2018

PHYSICAL EDUCATOR PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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Digital Object Identifier: https://doi.org/10.13023/etd.2018.426

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PHYSICAL EDUCATOR PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky

By
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Lexington, Kentucky

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Lexington, Kentucky

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

PHYSICAL EDUCATOR PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: 
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

The objective of this study was to explore the perceptions physical educators had of a phenomenon: professional development (PD). Specifically, the study sought to understand the following question: how do physical educators perceive PD? Said in the spirit of phenomenological research, this study aimed to explore the lived experience of PD from the perspective of elementary physical education teachers. Subsequent research questions included: (a) How do physical educators perceive PD in relation to their physical education program’s role in public health?; (b) What perceptions, including potential barriers and facilitators, do physical educators have of PD?; and (c) In what ways do physical educators use PD to improve upon both teaching practices and student learning? Participants included ten elementary physical education teachers employed in the same county in the Southeast United States. A lengthy, open-ended interview between the researcher and all ten participants was the only source of data. Data were analyzed using a phenomenological approach, more specifically Hycner’s phenomenological five-step data explication process. The data explication process revealed four common themes as well as a variety of sub-themes across all participants. The four themes were analyzed to gain a true understanding of the lived experiences of physical educators’ PD. Those themes were: (a) PD for Professional Growth – A search for meaning; (b) Accessibility, (c) I Matter!, and (d) Relationships. Overall the study highlights the integral and often-personal role PD has in the lives of the study’s participants. The insights from this study may inform education policy makers, school districts, school administrators, and designers of educator PD to improve the overall PD experience of practicing educators.

KEYWORDS: Phenomenology, Professional Development, Physical Education, Physical Educator, Public Health
PHYSICAL EDUCATOR PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all the people who helped me along my journey, most importantly, my wife, Crystin, whom without this would not be possible. Also, I dedicate this dissertation to my late grandfathers Dr. William T. Moore and Mr. Bob Rickard who were instrumental in my quest for not only my doctorate but the pursuit of higher education as a whole.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance and support of a great number of people. First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Aaron Beighle for his mentorship and support for over a decade. Dr. Beighle’s impact on my life extends far beyond the realm of graduate school, and I can say with zero hesitation that I would not be as successful, happy, nor as good of a person without his presence in my life. To Dr. Heather Erwin, thank you for always being an example of leadership and excellence. I am not too shy to admit that this process was challenging for me, and I occasionally stumbled and fell. Dr. Erwin was unbelievably adept at knowing if I needed a boost of encouragement or a firm talking to, and I am so grateful for her guidance along the way. I would also like to thank Dr. Melinda Ickes and Dr. Jeff Reese for their support on my doctoral committee. Thanks as well to Dr. Kiluba Nkulu for his willingness to serve my outside examiner. A special thanks to the participants of this study for their time and voice.

I am forever grateful to so many friends and family for their continued support and encouragement. My wife, Crystin, has been my constant companion throughout all of the highs and lows. Without her this would not have been possible. To my dogs, Herbie and Elinor, thanks for always being there to comfort me, and provide a sense of joy to my life.

It was all a dream…
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Investing in the continued professional growth of educators throughout their careers is essential to maximize the potential of an education system designed to promote societal growth and global prosperity (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Educators, much like occupations in medicine and law, require consistent and meaningful opportunities for professional growth (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). For most, if not all educators, the main means for developing themselves professionally is through some form of professional development (PD) (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009).

According to Guskey (2002), PD is considered a way to “alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understanding of school persons toward an articulated end” (p. 381), or more simply explained PD seeks to bring about a change in the classroom practices of teachers in order to benefit the student population.

In the modern era of education accountability, initiated by the passing No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in 2001, PD has taken on such a key role within education that its very existence is now both federally and state mandated and monitored (Goertz, 2005). Prior to NCLB PD was largely unregulated and undefined, but NCLB identified PD as an effective mechanism to assist educators in improving student achievement and the quality of teaching within the American education system (Howey & Vaughn, 1983). NCLB not only required State Department of Educations, and subsequently individual school districts, to monitor and set policies regarding PD, but also required them to, “devote significant resources to effectively carry-out high quality and ongoing professional development” (Kratochwill, Volpiansky, Clements, & Ball, 2007, p. 621). Furthermore, in an attempt to elevate the quality of instruction within
America’s schools, NCLB directly established a link between PD and improved teacher outcomes and student achievement (Borko, 2004).

A review of literature by Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Cronen, and Garet (2008) established that intensive, sustained, job-embedded PD focused on the content of the subject that teachers teach is more likely to improve teacher knowledge, classroom instruction, and student achievement. Similarly, a review of existing literature by Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, and Shapley (2007) demonstrates that PD can have an effect on student achievement. Likewise, studies conducted by Guskey (1979, 1982, 2002), Tienken (2003), and McCutchen et al. (2002) support the notion that PD can positively impact both teacher outcomes and student achievement.

PD as a tool to improve both teaching outcomes and student achievement is not limited to the core academic subjects, such as reading, writing, and math, but all subjects including physical education. Research specific to physical education shows that PD helps physical educators continue to improve teaching practices while expanding upon prior-content knowledge (Armour & Yelling, 2007; Borko, 2004; Department for Education & Employment [DfEE], 2001; Fishman, Marx, Best, & Tal, 2003; McRae, Ainsworth, Groves, Rowland, & Zbar, 2001; Reynolds & Teddlie, 2000). Similarly, Sparks’s (2002) study showed that consistent and frequent PD for physical educators results in enhanced teacher and pupil learning. Researchers agree that PD is an essential part of the modern educator’s path for professional growth. Although, what constitutes the correct path for professional growth, or the optimal physical education specific PD for improved teacher outcomes and student achievement is left up for debate (Coulter & Woods, 2012).
Physical education, as a content area within the larger scope of education, has experienced multiple identity and mission transformations over the past several decades resulting in an ever-changing relationship with PD. As physical education has redefined itself and its goals, PD has continuously reimagined itself to best support the current mission of physical education (Bucher & Wuest, 1987; Armour & Yelling, 2007). The modern mission of physical education, first introduced in 1991 by Sallis and McKenzie, is that physical education should serve as a tool for improving public health. They specify, “The public health goal for physical education is to prepare children for a lifetime of regular physical activity” (Sallis & McKenzie, 1991, p. 130). The same view of physical education and public health is corroborated by Pate et al. (2006); Reed, Beighle, Phillips, and Pangrazi (2007); Corbin and McKenzie (2008); McKenzie and Kahan (2008); McKenzie and Lounsbery (2009); and Sallis et al. (2012). Although, while the activity-centric mission for physical education has been pushed for over two and a half decades Sallis et al. (2012) points out that calls for “maximizing the public health impact of physical education,” has not been very successful illustrating an area of improvement for physical education as a subject going forward (p. 125). To better achieve this desired outcome, physical education and physical education teachers should concern themselves with developing students for a lifetime of physical activity; therefore, any PD participated in by physical education teachers should identify with this mission. PD for physical educators should assist educators in overcoming any particular barriers, whether they be insufficient content knowledge or poor pedagogical practices, as it pertains to meeting the current mission of physical education (Morgan & Hansen, 2008).
Given the known importance of PD and the current change in physical education focus, PD needs to occur, and more specifically, PD that occurs needs to be meaningful and relevant. Researchers and educators both agree that understanding PD from the eyes of the participants (i.e. practicing physical educators) is a critical factor to constructing effective PD in an ever-changing educational landscape (Wayne et al., 2008). Only through exploration of physical educators’ perceptions of the PD are educators able to both improve future PD and evaluate the effectiveness of current PD (Ko, Wallhead, & Ward, 2006). Researchers must identify what physical educators take away from PD and from these discussions look for ways to make PD more effective by making it more relatable to practicing physical education teachers (Armour & Yelling, 2007).

**Purpose of the Study**

The objective of this study was to explore the perceptions physical educators have of a phenomenon: professional development (PD). This current phenomenological study concerning the lived PD experience of ten elementary physical educators is guided by one main research question and three minor or subsequent research questions. Serving as the architect for the study was the main research question: How do physical educators perceive PD? Said another way, what is the lived experience of PD from the perspective of an elementary physical education teacher? Subsequent research questions include: how do physical educators perceive PD in relation to their physical educations program’s role in public health?; Also, what perceptions, including potential barriers and facilitators, do physical educators have of PD?; and, in what ways do physical educators use PD to improve upon both teaching practices and student learning?
Significance of the Study

PD has been identified as a potential method for physical educators to improve teaching outcomes and student achievement (Wayne et al., 2008). Researchers have indicated that an expanded understanding of PD from the experience of the participant only serves to improve both the current PD offerings as well as all future PD endeavors (Armour & Yelling, 2007). The study is significant because it gives voice to practicing highly-qualified physical educators allowing for a deeper understanding of PD as a whole, and as a means for professional growth within the field of physical education, which assists in improving future PD outcomes.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To adjust to an ever-changing educational landscape, the profession of education relies on the use of frequent job training to assist in developing the skills and abilities of the educator workforce. While PD is an integral part to the modern educator experience, educators have not always been prompted to obtain PD over the course of their careers. A massive shift in educational priorities first kicked off during the 1980’s and later, cemented by the passing of No Child Left Behind in 2001, firmly placed the role of yearly PD as a cornerstone of the profession (Guskey, 2002). Physical Education as a part of the larger American educational enterprise was not overlooked when it came to the role PD played in not only increasing teacher effectiveness but also in improving student outcomes (Armour & Yelling, 2007). In the following chapter, a history of PD, a history of the field of physical education, and lastly, how the two intersect, will be presented.

Professional Development

PD is a broad term used to describe learning activities related to enhancing skills needed to successfully meet the expectations of one’s occupation. In the professional world, PD is used interchangeably with terms such as staff development, vocational training and continuing education (Kratochwill et al., 2007). Education specific, the introduction of the standards era, capped off by the passing of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, constricted the use of terms and definitions related to PD. Previous incarnations of PD were either closed down or shuffled into the new mandates established in NCLB. Post NCLB, PD definitions were left largely up to State Departments of Education. While the National Professional Council of Professional Development and NCLB established loose parameters of what consisted as PD, it was left
solely up to the States to decide the specific definition of PD for their respective educators (Goertz, 2005). This section explores the transformation of PD by NCLB and the current PD climate will be discussed. In particular, the State of Kentucky’s definition and operationalization of PD will be investigated.

**Historical Context of Professional Development**

Late in the 20th century, as the American legislative system focused on improving the quality of US schools, and increasing student achievement, the role of PD within the education system expanded. While PD efforts in American schools can be traced back to the early 19th century, it was not until the 1980s that PD became an integral part of the American education landscape (Richey, 1957). Prior to the 1980s the PD climate was both underappreciated and unfocused. For instance, a report by Howey and Vaughn in 1983, characterized the PD climate as,

A potentially well-supported (in terms of resources) enterprise that is fragmented, not frequently engaged in on a continuing basis by practitioners, not regarded very highly as it is practiced, and rarely assessed in terms of teacher behavior and student learning outcomes. (p. 97)

Clearly, the role of PD in American education was on the fringe. This all changed with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, in 1983, by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. *A Nation at Risk* catapulted the role of education onto the national stage by exposing a laundry list of problems, from a growing number of illiterate students to the wide use of outdated and poorly equipped curriculums. This report sent shockwaves throughout American society and left lawmakers scrambling for a way to improve the now deemed sub-standard American public education system. By calling for districts and schools to focus on academic achievement and the preparation of students for the workplace *A Nation at Risk* ignited the school accountability reform movement. Part of
this movement was the expansion of PD programs for practicing educators (Grogan & Richards, 2002; United States National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The thought process behind PD expansion was singular. In this new era of accountability, where student achievement largely linked to standardized test performance was to be increased, teacher effectiveness, especially in math and science, began to be highly scrutinized. Teacher effectiveness was considered fundamental to student achievement due to a surge in research publishing’s in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Studies conducted by Bloom (1976), Brophy (1979), McDonald and Elias (1977), and Medley (1977) established a strong connection between instructional, or teacher, effectiveness and PD. Using these findings as a foundation, educators in the 1980s built up the impact of PD as a means to accomplish the goals of the accountability era.

As the 1980s came to an end, research findings continued to establish the importance of PD for educators. While previous studies examined PD and teacher effectiveness, the late 1980s saw a rise in research studies linking PD to student academic progress measured by standardized testing (Wayne et al., 2008). In particular, a groundbreaking research study published by Carpenter, Fennema, Peterson, Chiang, and Loef in 1989, demonstrated that teacher PD could improve student achievement (Carpenter et al., 1989). In the study 40 first grade teachers were randomly assignment to two groups. One group received a brief 4-hour PD seminar while the other group received an intensive 80-hour program known as cognitively guided instruction (CGI). The students of the teachers who received the CGI outperformed the students of the other teachers on three of six student achievement measures that were examined. Bolstered by the findings from Carpenter et al. (1989) policy makers sought to make PD much more
effective by increasing the amount and intensity of PD required for teachers. By establishing the link between PD and student achievement, researchers permanently placed PD at the forefront of the accountability movement.

**Definitions of Professional Development in Literature**

The last two decades of the 20th century saw PD programs expand at a rapid rate as PD became a central component to most modern proposals for improving education. Each individual PD program whether at the National, State, or District level, as well as every research study conducted on PD, established a operational definition of PD (Guskey, 2002). Unfortunately, a literature review of these ‘definitions’ casts a wide net as to what might be defined as PD (Desimone, 2009).

Most definitions of PD were vague and loosely constructed. In 1987, Little described PD as, “any activities that are intended partly or primarily to prepare paid staff members for improved performance in present or future roles in the school districts” (Little, 1993, p. 491). Similarly, as highlighted by Griffin in 1983, PD was defined as anything serving a purpose “to alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understanding of school persons toward an articulated end” (Griffin, 1983, p. 2). Both definitions highlight the extreme difficulties of defining PD. In particular, as Little explained, a contingent of the education community viewed PD as ‘activities’ such as workshops, local and national conferences, college courses, special institutes and centers (Little, 1993). Meanwhile, Griffin (1983), and later Thomas Guskey (1985, 2002) articulated the notion that PD was more than just the ‘activities’ as during PD experiences teachers were both interactive and social with fellow colleagues and the environment. Furthermore, Guskey identified any learning opportunity for teachers such as teaching lessons,
administering assessment, reviewing curriculums, or reading a professional journal or magazine as potential definitions of PD. Complicating the picture even further was the notion that PD could be both formal and informal (Little, 1989; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Stein, Smith, & Silver, 1999).

According to the definitions found in the literature PD could be defined as myriad of constructs. PD could be defined as an event or activity such as a workshop. It could be defined as a collective experience between the teacher and the environment. It could be something as simple as participating in a book club or reflecting on one’s own teacher experiences in the classroom (Putnam & Borko, 2000; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001). It could even include designing or choosing a new curriculum or textbook (Guskey, 2000). The lack of a universal definition of PD hindered the effectiveness of measures adopted in the era of school accountability. A lack of a central definition, or understanding, of PD prevented educators from measuring PD effectiveness. Ultimately Congress, a major player in the school accountability movement, stepped into the PD arena.

In 2000, in an effort to clear up the definition of PD for educators, the National PD Council, with the Congressional support, put forth the following definition of PD: “Professional development is a lifelong, collaborative learning process that nourishes the growth of individuals, teams, and the school through a daily job-embedded, learner-centered, focused approach” (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005, p. 217). It should be noted, that while this definition is not any more focused or clear than the ones put forth by Little or Griffin, this definition came not from a researcher, but rather from the federal institution in charge of monitoring PD within education. The power behind the National
PD Council moved their definition of PD to the forefront of the discussion. Federal, State, and District agents of education modeled their PD programs after this definition and reshaped the PD movement from the early 2000s to today.

**Standards Era – NCLB and Professional Development**

With the passing of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, the role of PD within education was both drastically expanded and redefined. NCLB expects improvement in both the quality of teaching and level of student achievement within American schools. To assist in meeting these objectives, NCLB calls for school districts to adopt programs and practices that are supported by scientifically based research (Birman et al., 2007). In order to meet the high demands, in particular teaching practices based in research, federal legislators require that substantial PD opportunities be available for all school staff members (No Child Left Behind Act, § 1001[10]). While PD requirements were nothing new to the education system, the breadth and depth of the PD mandates found in NCLB forced States and individual school districts to radically reconfigure their PD programs.

In addition to expanding amount of PD required for teachers, NCLB established a direct link between PD and student achievement (Kratochwill et al., 2007). While this view had been supported by research and members of the education community for close to two decades prior to NCLB, this reconfigured definition of PD came not from a research study, or even the National Council for Professional Development, but rather, from Congress in the form of an expansive federal education law. State Board of Educations, school districts, and teachers were no longer able to operationalize their own definitions of PD and determine what specific role PD would play in their respective environments. From the perspective of Congress, PD no longer concerned itself with the
transition of content knowledge and skills between teachers and students, but rather whether or not PD resulted in changes in student outcomes (Kratochwill et al., 2007). Essentially Congress thought PD was a means to justify an end; in particular, the end being student academic competency measured by standardized testing.

NCLB, while significantly altering the national education landscape, left decisions up to individual State Board of Educations regarding the specifics involved in PD programs. Decisions such as what programs of PD were to be considered of “high quality” and how many PD opportunities teachers should participate in yearly were left up to the State Board of Educations.

Kentucky Department of Education

In order to ensure that new PD programs are of “high-quality” NCLB requires State Departments of Education to explicitly define their respective definitions of “high-quality” PD. Moreover, each State is left to determine how much PD is required to meet NCLB’s mandate for frequent, substantial PD opportunities. The Kentucky Department of Education defines “high-quality” PD as,

those experiences that systematically, over a sustained period time, enable educators to facilitate the learning of students by acquiring and applying knowledge, understanding, skills, and abilities that address the instructional improvement goals of the school district, the individual school, or the individual professional growth needs of the educator. (Annual Professional Development Plan, 2013, § 1; see Appendix A)

In addition to defining “high-quality” PD the Kentucky Board of Education designated eleven PD standards to further assist school districts in determining what constitutes “high-quality” PD (see Appendix B for complete list). Furthermore, the Kentucky Board of Education requires each school district and individual school to complete an annual PD plan (see Appendix B). The transformation of PD post-NCLB represents a complete
one-hundred-eighty-degree turn from the fragmented, infrequent, and under-appreciated view of PD in the late 1970’s (Howey & Vaughn, 1983).

