

POLICY OR REALITY?
TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE
IN
SEVEN OAKS SCHOOL DIVISION

BY
CATHY HORBAS

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF EDUCATION
Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology

University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba

(c. August, 2006)

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Rationale

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine Seven Oaks School Division teacher's perceptions of themselves as reflective practitioners through the writing of an Annual Statement of Professional Growth.

This research involved a quantitative survey of all current Seven Oaks School Division professional personnel who are required by policy to write an Annual Statement of Professional Growth. Focus groups were subsequently held with twenty-four teachers.

The survey data showed no differences based on specified parameters. Most respondents agree with the Seven Oaks Policy, think positively about their participation the reflective practices, use a variety of documentation and have varied experiences with administrative feedback.

The focus groups evidence corroborates the survey data. The focus groups also provided information gathered around five thematic areas: audience, feedback from administrators, purposes for personal and professional development, acceptance and celebration of diverse modalities of teacher reflection, and how the practice of writing Annual Reflections on Professional Learning contributes to the professional culture of the School Division.

The author concludes that teachers participating in this study agree with the philosophical statements made in the teacher evaluation policy GBI. Teachers believe this particular policy contributes to Seven Oaks being a unique school division.

Recommendations are made in the area of building understanding of dialogue and the nature of feedback between teachers, colleagues and administrators.

Introduction

In 1991, Seven Oaks School Division, Winnipeg, Manitoba undertook a revision of the teacher evaluation policy. The policy, GBI, was written in three sections, the building of a professional portfolio, a section to address those teachers experiencing difficulty in their teaching situation, and a yearly requirement to write an Annual Statement of Professional Growth.

The intent of the policy was to move away from a clinical supervision model of teacher evaluation and to move to a self-reflective model.

Policy GBI is based on certain assumptions and the rejection of other assumptions. It dismisses the idea that experienced teachers improve their practices under the threat of inspection every three years or so. Policy GBI asserts that it is the teacher's responsibility to improve practice and this is accomplished by reflecting on that practice. Practice is understood as more than methodological competence, indeed as an amalgam of method and manner, encompassing both skills and intellectual and moral virtues. Policy GBI asserts that it is the teacher's responsibility to improve practice and this is accomplished by reflecting on that practice. These artefacts are meant as aids for reflection, which is supported by dialogue with colleagues and, by writing. Reflection on practice will lead to improved practice, which will lead to better education for students. (Seven Oaks School Division, 1996, p.16)

The Board of Trustees and Superintendents of the day believed there was a high level of professionalism and professional autonomy apparent in teacher performance in

Seven Oaks. This professionalism was not reflected in the hierarchical approach to education suggested by clinical supervision. The policy did not respect, nor honour teacher as professional, nor did it respond to issues of accountability and responsibility of the teacher as learner in the classroom.

The philosophical foundation for the change in policy began with the belief that self-reflection promotes professionalism and honours teachers as learners. The Board believed that for most of the teacher population evaluation by an outside other was not helpful for teacher improvement. What was necessary for teacher improvement to occur was an expectation that teachers would think about teaching and their work with children in a systematic manner allowing for growth and change over time. Thinking about teaching and improvement in teaching would more likely happen with the collaboration and consultation of administrators and colleagues. Professional development, in this case, would become self-directed as the teachers identified areas for professional learning. The school and school division culture would be one that would nurture a self-reflective stance.

A second core belief was that writing is a way of thinking that supports reflective thinking and a deepening of pedagogical knowledge. The writing of an Annual Statements of Professional Growth is seen as a means by which professional teachers could share their ideas and thoughts about teaching with colleagues. In the same manner in which teachers assist students to become better readers and writers in order to interpret their world, teachers would model that same belief about teaching through their own writing processes.

A third belief underlying this policy was that teacher reflection is supported by the compilation of a teacher portfolio. Much of the work of the initial implementation

team was spent in conversations about the purposes and practices of building a personal professional portfolio. The purpose was to demonstrate reflection-on-action (Schön, 1983), both in written and visual form, thus supporting documentation and evidence of professional learning. Over fifteen years of putting the policy into practice, the definition of a portfolio and what constitutes evidence of teaching practice has been expanded to include journals, interactive writing, action research, university coursework, reflective writing, collaborative projects, poetry and artwork.

The self-reflective part of the policy was designed for all teachers. A separate policy was designed to support those teachers experiencing difficulty in their teaching situations. The second portion of the policy is not included in this research.

In 1991, each school staff participated in a one day in-service. The in-service outlined the policy and set out expectations for teacher participation and explored the philosophical underpinnings of the policy. In addition, two divisional teams were established to follow the work of teachers through the implementation process.

The Divisional Resource Team had as its mandate to "Assume an educational role in promoting portfolio acceptance and development among teachers in the Division. Members will participate in an intensive orientation workshop designed to provide conceptual understanding of personal professional portfolios . . ." (Seven Oaks School Division, 1991, November). "Members will provide a leadership role in workshops and discussion groups both within and outside of the district. As well, team members will be expected to provide "on call" service to teachers" (Seven Oaks School Division, 1991, November).

The Research team had as its mandate the following (Seven Oaks School Division, 1991, November).

The Research team will develop its understanding of the ideas behind the professional portfolio project as well as the policy itself. Then, after looking at the current work in program evaluation and research, it will develop and implement a research proposal that address:

- i) The concepts of teaching and professionalism behind the professional portfolio policy.
- ii) The understandings that teachers and administrators have of the policy.
- iii) How teachers and administrators implement the policy.
- iv) How the policy contributes to the education of Seven Oaks students.

The two teams were comprised of representation from early, middle and senior years teachers, Divisional Teacher Team Leaders, school administrators and superintendents. Each team met separately for six months, together twice to plan joint activities and then worked independently for the second year. The Research team continued its work into a third year.

The Research team wrote two documents. The first report followed the implementation process and was entitled *Seven Oaks School Division Interim Report, Portfolios with Real Value?* (1993). *Reflection, Writing, and Dialogue: Professional Growth in the Seven Oaks School Division Implementation of policy GBI Final Report* (1996) was an analysis of teacher's perceptions of the policy as a whole. This final report raised questions that were identified to the Board of Trustees for further consideration. These issues included:

- Clarification of the rational and purpose of Policy GBI in allowing teachers to use portfolios to improve their practice.
- The relationship between teachers and administrators needs to be a more collegial exchange by separating the improvement of practice of experienced teachers from the evaluation of minimal competence.
- Issues surrounding trust, sharing and dialogue are key in the relationship between writing and reflection between teachers and administrators.

(p. 4)

In 2001, the superintendents began a review of the policy that led to a two-year discussion at the Divisional Advisory Committee level. This committee consists of teachers, administrators, superintendents and school trustees. Each school was asked to participate in giving feedback to the committee about strengths and weaknesses of the teacher evaluation policy and to raise questions and concerns. The committee made its final recommendations to the Board of Trustees and the policy was revised as of March 14, 2005.

The revised policy addresses the three issues above by defining reflective practice, setting expectations for collegial dialogue and outlining expectations for the documentation of teaching practice. (See Appendix E)

The data for this research project was collected after March 14, 2005. Therefore, the language of the project will reflect the language of the revised policy.

I have a long history with this particular policy. As a Divisional Teacher Team Leader in 1991, I was a part of the Resource Team charged with providing in service training for schools in Seven Oaks. During the first year of implementation, I presented information about the policy to five different school staffs. We spent a great deal of time

modelling teacher portfolios and the stance of a reflective practitioner. Since then, I have worked with at least five different teams of Seven Oaks teachers and administrators to present workshops on teacher portfolios. In addition, I have presented workshop sessions on professional portfolios to teachers in three other Manitoba school divisions, the Manitoba Association of Principals, the Seven Oaks Association of Administrators and with teacher candidates at the University of Manitoba.

As a current school administrator, I have done a great deal of personal reading, and writing for course work and for sharing with the staff members with whom I work regarding reflective practice. Reflective practice tied to professional development has been a constant theme of my administrative work. I have tried to model being a reflective practitioner through the sharing of my writing and my portfolio.

I realize I bring many biases to the work I am undertaking here due to my own participation and beliefs in reflective practice. I do have some preconceived notions about teacher beliefs around reflective practice as well as the effect of school culture and collegiality on the nature of teachers' writing. I also recognize that, although this is an independent research project, the fact that I am a school administrator raises the question if teachers will be totally unbiased and truthful in their survey responses. Throughout the process of implementation and revision there have always been questions of trust and agenda. Who is going to see this data? How will it be used? I hope that the fact that I am an administrator did not affect the way in which teachers will respond to the survey. In the same manner, my personal biases and perceptions had to be clearly put aside as I analysed and interpreted the data. I have been very careful throughout the project that all correspondence between teachers and myself has been through their home addresses and telephone numbers. At no time did I call teachers at school, nor did I contact them

through any divisional courier or divisional email, unless the teacher specifically requested that avenue.

At the same time as the survey for this project was mailed to teachers, administrators and teachers were reviewing the current revision of the GBI Policy. It was a time of heightened awareness and activity surrounding the policy revision. The concurrent timing of the two events, while completely coincidental and unintentional, did have the effect that teachers were thinking about their Annual Reflections on Professional Learning at the time the survey arrived in their mailboxes.

It is my hope that the data analysis in this study will help inform teachers in Seven Oaks, the Board of Trustees and the Superintendent's Department in furthering their understanding of teacher reflection. This is the first writing about this policy implementation since that of the Implementation and Research teams in 1996. It is an interesting follow up to those two documents and will be particularly relevant as it follows the policy revision of March 2005. In considering teacher perspectives in this evolving process I believe we are, and will be, better able to understand the important work of teaching and learning.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

In the early nineties, Seven Oaks School Division was undergoing a significant policy change regarding teacher evaluation. The teacher evaluation literature at that time is the context of this literature review. In this way, the reader can situate the decisions made by Seven Oaks School Division within the literature as it was available to them at the time those decisions were made. The superintendents of the day drafted the teacher evaluation policy on a set of beliefs and practices that emerged from this body of literature. As the set of beliefs and practices are those that are being examined by this researcher, it is important to see those beliefs and practices as they appeared in the literature of the time.

The body of teacher evaluation literature in the late eighties and early nineties generally falls into two categories that for the purposes of this paper will be called supervision and reflective practice. The literature examined in this paper is based on the theoretical and conceptual constructs of those two contrasting ideas. These theoretical and conceptual notions provide the backdrop for thinking about teacher evaluation. It is through an examination of these two schools of thought that one can come to an understanding of the philosophical underpinnings leading to the development of the Seven Oaks School Division policy for teacher evaluation.

Bureaucratic Supervision Literature

There are many underlying assumptions in the supervision literature. These assumptions include that continued supervision of teachers contributes to maintaining standards and ensures continued student progress and improved teacher instruction. Another assumption is that teachers need an objective or outside eye to see what needs to be improved in their classroom instruction. It also assumes that the principal, as that objective entity, has the ability and necessary knowledge to evaluate the teaching and that the evaluation of the teaching will lead to improved practices in the classroom.

Much of the supervision literature of the late eighties and early nineties was based on the work of Carl Glickman. His work *Supervision of Instruction: A Developmental Approach* (1989) is cited in much of the other supervision literature. Many later editions of this text have been coauthored with others. His developmental approach evolved from three philosophies education, those being essentialism, experimentalism and existentialism, which in turn, correspond to three supervisory models, directive supervision, collaborative supervision and nondirective supervision. Each of these three models is based on principals assuming the role of supervisor. The principal's work becomes based on observation, planning, research, evaluation, interpersonal and instructional skills.

Supervision of teachers also assumes that there are improvements to be made and that the voice of the supervisor is paramount in the instructional improvements. Glickman (1989) suggests that it "is the function in schools that draws together the discrete elements of instructional effectiveness into whole-school action" (p. 6). In this

view of supervision, it is the principal who takes the lead in setting a collegial atmosphere of supervision that will contribute to good teacher instruction.

The clinical supervision model of teacher evaluation is based on a pre-conference, observation, post-conference framework. The literature describes a conversational and dialogic approach to the pre- and post-conference. Supervisors (principals) work with teachers, in a non-threatening, collaborative manner, to move towards expert teaching.

Morris Cogan (1973) defines this model for clinical supervision as “the rational and practice designed to improve the teachers’ classroom performance “ (p. 9). Cogan believed that for this structure to be effective, data had to be collected from the teacher in the classroom. This procedure assumed that the data would be understood, had educational integrity, validity and reliability. Furthermore it assumed that both the supervisor and teacher involved would then collaborate to plan programs, procedures and strategies aimed at improving the teacher’s classroom behaviour, specifically instruction techniques.

The primary goal of the supervisor in clinical supervision is to improve instruction, by observing, analyzing and providing feedback to the teacher. A principal supervisor who is able to link appropriate interpersonal and technical skills together with the teacher will be able to influence improving instruction. The onus is on the supervisor to enhance the collaborative effort by building the teacher’s self-acceptance, morale, trust, and rapport between the parties. A clinical supervisor is also a facilitator – one who works with the teacher to meet the goal of the observation exercise - which is to improve teacher instruction. Effective supervision results when a supervisor clearly sets out the criteria to be used in the evaluative process thus ensuring that, even if the final assessment is a negative one, the teacher benefits from the exercise.

Those who use clinical supervision as a model for teacher evaluation believe that the ultimate goal of the supervisor is to improve teachers' classroom instruction. Clinical supervision therefore asserts that objective feedback, which if given in a timely manner, will lead to improved results. Clinical supervision helps to diagnose instructional problems and provides valuable information, which can lead to solving such problems. As a result, teachers are able to clearly see differences in what they are doing in reality and what they think they are doing. Where necessary improvements in instruction are highlighted, teachers, through clinical supervision, are able to develop new skills and strategies, which will be replicated as needed. As teacher instruction improves, students become more motivated, classroom management is improved and a more conducive atmosphere for promoting learning will exist.

Not only does clinical supervision aid the teacher in improving classroom instruction, it also aids the teacher in improving his/her chances for promotion and/or "taking on" other responsibility as he/she grows professionally. One such responsibility could be to provide direct assistance to a colleague. If clinical supervision is perceived in a positive light, then the teacher will become self-motivated and will seek further professional development even when this is not a requirement of the job per se.

Direct assistance (using the clinical supervision model) has developed various forms over the last three decades. Examples would be peer coaching, demonstration teaching, co-teaching and cognitive coaching, terms that have become embedded in the supervision literature as useful ways of improving instruction. The assumption in these literatures is that principals or supervisors may find that it is just as effective to use experienced colleagues, familiar with the clinical supervision process, to participate in the evaluation and improvement of teaching. In these methods, the improvement of

teaching becomes the responsibility of the individual teacher. The peer mentor, cognitive coach or co-teacher becomes the conversationalist for the teacher wishing to make improvements in their own practice.

