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Democratizing the Process of Teacher Professional Development

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Report

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Masters of Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

August 2019

Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the support of many individuals who have assisted me throughout the process. To the Social Studies Education department, thank you for taking the time to help me understand the greater depths and complexities of our field and for pushing me every day. To my colleagues and administrators, who were extremely flexible with me and were a source of encouragement. To my parents, for always being there and instilling a strong work ethic in me throughout my educational career. And to my wife, Jordyn, who always put up with my crazy schedule and helping me along every step of the way.

Abstract

Democratizing the Process of Teacher Professional Development

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2019

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Professional development is typically viewed by teachers in a negative way because of the impression of its inability to meet the actual needs of a teacher and its inability to have an immediate, direct impact on their instruction. The purpose of this work is to review the ways in which researchers have studied teacher knowledge and apply the theories developed in a manner that calls for and allows for a shift in how teacher knowledge is created to all stake holders involved. Examining teacher knowledge and the creation and implementation of professional development through a deliberative democratic framework (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004) may help to explain ways in which teachers can partake in the ownership of their own knowledge creation, which can have greater benefit within their own classrooms.

Table of Contents

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| What is <i>social studies</i>..... | 6 |
| History of Teacher Professional Development..... | 9 |
| Collaboration and Mentoring..... | 14 |
| Demands..... | 17 |
| Professional Development through a Deliberative Democratic Framework..... | 18 |
| Imagining Deliberative Democratic Professional Development..... | 23 |
| CONCLUSION..... | 24 |
| REFERENCES..... | 26 |
| VITA..... | 31 |

Introduction

“Professional Development has been the neglected step child of teacher education” (Crocco & Livingston, 2017, p. 371). Following time in an undergraduate teacher preparation program or an alternative certification program, the next stages of teacher learning occurs through primarily professional development organized by a school district or outside organizations (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). These types of professional development opportunities can be organized in various different ways, with popular styles being direct lecture, conference attendance, and mentoring (Crocco & Livingston, 2017). Even with a large variety of opportunities, mentors and other teachers that I have worked with depict professional development from a negative viewpoint. Much of the displeasure of professional development surrounds the idea that what is presented is not personally beneficial to the educators’ craft or it was too broad in trying to connect with teachers of various different subjects. When an opportunity is presented that allows me to attend content-specific professional development, I immediately jump on the opportunity to attend. It is these types of professional development that I find to be most beneficial to my work as it helps me to think more critically of the actual work that I do in my classroom and helps for me to have a deeper understanding of the work in my classroom. Although, this is not always the case for all content-specific professional development that I have attended. Much of the professional development offered is designed to meet needs of a broader population.

Because of the constraints of funding and availability of staff and trainers (Hess & Zola, 2012), professional development is often times provided to a broader audience at the secondary-level of teachers of various content areas, with sessions geared towards meeting campus and school district level goals. In some cases, these cases may revolve around high stakes

standardized testing, which becomes the focus of professional development to prepare teachers for new skills and strategies to teach students to be successful on the exam (Broadman & Woodruff, 2004). Other professional development focus upon resources that are going to be used in schools or methods for improving student achievement in the classroom (Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008).

My interest was piqued in professional development research after having the option to attend a professional development session for Social Studies teachers focused on introducing *effective* strategies for working with students with disabilities and English Language Learners. This professional development was of interest to me because I believed that it was a blend of campus-based goals along with professional development that I believed would be focused more with my interests and areas that I needed for professional growth.

Shulman (1986; 1987) presents the debate whether teachers have the ability to think critically about their work as educators or if teachers are “empty vessels,” who need to be told how to improve and make changes to their practices. Much of the successes seen in professional development involve teachers being active participants and collaborators in their own learning (Hess & Zola, 2012; Jacobs, Borko, & Koellner, 2009; Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008; Shulman & Sherin, 2004). Over the late 20th century, there was a shift towards the view of teachers as thinking beings, who are reflective practitioners, but often times see research as separate from their practice when in actuality their teaching and research are closely tied together (Adler, 1993; Grumet, 1990). Adler (1993) examines how teachers are researchers, in the way that they gather and reflect upon evidence to make changes and improvements to their practice, but the teachers do not see themselves as formal researchers and fail to publicize their findings for the benefit of all. Grumet (1990) examines the relationship between the teacher and teaching, which the

teacher is the one who creates a transformative experience in order to engage the learner. Grumet's belief is that teaching is unique within itself in that it is both an art and a science, which makes it important for teachers to be involved in studying teaching themselves. These notions of teachers as reflective beings with transformative power are not typically reflected in the predominant available professional development.