The Kentucky Board of Education considers individual school districts as those responsible for determining the quality of PD within the parameters established by the State. To assist school districts in this process, the Kentucky Board of Education requires each school district superintendent to appoint a certified school employee to the role of district PD coordinator (PDC). The sole responsibility of this position is to monitor and disseminate PD information to both schools and school personnel (Seiler et al., 2010). The PDC works with school principals in approving yearly PD plans for both individual teachers and the school staff as a whole. Currently, the Kentucky Board of Education requires all certified staff members to complete twenty-four hours, or four school days, of “high-quality” PD annually. Again, what those specific hours will consist of is largely left up to principals and district PDCs at individual schools across the state. Individual teachers do have the opportunity to select PD opportunities as long as the can be classified as “high-quality” by the standards put forth by the Kentucky Board of Education (see Appendix A).

Reporting of PD hours completed varies from district to district. While the Kentucky Board of Education was explicit in what counts as “high-quality” PD, as well as how much PD is to be obtained each year, they are mum on how to document PD experiences. Records are vague due to the fact very little information is required of teachers in regards to what specific PD program they participated in. More often than not the only information recorded is the date of the PD, the title of the program and the number of hours completed. In some instances PD records of teachers are incomplete
because the Kentucky Board of Education only requires them to report their completion of the yearly twenty-four requirement. Any PD obtained after reaching the twenty-four hour requirement is not required to be reported. Based on both of these factors, researchers studying PD in Kentucky are best suited to examine PD records from the source – individual teachers, not schools or school districts.

Summary of Professional Development Literature

PD’s role in education dates back over a century but it was not until the perfect storm of research findings and the rise of the accountability era of the 1980s and 1990s in education that PD became an integral part of the American Education system. With the passing of NCLB in 2001, Congress simultaneously expanded the role of PD in the education system while redefining PD as solely a means to improve student achievement. Decisions as to what constituted as “high-quality” PD as well as how much PD educators were required to obtain yearly was left up to respective State Board of Educations. The Kentucky Board of Education established a definition of PD to be used by all educators in the state. Additionally, the Kentucky Board of Education provided a list of eleven standards to assist school districts, principals and PDCs in determining what PD programs were of “high-quality”. In conclusion, while the narrative of PD is expansive and historically rooted NCLB redirected the focus and definition of PD to the State level. Any future study of PD can and should call on past literature for support, but in regards to an operationalized definition of PD the only place a researcher should look is their respective State Board of Education.
Physical Education and Public Health

Physical education over the years has gradually and systematically been pushed to the fringe of what is considered core-academic content. Despite this relegation to the background, physical education has developed a lofty goal of connecting with public health outcomes (Sallis et al., 2012). Over the many decades of American public education, physical education has assumed various identities with each leaving a piece behind to form our modern understanding of physical education. Dating back to the introduction of vaccine requirements, the implementation of vision and hearing screenings, as well as introducing the role of school nurses, physical education has considered itself a contributing member to improving public health. Furthermore, physical education’s roots in gymnastics and physical fitness have always been focused on getting youth moving, and it is from this desire of increased physical activity that modern physical education has found its footing (Kennedy, 1960; Sallis & McKenzie, 1991). Modern physical education believes that American schools in collaboration with physical educators can seek to improve the public health outcomes of the American public by focusing on the physical activity promotion of America’s youth (Sallis & McKenzie, 1991; Sallis et al., 2012).

Historical Context

Since the late 1800s, physical education has been a part of the institution that is American public education (Wuest & Bucher, 1999). Although the focus of physical education has fluctuated over the years, it has always maintained a relationship with public health. Dating back to physical education’s infancy, Dudley Allen Sargent, considered to be the father of physical education, explained physical education’s goal as,
“to improve the mass of our students and give them as much health, strength, and stamina as possible to enable them to perform the duties that awaited them,” (Felshin, 1967, p. 110). In other words, it was the responsibility of physical education to simultaneously improve the health of students while at the same time preparing students to live a life of good health once their education experience was concluded. Sargent, a medical doctor, believed the role of physical education to be consistent with that of public health – to reduce preventable death, disease, and disability among the population (Corbin, 2002b; Institute of Medicine, 1997; Pate et al., 2006). In Sargent’s eyes, the notion that physical education was separated from public health was both incorrect and unfathomable. Sargent believed, as many physical educators believe, that the goals of physical education and public health are one and the same. It is from this belief system that physical education grew as a subject and as a field of study within the American Education system.

Despite over a century having passed between Sargent’s life and the present, physical education has continued to play a part in public health. For example, in the aftermath of World War II, the Kraus-Weber report, an international study, was published detailing the poor standing of American youth in certain aspects of physical fitness (Kennedy, 1960). In response to this report, President Eisenhower established, in 1956, the President’s Council on Youth and Fitness (PCYF). The PCYF, or now known as President Youth Fitness Program, was the first of its kind in American history. For the most part, Eisenhower, a Republican, valued the role of a small federal government, but he broke from that tradition with the establishment of the PCYF. Eisenhower believed that improving the quality of health among American adolescents was vital to the strength of the American Republic. To Eisenhower, and later his successor, President
John F. Kennedy, public health, and to an extent national security, was directly tied to physical education’s ability to produce physically fit young men and women as well as preparing those young men and women to be active into adulthood (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, n.d.).

It is from the efforts of President Eisenhower and later President Kennedy that physical education became an integral part of the public health movement especially from the perspective of the federal government. In particular, President Kennedy, along with maintaining the PCYF, established the White House Committee on Health and Fitness (WCHF), the Department of Health, which at the time was oversaw by the Department of Education, and an annual Youth Fitness Congress attended by state governors (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, n.d.; Kennedy, 1960). President Kennedy also took the liberty of writing an article, *The Soft American*, which was published in *Sports Illustrated* in 1960, detailing the need for Americans to be physically fit. President Kennedy, and Eisenhower before him, felt the American education system, particularly physical education, was a perfect location to implement these new physical fitness and health guidelines. In the article, *The Soft American*, Kennedy called for researchers to establish a “physical fitness program for the nation’s public schools” (Kennedy, 1960, p. 3). Of all the possible arenas available, the Federal government, along with President Kennedy, viewed physical education classes within American schools as the ideal location for these new public health initiatives (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, n.d.). It should be noted that physical education is much more than the physical fitness of students, but this particular time period of American history chose to focus upon physical fitness as the main component to physical education. Regardless of one’s
view concerning the main goals of physical education, it is imperative to understand that these new American institutions (PCYF, WCHF, Department of Health, and Youth Fitness Congress) were the first of their kind. Never before in American history had the federal government taken such a keen interest in the physical capabilities and health of its constituents. From these programs, councils, and initiatives the notion had been established that the American education system could, and should, serve as a tool for improved public health. Additionally, the theme of using physical education programs to alter public health outcomes by the federal government becomes a permanent feature in American politics and education.

**PE and Public Health – The Shift to Physical Activity**

While the 1950s and 1960s were witness to numerous American theaters of war, hence the need for physically fit young men, the 1970s and 1980s were witness to the rise of global economic competition that threatened American national security (Kennedy, 1960; United States National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Highlighted in *A Nation at Risk*, published in 1983, American students lagged behind their European counterparts in regards to academic achievement. In this new age of global economics America could not afford to fall behind in student academic, thus *A Nation at Risk* sparked an overhaul of the American education system.

The new focus on academic achievement and subsequent deemphasizing of youth fitness levels forced physical educators to reexamine the goals of physical education. In particular, after decades of emphasizing physical fitness, research began to emerge that linked physical activity promotion as the best means to impact public health (Sallis & McKenzie, 1991). Despite educators and the federal government ramping up the attention
paid to student academic achievement, public health was still a concern. In the late 1980s and early 1990s public health, as the federal government was concerned, was centered on the rise of sedentary living among Americans and the numerous negative health consequences associated with sedentary living.

Beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s sedentary living was becoming one of the world’s largest public health issues (McKenzie & Lounsbery, 2009; World Health Organization, 2004). The rise of sedentary living and the negative health consequences associated with it, including but not limited to, obesity, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes, prompted American health officials to urge physical educators to adopt physical activity promotion policies. For example, in 1996 the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) issued a recommendation that all children and youth participate in sixty or more minutes of physical activity each day (Strong et al., 2005). Physical education plays a vital role in the CDC’s recommendations as physical education can account for up to 18 percent of a child’s recommended daily physical activity (Morgan, Beighle, & Pangrazi, 2007). Achieving this goal of at least 60 minutes was imperative because increased physical activity was established to have a positive association with most health-related fitness components and improved health (Riddoch, 1998). A review of literature by McKenzie and Lounsbery (2009) details the link between physical activity levels and cardiovascular disease, obesity and type-2 diabetes. Moreover, McKenzie and Lounsbery (2009) discuss that regular physical activity helps improve bone density and muscular strength, as well as muscular flexibility. Physical activity’s role in improving psychological health, reducing blood pressure and cholesterol levels among youth is also touched upon by McKenzie and Lounsbery. In short, physical activity was deemed the most essential
component to improving the negative health outcomes associated with sedentary living by the American populace.

**Modern PE and Public Health**

The modern interpretation of physical education’s role in public health is best illustrated by the article “Physical Education’s Role in Public Health” by James Sallis and Thomas McKenzie (1991). Sallis and McKenzie kicked off the modern movement of physical education as a tool for public health by establishing a connection between physical activity levels and the potential health outcomes. Sallis and McKenzie, and later Charles Corbin, believed that physical activity promotion in America’s public schools, particularly elementary schools, would positively impact America’s public health outcomes (Sallis & McKenzie, 1991; Corbin, 2002b). By linking together research publishing’s on the benefits of physical activity, particularly in the area of cardiovascular health, and the calling by numerous organizations for public schools to be used as a public health mechanism, Sallis and McKenzie provided a pathway to achieve public health goals through physical education programs.

To improve upon the physical activity levels of students, the traditional physical education curriculum of using of sport-focused resources on improving student fitness levels were questioned (Sallis & McKenzie, 1991). The time-honored tradition of physical education programs centered on competitive sports for physical fitness gains were being proven to be ineffective in promoting lifelong physical activity. Joining Sallis and McKenzie were other leaders in the physical education field such as Robert Pangrazi and Charles Corbin, in arguing against the traditional physical education curriculum for one that focused on physical activity promotion (Corbin, 2002a; Pangrazi, 2000).
Providing additional support for the movement, the American Academy of Physical Education (Malina, 1996), the American Academy of Pediatrics Committees of Sports Medicine and School Health (1987) and the American College of Sports Medicine (1995), each issued a statement calling for physical education programs to adopt health-related physical activity goals.

A review of research literature in 1987 by Simons-Morton, O’Hara, Simons-Morton, and Parcel detailed the strong argument behind the focus on physical activity as opposed to physical fitness. Simons-Morton et al. concluded that regular physical activity was more important than physical fitness levels for children and that physical education was the best social instrument available to address this issue. Moreover, multiple groups such as the American Academy of Pediatric Committees on Sports and Medicine (1987), American College of Sports Medicine (1995), as well as researchers Simons-Morton et al. (1987), Ross and Gilbert (1985), and Sallis and McKenzie (1991) all recommended that physical education should focus on physical activity as physical activity carried over well from childhood to adulthood.

School physical education programs were chosen as a frontline in the battle to reduce sedentary living due to the notion that schools reach most American children (McKenzie, 2007). The World Health Organization, the American Heart Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the US Department of Health and Human Services all displayed strong support for using physical education programs in public schools to help curb the rise of sedentary living (McKenzie & Lounsbury, 2009). As explained by Sallis and McKenzie in 1991, “physical education in schools is an ideal point of intervention because virtually all children participate” (p. 131). American public
elementary schools exist in nearly every community, are attended by nearly all children, are safe, have trained personnel (i.e. physical educators), and most schools offer adequate facilities to assist in promoting physical activity promotion (McKenzie & Kahan, 2008). Each of these points regarding the practicality of using public education, more specifically physical education, as a tool to improve public health is reiterated by Sallis et al. published in 2012. The authors of Sallis et al. (2012) suggest that even though the public decree in 1991 failed to fully move the needle for physical education’s impact on public health, hope still existed for physical education to ascend to its rightful place as a major contributor for improved public health outcomes.

**Future Implications**

Despite the era of accountability and NCLB reconfiguring modern American education around math, reading, and science, physical education still has support from both federal and state governments. In particular, the last two decades have witnessed an increase in federal support for public health and physical education (Sallis et al., 2012). Federal initiatives sponsored through federal departments, such as the CDC, or through legislation, such as Title X of the Elementary and Secondary Act (i.e. PEP grants) have spurred stronger connections between physical education and public health (Sallis et al., 2012). Other Congressional initiatives such as the passing of Law P.L. 108-265, which requires any school receiving federal funding to establish a school wellness policy, augment the role schools play within public health (Sallis et al., 2012). Former First Lady Michelle Obama launched the Let's Move initiative to further strengthen the role of physical education in public health (Let's Move, 2012). The Let’s Move initiative seeks to combat childhood obesity, a result of sedentary living, through increased physical

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activity programs, headlined by physical education class, in America’s public elementary schools.

Combining with the efforts of Let’s Move, The NASPE sponsored Comprehensive School Physical Activity Plan (CSPAP) helps physical educators expand the physical activity offerings in their respective schools (Carson, Castelli et al., 2014; Heidorn, Hall, & Carson, 2010). The driving force behind a CSPAP is the singular focus on improving access and opportunity to increased physical activity for students at the school level. Centeio and McCaughtry (2017) show that teacher preparatory programs that imbed CSPAP training into the pre-professional experience of aspiring educators helps boast the desired goal of increased physical activity opportunities for students. For already practicing physical educators the best means to obtain new, useful, and helpful tools to professional growth is through the use of PD (Sallis et al., 2012). In 2010, to help spread the message about CSPAP and connect practicing physical educators to improving public health outcomes, NASPE commissioned a task force to create a PD plan of action (Carson, Castelli et al., 2014). This plan of action centered largely on spreading the concept and tools for implementation of a CSPAP through the use of PD trainings for practicing educators (Carson, 2012). The CSPAP training for practicing educators has shown an ability to increase student activity opportunities, thus improving the desired overall public health gains sought by physical educators (Carson, Pulling et al., 2014). Furthermore, to boost public health outcomes through physical education programs state governments have joined the federal government’s support of public health by passing numerous policies, mandates, and requirements for physical education programs. As highlighted by the 2010 Shape of the Nation Survey (National Association for Sport and
Physical Education & American Heart Association, 2010), forty-two states mandate elementary physical education, thirty-nine states mandate middle school physical education and forty-five states mandate secondary physical education. Also, nearly all states (49) have established physical education standards (Sallis et al., 2012).

The era of accountability may have pushed subjects such as math, reading and science to the forefront of the education discussion, but it would be inaccurate to say physical education had left the modern education landscape altogether. The mounting support from both federal and state agencies regarding physical education as a tool for public health is too large to ignore. Yes, physical education as a mechanism for public health has taken a back seat to academic achievement in the past two to three decades, but we are now noticing an uptick in concern regarding America’s public health. The growing American health crisis will only assist the continued growth and dissemination of physical education programs being used as a means to improve public health outcomes.

Role of PD in PE

In 2001 with the passing of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) the role of PD within education was both drastically expanded and redefined. PD has considered imperative for educators regardless of subject in order to improve upon both teaching practices and student achievement. Based upon guidelines established in NCLB, most states (41) passed legislation requiring physical educators to participate in PD in order to maintain teacher licensure (Sallis et al., 2012). Along with helping maintain teacher licensure, PD has been identified as the best means for current physical educators to gain awareness and
understanding of current research practices within the field of physical education (Corbin & McKenzie, 2008).

PD serves as the bridge between current research supported movements in physical education, like the public health movement emphasized by Sallis and McKenzie in 1991, and physical educators (Corbin & McKenzie, 2008). Ultimately, PD is considered one of very few pathways educators can utilize to gain the necessary knowledge and awareness to be effective teachers and put forth effective physical education programs. While there are many definitions of what constitutes an effective physical education program, Sallis and McKenzie in 1991 and again in Sallis et al. (2012) established that an effective physical education program was one that embraced public health, and has a goal of preparing children for a lifetime of physical activity. In order for physical educators to meet this definition regular participation in PD must occur (Corbin & McKenzie, 2008).

Research conducted on the relationship between PD and physical education supports the underlying notion that consistent engagement with new training and curricular materials boasts the goals of physical educators. Two literature reviews dedicated the role of PD within physical education, Wayne et al. (2008) and Yoon et al. (2007), demonstrated that PD can have an effect on student achievement ranging from improved standardized test scores to improved grade point averages. Wayne et al. (2008) explained that carefully constructed PD, delivered by its creators in conducive settings, can have an effect on student achievement. Likewise, studies conducted by Guskey (1979, 1982, 2002), Tienken (2003), and McCutchen et al. (2002) support the notion that PD can positively impact both teacher outcomes and student achievement. A report
issued by the CDC in 2010 documented, among many things, the relationship between physical activity and academic achievement (National Center for Health Statistics, 2011). If academic achievement was going to be the desired overall product of public education, then CDC was going to assist the mission of public health and physical education by establishing connections between physical activity and student academic achievement. The culmination of each of these literature reviews, as highlighted by Wayne et al. (2008) was that intensive, sustained, job-embedded PD focusing on the content of the subject was likely improve teacher knowledge, classroom instruction, and student achievement.

Additional research shows that physical educator PD helps physical educators continue to improve teaching practices while expanding upon prior-content knowledge (Armour & Yelling, 2007; Borko, 2004). Armour and Yelling (2007) discuss the results of a two-year study concerning the continued PD for practicing physical educators. The study was conducted in three phases, the first being interviews, the second a questionnaire, and the third case studies, with each phase expanding the depth of the data collected. The results showed that PD from the eyes of physical educators was an absolute lifeline to improving professional practice. The authors suggest that physical education continuing PD has clear impact on pupil learning.

Building on the suggestions put forth by Armour and Yelling (2007), a study conducted by Ko et al. (2006) concluded similar findings that perceptions of PD were key to improving the effectiveness of future PD. In this study, a cohort of 23 urban physical education teachers participated a series of workshops over the course of two years aimed at improving physical education teacher practice. The study consisted of four phases – workshop attendance, unit planning, actual teaching, and last teacher reflections. While
the study results focused on the teacher outcomes, specifically the particular content teachers took from the workshops they participated in, the authors make note to suggest greater emphasis be placed in the future on teacher reflection or perceptions of the PD they participated in. The authors conclude that only through exploration of the participants perceptions of the PD were they able to understand which parts of the PD were sufficient or needed improvement. Researchers must identify what physical educators take away from PD and from these discussions look for ways to make PD more effective by making it more relatable to practicing physical education teachers. What greater way to improve upon the quality or effectiveness of a PD programs than to directly engage in a discussion with the participants – practicing physical education teachers.

