety in communities (1987). Briefly, these factors are:

1. Members of the group accept each other as they are. "You are free to be you" (pp. 67, 68).

2. Members begin to look at each other and themselves through lenses of respect (p. 69).

3. Members are willing to expose their weaknesses to colleagues (pp. 69, 70).

4. Members see the community as a safe place to experiment with new types of behavior.
5. Members see the community as a place "where conflict can be resolved without physical or emotional bloodshed" (p. 71).

In my research findings, these seem to be the same factors that promoted safety in teacher study groups and were experienced by participating study group members.

**Dynasty Elementary School (DES)**

Out of 26 teachers, 21 (82%) indicated that the study group is very helpful in identifying problems, finding solutions, and providing support. One teacher said that the study group was very helpful because "many questions that first-time teachers may have are aired without fear and in a congenial atmosphere" (Vol. 2, p. 117).

As noted in chapter 6, 18 out of 30 teachers reported that the content of the interaction between teachers was different and improved because of the study group structure.

One reason suggested for the improved interaction was that teachers were more open and willing to share. Another teacher explained, "All teachers feel relaxed and comfortable about sharing ideas" (Vol. 2, p. 123). Teachers were encouraged to share their opinions and felt their concerns would be addressed.

Out of 26 teachers, 19 (73%) believed they had a better working relationship with other teachers since participating in teacher study groups. One teacher shared, "The social climate has made me feel real good." As a result, teachers felt more comfortable, had gained some new friends and the experience "made communication
with each other easier" (Vol. 1, p. 132).

In the in-depth interview, Jeannie stated that through the study groups teachers had learned to know each other better, like each other better, and to realize that it is all right to say, "I don't know, I need your help" (Vol. 2, p. 106). In the past, teachers were afraid to let anyone know if they had a problem.

According to Kelly, study groups "opened up the school so that people aren't afraid to go into other peoples' [teachers'] rooms to see what they're doing" (Vol. 2, p. 110).

Crown Point Elementary School (CPES)

Out of 25 teachers, 14 stated that the content of the interaction between teachers was different and improved because of the study group structure. Members of the group felt more comfortable, less inhibited, and were able to share and discuss educational matters more freely. One teacher admitted she is no longer hesitant to say, "I don't understand. What did you do to accomplish a certain project?" (Vol. 3, p. 164).

Out of 20 teachers, 15 reported that study groups had influenced them on a personal level. Seven teachers described their actions as more open and more cooperative. One teacher explained that she had learned to "open up not only in subject content areas, but in other non-educational topics" also (Vol. 1, p. 3e).

Five teachers expressed how their relationships with other teachers had changed. They had become better acquainted, closer friends, and more aware of
others' point of view. One teacher commented: "I feel I have gotten closer to my colleagues and as a result I feel I can go to them for professional help if needed" (Vol. 3, p. 171).

Lonna, the principal, noticed a change in the school's atmosphere. Teachers are more relaxed and not afraid to give input (Vol. 3, p. 140).

Lincoln Elementary School (LES)

At LES 32 out of 40 (88%) of the teachers believed the study group structure had a positive effect on teacher interaction. Teachers commented that the teacher study group structure has helped them become "more relaxed and more productive" (Vol. 1, p. 13c). There is more interaction between teachers, and they are more open and willing to share what they have.

Ninety-seven percent, 39 out of 40, of the teachers at LES agreed that the study group had influenced them professionally and personally. Teachers felt that in the study groups they were able find a safe place for the "release of problems and tensions" (Vol. 1, p. 19e). The teacher study group "has allowed me to vent frustrations" (Vol. 1, p. 21c). One even reported, "My husband loves me more because I am more relaxed and less stressed" (Vol. 1, p. 25e).

Collegiality, Belonging,
Love, and Fun

Once the need for safety is met, individuals, according to Maslow and Glasser, aspire to fulfill the social needs for love, belonging, and self-esteem. These needs
can only be achieved in relationships with other individuals. These relationships are often described by the word collegial.

According to Joyce and Showers (1988), restructuring the workplace in a more collegial mode is one of the essential attributes of effective staff development and school improvement. Innovations and implementations are more likely to occur in a school culture where collegiality exists.

Fullan and Pomfret (1977) and Little (1982) confirm the link between collegiality, staff development, and implementation: "All other things being equal, schools characterized by norms of collegiality and experimentation are much more likely to implement innovations successfully" (Fullan, 1990, p. 12). "Put another way," explains Fullan, "staff development practices always incorporate teacher-teacher sharing and interaction" (p. 12). Seller and Hannay (1988) examined a project in two high schools and found that the pre-existing climate of collegiality determined the success of the project.

"True collaborative cultures," according to Hargreaves (1991), "are deep, personal, and enduring" (p. 14). They are not short-lived or a string of one-shot deals but rather must become an intricate, vital part of a teacher’s life and daily work. In the following examples it is clear that study groups have become a vital factor in teachers' lives. Teacher study groups have provided an atmosphere where collegiality not only flourishes but inspires feelings of belonging, love, and fun.
Dynasty Elementary School (DES)

At DES, 5 out of 28 teachers suggested that the purpose of study groups "is to improve the atmosphere of the school, to build a sense of camaraderie, a feeling that we are working together to bring about change to help each other" (Vol. 2, p. 113).

Jeannie reinforced this idea in describing how study groups had affected her. She stated, "Most of all [through study groups] you learn to listen to each other and appreciate one another for our unique ideas" (Vol. 2, p. 107).

Eight teachers explained that they had learned better team skills. They had learned (1) "how to work cooperatively as a team to improve the work place"; (2) that teachers who work together as a team tend to establish a better rapport among each other"; and (3) that members had "learned to open up more" (Vol. 2, p. 115).

Kelly agrees that study groups gave her a chance to get to know other teachers better as she worked with them. As a result, teachers have learned to trust each other and have developed good rapport. In Shannon's opinion, "It's more of a family instead of just everybody by themselves" (Vol. 2, p. 110).

Crown Point Elementary School (CPES)

At CPES, only 4 teachers out of 30 (13%) included in the purpose of a study group the concept of developing a sense of camaraderie and cooperation (Vol. 3, p. 151).

However, Betty, one of the teachers from CPES, underscored how study groups had encouraged teachers to work cooperatively. She admits, "I enjoy study
groups. It's one of the best things created" because, in Betty's opinion, study groups have fostered good relationships among teachers (Vol. 3, p.147). "Now teachers avoid hurting other peoples' [teachers'] feelings. Instead they take time to explain and share their points of view freely." Betty concludes by saying, "Everyone, I think --almost--should have study groups. It's worth it" (Vol. 3, p. 147). Out of 25 teachers, 9 indicated they learned to share ideas, techniques and materials, work cooperatively, and "face a problem and deal with it" (Vol. 3, p. 154).

When asked how study groups at CPES had affected them. 15 out of 20 (75%) respondents reported they had experienced personal growth. Seven out of 15 (75%) described their actions as more open and more cooperative. They were more open to suggestions, more willing to share ideas, and more patient with each other. As a result, they had learned better team skills (Vol. 3, p. 171).