Having the ability to attend an all-day content-specific professional development session helped to broaden my understanding of why there is a negative connotation given to professional development, even content-specific opportunities. Within the first thirty minutes of the professional development, it became clear that title of the session did not live up to the expectations that I had for the professional development. Firstly, the presenter took the first hour of the session to do introductions and go over what was going to occur during the session, which I viewed as waste of time because it felt as though the presenter could have accomplished these in half the time. However, Brophy & Good (1970) explain the importance of establishing clear expectations and goals in order to achieve the objectives of what is being taught. While I do not discredit the importance of the presenter's intention of spending time on introductions and expectations, it is important to do so in a meaningful way and not in a manner that feels as though time is being wasted. When teachers feel that professional development is not personalized towards their content and believe that their time is not valued, there are more negative feelings towards professional development as a whole (Özer & Beycioglu, 2010). Unfortunately, this was typical of other professional development sessions that I have attended. Secondly, the presenter introduced strategies that were not content specific nor were they beyond the most common best practices. For example, we were taught how to use a K-W-L chart, which I was training on in my undergraduate teacher education program. Common, cross-curricular,

best practices were introduced throughout the day. As I became significantly inattentive to monotony being presented, I began to question why a professional development session that was intended to be content specific to better assist the needs of students from special populations was ineffective. While there is a perceived need for strategies to work with these students, the presentation lacked content specific pedagogical strategies that were beyond what has been covered in teacher preparation programs and common professional development sessions that are typically found on my campus. This session allowed me to question: Why would a highly attended, content-specific professional development appear to have been a failure?

School districts have viewed professional learning for teachers through a direct teach model that is removed from the classroom (Lieberman, 1995). Various influences and constraints make professional development difficult to meet the needs of all stakeholders. Firstly, there is a lack of consensus amongst teachers about what types of professional development that they want and need, which makes it challenging to implement professional development sessions that will meet the needs of the majority and be a positive experience for most teachers (J. Jolliffe, Personal Communication, July 8, 2019). Additionally, research shows that there are variations in what is the most effective and beneficial professional development, which makes measuring effective professional development difficult (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Desimone, 2009). Because of this, some administrators who are involved in the making decisions regarding professional development tend to consider their personal understanding of the needs for professional development amongst their faculty and having to create more generalized trainings to meet district initiatives because of the lack of consensus of what teachers want to see as professional development (J. Jolliffe, Personal Communication, July 8, 2019). However, researchers believe that professional development

needs to be personalized and focused on the teachers' sense of situational awareness (Putnam & Borko, 2000). According to Putnam & Borko (2000), teachers find that much of the professional development is too far removed what they are doing in their classrooms day-to-day to have an impact and that there is a need to examine how people providing a context and positioning the what is being taught within the teacher's day-to-day work can provide more meaningful and beneficial learning opportunities for teachers. Much of what is done in professional development is provided to teachers and it is then their responsibility to bring it back to their classrooms to implement. Regardless, most cases result in teachers saying that they will implement the strategy or strategies into future lessons, but rarely do (Putnam & Borko, 2000). In contrast, thinking beings and situating the professional development within their classrooms or within a current practice, the professional development can be utilized immediately and can have immediate impacts on teaching and student learning (Putnam & Borko, 2000).

While there are many constraints that can arise from trying to situate professional development within the classrooms, the use of videotaped classroom activities have been beneficial for in-service and pre-service teachers to reflect upon their teaching and to implement different tools (Eliaam & Poyas, 2006; Jacobs, Borko, & Koellner, 2009; Sherin, Jacobs, & Philipp, 2011). Jacobs, Borko, & Koellner (2009) examined how the use of videotaped lessons in conjunction with a strong community of teachers analyzing the lessons can be used to greatly benefit a teacher's awareness of what is occurring in their classrooms. Teachers find this type of professional development to be greatly beneficial to improving their practice because they were able to complete a self-study as well as collaborate with peers regarding an area of concern in their teaching and work together to create solutions for the area of concern (Jacobs, Borko, & Koellner, 2009). What is common amongst programs where videotaped lessons are used and

evaluated is that the teachers have choice in what they want to present before their colleagues and that they have the ability to ask for feedback in areas that they believe will be most beneficial to them (Borko, 2004; Jacobs, Borko, & Koellner, 2009). Reflections of videotaped lessons have not only been seen as beneficial for professional development, but are also being valued as a tool to assess how well teachers are reflective practitioners for National Board Certification and initial teaching certifications in some states (Sato, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2008; Huston, 2017).