Ultimately, the importance of these literature reviews was not in the findings of the particular studies but rather in the call for, “researchers to continue studying PD programs” (Wayne et al., 2008, p. 470). As Borko (2004, p. 3) suggests, “we have evidence that PD can lead to improvements in instructional practices and student learning; however, we are only beginning to learn about exactly what and how teachers learn from PD, or about the impact of teacher change on student outcomes.”

Remarks made by Wayne et al. (2008), Yoon et al. (2007) and Borko (2004) suggest further research regarding PD is needed. Armour and Yelling (2007, pp. 195–196) reported after a two-year study into PD for physical educators that it was crucial, “to seek physical education teachers’ views about their PD opportunities.” Armour and Yelling (2007) concluded that examining the perceptions physical education teachers had of PD were important to future PD programs. Likewise, Pissanos and Allison (1996)
argue it is important to seek physical education teachers’ view about their PD so that future PD was more effective. Based upon the information gleaned from each of these studies it is clear that greater and expanded research into the relationship between PD and learning outcomes (increased teacher knowledge, improved student achievement, etc.) is critical to the improved understating of the role PD plays within our education system.

**Summary of Literature**

PD, thanks largely to the passing of No Child Left Behind during the early 2000’s, has become a focal point of the teacher experience (Guskey, 2002). More importantly, PD has been linked by legislators and educators alike to improve both teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Guskey, 2002). Physical education has not been excluded from the overall educational movement to incorporate PD as a tool to improving areas of concern. For Modern physical education one of the greatest concerns is the lack of regular physical activity for students (Sallis et al., 2012). To help combat this concern physical education has adopted a mission of intertwining a boast in student physical activity to help both improve societal health outcomes (Sallis et al., 2012). As PD has become a major mechanism to reach this new goal of physical education, research must be conducted to better understand the process and experience PD provides our educators (Armour & Yelling, 2007). Based upon prior research, the following study seeks to provide voice to practicing highly-qualified physical educators regarding their PD experiences.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the thoughts and perceptions of elementary physical education teachers regarding their PD experiences. Based on Groenewald (2004), a phenomenological methodology was identified as the best means for this type of study. Phenomenological design is appropriate when one’s goal is to explore the experiences of individuals whom have participated in a particular phenomenon (Lester, 1999). The belief of this researcher is that greater understanding of a phenomenon, in this case PD, can only come through exploration of that phenomenon from the participants’, physical education teachers, viewpoints. Creswell (1998) described qualitative research as multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach in which the researcher attempts to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning as people bring to them. By nature, rather than numbers, the data are descriptive and are comprised of words or pictures (Flowerday & Schraw, 2000). As part of a phenomenological study, the researcher’s purpose is to describe and interpret the perspective of the participant (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Research Design

This phenomenological research design seeks to understand, through the use of qualitative methods, the phenomenon of PD through the lived experience of ten elementary physical education teachers. This study’s main research question is: How do physical educators perceive PD? Said another way, what is the lived experience of PD from the perspective of an elementary physical education teacher? Subsequent research questions include: how do physical educators perceive PD in relation to their physical educations program’s role in public health? Also, what perceptions, including potential
barriers and facilitators, do physical educators have of PD?; and, in what ways to physical educators use PD to improve upon both teaching practices and student learning?

The phenomenological research design was based on the phenomenological method developed by the Duquesne School, and articulated and demonstrated by Giorgi (1975, 1985, 1992). Chief characteristics of this approach include:

- “It is an interpretive methodology, where emphasis is placed on accessing the living experience of participants (chiefly) through the use of loosely structured interviews.
- Participants are purposively selected on the basis of experience of the phenomenon under investigation.
- The researcher adopts a position of “conceptual silence” (Stones, 1988, p. 124), or naivety, bracketing a priori theories, hunches and suppositions.
- In an attempt to honor all data equally (and not be attempted to analysis and thus set aside what appears to be irrelevant) the interview protocols are reduced to natural meaning units, in which each unit represents a statement that makes complete sense, expressed in the words of the participants.
- The research explicates the natural meaning units, and then describes what is presenting, thus attempting to capture the lived-world of the participant.
- Only when a holistic sense of the participant’s lived world is obtained through description does it become appropriate to extract themes and compare findings with other sources, such as literature” (Giorgi, 1971, 1985, 1992).
As appropriate with phenomenological studies, data collection methods for this particular study include unstructured interviews with each study participant (Lester, 1999).

**Researcher Perspective**

It is important to note my personal connection with both the field of physical education and the experience of PD. I am a currently practicing elementary physical education teacher entering into his seventh overall year as a PE teacher. I, like the participants, have to obtain a certain number of PD hours on an annual basis. My career as an educator and, quite frankly, my negative experience with PD, helped motivate me to pursue this particular line of research. Throughout my teaching career I have obtained well over 100 hours of PD and typically these hours were ineffective at making me a better educator. For the most part my experience has been of being shuffled off into PD that had nothing to do with my field (PE) or nothing to do with my practice as an educator. Those PD experiences that were impactful to my professional growth resonated with me as they helped improve my teaching practices and student outcomes. I wanted to explore this topic from a personal desire to provide greater understanding of the PD experiences our practicing physical educators have. It is important for me to include this so that I document my potential researcher bias as well as highlight my personal desire for this specific line of research.

**Participant and Site Selection**

According to Hycner (1999, p. 156) “the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice-versa) including even the type of participants.” The researcher chose purposive sampling, considered by Welman and Kruger (1999) as the most important kind of non-
probability sampling, to identify the primary participants. The selected sample includes those who “have had experiences relating to the phenomenon [PD] to be researched” (Kruger, 1988, p. 150). For the study’s sample the researcher chose the following:

1. Elementary physical education teachers with at least one year teaching experience

2. Employed in either a public or private school located in the same school district of respective State located within the Southeastern United States.

This particular Southeastern school district is located in close proximity to a research-oriented land grant University whose Physical Education Department Faculty conduct annual PD in the selected school district. Interviews were scheduled for those physical educators meeting the pre-determined criteria and who agreed to participate in the study.

In order to ensure ethical research, informed consent was obtained from study participants (Holloway, 1997; Kvale, 1996). The informed consent letter provided to each of the study participants follows the protocols laid out by the University of Kentucky’s Office of Research Integrity. The informed consent letter included the following:

- That they are participating in the research
- The purpose of the research (without stating the central research question)
- The procedures of the research
- The risk and benefits of the research
- The voluntary nature of the research participation
- The subject’s right to stop participating in the research study at any time
- The procedures to protect confidentially
Boyd (2001) regards two to 10 participants or research subjects as sufficient to reach saturation and Creswell (1998, pp. 65, 133) recommends “long interviews with up to 10 people” for a phenomenological study. Based upon these guidelines, the researcher sought a minimum of 10 participants to be recruited from my study’s sample population. Every possible participant located within the selected school district (i.e. those who met the established criteria mentioned on the previous page) was contacted to participate in the study.

In total, 36 potential research participants were recruited to participate in this study, and from this 36, only 10 people volunteered to be a research participant. The ten participants in this study are known by their following pseudonyms:

- Bob
- Lysa
- Witt
- Martin
- Vicky
- Ann
- Paul
- Donald
- Ted
- Victor

It should be noted that demographic features such as gender or number of years experience were not considered valuable information to the researcher. In phenomenology the goal is pursue the experience of a phenomenon from a person who
has lived or experienced that particular phenomenon. In this study, PD was the
experience being explored and value can be found from the word’s of a teacher with three
years experience or 17 years experience. As the focal point was the entire, lived PD
experience of the research participants minor demographic details seemed illfit for this
study based upon the principals of phenomenological research.

**Data Generation**

In tradition of phenomenological research design the researcher conducted
unstructured, in-depth, interviews with each research participant. Questions were,
“directed to the participant’s experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions about the
theme in question” (Welman & Kruger, 1999, p. 196). Phenomenological research lends
itself to an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of
mutual interest, “where researcher attempts to understand the world from the subjects’
point of view; to unfold meaning of people’s experiences” (Kvale, 1996, pp. 1–2). While
interviews, for the most part will be unstructured, the following topics and/or issues were
addressed:

- Teacher perceptions of PD
- Goals of individual teacher’s physical education program
- Barriers and/or facilitators present to obtaining physical education specific PD
- Who is in charge of directing individual teacher PD programs?
- The role of physical education in public health
- Challenges of teaching physical education in rural communities
- Teacher perception of their role as a tool for public health
• How do teachers use PD to improve their respective physical education programs
• Teacher’s perceptions of what can be done to improve upon school health
• Teacher’s perceptions of how PD can be improved upon

The interview questions were designed to promote in-depth, rich-in-detail answers from the research participants. It should be noted that no official interview guide was used during the interview process. The topics above were woven into conversation with research participants as organically as possible to keep the focus on the descriptive world generated by the participants. Interviews ranged from 16 minutes to 46 minutes, with the average run time of the ten interviews being 29 minutes. Keep in mind that interview length does not reflect the strength of the data generated from the interviews. Also, all interviews were conducted in a setting chosen by the research participants and done in person.

The researcher scheduled interviews at times and locations that were convenient for each participant. Interviews were recorded for transcription purposes. Interview recordings were transcribed shortly after each interview. Each interview was analyzed and coded according to Hycner’s (1999) five-step process.

Explication of the Data

The heading ‘data analysis’ is deliberately avoided here because Hycner cautions that ‘analysis’ has dangerous connotations for phenomenology. The “term [analysis] usually means a ‘breaking into parts’ and therefore often means a loss of the whole phenomenon…[whereas ‘explication’ implies an]…investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context of the whole” (1999, p. 161). Coffey and
Atkinson (1996, p. 9) regard analysis as the “systematic procedures to identify essential features and relationships.” It is a way of transforming data through interpretation. Now that explication has been clarified, we can turn to a simplified version of Hycner’s (1999) explication process, which will be used in this study. Hycner’s five step process is as follows:

1. Bracketing and phenomenological reduction.
2. Delineating units of meaning.
3. Clustering of units of meaning to form themes.
4. Summarizing each interview, validating it and where necessary modifying it.
5. Extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary.

1. **Bracketing and phenomenological reduction.** The term reduction, coined by Husserl, is regarded by Hycner (1999) as unfortunate, because it has nothing to do with the reductionist natural science method. It would be a great injustice to human phenomena through over-analysis to remove the lived contexts of the phenomena and worse possibly reducing phenomena to cause and effect. Phenomenological reduction “to pure subjectivity” (Lauer, 1958, p. 50), instead, is a deliberate and purposeful opening by the researcher to the phenomenon “in its own right with its own meaning” (Fouche, 1993; Hycner, 1999). In order to minimize research bias the researcher utilizes bracketing to remove any presuppositions and to prevent the researcher’s meaning and interpretations of theoretical concepts to enter the unique world of the participants (Creswell, 1998, pp. 54, 113; Moustakas, 1994, p. 90; Sadala & Adorno, 2002). As phenomenologically focused qualitative analysis is inherently subjective – the researcher is the instrument for
analysis – research reflexivity must be addressed. Mason (1996) stated that reflexive research, “means that the researcher should constantly take stock of their actions and their role in the research process and subject these to the same critical scrutiny as the rest of their ‘data’” (p. 6).

This conception of bracketing is different than the bracketing used when interviewing to bracket the phenomenon research for the interviewee. Here it refers to the bracketing of the researcher’s personal views or preconceptions (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). In other words, both prior to, and during the reading of the transcripted interviews the researcher will bracket out his own presuppositions and thoughts. This is so the researcher does not blend his own thoughts with the thoughts of the study’s participants. This process is done in a deliberate, purposeful fashion so that researcher seeks to remove his pre-judgemental knowledge and bias as best as possible. For example, when a participant is describing something that resonates with a personal experience of the researcher, the researcher does not seek to hide or put away this thought. Instead the researcher embraces this thought and makes explicit note of it. In order to be aware of one’s bias, a researcher must not shy away from making them known. In regards to this specific study the researcher “bracketed” his own thoughts and beliefs as the interviews were explicated. This was a continual process in order to best limit researcher bias.

2. Delineating units of meaning. In this phase of data explication, statements that are seen to illuminate the researched phenomenon are extracted or ‘isolated’ (Creswell, 1998; Holloway, 1997; Hycner, 1999). The researcher is required to make a substantial amount of judgment calls while consciously bracketing his/her own presuppositions in order to avoid inappropriate subjective judgments. The list of relevant meaning extracted
from each interview is carefully scrutinized and the clearly redundant units eliminated (Moustakas, 1994). To do this the research considers the literal content, the number (the significance) of times a meaning was mentioned and also how (non-verbal or para-linguistic cues) it was stated. The actual meaning of the two seemingly similar units of meaning might be different in terms of weight or chronology of events (Hycner, 1999).

In this step of data explication the researcher seeks to gain a general understanding of the expressions of the research participants. To do this the researcher pours over every word, phrase, sentence, paragraph and notes significant non-verbal communication in the transcript to elicit the participants’ meanings (Hycner, 1985). This is done in two steps; the first by examining the transcripts without the frame of the research questions (i.e. what is been conveyed? What is the participant saying?); and second, by addressing the transcript through the lens of the research question (i.e. how does the participants words and phrases interact with the research question). The first step allows the researcher to view the transcript as a whole and to seek the meaning from the entire interview. The second step breaks down the interview from a whole to parts related to the research questions. The product of these two steps is the a list of “units of meaning” or better phrased for those unfamiliar with qualitative research as notes referring to the essence of the participant’s words in relation to the research question(s).

3. Clustering of units of meaning to form themes. Using the list of non-redundant units of meaning (i.e. the results of step two), the researcher must again bracket his/her presuppositions in order to remain true to the phenomenon. By rigorously examining the list of the units of meaning the researcher tries to elicit the essence of the meaning of units with the holistic context. Clusters of themes are typically formed by grouping units
of meaning together (Creswell, 1998; King, 1994; Moustakas, 1994) and the researcher identifies significant topics, also called units of significance (Sadala & Adorno, 2002).

Both Holloway (1997) and Hycner (1999) emphasize the importance of the researcher going back to the recorded interview and list of non-redundant units of meaning to derive clusters of appropriate meaning. Often there is overlap in the clusters, which can be expected, considering the nature of the human phenomena. By interrogating the meaning of the various clusters, central themes are determined, “which expressed the essence of these clusters” (Hycner, 1999, p. 153).

4. **Summarize each interview, validate and modify.** A summary that incorporates all the themes elicited from the data gives a holistic context. Ellenberger captures it as follows:

> Whatever the method used for a phenomenological analysis the aim of the investigator is the reconstruction of the inner world of experience of the subject. Each individual is has his own way of experiencing temporality, spatiality, materiality, but each of those coordinates must be understood in relation to the others and to the total inner “world.” (cited by Hycner, 1999, pp. 153–154)

At this point the researcher conducts a ‘validity check’, otherwise known as member-checking, by returning to the study participant to determine if the essence of the interview has been correctly ‘captured’ (Hycner, 1999, p. 154). Any modification necessary is done as a result of this ‘validity check.’ It should be noted that during this part of the data explication process member checking with all ten participants did not uncoverer any issues with how the data was being presented.

5. **General and unique themes for all the interviews and composite summary.** Once steps 1-4 have been completed for each interview, the researcher looks “for the themes common” to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations”
(Hycner, 1999, p. 154). Care must be taken not to cluster common themes if significant
differences exist. The unique or minority voices are important counterpoints to bring out
regarding the phenomenon researched. The researcher concludes the explication by
writing a composite summary, which must reflect the context or ‘horizon’ from which the
themes emerged (Hycner, 1999; Moustakas, 1994). According to Sadala and Adorno
(2002, p. 289) the researcher, at this point “transforms participants’ everyday expression
into expressions appropriate to the scientific discourse supporting the research.” In
summary, after bracketing his own presuppositions so that the data explication is as
objective as possible the researcher will seek to identify themes across all of the
interviews in relation to the research questions. From this list of themes the researcher
will then compose a summary of the identified themes and from this summary attempt to
make meaning of the entirety of the data with respect to this particular study’s research
question(s).

**Data Analysis Conclusions**

From individual analysis of each interview, the researcher was able to construct
the meanings and essences of the participant’s experiences and integrate all data into a
universal description representing the group as a whole (Moustakas, 1994). From the data
36 units of meaning were indentified, and from those 36, 15 clusters of units of meaning
were generated, ultimately condensing down into four major themes (see Figure 1). The
four themes represent the strongest foci across the participants’ experiences. When all the
participants experiences are taken as a whole the four themes are what connect them
together despite not the participants always sharing the same individual experience. The
themes explicated from the data will be brought to life through the participant’s own words in Chapter Four.

Data Management

The researcher, with the permission of the study participants, audio-recorded each of the interviews. Each audio-recorded interview was transcribed. Each interview was assigned a code and each interview participant was given a pseudonym so that all identifying information was removed from the data. All of the data were stored on a password-protected computer of which only the researcher had access.

Trustworthiness of Findings

Qualitative studies are not bound by traditional quantitative constructs of validity (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Moustakas (1994) suggests that qualitative research designs, specifically studies using phenomenological methods are naturally shielded from
threats to internal validity. Creswell (1998) provides eight verification procedures that qualitative researchers must consider. Specifically, Creswell (1998) states researchers should “engage in at least two of them in any given study” (p. 203). The eight procedures are: (a) prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field, (b) triangulation, (c) peer review or debriefing, (d) negative case analysis, (e) clarifying research bias, (f) member checks, (g) rich, thick descriptions, and (h) external audits (Creswell, 1998).

This study employs two of these eight procedures: member checks and the use of rich, thick descriptions. Member checking was done during the fourth part of the data explication process and the results of this research are presented in the words of the participants highlighting the use of rich, thick descriptions. Moreover, Creswell (1998) states, “phenomenologists view verification and standards largely related to the researcher’s interpretation, neither empirical, nor transcendental phenomenologists place substantial emphasis on verification beyond the perspective of the researcher” (p. 207).

Lastly, in order to evaluate whether the findings “ring true” as Coles (1974) says, the research findings must be presented to his research committee. Hycner (1999) refers to this process as bringing, “a certain ‘objective’ or trans-subjective agreement” to the research study. Thus, this study adheres to accepted standards of reliability and validity.