Out of 30 teachers, 7 also indicated that because of study groups "the sharing of ideas and materials is easier." They observed that the organizational structure of the school provided "a healthy working environment." One teacher explained, "Since we [staff] share information, there is a sense of cohesiveness that otherwise would not exist" (Vol. 2, p. 121).

Lincoln Elementary School (LES)

At LES, 11 out of 40 teachers reported that one of the purposes of teacher study groups is to help each other "physically and emotionally while learning
innovations." Five of the 11 teachers described the study group as "a great support team" (Vol. 1, p. 159).

Out of 40 teachers who answered the survey, 36 (90%) teachers perceived study groups as helpful. Two important reasons teachers believed study groups were helpful were the related ideas of community and support. For example, teachers stated, "It creates a bond with other teachers"; "it is also helpful in keeping the lines of communication open; I do not feel so isolated from the rest of the teachers," and "teachers have so little support" (Vol. 1, p. 166).

One of the new teachers stated, "I am a new teacher and my study group just began meeting two months ago. The usefulness is unbelievable. I wish we had been doing it all year. The burden is not all on my shoulders now. We all work together and well" (Vol. 1, p. 167). Additional examples of how the study groups satisfied teachers' basic needs included comments on how they provided a release of tension, and how it was just more fun planning with a group. "Since we are working together, it makes planning more enjoyable and expands our knowledge base" (Vol. 1, p. 167). Another teacher admitted that study groups at first "were cumbersome and time-consuming," but that once they became a habit, they proved to be beneficial because the teachers were able to discover each other's strengths and use each other as resources (Vol. 1, p. 167).

When responding to how teacher study groups had affected their personal growth, teachers explained that they had gained new friends and a feeling of
togetherness. As a result, they felt more comfortable and could communicate honestly with each other. This made working with peers easier: "I do not feel isolated as a teacher. I have been able to develop friendship and trust with my peers" (Vol. 1, p. 181).

Another added, "I have a more friendly attitude toward my fellow teachers." and "I now enjoy meeting and working with my grade level." In addition, "It [the study group] kept me from having to do all my planning alone" (Vol. 1, p. 181).

One teacher commented, "Meeting together and working cooperatively really makes a difference. Before study teams, we did not share ideas or discuss student problems with one another. We also did not plan lessons together." Another teacher added, "Before this, we were pretty isolated from one another with very little sharing of ideas" (Vol. 1, p. 174).

In the in-depth interview, Michelle explained that she knew all the teachers before the faculty was organized into study groups. However, because of the groups, she now knows a small group of teachers intimately: "You get to know things about their home life that teachers don't usually get a chance to talk to anybody about" (Green & Henriquez-Roark, 1993, p. 28).

Michelle's group members also know her better and expressed how much they cared for her. Michelle told of the group sending her flowers, and a fruit basket when her mother was in the hospital. Members of her group also helped to average grades and do report cards so that she would not have to do them when she returned.
She adds, "I came back and they were just really caring and understanding and that meant a lot to me, especially at that time" (Vol. 1, p. 149). The benefits gained from participating in teacher study groups also included increased self-esteem, teacher power, and freedom.

**Self-Esteem, Power, and Freedom**

**Dynasty Elementary School (DES)**

In defining a study group, 21 out of 29 (72%) of the teachers from Dynasty Elementary School stated that it was a group of teachers who get together to "improve and enhance their environment" (Vol. 2, p. 112).

As noted in chapter 6, 21 out of 26 (82%) of DES teachers indicated that the study group is very helpful in identifying problems, finding solutions, and providing support. An example given was that teachers were able to have more input in areas that traditionally are "dictated by authority figures" (Vol. 2, p. 117).

Out of 30 teachers, 7 reported that the organizational structure of the school, which organized the faculty into study groups, provided a healthy working environment. For example, more teachers voiced ideas that helped to build positive school morale (Vol. 2, p. 121), which in turn gave confidence and power to teachers.

In a study conducted by Ashton, a teacher's general sense of effectiveness as a teacher (personal efficacy) was considered to be personally renegotiated everyday. Ashton, Buhr, and Crocker (1984) further confirmed this concept when they found that teacher efficacy is a norm-referenced rather than a self-referenced trait. This
means that teachers' self-confidence in relationship to their teaching is determined primarily by his/her interactions with colleagues.

In 1988, Cooper claimed that teacher power is not based on status, but rather on "the quality and depth of practice and the values of the professional" (p. 48). Teachers' self-esteem and confidence is directly related to how others view them and their practices.

Personally, Jeannie admits, "it [the study group] has helped me. I feel better about myself. . . . We feel good about ourselves because we can feel free to go to each other to solve problems. . . . Now we are more empowered to make decisions" (Vol. 2, p. 106).

Out of 30 teachers, 25 (83%) felt the principal applauded and encouraged their efforts. One teacher said, "She [the principal] brags to county-level administrators regarding innovations, videotapes our efforts, [and] shares them with any and all" (Vol. 2, p. 130). Other examples of how the principal encouraged the teachers included: verbal praise, notes in lesson plan books, PA announcements, announcements in faculty meetings, getting materials, inviting resource people, verbal encouragement, door-always-open policy, allowing freedom to explore and "each teacher receiving a Reaching out for Excellence sticker" (Vol. 1, p. 130).

Not only did the principal back them up verbally but she was there with money. Forty-five percent of the teachers who gave examples of how the principal did "cheerleading" for the innovation they were implementing specifically mentioned
that the principal provided funds in order for teachers to attend workshops. One teacher reported, "She [the principal] is very supportive. Recently, our principal provided funds to attend a whole language workshop. She has also provided resource people for Models of Teaching and Cooperative Discipline" (Vol. 1, p. 130).

Another teacher added that the principal was very supportive because "she paid for a special class for any teacher who wanted it in Cooperative Discipline."

Out of the 26 teachers, 19 (73%) of the teachers claimed study groups had affected them personally. Examples cited were that teachers' self-esteem was positively reinforced; they felt more confident, more calm, and "better able to handle situations with more control" (Vol. 1, p. 132).

One teacher explained that she was "more confident in what I do and how I do it" (Vol. 2, p. 23e); another admitted that the study group had "made" her a better teacher because she was now able to take criticism and was willing to try new approaches (Vol. 1, p. 132).

Crown Point Elementary School

At CPES, 18 out of 25 (87%) of the teachers regarded teacher study groups as beneficial. One teacher reported, "The study group is very helpful in providing support where necessary" (Vol. 3, p. 186). Four other teachers also implied that the study group represented a support system to them. They explained how helpful it was to listen to people with similar problems, and to exchange feelings about lessons and
their effectiveness or failure. This type of support engenders confidence (Vol. 3, p. 157).

Another teacher observed the mutual respect that had developed because of study groups. She remarked, "Togetherness lends itself to a more conducive school climate and respect for each other seems to prevail" (Vol. 3, p. 163).

Out of 20 teachers, 15 (75%) at CPES, reported they had experienced personal growth as a result of participating in teacher study groups (Vol. 3, p. 171).