What is *social studies*?

The lack of definition of what the Social Studies is and the divisions within the content area make it difficult to provide professional development that will be content specific, while still be effective for all. There is a lack of consensus amongst researchers in the field as to the history of the term “social studies” and the origins of the term and the original purpose of why the term was used (Nelson, 2001). Nelson (2001) reflects upon this debate through the following questions:

Is social studies the same as history and geography- two subjects dating back into eighteenth-century American school curriculums- or is social studies an integrating field of knowledge devoted to study of human society and its problems and found in philosophic or social welfare literature also dating back to the eighteenth or nineteenth century in America? Or is social studies something else entirely? (p. 17)

Without a common and unifying definition of the social studies, it is difficult to understand and create professional development to meet a common need. Having spent time in a graduate program at a major research university, I have come to a greater understanding that the *social studies* has a much greater depth and complexity than I had imagined before. Even with my

experience obtaining undergraduate degree at a liberal arts college and the past four years in the classroom, my narrow perspective was that the social studies consisted of the curriculum, such as history, geography, economics, and government, which is what commonly makes up state standards for the subject area (Nelson, 2001). Having spent time studying the greater debates amongst researchers in the field, there are greater complexities in the field that are not typically represented in all social studies method courses or amongst professionals in the field.

There are other debates surrounding these questions that continue to create a difference in opinion between conservative and liberal social studies researchers (Mathison, Ross, & Vinson, 2001; Ross & Marker, 2005; Thornton, 1994). Researchers with a conservative ideological lens, such as Ravitch, believe that a pluralistic approach to social studies is more beneficial than a particularistic approach (Ravitch, 1990). Particularism is the idea that the narrative is to be purposefully designed to be inclusive of the stories of the students' particular ethnic or cultural group, such as the implementation of ethnic studies courses and including books, stories, and histories of the particular group of students in the class (Ravitch, 1990; Schlesinger, 1998; Leming, Ellington, Porter-Magee, 2003). On the contrary, pluralism is the idea that what is being taught should be inclusive of all members of a particular cultural group (Ravitch, 1990). Because of the great diversity of those who live in the United States, what is being taught should be inclusive of the stories of all people of the cultural group. Ravitch (1990) states that "the rising tide of particularism encourages the politic of a curricula in the school" (p. 351). While Ravitch does not believe that politics and education are separate, she does believe that the social studies becomes increasingly politicized when approached in a particularistic manner. Ravitch (1990) believes that the best way to approach history is through inquiry and to portray this search for understanding through debate and controversy rather than learning the for unreputable facts.

Those who believe in the liberal tradition (Noddings, 1992; Crocco, 2004) would call for a move beyond the increased inclusion of minority groups in the curriculum. For example, according to Noddings (1992) the increased recognition of women and other minorities in textbooks and encyclopedia are important. However, Noddings believes that there is a need to move further than just recognizing these groups but rather there is a need for cultural acceptance that the actions of these groups, such as peace efforts, need to be accepted as just as important as efforts made by men, such as in war. There would be an agreement of the importance of the particularistic approach to social studies because by purposefully designing curriculum and including minority groups into the curriculum, there is a recognition that their various actions are important and are significant. Noddings (1992) notes that these conversations regarding social issues in society should be cross-curricular and that teachers should be looking to have these conversations in classes beyond just the social studies. Even though Noddings (1992) and Ravitch (1990) have starkly different views on how to approach social studies education, both agree that significant events in history should not be left out in order to be inclusive of other events that would leave a gap in the understanding of the progression of history. Just as there are difficulties in the decisions that are made in government to make the best decisions within the country, these debates make appearances in decisions that are made in the development of curriculum.

