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Perceptions Regarding the Use of Common Planning Time at Three High-Achieving Elementary Schools

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MA, California State University of San Bernardino (2001)

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Administrator Leadership for Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

This transcendental phenomenological study examined the beliefs and strategies of elementary teachers and elementary administrators of three high achieving elementary schools utilizing a weekly common planning period. A scholarly review of the literature concluded that collaboration is a critical part of a professional learning community and leads to higher student achievement. However, there is limited research on what collaboration actually looks like in a school setting. Research questions for the study examined strategies used by classroom teachers and principals to capture specific actions and beliefs regarding collaboration to increase student achievement. A phenomenological qualitative method was used by interviewing 9 elementary teachers and 3 elementary principals to capture the essence of the phenomenon of collaboration. Coding was completed and data analysis achieved with the assistance of AtlasTi. Findings indicted that teachers build capacity through dialogue that revolves around data analysis, strategies to teach lessons, and creating common assessments. Principals noted data analysis and shared leadership as leading to increased student performance. Implications for social change include providing universities and school districts strategies to implement effective teacher collaboration that leads to higher student academic achievement and greater opportunities for students in a global economy.

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my wife and life-long friend, Emily Nguyen, who has supported me through this entire journey. Without your support and more importantly your love, I would have never completed this program. I appreciate you for setting aside and postponing your dreams so that I could finish mine.

I would also like to dedicate this paper to Dr. Anh Berry who, through her valiant but unsuccessful battle with cancer, taught me just how valuable and precious life is and to cherish and find joy in every moment.

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Finally, I cannot forget to acknowledge my wife, Emily Nguyen. Your presence and love is without question the very force that keeps me going each and every day. I cannot begin to express my gratitude and love for such an amazing person. The completion of this paper ends one chapter of our life together and I look forward to starting the next chapter with you by my side. Simply put, I love you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

For years, researchers have contended that the failure to improve the academic achievement of students of poverty and to close the achievement gap are connected to school sites' failure to utilize the latest research on effective practices (Pogrow, 2017). School leaders must search for best practices, programs, and strategies to increase the capacity of school sites to meet the needs of all students. Research identified strong links between the capacities of teachers and the academic performance of their students (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Lynch, Smith, Provost, & Madden, 2016), and the driving force behind changing the actions of the classroom teacher is the site leadership (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010; Owen, 2015; Wilson, 2011). Researchers have proposed professional collaboration by teachers as a means to improve student performance (Burgess, Newton, & Riveros, 2012; Harris & Jones, 2010; Levine, 2011; Resnick, 2010). Teacher collaboration was a critical factor in transforming high poverty, low achieving schools into high achieving schools (Brown & Green, 2014; Griffin & Green, 2012). Professional collaboration is systematic collective inquiry of strategies and practices to improve instructional quality and student outcomes in schools (Woodland, 2016).

Although teacher collaboration has been deemed a key element in improving student achievement, and despite the decades of research calling for such collaboration (Datnow, 2011), many teachers remain professionally isolated from their peers spending the majority of their day teaching classes and the remainder of the day completing administrative tasks (Dodor, Sira, & Hausafus, 2010; DuFour, 2011; Fallon & Barnett,

2009; Flinders, 1988; Levine, 2011; Lortie, 1975; Sutton & Shouse, 2016). Teachers shape the curriculum, write lesson plans, evaluate student progress, and reflect on strategies primarily by themselves (Dodor et al., 2010; Wimberley, 2011). Two main barriers to beneficial collaboration and planning are the lack of time and poor administrative support (P. L. Evans, 2012; Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2014).

Principals, through shared and supportive leadership, create the conditions to ensure that teachers form learning communities (Hillery, 2013). Principals need to set the vision, provide goals, and guide the collaboration of teachers (Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2014). Simply bringing teachers together in the name of collaboration does not guarantee a successful outcome (Datnow, 2011; Smith, Wilson, & Corbett, 2009). Instead, time and administrative support are necessary for teachers to analyze data, manage the curriculum, study lessons, improve instruction, and create formative assessments (Churchin, 2013). When faculty and staff work in a collaborative setting focused on student learning, this is a professional learning community (Allen, 2013; Hord, 1997).

Williams (2012) recommended that schools operate as professional learning communities (PLCs) so that educational professionals can work collaboratively by focusing on teaching and collecting and using assessment data to collectively inquire about and evaluate students' progress over time. The image of teachers working together as a community within a school has gained prominence in the last two decades (Allen, 2013). PLCs have a shared vision, feature collaboration, use reflective dialogue, and take collective responsibility for student learning (Allen, 2013). An effective PLC requires

the collaborative efforts of administrators and teachers to enhance the performance of students (Hallam, Smith, Hite, Hite, & Wilcox, 2015).

To develop teacher collaboration, a district in the Southwestern United States restructured the daily schedule of all 44 elementary school sites to establish a weekly 105-minute block of time for teachers to meet in a collaborative planning environment. Collaboration time is part of the district's commitment to establish PLCs at all school sites. PLCs have shown to significantly improve collective teacher efficacy (Bailey, 2016; Johnson, 2016; Miller-Bailey, 2016) and student achievement (Wennergren & Blossing, 2017).

The district of this study began implementation of PLCs in 2006 through staff development of administrators and select teachers. While many components and pieces come together to create a PLC, such as shared vision and mission, the development of learning goals, and a philosophy of continuous improvement, research demonstrated that few schools effectively demonstrate all PLC principles (Wells & Feun, 2013). The study explored the experiences of teachers and administration using common planning time at selected schools of a district located in the Southwestern United States that have demonstrated growth in their annual performance index (API) through mandatory state testing. The study provided a better understanding of how these schools used common planning time to successfully collaborate to improve student academic achievement. In a study of systematic school improvement, Mourshed, Chijoke, and Barber (2010) asserted that sustaining a system of improvement requires three elements, "the formation of a mediating layer between schools and the 'center;' a strong pedagogy supported by

collaborative practices; and leadership continuity" (p. 18). The study was of the beliefs and practices of a sample of elementary teachers and elementary administrators about the effective use of this time. Included in the literature review in Chapter 2 is a discussion of the frameworks that support teacher collaboration, the benefits of collaboration, PLCs; and the leadership skills and networks necessary to create a culture of collaboration.

Problem Statement

The problem identified for this qualitative study is the discrepancy in state-mandated test scores between elementary schools with high poverty rates in an urban district in the Southwestern United States despite similar demographics. To be a high-poverty school, 76% or more of the student populations in those schools must qualify to receive free or reduced-price lunches (Aud et al., 2012). Using this criterion, all 44 elementary schools in the selected district are high poverty (California Department of Education [CDE], 2013).

Common planning time was implemented in 2008 to promote teacher collaboration to achieve higher student test scores. The district increased by 71 points in the API in the four years following common planning time becoming a part of the educational program (CDE, 2013). In the four years prior to common planning time, the district improved by 36 points CDE (2013). Compared to an adjoining district with similar demographics, the district in question has made growth. In 2005, the district in the study had an API of 626 and an adjoining district with similar demographics had an API of 644–a difference of 18 points. Three years later and one year prior to the district in the study adopting the common planning time, the district had an API of 656 and the

comparison district had an API of 673–a difference of 17 points. In 2012, since the inception of the common planning time, the district had an API of 726 and the comparison district had an API of 734–a difference of 8 points.

There remained a discrepancy in growth between schools of the district The top three elementary schools in the district averaged 136 points of total growth (see Table 1), whereas the bottom three schools averaged 3 points of total growth over the past 4 years (see Table 2; CDE, 2013).

Table 1

API Growth of High-Achieving Elementary Schools in the School District 2008-2012

	School year				API growth
School	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	No. of points
A	27	47	37	21	132
B	34	37	42	22	135
C	45	12	55	29	141

Source: CDE, 2013; Full reference withheld for confidentiality.

Table 2

API Growth of Low-Achieving Elementary Schools in the School District 2008-2012

	School year				API growth
School	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	No. of points
A	-9	-15	17	-6	-13
B	3	2	-2	9	12
C	2	-5	-12	25	10

Source: CDE, 2013; Full reference withheld for confidentiality

Low performing schools with high numbers of students in poverty extend beyond the boundaries of the district. Downing-Murley, Keedy, and Walsh (2008) identified 75 elementary schools in Kentucky with high numbers of students in poverty as high achieving, but also noted that 340 elementary schools in the state with high numbers of students in poverty failed to meet acceptable achievement goals. Peabody (2011) reported a similar discrepancy between schools with high poverty in test scores of schools in Florida.

High poverty, failing schools exist throughout our nation and despite over 5 decades of reform initiatives, these schools still permeate the national landscape (Brown & Green, 2014). Many internal and external factors can contribute to disparities in schools' ratings and students' scores, including an absence of supportive leadership, a lack of quality instruction, unfavorable environments at home and school, a lack of parental involvement, and social and economic differences (Neimeier, 2012).

In 2008, the selected district for this study modified the school schedule to create a weekly two-hour time block for teachers to collaborate and improve student achievement. A signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) was completed (see Appendix A) after this time was negotiated with the teacher's union. In an effort to facilitate the district's goal to develop PLCs at all school sites, common planning time was incorporated into the schedule.

Some schools in the district under the study have made growth, as measured by state test results, but other schools have not. The three schools selected for the study have exceeded the district average. There was a discrepancy of over 154 API points over

the past four years between the school with the largest growth and the school with the lowest. The discrepancy in achievement scores occurs despite both schools being similar in demographics and utilizing the same curriculum. In this study I explored the use of a designated block of time created for the purpose of teacher collaboration at the high-performing schools. Specifically, I obtained in-depth information for this study on how teachers used collaboration, the ways in which teachers and administrators perceived their roles in the collaborative efforts, and the potential effects on school culture (Damore & Murray, 2009; Hang & Rabren, 2009). The essence of collaboration was vital as the district was attempting to create PLCs at all school sites.

Numerous researchers have supported PLCs and creating time for teachers to collaborate. In a study of practices in four U.S. states, Darling-Hammond, Chung-Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) found that all four states had committed to the practice of PLCs and teacher collaboration. In Canada, teacher collaboration and the adoption of PLCs have been central to school improvement (Burgess et al., 2012). A national study of science, technology, engineering, and mathematic (STEM) educational practices within the context of PLCs (Fulton & Britton, 2011) found that providing collaboration time for teachers had a positive influence on student achievement. As a problem for their study, Cook and Faulkner (2010), in an instrumental case study of common planning time, identified limited information on how teachers in the middle school setting used common planning time. Their study focused on three research questions that asked about (a) factors and characteristics that enhanced common planning

time, (b) beliefs and perceptions regarding common planning time, and (c) activities and topics covered during common planning time.

Since the inception of the new schedule for collaboration, test scores and API growth, as determined by the CDE (2013) for the district, increased by an average of 21 points per year. In this study I examined the use of collaboration time at three schools in the district where test scores have exceeded API goals of the district. The study findings provide the district with effective strategies for all sites to improve common planning time and teacher collaboration (de Waal, 2008). A review of the literature provided copious evidence that collaboration leads to improvements in student achievement, but a gap exists on how to properly implement and sustain effective collaboration (Bennett, 2010).

Nature of the Study

This qualitative study regarding the effective use of common planning time among three high-performing elementary schools in a school district in the Southwestern United States followed a transcendental phenomenological design. The approach chosen was because the focus of the study is the phenomenon of common planning time. For this study I did not focus on an individual, as in a narrative approach, or seek to develop a theory, as in a grounded theory approach. I did not focus on how a cultural group operates, as in ethnography, or on an in-depth understanding of a time-bound case, as in a case study approach. The purpose of the study was to obtain and explore the lived experiences of a sample of elementary administrators and elementary teachers regarding the use of common planning time (Moustakas, 1994).

I obtained data from interviews with the principals and teachers. Observation of common planning time at each site triangulated the data. I selected the teacher and administrator participants through purposive sampling to ensure that all participants had experienced the phenomenon and could provide accurate insights related to their experiences of the phenomenon (Groenewald, 2004). Chapter 3 provides more details about the methodology, including justification of the design and the data collection and analysis procedures.

Research Questions

These four research questions guided the study:

RQ1: What are the beliefs of elementary teachers regarding the use of common planning time to increase student achievement?

RQ2: What strategies have elementary teachers developed during common planning time to increase student achievement?

RQ3: What are the beliefs of elementary principals regarding the use of common planning time to increase student achievement?

RQ4: What strategies do elementary principals incorporate to implement the effective use of common planning time to increase student achievement?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to obtain the perceptions of elementary teachers and administrators at three high-performing elementary schools regarding the effective use of common planning time, a weekly 105-minute block of time that the district established in 2008 to implement PLCs at all school sites. The study

provided a deeper understanding of how teachers collaborate during common planning time to improve student achievement. Sun, Penuel, Frank, Gallagher, and Youngs (2013) found that teachers working in a collaborative setting improved teacher quality and increased school capacity. Mertens, Flowers, Anfara, and Caskey (2010) asserted that common planning time provided teachers a means to "plan ways to integrate the curriculum, analyze assessment data, examine student work, discuss current research, and reflect on the effectiveness of instructional approaches being used" (p. 50).

Although researchers such as DuFour (2011) have stated that teacher collaboration is an essential element of PLCs, research on what collaboration actually is in the school setting has been lacking (David, 2009; Graham, 2007). According to Plagens (2011), there is limited research available on teachers' effective conduction of collaboration or how teachers perceive their collaborative experiences impact their personal and professional practices. P. L. Evans (2012) argued that to differentiate collaboration from mere cooperation, it needs to be clearly defined and stated that teachers prefer congeniality over collegiality. Finley (2013) observed that teachers need to have blocks of time to plan collaboratively, share what they know, discuss what they want to learn, and have the time to reflect on the effectiveness of what they teach. In contrast, Hattie (2009) stated that one path to collaboration is for principals to purposively place teachers on teams to build capacity. Du (2009) proposed that team building is a "complex and dynamic process that, in practice, proves more opaque than its many guiding practices" (p. 14) and that mandated collaboration could lead to teachers forced to implement the mandates of the administrator. Sawyer and Rimm-Kaufman's

(2007) study of the characteristics and predictors of teacher collaboration, however, found that collaboration between teachers usually takes place informally. According to Plagens (2011), teachers feel that administrators have the most control over formal collaboration and that teachers lack ownership of the process.

Other factors affect the ability to collaborate. Panagos (2011) stated that the lack of time is often seen as a barrier, but it was essential that time be allocated for professional collaboration. Canady and Rettig (2008) noted that to accomplish the work of data analysis, curriculum management, lesson study, instructional improvement, and formative assessment design, along with the planning required to support a system of remediation, intervention, and enrichment, teachers must have time to collaborate. Ackerman (2011) determined that scheduled time for teachers to collaborate can enhance teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction. Ackerman found that teachers "desire to maintain or even increase collaborative time" (p. 110) and concluded that "implementation of a scheduled school day for collaboration would benefit not only the teaching staff but the students as well" (p. 110).

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to obtain the perceptions of elementary teachers and administrators at three high-performing elementary schools regarding the effective use of common planning time, a weekly 105-minute block of time that the district established in 2008 to implement PLCs at all school sites. These perceptions included control of the time and consideration of relationships between teachers as well as the relationship between the teachers and administration. The findings

might provide other schools in the school district with strategies and philosophies that they could incorporate during collaboration time to improve student achievement.

Conceptual Framework

Integration of teacher collaboration, PLCs, and the use of common planning time formed the conceptual framework to explain the phenomenon of the study. There is a widespread recognition of the value of a shared, collaborative philosophy in schools (Caskey & Carpenter, 2014). Meirink, Imants, Meijer, and Verloop (2010) noted that collaboration was defined as "two or more teachers, each with separate and autonomous practices, who agree to work together to make their private practices more successful" (pp. 163-164). Another definition of collaboration can also be teachers sharing responsibility and authority for decisions regarding common practices (Meirink et al., 2010). Teacher collaboration creates a learning community where individuals share their multiple perspectives, understandings, observations, and experiences (Goodnough, 2010).

That knowledge is produced through social interaction is the theory undergirding teacher collaboration (Britzman, 1991). Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD), which refers to the importance of social interaction in human development, also supported this theory. Murray, Ma, and Mazur (2009) found that ZPD "is a challenging level that an individual reaches through social interaction" (p. 204). Teacher collaboration became the focus of educational researchers early in the 20th century. Dewey (1916) stated that teachers who reflect upon their practices would provide benefits to the entire education system. Epperson (1962) asserted that it is important that educators share ideas and methods to promote the growth of all staff

members. Little (1990) studied six schools to gain insight into ways the social organization of schools as workplaces were conducive to teachers learning on the job. The ethnographic study characterized the interactions based upon who interacted with whom, location of the interaction, and the topic of the discussion. Little (1990) developed four collaborative practices known as critical practices of adaptability that distinguished successful schools from less successful ones. The practices were as follows: (1) support for discussion of classroom practices, (b) mutual observation and critique, (c) efforts made to design and prepare curriculum, and (d) shared participation in the business of instructional improvement (Little, 1982). Little (1982) observed that in successful schools all four types of practices occurred throughout the school and throughout the work week. Little (1982) also observed that during these collaborative interactions, teachers appeared to understand a shared and common vocabulary. Little (1990) conceptualized four forms of collaboration that may inhibit or promote teacher collaboration as a practice. These forms were as follows: (a) storytelling and scanning for ideas, (b) aid and assistance, (c) sharing, and (d) joint work (Little, 1990). The first three forms inhibited growth while the fourth promoted true collaboration (Little, 1990). Levine (2011) observed that the underlying difference is that at most schools, the norms, routines, and shared vision of the school evolved naturally whereas in an effective culture of collaboration, the norms, routines, and shared vision are "intentionally created" (p. 32). The idea was that the actions of the group are "associated with positive changes and seek to improve student learning" (Levine, 2011, p. 18).