An examination of the supervision literature finds conceptual models of supervision that have been heavily influenced by three sets of researchers. Most of the models of clinical supervision are variations on a theme of the work of Morris Cogan of the early 1970's, Goldhammer, Anderson and Krajewski (1983), and Acheson and Gall (1977). Cogan's influence of the supervision models is so embedded in the literature that it is important for us to examine his work. His definition of clinical supervision is

Clinical supervision may therefore be defined as the rational and practice designed to improve the teacher's classroom performance. It takes its principle data from the events of the classroom. The analysis of these data and the relationship between teacher and supervisor form the basis of the program, procedures and strategies designed to improve the student's learning by improving the teacher's classroom behaviours.

. . . Generally supervision subsumes supervisory operations that take place principally outside the classroom. . . General supervision, therefore denotes activities like the writing and revision of curriculum, the preparation of units and materials of instruction, the development of processes and instruments for reporting to the parents, and such broad concerns as the evaluation of the total educational programs. (p. 8 - 9)

Cogan's model of clinical supervision was the original source for the planning of the observation (pre-conference), observation, analysis, and post observation conference as cited earlier in the work of Glickman.

Goldhammer, Anderson and Krajewski (1989) built much of their work from the framework of Cogan's. They conceptualized supervision as teaching. They took the position that the supervisor, in order to be helpful, must have a larger and deeper understanding of teaching than the persons he or she seeks to help. They were prescriptive with the supervisor's role as administrative, curricular and instructional, not as mutually exclusive, but as complementary and necessary in the leadership role. The cycle of pre-conference, observation, analysis and post-conference is embedded in their work building upon the work of Cogan to include other more defined stages within the analysis part of the supervision.

Their work included collaboration as a central idea to supervision. Their definition of collaboration within the context of supervision was as follows. The supervisor:

Works with teachers as they identify and resolve teaching-related problems;
assists them in setting standards

Assists teachers in setting challenging goals for themselves by enhancing the
sense of professional autonomy

Educates teachers to self-examine performance; counsels them on how to learn
from analysis of failures.

Induces teachers toward and assists them in, innovative approaches. (p. 234)

These definitions of collaboration fit with their notions of the supervisor as a teacher of teachers and the teacher as a student of the teaching role. These notions of collaboration assume that the supervisor has the greater knowledge, the greater capacity for leadership and the greater ability in teaching.

Clinical Supervision is that aspect of instructional supervision which draws upon data from first-hand observation of actual teaching, or other professional events, and involves face-to-face and other associated interactions between the observer and the person observed in the course of analyzing the observed professional behaviours and activities and seeking to define and/or develop next steps toward improved performance. (p.29)

Acheson and Gall (1977) also built much of their work on Cogan's ideas. They developed an in depth set of checklists, word or phrase response sheets, charting of classroom use and sheets for recording child participation and teacher movement within the classroom. These kinds of supervisory tools were meant to complement the cycle of planning for the observation (pre-conference), observation, analysis, and post-observation conference. Their definition of clinical supervision is "Clinical supervision has as its goal the professional development of teachers, with an emphasis on improving teachers' classroom performance. It is supervision to help the teacher improve his or her instructional performance." (p. 11)

Peter Oliva (1989) outlines the work of supervision in a conceptual model that included supervision as Instruction Development, Staff Development, Evaluator, Group Leader, Consultant, Coordinator, Curriculum Development, Counselling, and Sociology. He was also one of the first writers to suggest that this supervisory job could be done by a whole host of support people in schools, not necessarily the principal, but a person with the prerequisite training and perspective. He divided the work of supervision into three domains: instruction; curriculum planning and improvement; and personal and professional growth and development.

Supervision is defined as a service provided to teacher for the purpose of improving instruction. A supervisor is a trained auxiliary or staff person whose primary function is the provision of service according to a conceptual model. The model presented portrays the supervisor as fulfilling the roles of coordinator, consultant, group leader and evaluator within the domains of instructional, curricular and staff development. (p. 5)

Oliva takes the premise that, in the ideal, supervisors would be of some help to all teachers but in practice would spend more time with the inexperienced and ineffective. He also made the distinction between the helping roles of colleagues as indirect and direct service to teachers with the administrative role being coordinator and evaluator. An analysis of the direct behaviours of supervisors includes control of a situation based on the authority of one's position in the school, people in higher organizational positions have more expertise, people can best be evaluated by those who are in higher positions, someone in a higher organizational position can give external rewards, and people learn best by being told what to do. An analysis of indirect behaviours of supervisors would be that control depends on the demands of the problem, expertise is a function of knowledge and experience, not necessarily of the organizational position, the product of a teacher's work is the best evaluative tool to use in measuring his performance. Teaching rewards are intrinsic, people learn best when being confronted by a problem and then seeking their own solutions.

It is in this context that extrinsic rewards such as merit pay became prevalent in the supervision literature. In the nineteen eighties there was a flurry of legislation policies made in the United States and Canada that encapsulated a bureaucratic view of teaching. These changes had supervisory structures and requirements and included such

practice as merit pay and career ladder formats. These formats were generally prescriptive in nature, and although they included some aspects of teacher input such as portfolio development, professional growth plan and the like, the underlying principles and assumptions were competitive and formulaic in nature and design. The result was that supervision became focussed on the specific behaviours required by the format rather than on actual problems within and understandings of teaching.

The coming together of organizational and business leadership theorists heavily influenced this movement towards merit pay and career ladders. The business viewpoint of human resources development was undergoing a radical change as business leadership aficionados worked with ideas from the organizational theorists imposing business models of changing business practices specifically related to human resources management, into educational settings. These collective philosophies and organizational practices were seen as positive influences as a means of organizing and managing educational endeavours and as providing a structure for performance reviews of workers. The assumption in all of this literature is that educators were workers who needed direct supervision in order to do their jobs correctly.

We see examples of this influence scattered throughout the supervisory literature. As one example, in the 1992 Yearbook from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Dryfuss, Cistone and Diviata (1992) describe these phenomena. Dade County Florida Education Authority used Fourteen Point to Supervision as the cornerstone for a complete revision of the School system's policy review and organization restructuring. This was a model exacted from the business world. Every aspect of the school system's management structures, policies and practices were modelled after a business model.

Edward Pajak (1991) categorized the transition in supervision in terms of the differences between a bureaucratic viewpoint and one of emerging practice. Bureaucratic supervision was defined as the one-to-one relationship between a worker and a presumably more expert superior who is charged with overseeing and correcting the work (Gitlin & Smythe, 1990). For our purposes this bureaucratic supervision definition works well to capitalize on the ideas presented thus far.

The assumptions that are embedded in this literature did not corroborate or support the philosophical beliefs and practices of Seven Oaks Superintendent Team of the day. The supervision literature did not allow for the expertise of the teacher to be acknowledged or celebrated. It did not allow for teacher voice and development, nor was it representative of a model of professionalism that was developing through other divisional initiatives of the time. This notion of bureaucratic supervision did not fit with the themes of teacher autonomy, democracy in the school and classroom, and teacher professionalism that the school division was working toward.

Professional/Reflective Practice Literature

In 1991, Daniel Duke stated reasons why one would not use clinical supervision. His thinking resonated with the beliefs of the Seven Oaks School Division at that time.

The idea of evaluating all competent teachers every year according to a common set of performance standards that, at best, represent minimum, or basic expectations is little short of an institutionalized insult. Teachers and

administrators both know that these evaluations are a terrible waste of time and energy. The reasons are obvious. (p. 663)

The superintendents used this particular quote as they presented the new policy to teachers in Seven Oaks. It clearly stated in a short concise statement why a policy would be built on another set of assumptions, those being ones based in professional notions of teaching, the second body of literature we are about to discuss here.

As Pajak (1991) had outlined there was a transition happening in the professional literature between a bureaucratic viewpoint and a professional viewpoint. Ann Lieberman (1988) refers to the then emerging reflective practices as those based on a professional viewpoint.

People learn best through active involvement and through thinking about and becoming articulate about what they have learned. Processes, practices, and policies build on this view of learning are at the heart of a more extended view of teacher development that encourages teachers to involve themselves as learners-in much the same way they wish their students would. (p. 252)

A professional viewpoint and the movement toward the professionalism of teaching is the philosophical stance that underlies the other body of work on supervision, that of reflective practice. Although a specific definition of what it means to be a reflective practitioner is very difficult to negotiate through the literature, there are many similarities and common stances that helped to inform the philosophical position underpinning professional growth models such as the one being researched in this study.

As the superintendents of the day were looking at revision of teacher evaluation in Seven Oaks, there were also other initiatives being undertaken at the same time. All of these initiatives had the same philosophical stance driving the change process. A

humanistic viewpoint, one based in notions of caring and personal responsibility for learning, one that would value the personal and professional in teaching, and one that was based on democratic principles, was emerging as the foundational philosophical stance for the changes taking place in the school division. As changes to the teacher evaluation policy were being discussed, these same notions of caring, personal and professional responsibility and democratic principles needed to be a part of the philosophical foundation of this policy change. The bureaucratic supervision literature was not humanistic or democratic in nature and therefore another viewpoint was appropriate.

In a conscious and deliberate choice to ameliorate the prescriptive ideas presented in the bureaucratic notions of teacher supervision, Seven Oaks School Division superintendents turned to the body of work that supports reflective practice as the basis for their policy development. A professional viewpoint with an emphasis on professionalism and reflective practice help educators shape common notions about the value of reflection in teaching. The following writers heavily influenced the philosophical stance for the development of the teacher evaluation policy in Seven Oaks School Division. The books and articles cited here are ones that were shared widely with the administrative community, the superintendent's department, the Seven Oaks School Division Board of Trustees and teachers. Many of the quotations cited here are ones that were used widely in the presentations at each school as the policy was implemented throughout the school division.

John Smyth (1989) was one who was writing about the dilemmas inherent in the supervision literature. He said

The major problem with traditional forms of supervision is that they are conceptualized as a delivery of a service to those who need it. Not matter how

benevolently it is done, efforts of this kind are largely self-defeating. Precisely because they are premise of managerial and undemocratic ways of working, these forms of supervision create dependence rather than independence. It is not the teachers' agendas, issues and concerns that are being addressed, but rather those of someone within the administrative or bureaucratic hierarchy. (p. 210)

Smyth offered an alternative to traditional forms of supervision. "There can be little doubt as we rush headlong into this era of neo-conservative ways of thinking and acting educationally, the reflective approach represents an interesting and challenging counter-discourse to the ensconced technicist view." (p. 242)

John Goodlad (1990) was writing about changing the technicist view in his work *Teachers For Our Nations Schools*. His main focus was ensuring that teaching and education was at the center of teacher improvement.

The education of teachers must be driven by a clear and careful conception of the educating we expect our schools to do, the condition most conducive to this education (as well as the condition that get in the way) and the kinds of expectations that teachers must be prepared to meet. Further, the renewal of schools, teacher, and the programs that educate teachers must proceed simultaneously. (p. 88)

Goodlad's text was highly influential at the time. His statements to the nation gave credence to the ideas that the notions of teacher supervision needed to be embedded in what is good for children and embedded in educational thought, not the business world or as a result of organizational theories. Goodlad strongly advised that teacher improvement was a human endeavour, that needed to be conscious of subject specificity, but that must take into account the human nature of relationship and teaching.

The epistemology of teaching must encompass a pedagogy that goes far beyond the mechanics of teaching. It must combine unrealizable principles of teaching, subject-specific instruction, sensitivity to the pervasive human qualities and potentials always involved, and full awareness of what it means to simultaneously “draw out” and “enculturate” (p. 76)

Stenhouse (1973) stated the value of moving away from bureaucratic supervision toward a professional viewpoint is in helping teachers self criticize as a way of improving teacher practice. “In short, the outstanding characteristic of the extended professional is a capacity for autonomous professional self-development through systematic self-study, through the study of the work of other teachers and through the testing of ideas by classroom research procedures.” (p. 144)

The responsibility lies with the teacher to self reflect, criticize one’s own practice in order that improvement and understanding affect the classroom practices for children. We think about this as a mirroring process between the classroom practice on students and the improvement on teaching by the teacher. Educationally we raise the standards of the children’s work not by setting the standards higher but by enabling students to understand their own strengths and weaknesses. So too, do we as teachers raise the standards of our teaching by understanding our own strengths and weaknesses.

Stenhouse stated this concept in this manner.

We do not teach people to jump higher by setting the bar higher, but by enabling them to criticize their present performance. There can be no educational development without teacher development; and the best means of development is not by clarifying ends by criticizing practice. (p. 83)

“The commitment to systematic questioning of one’s own teaching as a basis for development, the commitment and the skills to study one’s own teaching and the concern to question and to test theory in practice by the use of those skills were the three criteria which he believed professionals would improve their own teaching.” (p. 144)

Stenhouse believed that teaching would be improved through what he called extended professionalism.

Donald Schön (1983) described the movement away from the world of technical rationality of professional and scientific knowledge to one based on actual competencies that encompass the complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty of professional life.

A reflective teacher needs a kind of educational technology, which does more than extend her capacity to administer drill and practice. Most interesting to her is an educational technology, which helps students to become aware of their own intuitive understandings, to fall into cognitive confusions and explore new directions of understanding and action.

Accountability, evaluation, and supervision would acquire new meanings. There would be a shift from the search for centrally administered, objective measures of student progress, toward independent, qualitative judgments and narrative accounts of experience and performance in learning and teaching. Supervision would concern itself less with monitoring the teacher’s coverage of curriculum content than with assessment and support of the teacher’s reflection-in-action. (p. 334-335)

These notions of reflection-in-action were described as the process of observing our thinking and actions, as they are occurring, in order to make adjustments in the moment.

He further developed the idea of reflection-on-action as the process of looking back on and learning from our thinking and actions to make differences in future action. (Schön, 1987). Through most of the ensuing literature, Schön's notions of reflection in and on action have stood the test of time and have provided the theoretical basis for many others who have written about reflective practice.

Schön (1987) stated clearly that institutional and systemic learning was a key point in his rationale for moving from a bureaucratic notion to that of reflective practice. "In contrast to the normal bureaucratic emphasis on technical rationality, a reflective institution must make a place for conflicting values and purposes. But these extraordinary conditions are also necessary for significant organizational learning." (p. 338)

Teaching is not technical rationality, but an activity that is intellectual, humanistic and full of the emotion of the present. Schön's notions of reflection-in-action provided a framework within which a teacher could capture the wisdom and truth about the happenings in the classroom. Reflection was the way in which teachers could uncover the conflicts and dilemmas that come with the complicated daily and routine world of school life.