Ten teachers perceived themselves as better teachers because they now had a resource for good ideas; they were wiser in dealing with students and had gained more knowledge in using strategies effectively (Vol. 3, p. 171).

Lincoln Elementary School (LES)

Out of 40 teachers, 34 (85%) at LES stated that the principal applauded and encouraged their efforts. One teacher said, "He is our biggest cheerleader, highlighting ideas over the intercom system or in group meetings" (Vol. 1, p. 11d).

Some other examples of the cheerleading included pep talks from the principal, notes to recognize efforts, invitations of presenters with great ideas, assignments of challenging chores, whole school projects, individual praise and recognition at faculty meetings or small group meetings, and the provision of time (Vol. 1, p. 130).

More and more research is confirming the need to schedule a specific time for teachers to work together during the work day as an imperative for professional growth and school improvement (Fullan, 1991; Green & Henriquez-Roark, 1993;
Joyce & Showers, 1988; Senge, 1990). The action in and of itself gives teachers the message that who they are and what they are doing is important. In 1967, Schaefer described the "school as a center of inquiry, where faculties continuously examine and improve teaching and learning" (Joyce & Calhoun, 1995, p. 51).

In their article "School Renewal: An Inquiry, Not a Formula," Joyce and Calhoun admit that "school improvement has been inherently frustrating because time to study collectively as a faculty has not been available" (1995, p. 51).

Berry, in his forthcoming book The Work of Restructuring Schools, states that time is the most critical barrier in de-isolating teachers. He points out that "research on school change points to the pivotal variable of teacher time necessary in schools where innovation and reflection are paramount to success" (p. 30).

Teachers recognized that study groups not only provided the time and opportunities for them to work out problems together, but that as a result of the collegial culture in study groups, their self-esteem was increased (Vol. 1, p. 167).

One teacher explained, "It [the study group] also gives a sense of involvement and self-worth." Another teacher admitted, "I have a variety of lessons and units of study that I can use in my classroom. I feel that I have more input into my plans and the grade level plans" (Vol. 1, p. 183). As noted in chapter 6, it was the teachers' perception that the increase in confidence had also helped them become better teachers.

In the in-depth interview Clayton, the principal, described himself as a "zero"
when it came to the continuous learning of teaching. Now he says he has become "an actual learner of the profession" (Vol. 1, p. 142).

Although referred to in the informant's profile, it is worth repeating the changes Clayton experienced after receiving training in Models of Teaching, cooperative learning, and classroom management techniques. Others began to view him as an "expert" in those areas. He was asked to make presentations for the school district and around the country. As a result, his confidence increased enough so that he wrote a proposal to a cooperative learning conference in California that was accepted (Vol. 1, p. 143).

Clayton was not the only one who was recognized. He reveals that his teachers became very well known within the county because of their activities in whole language. Just locally, he adds, "we had at least 10 different schools ask to send people over and come to visit to see what was happening in those classrooms" (Vol. 1, p. 139). Other people from surrounding counties also came. Clayton was proud of all they had accomplished but there was one drawback. The teachers were becoming well-known and sought after. Several had received invitations to other schools or had been offered other promotions that would take them away from LES.

Nancy recognized that Clayton had confidence in the teachers. She reveals that at LES the teachers gained freedom, power, and confidence. "If we wanted to try something new in the classroom, we did not have to ask for permission."

Clayton, the principal, allowed us that power because he acknowledged our
professional growth and abilities. "If we had the support and research to back it up, we could do it." As a result, "the faculty has experienced increased self-esteem, power and cohesiveness" (Vol. 1, p. 190).

The benefits of increased self-esteem, and teacher power gained from participating in teacher study groups are also essential qualities of effective staff development and school improvement.

Joyce and Calhoun (1995), in writing about school renewal, believed that school improvement required time for teachers to be able to work together. "In essence, we need one another's ideas for stimulation, and we need one another's perspectives to enrich our own" (p. 51).

In identifying the traits of excellent teachers, Noon (1984) reported that "possessing personal and professional self-esteem," was considered third on the list of characteristics exhibited by superior teachers, preceded only by traits of choosing teaching as a profession and liking children (p. 25).

In 1987, the National Association of Secondary School Principals printed an article titled "Self-Perception: An Essential in Staff Development" (Burch & Danley). The message of the article was that educational leaders must assist teachers to maintain and develop more positive perceptions of self if the quality of instruction is to improve.

Authors Burch and Danley (1987) explained that proposals to improve teaching often include means such as new organizational schemes, imposing higher certification
standards, higher pay incentives, etc. Yet, "research literature suggests that none of these means is the primary affecter of good teaching, and that good teaching is determined by who the teacher is and what he is like" (p. 16).

It is, therefore, imperative to create an environment that satisfies teachers' basic needs and builds their self-esteem. "It is through enhancement of one's self-image and increased performance expectations that one becomes a better teacher" (p. 16).

The suggestions given in the article for maintaining and developing more positive attitudes were organized into three categories: (1) acceptance; (2) providing resources; and (3) recognition. Feelings of acceptance and recognition were precisely what teachers who participated in study groups experienced and repeatedly shared with me as one of the benefits.

In a review of a survey of Staff Development Needs for Special Education Teachers in Virginia, one of the recommendations included "the use of professional support systems as an approach to personal wellness, maintaining motivation and prevention of burn-out" (Letven, 1988, p. 10).

Using teacher study groups as a vehicle for staff development is a means of creating a climate and culture for continuing personal growth. (See Table 9.) It is also a means of recognizing that "educational change depends on what teachers do and think--it's as simple and as complex as that" (Fullan, 1982, p. 107).
TABLE 9
PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS EXPERIENCING PERSONAL GROWTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dynasty Elementary School</td>
<td>23 (30)</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Point Elementary School</td>
<td>19 (30)</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln Elementary School</td>
<td>30 (40)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Number in parenthesis represents total number of respondents.

Summary

In summary, by creating a culture that encourages openness and dialogue, a culture that allows mistakes and risk-taking, and a culture that promotes freedom and power, teacher study groups developed an organization where participants' basic human needs were satisfied.

As these needs were met, and participants' feelings of acceptance and recognition were nurtured, teachers and principals experienced a caring, synergistic community that is essential for recreating organizations and maintaining personal wellness, and continuous personal growth.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted to describe what teacher study groups looked like in the context of implementation. In chapters 4-7, I presented a case study of teacher study groups. The case study was used to (1) describe teacher study groups in operational terms as well as to describe the context of its implementation; (2) to describe the perceptions of teachers about how study groups affect their professional growth; and (3) to describe the implications of study groups on school change, school improvement, and staff development.

Until now I have tried to describe study groups primarily from the participants’ own perspective. Now I intend to shift the perspective to analysis and to interpret what I saw accomplished from my own point of view.