Research regarding PLCs includes the concepts of shared vocabulary, shared participation in the business of instructional improvement, and joint work (DuFour, 2011; Little, 1982, 1990). Qian, Youngs, and Frank (2013) stated that PLCs were to create a new culture where teachers had a collective responsibility for student outcomes. Additionally, to accommodate the theory of group learning, PLCs can serve as the framework within which teachers transform teaching practices through collaboration to achieve higher rates of student learning (Bush, 2016). Evidence from research demonstrated that PLC concepts can positively affect teacher development (Linder, Post, & Calabrese, 2012; Perrault, McClelland, Austin, & Sieppert, 2011). A critical concept of a PLC is that teachers must collaborate (Bretz, 2013; DuFour, 2011; Musanti & Pence, 2010; Richmond & Manokore, 2010). Linder et al. (2012) asserted that the use of reflection, dialogue with other adults, and connecting new learning to past experiences were necessary for teachers to learn new practices and strategies and that these theories and beliefs are present in the structure of PLCs. Wells and Feun (2013) stated that teachers who work in social, collaborative contexts by analyzing student learning and actively learn together enjoy success. Stoll and Seashore (2007) stated that teacher collaboration in the PLC concept is a process that brings the learning community together and PLC teacher collaboration provides an environment where all stakeholders benefit from collaborative relationships. Linder et al. (2012) suggested that the vision of any entity plays a vital role but only if all the participants acknowledge they are part of the plan. PLCs help raise the collective efficacy of teachers at a school site (Gallozzi, 2011). In a study of fourth and fifth grade teachers, Gallozzi (2011) determined a positive

relationship between the perception of the teachers' ability to achieve their goals and the perception that the school functioned as a PLC. Teachers also reported positive changes in classroom practices (Brownell, Adams, Sindelar, Waldron, & Vanhover, 2006).

Murphy (2012) asserted that teams should not be administrative structures but "rather as opportunities for collaboration and learning among team members focused on student learning" (p. 33). Meirink et al. (2010), in a mixed-methods study noted that learning and collaboration were interconnected but many schools, stated that teachers used the word collaboration to describe a practice better defined as cooperation. Likewise, Wells and Feun (2013) reported collaboration is the sharing of materials and resources by teachers' definition. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) found that team learning is a successful strategy in school improvement.

Positive results will not result simply by putting a group of teachers together and demanding collaboration (Gajda & Koliba, 2008; Levine, 2010; Platt & Tripp, 2008). Platt and Tripp (2008) cautioned that collaboration can be either effective groups to improve student learning or can also be groups "whose interactions block improvement and protect mediocre performance by both students and adults" (p. 19). Thessin and Starr (2011) argued that simply putting well-meaning individuals together and expecting them to collaborate is not enough and that districts needed to be deliberate in their efforts to teach teachers how to collaborate. Many researchers and change agents have advocated for PLCs to achieve school reform (Hord, 2008; Little, 2008) calling for a new school culture that eliminates teacher isolation and addresses the frequent lack in coherence among improvement strategies. The desire is to create PLCs that allow the participants to

engage in meaningful activities such as collaborating with peers to develop knowledge about teaching and learning (Musanti & Pence, 2010).

One of the common barriers in implementing a PLC is the availability of time (Dever & Lash, 2013). One means to assist teacher collaboration and implementation of a PLC is to alter the school schedule and create a common planning time for teachers (Bretz, 2013; McGrath, 2010; Smith, 2012). Researchers have asserted that it is critical that teachers have time to collaborate (Ackerman, 2011; Musanti & Pence, 2010; Pangagos, 2011). Gill and Hoffman's (2009) study of the use of common planning time demonstrated that when teachers plan together, their beliefs and rationale are open for scrutiny.

Hudson (2012) concluded that the loss of a common planning time led to more student discipline issues but did not have an impact on academic achievement. Hudson recommended further study on how districts can effectively use the time and provide teachers with plans, goals, and strategies to develop collaboration. Likewise, Santagata and Guarino (2012) concluded that teachers lacked the opportunities to develop and practice the knowledge and skills needed to engage in productive dialogue on teaching. McGrath (2010), in a qualitative study, noted that while teachers valued collaborative time. it was the site principal who was the catalyst in creating a collaborative culture that impacted the use of planning time. In a study of high-performing and high-poverty schools, Suber (2012) determined that effective principals provide school structure and conditions that encourage and provide opportunities for collaboration through planning. Incorporation of common planning time under the PLC model, teachers center their

discussion on teacher actions (Dever & Lash, 2013). It becomes imperative that the PLCs, in conjunction with common planning time, improve student achievement. Thus, through the use of common planning under the principles of PLCs, a collaborative culture places student needs and progress at the center of their work (Szczesiul & Huizinga, 2014).

Operational Terms

I used these definitions for this study:

Annual performance index (API): The API is a single number ranging from a low of 200 to a high of 1000 reflecting the performance level of a school, a local education agency (LEA), or a subgroup based upon the results of statewide testing. The standard for each school or LEA is to achieve an API score of 800 or higher. Each student's performance on multiple statewide assessments uses points for the API. The API calculation converts a student's performance on statewide assessments across multiple content areas into points on the API scale. All student scores then create a calculated API for schools, LEAs, and each numerically significant subgroup of students at a school or an LEA (CDE, 2013).

Belief: Belief is a subjective probability based upon evaluation and judgment that an object has particular characteristics (Oskamp & Schutz, 2005).

Common planning time: For the purpose of this study, common planning time referred to a weekly 105-minute block of time established by the district based upon an MOU signed in 2008 between the teachers' union and the district (see Appendix A).

Practice: Practice is an activity or application used to implement a model of education (Bassinger, 2011).

Professional learning community (PLC): Teachers establish PLCs to foster a culture of collaboration and work continuously through the process of inquiry and action research to improve the achievements of the students (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008).

Teacher collaboration: Collaboration refers to teachers sharing responsibility and authority for decisions regarding common practices (Meirink et al., 2010).

Teacher cooperation: Cooperation is two or more teachers who agree to work together to make their private practices more successful while maintaining their separate and autonomous practices (Meirink et al., 2010).

Assumptions

The study made two assumptions. The first assumption was all participants answered the interview questions honestly. This assumption was because the participants in the study are from three elementary sites that are achieving high test scores. Participants had no reasons to fear repercussions as they have experienced success. This created an environment for the participants to be more open and provided deeper descriptions of the phenomenon than what participants at a low performing school would possibly answer. The second assumption, the instructional strategies as well as the analysis of data completed during common planning time, transferred to the classroom.

Limitations

It is essential for the researcher to have a solid grounding in the philosophical percepts of phenomenology (Creswell, 2012), and thus my lack of experience in

conducting a phenomenological study must be taken as a limitation for the study. Additionally, all participants must have experienced the phenomenon. Teachers selected for the study were all participants in the common planning period. The small sample size was not statistically sufficient for the results observed from the study to be properly applied to the general population for schools or teachers that did not have a similar planning time (Simon, 2010).

Limitations in qualitative research existed and addressed concerning the collection and analysis of data. Information gathered from the one-on-one interviews reflected the views of the participants. These views might be narrow because of the participants' designated roles in the classroom or as site leaders. Some participants may or may not be equally articulate, candid, or perceptive to specific events or ideas within their academic setting, and my presence may have biased responses (Creswell, 2009). Likewise, limited observations by me may have occurred by the tone of the conversations, not understanding the full history of prior communication between specific staff members, and the use of language and double meanings within the context of a conversation between two participants with an established relationship (Creswell, 2009).

Constraints existed in the research context that made reporting beliefs, even the conscious ones, problematic if such beliefs conflicted with the way one is supposed to think about teaching (Gill & Hoffman, 2009). Interviews have limitations as participants may have answered the same question in a different way depending on factors such as how they feel, the relationship with the interviewer, and faulty memory (Reis & Judd,

2000). It was important to use free imaginative variation and give the participant several opportunities to participate in the interview and analysis throughout the study (Groenewald, 2004). Reader confidence of data reporting possibly was biased, incomplete, or compromised (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

Since the topic of the study concerned teachers and common planning time, teachers that do not like to collaborate or even participate in interviews would be disinclined to participate in the study. Research has shown that personality traits of teachers may impact their motivation to share ideas and strategies with other teachers (Benoliel & Schchter, 2017). This would limit the study findings to specific personality types and not reflect the beliefs and attitudes of the teachers and administrators at the school as well as the district.

Scope and Delimitations

The study purposely limited the study to three elementary schools located in one district that is implementing teacher collaborative learning groups. Research questions limited the study to the perceptions of the elementary teachers and elementary administrators who actually experienced common planning time. There was consideration to interview teachers and administrators at schools that have not shown significant improvement, but this rejected as it would be more difficult to gain the trust of the participants and obtain honest answers to interview questions. Sites specifically selected exceeded API growth expectations and had comparable student populations, staffing ratios, and funding sources.

Significance of the Study

The study was significant because it is relevant to the local problem and the profession of education, and it has the potential to implement social change. The phenomenological study examined the experience of teachers and administrators regarding the use of a common planning time and its impact on academic achievement. Teachers learn best in a collaborative and collegial culture that allows reflection and discussion centered on improving instructional practice (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

Application to the Local Problem

The study explored the culture of the site and shifted the core work of teachers from an isolated focus on the adaptation of classroom activities and individual student achievement to a collective inquiry involving the study of student data, identifying critical standards, and planning common sequences and experiences for students (Visone, 2016). T. H. Nelson (2009) stated dialogue by teachers changed interactions from sharing activities to critically questioning relationships between and among common activities, learning goals, and student learning. Because of the experiences of the teachers and administrators at successful sites, all schools in the district provided with commonalities and strategies to implement effective common planning time.

The study was significant because the district should have access to and provided with strategies and an understanding of how the district-implemented collaboration time using PLC principles improved student achievement. The district entered into an MOU with the teachers' union, and because students were released 2.5 hours earlier once a

week, the new schedule impacted parents and their ability to provide supervision for their children. With the adoption of a new schedule, principals and teachers explored and adapted practices and strategies to use this time effectively to impact the performance of students positively. Possibly the results of the study can be used by principals and teachers to create and develop strategies and techniques to enhance collaboration and to create a positive culture to share ideas, discuss student progress, create assessments, and build the collective capacity at a school site. The district can use the conclusions drawn from the study to conduct further research, implement suggested strategies and techniques to train site administration, and continue to work with teachers in building collaboration at the site and throughout the district.

Professional Applicability

The findings in the study might be of benefit to school boards, school administrators, teachers, students, and parents for consideration in modifying schedules and adopting PLCs as an opportunity to improve student learning. Other districts have modified their daily schedules to create common planning time, and the study might assist districts in creating effective site use of this time to increase student achievement. Likewise, districts have invested time and funding to train administrators and teachers to implement PLCs. Given a common planning time, principals and teachers need trained in and use techniques and strategies of high-performing schools to create a collaborative culture. Districts can now use this research to adopt schedule changes and work with staff members to make such changes to the schedule to directly benefit student achievement. Universities may use the research of the study to revise teacher preparation

programs to include collaboration time, analyzing data, and reflecting on their practices. Furthermore, the research may assist universities as they implement and develop their own research teams within their own departments (Du, 2009).

Positive Social Change

When student achievement improves, the overall impact on the community is positive. Ross and Willigen (1997) stated that well-educated people have access to meaningful work that increases their sense of personal control, resulting in more stable relationships with less emotional and physical distress. As examples, higher academic achievement in primary and secondary education has led to economic growth in Asia (Aghion, Bouston, Hoxby, & Vandenbusshe, 2009), and poor socioeconomics has been recognized as a factor explaining school success, failure, and dropping out (Bergeron, Chouinard, & Janosz, 2011). The study will add to the body of knowledge with the purpose of improving student lives as children and more importantly as adults. In a study on perceptions of college readiness, Reed (2014) stated that students who graduate from high school and college "may benefit economically, politically, and socially" (p. 1). The study might lead to both higher graduation rates and college readiness and provide data to improve communities across the United States.

Summary

The problem identified in this phenomenological qualitative study was the discrepancy in test scores of elementary schools with high poverty rates in an urban district in the southwestern United States. Despite adjusting the schedule to create a common planning time for all schools, there has been inconsistency in how schools have

performed on state tests. The purpose of the phenomenological study was to obtain the perceptions of teachers and administrators at three high-performing elementary schools regarding the effective use of common planning time, a weekly 105-minute block of time that the district established in 2008 to implement PLCs at all school sites. Data sources were interviews of both site administrators and classroom teachers who have experienced the phenomenon. Observations of common planning time triangulated the data.

The conceptual framework for the study included teacher collaboration and PLCs. The study was significant because it was relevant to the local problem and the profession of education, and it has the potential to implement social change. Included in Chapter 2 is a literature review of teacher collaboration PLCs, common planning time, and leadership. Chapter 3 includes information regarding the selection of the transcendental, phenomenological design as the best means to answer the research questions. Chapter 4 includes the data analysis of the results. Chapter 5 will include an explanation of the results, offer recommendations for action and further study, and discuss the implications for social change.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem identified in this phenomenological qualitative study was the discrepancy in test scores between elementary schools with high poverty rates in an urban district in the southwestern United States despite similar demographics. The purpose of the study was to obtain the perceptions of teachers and administrators at three high-performing elementary schools regarding the use of common planning time, a weekly 105-minute block of time that the district established in 2008 to implement PLCs at all school sites. This review of the literature on PLCs, teacher collaboration, site leadership, and common planning time demonstrated that PLCs and teacher collaboration link to higher student achievement but that a gap exists on exactly how collaborative cultures and leadership strategies develop to achieve such a culture at a school site.

Literature Search Strategy

I searched the following databases: EBSCO, ERIC, Educational Research Complete, Education (a SAGE full-text database), Proquest Dissertations and Theses, Thoreau, and Google Scholar. For the search I used the following terms: *professional learning communities, teacher collaboration, teacher collegiality, high performing schools, teacher trust, teacher beliefs, administrative trust, administrative beliefs, administrative practices, organizational commitment, planning time,* and *leadership.* Articles reviewed covered a span from 1916-2014 with over 75% from peer-reviewed journals and published within the last five years. In the review I detail research regarding PLCs, teacher beliefs and practices concerning collaboration, common planning time, and

leadership and teacher collaboration. The sources emerged to develop a scholarly foundation through a critical evaluation of the literature, which demonstrated how the relationships of current and past research related to the study.

Conceptual Framework

Integration of teacher collaboration, PLCs, and the use of common planning time formed the conceptual framework to explain the phenomenon of the study. To gain a deeper understanding of how the selected sites used common planning time to increase test scores, it was essential to access the research that supported such practices and beliefs. The first component reviewed was the topic of PLCs.

PLCs became popular during the late 1990s and early in the 20th century. However, research traced the term and ideas much earlier. Knowles (1979) referred to Schon's (1971) *Beyond the Stable* that encouraged organizations to consider that "learning communities are vessels to encourage, support and provide resources for their members to grow and develop" (p. 394). PLCs were developed to enable members of the school to work and learn together in a culture focused on continuous improvement (Knowles, 1979).

Research regarding PLCs includes the concepts of shared vocabulary, shared participation in the business of instructional improvement, and joint work (DuFour, 2011; Little, 1982, 1990). Qian et al. (2013) stated that PLCs were to create a new culture where teachers had a collective responsibility for student outcomes. Additionally, to accommodate the theory of group learning, PLCs can serve as the framework within

which teachers transform teaching practices through collaboration to achieve higher rates of student learning (Riveros, Newton, & Burgess, 2012).

Evidence from research demonstrated that PLC concepts can positively affect teacher development (Linder et al., 2012; Perrault et al., 2011). Linder et al. (2012) asserted that the use of reflection, dialogue with other adults, and connecting new learning to past experiences were necessary for teachers to learn new practices and strategies and that these theories and beliefs are present in the structure of PLCs. Wells and Feun (2013) stated that teachers who work in social, collaborative contexts actively learn together and enjoy success by analyzing student learning. A critical concept of a PLC is that teachers must collaborate (Bretz, 2013; DuFour, 2011; Musanti & Pence, 2010; Richmond & Manokore, 2010).

There is a widespread recognition of the value of a shared, collaborative philosophy in schools (Caskey & Carpenter, 2014). Meirink et al. (2010) noted that collaboration was defined as "two or more teachers, each with separate and autonomous practices, who agree to work together to make their private practices more successful" (pp. 163-164). Another definition of collaboration can also be teachers sharing responsibility and authority for decisions regarding common practices (Meirink et al., 2010). Teacher collaboration creates a learning community where individuals share their multiple perspectives, understandings, observations, and experiences (Goodnough, 2010). In higher performing schools, collaboration that was focused on identifying student needs and designing ways to address those needs through data analysis improved student performance (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015).

That knowledge is produced through social interaction was the theory undergirding teacher collaboration (Britzman, 1991). Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD, which referred to the importance of social interaction in human development, also supported this theory. Murray et al. (2009) found that ZPD "is a challenging level that an individual reaches through social interaction" (p. 204). Teachers through collaboration could actually teach each other by discussing techniques and strategies particularly if the teacher was achieving better test scores. Collaboration provides an opportunity for teachers to critically reflect on their work. Dewey (1916) stated that teachers who reflect upon their practices would provide benefits to the entire education system. Educators need to share ideas and methods to build the expertise and skills of all staff members (Epperson,1962).. Little (1990) studied six schools to gain insight into ways the social organization of schools as workplaces were conducive to teachers learning on the job.

The ethnographic study characterized the interactions based upon who interacted with whom, location of the interaction, and the topic of the discussion. Little (1990) developed four collaborative practices known as critical practices of adaptability that distinguished successful schools from less successful ones. The practices were as follows: (a) support for discussion of classroom practices, (b) mutual observation and critique, (c) efforts made to design and prepare curriculum, and (d) shared participation in the business of instructional improvement (Little, 1982).

Little (1982) observed that in successful schools all four types of practices occurred throughout the school and throughout the work week. Little also observed that during these collaborative interactions, teachers appeared to understand a shared and

common vocabulary. Little (1990) conceptualized four forms of collaboration that may inhibit or promote teacher collaboration as a practice. These forms were: (a) storytelling and scanning for ideas, (b) aid and assistance, (c) sharing, and (d) joint work (Little, 1990). The first three forms inhibited growth while the fourth promoted true collaboration (Little, 1990).

Levine (2011) observed that the underlying difference is that at most schools, the norms, routines, and shared vision of the school evolved naturally whereas in an effective culture of collaboration, the norms, routines, and shared vision are "intentionally created" (p. 32). The idea was that the actions of the group are "associated with positive changes and seek to improve student learning" (Levine, 2011, p. 32).