The nature of the “social studies” evolving from many different sub-content areas and without a clear starting point and strategic mission causes there to be a lack of understanding of what the social studies is. The varying viewpoints on what the social studies are and the conservative versus liberal debate leaves the decision making regarding social studies professional development to be highly contested and politicized. Additionally, because of how

different the sub-content areas are, administrators find difficulties in implementing extremely specific trainings (J. Jolliffe, Personal Communication, July 8, 2019). Even in large school districts, it is difficult to provide professional development to the sub-content areas as each grade level tends to be significantly different. However, there are skills, such as sourcing, are needed across all Social Studies sub-content areas that teachers should receive frequent training in and are broad enough that professional development can be designed and implemented over an extended time period (J. Jolliffe, Personal Communication, July 8, 2019). With the current state of financial and personnel resources available (Hess & Zola, 2012), it is difficult for school districts to provide teachers with the types of professional development that they would find most beneficial to them. However, there are better ways to better use the resources that schools currently have available to them to change the ways that they create and implement professional development opportunities for their teachers.

History of Teacher Professional Development

While professional development can take a variety of forms, the common purpose of all these programs is “to alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understanding of school persons toward an articulated end” (Griffin, 1983, p. 2). For all the different types of professional development a school can offer and the type of professional learning that it tries to create within the school building, the administration is ultimately relying on teachers to have an intrinsic motivation to buy-in and make changes within their practices and their own beliefs (O’Day, 2002; Ofoegbu, 2004). Without this type of buy-in and interest, the efforts of whatever type of professional development that is being presented will not be effective. There has been the idea that is pervasive over time periods that teaching is a field of reflection (Adler, 1993) and in turn these reflections should lead to an action plan to continue to improve (Zeichner & Liston,

1990). To have reflective practitioners, there is a need for teachers to understand that they can constantly grow as a teacher and that there are always ways that they can continue to enhance and improve their practice. The K-12 institutional types of additional training provided for teachers following their pre-service training is through professional development. The purpose of this section is to explore some of the prominent research regarding teacher professional development and teacher learning theories. While this section is not a comprehensive analysis of all research regarding teacher professional development, this history should provide guidance as to who is and is not included in conversations regarding the continued education of teachers.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Shulman (1986) explored the expectations by government agencies for teacher certification. Over the course of the late 19th through the 20th century, Shulman (1986; 1987) found that there is a paradigm shift from the expectation to be a subject matter expert to a pedagogical expert. Through Shulman's examination of state certification exams over the course of the twentieth century, he found that state certification exams contained either ninety-percent questions regarding content knowledge in the early part of the century or ninety percent of questions regarding pedagogical knowledge in the later part of the century. There was a distinct divide between content processes and pedagogical processes with very little crossover. Shulman believes that what was missing from research at the time was how content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge should not be singularly important but rather how they were of equal importance for a teacher to have expertise in. Teachers need to be able to transform content into something that a student can learn. Because Shulman was trying to establish the importance of both types of knowledge for teachers, he coins the term "Pedagogical Content Knowledge" (PCK) for the examination of how a teacher has a deeper knowledge of the content in order to

better understand how to teach the content for its ease as well as difficulties that learners might face (Shulman, 1986). Shulman believes that pure content knowledge is just as useless as pure pedagogical knowledge and that there is a need to for a blend of both to be the most effective educator. For Shulman (1986), PCK includes “the ways of representing and formulating the subject to make it comprehensible to others...and an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult” (p. 9). Because of the nature of how teacher certification exams became significantly based on pedagogy, Shulman called for a reexamination of these exams in a manner that is reflective of a teacher’s content knowledge and the ways that they will use pedagogy to make sense of their content. Additionally, he calls for professionals from the field to be involved in the creation of these exams rather than lawmakers exclusively using teachers follow the policymakers’ mandates.

Shulman’s work around PCK has been carried forward since its initial publication. For instance, Hashweh (2005) believes that what is missing from Shulman’s work on PCK is a collection of smaller ideas that comprise “teacher pedagogical constructions” that are developed with experience (p. 278). Hashweh believes that an aspect that is missing from PCK is how to help students overcome difficulties, which would be a component of teacher pedagogical constructions. Because teachers draw on their various different components of various pedagogical and content knowledge and resources, teachers are using their knowledge to construct a solution to a given problem that they are faced with (Hashweh, 2005). Hashweh believes that because PCK is knowledge that is associated with experience, it does not seem to be developed through study of pre-service teacher education programs (p. 279). Through Hashweh’s work, there is an understanding that the experience and beliefs of a teacher is important in the decisions that they make in the classroom and there is a need to examine how

teachers construct knowledge. In order to further develop teachers, attention needs to be given to these experiences and beliefs.