Conclusions

Innovation Configuration

As a researcher who was interested in implementing teacher study groups, the process of developing an innovation configuration was essential and practical. Although the concept of teacher study groups is an important innovation in American schools, until now it had not been described in operational and observable terms.
The teacher study groups as described in the Richmond County School District were organized for implementing innovation and sustaining long-term change over time. Recently, Carlene Murphy, the former director of staff development in the Richmond County School District, has developed another study group model that is centered around a problem-solving process. As one of the original developers of teacher study groups in the Richmond County School District, Carlene has a copy of the innovation configuration I developed and has already been able to use it in her training. The study group innovation configuration allows others who study the movement to understand what teachers are actually doing and to gain a historical perspective, which they can use as a point of reference for interpretation, comparisons, and further research.

Social, Professional, and Personal Growth

Teacher study groups lead to the professional and personal development of individual teachers. As individuals grow they influence organizational growth and success. Senge et al. (1994, p. 14) posits that the single greatest learning tool of any organization is conversation. Placing teachers in a culture where conversation is natural, encouraged, and rewarding results in increased learning.

To create this ambiance, however, requires a structure and culture that reaches out to teachers. It requires a culture that until recently has been rarely developed in schools. When Peck (1987) referred to Alcoholics Anonymous as being one of the greatest inventions of the 20th century, I think he was referring to the
subculture that the groups were able to create. This subculture is developed in the study groups. The 13 essential components of teacher study groups become part of the rules, standards, and norms that express the common values and beliefs upon which teachers shared and acted.

The development of this subculture required the building of community. The building of community required cooperation, commitment, and a shared vision. The building of learning communities known as teacher study groups led to teachers' social growth. Practicing cooperation led to teachers' professional growth and the overall creation of a subculture led to teachers' personal growth.

I do not mean to imply that community led only to social growth or that cooperation affected only professional growth or that culture affected only personal growth. Just as individuals' social, professional, and personal growth are intertwined, so are the effects of community, cooperation, and culture. The concepts of community, cooperation, and culture have explanatory power for organizing and isolating the most salient characteristics of teacher study groups. As schools learn to provide the enabling conditions for teachers to experience social, professional, and personal growth, they will be able to stimulate and maintain school improvement and organizational growth.

Community and Social Growth

It is through community that teachers are able to experience the support that functions as a catalyst for change. School change and improvement require learning
new knowledge, acquiring new skills, and applying these in the classroom. Too often teachers have learned innovations but have not been able to implement them because of the lack of support (Fullan, 1982; Joyce & Showers, 1988; O'Neal, 1995).

In my own experience with study groups, teachers have often expressed the idea that the study groups structure was the missing piece of the puzzle. Although they were anxious to implement innovations, it was easier to do what they had always done because a structure to support the new practice did not exist.

In all three schools teachers believed they had the support of the principal. Yet, there were subtle differences in these communities that had developed. One of the reasons for the difference is that groups go through several stages as they form themselves into community (Peck, 1987, p. 86; Ainsworth-Land, 1992).

Another reason for the differences in the teacher study groups was the principal’s leadership style and emphasis. The results of the Gregorc Mind Styles Delineator indicated three different predominant mind styles in each school. (See chapter 3.) The principals at DES and LES exhibited a shared leadership style characterized by shared visions, values, and commitment. The CPES principal exhibited a more authoritarian leadership style characterized by managing, organizing, and controlling the vision, values, and commitment. For example, each time I visited with a teacher study group the principal was present and teachers often looked to her for guidance.

The CPES principal and teachers used the vocabulary associated with the goals
of establishing teacher study groups but sometimes seemed to lack understanding. For example, when asked if the principal did any "cheerleading" for the innovation they were trying to implement, the answers were not appropriate for the question. They had a knowledge base and understood the "what" of study groups but were still working on the "how" of study groups. The DES principal and teachers seemed much more focused on professional development but did not use the words "honesty," "togetherness," and "trust" as much as the LES teachers. Of the three principals, the LES principal seemed to be the most focused and interested in all of the facets of teacher study groups.

The principal at LES was not only interested in improving his school but was also interested in enhancing staff development in general. He had a clarity of purpose, a strong belief in what he was doing, and a commitment and openness to continually learn more. It was his teachers who felt empowered because as long as they had a rationale for what they were doing they did not have to check with the principal for approval.

Principals can inspire confidence not because they have all the answers, but because they believe that together with the teachers, they can learn what is needed to achieve the desired outcomes. I agree with Peter Senge when he says that "the principals I know who have had the greatest impact tend to see their job as creating an environment where teachers can continually learn" (O'Neal, 1995, p. 21). In this study, and in my experience with study groups, it is evident that long-term change
requires involvement, clarity of purpose, and active support from those in leadership positions.

Through the use of study groups teachers were able to experience the social support necessary for building "community" where principals' endorsement, collegiality, and continual learning were established as a norm. As a result, this community of study groups stimulated teachers' social growth by:

1. Encouraging teachers to work together
2. Allowing teachers the time to develop interpersonal relationships
3. Fostering mutual respect among teachers
4. Promoting positive school morale and school cohesiveness
5. Nurturing collaborative working relationships within the schools.

Cooperation and Professional Growth

Two basic structures used in the implementation of teacher study groups both in the Richmond County School District and in my experience are cooperative learning and the training model developed by Joyce and Showers (1988).

The five essential components of cooperative learning are (1) positive interdependence; (2) individual accountability; (3) group processing; (4) interpersonal and small group skills; and (5) face-to-face interaction (Johnson & Johnson, 1991, pp. 1:8 -1:14). Although cooperative learning is advocated and student improvement has been well documented when using cooperative learning, few teachers actually have the opportunity to belong to a group where they are learning to cooperate themselves.
In the Richmond County School District study groups and in those study groups I have developed (Green & Henriquez-Roark, 1993), cooperative learning is used during the training. This allows teachers to develop skills needed to cooperate and to experience the academic growth in themselves that they desire to bring about in their own students.

The professional growth that teachers experienced in learning and implementing innovations was possible because the structure of study groups provided the environment for teachers to: (1) discuss the theory and rationale of the innovation, (2) observe demonstrations of the innovation; (3) practice the innovation; (4) receive feedback; and (5) participate in coaching. This training model is one of the best strategies developed for the implementation of innovations and long-term change. It provides a safe environment and the time and practice necessary for transfer to occur and implementation to take place.

One of the reasons I believe teacher study groups have continued for as long as they have in Augusta and in my district is that teachers see the results of their efforts. In my district one of my study group members explained that when she received her Master's degree, people viewed her as a professional but that it was not until she had been in study groups for several years that she finally felt like a professional. She explained that she now had a repertoire of teaching strategies that could be learned only through training. It is evident from their responses that teachers at all three schools in the Richmond County School District experience
professional growth because of the study group structure. This professional growth was achieved because study groups:

1. Supported and encouraged implementation of innovations and long-term change
2. Provided the necessary structure essential for acquiring new teaching skills and strategies
3. Exerted the pressure and motivation required to continue practice
4. Encouraged teachers to increase their teaching repertoire
5. Motivated teachers to focus more specifically on curriculum and instructional matters
6. Promoted improved teacher interactions
7. Stimulated better teaching because of the variety of strategies and ideas teachers were able to add to their repertoire.