Murphy (2012)asserted that teams should not exist to support operations but be focused on collaboration by team members focused solely on student learning.. However, many teachers and administrators have many definitions of collaboration. Meirink et al. (2010), in a mixed-methods study noted that learning and collaboration were interconnected but in many schools, stated that teachers used the word collaboration to describe a practice better defined as cooperation. Likewise, Wells and Feun (2013) reported collaboration is the sharing of materials and resources by teachers' definition.

Positive results will not result simply by putting a group of teachers together and demanding collaboration (Gajda & Koliba, 2008; Levine, 2010; Platt & Tripp, 2008). Platt and Tripp (2008) cautioned that collaboration can be either effective groups to improve student learning or can also be groups "whose interactions block improvement and protect mediocre performance by both students and adults" (p. 19). Thessin and Starr

(2011) argued that simply putting well-meaning individuals together and expecting them to collaborate is not enough and that districts needed to be deliberate in their efforts to teach teachers how to collaborate. But the desire to create a collaborative culture is necessary as it has been found that team learning is a successful strategy in school improvement (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).

PLCs were advocated to achieve school reform and improve student achievement (Hord, 2008; Little, 2008). PLCs cultivate a new school culture that eliminates teacher isolation and addresses the frequent lack in coherence among improvement strategies (Hord, 2008). The desire was to create PLCs that allow the participants to engage in meaningful activities such as collaborating with peers to develop knowledge about teaching and learning (Musanti & Pence, 2010).

For all the positive promises of PLCs, a critical barrier for implementation is the lack of time (Dever & Lash, 2013). One means to assist teacher collaboration and implementation of a PLC is to alter the school schedule and create a common planning time for teachers (Bretz, 2013; McGrath, 2010; Smith, 2012). Researchers have asserted that it is critical that teachers have time to collaborate (Ackerman, 2011; Musanti & Pence, 2010; Pangagos, 2011). Gill and Hoffman's (2009) study of the use of common planning time demonstrated that when teachers plan together, their beliefs and rationales are open for scrutiny.

Hudson (2012) concluded that the loss of a common planning time led to more student discipline issues but did not have an impact on academic achievement. Hudson recommended further study on how districts can effectively use the time and provide

teachers with plans, goals, and strategies to develop collaboration. Likewise, Santagata and Guarino (2012) concluded that teachers lacked the opportunities to develop and practice the knowledge and skills needed to engage in productive dialogue on teaching. McGrath (2010), in a qualitative study, noted that while teachers valued collaborative time it was the site principal who was the catalyst in creating a collaborative culture that impacted the use of planning time.

In a study of high-performing and high-poverty schools, Suber (2012) determined that effective principals provide school structure and conditions that encourage and provide opportunities for collaboration through planning. Incorporation of common planning time under the PLC model, teachers center their discussion on teacher actions (Dever & Lash, 2013). It becomes imperative that the PLCs, in conjunction with common planning time, improve student achievement. Thus, through the use of common planning under the principles of PLCs, a collaborative culture places student needs and progress at the center of their work (Szczesiul & Huizinga, 2014). The next chapters will delve deeper into PLCs, teacher collaboration, common planning time, and leadership and teacher collaboration and the research regarding these topics and how they support the study. PLCs are the first topic as the incorporation of PLCs in the district in question that led to the creation of the common planning time at all school sites.

Deeper Look into Professional Learning Communities

The concepts of PLCs appeared in the literature of the early 1990s and originated with organizational theory literature (Leclerc, Moreau, Dumouchel, & Sallafranque-St-Louis, 2012; Woodland, 2016). Establishing PLCs at school sites created possibilities for

reflective practice and new cultures where teaching and learning were the focus of both administrators and teachers (Allen, 2013; Hord & Sommers, 2008; Wells & Feun, 2013). Thus, PLC work is about teaching and learning with neither exclusive of the other (Allen, 2013; Hord & Sommers, 2008). Through the PLC, teachers construct knowledge through interactions and activities with others (Allen, 2013; Pella, 2011).

DuFour (2011) stated that in a PLC, educators work collectively together to develop a viable curriculum, gather information regarding learning using assessment data, analyze data, learn from each other, and create a systematic process that ensures that all students, even those who are struggling, learn. Ultimately, the practice of PLCs was an intentional strategy for system-wide change (Harris, 2011; Zhang, Yuan, & Yu, 2017). Leclerc et al. (2012) determined seven factors as crucial to the progression of a school becoming a PLC. These factors included the school's vision, conditions to support teacher collaboration, the culture of the school, shared leadership, communication, focus on student learning, and data-based decision making.

PLCs have gained recognition as an effective strategy for increasing student achievement, promoting professional development, and improving the culture of the school (Bruce, Flynn, & Ross, 2013; DuFour, 2011; Harris & Jones, 2010; Kalkan, 2016; Sigurðardóttir, 2010). Studies reviewed regarding PLCs and higher student achievement yielded conflicting results. Some studies have concluded that PLCs connect to increased student performance and other studies have concluded that there is not a significant relationship between PLCs and increased academic performance.

Hughes and Kritsonis (2007) conducted a quantitative study that looked at 64 schools in Texas that functioned as PLCs. Over a three-year period, 90.6% of the PLC school students achieved higher math test scores with 42.3% increasing by more than five points. Peters (2013), in a mixed-methods study of a district, noted that teachers in the schools surveyed rated the PLC climate higher than other schools and also demonstrated higher student achievement than similar schools. Sigurðardóttir (2010) concluded in a mixed-methods study of PLCs and student achievement that students had higher scores on national tests, especially in mathematics.

Not all studies reviewed have linked PLCs to higher student achievement. Royer (2012) determined in a quasi-experimental, nonequivalent group mixed-design that in a one-year implementation process of a PLC, there was not a positive association with teacher perceptions of PLC implementation and student math scores. However, Royer indicated that because the PLC implementation was not fully complete the impact on student achievement was not significant but "there were specific indicators from the beginning to the end of the year, thus reaffirming the effectiveness of collaboration among educators and the potential it holds to influence the success among student achievement" (Royer, 2012, p. 99). Story (2012) concluded in a quantitative casual comparative study of test scores of third- and fifth-grade students that no significant difference in test scores in reading for the three years prior to implementation of PLCs and test scores three years after implementation. Likewise, there was no improvement in third-grade math scores, but a significant increase in fifth-grade math scores was noted (Story, 2012).

Studies that focused on teacher perceptions of PLCs concluded that teachers perceive such communities as effective for both teachers and student achievement. Finley (2013) concluded in a case study of six elementary teachers that the implementation of a PLC structurally implemented and five of the six teachers interviewed routinely discussed team practices. Brucker (2013) conducted a quantitative study of teacher perceptions of implementation of PLCs and the effectiveness of PLCs in improving student achievement and found that most teachers felt that PLCs were effective in improving student achievement. P. L. Evans (2012) and Morris's (2011) research also concluded that PLCs had a positive effect on teacher perceptions and student achievement. P. L. Evans found in a qualitative interview study involving individual interviews, a focus group, and a teacher self-evaluation that participants perceived PLCs as a collaborative endeavor that was effective for both teacher learning and student achievement. Morris noted inconsistencies in student achievement across grade levels, but teachers perceived collaboration as having a positive impact on student achievement.

One issue regarding PLCs is the literature defining a PLC has demonstrated disagreement particularly in regards to structure, goals, and work (Richmond & Manokore, 2010). Richmond and Manokore (2010) defined a PLC as "a group of teachers who meet regularly with a common set of teaching and learning goals, shared responsibility for work to be undertaken, and collaborative development of pedagogical content knowledge" (p. 545). DuFour et al. (2008) defined a PLC as teachers coming

together to create a culture of collaboration and work continuously through the process of inquiry and action research to improve the achievement of students.

The influx of PLCs and the variety of definitions used of a PLC has led to criticism that the term to describe any practice involving teachers and other educators working together. Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth (2001) observed that "community has become the obligatory appendage for every educational innovation" (p. 942), and concluded that the word community "has lost its meaning" (p. 942). Huffman (2011) noted that there are still a variety of perceptions and other definitions that describe the PLC process and that the term PLC too often describes small groups and large groups. Huffman stated that "the lack of a consistently used, common definition for PLCs only serves to confuse the practitioner" (p. 322). Cranston's (2009) study of 12 principals concluded that while the principals understood the need for a PLC, their understanding of what defined a PLC and the key components varied and were limited. Wells and Feun (2013) stated that despite the research base to support the implementation of PLCs there are few examples of effective transformation.

The skills, beliefs, dispositions, and work arrangements of teachers at the school determine the professional capacity of the staff (Bryk, Sebring, Allenswoth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010). Critical to the PLC is frequent teacher interaction (DuFour, 2011; R. Evans, 2012; Harris & Jones, 2010; Sigurðardóttir, 2010). This is more than having teachers gather and talk.

Teachers working collaboratively are no guarantee for improved student achievement (Harris & Jones, 2010). Many teachers have reported collaboration as "the

sharing of materials and resources" (Wells & Feun, 2013, p. 235). It is important to develop a community of professionals engaged in the learning process and their knowledge be embedded in the process of collaboration (Riveros et al., 2012). Richmond and Manokore (2010) stated that those that conduct research on collaboration "need to be able to distinguish between a community of teachers and a group of teachers sitting in a room for a meeting" (pp. 544-545). Abawi (2012) noted that through the process of collaboration, a culture surrounding the professional learning community is developed.

In a PLC, teachers are engaged in work that deprivatizes practice (Wells & Feun, 2013). PLC's provide the organizational structures that promote regular opportunities for teachers to work with each other in teams (Ronfeldt et al., 2015). When teacher collaboration becomes the norm at the site, then the school becomes a place of learning for both students and staff (Abawi, 2012). It becomes necessary not only to understand the extent to which teachers collaborate but also how useful the collaboration is utilized in supporting the individual practice of teachers (Ronfeldt et al., 2015).

Teacher Collaboration

Collaboration can be an asset or a liability on how teams or individual teachers improve individual practice or innovation in school wide practice (Kaplan, 2014). Shernoff, Marinez-Lora, Frazier, Jakobsons, Atkins, & Bonner (2011) observed that PLCs are deliberate mechanisms to create collaboration through focused discussions and exposure to evidence-based strategies that promote connections with colleagues. This shift to a collaborative teacher culture comes from the idea that peer conversation and interaction is vital to building meaning, writing lessons, creating assessments, and

enacting pedagogical reform (Glazier, Boyd, Bell Hughes, Able, & Mallous, 2016). When teacher collaboration includes reflection and feedback on student learning, it can have a positive effect on student achievement (Johnson, S. M., Kraft, & Papay, 2012).

Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development helped to create teacher collaboration; and theory of group learning guided teacher collaboration. The theory is that "individuals learn best when working together with others during joint collaborations" (Shabani, Khatib, & Ebadi, 2010, p. 238). This zone of proximal development shares a theoretical base with social aspects of learning that through communication and interactions with others, learning and change take place (Pella, 2011). It is the goal that collaboration will bring teachers together to improve their pedagogy through engagement in collegial discourse (Glazier et al., 2016).

Traditionally, teachers have conducted their business in privacy behind classroom doors (Santagata & Guarino, 2012). Teacher isolation involved several factors: organizational beliefs, physical and time constraints, and the teachers themselves (Kozar, 2011). Most teachers are free agents responsible for providing instruction to students for a set number of days with little interest or concern about the teaching or learning that is occurring in other classrooms (Doyle, 2012). Teachers work in silos isolated from each other with limited opportunities to observe other teachers' instructional practices and this denies them opportunities to objectively reflect on their own practices (Fullan, 2010).

Flinders (1988) concluded teachers used isolation as an adaptive strategy because it protects the time and energy required to meet instructional needs. Flinders' observations of teacher interactions demonstrated that not only did teachers accept their

relative isolation; they actually strove to maintain it. Hargreaves (1998) stated that teacher isolation was a product of a culture that promotes individualistic behavior among teachers. Administration hired and retained teachers based on their ability to do things on their own with little or no assistance from the site principal (Doyle, 2012).

Isolation creates variance in teacher practice and instructional outcomes (Doyle, 2012). A meta-analysis by Hattie (2009) found that isolation created variations in teaching and that not all teachers are effective. These variations attributed to theories in use and espoused theory (Argyris & Schon, 1974). Argyris and Schon (1974) proposed that people have very specific ideas about how they will act in a given situation. The theory in use is what we actually do and the espoused theory is what we would like others to think we do. For isolated teachers, "what they say they are teaching and what they are actually teaching may be miles apart" (Doyle, 2012, p. 23). Disconnection and isolation prevent teachers from understanding their beliefs and actions if they do not have the opportunity to openly discuss and reflect with other teachers and administrators (Doyle, 2012). This lack of teacher interaction resulted in many teachers lacking the skills and knowledge needed to teach students let alone prepare students to achieve on standardized tests (Mertens et al., 2010).

Many researchers have called upon ending such isolated practices and have teachers collaborate to improve practice and student achievement (Miller, Goddard, Goddard, Larsen, & Jacob, 2010). Teacher collaboration's definition is teachers sharing responsibility and authority for decisions regarding common practices (Meirink et al., 2010). DuFour (2011) contended that collaboration is a fundamental piece in

establishing a PLC. Collaboration is a deliberate and intentional act to analyze student achievement that makes a difference in PLC work (Wells & Feun, 2013). Given that teachers are professionals, possess knowledge about their students, and know how they learn, collaboration is a logical practice for teachers (Goddard, Miller, Larson, Goddard, Madsen, & Schroeder, 2010).

In order to develop and sustain teacher coloration, teachers need to develop collegiality. Collegiality is more than congeniality (Nelson, J. P., Caldarella, Adams, & Shatzer, 2013). Collegiality is building relationships between staff that connects at a personal level, sharing advice and discussing new ideas and models for teaching (Nelson, J. P. et al., 2013). Storytelling, sharing advice, and discussing new ideas is collegial in nature; it still protects the autonomy of the classroom teacher (Little, 1990). Collegiality as a collaborative practice is complex work that cannot be accomplished alone (Little, 1990). Teams of teachers complete this complex work characterized by strong interdependence, shared responsibility, and a greater readiness to participate in reviewing and critiquing teaching practices and realities (Little, 1990).

Teacher collaboration serves as one of the core characteristics of PLCs and is also an element in Communities of Practice and Professional Inquiry (Resnick, 2010). Kutsyruba (2013) emphasized "collaboration has become the cornerstone of schools as postmodern organizations, serving as a basis for decision making and problem-solving" (p. 28). Harris and Jones (2010) offered that collaboration improved teacher efficacy which made teachers "more likely to adopt new classroom behaviors and also more likely to stay in the profession" (p. 173). Collaboration could be the key to a rewarding career

that would attract and retain professionals resulting in higher levels of teaching and better student outcomes but that not all collaboration is the same at districts or school sites (Glazier et al., 2016).

Little (1990) defined collaboration as a greater readiness to participate in reviewing and critiquing teaching practices and realities. As collaboration develops, there is an increased sense of responsibility for school-wide outcomes (Nelson, J. P. et al., 2013). Glazier et al. (2016) defined collaboration as falling along a continuum with three specific types: contrived, comfortable, or critical. Contrived collegiality is the strict adherence to administrative requirements that leads to stimulated compliance and is ineffective in changing teacher behaviors (Wang, 2015) It is administratively controlled, forced, fixed in time and space, and does not allow time or space for the development of trust and comfort for the participants (Datnow, 2011; Glazier et al., 2016).

Comfortable collaboration is not forced but more focused on short-term issues that do not work on deeper issues (Glazier et al., 2016). Teachers are comfortable, share stories and experiences, and start to build collegiality (Little, 1990). However, it goes little beyond opportunistic exchanges and protects the autonomy of the classroom teacher. Kutsyruba (2011) described comfortable collaboration as thin and superficial with teachers sharing ideas, resources, and techniques but avoiding deep discussion regarding long-range planning and collective purpose of teaching.

Critical collaboration is the arena where joint work occurs (Little, 1990). Critical collaboration espouses independent thinking, discussion of alternatives, and professional conflict in regards to perspectives and beliefs (Glazier et al., 2016; Little, 1990).

According to Glazier et al. (2016), the collaboration at this level avoids simple solutions, but engages the participants in critique of self and others with a focus on long-term solutions through improved communication and negotiation. Little (1990) added it is work that creates a collective action where teachers select one particular course of action or decide on a set of basic principles that guide the actions of individual teachers.

The key point is that teachers don't use collaborative time to evaluate each other but to study their practices and create a professional common ground for all to participate (Santagata & Guarino, 2012). Under a PLC model, teacher collaboration is focused on teacher actions not student actions (Wells & Feun, 2013). Time becomes the foundation to the creation of a PLC when utilized in this manner. Time becomes an important resource to facilitate and build the collaborative culture.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) found that U.S. teachers have 3-5 hours each week for lesson planning and that this time is independently scheduled independently rather than jointly with colleagues. They found that teachers are with students about 80% of their total workday (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Emerging research indicated that teacher collaboration is positively associated with the academic performance for students (Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2009). In Goddard et al.'s (2007) study of 47 elementary schools, it was found teacher collaboration was a significant positive predictor of differences among schools in student achievement. This study focused on direct connections between collaboration and student achievement. However, Huang and Waxman (2009) stated collegiality was not a predictor of professional commitment but

was a significant predictor of organizational commitment meaning that the effect of collegiality improved the teacher's commitment to a school, not necessarily the profession of teaching.

Harris and Jones (2010) noted, "While organizing teachers into small collegial groups may improve school culture, it does not necessarily result in improved instruction and student achievement" (p. 179). Dever and Lash (2013) observed that failing to provide teachers with initial training in PLC principles and expectations resulted in members less motivated to work collaboratively. Saunders, Goldenburg, and Gallimore (2009) found that one of the features that made teacher discussions effective was a focus on cause-effect connections between specific instructional strategies and student learning.

A review of the literature indicated critical factors in developing teacher collaboration. Mackey, Pitcher, and Decman (2006) stated trust, respect, and collegiality are specific factors that influence teacher collaboration. Collegiality is the formation of relationships between the teachers (Little, 1990). Trust is critical among colleagues as well as trust between the teachers and site leadership (Gray, Kruse, & Tarter, 2016; Gray, Mitchell, & Tarter, 2014; Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2014). Trust is the ability to appear vulnerable in front of your peers and the peers still accept and support their colleague. Educational research acknowledges trust among school members to foster school's effectiveness and improvement (Moolenaar & Sleegers, 2010).