In a second example, Monte-Sano & Budano (2013) examined how the pedagogical content knowledge of two novice history teachers grew longitudinally over a three-year time period. They used four components of PCK: “representing history, transforming history, attending to students’ ideas about history, and framing history” to measure the growth of the two teachers (p.178). One of the teachers completed their student teaching in a classroom where the mentor teacher valued reflection daily and this practice continued after student teachers because the teacher continued to work in the same school. The other teacher did not have the opportunity to teach one subject consistently and was unable to allow her to strengthen her knowledge in one particular area. Monte-Sano & Budano found that both teachers demonstrated different improvements over the course of the study, but both made “distinct kinds of growth in their PCK” (p. 208). Along with Hashweh (2005), PCK continues to be developed with experience and an area that teachers continue to grow in over time. This continues the work of Shuman (1986) because there is now a deeper examination of how teachers construct their knowledge and pedagogy.

While there is an understanding of what PCK is and what PCK looks like as it presents itself in teachers, Ball, Thames, & Phelps (2008) work to measure a teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge. By having an understanding of a teacher’s PCK, those responsible for implementing can effectively personalize professional development to be more effective. Ball, Thames, & Phelps (2008) found that there are

At least two empirically discernable subdomains within pedagogical content knowledge (knowledge of content and students and knowledge of content and teaching) and an

important subdomain of “pure” content knowledge unique to the work of teaching, specialized content knowledge, which is distinct from the common content knowledge needed by teachers and nonteachers alike (p. 389).

In an effort to empirically measure aspects of PCK, Ball, Thames, & Phelps (2008) creates a distinction between PCK and subject matter knowledge. They believe that by having more clarified content knowledge categories by identifying the knowledge of a subject area specific to teaching the subject matter, referred to as Specialized Content Knowledge (SCK), professional development can be designed to have a greater impact to improve upon instruction. Ball, Thames, & Phelps believe that by refining these categories that the preparation of both pre-service and in-service teachers can be clarified to focus upon these distinctive categories rather than subject matter and pedagogy as a whole.

Van Driel & Berry (2012) call for teacher professional development to be designed specifically to focus on PCK. They believe that PCK is not just a model of expert teaching of a particular topic of a particular subject but rather the skills needed to have a deep understanding of ways to teach particular topics given the circumstances of a particular setting. PCK is more than just knowledge of ways to teaching content understanding and preparing for student successes and failures but rather “includes knowledge of enhancing student learning in a variety of ways” (p. 27). Van Driel & Berry address how much of professional development is focused upon state and national standards, which they believe to be important. However, there has been a lack of emphasis on PCK because of this. In the development of PCK related professional development, there is a need to root the professional development in the context of the teacher’s work and to understand the teachers have varying views of good teaching (Van Driel & Berry, 2012). Current practices in professional development focus on instructional strategies but Van

Driel & Berry believe that there is a need to go beyond this to also “include an understanding of how students develop insights in specific subject matter” (p. 27). This consequently creates professional development that is inclusive of teacher input and has direct effects on the ways that they approach the work in their classrooms.

Beyond the need for a greater focus on the implementation of PCK within professional development provided to teachers, there is a need to remember that teachers come to their classrooms with different experiences and different understandings of their content area. Additionally, much of the learning and deeper understanding of the content being taught comes from the need to teach specific content for the first time (Wilson, 1989). Wilson (1989) creates case studies of novice teachers, from her research, in order to better educate pre-service teachers on the intricacies of teaching and the different types of thinking that a teacher is required to do in order to transform content knowledge utilizing pedagogical knowledge into something that students are able to learn. Wilson’s work introduces the idea that teachers are going to have an understanding of the content that they are teaching based on their experiences. For example, in one of the cases the teacher was not formally trained in teaching “theme” but used his experiences with the content and his knowledge of the field of English to effectively teach the topic. Schools and classrooms will resemble the situations from these case studies. Teachers will have varying experiences and understanding of their content areas and will use their pedagogical knowledge in order to best support students. When approaching professional learning, those responsible for implementing the professional development need to take into consideration the experiences of the teachers and provide opportunities to build upon their experiences.