What is clear is that, in a real-world school which tried to encourage reflective teaching (as in the reflective contract between professional and client), conflicts and dilemmas would surface which are absent, hidden, or of minor importance in an ordinary school. (p. 334)

Killion and Todnem (1991) took Schön's notions of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action and developed a third concept of reflection-for-action or the idea of stepping outside the moment to learn from and plan for future considerations. They

believed that in order for the reflection to have meaning, it needed to have further action and influence the future planning and processes in the classroom. Knowledge was created through the reflection on the past experiences and then applied to new experiences.

Shulman (1987) linked the processes of knowledge and creating new knowledge through evaluation, observation, testing and reflection on context and practices, which he named “pedagogical reasoning”. His framework was teacher thinking involving comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection and new comprehension. We can connect this pedagogical reasoning as the same kind of knowledge creation based on reflecting on what has been as suggested by Killion and Todnem. Both researchers are suggesting that it is what teachers create from their reflection-on-action that makes these practices of value in the classroom.

In a similar vein, John Smyth (1989) developed the reflective process as a circular notion of describing, informing, confronting and reconstructing. The teacher asks themselves the following questions: What did I do? What does it mean? How did I come to think like this? How might I do things differently? Pottle (2001) in looking at these questions through an inquiry lens, adds the following questions to that same framework. What do I believe? What theory is driving my practice? What is it that I am wondering? How can I become more skillful? What changes will I make in my behavior based on what I now know?

Linda Darling-Hammond (1992) made the connection between Schön’s reflection-in-action to Shulman and Smyth’s notions of constructing curricular and pedagogical meaning through reflection.

To be constructive, though, teacher reflection must be informed by knowledge about learning and pedagogy and grounded in instructional purposes and concerns for the effects of one's actions on learners. The capacity to reflect in an informed and thoughtful manner is critical to the transformation of complex knowledge into knowledge based on practice (p. 32)

In her view, reflection does not stand on its own but is inextricably linked to wise educational judgment. "The "professional" teacher in common parlance is one who does things right rather than one who does the right things." (p. 32)

In order for us to make practical judgments on what might become reflection-for-action, we, as teachers, interpret, analyze our observations and data in order to make educational judgments based on what might become reflection-for-action. Within that reflection, we become aware of ourselves as teachers within the political and historical context of our teaching situation. Maxine Greene (1978) refers to this as stepping outside ourselves, looking for and imagining what might be.

. . . to envisage things as if they could be otherwise, or of positing alternatives to mere passivity. And it should remind us of the relationship between freedom and the consciousness of possibility, between freedom and the imagination- the ability to make present what is absent, to summon up a condition that is not yet. (p. 16)

We connect those understandings within our individual and societal contexts, our past experiences and our practical knowledge in order that we can effect change in our teaching practice and that we may suspend our educational judgment to imagine another way of being and doing (reflection-for-action).

Coulter and Wiens (2002) refer to this capacity as the ability to suspend judgment as a "visiting imagination". They contend that in order for teachers to make sound

educational judgments, their reflection must include visiting the perspectives of students, parents, and colleagues recognizing diversity of voices and viewpoints before, during and after classes. It is through this capacity to see from outside and imagine how it might be from someone else's point of view that we listen to and learn from those around us.

Coulter and Wiens (2002) look at thinking and action as notions of judging actors and judging spectators.

In her conception of judgment, Arendt links both actor and spectators in two activities, acting and thinking, that are difficult to combine - - and never simultaneously. Yet both are required for good judgment: to be a good judge entails being both actor and spectator, although the balance many be more toward one or the other activity. (p. 22)

In this perspective, the teacher must be actively engaged as an outside other looking in on their practice at the same time as being actively engaged in their practice. To be able to make good, sound moral judgments based on sound theoretical and ethical stances, the teacher must be able to reflect on the actions from all perspectives, the teacher's, the students, the parents, the school, the school division, and society at large.

The teacher must examine his or her situation, behaviors, practices, effectiveness and accomplishments from all perspectives in order to completely understand what has happened. It is not good enough to simply reflect on the activities or strategies that have happened. In order for us to clearly understand those things, we must also understand how the situation, behaviors, practices and accomplishments were understood and perceived by others. This tenet of reflective practice is that it is necessary for teachers to consider relevant perspectives when planning their work.

Reflection means asking basic questions of oneself. Reflection is a slightly distorted self-evaluation – distorted in the sense that judgment is emphasized rather than data collection. The individual asks a value-laden question and responds on stored selected data (memory) and then concludes whether he or she is satisfied or dissatisfied. Reflection, then, is an individual's needs assessment and continued self-monitoring or satisfaction with effectiveness. (Valverde, 1982).

Roland Barth (2001) suggests that we reflect on our teaching practice to find meaning in it.

It is through reflection that we distil, clarify and articulate our craft knowledge.

Reflection is precisely the capacity to distance oneself from the highly routinized, depleting, sometimes meaningless activities in which we are engaged, so that we can see what's really going on. (p. 65)

Teachers also use reflection to maintain professional authority gained from close observation of children, systematic reflection on practice, immersion into the literature of teaching both philosophical and historical. Such knowledge leads to a firm internalized control of the language related to one's craft and can be a base for learning with others. (Perrone, 1991, p. 84)

The basic question of reflection is what am I doing and why? Teachers examine the situation, behaviour, practices, effectiveness and accomplishments and then ask themselves if the teaching matched the practice. The next question will be what did I learn from this teaching situation? In addition to the larger question above, Perrone (1991) gives us questions a reflective teacher would ask.

Why do you organize that way and not another?

Why one array of materials and not another?

How does one learning activity in one area make a connection to learning activities in another?

How do your provisioning decisions promote community building as they support individual growth?

How are the different inclinations of each student being supported?

How do you know that important growth is occurring? (p. 85)

The reflective practitioner takes these reflective questions a step further in the fact that they build an action plan to study, observe and improve upon the issues raised through their reflective thinking (reflection-on-action). A teacher takes the time to reflect upon the situation or behaviours in the classroom or the school and sees a need for improvement. At every step of the teaching process, the teacher is reflecting on what has happened, observing for differences and changes in patterns and thinking deeply about what questions should come next, whose voices are being heard and whose are not, and how to proceed in a way that is morally and ethically supportive to all voices (the visiting imagination).

Perrone was one of three guests who visited Seven Oaks School division to work with teachers and administrators on their notions of professionalism and reflective practice. Perrone came to Seven Oaks to work with middle school teachers in the late nineteen eighties on their notions of reflective practice particularly as it related to assessment practices from a student point of view. The researcher was not a part of those teacher sessions, but is well aware of the impact that those sessions had on the teachers who attended. His notions of reflective practice became some of the foundational philosophical cornerstones for the development of an alternative middle school in Seven Oaks School Division. Many of the teachers who attended his sessions were the teachers

and administrators who provided the impetus and teacher leadership for the development of alternative assessment strategies for a particular middle school based on the tenets of reflective practice.

The other two educational authorities were Gary Fenstermacher and Thomas Sergiovanni. These two writers participated in the Seven Oaks School Division Symposium Series. The Symposium Series has as its purpose to expose staff in Seven Oaks to a wide variety of writers and thinkers and offer time for small groups to have conversations with the authors about their writing and allow staff to interact with the ideas presented by each author. In addition to the Symposium Series, Mr. Fenstermacher also facilitated a three-day conference for administrators on the topic of professional manner, professional autonomy, and notions of democracy that lie therein. These three writers were able to share their ideas, not only in written form, but also in conversation with small groups of teachers and administrators. The fact that the school division thinks it important to bring such well-respected educational leaders to talk alongside the Seven Oaks teacher-learners has had an impact on teacher learning in Seven Oaks.

Sergiovanni brought with him his ideas about the moral dimensions of teacher mentality. His topic at the time was more about democratic notions in education, but many of the ideas are relevant to the discussion here as they certainly had an influence on the shared thinking of teachers and administrators. He talked about teachers as "truth makers" not "truth seekers." He based this idea from the action-oriented nature of the work teachers do. Teachers have such personal attachment to practice, as immediacy that relies on firsthand experience in the classroom. Teachers receive their feedback immediately from the students and from their colleagues. The contextual complexity of good teaching has as its stem the indeterminacy based on the immediacy of the

relationship between teacher and student. His notions of good teaching and personal attachment to the immediacy of firsthand experience are directly linked to the notion of reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action as presented by Schön (1987).

The key point of Sergiovanni's (1992) work relevant to this specific policy development in Seven Oaks was around issues of professional collegiality as a tenet for reflective practice. He refers to the virtues of collegiality in this manner.

There are two dimensions of collegiality as professional virtue. The first involves the fulfillment of obligations that stem from memberships-in the case of the school, membership in the teaching profession and in the school as a community. Professional and community membership provide teachers with certain rights and privileges and exact certain obligations and duties. One has the right to expect help and support from other members, and the obligations to give the same; collegiality is reciprocal, in the same way that friendship is. For teachers and principals, the obligation of collegiality involves cooperation and giving support for carrying out professional responsibilities.

The second dimension of collegiality has to do with why one behaves collegially. As Craig K. Ihara (1988) points out, 'Collegiality must be understood as more than proper behaviour toward one's colleagues. Collegiality is better defined in terms of having the proper professional attitude or orientation. To take this approach to collegiality is to consider it a kind of professional virtue " (page 57) Why behave collegially? Because it is effective to do so, on the one hand, and good to do so, on the other. (pp. 86-87)

The tenet of professional dialogue in reflective practice is clearly stated in Serviovanni's work. We understand that collegial dialogue is a professional virtue that is effective in supporting one's reflective practice.

Fenstermacher's discussions with us were not specifically about reflective practice per se but about professional manner and dialogue as a means for learning about teaching, one of the tenets embedded in reflective practice. His work on professional manner formed the springboard for conversations about teaching practice as mystification of knowledge, providing a social distance that allowed for reciprocity of effort. He, like Sergiovanni, talked about teaching as a moral activity. The moral stance and the manner in which a teacher conducts themselves in the classroom and within the professional community creates an affect on others in teaching as well as in the relationships teachers build with their students, families, colleagues and community.

Fenstermacher's (1994, 1997) writing and discourse at the time was embedded in the tension teachers experience between theory and practice. His notion was not particularly about reflective practice but about teacher's ability to examine their practical reasoning. He looked at practical reasoning in action as a tool that would enable teachers to reveal their beliefs and values thus fostering reflection. This practice would then assist teachers in their development of professional identity.

Clandinin and Connelly (1988) talk about the power of reflective practice in this way

If you understand what makes up the curriculum of the person most important to you, namely, yourself, you will better understand the difficulties, whys and wherefores of the curriculum of your students. There is no better way to study curriculum, than to study ourselves.(p. 31)

A teacher in a reflective stance chooses to study and learn from their teaching experiences in order to demonstrate characteristics of thoughtful and wise teaching. A reflective teacher uses the experiences of her teaching to foster capacities to learn for future experiences. The act of reflection with colleagues provides opportunities for strengthening one's practice through the lens of another's eyes, applying meaning to a situation beyond the immediate, making a commitment to adaptation and modification, and documenting learning to provide an increasingly rich base of shared knowledge.

Fenstermacher (1994) and Clandinin and Connolly (1988) speak clearly about teachers making the connection between theory and practice, another tenet of reflective practice. Linda Darling-Hammond (1999) states this connection in this manner.

Teacher reflection must be informed by knowledge about learning and pedagogy and grounded in instructional purposes and concerns for the effects of one's actions on learners. The capacity to reflect in an informed and thoughtful manner is critical to the transformation of complex knowledge into action and to the development of further knowledge based on practice. (p. 32).

Reflective teaching is psychological and intellectual engagement. A teacher who makes reflection a part of their practice is a teacher who constantly engages in critical thinking as a means of self-evaluation and one who thinks deeply about the questions children bring to the classroom. Reflection allows teachers to recognize improvement in student and teacher learning, identify strategies that suit the individual situation, and enhances authentic assessment in the classroom.

As Maxine Greene says (1978), reflective practice allows us to step outside ourselves and imagine what might be. Or, as Coulter and Wiens (2002) describe it,

reflecting upon our practice allows us to visit the imaginations of our students, our colleagues and our community.

As a vehicle for demonstrating teacher learning, Seven Oaks School Division developed an Annual Statement of Professional Growth (1991) that has been renamed in the latest revision of the policy to be an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning. This written statement was and is to be a personal and professional statement of professional learning based on documentation the teacher would keep over the course of a school year. The format was to be left to the discretion of the individual teacher. As you will read in the results of the research, the variety and format of the submitted pieces has been expanded and revised over the years however the original intent was that writing a reflective piece would provide teachers with the necessary intellectual challenge to remove themselves from their work and think in written form, connect theory to practice and to reflect upon their actions to improve their teaching and learning.

Writing about teacher practice is one of the tenets of reflective practice. Teachers write about their practice as a means for developing deeper understandings about teaching and learning.

Professionals who write about their teaching experiences may have the opportunity to develop more informed insights into their efforts than colleagues who elect not to write. Writing about the classroom, teacher-student interactions, the school and the community served by the school, is a natural outgrowth of the development of a reflective stance.

The purposes teachers have for writing are likely as varied and complex as those of other writers; to reflect of practice, to communicate beliefs to a wider audience, to come to know teacher-student relationship better, to build self-confidence, to

confront professional dilemmas, to assuage personal insecurities, to demonstrate accomplishments, and to record events to develop a perspective.

(Irwin, 1991, p. 32)

Lori Nielsen (1991) wrote about reflective practice as a means by which we can renew and author our professional identity.

Professional renewal is the essential ingredient in good teaching that we can neither buy or have bestowed upon us; we renew ourselves by revising who we are and what we do, daily and consciously, alone and together, with students, colleagues and friends. (p. 40)

The writing about our teaching practice is a means by which we can have space, distance and time to learn about and change what is really important in the education of our children. Writing is a means by which teachers can distil and clarify what is happening in the classroom allowing teachers to articulate their beliefs and values. The writing becomes a means by which teachers can author their own professional identity.

This literature review outlines six tenets of reflective practice. From the work of Schön, (1983, 1987) Perrone (1991) and others, we understand that reflection is based on understanding what is happening in the moment, looking back on what has been what has been done to influence the decisions on what will be done (reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action.)

Fenstermacher (1994,1997), Sergiovanni (1991, 1992), Barth, (2001) and Darling-Hammond (1999) remind us that in order to be a reflective practitioner, one must be able to link together the theory and practice inherent in teaching. They also inform us about professional dialogue and collegiality as important in how teachers understanding their world of work.

Greene (1978), Coulter and Wiens (2002) remind us about the importance of stepping outside the teaching act and consider other perspectives that are present in the act of teaching. We know and understand that writing is a means for further developing understanding and that it is the personal and professional responsibility of the teacher to understand and improve classroom practice.