Trust among teachers, for example, lays the foundation of well-functioning PLCs (Hargreaves 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2014), which through enhancing teacher learning, should improve student learning (Louis, 2008). Bryk and Schneider (2002) stated that

schools revolve around relational trust that is an anchor in the social exchanges attached to key role relationships found in schools. This goes beyond teacher-to-teacher interactions. Some of the key relationship groups involved with teachers and the organizational roles are students, parents, teaching colleagues, and the principal (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Relational trusts are the agreements to each party's' knowledge of expectations and obligations to each other (Cranston, 2011).

Both principal and teachers must observe the behavior of the other as consistent with mutually held expectations for the relational trust to grow and be reinforced (Cranston, 2011). Cranston's (2011) study of relational trust stated that five themes emerged: trust developed as teachers are in relationships, trust required establishing norms around risk-taking, trust-supported effective collaboration, the principal was central in establishing a climate of trust, and the faculty requisite trust of the principal was paramount. Cosner (2009) suggested that trust between colleagues contributes to psychological safety. Edmondson (2004) stated that individuals who feel psychological safety are more likely to engage in five important team learning behaviors, including feedback seeking, help seeking, speaking up about concerns and mistakes, innovation, and boundary spanning. Bryk and Schneider (2003) engaged in extensive quantitative data collection of Chicago public schools including longitudinal case studies and concluded "schools with high trust were more likely to demonstrate marked improvements in students learning" (p. 43).

Trust formation within organizations develops differently than the development of trust in either close, personal, or romantic relationships or between relative strangers

(Cosner, 2009). In organizational settings, a knowledge-based model of trust forms between individuals through repeated social exchanges (Cosner, 2009). Kramer (1999) contended that "trusts between two or more interdependent actors thickens or thins as a function of their cumulative interactions. Interactional histories give decision makers information that is useful in assessing others' dispositions, intentions, and motives" (p. 575).

To build trust and collaboration, teachers need to have more interactions with each other (DuFour, 2011). While teachers engage in as many as 1,000 interpersonal actions each day (Jackson, 1965) there tends to be a lack of opportunities for discussing their work with other personnel (Flinders, 1988). Finding time to collaborate is one of the most consistent barriers teachers face (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Friend & Cook, 2009).

Common Planning Time

Senge (1990) stated that structures needed to be in place to create collaborative communities and this included common planning time. It is critical that teachers have time to collaborate (DuFour, 2011; McGrath, 2010). Experts on teaching have noted that without a regular time to plan collaboratively, teachers tend to teach without differentiation strategies and resort to a one teach/one support paradigm (Murawski, 2012).

Canady and Rettig (2008) stated that school schedules should build in time for collaboration by creating common planning time for teachers to meet and collaborate.

Common planning time and PLCs provide a structure for teachers and administrators to improve instructional strategies (Bretz, 2013). Common planning time is a

> specific, planned period of time during the school day in which teachers on a team have the opportunity to meet with one another to plan curriculum and assessments, share instructional strategies, organize team events, discuss student issues and communicate with parents. (Cook & Faulkner, 2010, p. 2)

Mertens and Flowers (2004) recommended that these teams meet for at least 30 minutes a session. Often teachers have had trouble on utilizing this time for planning and have seen the time allocated to focus or complete other school related tasks (Cook & Faulkner, 2010).

Traditional instruction practices and teaching in isolation, teachers find little time to collaborate (P. L. Evans, 2012). A common complaint among teachers is there is insufficient time to effectively work together (Lujan & Day, 2010). Darling-Hammond (1999) found that U.S. teachers spend more time in front of their students than any other industrial nation. The average work week for primary teachers is 49 hours (Renwick, 2004). In contrast, European and Asian teachers teach between 17 and 20 hours and spend the rest of their 40 to 45 weekly work hours in classroom preparation, collegial work, one-on-one meetings with students or parents, study groups or observations, research, and demonstration lessons (Krantz-Kent, 2008). Teachers at the elementary level have little or no common planning time in the antiquated schedules adopted by most schools (McGrath, 2010). Yet, research demonstrates the need for such time to improve the school climate.

Barney and Deutsch (2012) determined that common planning time is beneficial for new teachers when they work with veteran teachers during their common planning time. In a study of how teachers use common planning time, Gill and Hoffman's (2009) study of four middle school math teachers stated that the benefits of common planning time afforded them the opportunity to share ideas, ask questions, and express themselves. Bretz (2013) in a qualitative study of high school teachers and administrators found that both teachers and administration perceived that common planning time had a significant impact on teaching and student learning. Over the past 30 years, research has also indicated that common planning time has provided students to be better known by their teachers (Lipsitz, 1984), led to higher student self-esteem, and a more positive perception of school climate (Mertens & Flowers, 2004); and fewer behavior problems (Mertens, Flowers, & Mulhall, 1998). Teachers have benefited from common planning time through higher levels of job satisfaction (Flowers, Mertens, & Mulhall, 1999) and more positive interactions and collegiality with their teammates (Flowers, Mertens, & Mulhall, 2000).

Mertens et al. (2010) noted the gaps in the research and found "most notable missing from the research already conducted on common planning time are the 'nuts and bolts' of how teachers work collaboratively during common planning time" (p. 53). The concepts of the PLC detail the "what" needs to be done, but the gap is in the "how" teams are to accomplish these tasks and the "knowledge and skills the teachers need, or the quality of these collaborative activities when they do take place" (Mertens et al, 2010, p. 53).

Hudson (2012) found that common planning time did not have an impact on student achievement in reading or math. However, Hudson concluded that the research did find common planning time as not beneficial but urged that districts have a clear plan and a purpose for the use of such time. Flax (2011) reported that in the interview of eight middle school teachers not one reported in professional training on how to prepare for or conduct common planning time. Santagata and Guarino (2012) concluded that new teachers' initial conceptions of collaboration do not necessarily match with the collaboration expected of them in PLCs; however, new teachers can learn from experienced teachers to collaborate and find collaboration useful.

The goal is not only for teachers to have the ability to collaborate and have the time to collaborate. Site leadership is essential in developing PLCs and the use of common planning time. While providing teachers scheduled time to meet is critical for collaboration, this allotted time does not guarantee that their efforts will result in instructional improvements (Levine, 2011, Little, 1990). Bretz (2013) stated that teachers were aware of the absence of site administration during common planning time. With effective leadership, principals can create a culture of collaboration (Szczesiul & Huizinga, 2014).

Several studies noted the positive effect of leadership on teacher collaboration (Leithwood et al., 2010; Owen, 2015). The site leadership needs to adopt the strategies and develop the trust to create a culture for the professional learning community (Wells & Feun, 2013). Mertens et al. (2010) stated that many teachers do not have the goals and purposes of the use of common planning time. They observed that if principals provided

teachers with this understanding, it would provide them with an environment where teachers would have success with teaming and common planning time (Mertens et al., 2010). The next chapter will provide the research regarding leadership and the exploration of site leadership during the study.

Leadership and Teacher Collaboration

Successful educational leadership has never been a random phenomenon (Wilson, 2011). Voelkel and Chrispeels (2017) found that strong supportive leadership is required to implement and sustain PLCs at a school site. They stated that leadership needs to create an environment of trust so that it is safe for teachers to work with their colleagues to change practice and innovate (Harris & Jones, 2010). Effective leaders use social process to collectively define and identify appropriate attitudes and behaviors for members; these attitudes and behaviors are essential to creating a strong culture (Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2014).

Ghamrawi (2011) noted that schools that wish to overcome the obstacles should redesign the roles assigned to teachers and focus on the leadership aspects in the school. Principals are responsible for supervising, evaluating, monitoring instruction, curriculum coordination, and gauging student learning (Blase and Blase, 2000). Research on principal leadership indicated that principals are most effective when they focus on instructional improvement, share decision-making with teachers, and encourage teachers to work actively toward instructional improvement (Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010).

A key component to implementing successful planning time is creating and embracing a shared vision of the goals of the school (Mertens et al., 2010). Hay (2011)

noted that the teachers respected a principal that established and clarified collaborative goals to avoid hidden agendas. Hay stated that the teachers in the study understood the goals and that the principal supported them in accomplishing these goals. Moller and Pankake (2006) declared there were power struggles when the goals of the principals and the teachers did not align.

Blase and Blase (2000) observed that effective principals combine connections between teachers socially and in the exchange of professional knowledge. This demands a leader to develop relationships with classroom teachers who have the desire to remain in the classroom yet extend their knowledge and expertise to others in the profession (Szczesuil & Huizenga, 2014). Good leaders encouraged open communication, guided teachers to reflect critically on their own learning and teaching practice (Goddard et al., 2010). Hay (2011) contended that effective principals are transparent, non-threatening, and respect teachers. Teachers find themselves in a culture where they trust, admire, respect, and feel loyal to the principal and are motivated to do more than what is expected of them (Yukl, 2006).

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) stated that leaders of schools that maintained learning and growth over time embraced change and provided support for staff and students. This does not mean selecting a high-energy site principal to motivate the staff, but leaders capable of creating systems to support and sustain a collaborative learning culture over time (Schlectty, 2005).

Talbert (2010) approached the implementation of PLC initiatives from a systems perspective; Talbert noted,

> Even if school system leaders share a research-based vision of PLC principles and practices, they often have radically different conceptions of what it takes to get there. Some see mandates, implementation checklists, and sanctions to ensure accountability as key levers for change. Others see change linked to leadership by example, tools and facilitators for learning and rewards for risk taking. (p. 6)

It also describes both the inherent accountability and characteristics of shared leadership including openness, trust, concern, respect, and appreciation (MacBeath, Oduro, & Waterhouse, 2004). Mintzberg (2004) stated that good leadership is about energizing others to do better things and make better decisions. Effective principals create a learning ethos and provide more hands-on support for instruction by developing an instructional vision, setting group goals, holding high-expectations, and providing individual support for teachers (Supovitz et al., 2010). Principals need to recognize that teachers desire to be more involved in decisions and activities within the building (Akert & Martin, 2012). This includes a climate where teachers' input is heard and valued in a substantial way that can help foster school improvement. By enabling teachers to be involved in the decision making process, it will increase their self-efficacy and willingness to engage in collaborative practices (Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2014).

Schools built on relationships and leadership is a relational activity (Ewen, Whiler, Blickle, Oerder, Ellen, Douglas, & Ferris, 2013). Examination of organizational trust in business and management settings has occurred for more than 30 years (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Trust and collaboration point directly to the cultural heart of the school organization (Supovitz et al., 2010). Bryk and Schneider (2002) used survey

data and interviews to conclude that the improvement in relational trust in schools results in sustaining the change process that directly contributes to improved student learning. They identified trust levels between the school's principal and as a central indicator of trust. Tschannen-Moran (2004) concluded that PLCs based on trust both teachers and site leaders base their actions on improving student performance and using data to justify their decisions. Principals that implement PLCs noted that their actions, communication, and expectations will determine the success of change efforts (Wells & Feun, 2013). This culture is central to effective use of common planning time (Mertens et al., 2010). Common planning times provide teachers the opportunity to "offer their skill sets to influence others ultimately impacting the learning experience for all within the school setting" (Akert & Martin, 2012, p. 295).

Methodologies

The study utilized a phenomenological qualitative design to describe the experiences of both teachers and administrators regarding the use of common planning time to improve student achievement. The purpose was to use the perceptions and experiences of teachers and administrators to describe the use of common planning time by successful teams so that other site administrators may be able to implement the same strategies and techniques at their sites to improve student achievement. Several other studies recommended the study. Mertens et al. (2010) stated the need to study how teachers use common planning time, particularly how successful teams function and operate during common planning time. Teacher collaboration links to higher student achievement in standardized tests (Goddard et al., 2007); and it received the

recommendation that further studies explore different aspects of collaboration between teachers.

Several studies referred to the use of common planning time. Using a grounded theory approach, Hay (2011) studied the role of the principal in implementing and sustaining common planning time. Likewise, Flax's (2011) qualitative study determined that principals have not received any formal training regarding teacher collaboration. McGrath (2010) utilized journals in a qualitative study to obtain teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of common planning time. Two quantitative studies examined PLCs and student achievement. One quantitative study conducted by Hughes and Kritsonis (2007) looked at 64 schools in Texas that functioned as PLCs. Over a three-year period, 90.6% of the PLC school students achieved higher math test scores with 42.3% increasing by more than 5 points. Most of the studies focused on teacher collaboration or PLCs. None looked specifically at the experiences of teachers at sites that have already demonstrated success. Except for McGrath's (2010) study, all the other studies pertaining to common planning time and PLCs involved middle school and high school settings, not the elementary level as in this study. The study may validate the work of Szczesiul and Huizenga (2014) that high performance schools have a shared vision, purpose, and goal that builds a collective responsibility within the teachers and the administration.

This study utilized a phenomenological qualitative approach to further confirm the studies discussed and explore the recommendations by the studies to explore the use

of common planning time, how effective teams use common planning time, and the perceptions of both leaders and teachers in regards to the use of common planning time.

Summary

The problem identified in this phenomenological qualitative study was the discrepancy in test scores of elementary schools with high poverty rates in an urban district in the southwestern United States. Despite adjusting the schedule to create a common planning time for all schools, there has been inconsistency in how schools have performed on state tests. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to obtain the perceptions of teachers and administrators at three high-performing elementary schools regarding the effective use of common planning time, a weekly 105-minute block of time that the district established in 2008 to implement PLCs at all school sites.

Chapter 2 of the study identified elements of the research surrounding the study regarding PLCs, teacher collaboration, common planning time, and site leadership beliefs and practices regarding teacher collaboration. The review concluded with studies and research on the use of common planning time.

Chapter 3 includes information regarding the selection of the transcendental, phenomenological design as the best means to answer the research questions. Chapter 4 comprises the data analysis of the results. Chapter 5 will include an explanation of the results, offer recommendations for action and further study, and discuss the implications for social change.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The problem identified in this qualitative study was the discrepancy in test scores between elementary schools with high poverty rates in an urban district in the Southwestern United States despite similar demographics. Despite adjusting the schedule to create a common planning time for all schools, there has been inconsistency in how students have performed on state tests. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to obtain the perceptions of teachers and administrators at three high-performing elementary schools regarding the effective use of common planning time, a weekly 105-minute block of time that the district established in 2008 to implement PLCs at all school sites. Exploration of the beliefs and practices of elementary teachers and elementary principals experiencing the phenomenon guided the development of the research questions. Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the research design and methodology. Specifically, this chapter includes the rationale for choosing the quantitative phenomenological research design and how the design guided the study. This chapter provides details regarding participant selection and protections afforded to the participants under Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines as well as a review of the research questions and how they relate to the data collection tools and the development of the interview questions and how the interview questions were reviewed and edited to improve trustworthiness and triangulation of data. Finally, I provide descriptions regarding the validity of the study and the data analysis and interpretation plan.

Design of the Study

The study of the effective use of common planning time among high-performing elementary schools followed a transcendental, phenomenological design (Creswell, 2012). Phenomenology focuses on a concept or phenomenon and the experiences of those who have lived the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Phenomenology draws heavily from Husserl's (1970) research and is popular in sociology, psychology, nursing and the health sciences, and education research. Phenomenology is rooted in philosophical presuppositions (Creswell, 2012) such as the search for wisdom, suspension of all judgments, reality related upon consciousness, and reality perceived through experiences (Stewart & Mickunas, 1990). Husserl (1970) stated that people can be certain about how things appear in, or present themselves to, their consciousness. "Anything outside of the immediate experience must be ignored, and in this way the external world is reduced to the contents of personal consciousness" (Groenewald, 2004, p. 4) to arrive at certainty. Phenomenology can be hermeneutical or transcendental (Creswell, 2012). Hermeneutical phenomenology focuses on the meaning of the lived experience (van Manen, 1990) by using interpretation and historical artifacts, particularly texts (Kakkori, 2009). Transcendental phenomenology, the design of this study, focuses less on the interpretation of the researcher and more on capturing the experiences of the participants. Transcendental phenomenology provides a fresh perspective of the phenomenon and sets aside previous experiences by involving researchers in describing their own experiences and by collecting data from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. I analyzed data and developed themes. Textual descriptions of the experience and a

structural description develop an overall essence of the experience. The study provided a deeper analysis and description of teacher collaboration. Moolenaar (2012) reported "a major challenge for research on teacher collaboration is that the concept has been interpreted in a very broad sense" (p. 8). The study was an exploration of the experiences of teachers and administrators at three high-achieving elementary sites in regards to the use of common planning time. Transcendental phenomenology provided an opportunity to examine and create new knowledge regarding "everyday human experiences, human behavior, and human relations" (Moustakas, 1994, p. xiv). Transcendental phenomenological data collected through interviews facilitated the opportunity to identify the participants' attitudes and beliefs more readily than observations would. Thomasson (2007) described phenomenology as a way to "uncover the preconditions for and interrelations among meanings of various types" (p. 90). Interviews supported the investigation into teachers' and administrators' backgrounds and predispositions toward a common planning time and how best to use this time. Phenomenology enabled me to obtain answers to the research questions and to create the essence of effective teacher collaboration.

Justification of the Design

The potential methodologies considered were quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. A methodology refers to the philosophical framework that relates to the entire process of the study (van Manen, 1990). For this study, I selected the qualitative methodology. In a qualitative study, the goal is to seek a multitude of explanations and analyze responses in many different ways to uncover meaning (Arghode, 2012). It was

important to explore the feelings and attitudes of elementary teachers and elementary administrators to identify the meanings inherent in their expressions and shared experiences. In this approach, I gained understanding by spending time in the setting (Creswell, 2012).

Qualitative research describes the phenomenon under investigation. Analysis of the data preserved the accuracy of the observations of the participants and maintained the descriptive nature of the study (Quick & Hall, 2015). Strauss and Corbin (1990) wrote that one of the main tenets of qualitative research is that it "leads one to see the world or situation through the participants' eyes and be able to make connections that may result in new understanding concerning the phenomenon" (p. 16). Chenail, Cooper, and Desir (2010) encouraged qualitative researchers to be passionate about learning, focusing on what a researcher knows or what a researcher does not know about the phenomenon studied.