Summary

The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological study was to explore a specific phenomenon: PD. More specifically, this study sought to explore the lived PD experience of practicing elementary physical educators. The phenomenological research design framework laid out by Giorgi (1992) coupled with Hycner’s (1999) data explication process laid a solid methodical foundation from which to conduct my research. In-depth
interviews with the ten research participants helped contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon of PD. It is my hope that a better understanding of PD will assist educators in improving desired learning and curricular outcomes.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the phenomenon of PD through the lived experiences of elementary physical education teachers. Phenomenology provides individuals an opportunity to share their life experiences in order to illuminate a phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). From the experiences of the research participants the researcher hopes to help the reader understand the perspective of the phenomenon – PD. Utilizing individual interviews with ten active physical education teachers, data were collected and analyzed using Hycner’s (1999) five-step process.

Chapter four presents the key findings obtained from the study’s ten in-depth interviews. Four themes emerged from the data and were analyzed to gain a true understanding of the lived experiences of physical educators’ PD. Those themes were:

- PD for Professional Growth – A search for meaning
- Accessibility
- I Matter!
- Relationships

Chapter four is in “the words” of the participants and contains discussion on the emerging themes as well as a summary of information provided.

PD Should Make Me Better: A Search for Meaning

While PD comes in many forms and is obtained through a variety of mediums the consistent message across the research participants was that PD must have meaning to be considering a positive aspect of one’s profession. What is meaning? In the context of this study, for PD to have “meaning” Donald describes it best as, “something that develops you professionally,” or in other words, PD must serve as a means in assisting the
professional growth, whether that be by providing curricular or pedagogical growth, a
better ability to understand one’s students, or as a tool for student improvement, of
physical educators.

**PD Dual Existence**

All ten of the research participants shared a common duality in their individual PD experience – they obtained PD that assisted with professional growth and has meaning; and they experienced PD that is un-relatable and meaningless. All of the participants’ experiences described that not all of their required 24 PD hours as a benefit or a tool to their professional growth. In fact, all ten research participants explained that in the past school year they all had participated in PD, often at the request of a school or district administrator, which did not serve any particular function to make them better teachers. As Witt (one participant) put it,

> the ones that are not PE related are 99% waste of my time. Much like going to PE workshop would be a waste of time for a classroom teacher. It just doesn’t make sense to make me sit through a MAP or reading PD. When we are going through reading stuff or any of that if I’m being honest with you my head is somewhere else. I’m daydreaming somewhere else.

When describing a three-hour writing portfolio PD Witt was required to attend, he said it, “was the longest three hours of my life.” Witt’s experience was shared by Ann who said, “sometimes they’ll [school administrator] do stuff where we’ll talk about MAP testing. We’ll talk about textbooks and stuff like that. I’m like hey, I’m playing solitaire over here. Let’s see if I can beat my score.” Martin, like Witt and Ann before him, experienced a lot of sitting in PD without actually getting any benefit from it. Martin expressed, “a lot of it [non-PE PD] doesn’t really affect me. A lot of it is me just sitting there. I think I could spend my time better around here doing something else.” One participant, Vicky,
was required to attend a monthly PD that consisted of the entire school staff and said, “99% of the time is not PE-related.” In Vicky’s case even after obtaining her mandated 24 hours through school required PD, that was not content related, she spent her own money and summer vacation to attend a PE PD. Having PD that is content related and relatable to them as professionals is worth one’s own time and money.

Among the research participants the only time a non-PE PD was deemed beneficial or meaningful was when it applied to the respective teacher’s student population or helped complete a school designated task such as training for administering statewide tests. Ted says “sometimes there’s gaps in different demographics of who we teach. Sometimes they [administration] give us suggestions in PD on how we might reach specific genders or socioeconomic groups…some of that is applicable in pretty much anything you teach.” However, even after Ted spoke positively of his non-content related PD, a rarity among the group, he directly followed up by saying, “You also have those math PD’s where they’re three hours on everyday math. It doesn’t really mean much, you know?” Even in the rare instances of satisfaction concerning non-content PD the satisfaction is not universal – there are still gaps in the PD offerings and subsequent experience of these teachers.

**Curricular and Pedagogical Growth**

Using PD as a means to improve upon teaching practices, or pedagogy, was a common experience among the ten participants. In fact, most participants viewed PD as a direct means to become better teachers through learning better teaching practices. PD is also used as a means for the physical education teachers in this study to expand the horizons of their curricular knowledge. Not just how to teach something but what exactly
to teach. The participants shared a common experience in that the PE PD they obtained helped them professionally by not only sharpening previously learned skills but by also guiding them to new horizons. An ever-changing subject within an ever-changing society requires consistent upkeep in current best practices.

Ted describes the role PE PD has on his curriculum by saying, “Always I found there are activities that I haven’t seen in the book or I’ve just assumed that this [game] is that way it would go. Then I would see him [PD presenter] do it and a light goes off. That’s how that’s supposed to look. That seems to happen every single time.” Every time Ted has a content related PD he has a moment of clarity or inspiration regarding his curriculum that only makes him a better teacher. Ted’s PE PD even helps his teaching or pedagogical skills as he says,

I remember last year he [PD presenter] was using the small gator skill balls to demonstrate a volleyball lesson. It was interesting because I had always tried to use these larger beach ball-like things and do some more realistic stuff. Then he was really breaking down how they would use their hands and they were trying to catch it, then throw it. Rather than always trying to hit. Basically trying to break down the actual motion. That got to me to pretty well. I just hadn’t thought of teaching it that way. In my mind I’m just kind of always like hitting an object. Theirs way more like a catch and then throwing. They kind of worked their way up to that, which I thought was good.

Lysa regards her PE PD’s as, “excellent.” She says her PD’s aid her curricular growth because her PD’s relate specifically to her curriculum. She says her PD’s are, “straight from the book [curriculum] so they’re really good.” She goes on to say her PD has been, “adding in new games. They’ve been doing that. The last time we had a PD, he [the presenter] added a couple of new games that aren’t in our book [curriculum]. That’s kind of cool because I’ve been teaching from the book for years now.” Without her PE PD’s
Lysa’s curriculum runs the risk of turning stale but thankfully her experience is one that allows her opportunities to refine and expand her curriculum.

In Bob’s experience his PE PD comments were similar to others in that they both helped him teach things in different ways as well as helping him discover new ideas for class. Bob’s PE PD allows him to, “get new ideas because you can definitely get set in your own ways for certain games and activities.” Bob’s PE PD even helps him overcome professional anxiety of attempting new games and activities by giving him an opportunity to both watch and participate in the games during PD. “I’ll be honest with you, says Bob, some of these games, I don’t even try because I never taught it before. Some of them are challenging and I don’t understand them...these PD’s help that. I actually look forward to it [PD] because I know that I will be able to grow what I do at these events.”

Regarding curricular growth and expansion Victor says, “I think it is extremely helpful. I do get a lot of new games. I usually learn one new thing every time I go.” When it comes to how content specific PD helps Victor become a better teacher he explains that PD, “should help stimulate your mental growth in that area [pedagogically speaking]. It should give you a little seed to plant and then you’d be like, ‘okay, I can work on this, I can do it better this way.’”

**Student Improvement**

Throughout the data gathering process each of the participants graded the effectiveness and quality of their PD regarding the PD’s ability to guide the teachers towards student improvement. What exactly determines student improvement was varied from teacher to teacher. Some teachers, like Paul and Vicky, experienced PD focused more on improving PE-specific related items so that students would be enriched through
more enjoyable and well-taught PE classes. Other participants, such as Donald and Victor, experienced PD to be more slanted towards better understanding the intrapersonal role of education and specifically how they as teachers and role models could best improve their students’ lives both inside and outside the realm of physical education. Regardless of the PD focus experienced by the participants the PD’s worth or meaning was largely weighed upon whether or not it impacted student improvement. PD, according to Donald, serves no purpose unless, “it is actually developing you professionally…helping you reach your students.”

Paul describes the impact PD has had on his student improvement like so, “I want people [PD presenters] to tell me how to do my job better. I’ve done this for several years, I don’t have all the answers. I want to learn…I want my class to be a positive experience for my students. I want them to grow and develop an interest in some kind of fitness activity. That will make me happy.” Vicky, echoing Paul’s desire for PD to bolster the role PE can have in shaping student growth, says, “When PD is done right and it is applicable, I can bring it right back into my classroom and these kids can use these activities right away out at recess or at home….PD helps, I guess, building the foundation so they [students] can enjoy movement down the road.” Meaningful PD allows teachers such as Paul and Vicky to nurture their respective PE programs into spaces of student exploration and growth. Without a quality PE experience bolstered by meaningful PE, Paul says a student would not be able to improve, “over the course of time, and say, ‘oh yeah, I can walk, run, hop, skip, jump. I can throw and catch a ball. These are the things I can do.’”

Despite being overwhelmingly negatively viewed by the research participants,
non-content specific PD could be as meaningful if the teachers believed the content would help them improve students’ lives. Donald explains that based upon his particular student population he welcomed non-content specific PD. Donald was worried he didn’t have the specific skill set as a teacher to reach his student population.

When my students, Donald explained, are told by their mother to stay in the house until I get home. Don’t unlock the door for anybody. Or the neighborhood that I live in isn’t safe to go out and play or risk getting beat up, what have you…PD would have to be [with] a component that was specific my population of kids. That doesn’t necessarily have anything to do with PE or health but understanding what comes with the type of home environment. I would need something that was specific for the behavior of the kids because that’s always in PE….I need to understand behavior issues.

Confronted with a difficult task of reaching students in an at-risk population Donald turned to PD, regardless if it was content-specific, because his PD experience was highlighted by meaning. His PD experience is helping him better teach and manage student behavior.

Victor found meaning in his student growth PD that focused on building character and developing leadership. Victor expressed a joy from the PD expanding his horizons on how to use PE as a means to teach social and intrapersonal skills to his students. He says:

from just a sheer character standpoint, we need to start teaching our kids, like, ‘you’re going to be in charge one day, and so you’re going to have to make smart decisions and not dumb ones.’...we need instill this knowledge in them..I just try and talk to them about that, the social aspect of sports, it is fulfilling.

PD need not be content-related for every teacher as long as it is applicable in some way to student improvement. A continued theme among the teachers was that they were serving as teachers as a means to better the lives of their students both academically (i.e. concerning PE) as well as socially.
PD as It Relates to Teacher Goals

PD, content or non-content specific, was given meaning by the research participants if that PD gave support and breadth for the teachers’ personal and classroom goals. It is important to note that when I talk about professional goals of the research participants I am wrapping up personal and professional goals into one group because they are often intertwined and indistinguishable. Each participant was very clear that he or she had established goals for their PE program and that these goals often formed a rubric for which PD should be graded. Professional goals served as both a motivation for research participants in PD choice as well as a lens for which to judge PD that was required through either the school or the school district.

When asked whether their PD helped meet their professional goals only two of the ten participants, Paul and Donald, mentioned that they felt particular PDs didn’t relate entirely to their respective individual goals. But, when both considered the sum of the parts of their PD experiences both agreed that at least some of their PD related to their professional goals. Paul when considering his PD experience first comments, “Not really, to be honest,” when asked about his PD helping him reach his professional goals. But then as he continues his thought goes to say, “I feel like my approach is not going to change but the PDs that are going to meet the approach. I’m not going to go to one that’s specific to a coach’s need…I’m going to seek out art integration and behavior management, kinds of things that help be a better teacher.” As Paul continued to describe his PD experience he says, “I guess you get out of PD what you put into it…and overall I would say my PD has been beneficial [to reaching his goals].” Paul, despite some of his
PD experience being tainted by useless and un-meaningful PD, still held a very positive view of PD overall.

Donald was more succinct in his PDs relationship to his professional goals saying, “some [PD’s] do, some don’t. The ones that I enjoy going to, the ones where we are active and there are people demonstrating this is what we can do…I would say those apply to my philosophy [goals] of PE.” Though his past PD experience brought him face to face with PDs that lacked meaning to his professional goals when faced with a newfound administrative support for his quest for meaningful PD, Donald says, “I’m kind of enthused about PD again just because it applies to what I’m doing.” Out of the ten participants Paul and Donald were the only two to speak in a negative light about their PD experience as it relates to their professional goals. Though as their thoughts continued to flow both of the participants came back around to the overall notion that PD as a whole was meaningful.

The other eight participants whole-heartedly believed that their PD experience was granted meaning through its overarching connection to each individual’s respective professional goals. When discussing how his PD related to his professional goals, Ted flatly stated, “Yes, I think so [help with goals].” Martin was equally succinct in his description of how his PD helped me reach his goals saying, “yes, it definitely helps.” Witt elaborates a little more explaining, “Yeah, I would,” say my PD helps my goals, “again, especially the some of the stuff I get from KAHPERD, but I feel like everything as far as I’m getting, I definitely feel like it helps.” Ann commented the same as others, saying, “I think I get good PD. It relates for sure.”

Victor comments that his PD helps him meet his goals, saying, “Oh yeah, yeah, I
would, because the way he [the presenter] runs them, it really is a help, just keeping them
[his students] as active as possible and let them have some fun.” He goes on to say that
one of his fundamental teaching goals, focusing on the process not the product, is
something that he picked up on at a PD. When describing how that phrase, “process not
product” impacts his professional career, Victor says, “The product comes. I’ve kind of
tried to remember that, because I’m a perfectionist, so my first years of teaching was
really hard…but as [I] focused on the process with my students it seemed more loose,
instead of harping…it really helped.”

Across the spectrum of the PD experience for the ten research participants each
agreed that PD would be meaningful if it helped them achieve their professional goals.
Each teacher had a vision for what his or her program would entail and the better PD
related to that vision the more meaning the PD would have.

**Accessibility**

While PD comes in many forms and is obtained through a variety of mediums
each of the research participants shared a common experience regarding the accessibility
of PD. Despite different teaching circumstance and different personal and professional
make-ups each research participant at one point discussed how meaningful or content-
specific PDs accessibility, or at times lack-there-of, impacted their PD experiences. For
some, barriers were encountered in attempt to shape a better PD experience, while others
shared a struggle to find opportunities to attend particular PDs. Additionally, research
participants identified that having a personal role, or agency, in their respective PD fates
played a significant role in their PD experiences.
Barriers and Facilitators: The Administrative Role

The research participants displayed wide-ranging views when discussing the role their respective school administrations played in their PD experiences. Paul and Bob spoke glowingly of administrative support, while others, such as Victor and Martin, spoke with alarmingly disparate experiences where administrations severely hamstrung the quest for PD. Ultimately, as a teacher working under a school leadership, how that leadership viewed its role in teacher PD impacted the access to quality PD.

When discussing his PD experience Paul reveled in his administration’s support for his PD desires as he commented it was not always that way. Paul commented,

"Our principal, now this is her third year, she’s much better. Prior to her arrival, all teachers did the same thing, regardless of subject. Our new principal is, you might not benefit from this math PD, you might not benefit from this social studies PD, because you don’t teach it. So you [pe teacher] go here and do your thing…she trusts us professionally to make sure we do something…I told my principal that I appreciate that immensely."

Bob says his administration is, “absolutely,” helpful in him getting quality, meaningful PD. “My school,” Bob says, “is very willing to work with us to help us advance our careers and so if I say, ‘Hey, I would love to go to KAPHERD’ they will completely support it.” When talking about his PD experience, Witt says, “I have complete support [from the administration. They’ve even come to me to go a step further [allowing him to travel to non-local PDs].” Ted shared similar views saying his administration “is very supportive. I would say they would be that,” as he discussed how that support enabled him to experience the PD he desired.

Lysa shares a similar support from her administration, a relationship she deems, “as wonderful. He’s never said no to me for anything I’ve ever asked for.” She goes on to say that this support has had an extremely positive role in her PE program. “He’s never
said no to me for one purchase [PD and equipment] I’ve asked for. I think he knows I’m doing the right thing for kids…I’m teaching the right curriculum so he’s going to say yes to those things because he wants me participate in the PDs…with that I can have the opportunities to teach the kids what they need.” Through administrative support Lysa both got to grow her PE program in a positive way but she also developed a sense of respect for her administrator, something that plays a major role in job satisfaction.

Victor expressed a polar opposite viewpoint on how his administrative assisted with his PD. “Our principal, said Victor, as far as PE PD, not so much. They are really hitting the math and writing.” He went on to say, I guess I have a bad taste in my mouth about how the administration views PE.” Clearly, Victor was becoming disparaged by his administration’s reluctance to commit time and resources to his PD experience. He lamented that other teachers in the school, particularly interventionists, got more administrative support than him. “They [administration] are more into interventionists. They chose to support them rather than [me]. I just feel low on the totem pole.” Martin shared in Victor’s experience saying his administrator, “doesn’t really care what I do [it terms of PD]. In the past she even admitted to me this, ‘I didn’t really care’.” When asked about if his administration supported his PD goals he responded with, “No. She doesn’t say [ok] me.” As he continued to contemplate his administrations role he started to talk out loud about why his administrator didn’t support him.

Vicky, when talking about her administration’s role, expressed that, “she’s [her principal] was supportive, but it is also limited. The specials area are not [appreciated], like I said, but our principal is pretty agreeable if she can figure it out, but you’re limited.” When asked to clarify what she meant by limited, Vicky said, “Limited by
funding, substitutes, transportation and availability. It’s difficult.” Even with administrative support, or in the case of Martin and Victor non-support, the research participants struggled to access meaningful and content-specific PD. This struggle will be discussed further below. The role of the administration, alone, could not solve all of what ails the PD experience of the ten research participants.

Economics

Regardless of administrative support the research participants were linked by the role of affordability and finances as they sought to build a beneficial PD experience. Each school, and subsequently each teacher, had independent financial circumstances but they all shared a common connection that accessing PD was impacted by their respective financial situations. For someone like Ted, “finances are the only barrier,” in the quest for meaningful and content-specific PD. Contrast that with the comments of Bob who claimed his budget was overflowing, saying “luckily, we have a lot of funds. I’ve got a fund for PE [includes PD]. It’s just outrageous. There’s just no way I could spend it all.” Taking those two participants’ comments to heart and you can establish the spectrum in which the participants would fall regarding their own funding situation. There are those like Ted who face serious financial restraints, while others like Bob had plenty of money to meet their PD needs, but regardless of where the participant fell on the spectrum each expressed a connection between their PD experience and the money on hand.