Collaboration and Mentoring

Following the foundational work of Shulman and his colleagues who followed, it is apparent that there is a need to focus attention towards not just content knowledge and not just pedagogical knowledge but rather there is a specialized set of a knowledge that teachers much have in order to transform content into something that students can learn and understanding. It is also understood the importance of situational awareness (Putnam & Borko, 2000) in understanding how professional development can have the greatest impact on the works teachers do day-to-day.

Hess & Zola (2012) examined different ways in which professional development could be used to help improve civic education. They felt that the most transformative civic learning programs are teacher driven and are dependent upon high-quality instruction. Hess & Zola (2012) believe that are five core elements of the most effective professional development:

They include a focus on important and challenging content; modeling and providing practice with classroom strategies that have been proven to work well with students; a collaboration-centered design so teachers can learn from and teach one another; encouragement of ongoing collaboration with participants; and sensitivity and responsiveness to the context in which individual teachers work. (p. 188)

As part of their work, Hess & Zola examined programs that they believed fit these core elements in providing highly effective professional development for teachers. One of these programs is Project Citizen, which is a program that is designed to give students the opportunity to address issues in their community through research and a guided action project (Hess & Zola, 2012). Prior to starting the program in a particular school, teachers attend a week long professional development where are asked prior to attending what they will need to be successful, from

particular skills to the inclusion of speakers on particular topics. Teachers are also provided with mentors that are a part of the initial training and then follow up with them throughout the school year, by assisting teachers with any issues that arise as well as coaching them through the program. Project Citizen also has teachers participate in the actual process that students will be introduced to during the professional development so that the teachers being trained have the opportunity to experience issues that their students may face and are able to be coached through these issues. Project Citizen finds success in that their approach is not a singular approach but rather it is designed to meet the needs of teachers and school of various experiences and backgrounds. This model of professional development helps to ensure that what is taught is not overwhelming but something that is manageable for teachers and that in the event that something becomes overwhelming, there is someone that they can collaborate with who has worked through these problems previously.

While there is not a direct context for teachers to immediately place the work completed in the professional development into, much of what Hess & Zola address as core elements of professional development and the design of professional development by organizations, like Project Citizen, utilize principles of situational awareness. Teachers learn in a variety of places, for example in the classroom and from workshops, and when learning opportunities intersect across places, they will be more beneficial for teacher learning (Borko, 2004). Professional development opportunities, like Project Citizen, allow for professional learning to cross settings and have created teachers that are more confident in this particular practice (Hess & Zola, 2012). There is a common theme of collaboration and discussion in context that has been recognized as important by researchers in the field. Project Citizen provides teachers with the opportunity to experience to the projects that students will be working through and have the ability to

collaborate with peers throughout the process to improve upon their practices. These teachers are then followed up with by a mentor throughout the year to ensure that what was taught is being implemented and to assist these teachers when problems, questions, or issues arise. Hess & Zola noted that teachers felt highly supported and well prepared to address any problems that they faced. By providing context for the professional development and providing individualized support throughout its implementation, teachers felt as though the professional development was beneficial. This type of model can be used to help evaluate the areas in which other types of professional development are not seen as beneficial.

Demands

There are a particular set of demands that are placed upon teachers when they are introduced to different disciplinary or interdisciplinary ideas, which are often times ignored by those introducing these ideas (Shulman & Sherin, 2004). The focus is upon improving instruction in order to increase student achievement. However, the changes that are being brought forth by professional development will in turn increase demands for teachers. Reflecting upon personal experiences surrounding professional development, there is typically an expectation to change my instructional practices or to make some type of change that will increase the demands of my work in some way. In some cases, it is a minor change of routine as to how I had done something previously and in other ways it is an effort to greatly change an approach to instruction.