The quantitative approach could not fully answer the research questions and was, therefore, rejected. The design of the research questions helped to explore the experiences of those who had been part of common planning time and teacher collaboration. The results of the study were a more in-depth analysis that may or may not be projectable to a larger population. Quantitative approaches can use a survey or experimental approach in which a treatment or an intervention on a control group is used. For this study, a mass survey using a Likert-type scale would not have provided the rich description that a qualitative study would be able to yield. The goal of the study was to describe, not explain; Therefore, I rejected a quantitative methodology. Merriam (2002)

stated, “Qualitative researchers are not interested in people’s surface opinions as in survey research, or in cause and effect as in experimental research; rather, they want to know how people do things, and what meaning they give to their lives” (p. 19).

I considered a mixed-methods design. The aspect of creating a survey for teachers, interviewing administrators, and combining the results had appeal. The concern was that the sample size for the survey would be too small. As Creswell (2009) stated, “In this design, the researcher may embed one smaller form of data within another larger data collection in order to analyze different types of questions” (p. 15). As previously stated, I intended the design of the research questions to explore the experiences of those who have been part of common planning time and teacher collaboration. However, neither the conceptual framework nor the literature review developed a “theoretical perspective” to guide the research (Creswell, 2009, p. 66). Therefore, I rejected the mixed-methods approach.

The next step was to select a qualitative approach that would best be suited to answer the research questions. According to Creswell (2012), five research designs are associated with the qualitative approach:

- ethnography, which facilitates study of a culture over a long period of time using primarily observational data and field responses;
- grounded theory, which incorporates multiple data-collection techniques and comparison strategies that seek emerging theories/categories among participant responses;

- case study, which explores a program or its participants to collect information in a variety of ways "bounded by time and activity" (p. 15);
- phenomenological research, which seeks to understand the human experience through elongated study of participants; and
- narrative research, which studies selected individuals and asks them to provide life stories subsequently retold in narrative form.

Of the qualitative approaches considered, ethnography was considered because the common planning time as experienced by performing schools creates a culture or a system of shared beliefs, values, practices, language, norms, rituals, and material things that group members use to understand their world (Patton, 2002). The PLC framework described creating such a culture. However, this study focused on the experience of teachers and administrators using a common planning time at three sites, so there was a possibility that the culture at each site might be different. Ethnography requires the researcher to observe a group in a natural setting for a prolonged period (Creswell, 2012). The goal of the research was to explore the perceptions of the individuals involved in explaining the phenomenon of common planning time, not the entire culture of a single site. Thus, I rejected the design.

I considered grounded theory because phenomenology and grounded theory both take an interpretive approach to explore real-life situations and require a high degree of interaction between researchers and the individuals, groups, or situations being examined (Gelling, 2011). However, grounded theory seeks multiple codes and then a merge of the codes to provide a theory. For this study I did not advance or intend to create a theory.

Furthermore, the goal of grounded theory is used to collect contradictory cases that might challenge but ultimately strengthen the emerging theory. This study focused less on developing a theory meant to explain the experience, so I rejected the grounded theory.

After considering the case study approach, I rejected it because it is "bounded" by place and time (Merriam, 2002). Creswell (2012) stated that it draws upon "multiple sources" of information (p. 75) from which the case is interpreted for meaning. Merriam (2002) stated that the case has a "finite quality about it in either terms of time (the evolution or history of a particular program), space (the case is located in a particular place), and/or components comprising the case (number of participants, for example)" (p. 179). This study concerned common planning time, which is a weekly event that is still ongoing, and the study covered three sites.

Multiple case studies were considered but were rejected as being far too complex, expensive, and time consuming (Gustafsson, 2017). This approach would address multiple sites and provide data that could be situational for each site and across all three school sites to provide strong data (Gustafsson, 2017). However, such an approach would require expertise and practice that I have not yet experienced.

Because the study involved elementary teachers and elementary administrators from three school sites, I rejected the narrative approach because it deals more with individuals and the description of the experience through the perceptions of one or two participants. Creswell (2012) stated, "The procedure for implementing this research consists of focusing on studying one or two individuals" (p. 54). The focus is on the participants and analysis of their stories, not the event or the occurrence. This study's

research questions were focused on the experience of common planning, not on individuals.

Research Questions

Creswell (2012), Hatch (2002), and Moustakas (1994) concurred that phenomenological research questions should be broad. Research questions in a phenomenological study are "meaning" questions (Creswell, 2012), and a defining characteristic of such questions is that they are explanatory and reveal the essence of a particular human experience (Creswell, 2012; Moustakas, 1994).

These four research questions guided the study:

RQ1: What are the beliefs of elementary teachers regarding the use of common planning time to increase student achievement?

RQ2: What strategies have elementary teachers developed during common planning time to increase student achievement?

RQ3: What are the beliefs of elementary principals regarding the use of common planning time to increase student achievement?

RQ4: What strategies do elementary principals incorporate to implement the effective use of common planning time to increase student achievement?

The research questions captured the unique beliefs concerning the use of a common planning time as utilized at three high-performing elementary schools. Throughout the study, they served as the central questions for the phenomena of interest and guided the interview questions and collection of data.

Context of the Study

The research site used for the study is an urban public school district located in the southwestern United Sates. The enrollment of the district in 2011 was 51,000 students, which makes the district the eighth largest in the state. The district is a high-poverty district with 85% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunches (CDE, 2013; Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). The district has 34% of the students designated as English Language Learners (ELL; CDE, 2013). The high-performing schools selected have even higher percentages of ELLs and students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. Education levels of the parents indicate that 38% of the parents did not graduate high school, 32% graduated high school, 19% have some college, 7% graduated college, and 4% have graduate degrees. The parents self-reported the information (CDE, 2013). Other major student groups include Hispanic/Latino at 71%, African American at 15%, and European American as 9%. The district has a 9% enrollment of gifted and talented students, and 10% of the students in the district qualify for special education services. The seven members of the elected at large school board represent from two cities. Under the mandates of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB; 2002), the district has been in improvement status for three years (CDE, 2013). In 2010, 11 schools in the district of the 100 selected by the state are consistently low performing (CDE, 2013). All of these schools underwent reconfiguration, and site administration personnel were changed. Based upon the district's API scores, the district scored in the 90th percentile in the county; this was a positive increase from four years ago when the district was last among the county's districts (CDE, 2013).

In 2007, the district adopted the PLC framework outlined by DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2006). School sites had to create specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (SMART) goals; create common assessments; develop data-driven decision making; and build consensus. After the adoption of the MOU that adjusted the schedule to create an extended collaboration time by creating a minimum day (see Appendix A), school staff were given control over the professional development program at each school site. As stated in the MOU, each school site shall develop a Professional Development Team (PDT) for the purpose of collaboration and planning for professional activities for the designated days. The PDT developed a year-long professional development plan considered a work in progress. As part of the MOU, the district and the teacher's association were responsible to develop and implement a yearly feedback mechanism.

For the study, the three schools selected had high increases in API since the inception of the common planning time. Table 3 shows the demographics of each of the schools to show the similarities of each site.

Table 3

Demographics of the Three Elementary Schools for the Study

	Demographics				
School	% African American	% White	% Hispanic	% Low SES	% English Learners
A	22	8	65	98	41
B	22	1	70	96	43
C	8	4	83	99	46

Source: CDE, 2013; Full reference withheld for confidentiality

Ethical Considerations

Research should make things work better (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In order to achieve this goal, researchers require much of their participants to ensure the quality and validity in responding to each of the research questions. Hatch (2002) stated, "We ask participants to reveal what goes on behind the scenes of their everyday lives" (p. 65). Participants received information about the importance of their involvement within the research and that the integrity of the data is dependent on their truthful responses and observations. It is equally important, however, to protect the participants through empathy, intuition, intelligence, and experience. Marshall and Rossman (2011) stated that ethical research practice has three moral principles: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Respect for persons includes respecting their privacy, desire to remain anonymous, and right to participate in the study. Information to all classroom teachers advised them they could request to participate in the study. Each participant was given a consent form that stated that they are (a) participating in research, (b) the purpose of the

research, (c) the procedures of the research including that they will be recorded with an audio device, (d) the risks and benefits of the research, (e) the participant's right to stop participating in the research at any time, and (f) the procedures to protect confidentiality (Groenewald, 2004). Beyond the signature on the form providing consent to the study, participants could to negotiate roles and have permission to inquire about matters personal and otherwise. Beneficence refers to the researcher's responsibility to ensure that the no harm would happen to the participants participating in the study, and justice refers to being aware of who benefits and who does not benefit from the study. The study did not present the participants with a risk of physical danger, but there is a slight danger of exposure, humiliation, embarrassment, loss of respect and self-respect, and loss of standing at work or in the group. This is of a particular danger since the study examined practices and beliefs of a high-performing elementary school and involved individual interviews. Hatch (2002) stated that "when district officials and principals have already agreed, it may be difficult to decline an invitation to participate" (p. 67) and "refusal to participate sends the message that they have something to hide" (p. 67). I reminded the participants they are volunteers and they could stop participating at any time or refuse to answer any questions they felt uncomfortable answering.

I took extra protection to protect the confidentiality of the participants and all participants were aware in writing of who will have access to the raw data and how the use of the interpreted findings. All participants had access to their particular text to review and verify accuracy through member checks. Member checking is primarily used in qualitative inquiry methods as a quality control process by which the researcher seeks

to improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity of what has been recorded by having the participants review the comments and conclusions made by the researcher to ensure the true essence of what has been stated by the participant was colleted (Harper & Cole, 2012). To maintain trustworthiness and ensure ethical practice, the study was compliant with the Institutional Review Board at Walden University as well as the school district.

All participants received an invitational letter and informed consent form to sign. This form explained the estimated time needed to conduct the research as well as the types of data collection tools. In addition, the role of the researcher, the role of the participant, and the potential outcomes of the research were included in the invitational letter. Any bias towards the participants based on gender, race, sexual orientation, age, or disability will not be implemented (Creswell, 2012). In other words, participants selected through the drawing were used based upon their experience with the phenomenon and grade-level assignment, and gender, race, sexual orientation, age, or disability were not used to either accept or deny a volunteer. Use of pseudonyms ensured confidentiality after the study was accepted. All lists of participants including contact information for member checks were stored on a password-protected file on a computer with a password for protection. Likewise, all audio recordings of participants were stored on a computer with a password for protection. To ensure confidentiality, storing the physical data in a locked file cabinet and electronic data was stored in a password protected file for at least five years. As all participants are adults, the normal considerations applied to vulnerable participants were unnecessary. The study did not involve children, prisoners, and/or mentally disabled persons. If a teacher is pregnant or physically handicapped, they will

not be required to participate but their condition would not preclude them from participating as the study only involved interview questions and would not subject them to any physical activity or exercise that would be considered exceeding the scope of their normal position activities.

Role of the Researcher

A key point to phenomenological research is the researcher's exploration of his or her own experiences, in part to examine the dimensions of the experience and in part to become aware of prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions (Merriam, 2002). Moustakas (1994) suggested that phenomenology should have both social meaning and personal significance. The research was socially meaningful as the setting was in a district where over 60% of the students do not meet proficiency in either Language Arts or Mathematics on state mandated tests. Creswell (2012) maintained that researchers have a responsibility to identify their biases, personal interests, and values as well as the methods they use to gain entry into the research site. Access to the sites was through the district office as well as obtaining the permission of the site administrator. As a former teacher, vice principal, principal, and now director for the district, though I am a director, my role is within the charter schools authorized by the district. I do not work at the public school sites and my interactions with elementary principals are limited; I have no interactions with classroom teachers. I had easy access to school sites, principals, and teachers. I do not supervise or evaluate principals or teachers who participated in the study nor has my current position had or will ever have any impact on the district's decision to rehire any participants in the study.

For the study, the following biases and personal beliefs were set aside and a journal of all biases maintained throughout the study. I believe that enhancing collaborative efforts of the classroom teachers will have a positive effect on student achievement. During my educational career, I have had the opportunity to take an active role in leading the school. I worked with other teachers, principals, and vice principals to develop programs and activities to benefit students. This developed my belief system that it takes more than just one individual to lead a successful school. One individual did not hold effective leadership but shared amongst the staff so that all members of the learning community felt empowered. The district supported the research and a letter of cooperation with the district is Appendix F. It is important to note participants experienced no threat by my position and saw me as a researcher and not as a director that is using the study to evaluate personnel. As a director, I have worked exclusively with the charter schools in our district and not the public schools that will participate in the study. Reminding the participants of my past experience as a teacher built the participants' trust. This common experience helped build rapport and focus the role of the researcher as an equal not a superior. Kingsley, Phillips, Townsend, and Henderson-Wilson (2010) stated that a key to building trust is to ensure that transcripts of the interviews be provided to all participants and they can provide feedback throughout the process.

It was important to maintain a professional and respectful atmosphere for the participants. In preparation, bracketing was used in which all the prejudgments and personal experiences as they relate to the use of common planning time are set aside as to

not allow for personal bias to influence the interpretations and develop the Epoche process. Husserl (1970) defined the Epoche as the freedom from suppositions. Moustakas (1994) suggested the researcher engage in this process in order to set aside prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas to allow things and events to "enter anew into the consciousness, and to look and see them again, as if for the first time" (p. 84). Bracketing occurred throughout the entire process of the study. I kept a journal listing all the ideas and feelings I had regarding the problem statement and the purpose of the study (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010). An audit trail established a framework to develop credibility, dependability, audibility and transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This included consistent consultation with the academic advisor that the emerging themes were "grounded in raw data and that others can see what you see in the data" (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010, p. 21). Finally, member checking ensured that the participants' experiences were accurately recorded (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010).

Throughout the study, I reviewed my thoughts and feelings regarding the problem, set aside biases and prejudgments, and considered the problem with an open mind. I identified specific beliefs and biases concerning teacher collaboration and the use of the planning time that could influence the study. The study implemented a duel process so that the participants described the essence of the common planning time as I described the experience of the research process.

Criteria for Selecting Participants

In phenomenological methods, "the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice-versa) including even the type of participants" (Hycner, 1999, p. 156). For the study, I

chose purposive, stratified sampling as the non-probability sampling to identify the primary participants. Based upon judgment and the purpose of the research (Groenewald, 2004), the primary participants were selected; selecting those who "have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched" (Kruger, 1988, p. 150). The inclusion criteria included the teacher and the site administrator must have been at the selected site for a minimum of three years to have fully experienced the phenomenon of the study. Participants for the study were the principal at each site, and three teachers from each site were randomly selected which brought the total sample size to 12.

At the three sites, there were three principals. All had been at the site for three or more years; two were male and one female. One was African American, one was White, and the other Hispanic. At the three sites, 64 teachers were working in the classroom; 85.9% of the classroom teachers were female. No data was available regarding the ethnic background of all teachers at the school sites.

Initially, I asked all 75 teachers from the three sites to volunteer. At each site, I placed the volunteers into two pools. The research placed the names of potential participants with more than five years of teaching experience and those with less than five years of teaching experience into two separate bags on 3x5 cards. This was to ensure that both new teachers' and veteran teachers' experiences would be included in the research. The research selected five cards from each bag. I separated the cards into two other groups of teachers who taught primary (kindergarten through third grade) and those that taught upper grades (fourth through sixth grade). From this, I selected two primary and two upper-grade teachers. Through this process, I was able to select both

experienced and less experienced teachers for interviews, creating the stratification of the sample. In Participants in Chapter 4, a summary of experience as well as grade levels represented are reported of all participants in the study.

There are no guidelines as to the quantity of participants for a phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994). Patton (2002) recommended that one select sample size based upon the "purpose and rationale of the study" (p. 45). Creswell (2012) suggested interviews with up to 10 people. The study consisted of individual interviews of three principals and interviews of teachers with no more than three teachers from each of the three sites. The sample size was 12, reached saturation, and answered all four research questions.

Data Collection

The study examined the experiences on the population of elementary teachers and administrators in an urban school district in the southwestern United States. Interviews of the teachers and principals described the activities, beliefs, and perceptions of common planning time. The three schools selected had API scores for the previous four years and demographics posted by the CDE (2013).

The primary sources of data for the study were individual administrator and teacher interviews. Interviews lasted approximately one hour each and held at the school sites with the exception of one teacher's interview that took place in my office at the request of the teacher. Interview questions were developed and sent to three experienced researchers for review and input. One member was an assistant superintendent of education, the second was a professor of education for a local university, and the third

was an elementary principal. All three had conducted qualitative research and all have received an EdD.

I received the questions back with member notes. After the research rewrote the questions, the reviewers received the questions for final notes. After the second revision, the final questions were submitted to the committee chair and approved The administrative interview questions are in Appendix B; teacher interview questions are in Appendix C. Triangulation of the data used observations of collaboration time. Observations of common planning time of specific behaviors on the observation form (see Appendix H) only involved interviewed participants. Observers achieve the better of two methods while overcoming their deficiencies is the goal of combining methods (Mathison, 1988). Observations of teachers and administrators during common planning time increased the validity of the study as well as provided convergence, inconsistency, or contradictory data filtered through knowledge from the immediate data (Mathison, 1988). The data to answer Research Question 1 came from teacher interview questions 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, and 13 (see Appendix C). The data to answer Research Question 2 came from teacher interview questions 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, and 13 (see Appendix C). The data to answer Research Question 3 emerged from administrator interview questions 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 13 (see Appendix B) and the data to answer Research Question 4 emerged from administrator interview questions 4, 6, 10, 11, and 13 (see Appendix B). Observations of common planning time triangulated data and answered all research questions.

In addition to the increase in test scores, schools also had similar subgroups, percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, ELL populations, Parent Education Level, Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) population, and Special Education populations. Each of the selected sites gave permission to interview the site administrators and teachers. All participants and site administrators received a copy of the notice that contained the purpose of the research study and provided notice that the participation was confidential and completely voluntary.

Data sources included in-depth interviews of administrators and teachers and observations of common planning time meetings. All interviews were recorded verbatim using an audio recorder. The average length of teacher and administrator interviews was one hour. I used an interview protocol for all individual interviews. I made all participants to feel comfortable before and during the interview process. I accomplished this by engaging participants in conversation to build connections prior to the interview. I met the needs of the participants by offering drinks, seeing if they needed a break, and asking participants if they were comfortable. I conducted the interviews at the participants' sites during the collaboration time. School sites offered the most comfort and minimum distractions for the participants. The school sites were the most appropriate place to conduct interviews.