It is clear that decisions about teacher evaluation in Seven Oaks School Division were based on the literature of reflective teaching and professionalism as stated above rather than the bureaucratic supervision literature. We see these six tenets of reflective practice clearly outlined in the headings of the teacher evaluation policy. The six headings are: Documentation, Reflection, Professional Dialogue, Consideration of Other Perspectives, Linking of Practice to Research and Research to Practice, Action and Annual Reflection of Professional Learning.

We can see direct links to Schön's definitions of reflection in, on and for action in the language of the policy. "In the Professional Learning Framework reflection, dialogue and action are built upon enabling conditions of trust and open communication. Leadership built on trust and communication will foster the professional learning, which results through reflection, dialogue and action." (Seven Oaks School Division, 2005)

The value of collegiality and personal responsibility as stated by Fenstermacher (1994), Darling-Hammond (1999) and Sergiovanni (1992) is outlined in the policy in this manner.

Administrators and teachers benefit from collegial discussion of education and teaching and are encouraged to engage in such discussion frequently. Educational judgment is negotiated through reflective dialogue.

Quality instruction is concomitant with quality education. Effective teaching forms the foundation on which quality education is based. Teachers, acting as professionals who serve the public interest, must be personally responsible and accountable for their professional judgments and actions. They must ensure that they are current in the knowledge of the profession and must take responsibility for the application of that knowledge in diverse situations. (Seven Oaks School Division, 2005)

The policy also embeds the notions of visiting imaginations and other perspectives as stated by Coulter and Wiens (2002) and Maxine Greene (1978). Teachers are expected to think about other relevant perspectives as they plan their work. For example, imagine the implications of decisions as seen through the eyes of a six year old or a sixteen year old or a parent or a particular culture. (Seven Oaks School Division, 2005)

The Seven Oaks School Division believes strongly in the professionalism of its teaching staff. We can see evidence of these beliefs embedded in the teacher evaluation policy as mentioned above. We can find additional evidence on the web site and in its professional journal. Examples of these stated beliefs are as follows: "Seven Oaks believes in its teachers. We value their professionalism and take pride in their work with children. Teaching is founded on caring and reflection is fundamental to ongoing professional development." (Seven Oaks School Division, 2006)

Teaching Today for Tomorrow is a joint publication of the Seven Oaks Teachers' Association Professional Development Committee and the Seven Oaks School Division Superintendents' Department.

Teaching Today for Tomorrow is the work of a professional community that values dialogue, plurality and free expression of educational thought. This journal

documents aspects of our ongoing professional conversations about learning and education. As in any professional discourse community, the authors speak to contribute to the knowledge of their profession. (Seven Oaks School Division, 2006)

These statements are indicators of the belief that Seven Oaks teachers are working in a culture that values reflective practice as a teaching stance.

The remainder of this project will examine if teachers in Seven Oaks School Division hold these values and beliefs about reflective practice. The stated purpose of teachers writing an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning is to demonstrate understanding of teaching and learning supported by reflective practice.

This project examines teacher's perception of that purpose. The assessment of the project data is an examination of teacher perceptions of reflective practice and whether teacher beliefs parallel those of the school division.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This study included two sources of data, which were collected for the purpose of examining teacher perceptions of reflective practice and the writing of an Annual Statement of Professional Learning.

The rationale for using a quantitative survey were: to be able to ask many and varied questions regarding teacher beliefs about reflective practice, to gain some understanding of teacher attitudes towards writing an Annual Reflection on Professional Learning, to gather information about what sources of documentation teachers use to support their reflective practice and to find out who supported teachers in the dialogue and conversations inherent in the implementation of the policy. In addition to these questions, the survey would allow the researcher to sort the data for comparison and contrasting results based on categories such as gender, length of experience, level of schooling taught and if the respondent had taught in another jurisdiction other than Seven Oaks.

The second source of data gathering was a series of focus groups. These groups would allow for conversations around the same topics as the survey. These conversations would be a source of validation of the survey results as well as providing the researcher with deeper understandings of people's perceptions in regard to their participation in the Seven Oaks policy.

Survey

Teacher perceptions were gathered via a researcher-designed survey appearing in Appendix A. Participants in the study included those current Seven Oaks School Division professional personnel who are required by policy to write an Annual Reflection on Professional Learning and who had been teaching for three or more years in Seven Oaks. Susan Thomas (1999) suggests that designing a survey is a work of precise questioning. "A survey must have enough data within it that will allow the researcher to manipulate that data after completion. This allows for the researcher to explore results that are surprising or unusual." (p.6)

It was precise questioning that drove the survey design process. There were three areas of interest for the researcher yet there needed to be some latitude to be able to look at the data differently if the results warranted. The survey design included four sections: personal data, documentation usage and frequency, agreement with Seven Oaks policy statements and attitude.

Four hundred and sixty five surveys were mailed to individual homes. Each survey included a stamped return envelope for replies as well as a letter of introduction and a separate sheet to indicate if the respondent wished to see the completed results. Included in each letter of introduction was an invitation to further participate in the study by taking part in focus groups. (See Appendix C)

The survey was completely anonymous. Information from the survey was gathered and analysed to find possible common threads of thought, perceptions and understandings in reference to the writing of Annual Reflections on Professional

Learning. The completion of the survey indicated participant willingness to take part in this research.

One hundred and eighty surveys were returned. Four of those had incorrect addresses and one was unusable due to non-compliance with the survey questions. Seventeen of the surveys included additional comments. Nine respondents commented on the same topic and as a result, a question about that particular comment was incorporated into the format of the focus groups.

This data for this research project was done at a unique juncture in time that enabled the researcher to draw some conclusions that may not have otherwise been obvious. The time factor was that the surveys were delivered to Seven Oaks teachers at the time of year when teachers were writing an Annual Statement of Professional Growth. It was also at a time when the Seven Oaks School Division implemented a major revision of the Professional Personnel policy and therefore the policy was being reviewed with each staff in the school division. The timing of these two events was coincidental with the survey delivery.

However there are two conclusions from this timing that may be significant to the researcher. There were a very high number of respondents to the survey. A forty-one percent return rate for any survey is quite high. One might conclude that the fact that the timing of the policy discussions and the fact that teachers were in the process of writing their annual statements of growth may have influenced the rate of return as the topic was prominent in the divisional discussions at the time.

The second conclusion would be that there were very few respondents on the survey and none who participated in the focus groups who displayed a negative attitude

towards the policy. One might conclude that those who enjoy and believe in the process took the research project as an opportunity to explore further their thoughts and beliefs.

Survey information was collated and analyzed by the use of SPSS software. SPSS was chosen because it is able to mathematically assign numbers to survey questions and those numbers can be analyzed in different ways by changing the mathematical formulas. SPSS software is an acceptable analytical tool for both research and business purposes.

The survey was analyzed in three portions. The first portion looked at the sum total for each respondent indicating the overall agreement of the respondent to the philosophical statements as stated in the Seven Oaks School Division policy statement on reflective practice.

The second portion of the analysis was to score positive or negative attitudes towards reflective practice.

The data was also analysed to have a better understanding of which of the possible professional development activities teachers found valuable in writing their growth statements, what kinds of tools as suggested by the School Division policy were utilized by teachers as they prepared to engage in the writing process and the frequency with which they used those tools.

Once those three sets of analysis were complete, the results were sorted by gender, length of teaching experience, if the teacher had taught in another jurisdiction and the level of schooling they were teaching. This sorting enabled the researcher to compare and contrast any differences in attitude and agreement scores across those four categories.

Focus Groups

In addition to the survey respondents were invited to participate in focus groups to discuss the findings of the survey and to comment further on their participation in the Seven Oaks policy. Twenty-three respondents indicated they would be interested in participating in the focus groups. Of these twenty-three respondents, there was an equal distribution of teachers from Elementary (eight), Middle (seven) and High Schools (nine). Of the twenty-three respondents, eight were male. The distribution of male to female echoed that of the general teaching population. Twenty-two of the twenty-three respondents were invited to participate in the focus groups. One respondent was unavailable for further participation. One respondent was ill during the time of the focus groups so an individual interview was held.

In his book *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*, Richard Kruger (1988) suggests the purpose of a focus group is to gather more information than one had previously. He also suggests that focus groups allow participants to articulate clearly their ideas to the other participants in the group and learn from each other in the process. Participants may talk about different viewpoints if they have some guidelines from which to work, if the purposes are clear and if time deadlines are adhered to.

With those criteria in mind, each focus group participant was sent a Focus Group Protocol (See Appendix B) in order to prepare themselves for participation, at the beginning of each session, the purpose of the study was reviewed as was the research and confidentiality protocol and the hour length of discussion was adhered to.

Three focus groups were held. An equal distribution of male and female, elementary, middle and high school teachers were represented in each of the three focus groups. Each participant in the focus groups was read a consent form and subsequently signed a consent form to continue with the study. Each participant was given a copy of the consent forms for their records. (See Appendix D)

The focus groups were audio taped for transcription. Each participant received an email copy of the focus group transcript within two weeks of participation. Opportunity was given to respond to any discrepancies in the transcripts or to add further comments. The individual interview was also transcribed and the researcher followed the same feedback process as with the focus group transcript.

Each of the focus group participants had an opportunity to respond to the transcripts before analysis. Comments within the transcripts were then thematically colour coded to identify particular values and beliefs that teachers hold in regard to reflective practice. These comments were then analyzed to find common threads and comments that would support or refute the findings of the survey data.

Five significant themes emerged. Colour-coded comments were sorted into those five categories for analysis. These themes were incorporated into the final results and discussion as well as recommendations for further development.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results, Analysis and Discussion

There are two sets of results for this research project. The first is the analysis and interpretation of the survey and the second is the interpretation and analysis of the focus groups. A discussion of the analysis follows.

Survey Analysis

The first set of data comes from a quantitative survey. The survey data was gathered from one hundred and seventy four responses from teachers who had been teaching in Seven Oaks three years or longer. The analysis subsequently described was completed using SPSS software. SPSS software was chosen for its comprehensive data analysis package. It is usable and acceptable in research and business. It assigns a numerical score to each data set enabling the researcher to make comparisons and mathematically interpret data collected.

In the first section of the survey, the numerical score designated indicated an agreement or disagreement with the Seven Oaks School Division's policy statements regarding reflective practice. The greatest possible total agreement score would have been a score of fifty. A total score of thirty-five or more would indicate that the respondent had used indicators of somewhat significant, significant or very significant to indicate their own understandings of reflective practice. The researcher deemed a total

score of thirty-five or higher would indicate agreement with the Seven Oaks School Division statements regarding reflective practice.

In the next section of the survey, the numerical scores designated indicated a positive or negative attitude toward the writing of an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning. The five indicators were strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, disagree and strongly disagree. All questions were rated from one to five with one being a negative attitude and five being a positive one. A total attitude score of seventy-five or more would indicate that the respondent had used indicators of somewhat agree, agree or strongly agree to indicate their participation in the writing of Annual Reflections of Professional Growth.

The third section of the survey analyzed the frequency with which teachers use the reflective practices outlined in the divisional policy, how useful these reflective practices are and the kinds of support teachers find useful when preparing to write an Annual Reflection on Professional Learning.

In addition, the personal data supplied by teachers were analyzed for differences in positive or negative attitudes based on four categories; male or female, years of experience, level of school taught, or whether the respondent had taught outside of Seven Oaks School Division or not. For the purposes of this survey, there were no statistical differences across any of these categories. The attitude and beliefs that Seven Oaks teachers hold does not differ according to gender, years of experience, level of school in which the teacher is teaching, or if they have taught in other divisions.

The data were analyzed to see if teachers felt positively or negatively about the writing process. All answers in the survey that indicated a positive or negative response were included in this analysis. The results showed that there was one respondent who

was completely positive in attitude, agreeing with every statement and felt very satisfied with the process and philosophy embedded in the Division's policy. Conversely, there was one person who was completely negative about their participation and the Division's policy.

If the respondent's total attitude score was sixty-four or higher, it indicated the teacher felt positively about the writing of an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning. (Corresponding descriptors being agree or strongly agree). Scores ranging from sixty-four to a possible one hundred and sixty were deemed as ones indicating a positive response. This was the most significant positive response of the survey. One hundred and sixty nine of the possible one hundred and seventy four responses were positive. Eighty-five per cent of those teachers responding think of this writing process as a positive one. (Figure 1)

Another aim of the survey was to gather teacher's level of agreement or disagreement with the Seven Oaks School Division Policy statements about reflective practice. This section of the survey was analyzed to ascertain whether the School Division statements of reflective practice were ones teachers also believed. There were ten statements from the policy and teachers were asked if each statement was significant to their own understanding of reflective practice. Total agreement score was sixty-five. The researcher assigned a score of thirty-five or above to be general agreement with the statements made in the policy which corresponded with numerical scores assigned to the indicators signifying somewhat agree, agree or strongly disagree. One hundred and thirty seven teachers agreed that the divisional policy statements aligned with their own beliefs in regard to reflective practice. Seventy-eight per cent of respondents have beliefs about

reflective practice that are significantly similar as those stated in the school division policy. (Figure 2)

The next set of data to be analyzed was the usefulness and frequency of professional development opportunities and activities that teachers engage in to support the writing of Annual Reflections of Professional Learning. The categories of activities that teachers may find useful for writing an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning as outlined in the Seven Oaks policy were as follows: school based workshops, dialogue with administrators, dialogue with colleagues, reflection on practice, reflective writing, journal writing, professional portfolios, professional development activities, collaborative projects, professional reading and action research. As with any diverse group of teachers, the results varied from activity to activity. All of the above mentioned activities were significant to some and not at all to others. (Figure 3)

In the original policy, the building of a professional portfolio was the key element suggested for reflective practice and the preparation of an Annual Statement of Growth. These results indicate that the professional portfolio is not the main element of documentation used by current teachers in Seven Oaks School Division. This indicates that teachers have found different ways and means of documenting their professional learning that is more suitable to their personal and professional practice. It is also an indication of the evolution of the process and policy over time. The division has added many other types of documentation as those that are valued and acceptable means of documenting professional learning. This diversity is reflected in the choices teachers have indicated on the survey results.

When analyzing these figures, the researcher added the response scores from the descriptors ranging from somewhat useful, quite useful or very useful. The scores

indicated in the next section of analysis is a compilation of per cent scores for each particular activity.

There were four activities that were very significant for a large group of respondents. These activities were dialogue with administrators and colleagues, professional development activities, collaborative projects and professional readings. Seventy-four per cent of teachers found dialogue with administrators to be useful. Sixty-seven per cent found dialogue with colleagues to be useful. These figures would indicate that the divisional focus on teacher dialogue is becoming embedded in teacher practice.