“It’s a good problem to have,” said Bob as he talked about his surplus PE budget that also provided funds for him to obtain relatable PD. “I’ve never ran into any obstacles…my school is very willing to work with us so if I ask for something then they will say, ‘how much is it?’ they will completely pay for it.” For Bob a teaching
experience lacking funding for PD tailored to his specific wants and needs would have been a very foreign environment. Witt and Lysa, like Bob, are in situations with ample funding. Lysa says, “I’ve got all the money I’ve ever asked for.” Lysa says when she asks for money, “he’s [my principal] like, ‘okay, that’s fine’.” For Witt, “they’ve [administration] even said to me that there’s money there if you want to go Southern District or if you want to go to the National PE conference.” Attending either or both of these conferences would easily equate to thousands of dollars as both of these conferences most often are located well outside of daily driving range and the conference registration fees alone can be several hundred dollars.

In the middle of the spectrum – a place where funding is available but something one has to fight for – resides Paul, Vicky and Ann. For Vicky, “there’s money available if I were to fight for it, but it is tough. Where do I go and how do I do it frugally, if that’s the right word.” In her situation funding was available for school teachers but as her school is “focused on math and focused on reading,” she was placed in a difficult place having to fight for funding for something she deemed counterproductive to overall school goals.

For someone like Ann, who again had administrative support, the struggle for affordable PDs was a very real one. Ann expressed, “we wound up getting into a problem with enrollment for a little bit and budgets went down. Trying the to find the PDs that were a little lower [cheaper]…I was trying to find ones that were more budget friendly to us.” When asked if she felt she was successful in her quest to find more affordable PDs, Ann replied, “it’s difficult. I haven’t been [to KAPHERD] the past couple of years.” Shortly after explaining her struggles to find affordable PD says that her principal would
send her “in a heartbeat to anywhere I wanted to go,” but sadly she just lacked the funding.

For Paul, who taught in a school with limited funds for PD, he explained, the PD committee is in charge of building up funds, if you are interested in going to a conference or whatever, you have to submit forms, because there’s only so much money. I actually joined the committee, simply, because I want to be able to go to my conferences. I’m the first one to [put] my request in…I know, every year, I’m going to choose to go a conference…I want to do that, I had to [talking about the PD’s importance], I need that PD money, so [I] work for it.

In Paul’s case he was able to secure the appropriate funding only through work of his own doing, some of that work being outside the realm of his daily professional responsibilities. For Paul, dedicating time to serve on an after school committee, or working diligently to get his PD requests turned in a timely manner were efforts well worth it for money was most definitely a factor in his PD experience.

Donald, Martin and Ted came down on the negative end of the spectrum. For these three individuals financial restraints were a severe limitation, or in Ted’s case the only limitation, to obtaining the PD experience that they respectfully desired. Ted simply says, “there isn’t any money for it,” when explaining his financial situation. Donald echoed Ted’s lack of access thanks to insufficient funds. He says, “You got to be Johnny on the spot because there’s a limited pool of funds and usually by the time I roll around to lining up my PD the pool is dried up. Then it comes down if I’m going to pay for it, if I’m going to pay for it out of my own pocket, or I’m going to a free one…that’s how it works.” The lack of funds forced Donald, “into the free ones. I do the free ones so I don’t have to worry about it too much,” but he didn’t seem very confident the free PDs were meeting his needs.

Martin dealt with financial limitations as he spoke about how he would have to
pay for the PD he wanted out of his own pocket. He didn’t have any opportunity to attend any PD that came with a cost unless he was willing to part with his own money, a reality that weighed heavily on him. Unlike Donald and others Martin did not get the opportunity to fight or request for funding. For Martin there was no chance to shape his own PD experience by joining a PD committee. For him, “as long as I’m competent, and wasn’t doing anything bad [in his administration’s eyes], there wasn’t really a care [within the school for PD for him].” He went on to say, “I was just looking at attending it [KAPHERD] but, I was like, I’m not paying for this. Like a hundred and fifty dollars.” A hard existence for Martin as lack of funding severely limited his access to meaningful, content-specific PD.

**Availability**

Even with funds, administrative support, or a lack of both, the research participants connected through the struggle or ease of readily availability of content-specific, meaningful PD. For many participants local university driven PDs served as a positive influence for their overall PE experiences. In addition, for the last several years the state organization representing the physical education and health teachers had held their annual conference in a location of close proximity to the research participants. Even then, with such advantages, participants struggled to attend due to issues such as being unable to take off work, unable to find a substitute teacher, or unable to make particular PDs due to other professional responsibilities.

As it pertains to the availability of relatable PD opportunities, Donald describes the situation best saying, “we’re on an island, within the school building we’re only teachers who teach what we do.” As compared to other subjects or classroom teachers
who are present in multiples, related arts teachers, specifically PE teachers, are the only teachers who teach what the subject within the school building. This shapes the accessibility of PD because PE teachers have to seek out PDs usually not offered on their own school grounds or through their school’s influence. When a teacher is forced to go outside their school for training, how far they have to travel and how likely they are to have quality substitute limits what types of PDs are actually available.

Having to look elsewhere than their own school for PD placed a healthy emphasis on the locality for the research participants. Someone like Bob, who by all accounts lives in a bountiful situation, with accompanied funds and administrative support, still relies heavily on the access of local PDs offered by the local university. He says, “for physical education, it’s very difficult to find PD hours.” Ann reflects that, “it is a problem [finding local PD]. It’s just hard finding it. Outside of the state conference, in our region, where would we go?” Ted says, “I don’t know where [I would go] outside of KAHPERD….if we didn’t already have the local university as partner [in providing PDs], what else is there?” For Lysa, without, “the every other month PD with the [local university],” and the occasional trip to KAHPERD she wouldn’t get any other content specific PD. Witt sums it up best by saying, “Back in the day [prior to the local university offering PD], if you didn’t go to KAHPERD, what did you do? You didn’t get anything. You pretty much had to do 24 hours [in meaningless PD]. I can even remember having to stay after school till seven o’clock, one time, for this three hour writing portfolio training.” A training that he described as the, “longest three hours of his life.” In the best cases, those with funding, and administrative support, whether or not PD was close determined whether or not it was accessible. In the worst cases even when PD is right around the proverbial corner,
getting a substitute teacher that frees up the teacher to attend the PD is a significant challenge.

For someone like Paul who has both financial support and administrative support he is still prevented access to PD due to a lack of substitute teacher funds, which leads him to pay out of pocket. He says, “I know how the system works, the funds for a sub is not fair, so I’ll pay out of my pocket to do it [attend PD].” Paul, though, stands as an outlier with the other research participants in his willingness to pay for his own substitute teacher. Others, like Victor describe the process of getting a sub to be dreadful. Victor say, “it is such a fiasco getting a good quality PE sub…even if I got one, though, I’m not sure I would get to go [to PD].” Ted’s PD experience was similar in that he says, “there’s no budget for substitute teachers, you’re probably going to end up paying for that yourself.”

Upon securing the funds and a substitute teacher to attend a PD, the research participants were still denied access due to professional restraints regarding how their workdays could be counted as PD. For example, in the state of Kentucky teachers are not allowed to count PDs attended during a regular school district teaching day as PD. PD would have to take place either after school, on a day in which school would not be in session for that particular district, or the teacher would have to take a personal or sick day in order be counted in the annual 24 hours of PD. As Lysa explains, “professional development is after your paid time. Professional development only counts after [or outside] your work hours…I have no issues finding subs…I would love to be able to do it during my work hours but I can’t. I could take off [but I don’t want to].” Vicky attended PD even knowing she wouldn’t get to count the hours in her favor. She explains, “You
want to continue [PD]. You want to continue to learn. You want to continue to get new ideas. However, you don’t want to be taken advantage of and give it too much of your time [reference to sick/personal days].” Ted doesn’t think he should have to use one of sick or personal days either, flatly saying, “I think the school system should [pay] because it’s paying to develop me professionally.”

The Role of the Internet

As participants sought greater access to PD the role of the Internet, social media, and modern connectedness came into play. The relative lack of cost, and ease of obtaining PD hours online facilitated a common experience amongst the participants – some positive, some negative. Being able to obtain content-specific PD online, especially for those who lacked appropriate funds and availability, was a positive draw. Those who sought more traditional, personal face-to-face PDs denounced the growing wave of online PDs, but even then they were open to the use of social media and online materials to grow their PE programs. In other words, those that didn’t seek out online PD to count for their 24 hours were still open to obtaining informal PD through the use of online tools. The modern era of online-connectedness despite personal feelings was a reality that no participant could escape.

For Ted and Vicky the role of online PD, or webinars, was unappealing and something they avoided when given the chance. Ted says, “I’m not a big fan of the online stuff [webinars]. For some, it’s okay. I’d rather get some hands on stuff.” Vicky was similar in saying, “webinars are becoming popular with a lot of [people], but I can look at a computer screen and it is totally blank. It’s not useful to me at all, those webinars. I have to be there.” Despite both not being supportive of the use of webinars, or online PD,
expressed a desire to have PD better reflect the growing need for technological knowledge and curricular integration. For instance, Ted hosted a group email among fellow PE colleagues in order to share ideas and to grow professionally. Ted says a lot of his online PD comes in the form of email saying, “I like to send out information, they’ll kind of say what to do with that [info provided], what link are you on, that sort of thing.”

Vicky, despite actively avoiding online PDs for her own professional growth, still recognized the value in the use of the Internet and its vast materials in helping boost the message of her PE program. She commented, “a lot of them [teachers] use Youtube. A lot of people use Just Dance in their classroom…so I send them weekly classroom activities [links to online resources].” She even talked about how she enjoyed Skyping with other physical educators not exactly for on-the-record PD hours but for content and professional support (which is technically, informal PD).

Witt, like Ted, heavily used email to stay in contact with other PE professionals. He says, “I email back and forth quite a few folks now. They’ll send me an email saying, ‘What have you got for bean bags this week?’ I’ll ask ‘does anybody got a different idea for Frisbees?’...That’s helpful.” Witt doesn’t chalk the hours he obtains through online communication with other PE professionals as PD, but these emails do serve the same role as PD by making him a more up-to-date, effective teacher.

Bob whose school has a strong focus on the incorporation of technology in the classroom uses the Internet’s tools to reach his students in and outside his classroom. His school’s emphasis on technology requires him to both adapt that in real time to his daily professional responsibilities but also it drives him to seek out PD to help him in his endeavors. For Bob, it is important to note that when he talks about “technology” he is
referring mainly to the use of electronic devices connected to the Internet. Bob says, “[his students] come in and I’ll have them create home fitness routines or use the apps, like the clock on the ipad. Sometimes I’ll have them use video...using technology in the classroom is really cool.” Outside of the classroom Bob uses an online website to communicate to his students on days they do not have PE. For instance, on Edmodo the service Bob uses, “I send ‘home’ assignments online. All of the kids have access to it,” which he commented allowed him to better connect with his students. The importance of using technology or online resources prompts Bob to seek out PD that grows his understanding of the relationship between PE and the Internet. He says, “I am definitely more interested in that [PDs with a technology focus…some parts that incorporate some technology…I would definitely be interested [in a PD] where they say, ‘Hey, you can use this technology in this lesson?’”

Donald, Paul and Ann relished the accessibly social media, online tools, and the Internet to material that made them better teachers. Paul says, “I’m always on Twitter, Facebook or YouTube asking questions. I want people to help me do my job better.” He continued, saying:

In recent years, I’ve benefited from the social media. There’s a Facebook group, Kentucky physical educators. There are all kinds of twitter things that I’ve done. I started a SharePoint. The kind of instantaneous feedback that some can post to Twitter, post to Facebook, post to SharePoint [is helpful]. I have this question, help me….I can have a question and then ten seconds later, get fifteen answers, it is amazing.

Paul’s enthusiasm for online resources even had him championing both the need for online related PE PD but also his profound love of the tech-related PE PDs he had already experienced. Paul says, “The content [at the PE PDs with an online slant] is
always great, [but] I’m still learning. I was only on Twitter two years ago…I may not have all the skills.”

For Ann, the use of the Internet allowed her to grow professionally as the Internet served as source for curriculum expansion coupled with pedagogical growth. Ann says, “I’ve been trying to work with the Internet stuff. There is this blog. It is actually on Facebook. She [blog host] posts new games every day. It’s really neat.” In fact, Ann, said she used this particular online resource as an almost weekly if not monthly way to get new and fresh ideas for her class, saying, “you have to put them [new ideas] to use.” To help her grow in how she teaches her students, Ann says, “I’m friends with a lot of PE teachers on Facebook. They send me a lot of stuff on there…saying you’ve got to do this. So, I got that going [how she taught certain things]. The kids loved that.” Even on the day she sat for her interview Ann had pulled a video from a PE teacher through Facebook that connected a popular dance with a fitness routine.

Donald used webinars and online PDs even though he wasn’t sure if they would count for his 24 hour mandate. He says,

I’ve done a couple of webinars this time [this year]. I haven’t even approached my PD people yet to see if they’re going to be approved. I needed them anyway…to me, a webinar is the same as sitting in a room full of people [with a PowerPoint presentation]. To me, there’s no difference. I’m either choosing to pay attention at the computer or choosing to pay attention to a person, I can choose to not do both.

He didn’t care if the webinars counted towards his PD requirements. For Donald, he just wanted materials to help him be a better teacher and if online is where he had to go then online is where he had to go.

Agency

Being able to take independent action regarding one’s own PD experience, in
particular, gaining access to meaningful PD, held a large influence among the research participants. Some participants, such as Donald and Paul, thrived in the ability to navigate the PD waters independently of a watchful eye or pre-determined course. Others, such as Vicky and Martin, sunk to the bottom when given the freedom to pick and choose as they went – especially in the face of other barriers (i.e. finances, administration support, etc.). No matter the impact of one’s own agency, whether it be positive or negative, in the end each participant shared a common connection that agency influenced their access to PD.

For Martin his administration allowed very little wiggle room for him to choose his 24 hours of PD, saying, “the principal…pretty much decided those couple of days [of PD] for me.” When asked to describe what these school decided PD hours were like, Martin said, “to be honest, for me, a lot of it is not…doesn’t really affect me, because it’s a lot about stuff that doesn’t last. I don’t know…and lot of me sitting there [non-meaningful PD]. In terms of his 24 hours of required PD Martin explained that he actually, “got a lot more than 24,” simply because he sought out relatable PD on his own terms. Of the required 24 hours that he had no say in “more was none PE [non PE related].”

Vicky shared a similar experience as Martin in that she lacked very little latitude for how she would obtain her 24 PD hours throughout the school year. “Over the course of the year,” Vicky says, “we’ll have something once a month PD-related, and it’s not PE PD…We [the school] call them Tune Up Tuesday. It’s professional development for the whole staff. We are strongly recommended to attend for our PD hours and 99% of the time [it’s] not PE related.” She went on to talk about how her lack of agency impacted her overall PD experience, saying, “I’m trying to come to an understanding and just
accept it. Accept it, however it is extremely frustrating and annoying…I’m probably at the point where I’m a little jaded. I go [to Tune-Up Tuesdays] but I’m a little jaded.” Like Martin, in order to craft a more enjoyable, powerful PD experience, Vicky goes above her 24 hours and attends both after-school PDs ran through the local university as well as dedicates her time over her summer vacation to attend PE PD. Even if the sum of the parts is a quality PD experience for Vicky, she still displays frustration over the lack of individual control at the school level. She would prefer not to have to give up, “unpaid” summer days to get her PD.

For Ted and Victor, they experienced more control over their PD fates at the school level than Vicky and Martin, but still were prevented from crafting their entire PD experience. Ted, like Vicky and Martin, says he was, “required to go to certain PDs,” but unlike Vicky and Martin spoke a little more positively about those experiences. That boils down to his PD stakeholders doing a better job creating PD that while not PE related still related to his overall job as a teacher. Even then, Ted says, “Usually every year I end up getting 30, I’d say between 30 and 40 [PD hours] during the year.” So, even though his non-chosen PD was a positive experience Ted still went above and beyond the PD requirements so that he could obtain the PD he wanted. Victor did his best to find meaning in his non-chosen PDs but it still chafed him when compared them to the PDs he had a choice in. Victor says that while these non PE PDs were “insightful” he preferred to choose his PDs. When asked to describe the relationship in being able to choose his PDs, Victor says, “Of course, man, I’m way more excited about it.”

The other six participants were given a lot of freedom to choose how to shape their yearly PD hours and it was clear they relished this freedom and responsibility. Lysa,
outside of an occasional PD that was recommended by the school, was allowed to choose how best to shape her PD hours. She commented a simple, “yeah” when asked if this freedom was beneficial to her, and this freedom not only allowed her to get the PD she wanted but also really fostered a sense of respect between her and her principal. Paul’s situation was very similar in that he was given a lot of free reign when it came to his PD hours especially under his new principal. The freedom is something that Paul appreciates “immensely.” For Paul, over the course of his teaching career, he was not always given the opportunity to go and find meaningful PD but under his new administration his freedom was empowering to his access to meaningful PD.

Ann says for her, “we [the teachers] have to decide how we’re going to do that [obtain our PD].” That PD experience was a positive one for her as she not only got to get PD that allowed her to grow professionally as a PE teacher, but also PD that allowed her to grow professionally through becoming a KTIP mentor. Describing her overall PD experience Ann says, “I think I get good PD,” and considering she is the one largely responsibly for crafting that PD experience she seems to be enjoying the freedom.

Witt’s PD experience and the new found freedom accompanied with it has been liberating. Previously, Witt talked about attending a writing portfolio PD that he described as “the longest three hours of his life,” but that PD choice was not one he made. It was one he was directed to attend. Now, he says, “It’s [PD] left to me. The only thing that happens at the school level is our PD chair lets you know periodically where you’re at as far as how many hours you have or how many you need.” When asked if he enjoyed this newfound freedom, “Yeah, I would.”

For Bob, his school “absolutely [does] not” organize any PD for him. He says,
“There’s been a lot of changes at our school...I thought that [agency] was pretty cool because none of them [past administrators] know that I even go to these PDs [local PE PDs] because its not required. They don’t say, ‘Hey, you need to go this PD.’ I just go to those [PE PDs] so that I can get hours in my field.” In Bob’s case he was given so much freedom to shape his own PD destiny that he was even allowed to go and observe other PE teachers in action; something that he describes as very powerful to his professional growth. Bob says,

What I did for my extra hours that I needed was ask if could go out one day during the school year and observe three different PE teachers just to see what they’re doing, what I’m doing, kind of compare notes. I was out there 8 hours [only needed 2]...[it was] the best experience I’ve ever had.

Donald shared a very similar to Bob in that he has complete freedom to choose his PD hours. He says, “I submit it [PD plan] at the end of the year [for the upcoming school year], all of the PDs that I would be interested in attending and would like to attend.” When asked how it has been working for him, Donald says, “It’s been good. I do [like the freedom]...and it’s come a long ways because 5 years ago, 6 years ago...the whole 24 hours was set in stone. Here it is. Here’s what you’re going to do. It’s going to be these 3 days.” Giving Donald the reigns to his own PD fate was clearly beneficial to his professional growth, and like the other research participants, when given the opportunity to seek out meaningful PD, he, like the others, was up to the challenge.