Notes created from interviews, notes from observations of collaboration time, and my reflective journal provided additional data. I recorded the field notes and bracketed notes directly on the developed protocol in a column constructed for that purpose. After each interview, I reviewed the field notes and the bracketed notes. I analyzed

observations of common planning time, and compared this to the interviews. Throughout the process, journal entries recorded the thoughts, questions, concerns, and feelings pertaining to the research as it unfolded. I made entries following interviews, after reviewing field notes, and after completing observations of specific behaviors of collaboration time.

Validation and Verification Procedures

For the study to be trustworthy, authentic, and credible, I needed the process to be carefully developed and followed for each interview and with the observations of the common planning time used to triangulate the data. Wimpenny and Gass (2000) stated the interview is not verbatim statements, but through a process becomes a reflection on the meaning it holds. To develop such meaning instead of summaries, the data needed to be organized. It was imperative that I develop strategies to establish quality, to substantiate accuracy of data, and to verify methods, meanings, and interpretations of data. I made certain all collected data is recorded, organized, and detailed. I made certain physical data was in a locked file cabinet and electronic data was stored in a password protected file and available for at least five years. For phenomenological methods, the researcher establishes the validity in each step of the study (Rawat, 2011).

I ensured the validity by establishing rigor in sampling, the data collection plan, and the data analysis. I created the interview questions and submitted them to three individuals with experience in qualitative research to review and recommend changes. After the changes, I resubmitted the questions back to the individuals for final review. Sampling for the study was logical and purposively drawn. Participants selected were

site administrators and teachers that have experienced the phenomenon of common planning time.

For the study, participant member checks, rich thick description, journal, triangulation, peer debriefing, and the use of epoche/bracketing assured standards of quality (Creswell, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). To ensure study reliability, participant checks included follow-up interviews for participants to verify, confirm, and corroborate data. I did follow-up questions during the participant checks were done in person and via email. Interviews were voice recorded so that intonations and emphasis were available during the process. I had the data transcribed to word-processed documents and attached to the participants' interview data. After the entire interview was completed, data coding took place. All participants received a final copy for review and to provide feedback. All linking lists that held the names of participants were stored on a password protected file and pseudonyms of the participants are included in the final publication of the accepted study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Plan

For data analysis, the study used the Moustakas' (1994) Modification of the van Kaam Method of Analysis of Phenomenological Data. This method of analysis enabled the implementation of ensuring that the data contained a moment of experience that clustered and labeled into core themes and then developed into composite descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological research requires a systematic method to manage and analyze a large amount of collected data. Such a system allows one to organize, bracket and reduce; delineate units of meaning; cluster units of meaning to form themes;

and synthesize the interview data (Groenewald, 2004). For the study, a code manual (see Appendix D) developed to serve as a data management tool for organizing segments of similar or related text and developed based on the research questions and the conceptual framework of PLCs (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). The manual provided a clear trail of evidence for the credibility of the study (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The next step of the proposed data analysis was to carefully read and reread the interview transcripts (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). Several readings of the transcripts were necessary to become familiar with the data which aided the data analysis and interpretation by providing a "sense of the whole" (Hatch, 2002, p. 181). Bracketing and reducing the data to ensure outside meanings and interpretations did not influence the unique world of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). The next step in the study was to use the process of horizontalization to extract relevant expressions from the data. For example, statements made by teachers, "I believe that common planning helps" had the teacher or administrator identified. All expressions had the teacher or administrator identified as equally important to the experience (Moustakas, 1994) and considered as horizons. Horizons then reduced to determine the invariant constituents and the core themes in the use of the common planning time. Particularly, the research separated the belief statements from the practices. Themes were developed and placed under each research question with statements.

This process gave each aspect of the phenomenon equal value and was the grounding that gave the phenomenon a distinctive character (Moustakas, 1994). I reduced the data and eliminated overlapping data. The next step was to cluster and

thematize the invariant clusters. In the study, it was necessary for me to read and evaluate for relevancy the horizons, noting whether to abstract the expression and label it (Moustakas, 1994). I highlighted the relevant expressions and eliminated the non-relevant expressions. During this process, I used free imaginative variation by bringing in the participants to assist in determining essential as opposed to incidental themes (Finlay, 2009; van Manen, 1990). Next, clustering and identifying those themes and constituents to demonstrate compatibility, relevancy, and explicitness through final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application were completed. I used individual textual descriptions for the interviews. From the textural, structural descriptions, composite descriptions of the meanings and essences of the participants' experiences were developed.

I clustered the invariant constituents and provided a thematic label. This led to the identification of the core themes of the experience. Validation of the core themes yielded comparisons to the complete interview record. I created a list of core themes to help identify recurring themes and aid in construction of individual and composite textual and structural descriptions. The last stage produced a final statement describing the phenomenon under investigation (Willig, 2007).

Summary

The problem identified in the phenomenological study was the discrepancy in test scores of elementary schools with high poverty rates in an urban district in the southwestern United States. The purpose of the phenomenological study was to obtain the perceptions of teachers and administrators at three high-performing elementary

schools regarding the effective use of common planning time, a weekly 105-minute block of time that the district established in 2008. After considering other designs, I selected transcendental phenomenology to capture the experiences of the participants who have experienced common planning time and was best suited to answer the research questions. Collection of the data was through interviews of site teachers and administrators. Data was triangulated through the observations of specific behaviors as outlined on the observation form (see Appendix H) of the common planning time. I created the interview questions, as well as guidelines on the transcription, coding, and development into core themes of the data which answered the research questions. Chapter4 includes a presentation of the findings using Moustakas' (1994) qualitative method of transcendental phenomenology. Chapter 5 includes an interpretation of the findings, relate and differentiate the study's findings with the literature review, detail the implications for social change, and provide recommendations for action as well as recommendations for further study.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to obtain the perceptions of teachers and administrators at three high-performing elementary schools regarding the effective use of common planning time, a weekly 105-minute block of time that the district established in 2008. Four research questions were developed and guided the study:

RQ1: What are the beliefs of teachers regarding the use of common planning time to increase student achievement?

RQ2: What strategies have teachers developed during common planning time to increase student achievement?

RQ3: What are the beliefs of principals regarding the use of common planning time to increase student achievement?

RQ4: What strategies do principals incorporate to implement the effective use of common planning time to increase student achievement?

To conduct this study I used a qualitative design with a phenomenological approach. Collection of data was through 12 face-to-face interviews involving nine teachers and three site principals at three different sites. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. I achieved triangulation of the data via three observations of common planning time. Coding of the data and analysis used the qualitative software program ATLAS TI. Grouping the codes and themes that emerged helped to answer the research questions.

Participants

I selected the nine teachers from volunteer slips placed into a brown bag and randomly pulled to identify three participants from each site. All teachers were women as no male teachers volunteered; this was a limitation as the volunteers may not fully represent the entire population of the teachers at the site. The experience of the teachers in the district ranged from a low of 6 years to a high of 27 years with an average of 17.1 years teaching within the district. The years of site experience ranged from a low of 5 years to a high of 25 years and the average teacher time at the sites was 14.4 years. Three site principals each had experience as both administrators and teachers at the sites.

Data Gathering Process

In order to examine teacher and principal perceptions of the use of common planning time, I conducted the following procedures. Walden University granted permission to conduct the study (Walden University IRB approval 10-06-14-0138792). After receiving IRB approval, the district gave permission for me to complete my study. After contacting all three sites and meeting with each site principal at the schools, I completed the interview arrangements.

Each principal agreed to the interview. I set up dates for each interview for the site principals and reviewed permission slips with each site administrator to sign prior to the interview. Each of the three sites obtained volunteer slips that each teacher received in their mailbox to volunteer. Each site office staff maintained the collection boxes for the slips. Following collection of the slips, at only at one site did the number of

volunteers exceeded three. For that site, after placing the slips into a bag, three were drawn.

I contacted the teachers and conducted a review of the permission slips. I scheduled the dates and times for interviews. All interviews for both teachers and site principals took place at the school sites with the exception of one teacher interview that took place in my office at the request of the teacher. Interview length varied from 24 minutes to 43 minutes. Observations were 30 to 45 minutes in length at each site.

The results and data provide a perception of teachers' and administrators' experiences of common planning time and how it related to student achievement The increases in test scores experienced at each site after the inception of the common planning time, a 105-minute block of time created by the district for the purpose of collaboration and planning, was the criteria for selection of the sites and participants.

Interviews

I conducted the interviews utilizing interview protocol (see Appendices B and C) to facilitate these interviews. The recorded interviews were transcribed using Microsoft Word. I used pseudonyms on the transcripts to maintain confidentiality. Each participant received a letter and number to correspond with the site and the teacher. No issues arose during the interviews, and all participants were relaxed and did not report any discomfort during the process.

After coding, several themes emerged. I shared interview notes and interpretations with all participants to ensure that the interviews and themes correlated with their own thoughts and perceptions. No participants reported any issues regarding

the transcripts or the data analysis and remained as participants in the study. This member checking allowed me to improve accuracy, credibility, and validity of the recorded interviews (Creswell, 2012).

Observations of Collaborative Meetings

I utilized a checklist (see Appendix H) when observations at each of the three sites during common planning time took place. I was a passive observer at these meetings and no questioning of participants took place during the observation. Data from these observations of common planning time aided me in triangulating data to determine the accuracy of the interviews. I took no notes during this process as I did not have permission from the staff as required by IRB.

Journal

During data collection, transcription, coding, and member checking, I maintained a journal to ensure that my natural bias was minimal. These notes are in a notebook. The following items of focus were to ensure that there was elimination of bias from the findings. It was during this process, I concluded a potential limitation to the findings based upon the selection of the participants. The participants were outgoing and enjoyed participating in the collaborative process. However, not all teachers are extraverts, and not all may want to collaborate with other teachers even if their practice could benefit from collaboration.

Coding

For coding interviews I used Atlas TI; from this, I developed themes. Codes were initally developed utilizing a preset list of codes. Future codes emerged as the process

developed. As the analysis continued, the codes developed into four groups regarding beliefs of administrators and teachers and direct actions taken by both.

For example, if a teacher stated, "We are all friends," this was a belief coded under teacher collegiality. If an administrator stated, "I have them all complete an action plan that they turn into me each week," this became an administrative leadership strategy. In all, 206 codes developed.

Codes that represented all of nine teachers went on the list, which along with an analysis of responses from all three administrators created themes. Horizontalization took place to ensure the removal of my bias, and the results were member-checked by participants. I placed the codes into two sections as either strategies or actions that occurred during common planning time or events that the teachers or administrators believed occurred as a result of common planning time. I then grouped the codes into specific themes under each research question. For example, creating common assessments, data analysis, sharing ideas, and planning became the strategy of improved instruction. I categorized the themes developed according to the research questions. I conducted triangulation of this data with observations to demonstrate consistency and to observe any discrepant findings.

Findings

In this phenomenological study, six themes emerged across the interviews and data collected from the observations of the common planning time as shown in Table 4. These six themes developed around the research questions.

Table 4

Themes

Research questions	Themes
RQ1: What are the beliefs of elementary teachers regarding the use of common planning time to increase student achievement?	1. Collegiality and Dialogue with grade level and other teachers
RQ2: What strategies have elementary teachers developed during common planning time to increase student achievement?	2. Data analysis and sharing ideas 3. Creating common assessments and planning
RQ3: What are the beliefs of elementary principals regarding the use of common planning time to increase student achievement?	4. Importance of common planning time 5. Shared leadership
RQ4: What strategies do elementary principals incorporate to implement the effective use of common planning time to increase student achievement?	6. Data analysis and planning

Theme 1: Collegiality and Dialogue

RQ1 was concerned with the beliefs of elementary teachers regarding the use of common planning time and student achievement. The first theme that emerged regarding the use of common planning time was the experience of the collegiality and dialogue between the teachers. Dialogue between teachers was a critical structure for the changes in teacher practices and development of beliefs by the teachers regarding instructional practice.

Talking to teachers or having discussions with other teachers was referred to by all nine participants and was mentioned 120 times throughout the interviews. This emphasis on talking relates to Mezirow's theory of transformative learning (Lundgren & Poell, 2016). As teachers delved into deep discussion regarding their practice, they engaged in adult learning. Throughout the interviews, the teachers stated how much they enjoyed just being with each other and that they all could talk to each other about pedagogy.

One major issue of isolation is that classroom teachers spend most of their time speaking to and providing instruction with students, with little interaction with their colleagues. Teacher A1 stated,

> When I started, it was me in the room and I would reflect on things I had in my classroom, but I did not have the opportunity to really talk to other people in my grade level or the grade levels you know above or below.

Common planning time provides the opportunity to break the barriers that exist between teachers. Teacher B1 added, "It gives us the opportunity to talk more; it does give us the opportunity to share."

Teachers stated that prior to common planning time, they knew very little about their colleagues. Teacher B2 stated, "I have worked with my neighbor for years, and this year I have learned more about her than ever." Staff meetings are short and often the administrator dominates the meeting. Common planning time provided the teachers extended periods of time to speak to and learn from each other. As Teacher A2 stated, "How do you teach this? How do you teach that?" All the participants stated how much

they just enjoyed the opportunity to speak to their colleagues. It is through the dialogue that teachers compared and actually grew to value each other. All school sites referred to the importance of friendship amongst the staff. Teacher C1 stated, "Absolutely, it has built a strong team, like we are friends. Absolute friends. In school, out of school, we have each other's back." Bieler (2012) reported that new teachers either emphasized to reach benefits of community-centered faculty life or bemoaned the difficulties of an isolative faculty culture. Teacher A2 stated, "We have great camaraderie, we get along very well." Teacher A3 summarized this sense of cohesion,

> And I love it, about this school is because it doesn't matter who you are, we are all friends. Outside at work, we are friends. I can have a debate or argument with one of my good friends, but when we leave campus, we're great because we are mature enough to do that.

The teachers believed that it was due to the deep collegiality that they could hold the deep conversations regarding student achievement.

Teachers repeatedly stated that they believed the opportunity to talk to other teachers was vital to the success of common planning time as this led to higher student achievement. Dialogue between teachers was a critical structure for the changes in teacher practices and development of beliefs by the teachers regarding instructional practice. One major issue of isolation is that classroom teachers spend most of their time speaking to and providing instruction with students. The amount of time speaking to adults outside of the classroom is limited to short breaks and lunch. Staff meetings are short and dominated by the administrator, often. Common planning time provided the

teachers extended periods of time to speak to and learn from each other. All the participants stated how much they just enjoyed the opportunity to speak to their colleagues. It is through the dialogue that teachers compare and actually grow to value each other. As stated by teacher A1, "You are talking to each other and valuing them" and "I think when you get to talk to each other, they find out they have the same struggles that you've had." At all three sites, all nine teachers responded that they enjoyed the experience of the interactions with their fellow teachers. As Teacher C1 expressed "I really loved the data reflection sessions; we could all collaborate with our grade-level members." As stated in the Literature Review, the structural set up of schools leaves elementary teachers isolated. Many work in classrooms with students completely unaware of how the teacher next door is delivering the same curriculum to another set of students.

Common planning time provided an opportunity for teachers to interact with each other on a professional level and discuss deeply the practices they employ and the outcomes of those practices. The dialogue alone is essential for Common Planning time. "We have a lot to share together" Teacher A1. And, Teacher A3 stated, "We get to share a lot." The process of enabling teachers to speak to each other and learn from the actions of each other builds the capacity of the teachers. Research indicated the role dialogue plays in Mezirow's learning theory as a venue for exploring alternative viewpoints which in turn stimulates reflective thinking (Mälkki & Green, 2016). It is through this dialogue that enabled the teachers to decide goals together, create assessments, share

responsibilities, hold each other accountable, and work together to achieve more than working as individuals (Barfield, 2016). Teacher C3 stated:

> We talk about the areas we spotted, and we talk about how we are going to teach a specific standard, talk about how we taught a specific standard, talk about student performance, we talk about whether or not we should continue with RTI, we talk about materials, we evaluate materials we used, we do all kinds of things as a team.

An interesting point was that while teachers had doubts about their own efficacy, they never questioned the intent or competency of their fellow teachers. Low outcomes become the result of utilizing a poor strategy or implementation by the teacher.

Even if the scores were low, teachers looked forward to sharing outcomes with fellow teachers: Teacher A2 shared, "It's really nice to sit with grade levels and discuss test scores even if you feel yours are low"

It was just as important for teachers to use this time to develop friendships and knowledge about teachers. Prior to common planning time, teachers knew relatively little about their colleagues.

Theme 2: Data Analysis and Sharing Ideas

The second research question yielded two themes. The first strategy that emerged as a theme was sharing ideas and data analysis. During an analysis of the transcripts, sharing ideas and data review emerged as the top themes discussed by the teachers; they were coded 59 times and mentioned by all nine teachers. Teachers shared data and then began a process of discussing ideas regarding the data, such as "How did you get your

scores?" Data review became the major focal point that all teachers used to focus their collaboration.

All teachers spoke of data review. As stated above, the act of sharing scores, particularly poor scores. As Teacher A2 stated, "It's really nice to sit with grade levels and discuss test scores even if you feel yours are low." Through data, teachers began to discuss ideas and strategies. Teacher A3 said, "We get together to review data, information, we go over strategies, what strategies worked, what strategies didn't."

In all three schools, data discussion was the norm. Teacher C3 stated, "What we normally do is our data, we talk about the assessments." Teacher C2 said, "Most of the time, we bring our test scores." After data analysis, teachers then can proceed to share ideas.

> Sharing ideas worked with both new and veteran teachers. Teacher C3 stated,
>
> So everybody is grabbing ideas and grabbing stuff and two of us teachers have been teaching 27 years, and one teacher has been teaching for 12, so we have a lot of ideas and curriculum that we just put together right to help each other.

Sharing ideas was mentioned 50 times throughout the interviews and was referred by all the nine teachers interviewed with three of the teachers referring to it only once and one teacher referring to it 18 times. The median was five times. As stated above sharing ideas has a strong impact on collaboration and makes the interchanges between the teachers meaningful.