Teachers who engaged in specific professional development activities and collaborative projects with colleagues found them to be very useful. Eighty-seven percent and eighty-nine per cent, respectively, of teachers found these two activities to be useful in their preparation to write an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning. The reading of professional journals, books and articles is also significantly useful to seventy-four per cent of teachers.

The most significant finding in this particular analysis was that ninety-seven per cent of respondents indicated that reflection on their own practice was a significant part of their preparation for the writing of an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning. The high scores compiled for these four activities would indicate that Seven Oaks teachers have embedded in their practice the notions of collaboration, dialogue, personal research and reflection. These tenets of reflective practice have a major contribution in the preparing of teacher's Annual Reflections of Professional Learning.

In preparing to write an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning, respondents indicated the frequency with which they engage in the following: school based

workshops, dialogue with administrators, dialogue with colleagues, reflection on practice, reflective writing, journal writing, professional portfolios, professional development activities, collaborative projects, professional reading and action research. (See Figure 4)

In this analysis, the dialogue with administrators and colleagues was also broken down into dialogue regarding content and writing style, ideas and beliefs. Fifty per cent of teachers talk to colleagues about their beliefs but only twenty-two per cent of respondents talk to their administrators about their beliefs. Fifty per cent of teachers talk to their colleagues about their writing ideas, twenty-four per cent of teachers talk to their administrators about their writing ideas. This analysis would parallel comments from the focus groups indicating where there were strong relationships between teacher and administrator and/or colleagues, dialogue was likely to occur and to be valued by the teacher.

There was only one category in which there was a strong response, that being reflection on teacher practice. Eighty-six per cent of respondents indicated that they use reflection on teacher practice most or all of the time to prepare their writing. This would correspond with the usefulness that was indicated in the previous analysis.

The frequency of usage for all other activities in this analysis ranged between two and twenty seven per cent. This result would indicate that teachers have chosen ways and means to document their professional practice that would vary from year to year, would be used sometimes and not others depending on circumstances and relationships, and that there is a clear understanding that all processes are available for teachers to use, but not all are useful to each individual. Diversity is evident as is the understanding that diversity is acceptable.

Focus Groups Analysis and Interpretation

The second set of data comes from three focus groups and one interview. Each focus group had an even distribution of male and female teachers and a mix from each of the three levels of schools, elementary, middle and high school. Two participants were school administrators. Analysis of an individual interview was incorporated into general responses from the focus groups.

Interpretation and analysis of the transcripts of the focus groups identified five themes that warranted further investigation. These themes are:

1. Purpose. Individual teachers had individual purposes that indicated personal responsibility for the writing process.
2. Audience. The comments were whether or not teachers were writing for a private or public audience, or if indeed, they considered audience in their writing process.
3. Enjoyment and process. In the writing of reflective pieces the teacher involved comment on the value and personal enjoyment of the process.
4. Response and feedback. Response and feedback could be from administrators and/or colleagues but was clearly a common theme of conversation. Most participants valued the conversation with colleagues and administrators, many participants valued written feedback. It was clear that individual experiences differed greatly from one respondent who had never received any feedback, to those who had some feedback every year.

5. Value and culture. It was clear that this is an evolving process within the school division. Teachers value this process and see it as contributing to the reflective nature of the school division as a whole.

The first theme present was that teachers came to the writing of an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning from different perspectives in terms of what they viewed as the purposes for them as a teacher. Participants held different viewpoints on what they think professional growth and learning is and how they think about representing that learning. The purposes stated were growing and improving teaching practices, self-assessment, personal discretion in goal setting, thinking and finding deeper understandings in teaching and ongoing inquiry.

Professional Growth I think is. . How do you as a professional through your practice have grown, how you plan to grow and how you plan to improve yourself, and how you are trying to improve? This is what I thought about, this is how I am going to improve.

The opportunity that this writing presents is writing to clarify our thinking and also about text as conversation pieces.

What the ASPG has done for me is to help me set goals for myself from one year to another.

[D]oing these reflections was a really good idea . well not everyone likes to reflect, but I think that as an educator, every educator needs to reflect on their teaching in order to grow. I think that the process of having to reflect on your teaching in order to grow is different from . . and I don't know that you or nor would I have grown in the same way had I continued to be evaluated. Otherwise I would probably be evaluating my students by checklists instead of talking to them

and reading their journals. I think that the method you use to assess your students is the same way you assess your work.

What I decide to focus on primarily will depend on what I learned last year and what became big questions for me last year and then I choose my own reflection in specific areas that I need to learn more about or read more about, professional development opportunities. To me, it's a continuous reflection about my practice. Writing about questions that I still have to bring forward to the next year.

[T]he professional growth statement is very deep and very intense. It's not that causal conversation that had in an early dismissal or late start or curriculum group. When I look back at all my growth statements, they began as very chronological events about all the things that happened in my year. And then these things evolve and you buy into somebody else's ideas and you share – it's a very big perspective. And when you're looking at a growth statement it might be only 2 sheets but it could be 20 years of thinking. And it's different than the conversations.

Some people use their growth statements to share that they are having difficulty and that they need assistance. Some people write about really needing a change or about something difficult in their personal or professional lives and they choose who they share that with. Sometimes they share it with someone other than the principal, first; some are only thinking about themselves and their students so they write that way.

My growth statement is a reflection of me as a teacher.

Each of these statements indicates that the individual teacher thinks very deeply about the individual purposes of reflection and writing as a reflection of their professional identity. Each teacher's expression of purpose was intensely personal. Collectively these personal expressions indicate a range of understandings of the purposes and practices embedded in reflective practice.

Another theme of prominence in the focus groups was the concept of audience. Who are we writing for? Do we consider the audience in our writing? Does considering audience change the purpose of the writing? It was the initial intent of the policy that professional writing would be a shared activity. In practice, that was sometimes not the case. There was a time when some teachers would seal their writing in closed envelopes in order that the only reader would be the superintendent. When this practice became evident, the policy was revisited by the senior administration with school administrators. Dialogue, conversation and focus on reflection that had been the original intent of the policy, was again reiterated. In the ensuing years, there was a great deal of attention given at administrative meetings, and subsequently at the staff level, as to the dialogic nature of the policy. The policy and the underlying intent has had a great deal of revision and discussion over the years. The teacher's comments from the focus groups are an indication of the wide variety of understandings of writing for public and private audience.

[S]ome of it might be pretty private or personal and you might want to only share a part of it because there might be some things in there that you might not want to be shared.

I guess I always know my administrator is going to read it. But mostly it's a personal reflection. It's all about my thoughts about teaching, what I am

learning from those thoughts and how I'm growing. But I must say that knowing my administrator is going to read it does play into it a little bit.

I think that in terms of a sense of audience, there are some ASPG's that administrators find more engaging than others.

I have in the back of my mind who is reading this thing and I want it to be as positive impressions of me as I can possibly make it.

I really like to share my thoughts with others and I'm curious about what others are thinking. But I remember when we first began when there was a lot of fear around that. I remember having conversations when people would say I'm just going to write what they want to hear because I don't want to get into any trouble over it.

It began as a very wide-open thing. At the beginning I was very conscious about who was going to read this and what are they going to think about me. Then we moved to the closed envelope stage. I moved to a stage where I thought, "You know, I don't really care about what the reader thinks. I stopped worrying about what someone would think when they read it. And now I've moved to a stage where I'm handing it out to others to read because I don't mind getting other's feedback about the things that I've done.

I like people reading mine and to have them know what I'm thinking about. But I'm also aware of who's reading it.

I always kind of disregarded my audience and that was kind of liberating for me.

You know I never really had any expectations that anyone would really pay attention to it. I always thought of it as an exercise of reflection and not of it

as an assignment of some kind. And the only people I ever talked to about my growth statement was another teacher that I really, really know.

It has been for me a pretty private thing.

Whenever you write, I think you consider audience. It's a part of the writing process. When I'm writing in my journal, though, it's different than when I'm writing for my statement. I might have in the back of my mind that administrators and superintendents are going to read it, but it doesn't really affect my writing.

I think that you are always writing for an audience because in a sense, someone's going to read it. I've always gotten the impression that my principal is going to read it and we actually schedule meetings. 30 - 45 minutes for each staff member.

When I'm writing it I'm writing it as a private document. My expression of my own thoughts. I know that someone's going to read it but I write it for myself. I know someone will read it and if they learn something from it, that's good. If they don't that's okay too; it's really for me.

[R]ealistically we write so others will read. I write to share my ideas and I like the confidentiality that the Division has and the mutual trust and if someone wants to share it, the division will approach you and ask. I know that someone else is going to read it, but it's a reflection of me and if it is to be shared, I would like to be asked and have the right to say yes or no.

I'm thinking about a couple of times, one very recently where I chose to write publicly, very publicly to share publicly and that was a huge leap – pretty risky. But that changed my purpose from writing for self to writing to share self.

It is clear throughout all of these comments that teachers view this as a personal, private reflection. They are aware of the fact that others, namely their principal and ultimately the superintendent, will read it. However, there is a definite confidence and ownership about the value of a piece of written material is inherently personal. The audience is clearly personal for these writers although there is added value in the sharing of these thoughts into a more public domain when the choice to share has been made by the writer.

The third category, or theme that arose from the focus groups was around the enjoyment and process of reflective writing.

I still like doing them. I think about what goals do I have for myself in September? How did I meet those goals? I tend to start local and then go to global. I write about my classroom, my school in the context of Seven Oaks and in the wider world of education.

I just value those conversations where we can have time to think together, walk in each other's shoes, sharing perspective from our different roles to kind of see what's going on throughout the day. I love that part of all this.

Sometimes it's like just another thing on the list of things to be done at the end of the year. . But sometime in the middle of the process, it transforms into a labour of love.

I like to write an ASPG. I remember doing one that was totally a philosophical paper. My administrator said "This is not a statement of professional growth and really pushed me at that." But I said "Well that's all I can come up with right now." I had a lot of ownership of that piece I did not want to mess with that.

I really like writing these things. I think of them as mini time capsules. “ I always remember this saying from University “ you never know what you think until you write. I really get it when I write about it.

I really enjoy the whole reflective piece. I really enjoy it and I get a lot out of it. The principal writes back to me and I’ve been involved with another teacher. I’m much more positive about it than I was when we first began.

I love writing them, I always have.

As an administrator when I read yours and yours and yours, it’s a really great way for me to understand other’s perspectives. For some people it’s a really great tool for them to be reflective about their practice and it’s an effective way for me to understand other people. I am in a position where I get an opportunity to read many and I think that helps me as a person writing my own.

The ASPG process can be an enormous help to teachers if it allows us to focus on one thing they really want to think about in a sustained manner.

At the very least if I’m setting down to do my own reflections, it’s relevant.

When it comes to being a teacher, one of the things I have learned is you really have to be patient with yourself. It really is about developing and growing one step at a time.

I need time to think about what happened and what went wrong and regroup. Writing about frustrating experiences and talking it through with my administrator and other teachers really helped me.

These are all very positive statements. In fact, of the twenty-three participants, there was only one comment that would be construed as negative.

I have to say I don't love it. To me when I sit down to write it, it's a chore. It's like going to exercise. I know I'm going to feel better when I'm done because I've done it . . . but I can't say that I look forward to it.

One might infer that the teachers who chose to be a part of the focus group would be people who were interested in the process, who believed in the process, and those who enjoyed the process. There were no people involved in the focus groups who did not believe that this policy was a positive experience in some fashion or manner. Most participants had a story to tell about someone else, or a story they had heard from a colleague, or a story about the nebulous "they", whose negative attitudes were evident and who had negative experiences about this process. These stories have an urban legend kind of feel to them as they could not be confirmed and were stories people had heard, but not observed or participated in. "They" are not the ones who participated in this process, therefore negative comments do not appear in the data.

Knowing all of these things, it is still significant that so many chose to talk about the fact that they did enjoy this process and that the process helped them to understand their teaching and learning in a different way. There was a great deal of personal responsibility and ownership evident in the comments.

By far the theme that had the most engagement was the one regarding feedback and response from colleagues and administrators. Teachers had a wide range of experiences in terms of the kind of feedback and responses they had received and were curious and interested in hearing about other's experiences. Only one teacher had never received any kind of response either verbal or written from an administrator. The other

participants were shocked to hear that someone had never received any kind of response. All other participants in the focus groups shared a variety of kinds of feedback, the value this feedback had for them, and commented on the influence those responses had upon their further reflective process.

The comments are also a reflection of the evolving process the division has undergone in the last fifteen years. The revisions, revisiting and focus of the senior administration with school administrators over the years have affected how administrators chose to structure or approach dialogue within the culture and context of each individual school. The comments from teachers are reflective of the different approaches taken by school administrators in each school

I think it also comes down to relationship. I have a strong relationship with my administrator and if I have had 10 conversations, then my conversation about my writing is just one more conversation. If that is in written form, then it is just one more conversation rather than it being perceived as having been corrected.

I think it would be in the follow-up. I am thinking about one particular statement of growth I wrote where I was writing about an issue – not as a criticism – just as an issue. It would have been great to have some follow-up with the superintendent. When I handed it in, the administrator was like – yeah, it should happen, I'd like to talk to other administrators about it. And it got lost. It just got lost. There was no follow up.

I'm really excited to know what my colleagues have written and our group always shares. I can't wait to hear what my colleagues have written . . . more so

than my administrator. Sometimes I feel its more truthful feedback when I'm sharing with the people I teach with.

I always really enjoyed her [my administrator's] responses because she had carefully read my text and would respond in a way. She was a very careful reader and would pick up on my themes I was thinking about. And would offer a response that would get me to shift my thinking. What allowed her to do that was that she and I discussed my practise a lot.

In my first 3 years at High school I never received a response. Since moving to [middle school] I've had lots of discussion with administrators, always had a meeting, not written though. We've had PD days used to share with each other. One of the staff has people over to her house to share each other's ASPG's.

I have been thinking about the conversations I have with my administrator rather than a colleague and I think it's different somehow. If you are just having a casual conversation with someone, you can push and pull in their thinking. But if they have written something and taken a lot of thought into it . . . that's the relationship piece the relationship.

This is the first time in 6 years I have had some feedback I fully expected some feedback this year, but when it actually happened . . . it startled me. It was something quite causal at first, in the hallway where the admin said "I read you piece; I was interested in what you said about your shift in thinking. I'd like to talk to you more; let's make an appointment to talk some more. Now that we as a staff are getting some feedback, it's gone from something that was a chore to something that is valued.

In our weekly meetings we discussed what was happening in the classroom. She [the administrator] spent a lot of time talking to teachers. As a consequence my ASPG that year was based on our conversations and my reflections about what I was learning. In subsequent years, the administrators did not do that and my ASPG shifted a lot to be about what I was reading. So it's interesting to look at that in terms of being in a building or a place where administrators are creating opportunities for discussion.