Professional Development through a Deliberative Democratic Framework

Professional development, as a whole and specifically within the Social studies, faces many challenges that can create challenges to creating highly effective opportunities for teachers. There is a need to continue to provide learning experiences that focus on pedagogical methods within particular content areas and for teachers to focus their learning on what will be most beneficial to their instruction. From personal experience, there is greater interest in professional development when it is focused upon my content area and will provide me with an increasing set of resources and experiences that can better help me with my work in the classroom. When discussing PCK, collaborative professional development with mentoring opportunities, and the increased demands that professional development can place on teachers, it is clear that the central component that is pervasive across all research is the importance of the teacher and teacher buy-in to what is being taught. Teachers are missing from decision making around their professional learning. In some cases, school districts will survey staff to get an understanding of what their teachers want without much consensus. Surveys are limiting in that it does not promote a discussion to further understand the complexities of what teachers need to improve upon their practices.

Recognizing the significance of PCK research is important when implementing professional development (Shulman, 1986). Teachers need to continue to be provided with opportunities to learn in order to deepen their knowledge to help make better decisions related to content and pedagogy in their classrooms. When decisions are made disregarding experience and levels of understanding, teachers are provided with professional development that they find to be boring and negative connotations of professional development continue (Nabhani & Bahous, 2010). Additionally, this would place novice teachers in the same professional

development as highly experienced teachers, who are in need of different types of professional learning (Lieberman, 1995). In order to engage teachers in professional development that will allow them to have positive experiences, teachers need to be actively involved in designing and requesting professional development that will help them to take up the learning they believe is essential. While there have been issues that have been addressed that cause highly personalized professional development to be difficult to implement, there are ways that teachers can be a part of the conversation around their professional development that can bring forth more effective trainings.

The decision-making process of professional development can be examined through the principles of deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy places value on the mutual respect and justification for all decisions being made. Gutmann and Thompson (2004) summarize their definition of deliberative democracy by stating that it is:

A form of government in which free and equal citizens (and their representatives), justify decisions in a process which they give one another reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible, with the aim of reaching conclusions that are binding in the present on all citizens but open to challenge in the future (p. 7)

The fundamental problem confronting all democratic theorists is to find ways to make binding collective decisions morally justifiable even during ongoing conflict (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004, p. 125). Deliberative democracy is different from other democratic theories in the ways it approaches these decisions and how it works through varying moral objections. At the core of deliberative democracy, there is a need to deliberate and have all reasons from different perspectives stated in a way that is accessible to all stakeholders (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004, p. 4). This process is dynamic as there are aims to produce binding decisions for a period of time

but still an open dialogue with the possibility of change in the future (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004, p. 6). This makes deliberative democracy different from other first and second order democratic theories because it does not try to eliminate the moral disagreement but rather face the conflict with an understanding that there is still room for change if the decision being made does not meet the needs of others in the future. Social studies researchers agree to a certain extent that curriculum is a product of our political system (VanSledright, 2008). Using principles of theories regarding democracy could be used as an approach for the ways in which schools can operate. A deliberative democratic approach in education would allow all involved to have a forum where they can give their reasons and justifications prior to decisions being made. It allows for greater distribution of control to all who are being impacted.

One of the principles of deliberative democracy is reciprocity. Gutmann & Thompson (2004) state that:

The basic premise of reciprocity is that citizens owe one another justifications for the institutions, laws, and public policies that collectively bind them. Reciprocity suggests the aim of seeking agreement on the basis of principles that can be justified to others who also share the aim of reaching reasonable agreement. (p. 133)

In the educational system and more specifically decisions that are made surrounding professional development, reciprocity would mean that there is a mutual agreement between the current decision makers regarding professional development and those who attend the professional development, the teachers. This model allows for a balance of opinions and decisions so that one side does not have complete and total decision making regarding what will impact the group as a whole.

As examined previously, there is little consensus on what types of professional development that teachers want provided to them, which causes decisions to be made for teachers and negative feedback about the professional development to be returned (Nabhani & Bahous, 2010). However, if teachers are actively involved in the decision-making process, there would be a forum for an active discussion about the professional development that is being provided. What is unique to a deliberative democratic process to professional development implementation is that all reasons need to be presented and discussed, which would lead to a greater understanding as to why the decisions regarding professional development are being made and a space for changes to be made in the future. This process can also help all stakeholders understand each other's needs. Current practices involve the use of surveys and involve limited amounts of discussions regarding professional development except from the most vocal teachers (J. Jolliffe, Personal Communication, July 8, 2019). Using a deliberative democratic model can also be transformative for the current state of professional development. The current state is very much limited to the goals of the administration, which are often times tied to state performance standards for schools. While some teachers may strongly value these when approaching their own personal learning, there would be a greater recognition of the teachers' opinions regarding their own learning. Additionally, deliberative democratic principles do not relinquish total control from a power to all; there is just a need for all voices and reasons to be stated and for a mutually acceptable decision to be made. The idea is that through the reason-giving process, all stakeholders involved in implementing professional development will be able to explain their feelings and reasonings for the professional development. This should help to create a greater buy-in for the professional development.