Culture and Personal Growth

Maslow (1970) and Glasser (1986) both identified basic needs that all human beings have in common. They suggest that it is in achieving these needs that individuals experience personal growth and self-fulfillment.

As teachers and principals described their perception of how study groups had affected them personally, it was evident that personal growth was achieved because study groups had developed into a subculture within the school culture where teachers' basic needs could be satisfied. These needs included: (1) the need for safety, acceptance, and trust; (2) the need for belonging and love; and (3) the need
for self-esteem, power, and freedom. Ordinarily the school culture does not provide
the time or structure for teachers to interact in a deep, personal, and meaningful way.
Study groups are able create the conditions where teachers feel safe enough to talk
about themselves, and their challenges and frustrations.

In the subculture created by teacher study groups, different patterns for living
are established. The values and attitudes that guide the behavior of the group allow
them to solve problems that are characterized by a distinctive set of standards. These
rules, beliefs, and habits have defined a new way of doing things.

In study groups teachers find a place where they know they will be listened to
and accepted for themselves. The emphasis is on listening to individuals and sharing
one's expertise and experience. Teachers begin to see each other with respect and are
willing to risk new behaviors, opinions, and actions.

Teacher study groups become places where conflict still exists but they are
places where conflict can be resolved without hurting individuals physically or
emotionally.

The study group structure allows individuals the opportunity to become
leaders. The atmosphere is one of collegiality where inclusivity is the norm.

Miller (1985) explains that "any lasting change of a school will occur only
because the staff itself changes norms of expectations, appropriate role definitions,
standards of accountability and patterns of behavior" (p. 41). Teacher study groups
have provided the structure for the creation of a subculture that can meet teachers’
basic human needs. As these needs are fulfilled teachers:

1. Experienced increased self-esteem
2. Developed more confidence
3. Felt empowered
4. Pursued intellectual achievement
5. Recognized and acted upon their personal and professional potential.

School Change, School Improvement
and Staff Development

Educators have learned much about school improvement as demands for restructuring and reform continue in the educational arena. Through research we now have valuable information to make more informed decisions. The challenge according to Fullan, Bennett, and Rolheiser-Bennett (1990) is to find "a powerful framework to assist our efforts to achieve lasting and substantial change" (p. 13).

Senge (1990) has described this powerful framework in what he terms a learning organization. According to Senge, we can build "learning organizations that are continually expanding their capacity to create their future" (p. 14). These organizations develop as they discover "how to tap people’s commitment and capacity to learn" (p. 14). This is achieved by creating an atmosphere where (1) new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured; (2) where collective aspiration is set free; and (3) where people can continually learn how to learn together.

In all three schools--Dynasty Elementary School (DES); Crown Elementary
School (CPES); and Lincoln Elementary School (LES)--, teachers perceived that the ideas they contributed were accepted because of the nurturing atmosphere that had been created. (See chapters 4 and 5 above.)

Lisa, one of the primary informants from LES, expressed the freedom that power study groups had provided the teachers. As long as they had research and information to back up their choices, they were free to implement a variety of approaches in their classrooms, without checking with administration, as had been previously required. The LES decision to continue to excel in whole language while other county schools did not move ahead is another example of how collective aspiration affected teachers' actions and gave them the confidence to pursue a common goal.

The DES teachers reported "working more and more effectively" as a result of the study group structure. The DES and CPES specifically noted learning better team skills and how to work together (see chapter 6 above).

The study group structure, then, created the type of atmosphere that Senge describes as vital for the development of learning organizations.

The core of a learning organization is system thinking (Senge, 1990). "System thinking is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools" that enables the growth of learning organizations. System thinking occurs when organizations are involved in (1) building shared visions; (2) discovering and sharing mental models; (3) mastering team learning; and (4) developing personal mastery. Senge calls these
characteristics disciplines. Each of these four disciplines is essential for the
development of learning organizations.

Building shared vision fosters a commitment to the long term. Mental models
focus on the openness needed to unearth shortcomings in our present ways of
seeing the world. Team learning develops the skills of groups of people to
look for the larger picture that lies beyond individual perspectives. And
personal mastery fosters the personal motivation to continually learn how our
actions affect our world. (p. 12)

The essential attributes of teacher study groups when described by teachers and
developers included: (1) the first discipline, building a shared vision; this begins with
faculties identifying a long-term focus and a common purpose; (2) the second
discipline, discovering and sharing mental models, which was encouraged by high
levels of cooperation, collaboration, and a relatively risk-free work environment; and
(3) the third discipline, mastering team learning, which occurred because of (a)
specific times that study groups were scheduled to meet; (b) teachers completing
assignments and reporting back; and (c) the use of the training model developed by
Joyce and Showers. The fourth discipline, personal mastery, was identified as a by-
product of teachers meeting together, working together, and forming community (see
chapters 4 and 5 above).

The data collected support the concept that teacher study groups are powerful
structures because they provide the atmosphere for building learning organizations as
well as the disciplines essential for the growth of learning organizations.

Finally, system thinking, the fifth discipline, emerges when organizations
integrate and implement shared visions, mental models, team learning, and personal
mastery. This fifth discipline is characterized by a paradigm shift. The focus changes from others "out there" causing our problems "to seeing how our actions create the problems we experience" (p. 13). Systems thinking is a continuous process of inquiry that uses feedback to create a future; and that sees "people as active participants in shaping their reality" (p. 69).

Senge (1990) explains that, as a result, we begin seeing interrelationships rather than seeing ourselves separate from the world. We begin seeing processes of change rather than single events. Once this concept is grasped and we understand how we contribute to our own problems, we can begin to solve our problems.

As study group participants, members reported experiencing paradigm shifts. They described themselves as problem-solvers rather than problem-makers, as individuals who now considered colleagues rich resources of information and ideas, as leaders whose concepts and philosophy underlying staff development had changed (see chapter 6 above). Teachers and principals attributed these changes to their participation in study groups, which allowed them the opportunity and time to reflect on what they do.

Joyce and Calhoun agree that "in essence, school renewal seeks to create environments that promote the continuous examination of the process of education" (p. 55). In the article "On Schools as Learning Organizations: A Conversation With Peter Senge," (O'Neil, 1995, p. 20), Senge admits that most schools are "definitely not" learning organizations. He explains that for schools to become learning organizations, it is essential
to find ways to get teachers really working together; we need to create an environment where they can continually reflect on what they are doing and learn more and more what it takes to work as teams. (p. 20)

The majority of teachers in the three schools, DES, CPES and LES, perceived that the organizational structure of study groups in the schools created the environment for teachers to work together.

The fundamental challenges in education involve cultural changes that require collective learning (O'Neal, 1995, p. 21). However, nothing will change unless a learning process and structure are created whereby over time people’s beliefs, ways of seeing the world, and ultimately their skills and capabilities change (O'Neal, 1995, p. 23).

Teacher study groups are powerful structures for improving teachers skills that ultimately result in increasing student achievement. Teacher study groups can create a subculture within schools that will change beliefs and influence the social, professional, and personal growth of teachers. As teachers experience social, professional, and personal growth they are able to contribute to the growth of the organization, which can bring about lasting and substantial change.