Teachers employed many strategies during common planning time. After the completion of a unit or in preparation of a new unit, teachers' first priority is the

discussion of data. Teacher C1 said, "We get together to review the data, information, and we go over the strategies, what strategies worked, what strategies didn't."

Teachers felt that sharing ideas was a great opportunity to improve instruction. Teacher C2 stated, "You get a chance to really bounce ideas off of each other and that spirals into a lot of other ideas." Another teacher, Teacher C3 stated,

> I think the benefit is hearing other people's ideas. Because I'm always a stealer of ideas. I do not want to be the originator. I don't have to be (laughs). So just hearing what other people are doing and having some conversations that may enhance what other people are doing.

Sharing ideas is one of four strategies that teachers utilized during common planning time. Data analysis was a strategy utilized by teachers during common planning time. During common planning time, teachers reported looking at State assessments, district benchmarks, common assessments, writing samples, and other samples of student work. All teachers look at data for two distinct purposes: to identify what needs retaught and second to ask teachers with higher scores for students for strategies and techniques to provide instruction for students. Through examination of data, teachers were able to identify students that needed extra support.

I found extra support at each site was different. Some sites grouped students and provided support throughout the day, some provided core instruction, and then provided a block of RTI as part of afternoon electives, and the third offered after-school tutoring. Curriculum is available to the teachers and they know the standards that the students need to master. However, it is the individual teacher that determines the instruction provided

to the students. Teachers face a variety of methods and means to provide this instruction and then assess the students to determine if they have mastered the curriculum through the instruction provided by the teacher. Common planning time provided all teachers two opportunities to share ideas and strategies in providing instruction. The first was through the process of providing common planning. As the teachers planned units of studies within their grade levels, they shared ideas on how they would teach the upcoming standards. Teacher A3 stated, "Okay, how can we fix the last unit and what are we doing moving forward with the unit? And, do you have any ideas." Teacher B1 stated, "Here's a strategy you can do to share: What are you using for technology that works? What have you used that worked for that math standard?" The second was through data analysis. When teachers shared test scores or common assessments, they would notice teachers who had great success and those teachers that did not do well. Since all three sites had developed a safe environment, teachers could ask each other how they provided instruction in order to achieve such success.

Teachers also used this data to compare their own scores to the scores of their colleagues. All teachers noted that the schools provided a safe environment for teachers to share data. Teacher A2 stated:

> I really think that it improved the relationships of our staff and I think we feel safe. I think it's nice because we do feel safe because we are never singled out as oh, you have the lowest kids, the lowest scores, or oh, you have the highest test scores or oh you're awesome . . . you've done this . . . You know, I think we have the safety of who we are.

Theme 3: Creating Common Assessments and Planning

The second theme that emerged from Research Question Number Two was the strategy of creating common assessments and planning centered on preparing students to successfully pass the assessments. This action was mentioned by all teachers and was coded 43 times. Teachers reported the creation of common assessments as specific strategy in regards to common planning time. After the teachers planned a specific skill or task, they developed a grade-level assessment to determine if the students became proficient at the taught skill. Teachers saw this as part of the ongoing dialogue between grade-level teachers. Teacher A2 stated, "To write decent assessments, it's a collaborative effort." Students receive these assessments after the teacher taught a specific skill for the students to master. Because the assessment was common to the entire grade level, it becomes the established norm for all students to become proficient. Since the teachers created the assessment prior to instruction, the teachers use the assessment to plan the lesson. Teacher C2 stated, "Common assessments definitely; it guided our instruction." The students that fail to master the skill will receive additional support.

With common assessments, teachers created a cycle for student achievement. First, identify the skill. Second, identify how the student would demonstrate proficiency in that skill. Third, create an assessment of four or five questions to show an understanding of the skill. Fourth, design lessons to provide instruction as a team, provide the assessment, and as a team, review the assessment results. One of the specific strategies as it relates to the second research question is the collective group of teachers

whether in grade levels (horizontal planning) or with grade levels above and below the teacher (vertical planning).

Theme 4: Importance of Common Planning Time

The third research question centered on principals' beliefs regarding common planning time. Principals' beliefs that emerged from the data emphasized the importance of the process of common planning time. All three site administrators believed that the common planning time led to higher student achievement. This was mentioned by all three principals and was coded 12 times.

The effective principals all shared a vision that they were not there to lead common planning time, but to facilitate the process and have rational outcomes for the teachers to follow. Principal A stated, "It really builds the teacher leaders and the teacher expertise." Principals were specific that the time was focused for agreed upon items. Principal A stated, "I think that one of the things, hone of the things we tried to do was make sure that common planning time was focused." Principal B added, "The reason why they are becoming more productive is that we have purpose."

Teachers saw this as well: shared leadership. Teacher B1 stated, "We all hear the same thing and are working on the same goal. So, it's really nice to have us all together on the same thing." Teacher A3 stated, "I've become the leader definitely." Teacher A2 stated, "I think it gives me more of a leadership role within the grade level."

Theme 5: Shared Leadership

The second theme that emerged under the third research question was the belief of the principals in the idea of shared leadership. Shared leadership was mentioned by all

principals and was coded five times. Principals saw the need to build the skills and capacity of the teachers by providing them opportunities to lead through common planning. Principal A stated, "It really builds the teacher leaders and teachers' expertise." Principal C stated, "We have committees for everything that goes into running this school." None of the principals interviewed saw their role as a leader of teachers, but a position to facilitate the growth of the school. Principal B stated, "I am not the leader, I'm just a member." This is an alternative view of leadership where leadership is not the property of a single leader but is a shared process that is stretched over various members (Raelin, 2014). Principal C added, "I didn't get into this position to be a dictator. In regards to shared leadership, again, it is helping me serve them." As teachers work in teams, build relationships, and not only interact with each other and the site administrator, site principals come to trust the expertise of the teachers and allow them more opportunities to lead professional development, provide interventions, organize school-wide activities, and develop curriculum. Principal B stated, "So really trusting them to kinda lead some of this discussion or whatever."

Teachers welcomed these opportunities. Teacher A2 stated, "I think it gives me a leadership role within the grade level. It's not one's the leader, but suddenly, we're all leaders." This empowerment through common planning time enables teachers to see themselves as leaders of the school and active participants in improving student outcomes for the entire school and not just of their single classroom. This builds community and cohesion that increases the skills and strategies that lead to the increase in test scores by

students. Shared leadership arose from the activities of common planning time as teachers worked together to implement change and new strategies to support students.

Theme 6: Data Analysis and Planning

Under the fourth research question, the final theme emerged as a strategy utilized by the principals. Data analysis and planning was mentioned by all principals and was coded 22 times. Both teachers and principals shared this theme. All saw the importance of data to guide instruction and to provide the basis for all dialogue. If dialogue is the glue that holds common planning together, then data is the foundation of all the discussion. Getting teachers together and having them talk to each other is not collaboration. Data enables the teacher to rationalize their actions and provides reflection for their actions. This was best summed up by Principal A, "We analyzed all that data, then we talked about what are we gonna do about it? Now we found this information, what are we gonna keep? What are we gonna need to go back and remediate." In other words, it is through data that teachers can see what works and what doesn't. Principals saw the data as a vehicle to talk to the staff and be a part of the discussion. Data analysis became a key element for the relationship between the principal and the teachers.

Discrepant Data

The analysis of the data collected revealed two discrepant points. The first was that eight of nine teachers (88%) reported that administration used the collaborative time to make announcements, complete administrative tasks, or district office requirements. Teacher C1 stated,

> Some, not all the common planning time is, I feel, important or effective, there's some that I feel 'Why are we even here?' It is repetitive information, or it is just information that is, you could have sent out in an email for, I do love the collaboration time when we actually get to work with our team.

Teachers stated that they sometimes had to sit and listen to information that used almost all of the common planning time and left them with little time to plan. Teacher B1 stated, "After all is said and done, you've got like 15 minutes left of common planning time to go and do your own planning."

Though teachers complained of time not effectively used, all principals reported that they felt they were effective in managing common planning time. Principal A used coaches, grade level leaders, and agendas to keep the planning focused.

> You're making sure that we stay on track; you're making sure that, those types of things. So that the grade-level experts could focus on being experts, and someone else could monitor that we are using the time appropriately. So, there were a couple of structures we put in place to make sure that the time is used effectively. (Principal A)

Another principal was aware that teachers were not always pleased with the structure of common planning time and the use of time, but that without professional development and focus on the data, teachers would not be able to plan for student achievement.

> I would say we really use the time effectively. Sometimes some of the teachers complain that in terms of it, that they feel like they didn't have a lot of that time, I

> guess for planning, but that wasn't what that was entailed in. You know, for that time, for a planning period. And so, there was maybe one or two people that tried to go against the grain, but because of the positive results that the grade levels were experiencing, it was almost like this kind, 'whoosa-ed it down.'
>
> (Principal C)

The second was that two teachers reported that they wanted more time to use to work in their rooms alone. Teacher A3 stated, "But I like to work in isolation in just my classroom." Despite acknowledging that isolation was ineffective and the need to interact with their colleagues enhanced student performance, some teachers still felt the need to work alone in their classrooms and isolated from others. Bell (2016) found that the addition of collaboration often seems as "an add-on" and keeps teachers from completing other assignments such as ensuring the room environment is acceptable

Evidence of Quality

This study followed procedures outlined in Chapter 3 to assure the accuracy of data. The collection of data was in the form of interviews and one observation of common planning time at each site. Participants were from three high-performing elementary schools. Participants were aware of their selection because their schools were high performing and would be truthful in their answers.

Interview questions utilized are in Appendices B and C. I read transcripts and then reread applying codes. Codes developed after utilizing the questions and separating beliefs from practices. Bracketing and reducing codes developed themes for final synthesis of the data. Conducting member checking ensured the quality of the work and

ensured that participants' views and experiences were accurately portrayed. Finally, comparing themes to observations to triangulate the data ensured accuracy of the final findings. I noted any discrepancies found. Teachers felt administrative announcements or tasks took their collaboration time while 66% of the administrators felt they effectively managed time to provide teachers with as much time as possible to collaborate and plan.

All participants received a draft of the findings to review and provide feedback. An audit trail including evidence of teacher responses and the transcriptions are preserved. Finally, all guidelines established by Walden IRB were adhered to with the collection of this data.

Conclusion

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to obtain the perceptions of teachers and administrators at three high-performing elementary schools regarding the effective use of common planning time, a weekly 105-minute block of time that the district established in 2008.

Interview questions and observations of common planning time helped to organize the data. To transcribe and code the interviews used the qualitative software program ATLAS TI. Under the four research questions, six themes emerged regarding the beliefs and strategies employed by teachers and site administrators during common planning time.

RQ1 regarded the beliefs of teachers regarding the use of common planning time. Teachers were focused on the belief that the mere opportunity to talk and build relationships with each other regarding their practice was vital to common planning time.

Teachers focused on the beliefs of collegiality and dialogue in the success of common planning time. Teachers spend countless hours with their students, but very little time connecting with or speaking to their colleagues. Teachers, even though engaged in a very social environment, feel isolated from their peers. Common planning time provided teachers with an extended period of time to actually work and learn from each other. Teachers developed collegial relationships that enabled them to be vulnerable towards each other. This relational trust is vital to developing productive teams of teachers who engage in planning, sharing resources, grouping students, and creating assessments to determine student outcomes and the need for remedial actions.

RQ2 regarded the strategies utilized by the teachers during common planning time. Teachers stated that the ability to collectively analyze data from test scores, benchmarks, and common assessments as well as create common assessments, plan together, and share ideas regarding instruction were effective strategies that they employed to improve student achievement.

RQ3 focused on the beliefs of the site administrators regarding common planning time. Principals believed in the overall concept of common planning time and shared leadership. Principals believed that common planning time as a concept improved student achievement. They also believed that common planning time provided opportunities for shared leadership. This not only empowered the teachers, but enhanced the overall staff cohesion and focus on student achievement.

RQ4 considered the strategies employed by the site principals in regard to common planning time. Both principals and teachers utilized the strategy of data analysis

to drive instructional practices which was the key to increased test scores. However, principals failed to recognize the importance of relationships and how vital it is to take the time for the staff to get to know each other. This is even true if the staff has been working at the site for years as though the teachers may have been working side by side for years; they often know little about the teacher and even less of what goes on in the classrooms of their neighboring teachers. The key difference was that teachers felt that administrators hindered planning time by making announcements, routine tasks, and district requirements that took time away from collaboration. Principals reported the opposite and stated that they used the time effectively to provide teachers with as much common planning time as possible. All interview data triangulated with observations of common planning time supported interview statements. Chapter 5 includes discussion, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Overview of the Study

Many teachers work each day in classrooms with few, if any, meaningful interactions with their colleagues. The problem identified in Chapter 1 is the discrepancy between elementary schools in state-mandated test scores in the district of study. In 2008, the district changed the instructional day to create a weekly common planning time. Since the inception of the common planning time, average test scores have increased, but the discrepancy between elementary sites in the district still exists despite similar demographics.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to obtain the perceptions of teachers and administrators at three high-performing elementary schools regarding the effective use of common planning time, a weekly 105-minute block of time that the district established in 2008. I developed four research questions that guided the study:

RQ1: What are the beliefs of elementary teachers regarding the use of common planning time to increase student achievement?

RQ2: What strategies have elementary teachers developed during common planning time to increase student achievement?

RQ3: What are the beliefs of elementary principals regarding the use of common planning time to increase student achievement?

RQ4: What strategies do elementary principals incorporate to implement the effective use of common planning time to increase student achievement?

A review of the literature provided in-depth research regarding the need for collaboration; however, identification of gaps surfaced.

Using a phenomenological design, I gathered data from 12 interviews using 12 interview questions to answer the research questions. After transcribing interviews and using ATLAS TI to code data, six themes emerged. The themes were then developed and shared with the individual participants. After member checking was completed, triangulation of the data with three observations of common planning time occurred. I then organized these six themes into the final recommendations as follows:

1. Provide teachers time to review data and discuss student performance at the same grade level (horizontal collaboration) and across the grade levels (vertical collaboration). Both the data and current research supported the need for teachers to enter into dialogue with each other regarding their specific practices and ideas.
2. Provide a means for teachers to develop common assessments aligned to the curriculum and standards that they are teaching and then lesson plan together to meet the assessment requirements. Also plan for reteaching methods when students fail to meet proficiency.
3. Create a means for teachers to temporarily group students based upon need and provide instruction tailored to meet specific goals.
4. Provide teachers opportunities to lead projects and academic programs.
5. Allow site administrators to work with site teachers to develop agendas and goals for common planning time.

6. Districts should protect common planning time and not create tasks, requirements, or duties that interfere with this time period.
7. Allow teachers and site administrators to collaboratively develop priorities for staff development based upon data.
8. Principals need to provide time and work with teachers to build relationships between staff members as well as provide teachers with leadership roles to improve collaborative efforts.
9. Principals need to resource time efficiently to focus on collaboration and not use time for announcements, paperwork, and other routine items that e-mail use can accomplish.

Interpretations of the Findings

While many studies exist regarding teacher collaboration and the negative impacts of teacher isolation, few studies exist regarding the connection of collaboration and student achievement. Ronfeldt et al. (2015) reported that in surveys of 9,000 teachers and administrators in 336 Miami Dade County schools over a 2-year period that teachers who engage in better quality collaboration have better gains in math and reading. Moreover, teachers improve at greater rates when they work in schools with better collaboration practices. This study focused on sites that had achieved higher student achievement as measured by state mandated test scores because the entire district adopted a weekly common planning period. The purpose of the study was to explore the beliefs, perceptions, and practices concerning the use of common planning time by teachers and administrators.

RQ1 delved into the beliefs that teachers held regarding the use of common planning time. The first critical belief was that the mere opportunity to talk to their colleagues regarding teaching in itself was seen as connected with increased student achievement. The ability to engage in dialogue with each other developed the collegiality that is best defined as the interactions with peers at any level, be they intellectual, moral, political, and/or emotional in nature (Ning, Lee, & Lee, 2015). The teachers stated they enjoyed the ability to speak to peers about teaching. Dialogue becomes a venue for alternative viewpoints that stimulates reflective thinking (Mälkki & Green, 2016). It was noted that the teachers at all three sites engaged in authentic collegiality.

Hargreaves and Dawe (1990) stated authentic collegiality was when teachers work in a culture that is open and trustworthy and offers support among teachers to they define and develop their own purpose. Authentic collegiality is opposed to contrived collegiality where teachers meet to meet requirements and fulfill programs developed by the district with little or no input from the site staff. The teachers in the study objected to such demands.

While teachers spoke of many strategies that were used during common planning time, they were just as adamant on the need for the district not to use common planning time to meet district mandates. The district needs to avoid interfering with common planning time by using this time to complete actions and activities that meet district priorities over site focus. Teacher B1 stated, “It’s mostly just telling us a lot of stuff. I guess district policies and stuff like that, but after all is said and done, you’ve got like 15 minutes left of MOU to go do your planning.”

Common planning time provided teachers with a safe venue to explore their practices with their peers without feeling they were being evaluated. As teachers work together, they become more open to new ideas and perspectives to change their actions in the classroom. Dialogue that included the use of data was of particular value to creating an environment of analysis and self-reflection.

RQ2 regarded the practices the teachers used during common planning time. At all three sites, data analysis was a specific activity during common planning time. Van Lare (2016) stated that teachers first examined areas that were below expectations. This also came out during the interviews as teachers reflected deeply on the areas in which they did poorly and looked for support from their colleagues. Teacher A2 stated, "It's really nice to sit with grade levels and discuss test scores even if you feel yours are low." Teachers effectively used data to analyze results of the classroom and to make decisions in areas they deemed weak in order to make immediate changes. They also used the data to prepare future lessons and units as well as develop common assessments to measure student proficiency.

Another strategy identified under RQ2 was the creation of common assessments. All the teachers mentioned common assessments. Joseph et al. (2014) stated that teachers who embraced formative instructional practices by setting learning targets and intentionally documenting evidence of aligning their formal and informal assessments saw growth in student achievement. Assessments, created by teachers, were utilized to guide the instruction over a specific standard or area. The teachers developed the questions to ensure that the areas were covered and that by passing the assessment, the

students would demonstrate proficiency for that particular standard or area covered. Teachers provided specific remedial teaching byintentionally pulling students amongst the entire grade level who did not pass the assessment. Teacher A1 stated,

> Then, there's that basic, far below or the below basic, and then I would take those kids. The middle kids go with someone else, and the more advanced proficient go somewhere else. So that's how we divided those kids up.