I Matter!

While PD comes in many forms and is obtained through a variety of mediums each of the research participants’ interviews gave life to the theme of self-importance and the relationship PD plays with how a teacher views him or herself. The participants of this study not only viewed themselves and the subject they taught in high regard, but
were adamant that proper PD should be a part of their professional lives. These ten teachers all believed in what they were doing – they believed in the importance of physical education and because of that all wanted PD to improve them professionally. In the eyes of the teachers, proper PD allowed them to expand the impact they have on their schools, students, and communities. In most cases this desire for meaningful PD manifested itself in what is best described as a hunger for anything or anyone who could help them be better teachers, and thus do a better job at improving their students’ lives.

**Importance of PE: A Professional Responsibility**

Each participant believed in the importance of physical education, and because of that each participant accepted a charge of responsibility when it came to deliver an effective, enjoyable PE experience to his or her students. To these participants, PE was a fundamental experience to every student, and therefore, should be taught by someone with an effective, modern mindset. Paul sums it up best, when describing the importance of PE, saying, “if the kids are going to have a positive experience in here [in PE], [they’ll] be interested in pursuing some kind of activity later in life.” He goes on to say, “I’ll be happy” if his students would go to become healthy adults due to their time in PE. To these ten teachers PE was instrumental to developing an appreciation for physical activity that in term would lead to students enjoying more active, healthy lives as adults.

Vicky describes PE as the place to learn “Being able to enjoy play and [learning] to cooperate with one another.” To her, a PE teacher is responsible for, “building the foundation so that they [the students] can enjoy movement down the road.” Lysa echoed a very similar mindset, PE is where, “Kids [learn] physical activity…to teach kids to have fun with exercise for a lifetime.” She goes on to say through an effective PE experience,
“Everybody can have fun, everyone can be healthy, everyone can be active…no matter who you are.” A PE teacher, to Lysa, is someone who is responsible for “teaching kids how to be healthy.” Lysa says a PE teacher should, “just make them [the students] aware [how to live a healthy life]. I can’t make them experts, but I might be able to make them aware of they need to do to remain healthy and active.”

Ted described how he viewed PE’s importance in education as,

“I think we [PE] are one of the solutions to maybe making the population healthier…I think that a mindset that we’re trying to work towards, that fun and exercise are one of the same, I think [that’s important]…I think its great PE is under the education umbrella. We are educators. We’ve been given a license in public schools to be able to go out and say, ‘We’re going to show you [the student] why its important [to be active] and why [activity] is fun…a lot of us are going to get a desk job. A lot of us are going to have a desk job at some point. We graduate, get of college and have a desk job. I think that PE is important in the idea of not being sedentary. Go for a walk with a coworker.”

For Victor, PE was, “ground zero,” in building a sense of healthy living in students. Victor says that PE and the PE teacher is what provides his students the blueprint to a healthy life, saying, “You’re [the student] going to be in charge one day, and so you’re going go have to make smart decisions.” He says PE should develop both good people and a lifelong passion for activity. Victor wants his students, “From a human standpoint, I [just] want them to be good citizens. I don’t care how good they are [at sports], I want them to be able to [work together with others].” Victor wants his students to learn, “Just be active doing something enjoyable.”

Witt considered PE extremely important, saying, “If PE is done right, [if] you
have the right program, the right teacher, it sets up the basis for kids wanting to be involved all the way through their life even as they become adults…if you plant the seed now they’ll still make time as they get older…they’ll find the time to be involved [be active].” To Witt PE was an important subject because when done right it led to active, healthy adults.

When a school or district neglects PE and/or the PE teacher, Witt says, “If you take PE away all you’re doing is promoting an unhealthy lifestyle…[without me] where would they get this basis [of healthy living].” Martin shared a similar thought, and says that without PE teachers, “There’s nobody that can do it [teach kids to be healthy and active].” Victor joins in saying, “If don’t instill that knowledge in them,” no one will.

Donald’s commentary provides us a nice summary as well as a transition into the next section. Donald, when talking about the importance of PE, says, “We [educators] need to wake up. I mean there’s so much research out there that tells us the benefits of active kids…We [PE teachers] can teach them [the students]. We can teach them how to do it [be healthy and active].” But, without a trained, professional PE teacher this task would, “Be impossible.” Donald says, “you have to give [PE teachers] the tools. You have to give them the tools. You have to give them the PD.”

**A Hunger: PD’s Importance**

PD, in the eyes of the participants, was the main means, if not the only means, for delivering on their professional responsibly. Without quality, meaningful PD, the participants would be stagnant in their professional growth; thus, their students would be denied a top-notch PE experience. So, not only did teachers crave PD to stay current in best practices, but they also used PD as a tool to accomplish a desire. For instance, a
teacher who believed they lacked sufficient knowledge and ability to teach nutrition would seek specific PD to help bridge the gap. In a sense, the participants were hungry for PD; they were hungry to become better professionals so that they could expand the impact each has on their respective student populations.

Donald says that PD is “absolutely” helpful for him growing professionally. He says, “I mean there would have been times when I say ‘hey, I need some PD to show me how to keep kids active…I mean we all go through awful practices…You’ve got to give them PD. You’ve got to give them [PE teachers, himself included] the opportunity to sit and listen.” For Donald his desire for PD had him reaching into his summer break and dipping into his own pocket to get the PD experience he needed. Lysa, Paul, and Witt did the same.

Witt says when it comes to PD, he “knows there’s got to be better way than how I do [it]. I’d love to have that [PD]. That’s where I am at [in my career].” With such a desire for PD to help him grow professionally, Witt used his own money to not only pay for PD in the summer, but also to pay for annual professional membership dues for the state association for PE and health teachers (Ky Shape). Lysa does the same, saying, “I did do the Fall convention [KY Shape]. I did do that one this summer.” She describes how those PD experiences related to her professional growth by saying, “Yeah [they’re helpful]. Yeah, because we do the intro, we do the fitness, we do the content with the games. We don’t just get one particular thing but we do all kinds of activities.” Paul, like the others, shelled out his own cash for his annual dues for the Kentucky Shape organization. These dues, which are typically around hundred dollars per year, help Paul gain access to the PD he desires.
Vicky shared a similar experience, saying, “Technically, I could go to my monthly PD during my school year and satisfy my 24 hours and be done with it. I just chose to go to the PD’s over the summer because it was PE and health related.” She says, “over the summer, you’re asked to give your unpaid days to this PD…then sometimes you’re paying a fee if there is a fee for the PD…it’s [often] up to you to decide what you want [in terms of your 24 PD hours].” As to why Vicky was willing to give up her summer vacation to attend PE she said, “…I like to use it [PD] as continuing education. That [PD] reinforces what I’ve been doing, or it gives me a new [way] how to, I guess, cover a topic, and I guess update what I’m doing…[PDs] keep me up with the times as opposed to getting set in my way.” Vicky says, “right now, I think I’ve got an effective program. PD’s that I go to reinforce what I’m doing.”

Victor felt his PE program suffered from his inability to cover nutrition or health materials efficiently in class. In order to address this area of concern Victor sought out specific PD. Victor says, “I have a hard time actually teaching kids that much content [health] and keep them active at the same time…PD has helped me find the balance between physical activity and actually, like, instruction time.” To Victor PD was essential to his continual growth as an educator. He says, “PD should help stimulate your mental growth in some area. It should give you a little seed to plant and then you’d be like, ‘okay, I can work on this.’”

Ted specifically sought out PD to help him improve his ability to teach gymnastics, saying, “I’m always concerned about gymnastics. They [PD presenters] did a little lesson where they really broke down how to do it…how to do animal movements and stuff like that. They talk about how to make it safe…it was really helpful.” PD was
so important to his professional development Ted says, “I would want it more frequently.” He goes on to say, “I want to see very specific lessons. Show us weeks three to six [discussing the PE curriculum he uses]…I want to see it…I could burn the book [PE curriculum]. I could come up with stuff. I think the thing for me is that [PD] helps being very concise…it helps with my management, helps get the kids with me.”

“I actually look forward to it [PD],” says Bob, “because I know that I will be able to reflect what I do at these events.” Bob goes on to say that his PD’s are, “absolutely” impactful to his teaching ability. In Bob’s case he began to use PD as a means to help him improve his contact with families. Bobs says, “I’ve not that been super involved with the community…but with PD…sometimes PD’s talk about how to a PE family night or give you different ideas on how to incorporate more of the community into your classroom.” “Now,” Bob says, “I’ve got a pretty good community connection,” which is something he directly attributes to his PD experience.

**Relationships**

One of the main connections or themes generated from the data residing around the creation and maintenance of professional relationships. For some, maintaining relationships with other PE teachers helped bolster their PD’s effectiveness. For others, PD served as a tool to improve upon one’s ability to connect with student and families outside of the gym. Even more, participants in this study used PD as a means to unite with other school employees, not just other PE teachers, mainly by using PD to connect the message of PE to that of the regular classroom teacher. As the nature of PD is largely communal the participants in this study developed a sense of enjoyment from the connections and camaraderie their PD experiences offered them. To these participants PD
was a way to connect with other PE teachers, other teachers, as well as with the families and students at their respective schools.

**Teacher ⇔ Teacher**

Being able to collaborate with other PE teachers during PD opportunities was an immense benefit for the participants of this study. PD serves as an outlet to not only deliver content to teachers but also to help PE teachers make connections with like-minded individuals who share in the same struggle and glory of teaching physical education. Learning from one’s peers allows for both increased understanding, as well as at times increased motivation; after all who best to discuss with the every day comings and goings of an elementary PE teacher than a fellow elementary PE teacher. Often the relationships formed during PD offerings lasted long after those PD hours were completed, as the teachers in this study frequently relied on their professional members-at-arms to assist whenever a question or problem arose.

For someone like Martin, “seeing everybody is nice,” and the relationships he has formed with other elementary PE teachers has been very beneficial. He says when he is able to talk with other teachers, “we talk about how we can [be better], talk about what’s going on with our lesson plan book. Talking about how or what you do at your school and maybe what I do.” He says these conversations and relationships, “helped me [be a better teacher].” Martin enjoys collaboration with his colleagues so much that when he got around to describing what future PD opportunities he would like he mentioned, “more discussion [and] collaboration.”

Lysa says, “I like seeing my colleagues and I like getting more idea on how to make thing better for my kids and easier. Any time you can make things easier for
yourself throughout the day, it is going to help you.”

“The other great thing that comes out of [PD],” says Witt, “is being able to bounce ideas off of other PE teachers.” Witt continued, “for example, [the presenter] was doing an activity last year that involved hula hoops and listening to other people, I was able to jot down not just the stuff presenter said but idea from all others there.” When it comes to how these informal conversations go with his PE colleagues, Witt says, “it [is] just pretty impactful as far as [my development goes].” He concludes, saying, “The collaboration aspect of it [these PDs]…it helpful.”

Bob takes collaboration with other PE teachers so seriously that he set up a manner with his school administrator to be able to obtain PD hours through direct observation of a fellow PE teacher. Bob says, “What I did for my other two hours that I need was to go and observe three other PE teachers. I was out there probably eight total hours and I only got two for credit. It was [one of] the best experiences I’ve ever had.” When it comes to traditional PD, Bob says, “I love going because I get to [spend time with other PE teachers]. We all share ideas…just being on top of this is keeping everybody accountable, which I like.” Bob thinks his PD experience is “absolutely helpful” to his continued growth as an educator; he even goes on to suggest, “I think it would be cool if we all [fellow PE teachers] met somewhere and observed together, not only to go to a PD, but to go somewhere an watch an actual teacher teach.” He says, “absolutely,” collaborating with other PE teachers is beneficial. “Afterwards,” Bob says, “people stay and we talk to each other…overall everybody is gaining a great experience out of it. These is definitely a lot of collaboration at these PDs which is a plus.”

Donald says collaboration is a favorite part of his PD experience because at
school, “We’re on an island.” “It’s nice,” says Donald, “To be able to see how other people approach things because you generate some ideas about it.” Donald continues, “It’s not just the talking but the seeing, and being able to see what other people are doing because we can take the same lesson plan out of the book and you and I will both teach it [differently]…that’s why I like those interactive up and moving kind of PDs.”

Ann says the “Best part of [PD] is when we break into small groups…all the PE teachers all get together.” She continues saying, “It absolutely is awesome” when she gets to collaborate with other elementary PE teachers. Vicky’s experience mirrors Ann, saying, “Sometimes it was something I already knew, but that [talking with other PE teachers] reinforced what I knew. Then it was just good networking with other PE teachers.” Victor’s experience was similar, saying, “I love doing it [PD] because you’re spending time with your friends.” The collaboration is helpful to Victor, like Ann and Vicky, “Because I get to ask [others] and all those guys how they do it, everybody does have a different take on the games that they get out of the lesson plan book.”

Teacher ⇔ School

PD is not only for teachers looking to improve professionally but also for teachers who are interested in making connections among fellow educators. The lack of fellow PE teachers within a school building isolates PE teachers from their peers both in professional practice (i.e. teaching particular subjects) and professional mission (i.e. what is taught and why). For the PE teachers in this study a common theme developed that they would use PD as a means of advocacy for their profession among their fellow teachers in order to help bridge the divide. For instance, the participants would help organize school wide PDs centered on a physical education message such as classroom
physical activity. In turn, the participants of this study even sought out meaningful PD that would grant them a better ability to efficiently organize and implement PE focused PD at their respective school level.

At Martin’s school, all of the specials area teachers were required to present an hour PD to the entire school faculty. Martin like most of the teachers in this study, chose to talk to his classroom teacher brethren about physical activity in the classroom. He says, “I mean, I think a lot of them [classroom teachers] are kind of intimidated by doing things like that [classroom PA]. I think [me giving these PDs] is extremely helpful.” Thankfully for Martin, his overall PD experience incorporated elements that helped prepare for him to facilitate PD to his school faculty.

Lysa had a very similar experience as Martin. Like him, she gave a classroom activity-based PD to her school faculty. She says, “At the beginning of the year I did a movement break [training] with the staff because that was more relative to them.” Lysa says her own PD experience helped prepare to give this training saying, “Right, [recently] we did do something similar about movement breaks [in a recent PD]. That was really relative for the staff [and me].”

Witt brought in an outside presenter to walk his school staff through classroom activity and nutrition. He says, “she did a training for the whole staff last year right at the beginning of school. It’s more health-related but still it was helping PE. It’s about movement and snacks and stuff to do in a room, and how to incorporate health in adolescence and that kind of stuff. It’s good.” For Witt, bringing in an outside presenter killed two birds with one stone, as he was able to get PD hours during the same time as helping promote his PE program’s healthy living agenda with his classroom bound
colleagues. Witt says, “I make sure that every classroom has the equipment we need. [Giving] these ladies a two hour training on here’s all the activities that you can do within a classroom…I think my group ate it up because they’re always looking for stuff to do.” For Witt, “some,” of his PD helps prepare him to promote healthy living beyond the boundaries of his gym.

At the school Bob works there’s an extra room where, “teachers take their kids once a week,” for physical activity. Bobs says, “Some of them are even doing it two or three times a week. We just went through the training and we teach it [to them, the faculty]…It’s pretty awesome. The training? I’m getting professional development hours for [giving] it.”

Ted relishes his role in promoting a healthy lifestyle with his fellow school faculty members. “I got our PTA,” says Ted, “to buy a classroom set of physical activity cards for every teacher in the building.” To better use the cards Ted says:

I did my own PD with the staff. I talked about how easy it was to read the directions. I actually went through all the sets. I did the K through two teachers together. I figured out what equipment [they needed]…I talked about how to make a fitness leader in the class. How they could designate today, this week, [etc.]…I think it is very popular. I’ve heard a lot about it.

When it comes to his own PD experience Ted says, “I think if we were to offer a PD like that [classroom based], I think that would be a good idea…It’s a great idea…[because] You’re really taking PE outside the gym and making those connections with the teachers.”

For Donald, who has a school population over five hundred students, he says, “It’s impossible with one PE teacher and [500 plus] kids to get them in the gym more.” So he turns to classroom physical activity promotion in order to spread his PE program’s
message outside the gym. Donald says, “I think we have to make physical activity [a priority]. We have to insist that every teacher does [classroom PA] and that they do it consistently.” To prepare classroom teachers for such a role Donald suggests, “If it comes to a three hour PD. I would say there’s a pretty good chance you could cover some pretty good stuff in the three hour PD for your staff.” In order to better guide his school in expanded physical activity offerings, Donald turns to his own PD for guidance saying, “I have been looking for ways to increase physical activity in the classroom…PD has helped.”

Ann has built relationships amongst her fellow school faculty members in order to help maintain a healthy, active school climate, even in the dead of winter. Ann says, “When it gets cold and it gets rainy, something that I like [to do] is set up a schedule for when I’m not in here [the gym]…where they [teachers] can come in. I try to get them in at least two or three times a week…I think it is very important for them to do that.” To help her colleagues when the gym wasn’t available Ann used her PD opportunities to “Learn activities that you [teachers] could do in the classroom. [Then] I have them each a binder of activities that they could do.”

Paul’s school has recently spent the last year connecting school wide staff through a series of school mandated PDs. Paul enjoyed the ability to connect with his classroom-based colleagues, saying, “to me, [PD] is kind of attractive, simply…because we, the teacher and I, have collaborated in these meetings and PDs.” It helped Paul “integrate” classroom topics with his own PE curriculum. For Paul, curriculum integration was not the only benefit of improved relationships with his colleagues. Paul commented that he used these improved relationships to his advantage in spreading his PE message of being
active. Paul says, “Another thing I’ve done is to help teachers be more physically active in their day. Simply, because again, I only see them [the students] once a week.”

**Teacher ⇔ Community**

Connecting to the members of the school community, specifically the parents or guardians or their students, was a common theme for the study’s participants. The participants often sought out PD to help them overcome any difficulties they had in establishing communications with those outside of the school. The PDs would provide support for the participants to navigate the modern age of online social connectedness as well as more traditional “family night” type events hosted at the school. For the teachers in this study it was incredibly important to expand the horizons of their PE program from not just their individual students but their families and the community at large.

Lysa says, she:

creates newsletters to take home with them [her students], so I create newsletters to promote health going home, and we work with our PTA. We have health conventions or healthy nights throughout the year when we bring in people from the community that come in and promote their different agendas as well with our PTA and different people from the community. They’ll come in and we will have a health fair….Yeah, I’m [committed to] involving the families.