Recommendations

The insights and experiences derived from this study demonstrated that study groups are powerful structures that can be used to improve instructional skills and to implement innovation and long-term change. As a result, the following
recommendations are provided:

1. That teacher study groups be used to implement innovation and long-term change

2. That teacher study groups be used in staff development to promote the social, professional, and personal growth of teachers

3. That teacher study groups be used to create a school culture where learning organizations can develop, teachers can excel, and students can experience an increase in their achievement level

4. That study groups become an integral part of training.

Suggestions for Further Research

As we continue to search for ways to effect change, there are several suggestions for probing the teacher study group concept. These include:

1. Conducting a study to describe the problem-solving model of study groups developed by Carlene Murphy

2. Conducting a comparison between the models of study groups developed by Joyce and Showers and those developed by Murphy, to delineate the benefits and outcomes

3. Conducting longitudinal studies of student achievement in schools that have maintained teacher study groups for 3 years or longer

4. Describing the effect of study groups on teacher burnout and attrition

5. Describing how study groups affect teachers from small and one-room schools
6. Determining if participating in study groups affects the level of use of an innovation as described in the Concerns-Based Adoption Model

7. Determining if participating in teacher study groups affects the amount of time it takes to progress through the different levels of use.

Teacher study groups develop and flourish in an environment where cooperation and true community have become the established norms of the schools’ culture. This new subculture reduces feelings of isolation and stress, integrates the study of new teaching strategies into the workday, encourages meaningful interchange, and, in these various processes, leads to the professional growth of teachers.

As a result of teacher study groups, schools can become learning organizations that (1) nurture the professional within them; (2) promote long-term change; and (3) result in teachers, students, and parents, once again, becoming excited about learning. "Classrooms, schools, and districts are social entities, that, like the human spirit, require the challenge of growth to maintain themselves in optimum health, but even more importantly, to soar" (Joyce & Calhoun, 1995, p. 51).
GROWTH STATES INTERVIEW

The body of the interview takes between 30 and 45 minutes, although it can be longer if special topics are explored. The purpose is to obtain information about the environment in which the teacher works and lives and their interchange with elements of those environments. A particular focus is the means by which they obtain ideas about content and process which they incorporate into their professional repertoire. Three dimensions of the environment receive specific attention: the formal system of staff development and the organization of the school, the informal system of interaction between teachers, and personally-generated activities such as reading, travel, engagement in the performing arts as consumer or participant, etc.. The data from the interview are summarized into depictions of the "states of growth" of the individual—their utilization of the formal and informal systems and the activities generated in their personal lives. In addition the data are summarized into an estimate of the energizing quality of the school.

If the interview provides complete information a picture is developed that shows how active the teacher is as a learner in the formal system, in informal interchange with peers, and in personal life and what content, process and materials are transferred from these domains into the active repertoire of the teacher as s/he works with students.

The uses of these data are:

1) to estimate the readiness of individuals and groups of teachers for participation in various types of staff development activities and provide guidelines for the adjustment of activities to the condition of the clientele.
2) to estimate the readiness of particular school environments for various kinds of staff development activities and curriculum development initiatives and provide guidelines to adjust procedures to fit the characteristics of the environment.

3) to ascertain teachers' responses to training, organizational changes, and curriculum initiatives.

4) to determine the effect of organizational changes on staff development, the growth states of teachers, and the environment of the school.

THE INTERVIEW

Explanation of Purpose

The interview commences with a description of its rationale. The interviewer explains that the interview is part of an attempt to understand the environments teachers live in, how they cope with the workplace, and their response to attempts to make those environments better. It is part of a statewide effort in California to increase the knowledge base to guide legislation and activities sponsored by counties, districts, universities, and teachers' organizations. Explain that notes are taken rather than the making of recordings, and that anonymity of individual teachers and schools is protected by keeping records under codes and ensuring that only summarized data are made visible in reports.

Substance

Academic and Professional History

The body of the interview begins by eliciting from the informant a brief resume of experience, academic preparation, and obtaining a sense of what led the person to the present role. It is worthwhile to ask informants to begin with information about where they grew up, where they went to college, their
first jobs, etc., their odyssey to the present position and preparation for it. By prompting, this portion of the interview should yield information about the individual's response to higher education, major influences on professional development, attitudes toward the profession, influence by mentors during the early career, and unusual experiences that may have influenced development. Without prolonging the interview overly, sufficient specificity should be obtained that the interviewer can envision the personal odyssey to the present point. A picture of cultural participation is essential as well as the identification of people and events that influenced the person's development and predisposition toward growth.

Present Formal Staff Development Activities

From the history we can envision the transition to the present. ("I would like to get as complete a picture as I can of the ways you use and react to the formal system of staff development—university courses, district-sponsored workshops, and curriculum development activities, whether you receive formal clinical supervisions, etc."). Try to get the interviewee to provide a general description and then ask for details. You want a detailed description of all activities engaged in during the last twelve months including numbers of workshops attended, who sponsored them, what the content was, how they reacted to them, and, very important, the extent to which they obtained ideas, skills, and instructional materials that they currently use in the classroom. Toward the end of this section of the interview, ask the person to summarize the yield from formal activities in terms of content, process, and materials actually incorporated into the flow of activities of the classroom. ("What are you doing now in your teaching that is new to you and where did it come from?")
The Informal System

("Please describe the kinds of interchange you have with other teachers in your environment. We want to know with whom you talk about teaching, whether you visit others as they teach, and whether anyone visits you, if you have any special friends with whom you interchange ideas, and so on.") Here again, try to obtain as clear a picture as possible of the details of the interchanges. We want to know just as precisely as possible how many times people visit one another, the nature of the information exchanged, and the types of things that are incorporated into the classroom repertoire. Try to get specific examples of items that were borrowed, whether teaching techniques, ideas for content, instructional materials, etc.

Personally-Initiated Activities

We introduce this phase of the interview by explaining that we are interested in learning about activities engaged in outside of the school setting which might possibly have a bearing on what and how teaching is carried on. We usually begin by asking people to describe their life out of school. If they haven't told us before we like to know how long they've lived in the area and how they spend their time when they're not on the job. We are interested in what they read and how much, utilization of the media, especially print, film and television, participation as consumers or even performers in the performing or visual arts, travel, athletic activities, hobbies, and so on. As each topic is discussed, we want as much detail as possible. We like to get a map of exactly what magazines are read, how many books were read during the last year, and the titles of the most prominent ones, how many films were seen, titles of the most prominent ones, etc.. The interviewer probes until a vivid snapshot of the last couple of months is obtained. Then, again, etc.
The Informal System

("Please describe the kinds of interchange you have with other teachers in your environment. We want to know with whom you talk about teaching, whether you visit others as they teach, and whether anyone visits you, if you have any special friends with whom you interchange ideas, and so on.") Here again, try to obtain as clear a picture as possible of the details of the interchanges. We want to know just as precisely as possible how many times people visit one another, the nature of the information exchanged, and the types of things that are incorporated into the classroom repertoire. Try to get specific examples of items that were borrowed, whether teaching techniques, ideas for content, instructional materials, etc.