But I also wanted to comment that my administrator did say last year "you know this thing you said here in your growth statement. This doesn't bode well for you. What you are saying isn't reflected in what you are doing." I said something politically incorrect and they [the administrators] said, "We know you haven't said this the way you mean it". So luckily, we had a very good discussion about it and I went back and reworked it and said the same thing more tactfully. I'm not sure that was a good thing or a bad thing. The experience was good because the trust factor, the relationship was strong. This is absolutely crucial because if you don't have the relationship, then you don't trust what they're saying and they don't respect what you're saying.

I have never had any feedback. For all I know they could be in the shredder.

I've always, every year, had a conversation with my administrator about it and I've always welcomed that.

I have been writing these things for 15 years and have received a response every year except one. The lack of response that year, was deafening

It [feedback] validated the experience for me.

[T]he best feedback has been when I've taken it to people and passed it around as ideas I've been thinking about. I always look at that as my responsibility to get my ideas out there.

[Only] once in my whole administrative career have I ever had someone comment. You definitely need some sort of feedback. You can't just hand in a paper and it disappears.

It is clear that teachers value the feedback they receive, be it from colleagues or their administrators. It is also clear that each administrator has chosen to provide feedback and response in different ways. Response, written or verbal, from administrators or colleagues, confirms the experience for teachers. Response and feedback adds to the validation of the work and thought the teachers have put into their written reflections.

Participants in the focus groups clearly value this process and see it as contributing to the reflective nature of the school division. They believe in reflective practice and believe that Seven Oaks School Division believes in them as teachers. There is a high degree of professional autonomy that was evident in the comments.

I think it [the writing of an ARPL] contributes to the culture of the Division. Philosophically the policy speaks about Seven Oaks School Division as a place to think and teach.

The issue of *Teaching Today for Tomorrow* was great. What we did [high school] did in terms of asking people if they would share theirs in addition to using the ones from *Teaching Today for Tomorrow*. And there's been a new issue

since and that generated lots and lots of discussion. The journal itself says a lot about how the Division values the reflective process.

It [the writing process] is the most obvious form that presents itself. People, who are not naturally writers or reflectors, will not naturally write. Natural writers, let's say, will set down and do an essay type thing because that's what the vast majority of Seven Oaks teachers do. Whereas there are other ways in which they could do their statement of growth that would be perfectly acceptable.

I think we have a professional responsibility to create that culture within our schools that nurtures reflective practice and I think that there are more of us doing that all the time. You know groups of teachers getting together to share their writing and all the supportive ideas that you have all mentioned. I imagine that you will be sharing your scrap booking with your colleagues will have a really positive influence, for example. Sharing already changes the culture.

I think the process has already changed the culture. It takes time. For years I used to be embarrassed to confess to another staff member that I like to write and we are talking about groups of people getting together to write and share

7 Oaks, in my estimation really promotes self worth as opposed to other school divisions.

It's [the writing of an ARPL] has got to be differentiated for teachers just the way it's differentiated for students. Different modalities for getting across our learning. I think we sometime feel that we have to write a certain way because that's what probably what most people would do, just because of the nature of the

type of people who are drawn to teaching. But artists and musicians and drama teachers. . Maybe a high school we see a wider variety of that. The TAA people. We see a wider range of what people will attempt. It's got to be okay for teachers just like its okay for students to work in another modality.

The culture of the school division really supports people writing in response to issues rather than I did this, this and this: Everything we do in the division is reflectively oriented. I would expect that 5 years into this, your results might have varied more. But in 15 years . . . it takes 10 – 15 years for something to be well understood and embedded in practice. It's also something that new teacher coming out of faculty have as part of their practice so it takes a lot less time for new teachers to this division – or any division – to be reflective.

The notion of reflective practice and putting something together as a culmination of my thinking is really important to me. I mean every interaction every conversation plays a role in putting that piece together. To me that's a really valuable part of me creating that end of the year piece; those conversations are so integral throughout my process. When colleagues are hashing something out in terms of practice or process you start to develop ideas and you start to see areas are heavily weighted. You reflect on so many things but the themes appear as I have that interaction with colleagues.

All of these comments give evidence to the notion that reflective practice is indeed embedded into the culture of Seven Oaks School Division. Teachers recognize the writing of an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning is one of the cornerstones of that reflective practice and that this practice has contributed to change over time. They also recognize that the diversity of how people choose to state those reflections is valued

amongst themselves as colleagues and by the school division. The “different modalities” of reflective practice are valued, accepted and supported as ways that teachers can articulate their professional learning.

Both sets of data indicate that Seven Oaks teachers have positive attitudes about their participation in the Professional Learning Framework policy. Teacher beliefs are similar to those stated in the policy document set by the school division. Teachers have a diverse range of activities that support their reflective practice and the frequency of those activities is also diverse. As the focus group comments suggest teachers value and celebrate the fact that the division accepts and celebrates that diversity.

Discussion

Donald Schön (1987) stated the two most important concepts for a reflective practitioner are reflection in action and reflection on action, the processes of looking back on and learning from our thinking and actions that would make a difference in future actions. He described a movement away from supervision towards one that would support teacher's reflection-on-action, independent and qualitative judgments and narrative accounts of experiences and performance in learning and teaching.

We can see this reflection on action in practice as Seven Oaks teachers describe the process in which they prepare for and go about writing a Professional Reflection of Professional Learning. The following four statements from teachers are indicators of reflection in action. They have each encapsulated how they look at their teaching to make qualitative judgments on what they have learned and what they are learning about teaching.

What I decide to focus on primarily will depend on what I learned last year and what became big questions for me last year and then I choose my own reflection in specific areas that I need to learn more about or read more about, professional development opportunities. To me, it's a continuous reflection about my practice. Writing about questions that I still have to bring forward to the next year.

When it comes to being a teacher, one of the things I have learned is you really have to be patient with yourself. It really is about developing and growing one step at a time.

I need time to think about what happened and what went wrong and regroup. Writing about frustrating experiences and talking it through with my administrator and other teachers really helped me.

The notion of reflective practice and putting something together as a culmination of my thinking is really important to me. I mean every interaction every conversation plays a role in putting that piece together. To me that's a really valuable part of me creating that end of the year piece; those conversations are so integral throughout my process. When colleagues are hashing something out in terms of practice or process you start to develop ideas and you start to see areas are heavily weighted. You reflect on so many things but the themes appear as I have that interaction with colleagues.

Seven Oaks teachers clearly have a sense of the value of reflective practice. This is reflected in the survey results. Ninety-seven per cent of respondents stated that reflection on practice is something they find useful when preparing an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning. Eighty-four per cent of respondents indicated that they reflected on their practice when preparing their Annual Reflection of Professional Learning. These percentages would indicate to the researcher that the notion of reflection-on-action is a tenet of reflective practice that is embedded within the professional culture of Seven Oaks School Division.

Valverde (1982) talked about reflection as an individual's needs assessment and continued self-monitoring or satisfaction with effectiveness. These teachers clearly indicate that they are indeed self-monitoring and looking at their individual needs as teachers. They are looking at what they have learned from a previous year. They are thinking about what they have read and what they need to read more about in order to

understand their thinking in teaching. They are reflecting on their mistakes and frustrations in order that they can move forward and improve. They are taking professional responsibility to develop and grow one step at a time.

Developing a professional viewpoint as a stance for teacher development is another tenet of reflective practice on which the Seven Oaks School Division policy is built. As Lieberman (1995) stated

People learn best through active involvement and through thinking about and becoming articulate about what they have learned. Processes, practices, and policies built on this view of learning are at the heart of a more extended view of teacher development that encourages teachers to involve themselves as learners-in-much the same way they wish their students would. (p. 252)

Do we see this tenet of reflective practice in the data collected? Do teachers in Seven Oaks School Division learn best through “active involvement and through thinking about and becoming articulate about what they have learned?” (Lieberman, 1995) These comments from the focus groups would indicate that this is so.

I think we have a professional responsibility to create that culture within our schools that nurtures reflective practice and I think that there are more of us doing that all the time.

It's [the writing of an ARPL] has got to be differentiated for teachers just the way it's differentiated for students. Different modalities for getting across our learning. I think we sometime feel that we have to write a certain way because that's what probably what most people would do, just because of the nature of the type of people who are drawn to teaching. But artists and musicians and drama teachers. . Maybe in a high school we see a wider variety of that. The TAA

people. We see a wider range of what people will attempt. It's got to be okay for teachers just like its okay for students to work in another modality.

These teachers clearly articulate the responsibility they feel in promoting the processes, practices, and policies that build on Lieberman's view of professional learning. They clearly articulate the social nature of learning that is at the heart of a more extended view of teacher development. We see that they are, as colleagues, encouraging teachers to involve themselves as learners-in much the same way they wish their students would.

Lieberman also talks of thinking about and becoming articulate about teacher notions of professionalism and teaching. Seven Oaks teachers who participated in the focus groups for this research are clearly articulate about their notions of professionalism and teaching.

Professional Growth I think is. . . How do you as a professional through your practice have grown, how you plan to grow and how you plan to improve yourself, and how you are trying to improve? This is what I though about, this is how I am going to improve.

What the ASPG has done for me is to help me set goals for myself from one year to another.

[D]oing these reflections was a really good idea. . . . well not everyone like to reflect, but I think that as an educator, every educator needs to reflect on their teaching in order to grow. I think that the process of having to reflect on your teaching in order to grow is different from . . . and I don't know that you or nor would I have grown in the same way had I continued to be evaluated. Otherwise I would probably be evaluating my students by checklists instead of talking to them and

reading their journals. I think that the method you use to assess you students is the same way you assess you work.

These comments indicate that teachers take a great deal of personal ownership for their learning and improvement in their own teaching. We can see that they have become involved in their own professional learning in much the way that we would expect our students to be involved in their own learning.

The survey results also indicate that teachers are using many modalities to support their reflective practice. We see that teachers are using teacher portfolios, reflective writing, journaling, action research, collaborative projects, relying on professional development activities to drive their professional practice and searching out and using professional reading to guide practice and reflection. All the respondents use no one of these activities yet each activity is being utilized by some of the teachers to support their professional practice. This result shows that the school division offers a wide variety and diversity of options for teachers to choose and honours that diversity in how teachers choose to use them. Just as teachers would offer different ways and means for their students to show their learning, so to do teachers use different ways and means for documenting their work and learning. As Lieberman suggests, teachers are reflecting upon their learning in many of the same modalities as their students. One Seven Oaks teacher talked about the choices in this manner.

The concept of the professional growth statement is to open up that smorgasbord wider than the superintendents can imagine it.

Killion and Todnem (1991) took Schön's notions of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action and developed a third concept of reflection-for-action or the idea of stepping outside the moment to learn from and plan for future considerations. The

planning for future considerations is a concept that came forward in the focus groups with such comments as these:

To me, it's a continuous reflection about my practice. Writing about questions that I still have to bring forward to the next year.

What the ASPG has done for me is to help me set goals for myself from one year to another.

How do you as a professional through your practice have grown, how you plan to grow and how you plan to improve yourself, and how you are trying to improve? This is what I thought about, this is how I am going to improve.

I think about what goals do I have for myself in September? How did I meet those goals? I tend to start local and then go to global. I write about my classroom, my school in the context of Seven Oaks and in the wider world of education.

The ASPG process can be an enormous help to teachers if it allows us to focus on one thing they really want to think about in a sustained manner.

Teachers think about their practice as something that is evolving over time. It is not a yearly capsule. Things learned from one year have tremendous impact on the teaching in the next year. Reflection-for-action is the notion that teachers carry their learning from one year to the next. Practices that happen in their classrooms will grow and evolve as long as there has been the time to reflect on what has been. The reflection on what has been forms the basis for the action that might be. The writing of an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning is one way that Seven Oaks School Division teachers are able to step outside their classrooms, think about what has occurred and act upon things differently as a result of what has been. As one Seven Oaks teacher said:

What I decide to focus on primarily will depend on what I learned last year and what became big questions for me last year and then I choose my own reflection in specific areas that I need to learn more about or read more about, professional development opportunities. To me, it's a continuous reflection about my practice.

Writing about questions that I still have to bring forward to the next year.

This is an example of a teacher being able to articulate reflection on action becoming reflection for action.

In the literature review the reflective process was discussed as a circular notion of describing, informing, confronting and reconstructing. The teacher asks themselves the following questions: What did I do? What does it mean? How did I come to think like this? How might I do things differently? We see this process reflected in the comments made by Seven Oaks Teachers. They are able to clearly articulate this process as a means for thinking about teaching and learning.

I think about what goals do I have for myself in September? How did I meet those goals? I tend to start local and then go to global. I write about my classroom, my school in the context of Seven Oaks and in the wider world of education.

I need time to think about what happened and what went wrong and regroup. Writing about frustrating experiences and talking it through with my administrator and other teachers really helped me.

I've tried to really understand how this can help me think about my work. So there's been lots of change. But what comes through is I've tried to . . . not be critical of myself or criticize anything . . . but to really write about what has happened, what I learned because of it and how am I a better teacher because of it.

Smyth (1989) poses the question how do I look at things differently? This question is the one that teachers must pose to themselves in order that reflection on action becomes realized. Although this notion of visiting and revisiting was not inherent in the survey questions or in the focus group protocol, we see evidence in the teacher comments of this circular way of thinking about teacher practice. Teachers described what they have done, what they have thought about as a result of that action and how they are to become a better teacher as a result of the thought and action. Reflection for action becomes a reality.

Another tenet of reflective practice is the ability to clarify and distil our thoughts as teachers, to distance ourselves from our daily teaching lives in order that we can make sense of it.

It is through reflection that we distil, clarify and articulate our craft knowledge.

Reflection is precisely the capacity to distance oneself from the highly routinized, depleting, sometimes meaningless activities in which we are engaged, so that we can see what's really going on. (Barth, 2001, p.65)

The central purpose in writing an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning is to do precisely what Barth is suggesting. To step back from our daily lives of teaching and clarify, distil and understand what is happening in our teaching and in our classrooms with our students, to see what is really going on. We can see in the following teacher comments from the focus groups that teachers understand this tenet of reflective practice.

I really get it when I write about it.

I really enjoy the whole reflective piece. I really enjoy it and I get a lot out of it. I always look at that as my responsibility to get my ideas out there.

The ASP process can be an enormous help to teachers if it allows us to focus on one thing they really want to think about in a sustained manner.

At the very least if I'm setting down to do my own reflections, it's relevant.

I've tried to really understand how this can help me think about my work. So there's been lots of change. But what comes through is I've tried to . . . not be critical of myself or criticize anything . . . but to really write about what has happened, what I learned because of it and how am I a better teacher because of it.