It would be remiss if not to address concerns that can be raised by implementing a deliberative democratic model. Firstly, there would be difficulty in the current system in being inclusive of all stakeholders, especially on a district level. Deliberative democratic principles call for all reasons to be given and explained, which may not be able to fit within the constraints of time. When examining the work around professional development, there is a need for more opportunities. This would naturally need to take place on a smaller scale, which would make the implementation of a deliberative democratic process more manageable. Additionally, what is decided upon on the smaller level, can be brought forth to the district level by a representative of the consensus that the school and stakeholders at that school came to. In a democratic system, there are different types of citizens who have varying different levels of involvement and contributions to the democracy (Westheimer & Kahn, 2004). It would be believed that just as there are also different types of “teacher-citizens” who are going to contribute to the conversation in different ways as well. There will be some teachers that will be active in this process while some that will remain passive. However, the goal is to increase teacher efficacy towards their own continued learning. In order to most effectively do so, there has to be an understanding of the knowledge and experiences of the teachers and they need to be included in conversations surrounding their professional development, whether or not all teachers will want to be involved in the conversation.

Imagining Deliberative Democratic Professional Development

Some of the key ideas when considering what type of professional development to provide to teachers is that PCK should be considered, the experience and background of the teachers, and that it should be personalized and situated within the current work in their classrooms. Taking into account PCK, decisions regarding professional development should not be made as entire school population, but rather sub-groups consisting of the different content areas and administrators. This will provide a forum that would be more beneficial towards having deliberations and the ability to participate in the reason-giving process. While the social studies remain tough to define and has many different sub-content areas within a school, this setting can help to provide all involved to decide about common areas of concern across grade levels. There are common skills, such as working with different types of sources and source analytical skills, that are seen across sub-content areas. This would also be a place where teachers can discuss areas of weakness and there may be a peer that could coach them in this area of weakness. A deliberative democratic approach to the design and implementation of professional development will allow for the typical process of professional development to be transformed because the creation will no longer be just focused upon the interests of the administrator but rather also a discussion to understand the needs that may not be apparent through test scores or a simple survey.

Conclusion

What makes the difference for teachers is that the content of the curriculum, the context of each classroom within the school, and the context of the school itself are all considered, with teacher participation central to any changes to be made in the functioning of the school itself (Lieberman, 1995, p. 68)

Professional development typically lacks the structures necessary to be seen as productive and to further teacher knowledge and practice. As a teacher-researcher, I find myself sitting within the professional development sessions asking myself how can this actually apply to my practice and why is it not effective in bringing change? The intention of this work was to review the ways in which researchers have studied teacher knowledge and apply the theories developed in a manner that calls for and allows for a shift in how teacher knowledge is created to all stake holders involved. Examining teacher knowledge and the creation and implementation of professional development through a deliberative democratic framework (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004) can help to explain ways in which teachers can partake in the ownership of their own knowledge creation, which can have greater benefit within their own classrooms. While there is much talk about professional development, the discussions that take place are often times not productive in helping to achieve the goals of making the teachers' practice better in order to improve student achievement. It is commonly recognized that professional development is the method that will be used to evoke the change in schools (Guskey, 2002). Since the work of Shulman (1986) and his colleagues' little action has been taken to address areas of content knowledge and experience that greatly impact how teachers can benefit from professional development. While most professional development continues to be focused on providing teachers with as many pedagogical strategies possible, some groups are finding

success in listening and identifying individual teachers' needs and working to improve their practice in this manner. If teachers have an avenue to advocate for their needs in a forum that is not just pen on paper, all stakeholders can benefit from understanding where teachers' self-perceived needs are.

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This manuscript was typed by the author.