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transfer questions are asked. "Have your personal activities provided you with content, materials, or teaching strategies that you use as you teach? If so, describe these and where they came from."

**Summarizing the Data**

The data are then summarized for each dimension in the tables provided below with comments following the tables. In the Appendix there are filled-in set of tables for each of the three teachers. Several summaries are made. The first is a detailed summary of formal activities of staff development and school improvement. The second deals with the interchange with other teachers. The third deals with the privately engaged-in activities, and the fourth is the estimate of the growth states of teachers and the energizing qualities of the school.
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<th>Activity</th>
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<td>Discusses teaching with other teachers</td>
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Overall response to informal environment:

- [ ] Initiating
- [ ] Active
- [ ] Passive
- [ ] Reticent
- [ ] Withdrawn

Effect of school qualities on response:

- [ ] Raises level dramatically
- [ ] Raises level
- [ ] Does not affect level
- [ ] Lowers level
- [ ] Lowers level dramatically
**Personal Dimension**

**Reading:**

<table>
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<th># of books last 2 months</th>
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**Films:**

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**Live Performances:**

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**Visual Arts:**

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Personal Dimension

Travel

Civic Activity

Sports

Other

Overall State:
___ Initiating
___ Active
___ Passive
___ Reticent
___ Withdrawn

Effect of School:
___ Raises level dramatically
___ Raises level
___ Does not affect level
___ Lowers level
___ Lowers level dramatically

Effect of Consorts
___ Raises level dramatically
___ Raises level
___ Does not affect level
___ Lowers level
___ Lowers level dramatically

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Clinical Supervision (describe amount, type, transfer)

Total hours of staff development/yr other than university courses

Overall response to formal environment

- Initiating
- Active
- Passive
- Reticent
- Withdrawn

Probable effect of school quality on overall response

- Raises level dramatically
- Raises level
- Does not affect level
- Lowers level
- Lowers level dramatically
### Formal Staff Development Activities

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<th>University-Sponsored Courses</th>
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<th>District-Sponsored Workshops</th>
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<th>Regional Teacher-Center Sponsored Workshops</th>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transfer of (describe):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Summary

Overall State of Growth

- Initiating
- Active
- Passive
- Reticent
- Withdrawn

Summary

Effect of School

- Raises level dramatically
- Raises level
- Does not effect level
- Lowers level
- Lowers level dramatically

Summary

Transfer

What kinds of materials, content, and teaching processes are being added to this person's repertoire?


STUDY GROUP SURVEY

1. Define a study team.
2. What is the purpose of a study team?
3. What have you learned and/or added to your teaching repertoire since becoming a member of a study team?
4. How long have you been in a study team? How frequently does your study team meet? Where does it meet?
5. Specifically, what is the content of your study team sessions, (e.g., do you plan lessons together, share the lesson you have planned with other teachers, etc.)?
6. Please assess the usefulness of your study team (e.g., is it helpful and how?)
7a. How was your study team set up?
7b. What is your role in the organization and facilitation of your study team?
8. Do you work with other teachers on curriculum and instruction more, less or the same as a result of the study team structure?
9. Does the organizational structure of your school encourage teachers to work together? If yes, please explain.
10. Is the content of teacher interaction different in study teams when compared with earlier less formal interactions? If yes, how?
11. Does your principal monitor the productivity of study teams? If yes, how?
12. Does your principal meet with one or more study teams? Please explain.
13a. How does your principal support study teams at your school?
13b. Does the principal do any “cheerleading” for the innovation you are attempting to implement at your school? If yes, provide an example.
14. Is your entire school engaged in implementing a curricular or instructional innovation? If yes, how did your principal get consensus from the faculty for a school-wide effort?
15. Do you have any school-improvement efforts/projects at your school that only volunteers participate in? If yes, please provide an example.
16. How has the study team affected you:
   a. personally?
   b. professionally?
APPENDIX C

GREGORC STYLE DELINEATOR CONTINUUM
APPENDIX D

STUDY GROUP INNOVATION CONFIGURATION CHECKLIST
AS DESCRIBED IN THE RICHMOND COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ a. A teacher study group consists of a group of four to six teachers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ b. A teacher study group consists of a group of three teachers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ c. A teacher study group consists of a group of two teachers or a group of more than six teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ a. There is a long-term common focus and a common purpose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ b. There is a common focus and a common purpose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ c. There is no common focus or common purpose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ a. The focus is to implement an innovation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ b. The focus is on sharing ideas without organized follow through.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ c. The focus is on getting together and socializing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 4</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ a. The innovation is focused on instruction which results in increased student achievement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ b. The innovation is focused on instructionally related activities such as policies and management concerns.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ c. The focus does not include innovation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 5</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ a. Specific times are regularly scheduled for study groups to meet during the school day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ b. Meetings are regularly scheduled before or after school hours.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ c. Meetings are sporadic and not regularly scheduled.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 6</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ a. There is an agenda, written or agreed upon which is followed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ b. The agenda is developed at the beginning of each meeting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ c. There is no agenda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 7</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ a. Leadership responsibilities are essential and pre-determined. Roles can vary and may be rotated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ b. Leadership exists but is not always predetermined.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ c. There is no organized leadership.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 8</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ a. Assignments are given to participants and reported back as part of the study group process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ b. Assignments are given but not always completed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ c. There are no assignments given.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 9</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ a. Administrative personnel participates in study groups.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ b. Administrative personnel is not directly involved but is supportive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ c. Administrative personnel is neither involved nor supportive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 10</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ a. Work climate includes modeling, demonstrations, practice, feedback and coaching, with an emphasis on student results.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ b. Work climate consists of sharing information but does not include actual practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ c. Work climate does not include demonstrations, practice and feedback or coaching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ a. The work environment is relatively risk free and includes high levels of cooperation and collaboration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ b. Some collaboration and cooperation exist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ c. Collaboration and cooperation are not practiced.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ a. Initial training is given which provides a framework and gives direction to future follow-up training activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ b. There is no connection between initial training and follow-up activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ c. There is no initial training.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ a. Teacher study groups meet once a week for an hour or more. (There can be variations in weekly scheduling. Some teacher study groups meet bi-weekly for two hours, and others meet once a month for four hours.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ b. Teacher study groups meet less than an hour a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ c. There is no formally scheduled meeting time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Component variations above double line are ideal. Component variations between solid and double lines are acceptable. Component variations below solid lines are unacceptable.
Dear Carlene,

I am interested in gaining your permission to gather data on the working of study groups in your school district. I know you have had extensive experience working with study groups. Your district, because of your experience, is one of the few places in the country where this process can be studied.

I believe it is important to be able to describe study teams who have been together for some time (3-5 years). As far as I know, this has not been done before in the literature. Study teams seem to be powerful structures for implementation of strong instructional strategies in classrooms. A description of the working of study teams would be helpful to all who are interested in instructional improvement efforts. Knowing how study teams have worked in successful schools can serve as a starting place for others; it is both comforting and can serve as a guide for implementation which includes adaptation to fit other environments.

The effect of the study team on the professional growth of the teachers is of particular interest. No one, to my knowledge, has looked at that question. We think, of course, that being a member of a study team over an extended period of time will be beneficial to teachers and principals, and, of course, to students of those teachers. If so, this information would be a useful addition to the profession as a whole and specifically to those planning to organize study teams or similar structures in schools.

The research design would primarily be qualitative. Some survey data would be gathered. Descriptive data from archival records would also be gathered. Interviews would be a major technique for gathering data. If the time allows, data from some participant observation (teams in action) would be gathered. Data would be analyzed using standard content analysis techniques. Our preliminary thinking is that we would limit ourselves to four school sites and one to five teachers at each site for the bulk of our data gathering efforts.

The district would receive a copy of the study. At this point in time, we are suggesting that the sites and participants be anonymous in all records and reports. Strict confidentiality of all records would be maintained. I would, of course, be willing to negotiate any of these items as needed.
I am Professor and Chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning in the School of Education at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Our School grants doctoral degrees in education. I, as a result, have students interested in research projects. I am personally interested in the study team concept. One of my doctoral students and I studied the front end of the study group process looking especially at training, teacher cognitions, and the implementation of specific educational innovation (models of teaching).

A natural progression of that study would be to study veteran study teams describing their operation and what happens to the professional growth of teachers as a result of being a part of study teams over time. I have a doctoral student interested in such a project. We would work together to accomplish the task.

What we need is permission to conduct the study. You will need more specific information about the study. My student, Rita Roark, and I are willing to meet with you October 29 in Augusta to explore possibilities with you. We have made travel arrangements to meet with you on the 29th. We will need more detailed information regarding time and place.

I really look forward to exploring this study and hope we can mutually agree to conduct it. I think it will be both practical and exciting.

Please call me or write if you have comments or questions.

Sincerely,

William H. Green
(616) 471-3577
March 9, 1994

Dr. William H. Green, Professor
Department of Teaching and Learning
School of Education
Ms. Rita H. Roark, Student
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104

Dear Dr. Green and Ms. Roark

We granted permission for you to conduct your research project, Study Groups: A descriptive case study of study groups and teacher perception on the effect of study groups on their professional growth, during the 1993-95 school years in the Richmond County School System.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Patricia B. Burau
Assistant Superintendent
for Personnel Services

hc
March 17, 1994

Rita H. Roark
1602 Lakeview Drive
Pineville NC 28134

Dear Rita:

The Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) has reviewed your proposal, "Study Groups: A Descriptive Case Study of Study Groups and Teacher's Perceptions on the Effect of Study Groups on Their Professional Growth," under the Exempt Review Procedure. You have been given clearance to proceed with your research plans.

Please be advised that any serious or adverse reactions and/or physical injury must be reported immediately in writing to the Human Subjects Review Board. Any physical injury must also be immediately reported to the University physician, Dr. Loren Hamel by calling (616) 473-2222. All changes made to the study and/or consent form after initiation require prior approval from the HSRB before changes are implemented. Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions.

The duration of the present approval is for one year. If your research is going to take more than one year, you must apply for an extension of your approval in order to be authorized to continue with this project.

We wish you success as you implement the research project as outlined in the approved protocol.

Sincerely,

James R. Fisher, Director
Office of Scholarly Research

c: W. Green

Good luck on finishing your project. It has been good to be in touch again!
December 7, 1993

I have agreed to be a part of a research project on study teams conducted by Dr. William H. Green and Rita H. Roark from Andrews University during the 1993 - 1995 school years. I understand I will be involved in formal and informal interviews, observations, journal writing and surveys. The research team has assured anonymity of all responses and confidentiality of all records.

__________________________ Date:__________________________
Participant

__________________________ Date:__________________________
Research Team Member

__________________________ Date:__________________________
Research Team Member

CAROLINA CONFERENCE of Seventh-day Adventists

Rita Henriquez-Roark
Associate Superintendent of Education

P.O. Box 25848 • Charlotte, N.C. 28229-5848
Bus. 704-535-6720  Home 704-889-7482

William H. Green, Ph.D., Professor
Chair, Department of Teaching and Learning

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY
Berrien Springs, Michigan 49104-0100
(616) 471-3577  FAX (616) 471-4425

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January 27, 1995

Dear Carlene,

It was a pleasure speaking with you this morning. I certainly do appreciate your willingness to help me as I continue to work on my dissertation.

In the process of developing an innovation configuration for teacher study groups my next step is to have the developers read the check list in order to make corrections and give feedback.

The checklist I have developed is descriptive of the teacher study groups in the Augusta project. I realize there have been other developments and changes since then.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you. Please feel free to use any of the following ways to reach me.

Fax number: 704-568-3036.
Phone Numbers: 704-543-8763 = Home
704-535-6720 = Office

Address: Rita H. Roark
1602 Lakeview Dr.
Pineville, NC 28134

E-mail: 74617.1355@compuserve.com

You can always leave a message for me at my office. I check in every day. Dr. Green can also be reached at (616)471-3577. His E-mail address (Internet) is Internet:greenw@Andrews.edu

Thanks again for your input. Have a wonderful week.

Sincerely,
January 28, 1997

Ms. Rita H. Roark
Associate Superintendent
Carolina Conference of SDA
P.O. Box 25646
Charlotte, N.C. 28229-5646

Dear Ms. Roark:

I hope your experience working with the Richmond County schools was a positive one. Please feel free to call on me if I can be of further help to you in your endeavors. I am enclosing one of my cards for your file.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Patricia B. Burau
Assistant Superintendent
for Personnel Services

[Attachment]
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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Hord, S. (1986). *A manual for using Innovation Configurations to assess teacher development programs*. Austin, TX: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, University of Texas at Austin.


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Murphy, C. (1992a). Reculturing schools and districts through study groups. Paper presented at the Richmond County Public Schools, GA.


Murphy, C. (1992c). Staff development: A vehicle for building self-renewing organizations through study groups. Paper presented at the Kentucky Association for School Administrators, KY.


VITA

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VITA

NAME: Rita Henriquez-Roark

PLACE OF BIRTH: Panama City, Panama

EDUCATION:

1995 Ed. D. Curriculum and Instruction, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

1974 M. A. French, SanDiego State University, San Diego, CA.

1972 B. A. French, Pacific Union College, Angwin, CA.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

1989 - 1995 Associate Superintendent of Education, Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Charlotte, NC

1987 - 1989 Vice-principal, Greater Miami Academy, Miami, FL

1984 - 1987 Teacher/Administrator, Pioneer Adventist School, New Smyrna Beach, FL

1978 - 1984 Teacher, Fort Myers Junior Academy, Fort Myers, FL

1976 - 1978 Teacher, Rustic Elementary School, San Bernardino, CA

1972 - 1974 Graduate Assistant, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA
PUBLICATIONS:


HONORS SOCIETIES MEMBERSHIPS

Pi Delta Phi, French Honors Society, 1974

Phi Kappa Phi, Cross Disciplinary Honors Society, 1995

Phi Lambda Theta, Educational Honors Society, 1995