The opportunity that this writing presents is writing to clarify our thinking and also about text as conversation pieces.

These teachers have come to understand that reflection, and in this particular case, writing about practice, is a process for clarification, improvement, and relevancy to the classroom as well as developing teacher responsibility and autonomy to act in a professional manner. As Joan Irwin (1991) writes

Professionals who write about their teaching experiences may have the opportunity to develop more informed insights into their efforts than colleagues who elect not to write. Writing about the classroom, teacher-student interactions, the school and the community served by the school, is a natural outgrowth of the development of a reflective stance. (p.33)

Seven Oaks School Division has some very specific statements about reflective practice and its shared beliefs about professionalism in teaching. The School Division clearly sees teaching from a professional viewpoint rather than a bureaucratic stance. These statements are available on the web site, as a preamble to the professional journal

Teaching Today for Tomorrow and in the policy statement that is being researched as part of this project.

The researcher was looking for evidence that teacher values and beliefs aligned with these divisional viewpoints and if there was agreement from teachers about these statements and practices. The School Division says it “values teacher professionalism that is founded in caring and reflection that is fundamental to ongoing professional development.” The respondents who were part of the focus groups clearly believe that this is so.

The culture of the school division really supports people writing in response to issues rather than I did this, this and this: Everything we do in the division is reflectively oriented.

The notion of reflective practice and putting something together as a culmination of my thinking is really important to me

I think we have a professional responsibility to create that culture within our schools that nurtures reflective practice and I think that there are more of us doing that all the time. You know groups of teachers getting together to share their writing and all the supportive ideas that you have all mentioned.

I think the process has already changed the culture. It takes time. For years I used to be embarrassed to confess to another staff member that I like to write and we are talking about groups of people getting together to write and share

7 Oaks, in my estimation, really promotes self worth.

I think it [the writing of an ARPL] contributes to the culture of the Division. Philosophically the policy speaks about Seven Oaks School Division as a place to think and teach.

Clearly these teachers also believe that their professionalism and professional autonomy is valued. Their statements indicate that reflective practices are embedded in the thinking processes of teachers in Seven Oaks. The survey results also indicated a positive attitude about the reflective practice of writing an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning. Teachers generally agree with the policy statements regarding reflective practice as outlined in the policy and use the reflective activities to improve their thinking and teaching in preparing to write their Annual Reflection of Professional Learning.

One of the foundations of reflective practice within the Seven Oaks policy is is dialogue. In the Professional Learning Framework reflection, dialogue and action are built upon enabling conditions of trust and open communication.. Leadership built on trust and communication will foster the professional learning, which results through reflection, dialogue and action. Administrators and teachers benefit from collegial discussion of education and teaching and are encouraged to engage in such discussion frequently. Educational judgment is negotiated through reflective dialogue. (Seven Oaks School Division, 2005)

This part of the policy is the one area, which in the survey results and in the focus groups, generated much discussion, many comments, much ambiguity and perhaps the widest variety of opinions. Teachers had a variety of experiences from those who had never had any feedback or dialogue, to those who highly valued the dialogue with their administrators. The survey results also varied on this particular topic. There were some

who responded that there was no dialogue with colleagues and/or administrators, to those who always had these kinds of conversations. The policy states that “Administrators and teachers benefit from collegial discussion of education and teaching and are encouraged to engage in such discussion frequently.” (Seven Oaks School Division, 2005)

Although this statement was verified in practice by many of the respondents in the focus groups, it is clear that collegial discussion of education and teaching between administrators and teachers is not a practice that every teacher experiences. The practices vary from school to school and between administrators and teachers.

Teaching Today for Tomorrow is the professional journal of Seven Oaks School Division. The mission statement of the journal was cited in the literature review as one of the statements the school division has made publicly about how it values professional practice and reflection within that professional practice. “*Teaching Today for Tomorrow* is the work of a professional community that values dialogue, plurality and free expression of educational thought. This journal documents aspects of our ongoing professional conversations about learning and education.”

In the focus groups, there were two particular issues of *Teaching Today for Tomorrow* that came to the discussion. Both journals were a compilation of Annual Statements of Professional Growth (now called Annual Reflections of Professional Learning). The comments discussed were about the public nature of sharing a piece of professional writing, how those examples exemplified the diverse nature of how teachers reflected, and how those examples influenced teachers in expanding their own notions of what is possible.

The issue of *Teaching Today for Tomorrow* was great. What we did [high school] in terms of asking people if they would share their statements in addition to using

the ones from *Teaching Today for Tomorrow*. And there's been a new issue since and that generated lots and lots of discussion. The journal itself says a lot about how the Division values the reflective process.

There were four different schools represented at the focus groups who used these editions of *Teaching Today for Tomorrow* as departure points for staff discussions and professional development.

The second comment about the professional journal was the public nature of the writing and how those teachers took it upon themselves (with permission, of course) to share their ideas in a very public venue. Going public with a particular self-assessment of teaching helps to advance the profession and widens the circle of new knowledge that teacher brings to the public discussion. This fact has enhanced the public discourse between colleagues and indicates the value that the School Division values the diversity of both the process and the product.

The final tenet of reflective practice to be analysed here is the notion that teachers who engage in reflective practice become more personally responsible and accountable for their personal learning. Individuals do not rely on an outside adjudicator to tell them they are doing a good job in teaching. Instead individuals rely on their own thinking about teaching and learning to improve their practice. As stated in the Seven Oaks School Division policy (2005)

Teachers, acting as professionals who serve the public interest, must be personally responsible and accountable for their professional judgments and actions. They must ensure that they are current in the knowledge of the profession and must take responsibility for the application of that knowledge in diverse situations.

Clandinin and Connolly (1988) talk about the power of reflective practice in this way

If you understand what makes up the curriculum of the person most important to you, namely, yourself, you will better understand the difficulties, whys and wherefores of the curriculum of your students. There is not better way to study curriculum, than to study ourselves. (p. 31)

Do Seven Oaks teacher study themselves? Do they take personal responsibility for their own professional practice? When we look at how teachers discussed the purposes they believed were inherent in the Seven Oaks Policy, we see that each of them had a decidedly personal viewpoint as to how each individual chose to respond to the policy. Each had a very keen sense of personal responsibility, not only for their own reflection on action, but also for how that reflection is shared with their colleagues and with their administrators.

This quality is particularly evident when teachers talked about audience when writing an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning. Although audience was in the back of some people's minds, it was certainly not a major consideration. The reflective writing was valuable as an entity in itself and valuable to the writer. Personal and professional autonomy was evident as teachers articulated the relevance of the writing process to their own teaching and learning. Thinking about teaching and learning and improving teaching for the benefit of student learning is not someone else's responsibility but one that lies with each individual teacher.

When I'm writing it I'm writing it as a private document. My expression of my own thoughts. I know that someone's going to read it but I write it for

myself. I know someone will read it and if they learn something from it, that's good. If they don't that's okay too; it's really for me.

[R] ealistically we write so others will read. I write to share my ideas I know that someone else is going to read it, but it's a reflection of me I really enjoy the whole reflective piece. I really enjoy it and I get a lot out of it.

[I]f I'm setting down to do my own reflections, it's relevant.

I always look at that as my responsibility to get my ideas out there.

If we look at the tenets of reflective practice as outlined in the literature review, we can see these tenets appear in the data from Seven Oaks teachers who participated in this project. Seven Oaks teachers are practicing notions of reflecting on their actions to move to reflecting-on-action. They demonstrate a professional autonomy that is rooted in personal and professional responsibility and engages in dialogue and writing as a point of departure for reflection on teaching and learning.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion, Recommendations and Summary

Conclusion

The fact that the policy was changing during the course of the research project allowed the researcher to gain some insight on the changes as they were taking place. The new policy came into being on March 15, 2005. The focus groups were held in the fall of that same year. There was still quite a bit of confusion about how the new policy differed from the previous one. There was also quite a bit of discussion about the interpretation of the new policy and how it was handled at each different school within the division. The fact that the policy had recently changed allowed teachers in the focus groups to talk about their experiences over time, how those experiences changed over time and how the culture of their schools had changed over time in respect to the value of this particular policy. The researcher's conclusion on teacher's understandings of the new policy is that there is still some work to be done divisionally and at individual schools to ensure that teachers have common understandings of purpose and structures.

This unique juncture in time also allowed the researcher to move from the language and structure of the original policy to the language and structure of the current policy. The new language demonstrates clearly the evolution of the policy and the fluidity and responsiveness the division has demonstrated over the fifteen years this policy has been in place. Even the name of the annual piece of written work demonstrates this evolution. An Annual Reflection of Professional Learning

demonstrates a different tone, a different depth of understanding and purpose than does the original Annual Statement of Professional Growth.

The professional literature has also developed and changed within those fifteen years. The bureaucratic notions of the supervision literature so prevalent in the late 1980's and early 1990's are now amalgamating tenets of reflective practice and professionalism within those structures. Most supervision literature written today has some form of professional growth model embedded in it. We see evidence of this change in the language of the new policy itself. The language is more specific about what the school division believes and the policy itself demonstrates a greater depth of understanding than the original. The new policy includes the notions of visiting an issue in education from a different viewpoint, understanding and embedding the place and value of dialogue as a tenet of reflective practice and the understanding and embedding the place and value of relationship between teachers and administrators as a strong foundation to this document.

There are three conclusions that have come from this research project. One is that the reflective stance of Seven Oaks School Division has become embedded in the practices of those Seven Oaks teachers who participated in this study. Teachers believe that this particular policy has had a direct influence on how they think and work as teachers within the cultural context of the school division. They view the process of preparing a Reflection on Professional Learning as one that is valuable philosophically, practically and personally. Reflection is a real way of thinking about teaching and learning in the lives of Seven Oaks teachers. In answering the original research question we can conclude that the writing of and Annual Reflection on Professional Learning is a representation of these teacher's reflective practice.

Secondly, Seven Oaks teachers take a great deal of personal ownership and professional responsibility for this process. Over the years it has become a meaningful part of the yearly teaching and learning in which they engage their students and colleagues. All of the focus group respondents were able to clearly articulate their own purposes and articulate how those purposes were reflected within the individual school cultures and within the division as a whole. These teachers do not view the writing of an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning as something that is done to them, but something that they have ownership over to make relevant to their lives in the classroom. One teacher stated that writing their Annual Reflection of Professional Learning transformed into a "labour of love". While we cannot assume that every teacher would take such joy in the reflective process, it is an indication that the process is very personal for each individual. This research would support the notion that teachers believe that writing an Annual Reflection on Professional Learning promotes the tenets of reflective practice.

The third conclusion the researcher makes is that the diversity of choice for teachers is extremely important in demonstrating the philosophical stance of the division. Teachers realize this diversity as a sign of respect for their individual differences and circumstances from year to year and a respect for their professional autonomy within their schools and classrooms. In the original policy, much time and effort was spent in demonstrating the building of professional portfolios. While it was the intent of the division at the time that professional portfolios be the main point of documentation for teachers, there was a need to expand this notion. Again we see the school division responding to teacher needs by developing a wider range of activities for teacher engagement. This response was not a policy response, but a practical one. We do see the

diversity stated in the revised policy, but the practice was in place long before the policy revision. The survey results indicate that no teachers use all of the activities listed in the school division policy, yet many teachers use many and that this usage varies from year to year. The division clearly accepts that teachers are going to use a variety of documentation strategies throughout their career, and that any and all of those strategies will be valued.

The fact that teachers are allowed to use different modalities to express what they have learned about their teaching and learning is celebrated and respected. We see this clearly as teachers talked about the different ways they were exploring the expression of their learning. We heard about scrapbooks, artwork, digital presentations, videos and poetry as exciting and acceptable ways of presenting professional learning. We heard about the example of the Division's professional journal dedicated to teacher writing contributing to a culture that values diversity. The journal was a demonstration of celebration and validation of using different modalities for teacher reflection. This part of the research answers the original questions regarding what kinds of documentation teachers use to support their preparation of an Annual Statement on Professional Learning.

Recommendations

The one area of this policy the researcher would make recommendations for continued development would be in the area of dialogue and the norms of collegiality that dialogue supports in professional learning. If we consider the original research question “Do teachers perceive the writing of Annual Reflections on Professional Learning to be connected to the norms of collegiality within their schools?” we can see many survey comments were about the lack of feedback received. Much of the discussion from the focus groups indicated confusion and discrepancy from school to school and teacher to teacher, regarding what was considered feedback, which teachers and administrators could be responsible to give feedback and the purposes of dialogue for professional growth. The norms of collegiality do not appear to be easily defined or understood by study respondents.

Further work in this area could include continuing discussions about purposes, processes and practices for deepening understanding of teaching and learning, developing shared strategies for administrators to support dialogue and feedback, and sustaining consistent understandings and purposes of dialogue as a means to support professional growth. These continuing conversations could be through shared reading, administrative peer support or group discussions for administrators and staffs. This would help to strengthen the feedback loop of the policy. We saw some, not many, but some, respondents who had never had any feedback from an administrator. There still remain some discrepancies from school to school about if feedback is expected, the purposes of feedback and how that feedback comes about. Teachers who receive feedback clearly value it as a part of their reflective process. Therefore one would think that strengthening

the feedback would contribute to strengthening the processes and understandings studied here.

There are two comments from the focus groups that clearly articulate the findings of the researcher in this area. "Now that we as a staff are getting some feedback, it's [the writing of an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning] gone from something that was a chore to something that is valued." "I have been writing these things for 15 years and have received a response every year except one. The lack of response that year was deafening "

Teachers value this work and believe it is important. One way the division can ensure this important work is validated is through consistent feedback and continuing to support teachers in their professional development. One would hope that in the future, every teacher would receive some sort of validation for his or her thinking and writing. There is a large group of teachers who are not represented in this research. We have no indication as to why they did not respond. We do not know if they think positively or negatively about this policy. We heard some stories in the focus groups about people who simply changed the date on their statements from year to year, or those who wrote only what they thought their administrator wanted to hear. There was one survey that was returned incomplete with a note saying " I refuse to complete this survey because I believe that writing Statements of Growth are a complete waste of time." This group of non-respondents is hard to understand because they have not participated in activities such as this research project. Some of the stories have a little bit of an urban legend feel to them as the people who are telling the stories do not often know the specific teacher, they have just heard the stories. However, the bottom line is that there is a group of

teachers in Seven Oaks School Division who do not think favourably about this policy or process and therefore should not be ignored.

It would be an interesting research challenge to gather perspectives of teachers who did not respond to the survey. How could we find out if their beliefs are aligned with those of the division? Is it a large group or a small group? A question that would follow would be how we can support teachers who question the value of the Annual Reflection on Professional Learning or those who do not believe in reflective practice? Another area for further research would be to follow the feedback and dialogue discussions to see if the kind and frequency of feedback has any impact on how teachers perceive reflective practice

Summary

This research project was designed to answer five questions.