When asked if her PD helped prepare for this kind of role with her students’ families Lysa said, “[Yeah], I think I get that…we are teaching that we carry it out to public health.”

Witt described one of his PE program’s goals to, “Incorporate the health and fitness aspect of it and to get them activities that they can go home and use, that they can go home and play with their families.” Witt says he has, “an open door. I try my best to get parents up here as often as I can. We have things after school where they can come in…I have come up here for health and wellness nights. We have those three or four
times a year.” When it comes to how his PD experience reacts with his desire to reach the school community, Witt says, “Yeah, I would say [the PDs help],” but that he still wants more, “health and movement promotion PD; again, how to sell it to the parents to get involved with what we’re doing.” Not only is PD already a tool for Witt to promote healthy living amongst the school community, but he also realizes that PD is the best, most appropriate place for him to continue to grow his own abilities in connecting with families.

Bobs says:

I’ve not been super involved with the community but I’ve talked to parents, they come in during conferences. We have a back to school blast and I talk to them. I send home my PE curriculum. I’ll send home like fitness homework that you [the student] and your parents are sitting there watching tv at home every commercial you do these exercises...Almost every lesson with my elementary kid I have them line up and I ask questions. I’ll say “hey, name one exercise we today and they’ll say ‘jumping jacks’, and I’m like, ‘can you do jumping jacks at home? Can you jump rope at home? Could you ask your parents to jump rope with you or do jumping jacks with you?’...when it comes to my PD, sometimes they’ll talk about how to do a PE family night or they give you different idea on how to incorporate more of the community in your classroom. [It is great] but I wish we would do more [of it].

Both Ann and Donald maintain a healthy appreciation for community support; Ann through direct parent communication, and Donald with providing the community with a much needed service. Ann focuses on communicating with her students’ parents and families in order to help her students’ in achieving their fitness goals. Ann says, “his mom and I text to keep in touch about [student’s] goal...[through this] he’s taken four minutes off of his mile.” For Ann, someone who promotes goal setting as a main pillar of her PE program, the ability to establish and maintain healthy parent communications has helped. “My parents are so great,” says Ann, and through this relationship Ann has been able to use community resources to help pay for her “registration fee” for a local PD
opportunity. For Donald, opening up a Saturday basketball league was the best way for him to reach his students’ families. “Every winter,” says Donald, “we do a basketball league…and for the ones who might struggle to pay there are scholarships.” Through his own efforts, and own time, Donald has pushed his PE program to where it impacts the school’s community at large.

Paul says, “In recent years, I’ve really tried to engage parents. I know one of the ways I’ve done that is through grant writing and working with various media organizations.” Paul says PD plays a vital role in how he improves his ability to connect with the local community saying, “those [PD opportunities] are good, and they’ve helped with the process [of improving community connections]. They’re [PE centered PD] really helpful if you choose to go.”

**Summary**

This chapter explored the lived PD experiences of ten elementary physical educators. Overall, the data reveals four emergent themes through a shared connection represented by common phrases and statements consistent throughout the participants’ interviews. The four themes are (a) the search for meaning in PD, (b), accessibility to PD, (c) the personal responsibility of a PE teacher, and (d) the relationships PD evokes. The themes were presented in the participants’ own words and thoughts. Overall, a common connection was demonstrated that PD mattered most when it helped spur professional growth. Furthermore, for the ten participants in this study growing professionally was a worthy endeavor because the role of physical education was an important one in public education.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the phenomenon of PD through the lived experiences of elementary physical education teachers. Phenomenology provides individuals an opportunity to share their life experiences in order to illuminate a phenomenon (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In this study, ten elementary physical education teachers offered up lengthy informal interviews concerning their lived experience of PD. In Chapter Four, we explored the four emergent themes found in the lived experience of PD through the thoughts and words of the study’s ten participants. In Chapter Five, the participants’ lived experiences of PD will be examined through the lens of this study’s research questions. Moreover, implications from this study will be discussed as well as this study’s limitations. In conclusion, I, the researcher, will pass along research recommendations and offer up this study’s concluding thoughts.

Research Questions

This current phenomenological study concerning the lived PD experience of ten elementary physical educators was guided by one main research question and three minor or subsequent research questions. Serving as the architect for the study was the main research question: How do physical educators perceive PD? Said another way, what is the lived experience of PD from the perspective of an elementary physical education teacher? Subsequent research questions include: how do physical educators perceive PD in relation to their physical education program’s role in public health? Also, what perceptions, including potential barriers and facilitators, do physical educators have of PD; and, in what ways do physical educators use PD to improve upon both teaching practices and student learning?
The data, collected through informal interviews, provides clarity on each of the research questions presented in this study. While Chapter Four focused solely on the connective themes generated from all ten participants, this section will focus solely on the data as it pertains to the research questions at hand. In this section, the research participants’ thoughts and words will be interwoven with literature comprised of supporting theoretical and research driven practices.

Main Research Question

The main research question of the study was: How do physical educators perceive PD? Said another way, what is the lived experience of PD? This question was essential to the study as through examining the lived experiences of physical educators we, researchers and public alike, gain knowledge of how PD plays in our education system. By applying a phenomenological approach, and exploring PD through intimate interviews with practicing educators, the data is able to concisely answer this research question. PD, when done in a way meaningful to the educator, was highly beneficial to the educators’ professional growth resulting in both increased job performance as well as increased job satisfaction.

While research participants came from unique and separate circumstances each shared a common connection with the role PD played in their careers. The participants lived PD experience was largely separated into two categories: meaningful and un-meaningful. Meaningful PD was not always content specific, as Ted’s interest into PDs tied to his specific student demographic demonstrated, but meaningful PD was always deemed something that helped spur professional growth, thus meaningful PD was highly valued. For the participants in this study, PD was an opportunity for them to catch up to
the current best teaching practices in the field (Corbin & McKenzie, 2008). Victor explains it best saying that PD, “should help stimulate your mental growth in that area [pedagogically speaking]. It should give you a little seed to plant and then you’d be like, ‘okay, I can work on this, I can do it better this way’.” Additionally, without meaningful PD occurring on a regular basis the participants felt they would be less effective at handling the challenges presented in their jobs as PD was deemed their best opportunity for professional growth (Armour & Yelling, 2007).

Even in frustrating situations where a teacher lacked access or funding, teachers resolved to find ways for PD to touch their careers. For Vicky, someone who said “99%” of her PD experience was filled with non-meaningful PD, and this resulted in serious “frustration” with her job, she still viewed PD as critical to her professional responsibilities. This is highlighted by the fact Vicky spent her own vacation time and her own money to attend a non-required PD opportunity. In fact, of all the participants, not one described a completely hopeless situation, because even in the most hardened of scenarios the participants took advantage of every opportunity presented. Often those opportunities manifested themselves into opportunities online or through the local university. In some occasions, a simple back and forth through email with another colleague was considered to be meaningful, and impactful PD. No stone was left unturned when it came to ways to achieve professional growth. Whatever lengths these teachers had to go, and no matter the level of difficulty, PD was sought after through a variety of mediums in order to quench a thirst for growth (Guskey, 2002).

Ultimately, the data generated detailing the lived experiences of these ten teachers shows how integral PD was to the entirety of their education responsibilities.
There was no aspect of one’s teaching career that eluded the touch of PD. If you sought to improve student achievement, or teacher content, or classroom management, PD was the embedded in the experience (Wayne et al., 2008). As Bob said, “I actually look forward to it [PD] because I know that I will be able to grow what I do.” The participants in this study identified PD as the best means for them to gain awareness and understanding of current research practices within the field of physical education thus enabling sufficient and desired professional growth (Corbin & McKenzie, 2008). Vicky, who expressed a less than enthusiastic PD experience, still holds PD in a positive light. She sums it up best for all when she says PD is like, “continuing education, in that it reinforces what I’ve been doing or gives me a new idea of how to do [something]…[overall] PD is very helpful.”

**Subsequent Research Question Two**

A subsequent research question pertaining to this study was: how do physical educators perceive PD in relation to their physical education program’s role in public health? With physical education having such a long and intertwined relationship with public health this question was important to explore (Corbin & McKenzie, 2008). The profession of physical education is improved by having a better understanding of the role an elementary physical education teacher plays in the public health domain (Sallis et al., 2012). The data provided in this study offers substantial substance to the relationship physical educators believe they play in improving public health.

Long have the public health actors been working towards incorporating public school physical education as a tool to impacting public health (Corbin & McKenzie, 2008). For the teachers in this study, all considered physical education as serving an
important role in public health. As Victor said PE was, “ground zero” in instilling a sense of healthy living and a desire to be active into the hearts of every student. Public school teachers are responsible for teaching a myriad of subjects and physical education should not be on any less of a footing than traditional subjects such as a math and reading. Ted says, “I think we [PE] are one of the solutions to making the population healthier…I think PE has a role in [public health], we’re educators, we’re able to go and say, ‘We’re going to show you why its [physical activity] is important and why it’s fun.”

To the participants in this study physical education was fundamental to the establishment of a physical and healthy foundation for all children. PE should not just be concerned with the product or skill outcomes of physical movement and sport, but also seek to impart knowledge of healthy living through proper nutrition as well as a desire to be active regardless of one’s skill level. The participants espoused their goal of physical education to be an emphasis in physical activity something long held to be important in PE’s role with public health (Sallis & McKenzie, 1991). Donald says he wants his, “Students up and active…[while] being exposed to as many different things [as possible]. Connecting students to the enjoyment of physical activity is considered critical for the hopeful development of healthy, active adults (Sallis et al., 2012). In addition to physical activity the participants showed a willingness to offer a diverse curriculum in hopes of sparking a desire to be active long into adulthood (Sallis et al., 2012). When Ted says, “the ultimate goal is when a kid leaves here is to have had fun in PE…and want to try active things when they’re older,” he really encapsulates the overarching PE philosophy of each participant in the student.

Believing PE was critical to developing healthy children, the teachers in this study
expressed a desire to expand the opportunities for physical activity within their respective schools. Donald created a weekend sports league for his students. Witt worked with the PTA to completely reshape the recess area, while Paul helps teachers be better prepared to keep their “students more physically active throughout the day.” In fact, every teacher interviewed at one point talked about the importance of physical activity not just during PE but throughout the entire school day including time spent in the classroom. PE teachers went out of their way to provide materials and training to give classroom teachers a better chance at succeeding in promoting more physical activity.

If an elementary physical educator, someone who is often the only teacher of that subject within an entire elementary school, fails to provide a positive PE experience to his or her students, those students in turn may develop apathy towards healthy living and physical activity (McKenzie & Lounsbery, 2014). Such responsibility to produce a positive and enjoyable physical education experience was not lost on the study’s research participants. Each of them expressed a desire to produce lifelong participants in physical activity as well as a desire to lay a solid foundation of health topics ranging from how to brush one’s teeth, how to safely cross a street, or how best to eat within nutritional guidelines. It was clear in each of these interviews that PE mattered not because it was their job, or because it was their means to keep paying the bills, but rather, PE mattered because it plays an important role in public health. These teachers firmly believe in the idea that healthy kids have a better chance to grow up to be healthy adults, and each of the ten participants strived forward as best they could in establishing a PE program capable of meeting these goals of healthy living and physical activity.
**Subsequent Research Question Three**

A subsequent research question in this study was: What perceptions, including potential barriers and facilitators, do physical educators have of PD? Greater knowledge of how educators feel, on a personal level, about PD allows for improved PD opportunities going forward (Armour & Yelling, 2007). Better PD opportunities would come from presenters of PD better understanding the personal mindset of an educator’s view of PD. This study’s data-rich interviews provide a window into the mind of a practicing physical educator, namely, into how PD is linked to the very foundation of a person’s teaching experience.

Each participant offered up a different set of circumstances when it came to potential barriers or facilitators in obtaining PD. It is important to note the major highlights in that the participants in this study enjoyed, when possible, supportive administrations, whether that is in the form of PD agency or financial aid, but most suffered when it came to PD accessibility either from proximity to local offerings or from a lack of finances. In reality, PD access is largely determined at the school level, where a teacher is either provided sufficient tools to obtain PD, or forced to become creative in his or her PD pursuits.

Locating and gaining access to local PD proved challenging for each of the participants. This is even taking into consideration the regular PD each of these participants mentioned attending that was run either directly or through partnership of the local university. Even with the local universities’ offerings each of these participants was forced into a complicated PD pathway largely because their respective school-based offerings were insufficient to their professional needs. In other words, schools did not
spend a lot of resources in the planning of PD opportunities for physical educators, instead choosing to allocate school resources on traditional subjects and classroom teachers. Without the local university filling the PD gaps for these participants, many would have struggled mightily to obtain the PD they wanted. Most could not afford the lofty annual dues for membership into the state’s professional physical education teacher’s association, and even if they could, locating and securing a substitute teacher proved to be a challenging task. Participants with supportive administrations and ample funding still decried the lack of school or district level PD planning. Even in the best of scenarios in terms of administrative support and available financing gaining access to quality PD for an elementary physical education teacher can be challenging.

In order to compensate for any deficiencies within their PD experience, many turned to the Internet and the role of social media. Even without the official district or school sanctioning of Internet webinars and online communications, the teachers expressed a desire to learn wherever given the chance. Despite the wide ranging and often individually crafted circumstances faced by each of the research participants, PD was consistently on their minds – how to get it? How to pay for it? And how can it help me?

**Subsequent Research Question Four**

The last subsequent research question was: In what ways do physical educators use PD to improve upon both teaching practices and student learning? As one research participant, Donald, said best, “it [PD] serves no purpose [unless] it is actually developing you professionally…helping you reach your students.” PD is considering a main pathway for physical educators to gain the necessary knowledge and awareness too
not only be effective teachers but to also put forth effective physical education programs (Corbin & McKenzie, 2008).

For the teachers in this study PD was the main means to improve professionally including improving teaching practices and student learning. On numerous occasions a participant would discuss how PD was used to shore up not only any perceived professional gaps, such as parental communications or nutrition, but also PD offered a teacher an opportunity to relearn something. Said another way, even when PD was covering a topic the teacher knew well opportunities still arose for the teacher to pick up a new wrinkle or gain new knowledge. Martin says even when it is a topic he’s covered before, “there’s always something new I pick up and it’s great, and I put it right in. It’s [PD] is pretty valuable.” According to Yoon et al. (2007) this is exactly how PD is supposed to function when done properly; in that, PD leads the teacher on a path to student improvement.

PD is considered an opportunity for growth and when presented in a meaningful way the teachers in this study leaped at the chance to participate. The participants in this study encourage the use of PD, especially PD either specifically tailored to PE teachers or PD individually chosen by the respective teacher, as an effective tool in improving a PE program. It is clear, at least based upon the data generated in this study, that PD is explicitly used a both as tool for teacher outcomes and student improvement and without a consistent positive PD experience, teachers and students both will suffer (McCutchen et al. 2002).

**Study Implications**

The findings of the research indicate a strong desire for elementary PE teachers to
obtain meaningful and effective PD on an annual basis due to several factors. One factor is a professional willingness to improve one’s ability to teach and thus one’s ability to connect with students. Another would be a strong desire to continue to educate oneself about the ever-changing world of student dynamics as well as ever shifting PE-centric best teaching practices. Ultimately, PE teachers carry a burden in that they personally feel responsible for the introduction and use of healthy living practices for their students, and PD is identified as the best medium to achieve this professional desire.

PE teachers consider themselves on the front line of improving not only student health but also public health. In the eyes of this study’s research, participants developing into healthy adults starts by developing healthy children, and that development is found in elementary physical education. During a student’s elementary career, PE serves as the foundational block to healthy living by being exposed to a great deal of athletic activities all the while being properly instructed on how best to take care of one’s own body through proper hygiene and nutrition. As students age and progress upward out of elementary school and into adulthood, the lessons and knowledge they gained in elementary PE go with them. And from that understanding, the teachers in this study imparted a strong desire to build life-long participants in the journey of healthy living. The data generated in this study shows that this responsibility was not misunderstood nor under appreciated. The findings of this study provide a clear understanding to the role an elementary physical education plays, or at least believes to play, in the production of healthy-living adults across all walks of society.

Unlike classroom teachers, physical educators are often the only certified members of their school’s staff dedicated to the instruction of their subject. This results in
a very limited PD experience especially when one considers that PD is largely crafted on a school-to-school basis. Even with tremendous support from a school administration or ample financing, PE teachers still struggle with connecting with other PE teachers, due to simple elementary school staff structures. PD then is even more important for physical educators in this sense because they often feel isolated from other members of their field. Being able to congregate with other PE teachers, in addition to gathering new knowledge about their field, has kept PD a positive in the physical education profession. It would be a mistake to characterize all teachers, even those who have taught for many years, as apathetic to professional gain. If anything, the results of this study display a hunger for professional growth that PD is best suited to quell.

In regards to what specific type of PD is better than others, ranging from communal gatherings of like-minded physical educators, to more traditional sit-and-get lecture type PD opportunities, to online means of continued education, the data was unclear as to what was preferred or more effective. What a particular teacher wants out of his or her PD experience is largely self-driven, so it is hard to conceptualize a panacea for every PE teacher regarding the best method of executing yearly PD. Even then, the information understood from the data could provide assistance to current and future PD policy makers. First and foremost, allowing participants greater access to meaningful PD and the reduction of PD that participants viewed as meaningless would serve to improve overall PD experiences. In practical terms, allowing elementary PE teachers the opportunity to skip math or reading centric PD’s in favor of attending something that will benefit them professionally. Moreover, giving schools greater access to funding sources, including funding for substitute teachers, will provide easier access to meaningful PD.
Also, evaluating the restrictions placed upon trainings earned during a regular school day so that teachers could attend conferences and count those experiences towards their PD requirements. Lastly, school districts or individual schools should place greater importance on the PD experience of their entire faculty, so that elementary PE teachers have easier access to school or district based PD’s. The results of this study show passionate teachers who desire professional growth opportunities and it would be in the best interests of both physical education and public K-12 education to embrace this educator appreciation and use of PD. Ultimately, further research could be conducted to better understand this area of study.

**Limitations**

The phenomenological qualitative research study to explore the lived experiences of PD for elementary physical educators was not without limitations. The limitations did not skew the data nor negatively impact the study, but they must be addressed and fully disclosed. One tenant of the phenomenological approach to research is that these findings do not offer a descriptive solution to a particular ailment. Rather the findings of this study offer simply a detailed look into what the PD experience is like for these ten participants and these ten participants only. While the findings of the research study provide insight and information to the role PD plays in the professional experience of an elementary PE teacher, there is still an abundance of data to be uncovered.