Grouping is an effective means to work with students who need extra support for a particular standard while providing instruction to other students who have already mastered the skills.

Teachers used common planning time to develop groups and plan activities for students who could benefit from enrichment or to develop plans for advanced mastery of specific standards. Teachers felt empowered as they chose which teachers would provide the support for at-risk students while others planned activities for the other students.

RQ3 concerned principal beliefs regarding common planning time. Both teachers and principals understood the need to empower teachers through shared leadership. Derrington (2016) found that principal leadership was important in determining the role of teacher-leaders working in concert with principals to implement change at the school site. Leadership at a school site has been universally associated with the principal, and shared leadership involves groups that decide what to do and how to do it (Raelin, 2014).

By empowering teachers, the study finds this strategy is critical in regards to professional development. Principals need to work with teachers to develop staff priorities for common planning time and staff development that the teachers deem

necessary for professional development. It is important for the principals to use relationships and influences instead of issuing mandates and district edicts to force training on the sites. By encouraging relationships, the site administrator creates a culture where adult learning is valued. Cherkowski (2016) stated that teachers need to feel valued, included, and engaged in their own learning.

Principals need to allocate time to build relationships between the teachers. As teachers begin to develop healthy relationships with each other, they can then share their frustrations as well as their successes in the classrooms with their colleagues. As the relationships develop, teachers build the trust with each other to share their practices and be open to change practices based upon the sharing of ideas during common planning time.

The final research question, RQ4, dealt with data analysis and planning. It has been noted in research that effective schools utilized collaboration that intentionally focused on data both through formal assessments and informal observations of student performance. The teachers then created lessons and activities to meet the needs of the students (Ronfeldt et al., 2015). Data driven discussion can guide instruction or can be oversimplified, which may lead to negative impressions (Datnow & Park, 2015). The teachers and the administrators in this study used data in a positive manner to analyze actions and strategies to improve student outcomes. Teacher A3 stated, "We usually start with the data from the last one. Who's still struggling and do we need to make changes." Teacher C1 stated, "I really loved the data reflection meetings."

This desire to use data to drive instruction was shared by the principals. They saw their role to assist the teachers in data analysis. Principal A stated, "Are you leading them and giving them an understanding of what they are supposed to be looking for?" Principal B stated, "We had a data collection protocol that pretty much facilitated the discussion. Data discussion was built upon trust amongst staff members." Principal C remarked how he developed relationships amongst the teachers. Principal C stated, "To have a data reflective session and have the teachers comfortable with looking at their data with other teachers."

In regards to administrators' focus on the process of common planning time, Szczesiul and Huizenga (2014) stated that most leadership focused on structural changes to foster collaboration. Teachers longed for their principals to set goals and vision for the school. Principal C stated, "I have to lead that planning time, but I also have to be part of it." Principal C also referenced that teachers are not necessarily experts on collaboration, "Just because they have been asked to collaborate doesn't necessarily mean they know how." In regards to setting the stage, Principal C stated, "A lot of times you can give them expectations . . . I don't run the school; I lead the school."

The one area that evolved that sat outside the desire to collaborate and work with other teachers was the research indicating that teachers wanted time alone to work in their rooms. Teacher B2 stated, "On Mondays, I love the fact that I get time to work in my room." This anomaly was supported by research. In a mixed-methods study of elementary teachers, Grosemans, Boon, Vercelairen, Dochy, and Kyndt (2015) found that while teachers enjoyed collaboration, they valued their autonomy the most.

The summary of the findings indicated that at the sites that were investigated, teachers and site administrators value common planning time, use the time to review data, plan together, and discuss different strategies to teach the curriculum. Teachers and site administrators also used this time to develop relationships, provide opportunities for shared leadership, and build collegial relationships based upon trust and the desire to achieve higher student achievement. Common planning time under the right conditions and focused on student achievement leads to higher scores and better student outcomes.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to a small population of nine volunteers and three administrators whose views may not reflect the other teachers at the site or throughout the district. It is not possible to generalize the findings to a school or the district in question. Since the teachers were volunteers and were aware that the study was focused on collaboration and common planning time, it attracted teachers who supported the practice and held beliefs in the importance of common planning time.

Research indicated that personality traits may impact a teacher's motivation to share ideas or strategies (Benoliel & Schechter, 2017). Teachers that do not support or like to participate in collaboration would be disinclined to volunteer to participate in a study regarding common planning time. While the teachers in the study reported that they did not like the isolation, there may be teachers that do not trust their colleagues and actually prefer the isolation that the typical classroom provides them (Benoliel & Schecter, 2017).

The teachers interviewed may or may not have responded differently to the questions as well as how the interviewer posed the questions to the participants. The lack of my experience in developing and asking interview questions led to a potential limitation of the study.

Implications for Social Change

The findings from this phenomenological qualitative study demonstrated that effective collaboration between teachers with support from administrators leads to higher student achievement. The implications for social change regarding common planning time is that by providing teachers time to plan together increases their skill and knowledge through a collaborative process involving data review, strategy sharing, lesson planning, creation of common assessments, grouping of students, and reteaching opportunities.

By increasing the skills and the knowledge of the classroom teachers, students are working with a better trained and empowered teacher. This leads to higher student achievement. Collaboration and the opportunity to speak to other teachers decreases the loneliness felt by many teachers (Kalkan, 2016). Communication becomes a focused dialogue that increases the skills, knowledge, and experiences of the classroom teacher. Communication between teachers becomes a focused dialogue that increases the skills and techniques of all teachers. The collegiality as teachers work together alleviates isolation and could lead to positive social change as it identifies outcomes for both teachers and site administrators experienced through collaboration and common planning time. Other sites can adopt the recommended experiences and strategies to lead to higher

student performance. Accomplishing this is by increasing the skills and the capacity of both teachers and administrators.

Recommendations for Further Study

While the findings supported common planning time, the pool was limited due to a small population. It is recommended that a survey be developed to survey teachers and site administrators throughout the district and other districts that have incorporated common planning time to ascertain if the findings of the study can be duplicated or generalized across a larger population. Also further research needs to be made to determine the beliefs and strategies utilized by the teachers and site administrators at secondary schools to develop a deeper understanding of instructional practice by teachers that hold a single subject credential. As mentioned before, while the study recommends relationship building among teachers, the study did not identify any specific actions or activities that could be developed to build or improve relationships. Furthermore, the study found that lack of time limits the collaboration but did not make any recommendations in regards to this issue.

Conclusion

The study focused on the use of common planning time and three elementary schools that had significant test score increases after implementing a weekly 105-minute extended period of time for collaboration. Interviews of nine teachers and three administrators used a phenomenological approach. After the data was coded, grouped, and themes developed, an exploration of the beliefs and strategies guided both the teachers and principals as they worked together during common planning time.

The study demonstrated that teachers and administrators strongly believe in and utilized strategies to ensure that common planning time is used for teacher collaboration and the goal is higher student performance. Teachers should not teach and work in isolation. It leaves them with little means to orientate them in how their actions and strategies impact classroom performance. Administrators' goal to improve academic performance should be to focus on improving the skills and mindset of the classroom teacher. Teachers need access to data, share the data openly amongst each other, create assessments that address the goals they want to achieve, and plan lessons and group students accordingly. During observations of planning time, teachers were dedicated in their ongoing use of shared assessments and data instruction to guide their instruction. They must also provide means to reteach students that do not meet proficiency on the common assessments.

This is a complete change of mindset. For years, universities trained teachers to take charge of the class and not seek the help of others as they would be weak and ineffective; taught to value autonomy and their work was that of an artisan. This has led to school sites that have ineffective teachers next door to master teachers and neither is aware of how the other practices their craft nor the student outcomes. Effective leaders need to assess teachers' collaborative work and identify next steps for professional development.

Common planning time and collaboration bring down the classroom walls that divide teachers. By bringing all teachers to share ideas and practices in an open and

trusting environment, teachers can learn from each other and this improvement in teacher performance will be an improvement shared by all the students at the school.

Broken down to its smallest unit, teacher collaboration works because it takes the isolated teacher from the classroom and thrusts them into conversations with their colleagues. It is through conversation that brings about the promise of true change. When teachers sit together and talk about what is happening in the classroom, the conversation is about students and their performance. It is through dialogue that teachers see the possibilities, the choices, and sense of hope in doing better for the students they serve. Teachers may spend hours alone in the classroom, but collaboration becomes an opportunity for them to come together and see themselves as part of a team, and together, they can make the world they live in better for themselves and the students they teach.

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Appendix A: Memorandum of Understanding

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
[redacted]

MOU-Collaboration Day Professional Development Program

This Memorandum of Understanding is made and entered into this 3rd day of May, 2011, between the [redacted] (hereinafter referred to as "District") and the [redacted] CTA/NEA (hereinafter referred to as "Association").

WHEREAS: The [redacted] and the [redacted] believe that student achievement is a result of the joint commitment to quality teaching and learning among all stakeholders at a school; and

WHEREAS: Quality teaching and learning can best be realized through collaboratively developed, effective professional development opportunities; and

WHEREAS: The District and [redacted] agree that to achieve this purpose a Collaboration Day Professional Development Program (hereinto referred to as "collaboration days") will remain in effect.

IT IS THEREFORE AGREED as follows:

A. All District schools shall participate in a Collaboration Day Professional Development Program. Adult Education, [redacted], and district preschools shall be exempt from this MOU.

   Collaboration days shall not be scheduled during those weeks when a District minimum day is scheduled.

   During collaboration days, the certificated staff shall participate in professional development which may include teacher planning, collaboration, and preparation in order to accomplish any and/or all of the following objectives:

   1. Development and implementation of the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA);

   2. Analysis of student achievement data to inform and improve instruction; and

   3. Integration of professional development concepts into the instructional and/or school program.

      This time shall not be used as individual conference/preparation time and the time shall not exceed one hundred-five (105) minutes for the elementary level and ninety (90) minutes for the secondary level. At the elementary level, time in the workday-beyond the maximum minutes established herein shall be available to the unit members to apply and/or extend the concepts covered during current and/or prior collaboration day activities at their discretion.

B. Addendum A shall reflect the work day for unit members and the student instruction day for regular work days, collaboration days, minimum days, track change days and exam days. The

Appendix B: Interview Guide Administrator Questions

Introduction: The purpose of this study is to explore the beliefs, perceptions, and practices concerning the use of common planning time by teachers and administrators and how the use of this time may influence student achievement. As a member of a school that has shown great growth since the inception of the common planning time period; I would like to inquire and learn about your experiences concerning common planning time.

1. Tell me about your background. How long have you been an administrator? How long have you been at this school site? How would you best describe your administrative experiences with teachers?
2. How would you describe your experiences concerning the use of the common planning time?
3. What is the purpose of the common planning time?
4. What specific activities do you complete during this time?
5. How has the use of the common planning time period influenced your role as an administrator?
6. Can you tell me one or more stories that illustrate how the planning time has enhanced student performance?
7. Has your role as an administrator been hindered by the common planning time? If so, please tell me more about that. If it has not, why do you feel that way?
8. Has common planning time influenced your relationships with teachers?

9. Have you experienced any benefits with the inception of common planning time? Please explain.
10. Take me through a common planning time session. Can you describe from start to finish?
11. What specific activities do you feel that occur during planning time that influence classroom activities and student achievement? Please share any story or experiences.
12. If you could change anything about how common planning time is practiced, how would you change it?
13. Is there anything else you would like to say about the topic of common planning time?

Appendix C: Interview Guide Teacher Questions

Interview Questions

Introduction: The purpose of this study is to explore the beliefs, perceptions, and practices concerning the use of common planning time by teachers and administrators and how the use of this time may influence student achievement. As a member of a school that has shown great growth since the inception of the common planning time period; I would like to inquire and learn about your experiences concerning common planning time.

1. Tell me about your background. How long have you been a teacher? How long have you been at this school site? What grade levels have you taught? How would you best describe your experiences?
2. What has been your experience concerning the use of the common planning time?
3. How would you describe the purpose of the common planning time?
4. What specific activities do you complete as an individual or as a team during this time?
5. How has the use of the common planning time period influenced your role as a teacher?
6. Can you tell me one or more stories that illustrates how the planning time has enhanced student performance?

7. Have your classroom techniques and strategies been hindered by the common planning time? If so, please tell me more about that. If it has not, why do you feel that way?
8. How would you describe how common planning time has influenced your relationships with other teachers?
9. Have you experienced any benefits with the inception of common planning time? Please explain.
10. Take me through a common planning time session. Can you describe from start to finish?
11. What specific activities do you feel that occur during planning time that influence classroom activities and student achievement?
12. If you could change anything about how common planning time is practiced, how would you change it?
13. Is there anything else you would like to say about the topic of common planning time?

Appendix D: Code Manual for the Study

The following Codes were used for the individual interviews with teachers and school administrators, Codes were developed based upon the four research questions. Codes were divided amongst belief statements and practices of both teachers and administrators.

1. Cognitive Strategy
    a. Individual strategies
    b. Collaborative strategies
2. Collaboration between teachers
    a. Grade level collaboration
    b. Between grade level collaboration
    c. Differentiation
    d. Reteaching methods
3. Collaboration between teacher and administration
    a. Shared/distributed leadership
    b. Administrative beliefs towards teachers
    c. Teacher beliefs towards administration
4. Collaboration between teacher and other staff
    a. Collaboration between teachers and office staff
    b. Collaboration between teachers and
5. Teacher beliefs about students
6. Teacher beliefs about other teachers

7. Teach belief about administration
8. Teacher belief about parents
9. Teacher organizational beliefs
    a. School norms
    b. School values
    c. School beliefs
10. Autonomy
11. Isolation
12. PLC beliefs
13. Data usage
    a. Teacher beliefs
    b. Teacher strategies
14. Student Achievement
    a. Teacher beliefs
    b. Teacher strategies
    c. Teacher values
    d. Administrator values
    e. Administrator beliefs
    f. Administrator strategies
15. Common planning Time
    a. Teacher values
    b. Teacher beliefs

c. Teacher strategies

d. Administrator beliefs

e. Administrator strategies

Appendix E: Letter to Superintendent

Dr. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX School District
XXXXXXX, XX XXXXX

January 25, 2014

Dear Dr. XXXXXXXX,

My name is Christopher R. Tickell and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. In preparation of exploring the perceptions of teachers and administrators of high-performing elementary schools in regards to the use of common planning time, I am writing to ask your cooperation in allowing me to conduct interviews and observations of common planning times at three of your elementary school sites in the Spring of 2014. I will also be contacting each building principal for permission to interview as well as for permission to contact teachers regarding participation in the study.

The purpose of the **propo**sed phenomenological study is to obtain the perceptions of teachers and administrators at three high-performing elementary schools regarding the effective use of common planning time, a weekly 105-minute block of time that the district established in 2008. The research questions will ask both teachers and administrators how they use and experience the weekly common planning time and how the use of this time affects student academic achievement. If they choose to participate in the study, they will each sign a consent letter. The data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University Institutional Review Board.

To obtain approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). I must submit confirmation from you indicating permission for me to conduct interviews and observations of teacher and administrators regarding the use of the common planning period. I thank you in advance for your support in the study and know that all responses will remain confidential.

Please return the attached letter of cooperation with your signature. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Christopher R. Tickell

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Appendix F: Letter of Cooperation

Christopher R. Tickell
XXX XXXXXXXX XXX
XXX XXXXXXXXXX XX XXXXX

January 27, 2014

Dear Mr. Tickell,

Based upon my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Perceptions of the use of Common Planning Time at Three High Performing Elementary Schools within the XXX XXXXXXX Unified School District. As part of the study, I authorize you to conduct face to face interviews with teachers and administrators and observe staff at common planning time. Individual participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,

XXXX XXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Appendix G: Initial Teacher Participation Letter

Dear Classroom Teacher,

I am, Christopher Tickell, a doctoral student with Walden University. I have district approval to contact teachers who may be interested in participating in a research study regarding the use of common planning time. Since the inception of common planning time, your school site's growth in test scores as measured by the API has exceeded the district average.

Your participation in the study will provide insight in the culture and collaboration of teachers at your school. Results will be published and presented to the governing board of [redacted].

Interviews will be one hour long and your name will be kept confidential. Results will be published and names will not be used in the study nor identification of sites by name. Interviews will be audio taped, electronically transferred and stored in a password protected file.

There is no compensation for participating and you may withdraw from the study at any time. After the interview, I will contact you one more time to review my transcripts and developed themes to ensure your statements accurately are reflected in the study.
I appreciate your consideration and interest in participating in this study.

By completing this form, you are just stating interest in participating in the study. Should you be selected, I will contact you be phone to set up an interview. Please place the form in the manila envelope next to the teacher mailboxes.

Sincerely yours,

Christopher R. Tickell
Student, Walden University

Name:_____ Phone Number:_____

Date:_____ Email: _____ _

School Site: _____

Grade level this year: _____ Years of Experience at Site:_____ In the District

Appendix H: Sample Observation Form

Date:_____

Time Started: _____ Time Ended: _____ Total time in Minutes_____

Site: _____ (Coded Letter) (A, B, C)

Participants Observed by Coded Number_____ (1,2,3,4)

Observations will be made of participants during common planning time. Only behaviors and actions of participants will be noted. The researcher will sit and take notes of the planning time, with the goal of the common planning time observation is to triangulate data. No audio recordings will be done. Researcher will not ask questions nor participate in the activities. If asked by anyone, the researcher will state that he is gathering data for a study by observing preselected participants. The researcher will not identify who he is watching and will not script any verbal responses by the participants. Researcher will only make marks to indicate the number of behaviors he observed of each of the following behaviors:

Observable actions:

Teachers discussing student scores/data_____

Teachers discussing applying school vision_____

Teachers discussing and analyzing state standards_____

Teachers creating goals_____

Teachers discussing lesson plans/unit plans_____

Teachers discussing reteaching strategies_____

Administrator and teachers collaborating_____

Administrators and teachers discussing specific teaching strategies_____

Administrators and teachers creating goals_____

Administrators presenting data_____

Notes: