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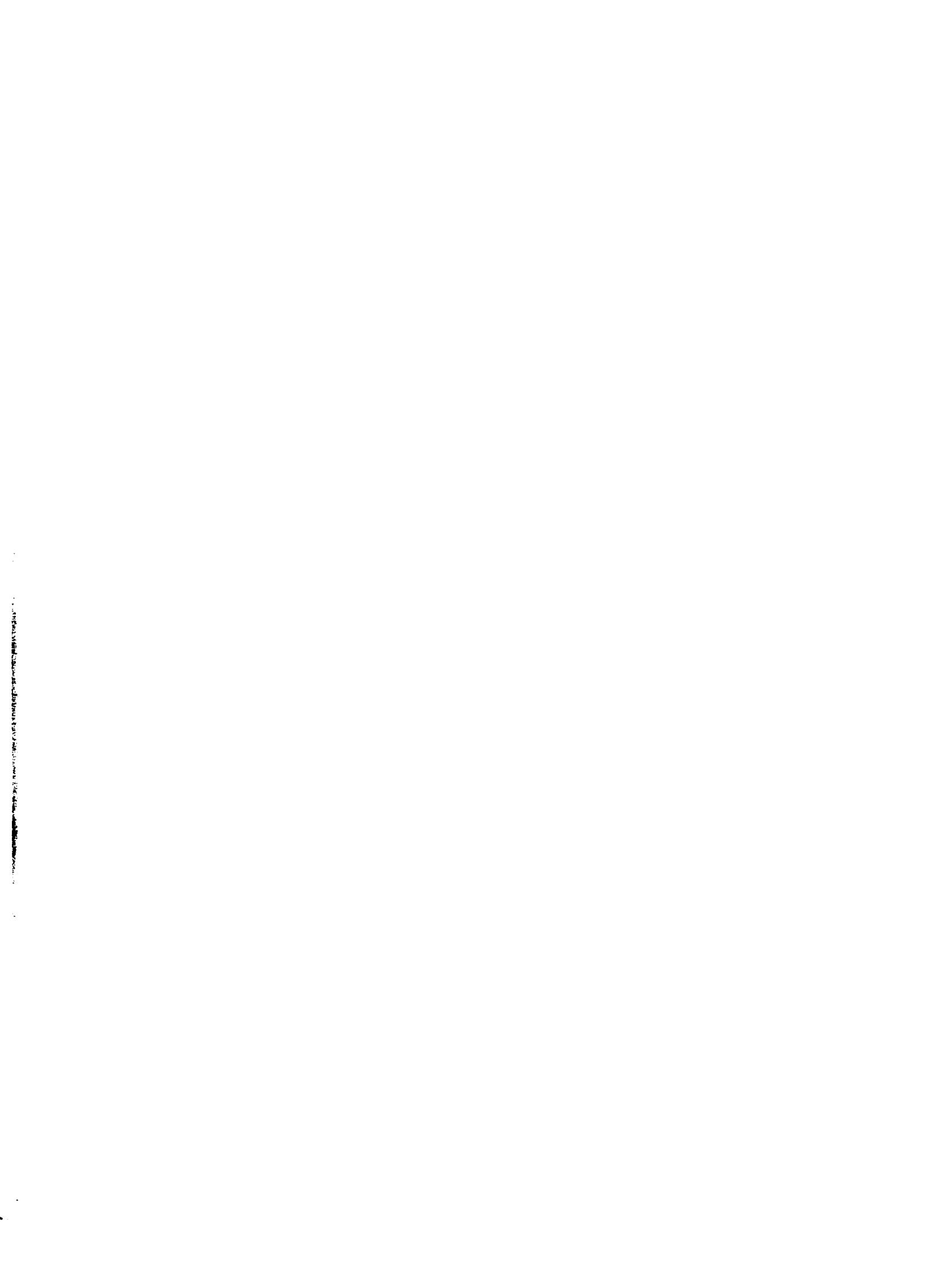
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**THE ON-SITE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM:
A COLLABORATIVE ENDEAVOR**

by

Dolores A. Sandoval

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

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For the Degree of**

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dale L. Steinhilber", is written over a horizontal line.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions and experiences of teachers participating in an on-site master's degree program in their school district. Its intent was to provide school districts and universities with information for establishing future programs.

To accomplish this, a questionnaire was distributed to teacher participants and instructors of six school districts in metropolitan Phoenix. Additionally, selected teacher participants, all program administrators and the university program administrator were interviewed.

The following conclusions were based on the findings of this study.

Teachers, instructors and administrators agreed that:

- a master's degree is important to a teaching career and improves teaching, provided the course content is implemented.
- participation in and completion of a master's degree program impacts student achievement.
- courses taken through the on-site program were more appropriate than those offered through a university-based program.
- a cohort system is beneficial to teachers in completing the program.

Teachers agreed that:

- a master's degree program has an impact on their practice.

- **courses in instructional strategies, diversity issues, special needs, child psychology, educational research and issues are valuable to their role. Instructors saw all courses offered as valuable.**
- **the quality of a course is determined unilaterally by the instructor.**
- **the convenience of proximity of the on-site program facilitates pursuing a master's degree.**

Teachers and instructors agreed that:

- **the on-site program is the best professional development for teachers and more helpful than inservice courses.**
- **an on-site program should include more practical than theoretical aspects. All administrators indicated the program must include a balance.**

Teachers and administrators agreed that:

- **district and non-district instructors both provided quality instruction; however, district instructors bring relevant district information to the instruction.**
- **the on-site program provides a meaningful professional development experience through its alignment with district philosophy and goals, and, as administrators further expressed, the optimum professional development experience for teachers.**

The long-term implication of the findings is the need for continued and extended university/school district collaboration in the area of teacher professional development.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Continuous improvement for teachers through professional development is of ongoing concern for school districts, most imminently with the flurry of school reform issues that has surfaced. Public education is being called to task by many constituencies—whether rightfully so or not, is a question that is being debated enthusiastically. The reasons behind this criticism are fourfold: the news media has become unduly critical and negative about education; as a result, educators have become disenchanted and disengage from the needed rhetoric about education; Far Right groups' criticism has contributed to the demise of public support; and finally, America as a whole is unclear of the expectations for public education (Jennings, 1996).

The now much beleaguered *A Nation At Risk* report that was released in 1983 led the way in the denouncement of public education. The “manufactured crisis” that ensued, Berliner and Biddle (1995) feel, is politically motivated and unjustly targets educators as scapegoats. The public perception that teachers and educators lack specific expertise is demoralizing to educators and consequently, affects interaction that is necessary in the process of reform (Tauber, 1992). The unfortunate result is that as the focus continues on the debate, the real problems in public education are not being addressed. Nonetheless, the debate continues, and options to the traditional mainstays of public education are being pursued and instituted, some examples being vouchers for choice, the creation of charter schools and alternatives to teacher certification.

In mid-1994, a seventh goal addressing teacher education and professional development was included as one of the National Education Goals: "By the year 2000, the Nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century" (U.S. Department of Education, 1993). This goal may in part be in response to recent public allegations that America's teachers are the least talented of those entering professions and also poorly prepared academically (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). Regardless of its intent, it is an indication that teachers are vital to the process of educational reform and must be provided with enriched and expanded activities in order to become better prepared to educate all students (Dilworth & Imig, 1995).

In response to this mandate, at the local level, school districts continue to be responsible and accountable for professional development for their teachers. In the attempt to meet the needs of teachers with varying levels of experience, they offer a wide range of professional development opportunities. These options often include required coursework that endorses knowledge the school district deems valuable in terms of instruction and classroom management; other offerings are general staff development opportunities, such as formal courses and workshops. These opportunities are provided by the school district and taught by resident staff development personnel or out-of-district consultants. A third option for professional development that is generally available, but not commonly sponsored through the district, is a master's degree program.

The reality in many districts is that progress on the salary schedule is based on acquiring a master's degree, and even though district-based staff development opportunities may indeed meet the professional development needs for most teachers, they may or may not fulfill the requirement needed to progress on the salary schedule. Financial reward is not the only reason teachers seek an advanced degree. In some states, re-certification has in the past been contingent on earning such a degree. And then, of course, the personal fulfillment of completing the degree is of great importance to many.

Overview of the Issues

Regardless of the reason for the pursuit of a master's degree, the master's degree option for continuing education has been most traditionally accepted for teachers (Turner, 1990). More often than not, teachers attempt to complete the degree while continuing to teach. For most, it is not financially feasible to take either a sabbatical leave, which is rarely available early in the teaching career, or a leave of absence. The result is a period of time when the teacher juggles the demands of a teaching career along with the needs for completing the master's degree requirements. The schedule can be demanding and may necessitate considerable time away from home, including summers and weekends, to complete the required coursework. Commuting time to and from courses adds to the time commitment, especially in large metropolitan areas. The lack of coordination for these generic programs with respect to both location and scheduling increases the difficulties associated with the time commitment for those teachers involved.

Time commitment is not the only issue involved in the completion of a master's degree. Recently, these degree programs have also met with the same unwavering

scrutiny as public education in general. "The worst of the education [sic] schools are certification mills where the minimally qualified instruct the barely literate in a parody of learning" (Kramer, 1991 in Berliner, p. 102).

Are teachers being adequately prepared to meet the needs of students? The often-made observation that "times and students have changed" belies the complexity of the issues the teaching profession now confronts. Through movements such as effective schools and quality schools, the role of the teacher continues to be defined and redefined. Master's degree programs attempt to meet those needs, but often the curriculum does not support or enhance the teacher's daily life in the classroom. Master's degree programs such as these are developed generically to fulfill the needs of a very broad population or to meet specific outcomes often determined unilaterally by the degree-granting institution.

Recently, the opportunity for school districts to offer a master's degree program on-site created specifically for a district in collaboration with a sponsoring university has become more prevalent. The school district, in conjunction with university personnel, designs the curriculum that not only includes capstone courses taught by university personnel, but also offers courses that are taught by district personnel. The collaboration offers the opportunity to jointly determine within the context of the school district's needs, what is most appropriate for that district's teachers in regard to a master's degree. While the responsibility for a master's degree program to provide universally agreed-upon educational tenets through capstone courses is undisputed, addressing a specific district's needs is the strength of these innovative programs.

Contribution and Purpose of the Study

With the recent reforms and restructuring movements in education, the need for teachers to complete a master's degree is being questioned. Knapp, et al. (1990) in their summary of findings concluded that "graduate education makes a modest difference in how teachers are perceived by their supervisors, in how they behave in classrooms, and in their students' learning" (Knapp, et al, p. 30). They further concluded that the expense involved contributed to the attrition rate of teachers, particularly if the degree was required for recertification or progress on a salary schedule.

On the contrary, Turner (1990) contends that the public expects teachers to be well-educated and since the "mean" educational status has risen in the general population, teachers must be required to complete a master's level education. A further expectation of the public is that teachers exhibit a sense of professionalism. In Turner's view, involvement in a master's degree program promotes the development of that professionalism.

Perhaps the central issue concerns the need to rethink the content and quality of master's degrees as they are presently administered. Dilworth and Imig (1995) have suggested that if teachers are to be better prepared to meet students' needs, they must be involved in activities that are tied to "the emerging student performance standards and be continuous, site-based, teacher-designed, and organizationally focused" (Dilworth & Imig, 1995, p. 1). They further suggest that collaboration between the university community and school districts is imperative. The conception of on-site master's degree programs allows for and supports these possibilities.

Several programs offering the opportunity to complete a master's degree on-site at a school district are presently in progress. These programs are unique in their approach and design, having been jointly developed by the school district and the sponsoring university. The outcomes of the program as experienced by those involved have not been fully addressed previously in research. In view of the growing need for innovative and meaningful avenues to address teachers' professional development, programs such as these must be investigated.

The purpose of this study is to describe the perceptions and experiences of teachers who are participating in an on-site master's degree program in their school district. It is intended to provide both school districts and universities with information to assist in the design, administration and implementation of future programs. The study will provide:

1. a description of the participants' perceptions and experiences of their involvement in an on-site master's degree program,
2. insight as to the needs of teachers for the design and development of the curriculum of the program,
3. insight into the process in regard to the administration of the program, and
4. a description of the district's needs as defined by the administrators and district-based instructors involved in the development, teaching and administration of the program.

Assumptions

A master's degree has historically been the chosen option for teachers to not only advance on the salary schedule, but also to improve their theoretical knowledge and practice. If such is the case, this study is based on the following assumptions:

1. A master's degree is a viable, effective and essential component in the course of a teacher's professional development.
2. Successful completion of a master's degree program contributes to the improvement of classroom practice and subsequently, increases student achievement.
3. Successful completion of a master's degree program promotes professionalism.

Definition of Terms

- Staff development is a serious and systematic effort to engage a group of professional educators who work together, a staff, in activities designed specifically to increase the power and authority of their share work. (Griffin, 1991, p. 244)
- Teacher education is comprised of the undergraduate courses and preservice training prior to completing a baccalaureate degree.
- Professional development is "an ongoing, systematic growth process for professional school employees. It is designed to improve professional performance for the benefit of students. Professional development helps all involved achieve organizational goals through the application of acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Burke, 1994, pp. 201-202).
- Teacher development is used interchangeably with professional development.

- Inservice education is “a structured learning experience scheduled by school authorities for school employees” (Burke,1994) and is considered a component of professional development.
- Collaboration is “the extent to which teachers engage in help-related exchange” (Rosenholtz, 1989, p. 56). “Working together, cooperating for some common purpose” (Russell & Flynn, 1992, p. 10).

Research Questions Guiding The Study

As noted before, throughout this current period of reform, the traditional avenues and the content for professional development for teachers are being questioned. The critics of public education cite the lack of student achievement and insist that it change.

If the assumption is that professional development can help revitalize classroom instruction and increase student achievement, the following questions surface:

1. What role does a master’s degree play in a teacher’s professional development?
2. What curriculum is most appropriate to create and support the revitalization of classroom instruction and consequent student achievement as seen by the participants?

Traditionally, master’s degree programs have represented the theoretical and philosophical foundations of teaching and learning as defined by an institution of higher education. Staff development at the district level has provided primarily the practical aspect of teaching and ultimately and ideally, inquiry into practice.

As teachers take greater responsibility for their own professional development and for the operation of their schools, they find less time and desire to pursue university instruction based in large measure on research.

At the same time, faculty at colleges and universities find less access to the schools and to practitioners who validate new forms of pedagogy and practice (Dilworth & Imig, 1995, p. 1).

3. Since these programs are designed jointly by a district and university, will the program better meet teachers' needs as they define them?
4. Does a master's degree program created jointly by a university and school district provide a meaningful and relevant professional development experience as seen by the participants?
5. Can an on-site master's degree program be the means for the merging of two systems for professional development?

Limitations of the Study

The population for the study involves only teachers from the State of Arizona, where a master's degree is no longer required for re-certification. The results of the study may not be meaningful in other populations where the incentives for professional development may differ greatly.

Overview of the Study

Traditional master's degree programs offered through universities have long existed. With the advent of programs designed to be offered on-site at school districts, the need for investigation into perceptions and experiences of those involved has been presented in this chapter. An introduction to the need, the research questions guiding the study and the limitations of the study have also been presented. The review of related literature is presented in Chapter Two. Chapter Three describes the methodology of this study in

depth. The analysis of the data collected is presented in Chapter Four, with Chapter Five providing the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

With recent reform mandates, an unprecedented move toward rethinking teacher professional development has been undertaken. Never before has there been such scrutiny of public education and the subsequent outcry for the revision of teacher professional development (Guskey, 1994; Berliner & Biddle, 1995). The master's degree has traditionally been the most-favored and revered option for continued teacher professional development; consequently, master's degree programs have come under close investigation in regard to their relevancy to that development.

In this literature review, the following questions have been employed as guidelines for inclusion of literature relating to the master's degree and its role in teacher professional development. The focus for the review is primarily on post-baccalaureate teacher development, but the inclusion of undergraduate teacher education issues is pertinent due to the extent that it colors and impacts the nature of ongoing professional development.

- What do recent reform movements suggest for teacher professional development in regard to delivery and curriculum? What delivery systems have historically been implemented for teacher professional development?
- What is the motivation for teachers to seek professional development?
- What are the adult learner's needs?
- What is the present status of the master's degree?

- What does the literature report on master's degree programs and their relevancy to teacher professional development?

Reform And Teacher Professional Development

The American educational system is about to once again repeat history—the reform of public education. The issues currently being addressed have been debated historically and periodically to little avail.

They failed for numerous reasons; but at the top of the list is the failure of reformers, policy makers, and communities to address the capacity of schools and the teaching profession to implement the reforms. (Futrell, 1994)

The *Nation at Risk* report issued in 1983 began an onslaught of reform movements and proposals. With the advent of reform initiatives, the importance of teacher professional development to the success of these reforms has finally been acknowledged; consequently, new structures and delivery systems for teachers' professional development are being investigated (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Guskey, 1994; Lieberman, 1995). "Efforts to redesign education ultimately require rethinking teachers' preparation and professional development" (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, p. 598).

Some long-held notions of what constitutes good teacher professional development are being reconsidered. These have included the one-shot workshop, the day-long conference or the out-of-district consultant who supplies information without the consideration of school philosophy and culture (Lieberman, 1995; Mann, 1995; Wood & Thompson, 1993). Instead, opportunities where teachers share and learn together within the context of their district and school are being created. The need for opportunities for

authentic teacher learning in a collaborative environment is evident (Futrell, 1994; Griffin, 1991; Johnston, Markle, & Ahar, 1988) and these opportunities are being recognized essential to capacity building if systemic reform is to be successful (Folden, Goertz, & O'Day, 1995).

Three reports regarding reforms for teacher education surfaced in the 80's: the Holmes Group Report, the Carnegie Task Force Report and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Redesign. Even though the focus of each report was different, the Holmes and Carnegie reports arrived at similar conclusions. The Holmes report focuses on the structure of teacher education, recommending that formal teacher education courses be offered as postgraduate work, rather than undergraduate. It states that undergraduate work should focus on content subjects and as a consequence, strengthen teacher education. In their discussion of teacher education curriculum, the Carnegie group arrives at a similar conclusion. Neither truly addresses the real issue at hand, according to Tom (1987), which is what a competent teacher should know. Of minor consequence, he concludes, is the NCATE Redesign, which describes a change in the selection process of the visiting team members who recommend accreditation. Unfortunately, the organization that oversees accreditation for teacher education institutions seemingly reduces this responsibility to renegotiating standards involving only process-oriented issues and, again, never addresses what constitutes teacher competency. The question Tom asks is: Will changing the structure of how teacher education is provided ultimately make a difference?

In direct response to these reports, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was created and charged to determine standards for what teachers should know and be able to do and to establish a certification process based on those standards. The board is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan and non-governmental organizational consisting of a sixty-three member board of directors. While most of the directors are classroom teachers, other members are from the educational community at large. The standards and consequent certification are guided by five core propositions:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach, and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities. (NBPTS, 1997)

The move to establish national criteria and certification for the teaching profession is unprecedented. Darling-Hammond (1996) suggests that “the assessment of NBPTS—based on evaluation experts according to well-developed standards and a collaborative process—provides an alternative that teachers find credible, helpful, and an extraordinary learning experience” (NEA, 1996, p. 1). States and districts across the nation are providing incentives for teachers to pursue national certification. Perhaps this process may well serve as the most definitive and empowering for teachers in the process of the present reform (NEA, 1996).

Reform initiatives, in the attempt to provide new vision, have set the stage for reconsidering existing educational systems, as is evident with the establishment of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The resurgence of Professional Development Schools is one outcome of this trend. Approximately 200 Professional Development Schools (PDS) have been created since the 1980's. The organization and administration may vary somewhat, but the intent generally is to provide experiences to the novice teacher that are linked with master teachers in the context of the school setting. These schools focus, promote and champion the collegiality and sharing that reform movements see as vital to change in teacher professional development. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) suggest that PDSs allow novice teachers to understand and build their practice from activities and experiences that are cooperative in nature and sustained over a period of time. Furthermore, these activities and experiences provide the opportunity for reflection on both process and content.

As reformers continue to investigate alternatives to the traditional means of teacher education and development, it has become evident that support structures and organizations outside the school must become a vital part of the process of professional development. Various collaborative endeavors such as networks, coalitions and partnerships are being implemented to provide quality alternatives to traditional offerings for teachers within the school district. These networks, coalitions and partnerships offer teachers the opportunity to become involved in topics that have surfaced for them personally in the process of reflection of their individual practice. Risk-taking is supported through dialogue and the building of shared knowledge in the newly created learning

community (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Lieberman, 1995). Studies on study groups and teacher networks suggest that “intense, long-term collaboration focused on instructional practice can change the ways teachers see themselves, perhaps even altering how they see themselves as learners” (Floden, Goertz, & O’Day, 1995, p. 20).

The Southern Maine Partnership is such an opportunity, where teachers come together to reflect on their practice. Through that process, they discovered that often what they valued and practiced were not the same. Teacher networks, on the other hand, provide support systems for examination and reflection on teaching. The issues that have surfaced from individual practice can be addressed openly and freely, without the limitations that such experiences at the school site might introduce. The Foxfire Teacher Outreach Network and the Four Seasons Network provide these opportunities to teachers. Both networks involve teachers in the problem-solving of educational issues. The outcome has been one of continued support in the definition of individual teacher’s learning needs (Lieberman, 1995; Smith & Wigginton, 1991).

An additional outcome of reform initiatives has been the call for schools and universities to combine efforts in regard to teacher development. Russell and Flynn (1992) suggest that the need for such collaboration is founded in common concerns about teacher development, in diminishing educational resources, and in providing a system that promotes the investigation of research and practice. Mutual involvement in the broad aspects of research, curriculum development and school reform can provide a strong base for collaboration.

Collaboration of any sort between schools and universities presents many challenges. Colburn (1993) cites the differences in cultures that tend to create problems between resident teachers and professors. Work tempo differs. Teachers must abide by schedules and bells, and have no time for reflection about practice. Professors' schedules allow for much greater flexibility, and these differences lead to a contrary conception of "professional time." In regard to professional focus, teachers are concerned with the immediacy of activity around classroom instruction, while professors tend to focus on theory and policy. Career reward structures vary. Teachers' rewards tend to be more intrinsic, while professors are judged publicly on their publications and other academic recognition. Additionally, they feel that participation in collaborative efforts are not fully recognized by the parent university (Russell & Flynn, 1992). Personal power and efficacy are experienced differently. Professors, having more voice in decisions that affect their status, see themselves as more professional. Teachers are supervised and evaluated by administrators, and, therefore, personal power is substantially mediated through that process. In the area of academic freedom, professors create their own courses, while teachers must teach the required curriculum with textbooks frequently selected by district personnel. A final cultural difference is in the determination of what preservice teacher education should include. Teachers prefer an apprenticeship experience where mentors teach and model knowledge and skills for the classroom, while professors prefer to investigate theory and practice (Colburn, 1993).

These cultural differences provide ongoing tension between teachers and professors. In order to provide a positive experience and not allow these differences to interfere with

the collaboration, Colburn (1993) further suggests that clear goals addressing both the school's and university's needs must be determined. The issues relative to the cultural differences must also be addressed openly. A collaborative effort requires "building mutual understandings, establishing trust, creating a structure for implementing decisions, and making a serious commitment over an extended period of time" (Russell & Flynn, 1992, p. 14).

The ideal of "collaborative egalitarianism" is offered by Duffy (1994) who suggests that to allay such differences, formal collaborations should be the outcome of teachers and professors working together, at least initially, to solve a specific problem. The collaboration process and its formal manifestation should not be the immediate focus. The intent of reform is not to create collaboration for the sake of collaboration, but to assist individuals within a system to rethink concepts of teaching and learning.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) describe three forms of collaboration that do not facilitate meaningful work in schools. "Balkanization" in a school occurs when teachers form groups that reflect differences in philosophy and practice and lead to a lack of communication and competition. In "comfortable collaboration," the second form, teachers involve themselves in the support and exchange of ideas, but not in the in-depth work of questioning and reflection about practice. "Contrived collegiality," a third form of collaboration, is imposed administratively and follows clearly defined guidelines that address some specific need at the school site. While this form of collaboration may be useful in the initial stages of the development of collaboration, it may ultimately impede teacher cooperation later in the implementation of the work at hand. A final caveat that

Fullan and Hargreaves offer is that effective collaboration at its best is time-consuming, difficult and often uncomfortable. It operates “in a world of ideas, examining existing practices critically, seeking better alternatives and working together at bringing about improvements and assessing their worth” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991, p. 57). Without this form of positive professional interaction, little in the way of school and teacher development reform may be accomplished.

What continues to surface throughout the discussion about reform is the need for the inclusion of teachers in the development and design of their own professional development.

Teachers have been told often enough (or it has been taken for granted) that other people’s understanding of teaching and learning is more important than their own and that their knowledge

—gained from the dailiness of work with students

—is of far less value. Outside experts have often viewed teaching as technical, learning as packaged, and teachers as passive recipients of the findings of “objective research” (Lieberman, 1995, p. 592).

To a great extent, the structure of the educational system has deterred teachers from joining the ranks that design and implement professional activities. The system lacks the flexibility to make teachers available to collaborate in the discussion and review of any initiatives considered at the school or district level. Teachers are best aware of not only their own needs in terms of strengths and weaknesses, but of what is best for their students in regard to instructional strategies. They can best determine the impact of those

changes. By giving teachers a voice in this process, ultimately, the change and implementation becomes owned by the primary constituency—the implementer (Burke, 1994; Futrell, 1994; Griffin, 1991). The need for peer-driven teacher development has become evident (Cooper, 1991; McLaughlin, 1991).

Inherent in the teaching profession, and contrary to other professions, is the lack of career advancement. It is vitally important to recognize in the process of reform that to continue to limit leadership opportunities for teachers will perpetuate inertia in the profession. The greatly changed demographics of the school population requires a more broad-based leadership team that must include teacher participation (Griffin, 1991). With the emergence of site-based management and university/school partnerships, several options for teacher leadership in professional development have surfaced: preservice teacher educator, mentor, researcher, staff developer, peer coach, curriculum developer (Fessler & Ungaretti, 1994). These opportunities allow teachers to showcase their expertise, while expanding their own professional development. “Reform lies in eschewing efficiency, in altering assumptions. It lies in a meaningful empowerment of practitioners who will use responsibility, authority, knowledge, and collaboration to make schools humane places for learning” (Cooper, 1991, p. 90). Though the implementation of many of the innovations encouraged by the reform movements has been slowly accomplished, the activity indicates that progress is being made in the areas of teacher education and development (Galuzzo, 1988).

Historical Perspective on Teacher Education And Development

All literature reviewed indicates that the state of teacher development has been less than optimal. The educational system as it exists does not support the teacher as learner, but simply as the provider of learning for others. School settings with the present "live by the bell" structure do not allow for the collaboration, collegiality and time for reflection about practice that must pervade all teacher development if the present reform efforts are to succeed (Cooper, 1991; McLaughlin, 1991). "Lacking is a metaphor to clearly express a vision of a reconceptualized educational system whose values and assumptions are truly liberating, free of cant and conformity" (Cooper, 1991, p. 90).

This cant and conformity have been long-established with the beginnings of teacher education in the 19th and 20th centuries. Adler (1984) identifies three paradigms of professionalization that have been pervasive in defining teacher education, and ultimately teacher development. The paradigms of teaching as a calling, a science and a craft have guided the emphasis for the curriculum for teacher education. The paradigm of teaching as a calling was a direct outcome of the religious environment where dedication and good character instead of specific teaching skills, were the attributes most sought. Teacher education during this period of time was mostly nonexistent. A precursor of teacher development, teacher institutes, evolved during this time and were responsible for the shift to more emphasis on pedagogy than character attributes; thus, the move toward teaching as a science was introduced. An outcome of this movement was that "all teaching problems had technical solutions" (Adler, 1984, p. 11) and could be resolved through acquiring specific skills. The great need for efficiency versus inquiry and analysis was

condemned later by John Dewey, and the paradigm of teaching as a craft was conceived. Teaching as a craft sees the teacher as a decision-maker who is armed with the knowledge to analyze a given situation at a given moment and respond with what is best for the learner. It is in this paradigm that the teacher is best empowered to provide meaningful experiences for students. Unfortunately, as suggested before, our present educational system is not consistently supportive of teachers to allow for such action. "The production of knowledge is centered, not in places of practice, but developed elsewhere and passed on to practitioners" (Adler, 1984, p. 17). The continued focus on teaching as a science has not encouraged teachers to come to the forefront of the decision-making process in regard to professional development.

In the past, teacher development has often been a top-down creation of district administration or outside agencies with little relevancy to the classroom setting. Traditionally, teacher development programs have operated from a premise of deficiency instead of one of empowerment (Griffin, 1991; Krupp, 1989). Teacher input is not utilized in the design or delivery of skills that others have decided teachers need. Professional development at the school site usually involves one or two days of workshops or seminars where no follow-up for the implementation of the strategies is provided. Unfortunately, such programs ultimately foster a sense of isolation for those involved. Teachers teach alone without the professional support of their colleagues, as a consequence, discussion and insight around practice have been greatly limited (Cooper, 1991; Futrell, 1994; McLaughlin, 1991).

Teachers' Motivation For Professional Development

The discussion of teachers' motivations for professional development cannot be fully considered outside the context of the desire and motivation for teaching in general. Since Lortie's (1975) classic study, it has been well-established that teachers are drawn to the profession primarily by intrinsic rewards such as helping and working with others (students) and the satisfaction of teaching itself. A more recent study by Susan Johnson (1990 as in Sergiovanni, 1992) reports similar results. Teachers voiced that satisfaction comes from working with students and teaching itself. On the other hand, motivation is decreased by many dissatisfiers such as low pay, lack of respect, lack of administrative support, and poor working conditions in general.

Another study of a teachers' network, IMPACT II, concluded that teachers chose to be involved in this particular professional development activity, primarily to alleviate the isolation felt in the classroom and to take part in leadership and professional growth opportunities. Furthermore, more activity on the teachers' parts created a greater sense of efficacy and ability to make a positive impact in the classroom. They described themselves as master teachers and felt richly rewarded by their teaching experiences (Mann, 1995).

The Rand Change Agent Study examined teacher development in a broad context that included such variables as teacher commitment, training and follow-up, and the consequent maintenance of acquired skills. Results concluded that teachers chose to be involved for several reasons. They saw such involvement as valuable to their professional growth, they were asked to participate, or the incentive offered, whether financial or otherwise, was attractive. Additionally, motivation was increased when teachers

perceived district leaders positively involved in the change project. Teacher involvement in the planning increased ownership; top-down planning caused alienation. Finally, teachers were more motivated to participate in complex projects than in more routine and limited projects. McLaughlin (1991) further summarized that “values and norms operating at the school level create the critical context for teachers’ interest in and involvement with professional development...It is difficult for the individual to sustain interest in their professional development if it is not valued and encouraged within their school workplace” (McLaughlin, 1991, pp. 70-71).

Self-interest and personal gain, then, may not be primary motivators, but instead, teachers may be motivated generally by what they feel is right and good. The traditional rule of motivation says that “what gets rewarded gets done.” The result of rewards, financial or otherwise, is a very calculated involvement and creates a narrow focus on the part of the participant. The question that must be asked is “ what will happen when the reward is no longer there?” The second rule says “what is rewarding gets done.” Both the satisfier and involvement are intrinsic and personal in nature. The final rule proposes that “what is good gets done” and is fueled by duty or obligation. Involvement is the consequence of a moral commitment. Sergiovanni (1992) suggests that the final rule, that of moral obligation, is most authentic, and consequently, most beneficial to the educational setting. As teachers pursue authenticity in their practice and work, ultimately, they are driven by their moral obligation and what is good as described by Sergiovanni (Grimmett & Neufeld, 1994).

Perhaps the greatest motivator for teachers may be their initial, total involvement in the design and implementation of a change project. Farber (in Fullan, 1993) suggests that teachers often suffer from a "sense of inconsequentiality" (Fullan, p. 12), and as a result, lose the initial moral purpose that brought them to the teaching profession. Fullan (1993) proposes that for teachers to rediscover their moral purpose, they must be better prepared to promote change in their school environment and investigate more thoroughly the role of change agent. It is only through the coexistence of moral purpose and the role of change agent that change in the school environment can be maintained. As a consequence, teachers will be more prone to fully commit to whatever change project may be attempted.

The Adult Learner

In the search for meaning in their lives, adults frequently turn to the opportunity to increase either skills or knowledge that initially may surface as a specific need related to employment (Apps, 1992; Oja, 1991). This search involves "a conversation with self, a conversation with others, an interaction with some content, and an interaction with the environment around them" (Apps, 1992, p. 9). Along with many expectations for the outcome of the learning process, adult learners bring many psychological, social and economic barriers and challenges with them, which may include poor self-esteem and fear of failure. Adults question their own abilities, but frequently know more on a given subject than they realize. Through strategies such as discussion, reflection and journal writing, that help them in the discovery of their own knowledge base, adult learners must acknowledge, validate and capitalize on their own life experiences. In the process, it must be recognized that all adult learners are part-time students. Being in the mainstream of

their life, and with the demands that daily life brings, they usually have no other option (Apps, 1992; Arin-Krupp, 1989).

Both life cycle and stage theories must be addressed in not only the design but the implementation of programs for adults. Life cycle theory describes transitions that are age-related. Adults progress through a life-long process of decision-making around the why's and how's of their lives. From issues that are career-related to the personal, adults continuously question their perspective and consequent decisions in their 20's, 30's, 40's and 50's through fairly predictable phases. While these phases may not be completely descriptive of all adults, the phases provide a frame for the dilemmas that adults face (Arin-Krupp, 1989; Oja, 1991).

Stage theory, which is not age-defined, has to do with cognition, i.e. the thought and problem-solving strategies that shape an individual's perspective of his/her environment. Several models, such as ego development (Loevinger), moral development (Kohlberg), intellectual development (Piaget, Perry, Hunt), and interpersonal development (Selman), all provide insight into this process. The stages in these models are hierarchically arranged, with advancement into the next stage being dependent on the acquisition of learning and understanding required at each level. The higher the level hierarchically, the more adept the individual's functioning is in the discrimination of multiple perspectives and in the realm of problem-solving (Oja, 1991). The consideration of these stage models in the design of professional development may provide a more global perspective of life's decision-making process and suggests that "human development, personality, and

character are the result of orderly changes in underlying cognitive and emotional structures” (Oja, 1991, p. 41).

More recently, it is being recognized that adult learners may learn more like school-age students do—through active involvement and the consequent processing and articulation of what has been learned (Lieberman, 1995). To best create an optimal learning environment for adults, Wood and Thompson (1993) suggest the following considerations be taken into account:

- Goals and objectives must be meaningful and applicable to the learners’ work.
- Relevancy is of utmost importance and will promote retention and application.
- Efforts to provide peer support that help diminish judgment should be made.
- Seeing results and receiving feedback on implementation is vital to the adult learning process.
- Adults are very concrete in their learning, and the opportunities in which they apply their learning must also be concrete and directed.
- Small group interaction promotes understanding and supports the application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of what has been learned.
- The learners’ vast and varied experiences must be accommodated within the learning process.
- Some control over content must be assumed by the learners.
- Follow-up support such as coaching, facilitates the transfer of learning.

Professional development often is designed without consideration for the adult learners’ needs. Addressing professional development for educators more specifically, Oja

(1991) suggests four areas of focus that incorporate those needs. One area is that of needed time for reflection. Practical application of what is learned must be followed by reflection. As assumptions about practice are challenged, teachers must have time to build upon and embed new learning into their base of previous experience and learning. A second area is the use of peer supervision and advising. A model suggested is one of support/challenge and action/reflection, where peers model and critique teaching effectiveness. Continued support throughout the implementation of new learning is vital to retention and continued use. The third area suggests that role-taking is essential to adult development, and since new roles for teachers have surfaced as a consequence of the restructuring of schools, the need for role-taking has become even more important. Role-taking is "the ability to take into account the perspective of others, to understand a situation from another person's point of view, and to act 'as if' by assuming the role of another" (Oja, 1991, p. 51). To better understand and develop the confidence required in new roles, teachers must be encouraged to assume roles such as group discussion leader, peer supervisor, cooperating teacher, resource teacher, and action researcher. Finally, new learning that challenges assumptions and beliefs about practice often brings cognitive conflict and disequilibrium to teachers. Teachers are likely to feel anxious and frustrated during this period. To help teachers avoid retreating to previously established assumptions and beliefs, it is necessary to provide an environment that is nurturing and supportive. Any form of collegial interaction that offers support is essential at this time (Oja, 1991).

To best facilitate professional development, it is vitally important to incorporate what is known about the adult learner. Appropriate strategies can allow the adult learner to become an active and enthusiastic participant in his/her own development, and consequently, lead to better understanding of what teaching and learning is about (Apps, 1992; Arin-Krupp, 1989).

The Present Status of the Master's Degree

Historically, the answer to better preparation and advancement in any field has been the master's degree. Although, offered as the first post-baccalaureate degree at the beginning of the twentieth century, the master's degree had in the past been considered the "consolation prize" for those unable to pursue a doctorate. Since World War II, a resurgence in the value and need for the attainment of a master's degree has been underscored by business and industry seeking employees with such degrees. To better meet these needs, colleges and universities have provided master's degrees based on a broad spectrum of requirements and content. Some critics suggest that the move to such variance in programs has weakened master's education, while others feel that, in fact, this is its greatest contribution and strength (Borchert, 1994).

Cassanova et al. (1992) indicate that over the last three decades, master's degrees have become the most beneficial and profitable means to support the American economy in a global market. It is through its versatility and comprehensive nature that it has become the most commonly sought degree. "Though master's programs vary in their purposes and characteristics, most share a commitment to providing students with some

experience in original scholarship and acquainting them with the research protocols appropriate to the field” (Cassanova et al., 1992, p. 3).

Master’s degree programs generally fall into two categories:

1. Research or discipline-oriented programs which are designed to prepare students for scholarly or research activity directed toward the acquisition of new knowledge;
2. Practice-oriented or professional programs designed to prepare students for professional practice directed mainly toward the application or transmission of existing knowledge (Borchert, p. 4).

Eighty-five per cent of all master’s degree programs offered are professional programs that may serve as entry-level, workplace credentials. The outcomes for all programs include skills and knowledge gained from not only coursework, but from field experiences and the varied perspectives and backgrounds of those involved (Borchert, 1994).

Conrad, et al. (1993) conducted an extensive study of master’s degree programs and their participants across the United States with the intent of providing data to support that, indeed, these programs are a vital link between higher education and the workplace. Their results identified four types of master’s programs: community-centered, apprenticeship, career advancement, ancillary. Community-centered programs focused on collegiality of participants and faculty where the learning was a collaborative process. Apprenticeship programs provided practical experiences to participants through the instruction of “masters of the craft.” Career advancement programs provide theoretical and basic knowledge through core courses. These programs are considered terminal, with the end

result being expertise in the given field. Ancillary programs are offered through departments whose primary focus is the promotion of doctoral degrees; therefore, the master's degree in this situation is considered secondary. While providing sound academic preparation, these programs do little for practical, real world application.

The 1990's typical master's degree participant attends part-time while working full-time, is older and is female. Interestingly, the attributes of degree programs most traditionally valued, such as prestige and academic excellence, did not surface in the study. Instead, participants valued attributes that focused on the relationships and the experiences in the programs. The culture, leadership aspects, planned learning experiences and resources available were most important to the participants. A program culture that provided a supportive environment while nurturing risk-taking and, consequently, expanding learning experiences was valued. In regard to leadership, faculty with non-university experiences who were highly involved in their respective fields provided learning opportunities that included skills and knowledge needed to survive in the workplace. Planned learning experiences were varied and were provided through core coursework, intensive periods of subject involvement, mentoring, active participation internships and research, and a final, comprehensive project. Resources were defined through institutional and departmental support. Institutional support provided funding for facilities, supplies and student financial support, while departmental support was demonstrated through the provision of adequate staffing and assistance for graduates in the acquisition of employment or the pursuit of an advanced degree (Borchert, 1994).

Teacher Development and the Master's Degree

In the process of reform, the utility and appropriateness of the role of the Master of Education Degree in teacher development is being questioned. Along with university-based teacher education, the Master of Education Degree is being heralded as an endangered species. Critics suggest that a more practical and authentic approach which could include school-based delivery, be pursued (Knapp, et al., 1989; McCaleb, et al., 1987).

Unlike the general master's degree which is growing in popularity, the master's degree in education has increasingly been criticized. A great part of the concern has been with the lack of consistency in both title and content. Many higher education institutions offer the Master of Arts in Education, Master of Science in Education and the Master of Education from the same department in the attempt to meet varying needs. Program content also varies accordingly, with no definitive core coursework established. According to Osguthorpe and Wong (1991), there is reason to be concerned. The meaning of the degree not only causes confusion for employers and for personnel at institutions where graduates with master's degrees apply for entry for doctoral degrees, but also for the participants themselves as they seek information about the degree. The greatest concern is that as the confusion and lack of definition continues, the teaching profession suffers. Most professions award a single degree. It is in this unity of purpose that the profession is strengthened and defined.

The area of program requirements must also be addressed. There is no established, definitive set of program requirements. Some programs require a thesis, others a major

project and yet others require neither. The inconsistency is unlike either of the doctoral degrees, Ed.D. and the Ph.D., where both consistently require a dissertation. Educators at all levels must come to consensus on the intent and purpose of a quality master's degree program. Until a more uniform and consistent program is adopted, the teaching profession will continue to seem at odds with itself (Osguthorpe & Wong, 1991).

Another ongoing concern in regard to the master's degree, but as well as undergraduate teacher education, is the lack of relevant and practical experience and preparation on the part of professors. Frequently, professors have fewer than five years experience in the K-12 classroom, and as a consequence, according to preservice students, reflect little of the realities of the teaching profession. Preservice students frequently see their own K-12 experience as more valuable than educational foundation courses and conclude that the experience prepares them in some ways far better than formal coursework. Restructuring teacher education must include the selection of professors with a broad repertoire in contemporary elementary and secondary school experience (Ciscell, 1993).

The issue of cost effectiveness in the attainment of a master's degree is addressed by Knapp, et al. (1990). They conclude that requiring a master's degree of teachers is actually detrimental to the retention of good teachers due to the cost involved in attaining such a degree.

Additionally, the lack of consensus on what constitutes a well-defined master's degree program adds to the concern of mandating the requirement. In the review of studies cited, no significant relationship between student achievement and the level of

degree held by the teacher was determined. However, teachers with graduate level degrees are perceived as more successful by their supervisors and may be considered more highly motivated. Their conclusion, taking all into account, is that data indicate there is no need to require a master's degree for teachers in order to ensure higher student achievement (Knapp et al, 1990).

Turner (1990), on the other hand, contends that a master's degree is a necessity if teachers are to meet public expectations that they be better educated than the general public. Historically, teachers have been educated at a level four years above the general public, which is projected to be 13.5 years by the year 2000. If such is the case, teachers will need to complete a master's degree. Along with this general requirement of a higher level of education, the public expects a measure of professionalism. Turner believes that a baccalaureate degree does not provide sufficient time and experiences to produce the expected professionalism that a master's degree provides. Ultimately, teacher efficacy and empowerment may be a direct outcome of a master's degree requirement; an outcome that cannot be achieved through merely acquiring graduate hours. This must be achieved through a focus on the "development of knowledge of subject matter, on the one hand, and greater problem-solving capabilities relative to professional practice, on the other" (Turner, 1990, p. 43). The master's degree may also provide a basis for more equitable distribution of salary incentives. Altogether, the development of teacher efficacy and consequent empowerment, not only through an improved and consistent knowledge base, but also through a solid base for salary incentives, makes the requirement of a master's degree for teachers imperative.

What may generally be suggested here is that an innovative approach to the curriculum and delivery of a master's degree is needed. Such an endeavor, joint development, was undertaken by a university and a union of K-12 teachers. Both entities contributed to the program; the university offered the latest research on instruction and delivery, while the K-12 teachers offered current instructional methods and their experience and perspective of classroom life. The on-site program offered an opportunity to teachers who normally would not be able to attend traditional university courses for various reasons. The partnership has resulted in a program where meaningful learning experiences were delivered through the establishment of a common knowledge base and in an environment of the collegial support of a cohort group. Evaluation by participants of the program indicated that they have found the coursework to be very good to excellent. Also reported was that, as professionals, they felt "refreshed, restimulated and re-energized," an indication that the collaborative endeavor had been a success (Warring & Huber, 1993, p. 11).

Another innovative program involves beginning teachers, veteran teachers and university faculty in a program that not only monitors and supports beginning teacher progress, but provides leadership opportunities for veteran teachers. Veteran teachers serve as clinical supervisors during the two-year program. The program is offered tuition-free to the beginning teachers, and the culmination is a master's degree. Two important outcomes of this collaborative endeavor are the support to the beginning teacher and the enhancement of professional development for the veteran teacher (Knutson, 1991).

The collaboration of higher education and local school districts on the issue of teacher development is the optimum avenue to that development. Higher education must respond to the needs of teachers as they define them if reform is to be successful (Goodlad, 1990; Warring & Huber, 1993).

The success of this agenda ultimately turns on teachers' success in accomplishing the serious and difficult tasks of learning the skills and perspectives assumed by new visions of practice and unlearning the practices and beliefs about students and instruction that have dominated their professional lives to date (Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, p. 597).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of chapter three is to outline the research procedures used to answer the questions guiding the study outlined in chapter one:

1. What role does a master's degree play in a teacher's professional development?
2. What curriculum is most appropriate to create and support the revitalization of classroom instruction and consequent student achievement as seen by the participants?
3. Since these programs are designed jointly by a district and university, will the program better meet teachers' needs as they define them?
4. Does a master's degree program created jointly by a university and school district provide a meaningful and relevant professional development experience as seen by the participants?
5. Can an on-site master's degree program be the means for the merging of two systems for professional development?

This chapter, therefore, addresses the selection of the sample population, the methods used in collecting data, and the analysis of that data.

Introduction

Most research involving educational organizations attempts to describe their activity based on quantitative analysis procedures without including the perceptions and experiences of individuals who work within the organization. It becomes a distant and indifferent means of interpreting the organizational process when it does not include the

individuals' voices who are the organization and carry out that process (Seidman, 1991). "Social abstractions like *education* are best understood through the experiences of the individuals whose work and lives are the stuff upon which the abstractions are built" (Ferrarotti, 1981 in Seidman, p. 4). The experience must be considered within the context of the learning that is taking place, and if true understanding of that individual's experience is the intent, interviewing is the best means by which to accomplish this understanding.

With the intent of fully comprehending the participants' experiences and perceptions of an on-site master's degree program, this study includes both a quantitative and qualitative components. Together, the two components provide the following:

1. a description of the participants' perceptions and experiences of their involvement in an on-site master's degree program,
2. insight as to the needs of teachers for the design and development of the curriculum of the program,
3. insight into the process in regard to the administration of the program, and
4. a description of the district's needs as defined by the administrators and district-based instructors involved in the development, teaching and administration of the program.

Chronology of Events

To provide the context in which these programs were developed, a typical, brief chronology of the process is included.

The university was approached by the school district with the request for offering an on-site master's degree program for their teachers. While universities frequently offer

such programs, the request differed in the proposal that the curriculum for the program be jointly developed and taught by both university and district personnel. The curriculum as developed reflected the goals and philosophy of the district which were supported through the specific courses that were offered. In one district, the courses closely paralleled modules that were requirements of the teacher evaluation program. Once the curriculum was determined, instructors were selected from both university and district personnel. At times, courses were taught by teams of instructors.

The administration of the program was shared by both the university and district personnel. The established cohorts moved through the entire program course sequence to its completion.

Selection of the Sample

All participating teachers, district program administrators and instructors for the courses from six school districts in metropolitan Phoenix served as the population for this study. Three districts had completed the degree program, while the other three were beginning a program.

This study describes the experiences of these two groups, those who were beginning the program and those who had completed the program, along with the perceptions of the district program administrators and instructors of the courses. The analysis of perceptions from the different constituencies provides an in-depth portrayal of the experience provided by an on-site master's degree program.

Sample For The Questionnaire

All participating teachers and instructors from the six districts received a questionnaire to complete. Two hundred seventy-four participating teachers received and responded to the questionnaire during one of their class sessions, giving a 100% rate of return. Twenty-nine instructors were mailed or hand-delivered a questionnaire, also resulting in a 100% rate of return. Complete demographic information on all participants can be found in Appendix A.

Sample For The Interview

A total of eighteen teachers (three teachers from each district) were selected to be interviewed through a stratified sampling procedure. Years of experience defined the levels that determined the selection of the sample. The categories for years of experience were as follows: years 1 - 5, 6 - 15, 16 or more. Teachers to be interviewed were then selected randomly from these levels. Complete demographic information on all participants can be found in Appendix A.

All six district administrators were interviewed as was the university administrator who oversees all six programs.

Data Collection Procedures

This section describes how the collection of data was accomplished using the two methods, a questionnaire and interviewing. The questionnaires were distributed and interviews conducted simultaneously.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to collect data that was analyzed quantitatively. The questionnaire was developed to reflect the questions that guided the study, with the curriculum questions being derived from the research of current literature. A panel of experts, university personnel and research analysts, reviewed the questionnaire for reliability and validity. Modifications were made as a consequence of that review.

The questionnaire's responses were based on a five-point Likert scale that varied from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

The following groups were surveyed independently with an appropriate variation of the instrument for each group:

- teacher participants from the districts beginning a program
- teacher participants from the districts who had completed a program
- instructors who are district personnel
- instructors who are adjunct instructors for the university (see Appendices B - E).

As part of the questionnaire, a section on personal data was included. The demographics of the participants' backgrounds collected through this means were used in the final analysis of the data to help determine how the veteran teacher's experience varied from the more novice teacher's experience.

A section for open-ended statements was also included. This section provided clarification and elaboration on views about the program. The comment section of the beginning participant survey consisted of simply "Comments." There were no specific questions asked of the beginning participant.

The completing participant survey comment section listed five open-ended statements and a “comments” statement. All statements referred to the program content.

Questionnaires were distributed during a class session and collected at the conclusion of the class. Questionnaires were mailed or hand-delivered to the instructors.

Interview

Data were collected through an interview process (Appendices F & G). The interview process was developed to reflect the questions that guided the study. As with the questionnaire, a panel of experts, university personnel and research analysts, reviewed the interview questions for reliability and validity. Modifications were made as a consequence of that review. The results of a pilot program helped to further develop the interview process.

The interview process was conducted with two groups, those who were beginning the program and those who had completed the program. Eighteen participants from the six districts, three from each district, were interviewed. Prior to the interview, a telephone call was made to explain the purpose of the interview and to arrange a mutually agreed-upon place and time to conduct the interview. Each interview took approximately 30 - 45 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim for the purpose of analysis. Some interviews were conducted by telephone when the teacher was unable to meet in person.

The administrators in the six school districts who were directly responsible for the on-site program were also interviewed (Appendix H). As described before, prior to the interview, a telephone call was made to explain the purpose of the interview and to

arrange a mutually agreed-upon time and place. Each interview took approximately 45 - 60 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim for the purpose of analysis. The university administrator who is responsible for all programs was also interviewed.

In-depth interviewing allowed the interviewer to examine the participants' experiences more thoroughly. It is imperative that participants know and understand the purpose and intended outcome of the interview. For that reason, an informed consent form was required of each interviewee (Appendix J).

Data Analysis Procedures

This final section describes procedures and analyses of the data collected.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire data were analyzed through statistical analysis using the Statistical Products and Solution Software (SPSS) for Windows. Participants responded on the questionnaire sheet. The sheets were coded to help identify the participants' districts. The data were then entered into files and analyzed using SPSS. The descriptive analyses used were a frequency count converted to percentages based on the number of respondents. A t-test was calculated on parallel questionnaire items to determine differences between the two groups.

- Participants beginning a program with those who had completed a program
- Participants considered novice teachers with veteran teachers
- Instructors who are district personnel with non-district university adjunct instructors.

The responses to the open-ended statements on the questionnaire were tallied and the results were summarized.

Definition of Groups

- **Beginning participants:** participants who had taken three or four courses in the program.
- **Completing participants:** participants who had completed the program.
- **Novice teachers:** teachers who had five or less years teaching experience.
- **Veteran teachers:** teachers who had six or more years teaching experience.
- **Instructors who were district personnel:** instructors who were employed by the district in another capacity.
- **Adjunct university instructors:** instructors who were not employed by the district.

Interview

Qualitative data analysis requires that interpretation of data be inductive rather than deductive. It is appropriate to frame data through specific questions in the interview, but the interviewer must be careful to not allow those questions to limit the breadth of the data being collected. Qualitative research is not intended to test a predetermined hypothesis nor is it intended to support an established theory. It is the analysis of “data in the form of words” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 9). The interviewer must review the raw data with an open attitude and allow the data “to breathe and speak for itself” (Seidman, 1991, p. 89).

The approach to data analysis for this study was interpretivist in nature. It must be understood that as researcher, it was not entirely possible to disengage from the process

and that the interviewing process was a “co-elaboration” between interviewer and interviewee (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The data gathered from the audio recorded interviewing was transcribed verbatim. The information was then grouped by categories that emerged from the participants’ experiences and encoded to determine themes between and among the categories (Appendix I). This was accomplished by using the three-step process of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The analytical process was ongoing throughout the entire data collection sequence and beyond.

Data reduction was the initial procedure in the selection and focus on data interpretation. It was not separate from, but a part of the total analytical process. During this period of time, care was taken not to eliminate or ignore the context from which the data emerged.

Data display was a compressed, organized view of the data. The most commonly used display has been extended text, which can be cumbersome and difficult to interpret. Extended text provided the initial display to determine themes and categories. Depending on the nature of the themes and categories that surfaced, a matrix, chart or graph was used.

Conclusion drawing and verification comprised the decision-making process that allowed to “note regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows and propositions” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). This occurred in the final stages of data analysis when it was necessary to constantly reexamine the data to substantiate any tentative conclusions.

This three-step process provided the framework for the qualitative analysis. After tentative conclusions had been drawn, the quantitative and qualitative data were further examined to confirm or elaborate on the conclusions for both sets of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter includes data which describe: (a) the participants' perceptions and experiences of their involvement in an on-site master's degree program; (b) the needs of teachers for the design and development of the curriculum of the program; (c) the process involved in the administration of the program; and (d) the district's needs as defined by the administrators and district-based instructors involved in the development, teaching and administration of the program.

Frequency responses were tabulated for each item on the questionnaire and converted to percentages. Percentages were calculated separately for those participants beginning and those completing the program, and for instructors who were district personnel and those who were not (adjunct). Additionally, a t-test on parallel questionnaire items was used to determine group differences between beginning and completing teacher participants. A t-test was also computed to test for differences between district and adjunct instructors. The value of less than or equal .05 was used to determine the level of significance. Any discrepancy in the total number of responses for each of the questionnaire items is due to the fact that participants may not have responded to all items.

Interviews were conducted with teacher participants, both beginning and completing, district administrators, and the university administrator. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. A preliminary code list was determined based on the questions that guided the

study. Further inspection of the data helped determine a final code list and themes and patterns in the data.

The central questions that guided this study are discussed individually. The discussion for each question indicates the questionnaire and interview results separately for the different groups of participants.

Question One: What Role Does a Master's

Degree Play in a Teacher's Professional Development?

To respond to question one, responses to items 1, 2, 23, and 24 from the questionnaire are reported. In addition, applicable responses from the interviews are also presented.

Questionnaire Results

Teacher Participant and Instructor Results

In order to address this research question, teacher participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement (item 1) "Completing a master's degree is important to a teaching career;" 47% of those beginning the program and 29% of those who had completed the program strongly agreed; 39% of beginning participants and 56% of completing participants agreed (See Table 1). Sixty-eight percent (68%) of district instructors and 60% of adjunct instructors strongly agreed while 26% of district instructors and 40% of adjunct instructors agreed. t-tests showed no significant differences between either the two teacher group's nor the two instructor group's responses to this question (See Table 2).

To the statement (item 2) "A master's degree improves teaching," 42% of beginning participants and 43% of completing participants strongly agree; 45% of beginning participants and 43% of completing participants agree (See Table 1). Seventy-eight percent (78%) of district instructors and 90% of adjunct instructors strongly agreed; 21% of district instructors and 10% of adjunct instructors agreed. t-tests showed no significant differences between the two teacher groups or the two instructor groups (See Table 2).

Table 1

Means and t-test Results of Individual Question Item Responses for Teacher Participants

Questionnaire Item	Teacher Participants		t-value	df	p-value
	Beginning Means	Completing Means			
1. Completing a master's degree is important to a teaching career.	1.74	1.90	1.49	271	.138
2. As a result of the course content in this master's degree program, my teaching has improved.	1.74	1.74	-.08	272	.938
23. I have ___ years teaching experience.	2.22	2.60	2.85	269	.005*
24. I have been with my current district for ___ years.	1.88	2.21	2.69	270	.008*

* $p \leq .05$

There was a significant difference in the years of teaching experience between of the two teacher groups (item 23). Teachers beginning the program had 4-5 years teaching experience, while completing teachers had closer to 7 years teaching experience.

There was also a significant difference in the number years in the current district between the two groups (item 24). Teachers beginning the program had been with their current district 0 - 3 years, while teachers completing the program had been 4 - 7 years with their current district (See Table 1).

Table 2

Means and t-test Results of Individual Question Item Responses for Instructors

Questionnaire Item	Instructors		t-value	df	p-value
	District Means	Adjunct Means			
1. Completing a master's degree is important to a teaching career.	1.37	1.40	.14	27	.889
2. The content of the course I teach in this master's degree program improves the participants' teaching.	1.21	1.10	-.73	27	.472

Note: $p \leq .05$

Summary of Questionnaire Results

Overwhelmingly, both beginning and completing participants agreed that a master's degree is important to a teaching career and also improves teaching. Almost 100% of both district instructors and university adjunct instructors agreed that a master's degree is important to a teaching career and also improves teaching.

Additional data indicate that the difference in years of teaching experience was statistically significant. Teachers beginning the program had 4-5 years teaching experience, while completing teachers had closer to 7 years teaching experience. Also, the difference in the number of years employed in the district was significant. Teachers

beginning the program had been employed in their current district 0 - 3 years, while teachers completing the program had been employed 4 - 7 years.

Interview Results

Teacher Participant Results

Beginning and completing participants were asked how important they believed a master's degree to be to a teaching career. Most participants stated that a master's degree per se may not be important to a teaching career if the individual does not implement what is learned. It is the knowledge and consequent application, not the degree, that make the difference. As one respondent noted, "I don't think a master's degree makes you a master teacher. Important? I think it is up to the individual on how important they make it."

Completing participants felt that the idea of continuing education, whether through a formal degree program or just a variety of courses, was seen as vitally important to a teacher's professional development. Beginning participants saw a master's degree as an opportunity to renew and refresh their ideas. One beginning participant suggested that "Some teachers become very—let's say—boring in respect to their field, and they don't bring life into the classroom, and it is very critical." Impact on their salary schedule was mentioned, though both beginning and completing participants spoke more of acquiring knowledge versus the economic gain.

In the discussion regarding the most appropriate time in a teaching career when teachers should undertake a master's degree, most completing participants interviewed believed that teachers should wait three to five years. They believed teachers needed to establish themselves in the classroom and become familiar with students' developmental

stages. Having this knowledge as a basis would make consequent learning in the program more meaningful.

To further determine the role of a master's degree, participants were asked to discuss their primary motive for pursuing a master's degree. Though most beginning participants indicated that the primary motive was to move on the salary schedule, they quickly rejoined that the professional growth aspect was also important to them. A love of learning and the need to update and learn new strategies were mentioned frequently. "I just think I need to keep learning so I don't get behind with good techniques, and I think it keep teachers fresh when you're taking classes," one teacher noted. Completing participants' initial motivation to pursue a master's degree came from the need to comply with the state requirement for certification. During the course of the program, the requirement was eliminated. Participants then chose to continue based on the need for the salary increase or simply their own self-satisfaction. As one respondent stated, "I could have just taken units, but I thought I'm worth it, and I did it for myself."

Beginning participants were asked if they would be better teachers at the completion of the program. After indicating they thought they would be, most participants responded by discussing how they had incorporated what they had learned to date into their practice. Other beginning participants' responses, however, were more introspective and addressed how their perspective about teaching had changed. Typical responses were,

- "It is not so important how much the teacher knows; it's how much can the teacher get kids to know."

- “I’ve seen where I’ve made mistakes in the past and haven’t been as clear. The effort’s been there, the intent’s been there, but I’ve already seen where I can take certain things and make [them] much clearer and evaluate the students much better, too.”

Completing participants also agreed they were better teachers, and indicated that more specifically, the utilization of projects such as resource handbooks and units developed during the program, would make them better teachers. Furthermore, the experience of participating in a degree program, for most, clarified their own philosophy of education. “I think knowing just where I was coming from made it better and made me see where I needed to grow and things that I did well.” Overall, a heightened sense of efficacy as an outcome of the program was apparent throughout their discussion. Some related that their involvement in the program allowed them to serve as role models for their own students. By sharing their own learning experience, an awareness of what lifelong learning is about was provided to their students.

Administrator Results

Most district administrators in their discussion of the role of a master’s degree in a teaching career, believed that the degree provided a broader perspective and imbued the participants with a great sense of confidence about themselves and their profession. They noted demeanor, understanding that the implementation of course content in regard to instruction was solely up to the individual and its benefits to their practice contingent on that implementation. Acquiring a master’s degree was seen as a strong indication that the teacher sees him/herself as a lifelong learner. Teachers can “continue to take classes and courses and so forth, but there’s something about a degree program and the discipline it

takes to hang in there...it says a lot about the individual when you take on a goal like that and complete it," was one response. They believe that the skills and knowledge gained promotes the teachers' sense of professionalism as reflected in the statement, "They see themselves more as a professional and, therefore, they act more like professionals when they have completed a degree."

Figure 1 illustrates the interview responses to this question by the different participant groups.

Participant	Importance of M.Ed. to a teaching career	Primary motive for pursuing M.Ed.	Will they be better teachers with an M.Ed.?
Beginning Teacher Participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up to the individual to implement content—that is what is important 2. Renews and refreshes ideas 3. Increase on salary schedule 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase on salary schedule 2. Love of learning 3. Update and learn new skills 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Specific content will be implemented 2. Perspective about teaching has changed
Completing Teacher Participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up to the individual to implement content—that is what is important 2. Concept of continuing education most important 3. Increase on salary schedule 4. M.Ed. should be pursued after 3-5 years in the classroom 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Certification requirement 2. Increase on salary increase 3. Personal satisfaction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructional materials developed will be implemented 2. Serve as role models for own students 3. Clarified philosophy of education
District Administrators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides a broader perspective for teaching 2. Gives greater sense of confidence in themselves and their profession 3. Pursuit of M.Ed. indicates teacher sees self as lifelong learner 	Not addressed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Broader perspective for teaching 2. Skills and knowledge gained promote professionalism

Figure 1. Participant Perspective and Opinion Matrix

Summary of Interview Results

In summary, beginning and completing participants see the master's degree as an opportunity to renew and refresh their ideas and skills, but the degree in itself, they feel, does not make you a better teacher. The application of knowledge and skills from any source of continuing education is the key to better teaching. It is up to the individual to

utilize that new-found knowledge to their best advantage in the classroom. Completing participants further indicated that teachers should wait three to five years before beginning a master's degree. Developing a knowledge about classroom practice and building on that makes the degree program more meaningful.

District administrators believed that a master's degree promotes a greater sense of confidence and professionalism in teachers. Pursuing a master's degree suggests that the teacher is not only a lifelong learner, but conveyed dedication to the program.

Most beginning participants cited the primary motive for pursuing a master's degree was a salary increase, and the secondary motive, was a love of learning and the realization that it was necessary to keep updated. Completing participants initial motive was to comply with the state requirement for certification. Once that was eliminated, salary increase or the self-satisfaction of earning a master's degree became the motive.

Beginning participants felt they would be better teachers at the completion of the program. The response as to how, elicited descriptions of the implementation of skills and knowledge they had already acquired. Others spoke more philosophically about the changes in their perspective about teaching. Completing participants spoke more specifically about how the units and resource materials they had developed during the program would improve their practice. They shared their confidence about being able to make a difference in the classroom.

**Question Two: What Curriculum Is Most Appropriate to
Create and Support the Revitalization of Classroom Instruction and
Consequent Student Achievement as Seen by the Participants?**

To respond to question two, responses to items 3, 7, and 11 - 21, and open-ended statements 29 and 30 from the questionnaire are reported. In addition, applicable responses from the interviews are also presented.

Questionnaire Results

Teacher Participant and Instructor Results

Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement (item 3), "The content of the courses in this master's degree program and its implementation will increase student achievement in my classroom;" 31% of beginning participants and 19% of completing participants strongly agreed while 43% of beginning participants and 45% of completing participants agreed. A significant difference in the way the two groups, beginning and completing, responded to this statement was seen. Teachers beginning the program agreed more strongly with this statement (See Table 3).

Instructors were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement (item 3), "The content of the course I teach in this master's degree helps increase student achievement in participants' classrooms." Here, 78% of district instructors and 90% of adjunct instructors strongly agreed or agreed while 21% of district instructors and 10% of adjunct instructors were undecided. No significant differences were seen between the two instructor group's responses to this question (See Table 4).

Table 3

Means and t-test Results of Individual Question Item Responses for Teacher Participants

Questionnaire Item	Teacher Participants		t-value	df	p-value
	Beginning Means	Completing Means			
3. The content in the courses in this master's degree program and its implementation have helped increase student achievement in my classroom.	1.99	2.30	2.81	271	.005*
7. The courses in this program included more of the practical aspects of teaching rather than a lot of theory.	1.41	2.18	7.26	271	.000*
I found the courses covering the following content valuable for my role as teacher:					
11. Classroom management	1.63	2.27	6.36	266	.000*
12. Curriculum development	1.54	1.96	4.71	269	.000*
13. Teaching strategies e.g. cooperative learning, mastery learning, seven intelligences	1.48	1.59	1.47	272	.143
14. Development of assessments for instruction	1.74	2.17	4.62	270	.000*
15. Equity/Diversity issues	1.87	2.01	1.56	271	.119
16. Special Needs e.g. at-risk, gifted, inclusion	1.85	1.93	.85	271	.396
17. Leadership roles for teachers	2.01	2.25	2.47	269	.014*
18. Child/adolescent psychology and its implications for instruction	1.91	2.11	1.91	270	.057
19. Educational research and its implications for the classroom	2.10	2.10	.00	268	1.000
20. Educational issues e.g. change, parental involvement, public relations	1.84	1.79	-.63	270	.527
21. Historical and/or philosophical perspective of education	2.32	2.29	-.31	268	.756

* $p \leq .05$

To the statement (item 7), "The courses in this program included more of the practical aspects of teaching rather than a lot of theory;" 95% of beginning participants and 76% of completing participants strongly agreed and agreed combined, while 2% of beginning participants and 7% of completing participants were undecided. Two percent (2%) of beginning participants and 15% of completing participants disagreed. A significant difference was found in the way the two groups, beginning and completing, responded to this statement. Teachers beginning the program agreed more strongly with this statement (See Table 3).

When instructors were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement (item 7), "I believe that courses in this program should include more of the practical aspects of teaching rather than a lot of theory;" 69% of district instructors and 100% of adjunct instructors strongly agreed or agreed, while 31% of district instructors were undecided. T-test showed no significant difference between the two instructor groups' responses to this question (See Table 4).

To the statement (items 11-21), "The courses covering the following content are valuable for my role as teacher," beginning participants and completing participants were in concurrence in strongly agreeing or agreeing that teaching strategies, equity/diversity issues, special needs, child/adolescent psychology, educational research, and educational issues provide content that is valuable to their roles as teachers. Beginning participants viewed classroom management, curriculum development, development of assessments for instruction, and leadership roles for teachers as more valuable than did completing participants. Both beginning and completing participants viewed a course on the

historical/philosophical perspective of education less valuable with only 65% and 66%, respectively, strongly agreeing or agreeing, and 26% and 20%, respectively, being undecided on its value (See Table 5).

There was a significant difference in the way the two groups, beginning and completing, responded to, "The courses covering the following content are valuable for my role as teacher." Teachers beginning the program agreed more strongly that courses in classroom management, curriculum development, the development of assessments for instruction, and leadership roles for teachers, were valuable than did completing participants (See Table 3).

Both district and adjunct instructors viewed all courses as valuable with most in the 90% to 100% range for strongly agreeing or agreeing. The exception was district instructors' disagreement in the value of courses in educational research, educational issues and the historical/philosophical perspective of education. Here no significant difference between the two instructor groups' responses to this question were seen (See Table 4 and 5).

Table 4

Means and t-test Results of Individual Question Item Responses for Instructors

Questionnaire Item	Instructors		t-value	df	p-value
	District Means	Adjunct Means			
3. The content of the course I teach in this Master's Degree program helps increase student achievement in the participants' classrooms.	1.58	1.40	-.58	27	.569
7. I believe that courses in this program should include more of the practical aspects of teaching rather than a lot of theory.	2.31	1.50	-1.96	27	.060

The courses covering the following content are valuable to participants for their roles as teachers:

11. Classroom management	1.26	1.30	.20	27	.181
12. Curriculum development	1.42	1.40	-.09	27	.926
13. Teaching strategies e.g. cooperative learning, mastery learning, seven intelligences	1.21	1.10	-.73	27	.472
14. Development of assessments for instruction	1.21	1.30	.44	27	.662
15. Equity/Diversity issues	1.58	1.40	-.79	27	.435
16. Special Needs e.g. at-risk, gifted, inclusion	1.47	1.40	-.32	27	.748
17. Leadership roles for teachers	1.52	1.70	.88	27	.385
18. Child/adolescent psychology and its implications for instruction	1.53	1.60	.32	27	.748
19. Educational research and its implications for the classroom	1.74	1.70	-.13	27	.896
20. Educational issues e.g. change, parental involvement, public relations	1.53	1.40	-.46	27	.647
21. Historical and/or philosophical perspective of education	1.84	1.80	-.15	27	.883

Note: $p \leq .05$

Table 5

Percent of Beginning and Completing Teacher Participants, and District and Adjunct Instructors Indicating Course Content Preferences

Course Content	Teacher Participants		Instructors	
	Beginning N = 137	Completing N = 137	District N = 19	Adjunct N = 10
Classroom management				
Agree ¹	91%	63%	100%	100%
Disagree ²	2%	12%		
Undecided/Unknown	7%	21%		
Non-respondents		4%		
Curriculum development				
Agree ¹	94%	84%	100%	90%
Disagree ²	1%	8%		
Undecided/Unknown	5%	6%		10%
Non-respondents		2%		
Teaching strategies e.g. cooperative learning, mastery learning, seven intelligences				
Agree ¹	96%	95%	100%	100%
Disagree ²	1%	1%		
Undecided/Unknown	3%	4%		
Development of assessments for instruction				
Agree ¹	92%	69%	100%	90%
Disagree ²	3%	6%		
Undecided/Unknown	5%	23%		10%
Non-respondents		2%		
Equity/Diversity issues				
Agree ¹	83%	83%	95%	100%
Disagree ²	2%	6%		
Undecided/Unknown	15%	11%	5%	
Special Needs e.g. at-risk, gifted, inclusion				
Agree ¹	86%	85%	95%	100%
Disagree ²	1%	3%		

Course Content	Teacher Participants		Instructors	
	Beginning N = 137	Completing N = 137	District N = 19	Adjunct N = 10
Undecided/Unknown	13%	12%	5%	
Leadership roles for teachers				
Agree ¹	80%	63%	100%	100%
Disagree ²	3%	8%		
Undecided/Unknown	16%	28%		
Non-respondents	1%	1%		
Child/adolescent psychology and its implications for instruction				
Agree ¹	84%	80%	95%	100%
Disagree ²	2%	12%		
Undecided/Unknown	13%	8%	5%	
Non-respondents	1%			
Educational research and its implications for the classroom				
Agree ¹	78%	80%	90%	100%
Disagree ²	5%	10%	5%	
Undecided/Unknown	15%	10%	5%	
Non-respondents	2%			
Educational issues e.g. change, parental involvement, public relations				
Agree ¹	92%	89%	95%	100%
Disagree ²	2%	3%	5%	
Undecided/Unknown	6%	8%		
Historical and/or philosophical perspective of education				
Agree ¹	65%	66%	89%	90%
Disagree ²	9%	14%	5%	
Undecided/Unknown	26%	20%	5%	10%
Non-respondents			1%	

¹Strongly agree and agree results have been combined.

²Disagree and strongly disagree results have been combined.

Questionnaire Open-Ended Statement Results - Completing Teacher Participant

The following results are a summary of the comments taken from the completing participants' questionnaires. Similar responses were grouped into categories and then tallied.

For the open-ended statement (item 29) "The most valuable course in this program has been...", a majority of completing participants reported the course in cooperative learning was by far the most valuable course in the program. It was reported as the most valuable by twice the number of the next most reported course, professional problems and issues. The course in multi-cultural education was cited a close third. If multiple courses were seen as valuable, all responses were included in the summary (See Table 6).

Some comments about the most valuable course:

"The issues class—I finally felt I had my own philosophy of education."

"There are two courses—the issues course, the first I took set the tone for the entire program, and philosophy awakened an awareness of abilities in all of us."

Table 6

Tally of Comments Regarding Most Valuable Course in their District Program byCompleting Teacher Participants (Item 29)

Title of Course	District B	District C	District E	Total
	Frequency* N = 51	Frequency* N = 46	Frequency* N = 40	
Cooperative learning	32	13	10	55
Professional problems and issues		22	7	29
Multi-cultural education	20			20
Child psychology	3	4	3	10
Classroom assessment			9	9
Facilitative leadership			9	9
Philosophy/foundations of education			8	8
Special Education/gifted		8		8
Curriculum construction		3	4	7
Elementary math methods		6		6
Exceptional children		4	2	6
Foundations of schooling as a social structure			6	6
Children's literature	4			4
Independent study			3	3
Social studies		3		3
Supervision of instruction			3	3
Educational research	1			1
Science		2		2
Environmental education		1		1
Technology			2	2

*If more than one course was identified as most valuable, all entries were included in the tally.

For the open-ended statement (item 30), "The least valuable course in this program has been..." completing participants cited the course in environmental education as being the least valuable course in the program, with child psychology cited as the second least valuable. Philosophy of education, a reading methods course and a curriculum course were cited as third. It is interesting to note that only one district determined that the child psychology course was least valuable. No single, same course across the three districts that completed the program appears to be strongly considered least valuable. If multiple courses were seen as problematic, all selections were included in the summary (See Table 7).

Some comments about the least valuable course included,

"Child psychology—not taught well, very knowledge-based, not hands on."

"The philosophy class—I would have liked to talk/read/write about current philosophies rather than past—I did that in undergrad."

Table 7

Tally of Comments Regarding Least Valuable Course in Their District Program by
Completing Teacher Participants (Item 30)

Name of Course	District B	District C	District E	Total
	Frequency* N = 51	Frequency* N = 46	Frequency* N = 40	
Environmental education	24	15		39
Child psychology	2		16	18
Philosophy of education		9	5	14
Reading strategies	12			12
Curriculum construction		7	4	11
Issues in education	7		2	9
Multi-cultural education		8		8
Assessment of instruction	2	1	4	7
Technology			7	7
Social studies methods	6			6
Special needs students		1	2	3
Supervision of instruction			3	3
Educational research	2	1		3
Exceptional child		2		2
Science methods		1		1
Sociology	1			1

*If more than one course was identified as least valuable, all entries were included in the tally.

Summary of Questionnaire Results

Approximately three-fourths of both the beginning and completing teacher participants agreed that the content of the courses in the master's degree program would

improve student achievement. Beginning teachers agreed more strongly with this statement than completing teachers. Almost all instructors, both district and adjunct, believed that the course they taught helped improve student achievement.

Almost all beginning participants believed that the practical aspects of teaching were included in their courses while slightly fewer completing participants agreed. Beginning teachers agreed more strongly with this statement than completing teachers. Some completing participants disagreed that enough practical aspects had been included in their program. Interestingly, all adjunct instructors believed that the master's degree program should include more practical aspects with slightly fewer of the district instructors agreeing.

Beginning and completing participants strongly agreed or agreed that courses in teaching strategies, equity/diversity issues, special needs, child/adolescent psychology, educational research and educational issues were valuable to their roles as teachers. Beginning participants viewed classroom management, curriculum development, development of assessment for instruction, and leadership roles for teachers as more valuable than did completing participants. A course on the historical/philosophical perspective of education was seen as less valuable by both beginning and completing participants. Instructors saw all courses as valuable except for some slight disagreement by district instructors on educational research, educational issues and the historical/philosophical perspective on education.

The most valuable course in their program as listed by completing participants, respectively, were cooperative learning, professional problems and issues, and multi-cultural education. The course seen as least valuable in their program by completing participants were environmental education and child psychology, in that order. No single, same course across the three districts appeared to be strongly considered least valuable.

Interview Results

Teacher Participant Results

To answer this research question, beginning participants were asked if a master's degree curriculum should primarily address practice or theory. Most participants believed that at master's degree program for educators should be more practical than theoretical, as given in the statement, "You can hear a lot of theory, but if you don't have any ideas to go behind the theory, you're going to go back and be basically the same person you were before." Practitioners had a great need for course content to be directly relevant to their teaching. "I think they brought it all together in this last one where we constructed a task, constructed different types of things, and really applied it; then you could see everybody come alive." Interestingly enough, some participants who have now completed the program, believed that there should be a balance of the practical and theoretical aspects in the program. "I would have said more practical in the beginning, but in retrospect, I can see where the others [theoretical] really paid off in giving me more information, giving me more ideas and I know more now." It seems that completing participants, as a

consequence of the program, have recognized the importance of including the study of theoretical components in the courses.

Beginning participants were asked what impact, if any, the curriculum of the master's degree program would have on their classroom practice. Participants felt that courses that addressed instructional strategies and methods specifically, would impact their practice more than would courses that might be more theoretical. They believed that continued involvement in the program, would facilitate the implementation of those instructional strategies and methods. "If you're involved in it constantly, and you're thinking about it constantly, it becomes easier and easier to apply it. Once you start applying it, it just snowballs." Other participants spoke in terms of the insight gained about instruction in general. "I realize that kids learn at different rates. And really, it's not so important at what rate they learn, the bottom line is that they learn." Another participant learned that "the whole aspect of teamwork is something that is critical in respect to the world of work. These are skills that we've been exposed to in respect to programs and how to bring this into the classroom."

Completing participants, in addressing the impact their involvement in the master's degree program had on their practice, indicated that the complete units they created over the duration of the program, would affect their instruction the most. The units could not have been developed by participants on their own. The opportunity for collaborating within the cohort, allowed for the development of those units.

“I probably would have done it had I had time during the school year, but it just doesn’t happen.”

“We go put our resources together and sat down and step-by-step went through and developed a clear cut plan, and put in all these things and also assessments—a complete package.”

In regard to student achievement, about half of the nine beginning participants interviewed were certain that being involved in the program would result in increased student achievement in their classrooms. They believed it would be measurable through a variety of means. One respondent offered, “If I’m clear in what I’m testing, and what they are supposed to know, and we work through it all together, they should do better.” The other participants felt that the impact on student achievement would be difficult to observe and measure due to the many variables involved. Different groups of students respond differently. “Anybody can implement a method and I don’t think all methods work all the time for all children, so it depends on so many factors.”

Half of the completing participants interviewed believed that their involvement in the program would improve student achievement in their classrooms. They spoke enthusiastically about all they had learned, and their plans for implementation. Those who had already implemented some of the material reported their observations with respect to student achievement. “I don’t see how it couldn’t have affected it just because of the different ideas I received, and all the different things I learned from the instructors and the

other teachers.” The other participants felt it would be difficult to fully assess to what the improvement might be attributed.

Administrator Results

To answer this research question, district administrators were asked to discuss the development of the program and the basis for the district’s choice of curriculum for their program. All programs were designed jointly by the district administration and the university administrator with the initial contact about such a program in most cases, being made by the school district. In one instance, the development of the program was in response to the teachers’ request that the district’s continuing teacher status requirements be incorporated into a degree program.

The university capstone courses were considered the core of the program and, with input from the district superintendency and other administrators, other courses that reflected district goals and initiatives were developed. Some of these areas included English As A Second Language endorsement; math, science and social studies methods; alignment of instruction with a specific curriculum; and specific instructional strategies such as cooperative learning. “It’s proved to be very beneficial in getting teachers out there more highly trained in the areas that we’re having some change in.” One district included a seminar where participants created an independent project that reflected what they had learned and implemented in their classrooms from the master’s degree program. Another district included the content of modules that were required through the teacher evaluation system in their degree program courses. The course titles as reported in

Appendix K are similar, but the content varies to reflect district needs. “We tried to match the courses that were required, and the courses that were optional from the university’s point of view and what we were trying to achieve as a district.” Paperwork and other demands of the course were also given consideration in the scheduling process.

Concerning program development, the university administrator indicated that the concept of the on-site master’s degree program had evolved from discussions with teachers who, at the time, were then involved in traditional master’s degree programs at the university campus. The teachers spoke continually of the value of the content and applicability of their district inservice courses, and as a consequence, the university administrator concluded that the ideal program should incorporate both university capstone courses and inservice course content. From his experience with the programs, he believed that one-half to two-thirds of the program should be developed by the district.

Of specific interest to this study was the question of what is most beneficial to teachers at the master’s degree level—a more practical or theoretical approach to course content? Most district administrators, as well as the university administrator, used the concept of balance in their discussion about practice versus theory in the degree program. Both must be present for instruction to be meaningful to participants. The imperative mentioned was that any theory discussed must be relevant and applicable—it must be useful for teachers. “When you teach a college course, you not only want the theory that’s there for the understanding and the mental intellectual challenge of what that theory is and the belief in it or the non-belief in it, but you’ve got to put it to work.”

Administrators most valued teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to make them successful in the classroom, and they wanted the degree programs offered in their districts to provide the best possible opportunity for that learning. One administrator saw the on-site master's degree program as a natural bridge between university-based programs and the day-to-day operations of the school setting.

The university administrator, in his discussion of theory versus practice, stated that a master's in education is intended to be a practitioner's degree. However, the underpinnings to such a degree must be theoretical, otherwise the program has no foundation, noting, "The teachers who are in a field-based program should expect to have practice and improve skills, and the district should be able to see a better teacher at the end of the program."

The foremost intent of professional development for teachers is to improve their practice and ultimately increase student achievement. While district administrators were hopeful that classroom teaching practice of those participating in the on-site degree program would be impacted by the implementation of the course content taken, most indicated that measuring this impact on student achievement would be somewhat difficult. Some of the administrators suggested that through classroom observation and the formal process of teacher evaluation, administrators would be able to determine if the content had indeed been implemented. Test scores might also indicate some change. One administrator felt that the instructional strategies and knowledge learned would "add to the comfort in learning and it may add to the achievement, but it certainly adds to the

teacher's repertoire of what they can do in terms of keeping kids motivated and interested."

Figure 2 illustrates the interview responses to this question by the different participant groups.

Participants	Should the M.Ed include more practice or theory?	Impact of the M.Ed. program on practice	Impact of the M.Ed. program on student achievement
Beginning Teacher Participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More practical content and aspects 2. Practitioners need relevancy of content 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructional strategies and methods learned would be implemented 2. Continued involvement facilitates implementation 3. Insight about instruction critical to practice 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mixed response, 50% yes, 50% uncertain about how to determine impact 2. Many variables make measurement difficult
Completing Teacher Participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Most indicated more practical 2. Some indicated a balance of the practical and theoretical 3. Theory provides more information and ideas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete units developed will benefit practice most 2. Collaboration and consequent networks created will continue to benefit their practice 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mixed response, 50% yes, 50% uncertain about how to determine impact 2. Many variables make measurement difficult
District Administrators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A balance of practical and theoretical is most meaningful 2. Theory discussed must be applicable to teaching 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. M.Ed. will impact practice 2. New knowledge and skill help keep students motivated and interested 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The desired outcome is increased student achievement, but it would be difficult to substantiate 2. Classroom observation determines implementation of strategies learned 3. Test scores may indicate increased student achievement.

Figure 2. Participant Perspective and Opinion Matrix

Summary of Interview Results

To answer this research question, district administrators were asked to discuss the basis of the development of the program of studies for their master's degree program. All programs were jointly designed by the district and the university, with the university's capstone courses serving as the core of the program. Other courses in the program reflected the district's philosophy and goals, and incorporated curriculum specific to the

district's instructional programs. The university administrator's role was instrumental in the development of these programs, with the initial conception of such programs coming from discussions with teachers in traditional master's degree programs. His subsequent experience with these programs has led to the belief that on-half to two-thirds of the program should be developed by the district.

In determining what curriculum is most appropriate for the classroom teacher, participants were asked if the program should be more practical or theoretical. Both beginning and completing participants believed that for educators, a master's degree program that emphasizes the practical aspects is more beneficial, though completing participants as a consequence of finishing their program, had recognized more keenly the importance of including the theoretical aspects. District administrators and the university administrator believed that a balance of the theoretical and practical provided the optimum master's degree experience for teachers. A program without the theoretical underpinnings would be less meaningful and lacking foundation.

Participants were asked to discuss how the content of the master's degree would impact their practice. Beginning participants felt that the courses that addressed specifically instructional strategies and techniques would benefit their practice the most. Completing participants indicated that the final products, such as complete units and other resource materials, would have the greatest impact on their practice. In their discussion about the desired increase in student achievement, half of both beginning and completing participants described the increase in enthusiastic and certain terms, while others believed

that the increase would occur, but would be hard to measure due to the many variables involved in any teaching situation. District administrators agreed that subsequent student achievement gains might be difficult to assess, but felt that through observation and the formal evaluation process, the implementation of instructional strategies that would impact student achievement could be noted. Test scores might also indicate those gains.

Question Three: Since These Programs Are Designed Jointly by a District and University, Will the Program Better Meet Teachers' Needs as They Define Them?

To respond to question three, responses to items 6, and 8 - 10, and open-ended statements 31 and 33 from the questionnaire are reported. In addition, applicable responses from the interviews are also presented.

Questionnaire Results

Teacher Participant and Instructor Results

In order to address this research question, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement (item 6), "The courses I have taken through this on-site program created for my district have been more appropriate for me than those I could have taken through a strictly university-based program;" 81% of beginning participants and 68% of completing participants strongly agreed or agreed combined. A significant difference in the way the two groups, beginning and completing, responded to this statement was seen. Teachers beginning the program agreed more strongly. Fifteen percent (15%) of beginning participants and 23% of completing participants were

undecided (See Table 8). Instructors were also asked to indicate their level of agreement with the similar statement (item 6), "The courses taken through this on-site program created for this district are more appropriate for district teachers than those taken through a strictly university-based program." Here, 100% of district instructors and 80% of adjunct instructors strongly agreed or agreed while 10% of adjunct instructors were undecided. Ten percent (10 %) of adjunct instructors disagreed. No significant difference existed between the two instructor groups' responses to this question (See Table 9).

To the statement(item 8), "I have found that going through the program as part of a cohort is beneficial;" 67% of beginning participants and 75% of completing participants strongly agreed, while 27% of beginning participants and 24% of completing participants agreed (See Table 8). Instructors were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement (item 8), "Going through the program as part of a cohort is beneficial to the participants;" 84% of district instructors and 90% of adjunct instructors strongly agreed or agreed, while 16% of district instructors were undecided. Ten percent (10%) of adjunct instructors strongly disagreed. t-tests showed no significant differences between either the two teacher groups' nor the two instructor groups' responses to this question (See Table 9).

To further investigate the role the cohort plays in addressing teacher needs, teacher participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement (item 9) "My colleagues in this program offer valuable insight and information through class discussions;" 68% of beginning participants and 73% of completing participants strongly

agreed, while 30% of beginning participants and 27% of completing participants agreed (See Table 8). Instructors were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement (item 8), "A cohort experience provides the climate for more candid discussion and exchange of information between members during class;" 74% of district instructors and 90% of adjunct instructors strongly agreed or agreed while 16% of district instructors were undecided. Ten percent (10%) of district instructors disagreed and 10% of adjunct instructors strongly disagreed. The appropriate t-test showed no significant differences in responses between the two teacher groups or between the two instructor groups (See Table 9).

To help determine if instruction would differ between district and adjunct instructors, participants were asked to respond to the statement (item 10). To the statement, "I found that instructors who were district employees provided information more directly applicable to the classroom than those who were not employed by the district," 64% of beginning participants and 56% of completing participants strongly agreed or agreed. The t-test showed a significant difference in the way the two groups, beginning and completing, responded to this statement. Teachers beginning the program agreed more strongly with this statement. Twenty-three percent (23%) of beginning participants and 18% of completing participants were undecided. Twelve percent (12%) of beginning participants and 24% of completing participants disagreed (See Table 8). Instructors were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the similar statement (item 10) "Instructors who are district employees provide information more directly applicable to the classroom than

those who are not employed by the district;” Here, 95% of district instructors and 60% of adjunct instructors strongly agreed or agreed. The t-test showed a significant difference in the response for this statement, with instructors employed by the district agreeing’s more strongly with the statement than adjunct instructors. Ten percent (10%) of adjunct instructors were undecided. Five percent (5%) of district instructors disagreed while 30% of adjunct instructors strongly disagreed (See Table 9).

Table 8

Means and t-test Results of Individual Question Item Responses for Teacher Participants

Questionnaire Item	Teacher Participants		t-value	df	p-value
	Beginning	Completing			
6. The courses I have taken through the on-site program created for my district have been more appropriate for me than those I could have taken through a strictly university-based program.	1.76	2.14	3.41	272	.001*
8. I have found that going through the program as part of a cohort group was beneficial.	1.39	1.28	-1.48	272	.139
9. My colleagues in this program offered valuable insight and information through class discussions.	1.33	1.27	-1.02	272	.309
10. I found that instructors who were district employees provided information more directly applicable to the classroom than those who were not employed by the district.	2.18	2.51	2.47	272	.014*

*p ≤ .05

Table 9

Means and t-test Results of Individual Question Item Responses for Instructors

Questionnaire Item	Instructors		t-value	df	p-value
	District Means	Adjunct Means			
6. The courses taken through this on-site program created for this district are more appropriate for district teachers than those taken through a strictly university-based program.	1.37	1.90	1.94	27	.063
8. Going through the program as part of a cohort group is beneficial to the participants.	1.68	1.60	-.23	27	.823
9. A cohort group experience provides the climate for more candid discussion and exchange of information between members during class.	1.84	1.80	-.10	27	.924
10. Instructors who are district employees provide information more directly applicable to the classroom than those who are not employed by the district.	1.58	2.80	2.78	27	.010*

*p ≤ .05

Questionnaire Open-Ended Statement Results—Beginning and Completing Teacher Participant

The comment section of the beginning participants questionnaire simply contained the "Comments" statement. No other open-ended statements were included. Beginning participants stated that they were unsure of their opinions at this early stage of the program. Comments were brief. The following results are a summary of the comments

taken from the beginning participants' questionnaires. Similar responses were grouped into categories and then tallied.

The most frequently addressed aspect of the program in response to the comment statement was the cohort experience. Beginning participants liked moving through the program with the same colleagues. Other comments indicated that, in general, beginning participants were positive about their choice to pursue a master's degree through an on-site program. Participants voiced their appreciation of such factors as convenience and district support. A concern addressed was the quality of instruction and the need for instructors to be sensitive to the expertise level and needs of teachers in the courses.

The following is a summary of the responses from the open-ended statements on the completing participants' questionnaires. Similar responses were grouped into categories and then tallied.

For the open-ended statement (item 30), "The least valuable course could be improved by...", completing participants' comments addressed the areas pertaining to the instructor and the various facets of instruction in the courses. The need for a different instructor for the least valuable course was seen as being the factor needing the most attention. Thirty-five percent (35%) of the participants felt that the most important factor in a course's value was determined by the quality of the instructor. Other issues in regard to the instructor were a poor attitude toward the participants, inappropriate instructional planning, and the lack of management of the details of the course.

The second most frequently addressed possible improvement concerned the relevancy of material presented in the course. Twenty-one (21%) of completing participants felt that the least valuable course often did not provide information that addressed teachers' roles and classroom needs. The concerns discussed also referred to the lack of relevancy for a particular grade level.

In regard to instruction, 13% of participants cited the need for the instructor to use a variety of instructional strategies instead of the traditional lecture and test format. More hands-on application of information presented was also indicated. Completing participants indicated that class assignments needed to be relevant and appropriate to the time frame of the course.

Even though courses were considered deficient in various respects, few participants felt that a particular course should be eliminated from the program (See Table 10).

Comments on how the least valuable course could be improved included,

"The format of the class. Traditional read and test format needs changing."

"Changing the instructor—it could have been a valuable, informative course."

"Changing the instructor—she gave ambiguous assignments and changed her mind about requirements."

"Making it more applicable to teaching and more relevant for practical classroom application."

Table 10

Tally of Comments Regarding Areas for Improvement for the Least Valuable Course in Their Program by Completing Teacher

Participants (Item 31)

Area for improvement	Frequency* N = 137
Instructor	48
Relevancy of material	29
Instruction	18
Assignments	7
Currency of material	5
General	5

*If more than one area was identified as needing improvement, all entries were included in the tally.

For the open-ended statement (item 33) "The program could be improved by...", completing participants' responses addressed four areas for improvement: the administration of the program, general issues regarding content/instruction, relevancy of content/instruction to the role of the teacher, and instructors.

Twenty-one percent (21%) of completing participants addressed two areas pertaining to the administration of the program: the need to establish the program of studies in advance and to include more participant input in the planning of the program of studies. Participants felt uninformed about upcoming courses as well as the program of studies in general. More availability on general information on the transfer of credits and other

university issues was also requested. Participants also expressed the need for input and choice of the courses taken.

Seventeen percent (17%) of the participants' recommendations for improvement in the area of content/instruction included that texts purchased for the course should be more directly utilized in their own classrooms. They further recommended that materials instead of texts might be more valuable in the long run as far as classroom use is concerned. Another area of concern was the amount of papers written over the entirety of the program. It was suggested that acquired knowledge be demonstrated through alternate methods, such as class discussion and reports, instead of written communication.

The relevancy and applicability of course material taught to the classroom was again addressed by 13% of the participants as an area for program improvement. Participants seek information that can be readily used in the classroom setting.

The source of instructors was cited as an area for improvement. Thirteen percent (13%) of the participants were not comfortable with the number of district personnel being requested to teach the courses. A better balance between district and non-district personnel as instructors was recommended (See Table 11).

Comments on how the program might be improved included,

"Developing a program of study in advance, rather than planning only one semester at a time based on availability of instructors."

"Using texts that can be referred to in the actual classroom setting."

“Offering it [the master’s degree] with an ESL endorsement upon completion.”

“More time to develop curriculum for practical in class work. Use our own class to reflect what was learned.”

“Making more classes more teacher-oriented and the ideas taught can go right into the classroom. We’ve had enough theory.”

“Don’t use instructors that are responsible for me keeping my job—fear of retaliation.”

“Get more outside district [instructors] to instruct. At times district personnel were too busy to give us adequate time and attention. Sometimes we felt we were being ‘district-ized.’”

Table 11

Tally of Comments Regarding Areas for Improvement for Their
On-Site Master’s Degree Program by Completing Teacher

Participants (Item 33)

Areas for Improvement*	Frequency* N = 137
Administration	29
Instruction/Content	23
Relevancy	18
Instructors	18

*If more than one area was identified as needing improvement, all entries were included in the tally.

For the “Comments” section, most of the comments made reiterated previously stated perceptions of, and recommendations for, the cohort experience, instructors and the administration of the program. Of particular note was the request that transcripts showing completed courses be available in a more timely manner for the purpose of salary schedule adjustment.

Summary of Questionnaire Results

To help determine teachers’ needs in regard to professional development, participants were asked if the course taken through the on-site master’s degree program were more appropriate for them. Thirteen percent (13%) more beginning participants strongly agreed or agreed that the courses taken through the on-site master’s degree program were more appropriate for them than did completing participants. This difference was significant. One-fourth of completing participants and fewer beginning participants were undecided. All district instructors strongly agreed or agreed that courses taken through an on-site master’s degree program were more appropriate for teachers with fewer adjunct instructors concurring. A tenth of adjunct instructors were undecided and another tenth disagreed.

Participants were asked to discuss the cohort experience. Almost all of the beginning and completing participants strongly agreed or agreed that going through the program as part of a cohort was beneficial. Most district and adjunct instructors strongly agreed or agreed. Some district instructors were undecided and one-tenth of adjunct instructors strongly disagreed in the value of a cohort experience.

Almost all of the beginning and completing participants strongly agreed or agreed that their colleagues offer valuable insight and information through class discussions. Almost all instructors strongly agreed or agreed. A few district instructors were undecided and a tenth of adjunct instructors strongly disagreed.

In response to the question whether district instructors or adjunct instructors would provide more meaningful instruction to participants, slightly more than half of both beginning and completing participants strongly agreed or agreed that instructors who are district employees provide more information directly applicable to the classroom than do adjunct instructors. It was statistically significant that beginning participants agreed more strongly with the statement than did completing participants. One-fourth of all participants were undecided, and a few beginning participants and one-fourth of completing participants disagreed. Almost all district instructors and slightly over one-half of adjunct instructors strongly agreed or agreed. District instructors agreed more strongly with the statement than did adjunct instructors. A tenth of district instructors were undecided, while a third of adjunct instructors strongly disagreed.

The open-ended statement section of the questionnaires for beginning participants included no other statement than "Comments." Responses were brief and beginning participants stated they were unsure of the validity of their opinions at this early stage of the program. The most-addressed aspect of the program was the cohort. Beginning participants indicated they enjoy going through the program with the same colleagues.

Other comments indicated that, in general, beginning participants are positive about their decision to pursue a master's degree through an on-site program.

Completing participants were asked to respond to specific open-ended statements. To the statement regarding the least valuable course in their program and its improvement, participants cited a change of instructor. The instructor of the course was the most significant factor for improvement in any course. The instructor's attitude toward participants and classroom management were cited as part of the needed improvement. The second most-addressed improvement concerned the relevancy of course content. Courses must provide information valuable to teachers in their roles in the classroom. Even though some courses were seen as least valuable, few participants recommended that particular courses be eliminated from the program.

Completing participants recommended the program could be improved in four areas: the administration of the program, general issues regarding content/instruction, relevancy of content/instruction to the role of the teacher, and instructors. In regard to program administration, the need to establish a program of studies in advance and the need for more participant input were cited. In the area content/instruction, participants recommended that texts used be more relevant and usable in the their own classrooms. It was also recommended that acquired knowledge be demonstrable in a variety of ways other than through written communication only, ultimately decreasing the amount of paperwork which was often seen as extensive. Another recommendation was that course content, be relevant and directly applicable to their own classrooms. A final

recommendation from completing participants was that the sole source for instructors should not be district employees. A balance of district and adjunct instructors was seen as most beneficial to the program.

Completing participants' responses to the "Comment" statement reiterated previously-stated perceptions and recommendations. A few participants requested that transcripts be available on a more timely basis to allow coursework to be applied toward their salary schedule more quickly.

Interview Results

Teacher Participant Results

To determine how the program might better meet teachers' needs, beginning participants were asked to discuss their cohort experience. They addressed various aspects they valued, among them the comfort level of the group, the support, and the collegiality that had resulted. The comfort level of the group provided much openness and honesty in regard to class discussions. As one person noted, "They know their feelings are going to be respected by everybody else, whether or not we agree. It's fun to be able to disagree, to question." The group had come to know each other well over the period of three to four courses, so well that they voiced their concern for an instructor coming later in the program and feeling very much the outsider.

Beginning participants felt very supported in the group. The trust and camaraderie established early on, carried through to subsequent courses, facilitating the learning process and allowing participants to get to the tasks at hand quickly. "You go and be

yourself, and start learning right away.” As participants came to know each other at such a personal level, real caring occurred. “No one is going to drop out of the program, I can tell you that, because we won’t let them. We will help anybody do anything.” This level of support created an open communication that extended beyond the cohort’s immediate environment to their own classrooms. A sense of collegiality had been fostered to the point that they have opened their classrooms to each other.

This last class we actually sat with some people from another school because they grouped us by grade level and stuff, and one of the girls—she was just wracking our brains for ideas to use in the classroom....I finally said to her to take a professional day and come over to our school.

Completing participants were overwhelmingly vocal and positive about their cohort experience. This aspect of the program generated the most discussion. Completing participants elaborated more strongly and broadly on their cohort experience than beginning participants. The tremendous support, sharing and collegiality were all described in greater depth. The support extended beyond the courses themselves into the participants’ personal lives. They spoke of support for each other through the joys and tragedies experienced during the program—voicing that the support through difficult times had kept them in the program. In regard to sharing, participants indicated that the familiarity of cohort members made all the difference in the learning experience, and ultimately heightened its quality.

“We started learning each other’s strengths and weaknesses. We had to do group presentations—we know which person in our team had what strengths, and we could utilize those strengths, so our presentations started getting better and better.”

“I didn’t feel like there was competition. I like that.”

“I learned so much from all of my peers. I changed when I really started to interact with other people and other schools—I learned so much.”

A consequence of this sharing was the awareness and importance for the articulation between grade levels, as indicated by such comments as, “...you start reaching out, and start having really close relationships with other grade levels. You start thinking a little bit beyond your scope, and you start thinking about not only, if it’s a teacher above you, what you’re doing that impacts them and vice versa, but you’re thinking school-wide.” Participants spoke of breaking the barriers of the isolation they’ve experienced in their careers. “When you’re in your school and going in your classroom, you’re so isolated that I think that kind of carries through with everything. [Now] they can collaborate and articulate with people in their grade levels.”

Returning to “school” helped completing participants become re-sensitized to understanding their own students’ needs. “I can see now more, too, as far as having the kids work in groups. I can understand how they like it better, because I did....I learned more working with people actually.” Above and beyond, participants recognize that the

circumstances that provided so much support for continued learning and sharing had come to an end.

“We had blocked times that we worked together. We’ll never find that again on our own. You learn more from each other—more than anything else.”

“For two years we had this imposed interaction that has been wonderful.”

Beginning and completing participants further report that the cohort experience has changed their level of communication with, not only other teachers in the program, but with other colleagues at their school sites. One beginning participant noted that the communication became more specific to a particular situation as the courses progressed since the cohort members became familiar with each other’s students. “The exchange is more specific because they know exactly my classroom, my style, the children in my room.”

To further determine how the master’s degree program could better meet teachers’ needs, beginning and completing participants were asked if their experience would have been different if they had pursued their degree through a traditional university-based program. They indicated that the convenience of an on-site program that eliminated “bureaucratic requirements,” such as entry exams, final comprehensive exams, and so on, was its greatest advantage. The on-site program is sensitive to the district’s teachers’ needs. “If I just have to prove it on this little test, that doesn’t mean I’m a better teacher.” A third of completing participants interviewed cited the fact that no thesis or final comprehensive exams requirement, made the program much more attractive. Common

ground for both the instructor and the other participants in the programs was also mentioned as a plus. Participants felt there was more to gain from such an environment, “Because I’m with colleagues from my district, we share the same percent of problems every day. That’s why we have more to share because we go through the same exact things.”

In their discussion of how district and adjunct instructors might instruct differently, both beginning and completing participants believed that the basic difference is the background information that district instructors bring to the courses. District instructors know the student population and community and can incorporate information in their courses. A completing participant indicated that “I definitely think that teachers from the district are fine, but it needs to be someone who has practice in teaching their own colleagues, and that they have taught at that level.” Additionally, completing participants felt that district administrators who taught provided valuable insight into, not only the district’s operations, but their role as administrator. On the other hand, a beginning participant indicated that members of her cohort were concerned that the first three courses had been taught only by district personnel. A particular course had not been well-received since participants were resentful of the instructor’s approach to the content.

Participants were asked to discuss the administration of the program in the context of their needs. Both beginning and completing participants were very satisfied with the program administration. They felt that for the most part, the communication between district, university, and participant had been positive. The exception mentioned by

participants was not having a program of studies at the inception of the program.

Conflicting information on the accessibility of the university administrator surfaced. Some participants felt he was very available while others did not.

Completing participants were concerned about the pace of both single courses and the program as a whole. A research course had been offered over a two-week period, making the required assignments difficult to complete. "As we started talking about one person the next day, we should say, you know, we thought about this on this person here, and then we were talking about somebody else. We didn't have enough reflection time." The length of the entire program was also a concern. A two-year program, it was felt, is much too intense for teachers who are working full-time. It was suggested that the program be offered over a three-year time period.

Administrator Results

In the discussion of the cohort concept and teachers' needs, most district administrators spoke on many of the issues from first-hand observation since they have taught the courses that were offered in the programs. Administrators spoke mostly of the support that they observed within the cohorts. Undertaking a master's degree requires a more intense commitment of teachers, especially when they are working full-time. The cohort concept provided the support needed for many teachers, especially veteran teachers, to proceed with the program.

Community building was greatly facilitated by the cohort concept. Therefore, at the beginning of each course, little time was expended in "getting to know each other."

Participants came to know each other well, their strengths and weaknesses, which allowed for more candid and in-depth examination of issues. "They challenged each other, and I think everybody's work was on a higher level because they had been together so long." Time was not wasted in determining groups. Participants knew each other's working styles and gravitated to those groups.

As district administrators became familiar with the cohorts, they observed that participants' differences were absorbed and processed by the group. The group processing, it seemed, often became part of the total educational experience. "It was a criticism, but I think she was taking it to heart where she was beginning to see herself as a result of their open criticism of her work. They were facilitating her learning experience." Participants who were not well-liked initially, were later seen in a different light.

In one district, the group members collected enough money for tuition for two courses that one of their teachers was not able to afford and would have kept him from completing the program with them. This was evidence that cohorts grow to support each other.

The university administrator's respect and belief in the cohort system had grown as a consequence of his involvement with on-site programs over the last eight years. He indicated that teachers really grow to work as a team and in the process, learn the language of the profession—a language experience that moves them to a different level of professionalism. The relationships formed within the cohort facilitated and supported the learning experience.

District administrators described teacher needs in two general categories, the instructional/professional and the personal. On the instructional/professional level, one administrator's words describe it very well:

I could not believe it when I listened to some of their comments, concerns, and their questions....the things they said at the beginning of the program—how isolated they had to be and how uninformed they were and how...I couldn't believe things that I took for granted that they would know as teachers, and educators they had never even heard of before. I was amazed at their level of knowledge about major issues in education that affect what they do.

District administrators who taught noted there was substantial progress shown by teacher participants from the beginning of the program to the end. Their vocabulary and discussions reflected the extent of their new-found knowledge.

In terms of teacher needs, the university administrator felt that teachers wanted to be successful, and knew that their initial preparation may have been deficient in some areas. "It's impossible to learn enough to affect the wide spectrum of student needs in one given setting." The intent of the on-site program was to provide supplementary knowledge and skills in those areas.

Surprisingly, many veteran teachers became involved in the program. Even though, many were looking to move on the salary schedule, still others were saying that it was accomplishing a personal goal, something they had always wanted to do.

On the personal level, district administrators were surprised at the intensity of emotion that surrounded the participants' completion of the program. "It was very revealing to me to listen to these teachers stand up in front of their spouses and their instructors and talk about what this has meant to them personally and how proud they are with what they have accomplished."

In their discussion of the difference in instruction between district and adjunct instructors, both district administrators and the university administrator felt that in terms of instructional expertise, district and adjunct instructors were no different. What might be different is the context in which the instruction was taught. District instructors believed they would have more background information, about the district, and therefore, would incorporate that information into the instruction. The university administrator suggested that district instructors also would "probably have more constant practice with the skills that are being taught because, in fact, those skills are used in their job on a daily basis." The district administrators and university administrator voiced that there was need for both district instructors and adjunct instructors to be involved in the program. Adjunct instructors brought new ideas and different perspectives which are vitally important to the health of any organization and keep the instruction from becoming too district-oriented. Syllabi from other courses were frequently reviewed to gain perspective on the central issues that are most pertinent to that particular course. "It has been interesting to note that while they feel it is really good to have the culture of the district brought into those classrooms, they still feel like they need outside information." Above and beyond the issue

of difference in instructional focus, administrators were concerned primarily with acquiring instructors who were well-qualified in terms of content and instructional capabilities to teach their district courses, and ultimately meet teachers' needs.

The university administrator cited the opportunity for discretionary selection of instructors as a strength of the on-site programs, "...in a field-based program, you are not compelled to hire exactly the same people back. You want to find cohort faculty, but you are not compelled to re-employ them." The quality of the instruction is not only maintained, but continues to improve through this on-going process of the selection of the most capable instructors, an option that university programs do not have.

To further answer this research question, district administrators were asked to discuss what differences the participants might encounter if they completed their master's degree through a university-based program versus an on-site program. The biggest difference cited most by administrators was the practicality and relevancy of the program. The course content was directly relevant to what they "live and breathe every day." The appropriateness and applicability of course content, as administrators see it, brings more buy-in to what the district is about. "I think their experiences, in a way, might tie them to the district too, because they're really understanding what is happening in the district."

The university administrator felt that a major strength of the on-site programs was that unlike a university-based master's degree program, the program of studies has a flexible framework that incorporated district goals and objectives with university goals and expectations. "...you set essential parameters with the goals and objectives of both

institutions, but how you accomplish those can be changed from semester to semester.”

The program of studies can be altered to reflect the needs of the district and its teachers as they change.

Figure 3 illustrates the interview responses to this question by the different participant groups.

Participant	Cohort experience	On-site M.Ed. versus university-based M.Ed.	District versus adjunct instructors	Program administration
Beginning Teacher Participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extraordinary comfort level, support and collegiality a result 2. Facilitated learning 3. Eliminated time-consuming trustbuilding at each course, focus on learning 4. Open communication extended to own site 5. Communication with colleagues has become more specific to own classroom 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convenience of on-site program greatest difference 2. No entry or final exams 3. Common ground for both participants and district instructors beneficial 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District instructors bring district information to instruction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication between university and district has been positive 2. Services provided by their district surpassed what they had expected 3. A program of studies must be made available at the onset of the program
Completing Teacher Participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extraordinary comfort level, support and collegiality a result 2. Learning experience quality increased by familiarity 3. Awareness and importance of articulation between grades noted 4. Teacher isolation alleviated 5. Re-sensitized participants to own students' experiences and needs 6. Changed type of communication with colleagues 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convenience of on-site program greatest difference 2. No entry or final exams 3. Common ground for both participants and district instructors beneficial 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District instructors bring district information to instruction 2. District instructors who are administrators provide valuable insight to district operations and administrator role 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication between university and district has been positive 2. Services provided by their district surpassed what they had expected 3. A program of studies must be made available at the onset of the program 4. Length of program needs to be extended to three years
District Administrators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support cohort provides to participants is crucial to their success 2. Community building in courses was facilitated 3. Familiarity allowed candid and in-depth examination of issues 4. Participants' differences were absorbed and became part of learning experience 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practicality and relevancy of on-site program more beneficial 2. Learning specific content in the context of district issues promotes greater understanding of what the district is about 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructional capabilities no different 2. District instructors can relate more district information 3. Both district and adjunct instructors must be involved for a better balanced program 	Addressed in Question Five
University Administrator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants learn to work as a team 2. The language of the profession is learned boosting professionalism 3. Relationships formed facilitate and support learning 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flexible framework of on-site program allows for adjustments to course of studies 2. On-site program can always reflect district and teacher needs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructional capabilities no different 2. District instructors can relate more district information 3. District instructor have more practice with skills being taught 4. Both district and adjunct instructors must be involved for a better balanced program 5. Discretionary hiring allows for using most capable instructors 	Addressed in Question Five

Figure 3. Participant Perspective and Opinion Matrix

Summary of Interview Results

To help determine how a cohort experience might help meet teachers' needs, participants were asked to describe their experience. Beginning and completing participants agreed most enthusiastically that the cohort experience was invaluable to them on both the professional and personal level. The cohort provided an extraordinary sense of comfort, support and collegiality. The cohort environment facilitated the learning process by allowing participants to dispense with trustbuilding at the beginning of each course and be able to move quickly to their studies. The familiarity also permitted in-depth and open sharing on all, even controversial issues. The cohort provided common ground for the participants; it fostered a sense of kinship in regard to their district's concerns and issues. The sense of isolation that is common in the teaching profession was lessened through the camaraderie and sharing that occurred. Participants report that their communication with both their cohort and site colleagues had changed from the usual griping to the discussion of instructional issues and challenges. On a personal level, the cohort provided support for many participants during troubled times. Those participants accredited the group's encouragement and loyalty to helping them continue in the program.

District administrators supported the cohort concept wholeheartedly. Most spoke from first-hand observation since they had taught in the program. A cohort, they believed, offered the support that teachers needed in pursuing a master's degree while working full-time. It facilitated community building and consequent discussion of major educational

issues. Participants learned to appreciate each other's differences and work cooperatively, a positive result for any workplace.

The university administrator's respect and belief in the cohort concept has grown as a consequence of his involvement with the programs. The relationships formed between participants surpassed even those developed at their sites. Through the cohort experience, participants reached a new level of professionalism.

As part of their discussion of the needs that a cohort experience for teachers satisfies, district administrators also addressed other instructional/professional and personal issues. On the instructional/professional level, they saw teachers needing to become better-informed on educational topics in general. District administrators noted that the progress made for many participants from the program's beginning to end was exceptional. On the personal level, administrators were surprised at the level of emotion surrounding the completion of the program. Experiencing a master's degree program, they discovered, was a profound, life-changing accomplishment for many participants.

Beginning and completing participants believed that the greatest difference between an on-site program and a traditional university-based program was the convenience of the program, not only its proximity, but its omission of bureaucratic requirements. The fact that no entry and final comprehensive exams were required for the on-site program, made the program more attractive. Participants also saw the common background between district instructors and themselves as positive and beneficial.

District administrators felt that an on-site program would be more practical and relevant for their teachers than would a traditional, university-based program. The approach to the content, they believed, might bring more understanding and support of the district's goals and philosophy.

The university administrator saw the greatest strength of the on-site program as its flexible framework, a framework co-constructed by the district and university, which incorporated both district and university goals and objectives. Once parameters had been set, the program of studies could be altered from semester to semester to meet changing district goals, and consequently, better address the district's and teachers' needs.

In their discussion of the difference in instruction between district and adjunct instructors, both beginning and completing participants agreed that a very basic difference between district and adjunct instructors was the background information about the district that district instructors have. District instructors, who are frequently administrators, offered pertinent insights about the district's operations and also the role of administration.

District administrators and the university administrator agreed that district and adjunct instructors' instructional capabilities were no different. Agreeing with participants, they felt that district instructors could bring much district background and information to the course content. They further indicated that a well-balanced program must involve both district and adjunct instructors. A strength of on-site programs cited by the university administrator, was the discretionary selection of instructors. There is no commitment to rehire the same instructors from semester to semester, allowing for the quality of

instruction to improve by the elimination of less capable instructors, an option that universities do not have.

When asked how the administration of the program might contribute to providing for teachers' needs, all participants were very satisfied with the administration of the program, particularly with their district's role. They felt their district had often provided services above and beyond what they had expected. The provision a program of studies at the onset of the program was also recommended. It was also recommended to extend the program to three years by completing participants whose district's were involved in a two-year program, that the program be extended to three years.

Question Four: Does a Master's Degree Program Created

Jointly by a University and School District Provide a Meaningful and

Relevant Professional Development Experience as Seen by the Participants?

To respond to question four, responses to items 4 and 5, and open-ended statement 32 from the questionnaire are reported. In addition, applicable responses from the interviews are also presented.

Questionnaire Results

Teacher Participant and Instructor Results

In order to address this research question, teacher participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement (item 4), "My participation in this master's degree program has provided the best possible professional development for me as a

teacher;" 79% of beginning participants and 59% of completing participants strongly agreed or agreed, while 15% of beginning participants and 26% of completing participants were undecided. There was a significant difference in the way these two groups, beginning and completing, responded to this statement. Teachers beginning the program agreed more strongly with this statement (See Table 12).

Instructors were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement "Participation in a master's degree program provides the best possible professional development for teachers." Here, 53% of district instructors and 30% of adjunct instructors strongly agreed, while 16% of district instructors and 30% of adjunct instructors agreed. Thirty-two percent (32%) of district instructors and 40% adjunct instructors were undecided. No significant difference were found between the two instructor groups' responses to this question (See Table 13).

To the statement (item 5), "The courses in this program have been more helpful than inservice courses I have taken;" 63% of beginning participants and 68% of completing participants strongly agreed or agreed, while 26% of beginning participants and 13% of completing participants were undecided. Eleven percent (11%) of beginning participants and 16% of completing participants disagreed (See Table 12). To a similar statement (item 5), "The courses in this program are more helpful than inservice courses they might have taken," 69% of district instructors and 60% of adjunct instructors strongly agreed or agreed. Thirty-one percent (31%) of district instructors and 40% of adjunct instructors

were undecided. No significant differences between the two teacher group's or the two instructor group's responses to this question was found (See Table 13).

Table 12

Means and t-test Results of Individual Question Item Responses for Teacher Participants

Questionnaire Item	Teacher Participants		t-value	df	p-value
	Beginning Means	Completing Means			
4. My participation in this master's degree program has provided the best possible professional development for me as a teacher.	1.87	2.38	4.55	271	.000*
5. The courses in this program have been more helpful than inservice courses I have taken.	2.23	2.28	.43	271	.666

* $p \leq .05$

Table 13

Means and t-test Results of Individual Question Item Responses for Instructors

Questionnaire Item	Instructors		t-value	df	p-value
	District Means	Adjunct Means			
4. Participation in a master's degree program provides the best possible professional development for teachers.	1.94	1.70	-.72	27	.479
5. The courses in this program are more helpful than inservice courses they might have taken.	1.79	2.10	.88	27	.387

Note: $p \leq .05$

Questionnaire Open-Ended Statement Results - Completing Teacher Participant

The following results are a summary of the comments taken from the completing participants' questionnaires. Similar responses were grouped into categories and then tallied.

To determine if the program has been a meaningful and relevant professional development experience, completing participants were asked to respond to the open-ended statement (item 32) "Generally speaking, the program has been...." More than half of the completing participants who responded simply rated the program in descriptors that varied from outstanding to disappointing. Of these participants, only nine were dissatisfied with the program.

The convenience of the program was cited as an important factor in participation. Completing participants indicated that without the accessibility of time and place, they would not have been able to undertake the completion of a master's degree. The administration of the program at both the university and district level was described as organized and also a key factor in the contribution to the success of the program.

Other participants cited the cohort experience as being the most beneficial aspect of the program. The program was not only more enjoyable with the cohort, but the cohort provided the support sometimes needed by members during the program (See Table 14).

Table 14

Tally of Comments Regarding Their Program Experience by Completing
Teacher Participants (Item 32)

Program experience	Frequency*
	N = 137
Descriptor	97
Convenience of program	16
Cohort experience	14
Administration of program	5

*If more than one comment was used in describing the program, all entries were included in the tally.

Comments about the program:

“A means to a wonderful end. With a very busy life, teaching, raising children...etc. (you know the drill) there was virtually no way that I could manage the rigors of typical registration and classroom attendance. The university brought the world to my door. Thank you!”

“Extremely enlightening, very valuable in terms of teaching and working with team members.”

“Okay, but I wonder if it was truly master’s quality—it seemed more workshop district-directed not university-directed—what if teachers move districts.”

“Difficult, from everything I've heard, students in a regular master's program don't have half of the homework that we've had. I guess people are concerned about what will the rest of the education world think of our program, that is not right.”

“Fantastic—it has truly improved my teaching skills.”

“Informative, however some courses were extremely difficult to keep up with paper work which really wasn't necessary.”

“Good, I found the cohort system to be very beneficial in keeping people motivated to continue with the program.”

For this same statement (item 31) “The program has generally been...,” 62% of instructors responded in very positive descriptors ranging from “fantastic, excellent” to “great.” Seven percent (7%) instructors commented that they felt the program lacked the rigor of a university-based program. Some comments from instructors:

“An excellent opportunity for me to share my training and for less-experienced teachers to reap the rewards of classroom relevant strategies.”

“This entire district is strengthened by the knowledge skills learned by the students.”

“Very good for our district—the teachers share what they learn from the university staff with their schools.”

Questionnaire Open-Ended Statement Results - Instructor

A total of twenty-nine instructors completed the survey, 10 university adjunct instructors and 19 instructors who were employed by the district in another capacity.

There was no difference in their responses to the open-ended statements other than instructors who were employed by the district in another capacity tended to respond more frequently to the open-ended statements. The instructors responses to the statements were grouped together for the purpose of analysis. Similar responses were categorized and then tallied. The following results are a summary of the comments taken from both the district and adjunct instructors' questionnaires.

To better define what is necessary to provide meaningful and relevant professional development for teachers, instructors were asked to respond to the statement (item 29), "The course(s) I teach could be improved by." Most responses indicated that the period of time in which course were taught be extended. Courses taught over two weeks and at the end of the summer did not allow for meaningful processing for the participants. The instructors also commented that follow-up classroom observations would better benefit participants.

For the statement (item 30), "My experience as an instructor for this program could be improved by," instructors again addressed the issue regarding the length of the course. Another response indicated that instructors needed to be familiar not only with the content of other sections of the course they were teaching, but also with other courses in the program. An additional concern that surfaced throughout the responses was best described by this comment:

Students' understanding that earning a master's requires a higher level of analysis and synthesis of information. Many students complain incessantly about the work load

during the course... and thanked me for what they learned later. Their griping and wish for an easy course made teaching a grind and fairly unpleasant during the time I taught the course. It's not an experience I would want to repeat although the positive comments later were gratifying.

For the statement (item 32) "The program could be improved by," three areas most addressed were time constraints on the courses, administrative issues and participant attitudes and expectations of the program. Instructors again addressed concerns with courses not allowing for processing time. An administrative issue addressed concerned the need for the course sequence and instructors be identified prior to participants beginning the program. The final area of participant attitude and expectations was the most-addressed. Instructors commented that participants were not always fully aware of the time and intellectual commitment that must be made in the pursuit of a master's degree. Some instructor comments were:

"Several students who obviously resented the complaints of some, stated that some students appeared to equate 'convenient,' which was meant to refer to the location, to 'easy' instead. Graduate education programs are coming under fire for being watered down—it is critical that the integrity of graduate programs be maintained by setting appropriate goals and striving to meet them."

"Giving students a better understanding up front of the amount of work required by a master's program. Many students grossly under-estimated the amount of work a master's program requires. They were unhappy and their constant complaining detracted from the learning of others."

Summary of Questionnaire Results

To answer this research question, participants were asked if the on-site master's degree was the best professional development for them as teachers. Fewer completing participants agreed that this degree program was the best professional development for them in contrast to beginning participants. Beginning participants agreed more strongly than did completing participants. One-fourth of completing participants were undecided as were a few of the beginning participants. Two-thirds of district instructors and more than half of the adjunct instructors agreed that the master's degree was the best professional development for teachers. The remaining instructors, both district and adjunct, were undecided.

Two-thirds of both completing and beginning participants strongly agreed or agreed that the courses taken in the master's degree program were more helpful than inservice courses they had taken. The remaining one-third were either undecided or disagreed. Five percent (5%) more of completing participants than beginning participants disagreed. More than half of both the district and adjunct instructors strongly agreed or agreed that the courses taken in this program were more helpful than inservice course they might have taken. One-third of district instructors and slightly more than a third of adjunct instructors were undecided.

Through responses to open-ended statements, completing participants indicated that the program's convenience was a key factor in their decision to participate. The cohort experience was frequently cited as the most beneficial aspect of the program. Other completing participants described the program in descriptors ranging from "outstanding" to

“disappointing,” with 7% describing the program as disappointing. More than half of the instructors rated the program with very positive descriptors. Seven percent (7%) of the instructors expressed concern about the rigor of the program.

Instructors were also asked to respond to specific open-ended statements. There was no difference in the response between district and adjunct instructors; therefore, the results were combined. Both district and adjunct instructors felt that the course or courses they taught could be improved by extending the time period in which they were taught. They did not feel that a two-week course allowed for the needed processing time. It was also recommended that time be allowed for observation of participants' classrooms to facilitate the implementation of the program course content.

Instructors indicated again that their experience in the master's on-site programs could be improved by extending the time period in which the course was taught. They also felt the need to be informed about the content that other instructors taught in the same course, but also in the various courses taught in the entire program. A final concern indicated was the participants' attitudes. Instructors felt that participants should be informed of the requirements and commitment need to undertake a master's degree. Participants, in general, interpreted “convenient” and “easy” to mean that the program might be less rigorous since it was on-site.

The instructors cited three areas for program improvement. The length of time for courses needed to be extended to allow for more in-depth processing surfaced again as a recommendation. In regard to program administration, it was suggested that an established course sequence and selected instructors be identified prior to participants beginning the

program. The final and most-addressed area was the need for participants to fully understand the commitment, both time and intellectual, that must be made in the pursuit of a master's degree.

Interview Results

Teacher Participant Results

To determine if a master's degree program provided a meaningful and relevant professional development experience, participants were asked what they would accomplish by earning a master's degree. Beginning participants responded that completing a master's degree program was a personal goal and very self-satisfying. In the short period of time that they have been involved, it has provided the opportunity for them to reflect on their practice. The degree was also seen as providing the credentials to teach other teachers or to move into administration.

Completing participants, for the most part, agreed with beginning participants, but voiced their sentiments in more global terms about their accomplishment. "When you think about learning more about education, you think about content and whatever, but really as a teacher, education is about communication and cooperation, and even if content-wise, the class wasn't as rewarding as we thought, just communicating with each other is important." Participants found the program of great value both on a personal and professional level. "I feel that I can speak and defend my profession. I feel like it's made me a very valuable professional, more valuable than I was before."

Participants were asked to discuss the program of studies in relation to their professional development needs. Beginning participants appreciated the practical nature of

the program, and also the alignment of needs to the learning community as a whole. "I think what they're doing in the district is in respect to analyzing what teachers, the classroom, and the community need....it reflects it and serves our needs." The coursework as selected by each individual district addresses classroom needs within the context of their community. Completing participants also found the program more arduous than they had anticipated. Working full-time, for some, the assignments at times were difficult to complete. In spite of that, there was no doubt that the assignments were worthwhile. Overall, they saw great benefit to the program of studies reflecting their district's philosophy and goals. The one concern mentioned was the lack of information about the program of studies at the inception of the program. Often, participants did not know which course was to be held next until a week prior to its start date.

It is not surprising that the most valuable aspect of the program mentioned by beginning participants was the applicability of the course content of the program. "There definitely is time involved in the reading, but everything that the instructor so far has given us can be used somehow." Many completing participants described a particular course as the most valuable aspect, but most saw their new-found confidence, and for some, empowerment, in themselves and their ability to learn as most valuable.

So on a personal level, I feel greater self-worth. Professionally, I feel much more confident in what I do with my peers...I'm not afraid to discuss with administration on an equal platform. I think I'm, I don't want to say powerful, but maybe an empowered advocate for middle school, an empowered teacher at my site.

To determine the on-site master's degree program's meaningfulness and relevancy as a professional development experience, beginning and completing participants were asked to discuss the relationship between their master's degree and the district's inservice courses. Though participants indicated that their inservice courses were both similar and different to the master's degree courses, in their description, they attributed that likeness and difference to the depth in which master's degree courses investigate content. They felt that these two options provided different means and perspectives to fulfill different needs. Master's degree courses, due to their length, provide a much more in-depth and thorough presentation of a topic. "I think they [master's degree courses] are a lot broader and let us see a lot more of what is going on out in the world. Our district courses, because they are offered by our own teachers, are really geared for what is going on in our own district." Master's degree courses provide the theoretical basis for what is being studied. Both experiences were seen equally as valuable in the course of a teacher's professional development. "I can tell you how after an inservice, but with my master's program I can tell you why and how."

To further address the relevancy and meaningfulness of the master's degree program, participants were asked if their communication with their colleagues had changed. Beginning participants indicated that even though they had been in the program a brief period of time, to some extent, the type of communication with colleagues at their school sites was different. The greater number of teachers participating in the program at their schools, the more apparent the difference. Participants at the school site shared with colleagues in the program and also with other colleagues who were not.

We always go in the cafeteria when the kids are having breakfast and we sit in there and talk, and if you heard our conversations—the people who are not in the program just look at us—they will start in the fall, and we say, “Just wait, just wait. You’ll be talking like us pretty soon, too.” It really has made a difference in what we talk about.

Beginning participants not only share informally, but formally by taking back to their sites the curriculum and materials that had been developed in the courses. “I’m working with a couple of individuals who are going to do the same unit with their team. We’re bringing programs not just within one team, but it will be spread across the school.” As a consequence of the work participants have done in the courses, they frequently are seen as resources. “They follow behind us because we’ve got the books; we know exactly what you need to know, we’ll help you.”

Completing participants spoke of the impact of their participation in the program on their school, more in terms of leadership capabilities. “We started taking some of those ideas back to different submeetings in our building and different ideas to generate ideas and solutions to different problems.” One participant spoke specifically of initiating change at the school level noting, “...maybe through some of us, we can initiate some change at our school....We have the knowledge, information and research base to back it.”

Beginning participants felt there had to be a great impact on the district by the sheer number of teachers involved in the district program. The convenience of the program encouraged teachers who had not considered pursuing a master’s degree before. They felt that the district gained from participants having the same knowledge and content that

would be implemented; it provided a very convenient and accessible delivery system for information for the district's new and even existing instructional programs. As one teacher stated, "...so within that system, in order to continue its movement, they're going to have to provide certain things, materials, and program development—things that we need." The program was seen as providing the district with the opportunity for the dissemination and implementation of information gained through the coursework.

Completing participants felt strongly that the impact for the district came from the relationships that had been established during the program.

Relationships, not just ideas, but relationships. Now anytime that I am doing something, I really feel comfortable picking up the phone and saying, "Can you explain that to me?" We wouldn't have normally had that.

The teamwork idea was strengthened—problem-solving together. Although many of us didn't think all that way alike, they weren't afraid to say that they thought differently anymore.

A district-wide network for open communication had been established.

Administrator Results

District administrators were asked what they believed participants would accomplish by completing the master's degree program. They consistently praised the results of the program and felt fortunate to be involved in a unique and innovative opportunity to strengthen their district. For administrators whose districts have completed the program, it was revealing how meaningful the experience had been to completing participants. Their sense of accomplishment and gratitude was touching. Generally, the program was seen as

a move to provide an enriching opportunity to their personnel in a very humane, efficient, and convenient means with a concluding statement being, "I think we need to humanize all parts of education."

As an outcome of program involvement, district administrators described a sense of commitment to the profession and the district on the part of the participants that has not been seen before. "There's other things to talk about and they know it, and got involved in it—which they wouldn't have done on their own. That's exciting." Part of that commitment, administrators believed, was fostered by the message the district's involvement and support had sent. "It has reinforced a value that we've always had and has highlighted professional growth, professional development, and the importance of treating them as professionals and giving them the opportunity to pursue higher degrees." A by-product of this district commitment and administrator involvement was that "as we work and learn and grow together...they begin to see it all "us" rather than "they and us."

The university administrator stated that regardless of what the university provided, the on-site programs were the most meaningful for teachers and teacher's improvement. The program was designed for the practitioner and supported the activities that are specifically relevant to teacher's practice.

In regard to the impact the program has made, the analogy used by one administrator to describe that effect was a spider web that has encompassed the entire organization and community. Its impact is threefold: at the school level, at the district level, and on the community as a whole.

At the school level, district administrators believed that knowledge learned in courses by participants is taken back to the site and shared. This is particularly true when several participants are located at the same school. An observed consequence was curriculum integration as the result of a unit that was developed and taken back to the site. Another observation involved the change in discussion in the teacher lounge. "Instead of sitting around griping about kids, there were talking about issues. They were talking about things they were learning."

At the district level, participants' work frequently results in curriculum units that ultimately were used by the entire district. An example of that is a physical education curriculum that now includes games that can be played to support the social studies that is taught at each grade level. Another result of curriculum work in the courses was the realization of the importance of such work at the district level. Participants have indicated in their personal goals that they plan to serve on district committees. Grade level meetings to further curriculum discussion were also recommended as a result.

District administrators saw the cohort concept as having tremendous impact on the district. Participants shared a common knowledge base, and the cohort further promoted positive communication about the district's needs and values. "The more people that you have with a similar experience and a positive experience, and the more that they talk to others."

At the community level, district administrators believed that the district's support of the program was a public endorsement of the commitment to life-long learning for their personnel. The program had become a very visible example of district values.

In the continued effort to provide a quality master's degree program, district administrators voiced concerns about the teachers' expectations as they began the program. While the program is a convenience and may facilitate the process, the negative side of that is that it may attract teachers who are simply interested in moving on the salary schedule or are not willing to expend the extra effort it may have taken to pursue the degree if it had not been offered on-site. Of particular concern for some of the administrators was the attitude that "convenient" meant a less-than-rigorous program. Participants were not prepared nor expecting, the rigor that was demanded in many of the courses. "Most of them, any classes they've taken have been district staff development classes which are probably not a lot of delving into theory...you just don't have the time, so it's not set up for that. That's the type of class they're used to." Veteran teachers, from two administrators' experiences, were more willing to work and at times were embarrassed by their younger colleagues' lack of motivation. Most district administrators felt that the situation can be alleviated by speaking about the rigor of the courses and raising teachers' expectations before the program begins.

Addressing the issue of program rigor, the university administrator felt that the status of a master's degree supported instructors in upholding full university standards at the site. At times, school districts find it difficult to maintain that rigor in their inservice courses because teachers see it as "just inservice." A master's degree program, such as this, could raise the expectations of participants in general.

Figure 4 illustrates the interview responses to this question by the different participant groups.

Participant	What has been accomplished with an M.Ed.?	Program of studies	Comparison of M.Ed. and inservice program	Impact of the M.Ed. program on their school site	Impact of the M.Ed. program on the district
Beginning Teacher Participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A personal goal and very self-satisfying 2. Has provided opportunity to reflect on practice 3. Credentials for teaching other teachers or to move into administration 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appreciate practical nature of program 2. Alignment to district goals and philosophy a benefit 3. Applicability of course content seen as most valuable aspect 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Master's level courses provide in-depth investigation of content, inservice courses are more focused 2. Different means to fulfill different needs 3. Both important to professional development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resources are shared with colleagues who are in and those not in the program 2. Type of communication with colleagues has changed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Common knowledge and content is implemented 2. A convenient and accessible delivery system for district information
Completing Teacher Participants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Key skills of communication and cooperation learned 2. Heightened sense of professionalism 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More arduous than anticipated 2. Assignments worthwhile 3. Alignment to district goals and philosophy a benefit 4. Need information about course of studies prior to beginning the program 5. Acquisition of confidence in themselves and ability to learn seen as most valuable aspect 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Master's level courses provide in-depth investigation of content, inservice courses are more focused 2. Different means to fulfill different needs 3. Both important to professional development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newly learned leadership strategies are implemented on-site 2. Skills and knowledge used to initiate change 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outcome of relationships formed is the primary impact 2. Networks created for problem-solving and resources
District Administrators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants display a sense of commitment to the district and the profession 2. Attitude of team spirit between administrators and participants has been established 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convenient interpreted as less than rigorous program by participants 2. Participants not prepared for demands of master's program 3. Veteran teachers more willing to work 	Addressed in Question 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge and content shared 2. Change in daily communication with colleagues 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Units developed in program implemented district-wide 2. Awareness of importance of working on district curriculum writing 3. Share common knowledge base a consequence of the cohort
University Administrator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On-site programs are most meaningful for teachers and teachers' improvement 2. Program is designed specifically for practitioners 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Status of master's degree supports instructors in maintaining rigor 	Addressed in Question 5	Not addressed	Not addressed

Figure 4. Participant Perspective and Opinion Matrix

Summary of Interview Results

When asked what they were accomplishing by completing a master's degree, both beginning and completing participants saw their accomplishment as meaningful in terms of

personal goals and being self-satisfying. Beginning participants felt that even in the short time they had been involved, much reflection on their practice had taken place.

Completing participants' perspective was more global, and they spoke of the accomplishment of the degree as one of learning about communication and cooperation, two very valuable skills for teachers.

Participants were asked to discuss the program of studies in relation to their professional development needs. Beginning participants appreciated the emphasis on the practical aspect of the program. Completing participants related that they had found the program to be more arduous than anticipated. Both beginning and completing participants agreed that the alignment of the program to district philosophy and goals was a great benefit, not only to themselves, but to the district. A concern voiced by both groups was that lack of what they felt was adequate information about the program of studies at the onset of the program. Often, participants did not know what course was to be taken until a couple of weeks before the course began. The most valuable aspect of the program for beginning participants was the applicability of the course content, while completing participants saw the provision of their increased confidence in their ability to learn and teach as the most valuable aspect of the program.

In their comparison of a master's degree program and inservice courses, beginning and completing participants both saw the master's degree program providing a more in-depth and broader perspective on content, than inservice courses. They fulfilled different needs through different means, and both were seen as equally important to a teacher's professional development.

Beginning participants reported that their participation in the program promoted much sharing, both formally and informally at their school sites. Through both the provision of curriculum and serving as resources, beginning participants' involvement impacted positively the school site's operation. Completing participants spoke of their program involvement's impact on the school site more in terms of leadership capabilities. The use of teamwork strategies such as problem-solving, were shared with their colleagues and their use promoted in the school's meetings.

As far as the impact of the master's degree program on the district, beginning participants believed that the number of teachers involved would serve to provide a basis for common knowledge and content was seen as a benefit for the general instructional program. The master's degree program was seen as a very convenient and accessible means for the district to provide consistent information to its district's teachers. Completing participants felt that the impact of the program on the district came from the relationships formed during the program. It provided the opportunity for a district-wide network to be created.

When asked what teachers would accomplish by completing a master's degree, district administrators saw the program as a unique and innovative opportunity to strengthen and enrich skills and knowledge of district personnel. The university administrator believed that since the master's degree program was designed for the practitioner, it was the most meaningful for teachers and their improvement.

District administrators described the impact of the program at three levels: the school, the district, and the community. Impact on the school was demonstrated by the

knowledge that was shared by participants with their colleagues through the development of instructional resources. At the district level, the development of curriculum for district-wide use and the observed value by teacher participants of such activities had been felt. Participants indicated that the awareness of district committee's work has made them more willing to work on district committees as a result. District administrators described observing a sense of commitment from participants, not only to the profession, but to the district as well; participants were actively and enthusiastically involved in learning. The common core of knowledge participants acquired during the program was of great benefit to the district. Furthermore, as a consequence of the program, an open communication between administrators and participants had been established. It fostered a spirit of teamwork and replaced the "us versus them" attitude that had previously existed. At the community level, the administrators believed the community saw the district's endorsement of the program as promoting lifelong learning to their personnel.

A concern voiced by district administrators was the possibility that the convenience of the on-site program might attract teachers who were not genuinely interested in the program, but merely felt the need to move on the salary schedule. Participants may not be prepared for the rigor a master's degree program demands, since usually inservice courses do not delve into content as thoroughly as do master's level courses. Two administrators observed that veteran teachers were more dedicated to their studies. Administrators believed that it was important to make teachers aware of the level of commitment that was required in the pursuit of a master's degree before beginning the program. The university

administrator believed that an on-site program could support the district in maintaining the needed rigor in the courses by establishing university standards.

Question Five: Can an On-site Master's Degree Program Be the Means for the Merging of Two Systems for Professional Development?

To respond to question five, applicable responses from the interviews are presented.

No items on the questionnaire addressed this question.

Interview Results

Administrator Results

To answer this research question, district administrators were asked to discuss the relationship of district staff development and a master's degree to professional development for teachers. All administrators agreed that a teacher's professional development must incorporate many different types of activities and experiences. These may include inservice courses, conferences and workshops, and degree programs. None was seen as more valuable than the others; each served a purpose in the total professional development of a teacher. The difference cited particularly between inservice courses and a master's degree was that inservice courses tend to be more short term and focused on specific content; whereas, a master's degree provided a much broader perspective on a range of topics through a very formalized process. Inservice courses are "focused on a specific problem and they did very well, but they're not broad. They're not far-reaching. They develop skills, but they don't develop professionalism. They're one leg of a three-legged stool." District administrators agreed that the on-site master's degree program was a blend of a traditional master's degree program and the district's staff development

program. The on-site master's degree program provided the opportunity to incorporate the focus of the district's staff development into the course content and allowed staff development focus to become more formalized through that process. Bringing together the master's degree program and the district's staff development program, created the ultimate professional development because "you bring the best of both worlds to them."

The university administrator acknowledged that teachers' professional development consisted of many facets. "I don't think a master's degree replaces the need for inservice for the faculty, nor do I think it replaces the need to attend a conference." The on-site master's degree allows for the program of studies to restructure courses so that they meet both university course requirements and inservice needs. Most districts have linked their staff development programs to the on-site degree program. "It will make an educational partnership like probably partnerships should be. University and schools should be working together, same goals, same desired outcomes."

District administrators were asked to discuss what the collaboration between the district and university has accomplished in general. The operative word spoken often in their discussion was opportunity. The opportunity to bring together university and district expertise, both at the instructional and administrative level, was cited by most administrators. Administrators were appreciative of the opportunity to strengthen the skills of and to professionalize their staffs while providing valuable and relevant information about the district. "I believe it has given us the opportunity to influence teachers, and while they are learning about issues in education, they are learning about those issues in relationship to their school district."

The university administrator agreed that an on-site master's degree program brought together the best of what both the university and public schools had. From his experience in coordinating on-site programs, he believed that the program should be one-half to two-thirds developed by the district. "University systems and colleges of education know a lot about what should be in a profession, and they do know a lot about program development; they know about foundational information. What we can't do as well is know what's contemporary and what works with kids on a day-to-day basis. It's very hard to keep up with that because none of us are in the field."

The communication on district issues had not been one-way. As administrators became involved in the program, they received much information and input from participants on both a formal and informal basis. On an informal basis, "The information we have learned from teachers about what really happens out in the school and classroom has been very revealing." On a formal basis, some districts have asked participants to give input into newly developed curriculum. The program had provided a forum for the exchange of information, both formally and informally. "It's given us an opportunity...to really get to know them on a personal basis and to listen to some of the issues that we would not have been aware of if we hadn't been involved in weekly meetings with them."

In addressing the administration of the master's degree program at the district level, district administrators indicated that providing an on-site program was very time-consuming for them. To a great extent, districts assume much of the administration of the program that would normally be handled by the university personnel, such as coordination of facilities and the necessary communication to participants. Most of the administrators

interviewed played key roles, not only in the administration of the program, but also in its design. They served as the district's liaison for planning the course, selecting the instructor, qualifying the instructor, and registering participants for the course.

As a consequence of the courses being held on-site and often being taught by district personnel, the district incurred other expenses. District resources, such as supplies and copying, are often used by these instructors.

District administrators' discussion in regard to program improvement addressed administrative issues. Class size, appropriate facilities, scheduling, registration, and the lack of coordination between the program and what they termed "university bureaucracy" were cited as areas of concern. Participants frequently received communication from the university that was not appropriate for the on-site program since general university timelines and schedules did not coincide.

Another issue addressed was the need to speak to participants at the onset of the program about the commitment they would be making in regard to the degree program. Participants, at times, tend to interpret "convenient" to mean a less than rigorous program.

In smaller districts where many of the courses were taught by their own administrators, the need to include more adjunct instructors became apparent. "We had to look at bringing in outside instructors just because we can't continue to do that, it's too much of a strain on the organization."

While greatly appreciative of the university administrator's work, most district administrators felt that the university needed to provide additional support at the local level. The consensus was that the university liaison was "stretched" and "swamped." As

the programs continued to grow, the student-advisor ratio needed to be taken into consideration. "My advice to the university is that I think this is providing a tremendously valuable service to the district, and if it is going to continue to grow the way it has, they need to think about resourcing it."

The university administrator agreed that as the number of on-site programs had grown, the intent of the personal contact that he believed was a strength of the program, was being lost. As his time was taken up with completing the necessary administrative tasks, less time could be given to individual contact with participants. The need for more support and resources had become apparent.

Figure 5 illustrates the interview responses to this question by the different participant groups.

Participant	Comparison of M.Ed. and inservice program	Collaboration between district and university	Program administration
District Administrators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each serve a purpose in the total professional development of a teacher 2. Master's courses provide broader perspective through formalized process; inservice course are short-term and focused 3. On-site program is the ultimate professional development experience 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The opportunity to bring together district and university expertise 2. District can strengthen skills and professionalize staff 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time-consuming 2. Much of day-to-day administration is assumed by the district 3. Responsibilities included program design, selection of instructors, needed communication to participants, and registration 4. Adjunct instructors needed to relieve strain on organization for smaller districts 5. More administrative support from the university is needed 6. Areas for program improvement: class size, facilities, scheduling, registration coordination between university offices and participants
University Administrator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On-site program allows courses to be restructured so that they meet both university requirements and inservice needs 2. On-site program allows districts to link staff development to master's degree 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The opportunity to bring together district and university expertise 2. One-half to two-thirds of the program should be developed by the district 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal contact which was a strength of the program has been lost due to growth of program 2. More administrative support from the university is needed

Figure 5: Participant Perspective and Opinion Matrix

Summary of Interview Results

To address this research question, district administrators were asked to discuss the relationship of the on-site master's degree program with the district's staff development program. District administrators agreed that professional development for teachers must incorporate different types of activities and experiences. Master's degree program and inservice courses were both seen as valuable and necessary in that they both served a purpose. Inservice courses were highly focused and short-term; master's degree program

courses are lengthier allowing for time to provide in-depth investigation of the topics. The result is a broader perspective acquired through a very formalized process. Administrators saw the on-site program as a blending of both systems—the ultimate professional development experience that bring the best of both systems together.

The university administrator acknowledges that teachers' professional development consisted of many facets. The on-site master's degree program allowed for the reconstruction of courses so that both university requirements and inservice needs were met; the outcome was an ideal partnership between the university and district.

The collaboration as seen by the district administrators and university administrator, provides the opportunity to bring together district and university expertise. It allowed for the strengthening of skills and the professionalization of staff in the context of district philosophy and values. The university administrator believed that one-half to two-thirds of the program should be district-developed, and therefore, allow the district to provide content and knowledge about what works on a daily basis with students.

In regard to the administration of the program, district administrators described their involvement as very time-consuming. Much of the day-to-day administration of the program is assumed by the district, and their role as district liaison required that they coordinate or be involved in program design, selection and qualifying of instructors, general communication, and registration.

District administrators' discussion of the program administration centered around improvement. Concerns included class size, appropriate facilities, scheduling, registration and the lack of coordination between the university's administrative offices and the on-site

programs. Communication received by participants had been, at times, inappropriate since the timelines did not coincide. A final issue addressed was the need to inform participants of the commitment they would be making to pursue a master's degree. Participants tended to interpret "convenient" to mean a less-than-rigorous program.

Frequently, district administrators taught courses for the program. In the smaller districts, the need to include adjunct instructors became necessary to alleviate the strain on the organization. District administrators observed that as a consequence of program growth, more administrative support from the university was needed. The changing student-advisor ratio must be addressed. They saw the university administrator as "stretched" and "swamped." The university administrator felt that the personal contact he considered a strength of the program, was being lost as the number of programs grew. Administrative tasks were taking time away from individual contact with students.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS,
IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions and experiences of teachers who participated in an on-site master's degree program in their school district. The intention of this study was to provide both school districts and universities with information to assist in the design, administration and implementation of future programs.

This study provided:

1. a description of the participants' perceptions and experiences of their involvement in an on-site master's degree program,
2. insight as to the needs of teachers for the design and development of the curriculum of the program,
3. insight into the process in regard to the administration of the program, and
4. a description of the district's needs as defined by the administrators and district-based instructors involved in the development, teaching and administration of the program.

To accomplish this goal, a questionnaire was constructed and distributed, and interviews were conducted. The questionnaire was distributed to teacher participants and instructors of six school districts in the Phoenix metropolitan area that were beginning or completing an on-site master's degree program. Selected teacher participants, all on-site program administrators and the university administrator who oversaw all six programs were interviewed.

The questionnaires and interviews were used to obtain answers to the following questions:

1. What role does a master's degree play in a teacher's professional development?
2. What curriculum is most appropriate to create and support the revitalization of classroom instruction and consequent student achievement as seen by the participants?
3. Since these programs are designed jointly by a district and university, will the program better meet teachers' needs as they define them?
4. Does a master's degree program created jointly by a university and school district provide a meaningful and relevant professional development experience as seen by the participants?
5. Can an on-site master's degree program be the means for the merging of two systems for professional development?

Two hundred seventy-four teacher participants, 6 administrators, 29 instructors and the university administrator participated in the study. Since the questionnaires were distributed during class, the rate of return was 100%, with the exception of those participants who may have been absent from that particular class. The rate of return for the instructor questionnaires was also 100%.

Summary of Findings

The findings presented are directly related to each specific research question. For the purpose of clarity, each question is restated, followed by the major findings.

Question One: What role does a master's degree play in a teacher's professional development?

Teacher participants and instructors agreed that a master's degree is important to a teaching career and also improves teaching. The interviews yielded further information. Teacher participants who were interviewed believed that the application of knowledge and skills from any source of continuing education is the key to better teaching, not necessarily a master's degree per se. Teachers completing the program recommended that teachers should teach three to five years before undertaking a master's degree program. District administrators believed that a master's degree promotes a greater sense of confidence and professionalism in teachers. Additional data indicated that the teachers who have completed program were more experienced and had been employed with their current district longer than teachers who are now beginning the program.

The primary motive for pursuing a master's degree was salary increase or satisfying the state requirement for certification. Also mentioned was the self-satisfaction of completing the degree and an interest in keeping updated. Teacher participants believed the implementation of skills and knowledge and the utilization of resources developed in the program would help improve their teaching.

Question Two: What curriculum is most appropriate to create and support the revitalization of classroom instruction and consequent student achievement as seen by the participants?

Teacher participants and administrators believed that involvement in the master's degree program affected student achievement in their classrooms. Some concern was

voiced as to its assessment and to what to attribute the change that occurred. Instructors believed that the courses they taught would have an effect on student achievement in the teacher participants' classrooms.

In response to whether a master's degree program should be more practical or theoretical, teacher participants and instructors believed it should include more of the practical; however, some completing teachers indicated that as a consequence of their involvement in the program, they had come to believe that a balance of practical and theoretical components was more beneficial. Administrators also agreed that a balance of both the theoretical and practical aspects provides the best possible master's degree experience for teachers.

In regard to specific curriculum, teacher participants agreed that courses in teaching strategies, equity/diversity issues, special needs, child/adolescent psychology, educational research, and education issues were valuable to their roles as teachers. A course on the historical/philosophical perspective of education was seen as less valuable. The most valuable courses for teachers completing the program were cooperative learning, professional problems and issues, and multi-cultural education, in that order. No single, same course across the three districts where participants had completed the program was considered as least valuable.

Question Three: Since these programs are designed jointly by a district and university, will the program better meet teachers' needs as they define them?

Most teachers agreed that an on-site master's degree program offers courses more appropriate for them than does a traditional, university-based program. The convenience

in terms of proximity and its omission of entry and comprehensive final exams made the program most appealing. District administrators agreed that the on-site master's degree program is more relevant and practical for their district's teachers. The university administrator believed the greatest strength of the program is its flexible framework--a framework that allows the program of studies to continually reflect district goals and teachers' needs as they change.

The most-addressed and valued aspect of the on-site master's degree program was the cohort system. Teachers, instructors and administrators agreed that the cohort experience provides an environment that sustains teachers in the pursuit of a master's degree. The unparalleled level of comfort, support, and collegiality created by the cohort environment facilitated learning and created networks throughout the district. Relationships established on both a personal and professional level were seen, at times, as the most important outcome of the program.

Teachers, administrators and instructors indicated no difference in the instructional capabilities of district and adjunct instructors, the exception being simply the provision of district background and information by district instructors. Teachers and administrators agreed that a balance of both district and adjunct instructors was most beneficial to the on-site master's degree program.

To better meet teachers' needs, teachers completing the program most often indicated a change in instructor as a remedy to improve the least valuable course they had taken. Areas for program improvement cited were: the administration of the program, general issues regarding content/instruction, the relevancy of content/instruction to the

role of the teacher, and instructors. Although specific recommendations were made for program improvement, overall, teachers were very satisfied with the administration of the program, particularly with their district's role.

Question Four: Does a master's degree program created jointly by a university and school district provide a meaningful and relevant professional development experience as seen by the participants?

Most teacher participants and instructors agreed that the on-site master's degree program was the best possible professional development for a teacher. They also agreed that the courses taken in the program were more appropriate for them than inservice courses they had taken. In the comparison of these courses, the master's degree program courses were seen as providing a more in-depth and broader perspective on content than did inservice courses. Both were seen as equally important to teachers' professional development.

Teacher participants indicated convenience of the program and the cohort experience as most beneficial. In their discussion of the program of studies, teacher participants agreed that the alignment of the program to district philosophy and goals was of great merit, not only to themselves, but to the district. Teachers expressed the need to know at the onset of the program exactly what courses were to be included. The most valuable aspect of the program for teachers beginning the program was the applicability of course content, while teachers completing the program saw their increased confidence in their ability to learn and teach as most valuable.

Both teachers and administrators saw the program's impact on several levels. At the school level, teachers agreed that the resource materials and leadership capabilities developed during the program would greatly benefit their schools. Administrators believed that the impact at the school level was the knowledge that was shared by the program's participants with others. At the district level, both teachers and administrators believed that the common core of knowledge developed and established by the program was of tremendous benefit to their district's instructional program. At the community level, the program, they indicated, was seen as the district's endorsement of lifelong learning.

Question Five: Can an on-site master's degree program be the means for the merging of two systems for professional development?

District administrators saw master's degree program courses and inservice courses as equally valuable and necessary since they both served a purpose in teachers' professional development. The on-site master's degree program was seen as a blending of both systems, which in their opinion was the ultimate professional development experience since it brings the best of both systems together. The university administrator indicated that an on-site master's degree program allowed for the reconstruction of courses so that both university requirements and inservice needs were met--the outcome being an ideal partnership between the university and district.

District administrators described their involvement in the program as very time-consuming. Much of the day-to-day administration of the program was assumed by the district, and their role as district liaison required much participation in various

administrative tasks. As the number of programs grows, district administrators indicated that more administrative support and resources from the university will be needed.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are made based only on the findings of this study, which involved sampling from teachers, instructors and administrators from six school districts in metropolitan Phoenix that are presently offering an on-site master's degree program. The findings were derived from the results of a questionnaire and interviews.

1. Teachers, instructors and administrators agreed that a master's degree is important to a teaching career and that completing the degree improves teaching; however, teachers and administrators further indicated that the master's degree per se is not valuable unless the course content is implemented.
2. Teachers agreed that a master's degree program has an impact on their practice. Teachers beginning the program indicated that course content addressing instructional strategies and methods is most beneficial, while teachers completing the program indicated that curriculum units and resource materials developed in the program had the greatest impact on their practice.
3. Teachers, instructors and administrators agreed that the completion of a master's degree program impacts student achievement positively; however, they voiced concern about substantiating that impact and determining exactly what factors had created that change.
4. Teachers and instructors agreed that an on-site master's degree program should include more practical than theoretical aspects, though teachers who had completed the

program indicated there was a need for a balance of the two as a consequence of their involvement in the program. District administrators and the university administrator agree that a balance of practical and theoretical aspects must be included in the on-site master's degree program.

5. Teachers agreed that courses in teaching strategies, equity/diversity issues, special needs, child/adolescent psychology, educational research, and educational issues are valuable to their role as teachers. They saw less value in a course in the historical/philosophical perspective of education. Teachers completing the program saw courses in cooperative learning, professional issues, and multi-cultural learning, respectively, as the most valuable courses. Instructors saw all courses offered in the program as valuable for teachers.

6. Teachers, instructors, and administrators agreed that courses taken through the on-site master's degree program were more appropriate for teachers than those offered through a university-based program.

7. Teachers, instructors and administrators agreed that a cohort system is beneficial and provides support to teachers in their pursuit of a master's degree. The common core of knowledge established through such a system was seen as having great value for the district.

8. Teachers and administrators agreed that district and non-district (adjunct) instructors both provided quality instruction; however, district instructors bring relevant district background and information to the instruction. A balance of both is most beneficial to the on-site master's degree program.

9. Teachers completing the program agreed the quality of a course is determined unilaterally by the instructor and indicated a change of instructor as the greatest improvement possible for a course seen as least valuable.

10. Teachers and instructors agreed that the on-site master's degree program is the best professional development for teachers and that the courses taken in the program are more helpful than inservice courses they might have taken; however, both are seen as equally important to a teachers' professional development.

11. The convenience of proximity of the on-site master's degree program facilitated pursuing a master's degree for teachers.

12. Teachers and administrators agreed that the on-site master's degree program provides a meaningful and relevant professional development experience through its alignment with district philosophy and goals. Teachers and administrators further indicated that the impact of the district's endorsement and involvement in an on-site master's degree program impacts the school, district and community.

13. District administrators and the university administrator agreed that an on-site master's degree program provides the opportunity to link the district's professional development needs with a master's degree. By incorporating the university's goals and expectations with the district's goals and objectives, this partnership provides an optimum professional development experience for teachers.

Implications

The conclusions from the findings suggest several possible implications. The strong agreement from all participants in the study indicating that they believe a master's degree

is important to a teaching career and improves teaching, implies that the master's degree, contrary to recent criticisms, is considered a valuable acquisition for teachers, provided that the content is implemented. It is further implied that a teacher's practice, regardless of years of teaching, can be affected by formal courses of study. Unfortunately, the link between improved practice and student achievement remains elusive as indicated by teachers and administrators. Without more prescribed methods of investigation, it seems that the effects of teachers' professional development on student achievement is difficult to substantiate.

Teachers completing the program indicated that they saw value in including the theoretical aspects in the master's degree program courses. Perhaps to better educate and equip teachers for their classrooms, an implication for a district's inservice program is that more of the theoretical aspects should be included. Since teachers and instructors indicate that both a master's degree program and inservice courses are equally important to teachers' professional development, school districts must continue to make both options available to teachers.

In regard to teachers' needs, the conclusions imply that teachers find an on-site master's degree program that is reflective of their district's philosophy, goals and culture, a meaningful and relevant professional development experience. The traditional university-based undergraduate and master's degree programs may need to be reconsidered and reconfigured. On-site master's degree programs and professional development schools where student teachers and teachers can learn in the context of an educational setting and culture, may be the best means for teachers' professional

development. However, it is interesting to note that teachers agree instructors not employed by the district provide instruction as valuable as do those employed by the district in another capacity. The need for non-district instructors implies that teachers believe in the existence of a universal body of educational knowledge that exists and can be imparted separately from contextual influences.

The impact on school, district and community as observed by teachers and administrators, suggests that the on-site master's degree program can be the infrastructure for the development and establishment of a community of learners. The exchange of knowledge and information flowed freely between and among all participants, becoming an experience where all participants came to be knowledgeable about not only educational ideology, but about the process of education at all levels. The linking of district's professional development needs to a master's degree program has opened doors to a partnership of many facets.

Overall, the findings suggest the long-term implication that universities and school districts must collaborate and share more equally in the development and delivery of undergraduate and graduate programs for teacher education and development. Universities must allow greater flexibility in the administration of such programs to promote their continued success and consequent enrichment for teachers.

Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest the following recommendations for further research.

1. Research that is conducted longitudinally is needed to yield additional information. Teachers who are interviewed at the inception and completion of their on-site master's degree program may provide more complete information about the program.
2. Research that is conducted longitudinally is needed to yield additional information about the impact of the program on student achievement. The inclusion of pre-assessment and post-assessment of students at the inception and completion of the on-site master's degree program may provide more complete information about student achievement.
3. Research is needed on groups of teachers in a traditional university-based program and in an on-site program. Parallel data in the comparison of experiences and the program of studies may yield more in-depth and broader information about master's degree programs in general.
4. Research is needed on secondary level teachers' experiences in an on-site master's degree program. This study's sample was primarily teachers at the elementary level. Secondary teachers' needs may be different.
5. Research is needed on rural teachers' experiences in an on-site master's degree program. This study's sample was teachers from an urban setting. Rural teachers' needs may be different.

APPENDIX A
DEMOGRAPHICS OF TEACHER PARTICIPANTS
WHO RESPONDED TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographics of Teacher Participants	N=137	N=137
	Beginning Participants	Completing Participants
Grade level taught		
K-3	54%	55%
4-6	20%	37%
7-8	14%	4%
9-12	6%	0%
Other	6%	4%
Years teaching experience		
0-3	36%	13%
4-7	21%	39%
8-15	29%	25%
16-24	12%	21%
More than 25	2%	2%
Number of years in current district		
0-3	48%	26%
4-7	22%	42%
8-15	23%	18%
16-24	6%	14%
More than 25	1%	0%
Student population of district		
Less than 5000	2%	2%
5, 000-10, 000	14%	13%
10,000-20,000	57%	58%
20,000-30,000	2%	2%
More than 30,000	25%	25%
Age		
Less than 23	3%	2%
24-30	29%	27%
31-40	35%	33%
41-50	24%	31%
51 or more	9%	7%
Gender		
Female	82	92

	N=137	N=137
Demographics of Teacher Participants	Beginning Participants	Completing Participants
Male	18	8
Ethnicity		
Asian	2	1
African-American	4	0
Caucasian	78	94
Hispanic	13	3
Native-American	1	1
Other	1	1

Demographics of Teacher Participants Who Were Interviewed

N = 18

Interviewee	School District	Grade Level	Years Experience	Gender
1	A	Elementary-1st	4	F
2	A	Elementary-K & 1st	10	F
3	A	Elementary-3rd	18	F
1	B	Elementary-ESL 6th	5	F
2	B	Jr High-Sp Ed	15	F
3	B	Elementary-1st	25	F
1	C	Elementary-5th	4	F
2	C	Elementary-K	10	F
3	C	Elementary-5th	16	F
1	D	Elementary-ESL 1st	3	F
2	D	Elementary-5th	11	F
3	D	Jr High-Sci-7th & 8th	18	M
1	E	Elementary-Gifted Resource 3rd-5th	3	F
2	E	Elementary-6th	9	M
3	E	Jr High-7th Lang Arts	17	F
1	F	Sr High-10th & 11th Eng	4	F
2	F	Elementary-K ESL	8	F
3	F	Jr High-Soc St-9th	16	M

Demographics of Instructors Who Responded to the Questionnaire

Demographics of Instructors	N=19 District Instructors	N=10 Adjunct Instructors
Years teaching experience in K-12		
0-3	5%	—
4-7	5%	10%
8-15	4%	50%
16-24	26%	30%
More than 25	42%	10%
Years with current district		
0-3	11%	n/a
4-7	21%	n/a
8-15	42%	n/a
16-24	16%	n/a
More than 25	11%	n/a
Number of years experience teaching university courses		
0-3	11%	40%
4-7	21%	50%
8-15	42%	—
16-24	16%	10%
More than 25	10%	—
Age		
Less than 23	—	—
24-30	—	—
31-40	26%	40%
41-50	37%	40%
51 or more	37%	20%
Gender		
Female	79%	70%
Male	21%	30%
Ethnicity		
Asian	—	—
African-American	—	—

Demographics of Instructors	N=19 District Instructors	N=10 Adjunct Instructors
Caucasian	95%	90%
Hispanic	—	—
Native-American	5%	—
Other	—	10%
Current position		
Classroom teacher	21%	30%
Teacher specialist	15%	—
School administrator	16%	30%
District administrator	48%	10%
Other	—	20%

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE: TEACHER PARTICIPANTS BEGINNING A PROGRAM

QUESTIONNAIRE**ON-SITE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY/SCHOOL DISTRICT COLLABORATION**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine your perceptions of, and experiences in, your on-site Master's Degree program. The results will provide valuable information for the administration of the program. Your response is appreciated. Thank you!

Please circle your level of agreement with these questions and then respond to the questions on the back:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided/ Unknown	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Completing a Master's Degree is important to a teaching career.	SA	A	U	D	SD
2. The courses in this Master's Degree program will help me to improve my teaching.	SA	A	U	D	SD
3. The courses in this Master's Degree program will help increase student achievement in my classroom.	SA	A	U	D	SD
4. My participation in a Master's Degree program will provide the best possible professional development for me as a teacher.	SA	A	U	D	SD
5. The courses I will take in this program will be more helpful than inservice courses I have taken.	SA	A	U	D	SD
6. The courses I will take through this on-site program created for my district will be more appropriate for me than those taken through a strictly university-based program.	SA	A	U	D	SD
7. I believe that courses in this program should include more of the practical aspects of teaching rather than a lot of theory.	SA	A	U	D	SD
8. I will find that going through the program as part of a cohort group will be beneficial.	SA	A	U	D	SD
9. My colleagues in this program will offer valuable insight and information through class discussions.	SA	A	U	D	SD

Please circle your level of agreement with these questions and then respond to the questions on the back:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided/Unknown	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. I think that instructors who are district employees will provide information more directly applicable to the classroom than those who are not employed by my district.	SA	A	U	D	SD
The courses covering the following content will be valuable for my role as teacher:					
11. Classroom management	SA	A	U	D	SD
12. Curriculum development	SA	A	U	D	SD
13. Teaching strategies e.g. cooperative learning, mastery learning, seven intelligences	SA	A	U	D	SD
14. Development of assessments for instruction	SA	A	U	D	SD
15. Equity/Diversity issues	SA	A	U	D	SD
16. Special Needs e.g. at-risk, gifted, inclusion	SA	A	U	D	SD
17. Leadership roles for teachers	SA	A	U	D	SD
18. Child/adolescent psychology and its implications for instruction	SA	A	U	D	SD
19. Educational research and its implications for the classroom	SA	A	U	D	SD
20. Educational issues e.g. change, parental involvement, public relations	SA	A	U	D	SD
21. Historical and/or philosophical perspective of education	SA	A	U	D	SD

Please circle the appropriate response for the following information:

22. I mostly teach in grades ____.
- a. K-3 b. 4-6 c. 7-8 d. 9-12 e. Other
23. I have ____ years teaching experience.
- a. 0-3 b. 4-7 c. 8-15 d. 16-24 e. 25+
24. I have been with my current district for ____ years.
- a. 0-3 b. 4-7 c. 8-15 d. 16-24 e. 25+
25. The district has a population of ____ students.
- a. Less than 5,000 b. 5,000-10,000 c. 10,000-20,000 d. 20,000-30,000 e. 30,000+

- 26. I am ____ years old.
 - a. Less than 23
 - b. 24-30
 - c. 31-40
 - d. 41-50
 - e. 51+
- 27. I am ____.
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
- 28. I am ____.
 - a. Asian
 - b. African-Am
 - c. Caucasian
 - d. Hispanic
 - e. Native-Am
 - f. Other _____

Comments:

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE: TEACHER PARTICIPANTS COMPLETING A PROGRAM

QUESTIONNAIRE**ON-SITE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY/SCHOOL DISTRICT COLLABORATION**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine your perceptions of, and experiences in, your on-site Master's Degree program. The results will provide valuable information for the administration of the program. Your response is appreciated. Thank you!

Please circle your level of agreement with these questions and then respond to the questions on the back:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided/ Unknown	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Completing a Master's Degree is important to a teaching career.	SA	A	U	D	SD
2. As a result of the course content in this Master's Degree program, my teaching has improved.	SA	A	U	D	SD
3. The content in the courses in this Master's Degree program and its implementation have helped increase student achievement in my classroom.	SA	A	U	D	SD
4. My participation in this Master's Degree program has provided the best possible professional development for me as a teacher.	SA	A	U	D	SD
5. The courses in this program have been more helpful than inservice courses I have taken.	SA	A	U	D	SD
6. The courses I have taken through this on-site program created for my district have been more appropriate for me than those I could have taken through a strictly university-based program.	SA	A	U	D	SD
7. The courses in this program included more of the practical aspects of teaching rather than a lot of theory.	SA	A	U	D	SD
8. I have found that going through the program as part of a cohort group was beneficial.	SA	A	U	D	SD

Please circle your level of agreement with these questions and then respond to the questions on the back:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided/Unknown	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9. My colleagues in this program offered valuable insight and information through class discussions.	SA	A	U	D	SD
10. I found that instructors who were district employees provided information more directly applicable to the classroom than those who were not employed by the district.	SA	A	U	D	SD
I found the courses covering the following content valuable for my role as teacher:					
11. Classroom management	SA	A	U	D	SD
12. Curriculum development	SA	A	U	D	SD
13. Teaching strategies e.g. cooperative learning, mastery learning, seven intelligences	SA	A	U	D	SD
14. Development of assessments for instruction	SA	A	U	D	SD
15. Equity/Diversity issues	SA	A	U	D	SD
16. Special Needs e.g. at-risk, gifted, inclusion	SA	A	U	D	SD
17. Leadership roles for teachers	SA	A	U	D	SD
18. Child/adolescent psychology and its implications for instruction	SA	A	U	D	SD
19. Educational research and its implications for the classroom	SA	A	U	D	SD
20. Educational issues e.g. change, parental involvement, public relations	SA	A	U	D	SD
21. Historical and/or philosophical perspective of education	SA	A	U	D	SD

Please circle the appropriate response for the following information:

22. I mostly teach in grades ____.
- a. K-3 b. 4-6 c. 7-8 d. 9-12 e. Other
23. I have ____ years teaching experience.

- a. 0-3 b. 4-7 c. 8-15 d. 16-24 e. 25+
24. I have been with my current district for ____ years.
a. 0-3 b. 4-7 c. 8-15 d. 16-24 e. 25+
25. The district has a population of ____ students.
a. Less than 5,000 b. 5,000-10,000 c. 10,000-20,000 d. 20,000-30,000 e. 30,000+
26. I am ____ years old.
a. Less than 23 b. 24-30 c. 31-40 d. 41-50 e. 51+
27. I am ____.
a. Female b. Male
28. I am ____.
a. Asian b. African-Am c. Caucasian d. Hispanic e. Native-Am
f. Other _____
29. The most valuable course in this program has been
30. The least valuable course in this program has been
31. This least valuable course could be improved by
32. Generally speaking, the program has been
33. The program could be improved by

Comments:

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE: DISTRICT PERSONNEL AS INSTRUCTORS

QUESTIONNAIRE**ON-SITE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY/SCHOOL DISTRICT COLLABORATION**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine your perceptions of, and experiences in, your on-site Master's Degree program. The results will provide valuable information for the administration of the program. Your response is appreciated. Thank you!

Please circle your level of agreement with these questions and then respond to the questions on the back:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided/ Unknown	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Completing a Master's Degree is important to a teaching career.	SA	A	U	D	SD
2. The content of the course I teach in this Master's Degree improves the participants' teaching.	SA	A	U	D	SD
3. The content of the course I teach in this Master's Degree program helps increase student achievement in the participants' classrooms.	SA	A	U	D	SD
4. Participation in a Master's Degree program provides the best possible professional development for teachers.	SA	A	U	D	SD
5. The courses in this program are more helpful than inservice courses they might have taken.	SA	A	U	D	SD
6. The courses taken through this on-site program created for this district are more appropriate for district teachers than those taken through a strictly university-based program.	SA	A	U	D	SD
7. I believe that courses in this program should include more of the practical aspects of teaching rather than a lot of theory.	SA	A	U	D	SD
8. Going through the program as part of a cohort group is beneficial to the participants.	SA	A	U	D	SD

Please circle your level of agreement with these questions and then respond to the questions on the back:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided/ Unknown	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9. A cohort group experience provides the climate for more candid discussion and exchange of information between members during class.	SA	A	U	D	SD
10. Instructors who are district employees provide information more directly applicable to the classroom than those who are not employed by the district.	SA	A	U	D	SD
The courses covering the following content are valuable to participants for their roles as teachers:					
11. Classroom management	SA	A	U	D	SD
12. Curriculum development	SA	A	U	D	SD
13. Teaching strategies e.g. cooperative learning, mastery learning, seven intelligences	SA	A	U	D	SD
14. Development of assessments for instruction	SA	A	U	D	SD
15. Equity/Diversity issues	SA	A	U	D	SD
16. Special Needs e.g. at-risk, gifted, inclusion	SA	A	U	D	SD
17. Leadership roles for teachers	SA	A	U	D	SD
18. Child/adolescent psychology and its implications for instruction	SA	A	U	D	SD
19. Educational research and its implications for the classroom	SA	A	U	D	SD
20. Educational issues e.g. change, parental involvement, public relations	SA	A	U	D	SD
21. Historical and/or philosophical perspective of education	SA	A	U	D	SD

Please circle the appropriate response for the following information:

22. I have ____ years K-12 teaching experience.
 a. 0-3 b. 4-7 c. 8-15 d. 16-24 e. 25+
23. I have been with my current district for ____ years.
 a. 0-3 b. 4-7 c. 8-15 d. 16-24 e. 25+

24. My role in the district is ____.
- a. Classroom teacher b. Teacher specialist c. School administrator d. District administrator
25. The district has a population of ____ students.
- a. Less than 5,000 b. 5,000–10,000 c. 10,000–20,000 d. 20,000–30,000 e. 30,000+
26. I am ____ years old.
- a. Less than 23 b. 24–30 c. 31–40 d. 41–50 e. 51+
27. I am ____.
- a. Female b. Male
28. I am ____.
- a. Asian b. African-Am c. Caucasian d. Hispanic e. Native-Am
- f. Other _____
29. The course(s) I teach could be improved by
30. My experience as an instructor for this program could be improved by
31. Generally speaking, the program has been
32. The program could be improved by

Comments:

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE:

ADJUNCT (NON-DISTRICT) UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTORS

QUESTIONNAIRE

ON-SITE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM UNIVERSITY/SCHOOL DISTRICT COLLABORATION

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine your perceptions of, and experiences in, your on-site Master's Degree program. The results will provide valuable information for the administration of the program. Your response is appreciated. Thank you!

Please circle your level of agreement with these questions and then respond to the questions on the back:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided/ Unknown	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Completing a Master's Degree is very important to a teaching career.	SA	A	U	D	SD
2. The content of the course I teach in this Master's Degree improves the participants' teaching.	SA	A	U	D	SD
3. The content of the course I teach in this Master's Degree program helps increase student achievement in the participants' classrooms.	SA	A	U	D	SD
4. Participation in a Master's Degree program provides the best possible professional development for teachers.	SA	A	U	D	SD
5. The courses in this program are more helpful than inservice courses they might have taken.	SA	A	U	D	SD
6. The courses taken through this on-site program created for this district are more appropriate for district teachers than those taken through a strictly university-based program.	SA	A	U	D	SD
7. I believe that courses in this program should include more of the practical aspects of teaching rather than a lot of theory.	SA	A	U	D	SD
8. Going through the program as part of a cohort group is beneficial to the participants.	SA	A	U	D	SD
9. A cohort group experience provides the climate for more candid discussion and exchange of information between members during class.	SA	A	U	D	SD

Please circle your level of agreement with these questions and then respond to the questions on the back:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided/Unknown	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. Instructors who are district employees provide information more directly applicable to the classroom than those who are not employed by the district.	SA	A	U	D	SD
The courses covering the following content are valuable to participants for their roles as teachers:					
11. Classroom management	SA	A	U	D	SD
12. Curriculum development	SA	A	U	D	SD
13. Teaching strategies e.g. cooperative learning, mastery learning, seven intelligences	SA	A	U	D	SD
14. Development of assessments for instruction	SA	A	U	D	SD
15. Equity/Diversity issues	SA	A	U	D	SD
16. Special Needs e.g. at-risk, gifted, inclusion	SA	A	U	D	SD
17. Leadership roles for teachers	SA	A	U	D	SD
18. Child/adolescent psychology and its implications for instruction	SA	A	U	D	SD
19. Educational research and its implications for the classroom	SA	A	U	D	SD
20. Educational issues e.g. change, parental involvement, public relations	SA	A	U	D	SD
21. Historical and/or philosophical perspective of education	SA	A	U	D	SD

Please circle the appropriate response for the following information:

22. I have ____ years K-12 teaching experience.
 a. 0-3 b. 4-7 c. 8-15 d. 16-24 e. 25+
23. I have taught at the university level for ____ years.
 a. 0-3 b. 4-7 c. 8-15 d. 16-24 e. 25+
24. I am ____ years old.
 a. Less than 23 b. 24-30 c. 31-40 d. 41-50 e. 51+
25. I am ____.
 a. Female b. Male

26. I am ____.
- a. Asian b. African-Am c. Caucasian d. Hispanic e. Native-Am
f. Other _____
27. I am currently employed as a ____.
- a. Classroom teacher b. Teacher specialist c. School administrator d. District administrator
e. Other—please describe in item 28
28. If not employed by a school district, what is your current position?
29. The course(s) I teach could be improved by
30. My experience as an instructor for this program could be improved by
31. Generally speaking, the program has been
32. The program could be improved by

Comments:

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

TEACHER PARTICIPANTS BEGINNING A PROGRAM

Interview Questions

1. Why have you chosen to pursue a master's degree?
2. What will having a master's degree accomplish for you?
3. How important do you think having a master's degree is to your teaching career?
4. Why have you chosen to pursue it through this on-site program instead of a program offered through a program away from your district?
5. How do you think your learning experience in regard to content would be different if you chose to complete the degree through a "regular" degree program not on-site?
6. How do you think this program will compare to some of the inservice courses you have taken either in your district or away from your district?
7. Do you think the courses offered will help increase student achievement in your classroom? Why? How will you know?
8. What do you expect from this program as far as the courses? What is some of the content you expect to learn? How will it help you and your teaching?
9. Some of the instructors will be district personnel. What do you think about that? Do you think they might teach differently than adjunct university instructors?
10. What do you think about working with a cohort group throughout the program?
11. Talk about your district's involvement in this program.
12. Do you have any concerns about the program?
13. Do you have anything to add?

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

TEACHER PARTICIPANTS COMPLETING A PROGRAM

Interview Questions

Why did you chose to pursue a master's degree?

1. What has completing a master's degree program accomplished for you?
2. How important do you think having a master's degree is to your teaching career?
3. Why did you choose to pursue it through this on-site program?
4. What needs has this program met?
5. What needs has this program not met?
6. Talk about the course content of program.
7. Talk about your practice as a result of completing this program.
8. Do you think this program will affect or has affected student achievement in your classroom? How do you know that?
9. Some of the instructors were district personnel. Do you think they taught differently than adjunct university instructors? How?
10. How would your experience have differed in regard to content if you had completed the degree through a "regular" degree program not on-site?
11. How do you think this program compared to some of the inservice courses you have taken either in your district or away from your district?
12. Describe your experience in regard to completing the program with a cohort group.
13. Talk about the administration of the program.
14. Talk about your district's involvement in this program.
15. Is there anything you would like to add?

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS OVERSEEING PROGRAM

Interview Questions

1. Describe your role in:
 - the development of the program
 - the administration of the program.
2. How important do you think having a master's degree is to a teaching career?
3. Why did your district choose to offer this on-site program?
4. What has been accomplished by the collaboration of a university and your school district in the design and implementation of this on-site master's degree program? What benefits/detriments to the district?
5. How was the program content designed? Who was involved?
6. Talk about the course content of program.
7. What impact do feel the program will have on your teachers' classroom practices? On student achievement? How will you be able to observe that?
8. Some of the instructors have been district personnel. Do you think they taught differently than adjunct university instructors?
9. How would you think the experiences for your teachers would have differed in regard to content if they had completed the degree through a "regular" degree program not on-site?
10. How do you think the courses in this program compared to some of the inservice courses that have been offered in your district? What is the relationship you see between the degree program and your staff development program?
11. What do you think about the cohort group concept for the program?

12. Talk about the administration of the program in regard to your district/in regard to the university.
13. Is there anything you would like to add?

APPENDIX I
INTERVIEW CODE LIST

Teacher Participant Interview Code List

adm	program administration
bt	better teacher
ch	cohort experience
comm	communication patterns
cp	comparison of programs-university-based vs. on-site
imp	impact on practice, school, district, community
ins	instructors
mdtc	role of master's degree in a teacher's career
mva	most valuable aspect of the program
pc	program content
pmd	reason for pursuing a master's degree
pvt	practice versus theory
rel	relationship between a master's degree program and district inservice program
sa	student achievement

Administrator Interview Code List

ch	cohort experience
cl	collaboration
cp	comparison of programs-university-based vs. on-site
dadm	district administration
diff	what to do differently
gpg	general program
imp	impact on
ins	instructors
mdtc	role of a master's degree in a teacher's career
pc	program content
pvt	practice versus theory
rel	relationship between a master's degree program and district inservice program
rol	administrator's role in development of program
sa	student achievement
texp	teacher expectations
tn	teacher needs
uadm	university administration

APPENDIX J

PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT FORM

Participant's Consent Form

DISSERTATION RESEARCH STUDY

*The On-Site Master's Degree Program:
A Collaborative Endeavor*

Researcher: Dolores A. Sandoval, Ed.D. Candidate

The University of Arizona

Participant's Consent Form

I am being asked to read the following material to ensure that I am informed of the nature of this research study and the nature of my participation, if I consent to do so. Signing this form will indicate that I have been so informed and that I give my consent. Federal regulations require written informed consent prior to participation in this research study so that I can know the nature and the risks of my participation, and can make my decision to participate in a free and informed manner.

Purpose

I am being asked to voluntarily participate in the above-titled research project. The purpose of this study is to examine the expectations and experiences of teachers who are participating in an on-site master's degree program at their district.

Procedure

If I agree, I will be asked to participate in at least one interview, and possibly a follow-up interview. Each interview will be taped, and a copy of the interview(s) will be made available to me at my request. My participation is strictly voluntary, and I may terminate the interview at any time.

Confidentiality

All tapes and transcripts will be kept strictly confidential. Excerpts from some of the transcripts may be used in the final dissertation document and/or presentations and publications on the study. I understand that a pseudonym of my choice will be substituted for my real name.

I have read and understood the above information. My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this research study.

Name (Please print)

Signature

Date

APPENDIX K
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

District Program of Study

The Master of Elementary Education program requires 36 hours of coursework. A course in the content area of psychology, research, and foundations/philosophy of education is required for a total of nine hours. Six additional hours in Special Education or Multicultural Education are required with the remaining 6 hours of coursework selected from the following content areas: math, language arts, science, social studies or reading.

The Master of Secondary Education program requires 36 hours of coursework. A course in the content area of psychology, research, and foundations/philosophy of education is required for a total of nine hours. Twelve hours are taken in the individual teacher's content specialty and may be completed within a six-year period.

District A

Beginning a Program

N = 52

Course Title

Child Psychology

Introduction to Research

History of American Education

Principles of Curriculum Construction

Issues in Reading

Modern Elementary School Mathematics

Teachers' Workshop—Instructional Strategies

Professional Issues of Teachers

English As a Second Language—2 courses to be determined

District B**Completed Program****N = 51****Course Title**

Child Psychology
Introduction to Research
History of American Education
Educational Sociology
Foundations of Reading Instruction
Values Education
Modern Elementary School Social Studies
Professional Problems of Teachers
Multi-Cultural Education
Special Education for the Classroom Teacher
Problems in Elementary School Curriculum-Environmental Education
Teachers' Workshop—Cooperative Learning

District C**Completed Program****N = 46****Course Title**

Professional Problems of Educators
Problems in Elementary School Curriculum—Environmental Education
Principles of Curriculum Development
Introduction to Research
Science Methods
Teachers' Workshop—Cooperative Learning
Elementary Problems—Multi-Cultural Education
Philosophy of Education
Social Studies Methods
Issues in Teaching Math
Applied Educational Psychology
Special Education for the Classroom Teacher

District D**Beginning a Program**

N = 46

Course Title

Modern Elementary School Mathematics
Problems in Elementary School Curriculum—Roger Taylor Workshop
Principles of Curriculum Construction
Exceptional Student in a Regular Program
Leadership in Instructional Planning—Cognitive Coaching
Modern Language Arts Instruction
Introduction to Research
Child Psychology
Creativity and Giftedness in the Classroom
Philosophy of Education
Instructional Media and Materials
Classroom Microcomputer Application

District E**Completed Program**

N = 40

Course Title

Professional Problems of Teachers
Child Psychology
Introduction to Research
Technology in the Classroom
Philosophy of Education
Leadership and Instructional Planning
Exceptional Students in the Regular Classroom
Supervision of Instruction
Principles of Curriculum Construction
Assessment of Instruction
Problems in Elementary School Curriculum
Foundations of Schooling as a Social Structure

District F**Beginning a Program****Elementary Program****N = 25****Course Title**

Teachers' Workshop—Effective Classroom Management
Problems in Elementary School Curriculum—Instructional Strategies
Contemporary Developments—Assessment of Student Growth
Introduction to Research
Child Psychology
Principles of Curriculum Construction
Philosophy of Education
Professional Problems of Teachers

Secondary Program**N = 14****Course Title**

Teachers' Workshop—Effective Classroom Management
Problems in Secondary School Curriculum—Instructional Strategies
Contemporary Developments—Assessment of Student Growth
Introduction to Research
Adolescent Psychology
Principles of Curriculum Construction
Philosophy of Education
Professional Problems of Teachers

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