During this phenomenological research study, there were five limitations encountered. The first limitation was the influence of researcher bias. The primary researcher conducting the study is a current elementary physical education teacher, although not in the district where the participants were chosen. While the methodology
design discussed in chapter 3, specifically the use of bracketing, detailed way in which bias was reduced, it is impossible to remove the entirety of researcher bias from a phenomenological study.

The second limitation is the research findings are specifically relevant to a unique demographic of the teaching profession located in a specific part of the Southeast United States. In the case of this research study, the research findings are only relevant to the ten elementary physical education teachers who participated in this study. While the findings are limited in scope, the information gathered is still useful in the quest to better understand PD. Other physical educators, namely at the secondary level, or other educators in general were not included in this study; therefore, the findings do not relate to those demographics.

The third limitation is that the research study relied on one depth interview as its only source of data. The interviews, while broad in nature, still limited the type of data collected from the participants to oral descriptions and personal statements taken during one occasion. While the interviews were structured in a way to allow for the participants to fully explore the study’s topic and their own personal experience with PD, utilizing different forms of data, or even a greater number of interviews could provide further insight into the topic.

The fourth limitation is that even with the great care of the researcher to keep all data anonymous, the participants in this study could have still felt apprehensive about being painfully honest about their personal PD experience. This is especially possible in cases where a particular teacher feels critical of their administration, school, or district but is hesitant to voice such concerns due a fear of reprisal.
The fifth limitation was that the research participants of this study were the only people out of the 36 recruited to agree to participate. It is possible each of these participants agreed to participate because of their passion for PD and the data is poorly represent the recruitment population.

Each of these limitations is likely to impact the findings and any application of these findings should be done with great care.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Additional research is recommended to expand the scope of this study. Elementary physical educators need greater support when it comes to navigating the PD landscape. Due to this study’s limited scope and methodology, I would recommend the future research regarding this topic expand the breath and scope of the interview process, at least including a follow up interview to flesh out previously mentioned topics and ideas. Introducing a participant questionnaire into the data collection process could help gain a better understanding of one’s PD experience, especially for those participants that are not particularly verbose or engaged in interviews (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). By conducting a research study utilizing these data collection methods, a more holistic view of the phenomenon may be obtained.

**Conclusion**

The power of PD cannot be overlooked when it comes to professional growth for physical educators. The elementary physical education teachers within this study identified PD as the best means to improve professionally by helping gain new knowledge in areas of perceived weakness, or as a tool to improve student outcomes. In order to meet their professional needs, the teachers in this study often went above and
beyond by using their own money or free time to obtain the PD they desired. If PD held no value, teachers would most assuredly lack the desire to spend one’s own time and money to experience it. The use of PD by the participants in this study was purposeful for professional growth but yet each participant still yearned for a more bountiful PD landscape. It is known that PD can serve as a critical tool to continued education for all educators, but especially so for those educators whose subjects, like physical education, fall outside the scope of standardized testing. Annual, mandated, PD should not be negatively associated with a career in education as it is largely deemed as the best method to improving physical education as a whole. In the end enacting more meaningful PD is one step in the right direction to creating a more positive and useful PD experience for PE teachers, one that will contribute to teachers’ professional growth and student achievement. In conclusion, I leave you with this quote from Paul, which sums up the attitude the teachers in this study felt towards PD. Paul says, “I want people to tell me how to do my job better. I’ve done this for [over a decade] and I don’t have all the answers. I want to learn.”
Appendix A: 704 KAR 3:035 Kentucky Annual Professional Development Plan

704 KAR 3:035. Annual professional development plan.

RELATES TO: KRS 156.095, 156.070
STATUTORY AUTHORITY: KRS 156.070, 156.095, 158.070(5)
NECESSITY, FUNCTION, AND CONFORMITY: KRS 156.095 requires the Kentucky Board of Education to establish, direct, and maintain a statewide program of professional development to improve instruction in the public schools. KRS 158.070(5) requires the state board to promulgate administrative regulations establishing guidelines and procedures to be followed for the approval of the days utilized for four (4) days of the minimum school term required to be utilized by each local school district for professional development activities for the professional staff. This administrative regulation establishes the requirements for the annual professional development plan.

Section 1. Definitions. (1) “Comprehensive School Improvement Plan” is defined in 703 KAR 5:225, Section 1(3).
(2) “Needs assessment” means the gathering, sorting, and analysis of student, educator, and system data that lead to conclusions regarding the need for content and learning designs for professional development in identified areas related to educator performance and student achievement.
(3) “Professional development” means professional learning that is an individual and collective responsibility, that fosters shared accountability among the entire education workforce for student achievement, and:
(a) Aligns with Kentucky’s Core Academic Standards in 704 KAR 3:303, educator effectiveness standards, individual professional growth goals, and school, school district, and state goals for student achievement;
(b) Focuses on content and pedagogy, as specified in certification requirements, and other related job-specific performance standards and expectations;
(c) Occurs among educators who share responsibility for student growth;
(d) Is facilitated by school and district leaders, including curriculum specialists, principals, instructional coaches, competent and qualified third-party facilitators, mentors, teachers or teacher leaders;
(e) Focuses on individual improvement, school improvement, and program implementation; and
(f) Is on-going.
(4) “Professional development program” means a sustained, coherent, relevant, and useful professional learning process that is measurable by indicators and provides professional learning and ongoing support to transfer that learning to practice.

Section 2. Each local school and district shall develop a process to design a professional development plan that meets the goals established in KRS 158.6451 and in the local needs assessment. A school professional development plan shall be incorporated into the school improvement plan and shall be made public prior to the implementation of the plan. The local district professional development plan shall be incorporated into the district improvement plan and posted to the local district Web site prior to the implementation of the plan.

Section 3. Each school and local district professional development plan shall contain the following six (6) elements:
(1) A clear statement of the school or district mission;
(2) Evidence of representation of all persons affected by the professional development plan;
information about the results, and reflecting on their efforts. Professional development programs shall be made available to teachers based on their needs which shall include but not be limited to the following areas:

(a) Strategies to reduce the achievement gaps among various groups of students and to provide continuous progress;
(b) Curriculum content and methods of instruction for each content area, including differentiated instruction;
(c) School-based decision making;
(d) Assessment literacy;
(e) Integration of performance-based student assessment into daily classroom instruction;
(f) Nongraded primary programs;
(g) Research-based instructional practices;
(h) Instructional uses of technology;
(i) Curriculum design to serve the needs of students with diverse learning styles and skills and of students of diverse cultures;
(j) Instruction in reading, including phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary;
(k) Educational leadership; and
(l) Strategies to incorporate character education throughout the curriculum.

(4) The department shall assist school personnel in assessing the impact of professional development on their instructional practices and student learning.

(5) The department shall assist districts and school councils with the development of long-term school and district improvement plans that include multiple strategies for professional development based on the assessment of needs at the school level.

(a) Professional development strategies may include, but are not limited to, participation in subject matter academies, teacher networks, training institutes, workshops, seminars, and study groups; collegial planning; action research; mentoring programs; appropriate university courses; and other forms of professional development.

(b) In planning the use of the four (4) days for professional development under KRS 158.070, school councils and districts shall give priority to programs that increase teachers' understanding of curriculum content and methods of instruction appropriate for each content area based on individual school plans. The district may use up to one (1) day to provide district-wide training and training that is mandated by state or federal law. Only those employees identified in the mandate or affected by the mandate shall be required to attend the training.

(c) State funds allocated for professional development shall be used to support professional development initiatives that are consistent with local school improvement and professional development plans and teachers' individual growth plans. The funds may be used throughout the year for all staff,
(9) Parent-teacher conferencing skill development shall be permissible as a professional development experience.

Section 5. The Qualifications and Duties of the District Professional Development Coordinator. (1) Qualifications for the position of district professional development coordinator shall include:

(a) A staff member meeting the certification requirement for a professional development coordinator as established by the Education Professional Standards Board in 16 KAR 4:010;

(b) A demonstrated ability to work with schools to plan, design, implement, and evaluate professional development that aligns with the requirements of this administrative regulation; and

(c) A demonstrated ability to work with schools to connect professional development with effective instructional practices and student achievement data.

(2) Duties of the district professional development coordinator shall include:

(a) Facilitating analysis of student, educator, and system data to conduct the district professional development needs assessment;

(b) Coordinating the intradistrict alignment of professional learning to achieve identified goals and objectives for professional development;

(c) Building capacity of school leaders, school council members, and other school and district leaders to plan, access resources, implement, and evaluate professional learning;

(d) Disseminating professional development information to school councils, staff members, and professional development committees;

(e) Providing technical assistance to school councils on scheduling to allow for job-embedded professional learning opportunities;

(f) Coordinating the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the district professional development plan that is aligned, supportive of, and developed in conjunction with school improvement plans;

(g) Coordinating the establishment of local policies, procedures, timetables, necessary forms and letters, assignment of workshop sites, and all other practical elements of professional development, including fiscal management;

(h) Maintaining, verifying, and, if appropriate, submitting district and school professional development records, documentation, and other pertinent information to the Department of Education;

(i) Explaining the district's professional development plan's objectives, results, and needs to school professionals, district staff, board members, civic and parent groups, teacher training institutions, and others, as requested;

(j) Maintaining contact with the Department of Education and other agencies involved in providing professional development; and

(k) Identifying, selecting, coordinating and evaluating the services of third-party professional development providers.

Section 6. A maximum of fifteen (15) percent of the district's professional development grant may be used for administrative purposes.

Section 7. When implementing professional development plans under KRS 158.070, a local school or district shall adhere to its school or district improvement plan. (7 Ky.R. 697; Am. 902; eff. 4-23-81; 11 Ky.R. 251; eff. 9-11-84; 1472; eff. 5-14-85; 12 Ky.R. 1165; eff. 2-4-86; 1635; eff. 5-6-86; 17 Ky.R. 455; 1485; eff. 12-7-90; 3254; 18 Ky.R. 45; eff. 7-5-91; 3523; 19 Ky.R. 394; eff. 8-1-92; 394; 1885; eff. 4-19-93; 20 Ky.R. 843; eff. 12-6-93; 3311; eff. 8-4-94; 21 Ky.R.
2531; eff. 6-1-95; 25 Ky.R. 1141; eff. 1-19-99; 31 Ky.R. 1585; 1814; eff. 5-26-05; 40 Ky.R. 439; 1102; 1261; eff. 1-3-2014.)
Appendix B: Kentucky State Professional Development Information

156.095 Professional development programs -- Professional development coordinator -- Long-term improvement plans -- Suicide prevention awareness information -- Evidence-informed trainings on child abuse and neglect -- Electronic consumer bulletin board -- Training to address needs of students at risk -- Teacher academics -- Annual report to Juvenile Justice Oversight Council.

(1) The Kentucky Department of Education shall establish, direct, and maintain a statewide program of professional development to improve instruction in the public schools.

(2) Each local school district superintendent shall appoint a certified school employee to fulfill the role and responsibilities of a professional development coordinator who shall disseminate professional development information to schools and personnel. Upon request by a school council or any employees of the district, the coordinator shall provide technical assistance to the council or the personnel that may include assisting with needs assessments, analyzing school data, planning and evaluation assistance, organizing district-wide programs requested by school councils or groups of teachers, or other coordination activities.

(a) The manner of appointment, qualifications, and other duties of the professional development coordinator shall be established by Kentucky Board of Education through promulgation of administrative regulations.

(b) The local district professional development coordinator shall participate in the Kentucky Department of Education annual training program for local school district professional development coordinators. The training program may include, but not be limited to, the demonstration of various approaches to needs assessment and planning; strategies for implementing long-term, school-based professional development; strategies for strengthening teachers' roles in the planning, development, and evaluation of professional development; and demonstrations of model professional development programs. The training shall include information about teacher learning opportunities relating to the core content standards. The Kentucky Department of Education shall regularly collect and distribute this information.

(3) The Kentucky Department of Education shall provide or facilitate optional, professional development programs for certified personnel throughout the Commonwealth that are based on the statewide needs of teachers, administrators, and other education personnel. Programs may include classified staff and parents when appropriate. Programs offered or facilitated by the department shall be at locations and times convenient to local school personnel and shall be made accessible through the use of technology when appropriate. They shall include programs that: address the goals for Kentucky schools as stated in KRS 158.6451, including reducing the achievement gaps as determined by an equity analysis of the disaggregated student performance data from the state assessment program developed under KRS 158.6453; engage educators in effective learning processes and foster collegiality and collaboration; and provide support for staff to incorporate newly acquired skills into their work through practicing the skills, gathering
information about the results, and reflecting on their efforts. Professional
development programs shall be made available to teachers based on their needs
which shall include but not be limited to the following areas:

(a) Strategies to reduce the achievement gaps among various groups of students
and to provide continuous progress;
(b) Curriculum content and methods of instruction for each content area,
including differentiated instruction;
(c) School-based decision making;
(d) Assessment literacy;
(e) Integration of performance-based student assessment into daily classroom
instruction;
(f) Nongraded primary programs;
(g) Research-based instructional practices;
(h) Instructional uses of technology;
(i) Curriculum design to serve the needs of students with diverse learning styles
and skills and of students of diverse cultures;
(j) Instruction in reading, including phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension,
fluency, and vocabulary;
(k) Educational leadership; and
(l) Strategies to incorporate character education throughout the curriculum.

(4) The department shall assist school personnel in assessing the impact of professional
development on their instructional practices and student learning.

(5) The department shall assist districts and school councils with the development of
long-term school and district improvement plans that include multiple strategies for
professional development based on the assessment of needs at the school level.

(a) Professional development strategies may include, but are not limited to,
participation in subject matter academies, teacher networks, training institutes,
workshops, seminars, and study groups; collegial planning; action research;
mentoring programs; appropriate university courses; and other forms of
professional development.

(b) In planning the use of the four (4) days for professional development under
KRS 158.070, school councils and districts shall give priority to programs that
increase teachers' understanding of curriculum content and methods of
instruction appropriate for each content area based on individual school plans.
The district may use up to one (1) day to provide district-wide training and
training that is mandated by state or federal law. Only those employees
identified in the mandate or affected by the mandate shall be required to attend
the training.

(c) State funds allocated for professional development shall be used to support
professional development initiatives that are consistent with local school
improvement and professional development plans and teachers' individual
growth plans. The funds may be used throughout the year for all staff,
including classified and certified staff and parents on school councils or committees. A portion of the funds allocated to each school council under KRS 160.345 may be used to prepare or enhance the teachers’ knowledge and teaching practices related to the content and subject matter that are required for their specific classroom assignments.

(6) (a) By August 1, 2010, the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services shall post on its Web page suicide prevention awareness information, to include recognizing the warning signs of a suicide crisis. The Web page shall include information related to suicide prevention training opportunities offered by the cabinet or an agency recognized by the cabinet as a training provider.

(b) By September 1, 2010, and September 1 of each year thereafter, every public middle and high school administrator shall disseminate suicide prevention awareness information to all middle and high school students. The information may be obtained from the Cabinet for Health and Family Services or from a commercially developed suicide prevention training program.

(7) (a) The Kentucky Department of Education shall develop and maintain a list of approved comprehensive evidence-informed trainings on child abuse and neglect prevention, recognition, and reporting that encompass child physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect.

(b) The trainings shall be Web-based or in-person and cover, at a minimum, the following topics:
1. Recognizing child physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect;
2. Reporting suspected child abuse and neglect in Kentucky as required by KRS 620.030 and the appropriate documentation;
3. Responding to the child; and
4. Understanding the response of child protective services.

(c) The trainings shall include a questionnaire or other basic assessment tool upon completion to document basic knowledge of training components.

(d) Each local school board shall adopt one (1) or more trainings from the list approved by the Department of Education to be implemented by schools.

(e) All current school administrators, certified personnel, office staff, instructional assistants, and coaches and extracurricular sponsors who are employed by the school district shall complete the implemented training or trainings by January 31, 2017, and then every two (2) years after.

(f) All school administrators, certified personnel, office staff, instructional assistants, and coaches and extracurricular sponsors who are employed by the school district hired after January 31, 2017, shall complete the implemented training or trainings within ninety (90) days of being hired and then every two (2) years after.

(g) Every public school shall prominently display the statewide child abuse hotline number administered by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, and the National Human Trafficking Reporting Hotline number administered
by the United States Department for Health and Human Services.

(8) The Department of Education shall establish an electronic consumer bulletin board that posts information regarding professional development providers and programs as a service to school district central office personnel, school councils, teachers, and administrators. Participation on the electronic consumer bulletin board shall be voluntary for professional development providers or vendors, but shall include all programs sponsored by the department. Participants shall provide the following information: program title; name of provider or vendor; qualifications of the presenters or instructors; objectives of the program; program length; services provided, including follow-up support; costs for participation and costs of materials; names of previous users of the program, addresses, and telephone numbers; and arrangements required. Posting information on the bulletin board by the department shall not be viewed as an endorsement of the quality of any specific provider or program.

(9) The Department of Education shall provide training to address the characteristics and instructional needs of students at risk of school failure and most likely to drop out of school. The training shall be developed to meet the specific needs of all certified and classified personnel depending on their relationship with these students. The training for instructional personnel shall be designed to provide and enhance skills of personnel to:

(a) Identify at-risk students early in elementary schools as well as at-risk and potential dropouts in the middle and high schools;

(b) Plan specific instructional strategies to teach at-risk students;

(c) Improve the academic achievement of students at risk of school failure by providing individualized and extra instructional support to increase expectations for targeted students;

(d) Involve parents as partners in ways to help their children and to improve their children's academic progress; and

(e) Significantly reduce the dropout rate of all students.

(10) The department shall establish teacher academies to the extent funding is available in cooperation with postsecondary education institutions for elementary, middle school, and high school faculty in core disciplines, utilizing facilities and faculty from universities and colleges, local school districts, and other appropriate agencies throughout the state. Priority for participation shall be given to those teachers who are teaching core discipline courses for which they do not have a major or minor or the equivalent. Participation of teachers shall be voluntary.

(11) The department shall annually provide to the oversight council established in KRS 15A.063, the information received from local schools pursuant to KRS 158.449.

Effective: June 29, 2017


Legislative Research Commission Note (7/14/2000). This section was amended by 2000 Ky. Acts chs. 162, 452, and 527. Where these Acts are not in conflict, they have been codified together. As to subsection (? of this section, a conflict exists, in part, between Acts chs. 452 and 527. Under KRS 446.250, Acts ch. 527, which was last enacted by the General Assembly, prevails in this conflict.
REFERENCES


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Social Studies Teacher

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