Do Seven Oaks teachers perceive the writing of an Annual Reflection on Professional Learning to be a representation of their reflective practice? The survey did an agreement scoring of teacher's perceptions of their beliefs as stated in the Seven Oaks policy statement. Respondents generally agreed with these statements. In addition, the focus groups indicated strong understanding of writing for the purposes of representing reflective practice.

Does the writing of an Annual Reflection of Professional Learning promote the tenants of reflective practice? The respondents of this study generally agreed with the tenets of reflective practice. The focus groups participants spoke passionately about their understandings of why reflective practice is important to them and how those expectations of reflective practice make Seven Oaks School Division a unique place in which to teach and learn.

The questions of what sources teachers use and who supports teachers in their writing of Annual Reflections on Professional Learning were combined in the survey data. Seven Oaks teachers use a variety of documentation methods to support their writing and they value the fact that they have a choice in that representation of their reflective practice. Teachers rely on their colleagues and in some cases, administrators, to support their writing of an Annual Reflection on Professional Learning.

The final question posed was do teachers perceive the writing of Annual Statements of Professional Growth to be connected to the norms of collegiality within their school buildings? These norms of collegiality are varied and diverse and not clearly

defined as a result of this project. There are recommendations for further study in this area.

On the Divisional web site of Seven Oaks School Division, you will see the following statement. "Seven Oaks believes in its teachers. We value their professionalism and take pride in their work with children. Teaching is founded on caring and reflection is fundamental to ongoing professional development." (www.7oaks.org)

The results of this researcher's work into Seven Oaks teacher's perceptions of themselves as reflective practitioners, would suggest that Seven Oaks teachers do indeed take pride in their work with children. Teachers clearly articulate their caring about student emotional, social and academic growth.

Seven Oaks teachers believe that reflection is fundamental to their individual professional development. They take personal and professional responsibility to improve their individual understanding about teaching and learning. The writing of an Annual Reflection of Professional Growth is valued as a means to demonstrate this reflective stance in teaching.

Reflective practice is a way of thinking about teaching in Seven Oaks School Division. It is not just a policy. Reflective Practice is indeed a reality in the professional lives of the Seven Oaks teachers who participated in this study.

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APPENDIX A

Survey**Policy or Reality?****Teacher Perceptions of Reflective Practice in Seven Oaks School Division.**

Section One: Teacher Information

Please check all categories that apply in your current teaching assignment.

- ☐ K- 5
- ☐ 6- 8
- ☐ K – 8
- ☐ 9 - 12
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ 3 – 5 years teaching experience
- ☐ 5 – 10 years teaching experience
- ☐ 10 – 20 years teaching experience
- ☐ 20 or more years teaching experience
- ☐ Have taught in a school division other than Seven Oaks School Division

Section Two: Implementation and Purposes

How did you first learn about the Professional Learning Framework (Policy GBI)

Please check all that apply to you.

- ☐ I learned about this policy from my administrator/superintendent.
- ☐ I learned about this policy from my colleagues.
- ☐ I looked up the policy on the Seven Oaks Web-site.

Which of the following activities have you participated in to learn about the teacher evaluation policy?

- ☐ I participated in the school-based implementation in-service. (1990 – 1991)
- ☐ I attended a new teacher workshop in which the policy was discussed.
- ☐ Participation in a school-based workshop/in-service informed me of this policy.
- ☐ I have not participated in any formal presentation.
- ☐ I participated in the SOTA after school workshops. (late 1990's)

Read the following statements. Specify the degree to which you believe each statement is an expression of your own understanding of reflective practice.

- 5 Very significant
 4 Significant
 3 Somewhat significant
 2 Insignificant
 1 Completely insignificant

	5	4	3	2	1
The use of a professional portfolio, personal journal, interactive journal or other means shows evidence of teaching practice.					
It is important that teachers reflect upon their teaching to link the theoretical frameworks and broader purposes of education to their actions in the classroom.					
In order to improve one's teaching, a teacher dialogues with peers and administrators to consider educational judgements made and how they link knowledge and practice.					
Teachers should give consideration to other relevant perspectives.					
Teachers can use research to inform practice as well as having their practice inform research.					
Reflective practice allows teachers to act upon new understandings.					
Dialogue and action are built upon enabling conditions of trust and open communication.					
Professional learning is fostered with leadership built on trust and communication.					
Professional learning results from reflection, dialogue and action.					
Administrators and teachers benefit from collegial discussion of education and teaching and are encouraged to engage in such discussion frequently.					
Educational judgement is negotiated through reflective dialogue.					

Section Three: The Writing of Annual Statements of Professional Growth

The following is a list of activities teachers may access in preparation for the writing of Annual Statements of Professional Growth. Please indicate how useful you have found each of the following in your own writing process.

- 5 Very useful
- 4 Quite useful
- 3 Somewhat useful
- 2 A little useful
- 1 Not at all useful

Activities	5	4	3	2	1
Divisional in-service. (New Teachers, Divisional PD Day, Numeracy, Curriculum groups etc.)					
School-based workshop/in-service.					
Dialogue with administrators.					
Dialogue with colleagues.					
Reflection on practice. (new pedagogy tried, difficult children, etc)					
Reflective writing.					
Journal writing.					
Professional portfolio.					
Professional development activity attended.					
Collaborative projects with colleagues.					
Professional reading that affected my practice.					
Action research project.					
Other (please explain below)					

Please indicate the frequency with which you engage in the following activities as you prepare to write your Annual Statement of Professional Growth.

- | | | |
|---|------------------|---|
| 5 | Always | (every year) |
| 4 | Most of the time | (most years with the exception of one or two) |
| 3 | Sometimes | (some years and not others) |
| 2 | Once in a while | (I have done this at least once) |
| 1 | Never | (I don't do this) |

	5	4	3	2	1
Ideas and activities I have collected in my Professional Portfolio.					
Journal writing.					
Professional books or articles I have read.					
Professional development activity I have attended.					
Dialogue with administrators about the content and style of writing. (writing process)					
Dialogue with administrators about the ideas presented in my writing.					
Dialogue with administrator about the pedagogical beliefs and knowledge that serve as a basis for my writing.					
Dialogue with colleagues about the content and style of writing. (writing process)					
Dialogue with colleagues about the ideas presented in my writing.					
Dialogue with colleagues about the pedagogical beliefs and knowledge that serve as a basis for my writing.					
A political/policy decision that has affected the way I view my work.					
Reflection on practice. (new pedagogy tried, difficult children, etc)					
Reflective writing.					
Collaborative projects with colleagues.					
Other (please explain below)					

Read the following statements and indicate your agreement or disagreement.

- 5 Strongly Agree
 4 Agree
 3 Neither Agree nor Disagree
 2 Disagree
 1 Strongly Disagree

	5	4	3	2	1
I find the writing my Annual Statement of Professional Growth a purposeful professional activity.					
Writing an Annual Statement of Professional Growth does nothing to support the professional community in Seven Oaks School Division.					
I believe that writing an Annual Statement of Professional Growth is a waste of my time.					
I write something on the due date only because I have to					
Writing an Annual Statement of Growth allows me to further develop my stance as a reflective practioner.					
Writing an Annual Statement of Growth has nothing to do with what I do in my classroom.					
This policy supports the notion of developing teachers autonomy and accountability in the classroom.					
This policy allows administrators to abdicate their responsibilities in evaluating teachers.					
The best part of the Annual Statement of Growth is the dialogue that I have with my administrators and colleagues.					
I don't understand the purpose of writing and Annual Statement of Professional Growth.					
I believe it is necessary to share my writing with my administrator and/or colleagues.					
I believe it is important to receive a response from my administrator and/or colleagues.					
I need more feedback.					
I believe writing an Annual Statement of Professional Growth helps me to understand myself better as a teacher.					
Writing an Annual Statement of Professional Growth promotes the tenets of reflective practice within Seven Oaks School Division.					

Thank you for participating in this survey. A self addressed stamped envelope has been included to return your reply. If you have any questions, or would like to have final results shared with you, please contact me at (daytime) or (evenings). I can also be contacted by email at

APPENDIX B

Focus Group Protocol**Section One: Teacher Information**

1. How long have you been teaching in Seven Oaks School Division?
2. Have you taught in other school divisions?
3. At what level are you teaching, elementary, middle, high school?

Section Two: Implementation and Purposes

1. What is your understanding of the purpose of the writing of Annual Statements of Professional Growth?
2. Does the writing of the Annual Statement of Professional Growth contribute to your reflective practice? If so, in what ways? If not, what are factors exist that provide barriers for the process?
3. Is there a connection for you between writing an Annual Statements of Professional Growth and the culture of Seven Oaks School Division as a division that supports and promotes reflective practice?

Section Three: Writing Process

1. Describe your process in preparing your Annual Statement of Growth.
2. Do you share your Annual Statement of Professional Growth with anyone? Does this sharing include conversation about the ideas you present?
3. What kinds of sources do you use in order to prepare yourself for the writing of your Annual Statement of Professional Growth? Examples might include: Professional Portfolio, Journal writing, professional books or articles you have read, discussions with colleagues, discussions with administrators, experiences with students, experiences with parents, new pedagogy or classroom structure tried, professional development activity attended, effect of a political or divisional policy on classroom practice or any others. Please comment.

Section Four: Other Comments

1. Are there any other comments you would like to make on the writing of Annual Statements of Professional Growth or reflective practice within the culture of Seven Oaks School Division?

Thank you for participating in this process. The researcher appreciates the time and conversation about teaching in Seven Oaks School Division.

A distillation of each focus group will be returned to you for verification.

Teacher Name

Number or email for contact

APPENDIX C

Dear Colleagues,

My name is Cathy Horbas and I am the principal at École Constable Edward Finney School. I am currently enrolled in the Master's program in Educational Administration at the University of Manitoba and am working on my Master's Thesis. This letter is an introduction of my research topic and an invitation to be a part of the collection of research data.

The purpose of this study is to examine teacher beliefs, perceptions and practices in writing the Annual Statement of Professional Growth in Seven Oaks School Division. It also seeks to address the following questions:

- 1) Are teacher's beliefs about reflective practice the same as the beliefs in the School Division policy?
- 2) Do teachers believe the writing of an Annual Statement of Professional Growth promotes the tenets of reflective practice as outlined in Seven Oaks policy?
- 3) What resources do teachers use in writing the Annual Statement of Professional Growth?
- 4) Who supports the teacher in their writing of Annual Statements of Professional Growth?

This is a qualitative study involving a survey of all current Seven Oaks School Division professional personnel who are required by policy to write an Annual Statement of Professional Growth and who have been teaching for three or more years in Seven Oaks.. The survey is completely anonymous. Information from the survey will be gathered and analysed to find possible common threads of thought, perceptions and understandings in reference to the writing of annual statements of professional growth. The completion of the survey indicates your willingness to participate in this research.

The researcher intends to follow up the survey results with individual interviews and/or focus groups. These interviews and/or focus groups will take place in July through December. The interviews and focus groups will include a cross section of the teaching population, elementary, middle and high school teachers, male and female, as well as a mixture of teachers with differing lengths of teaching experience.

If you are interested in being a part of these interviews and/or focus groups, please indicate below and return to the researcher at Constable Finney School or by mail at the address below. You may also contact the researcher at the addresses below for any clarification.

Participation in the survey, interview and focus groups is on a voluntary basis. No individual names or identifying data will be used in the writing. All data will be kept in strictest confidence and will not be used in any manner that is supervisory or evaluative. If you identify yourself as a participant in the interview or focus group, you may withdraw at any time without prejudice.

Attached you will find the survey that I ask you to consider filling out. It will take approximately twenty minutes of your time. A self-addressed stamped envelope is

included for you to return your survey to me. It would be preferable if this could be done before June 30, 2005.

I thank you in advance for your attention to the survey and for your consideration of my research project. If you would like further information, please call me at or contact me via email at

Sincerely,

Cathy Horbas

Yes I am interested in further discussions regarding teacher perceptions of reflective practice.

Teacher Name

Number or email for contact

APPENDIX D

Research Project Title: Policy or Reality? Teacher Perceptions of Reflective Practice in Seven Oaks School Division.
Principal Investigator: Cathy Horbas

Dear Colleague,

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The purpose of this study is to examine teacher beliefs, perceptions and practices in writing the Annual Statement of Professional Growth in Seven Oaks School Division. It also seeks to address the following questions. Are teacher's beliefs about reflective practice the same as the beliefs in the School Division policy? Do teachers believe the writing of an Annual Statement of Professional Growth promotes the tenets of reflective practice as outlined in Seven Oaks policy? What resources do teachers use in writing the Annual Statement of Professional Growth? Who supports the teacher in their writing of Annual Statements of Professional Growth?

You have voluntarily agreed to participate in a focus group. The survey has been completed by one hundred and seventy-seven Seven Oaks School Division teachers and a number of common threads have been identified. These common themes will form the basis of our discussions in the accompanying focus group.

No individual names or identifying data will be used in the writing. All data will be kept in strictest confidence and will not be used in any manner that is supervisory or evaluative. If you wish to withdraw, you may do so at any time in the project without prejudice. All data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home and destroyed at the completion of the project.

This time will be arranged with the principal researcher and yourself at your convenience. The expectation is that each focus group will be completed in a one hour session. Subsequent conversations or discussions may be added only where there is agreement of yourself and the principal researcher. The focus groups will be audio taped for analysis. A distillation of each focus group will be returned to the respective teachers for verification before being included in the final analysis. You will be given an opportunity to further discuss or comment in writing to the researcher's analysis or the interview focus group.

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand to your satisfaction the information regarding your participation in the project. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institution from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any question you prefer omitted, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout the process.

I thank you in advance for your participation in this research project. If you would like further information, please call me at _____ or contact me via email at _____. You may also contact my Master's advisor, Dr. John Wiens at _____.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Boards of the University of Manitoba and by the Seven Oaks School Division. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for you records and reference.

Participant's Signature

Date

Principal Investigator's Signature

Date

Please complete this consent form and send it to Cathy Horbas at École Constable Edward Finney School or mail to Cathy at by November 30, 2005.

* Please indicate whether you would like a short summary of this project sent to you at the conclusion of this study. Yes _____ No _____

APPENDIX E

THE SEVEN OAKS SCHOOL DIVISION March 14, 2005 GBI PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Seven Oaks School Division desires high quality education for its students. Quality instruction is concomitant with quality education. Effective teaching forms the foundation on which quality education is based.

Teachers, acting as professionals who serve the public interest, must be personally responsible and accountable for their professional judgements and actions. They must ensure that they are current in the knowledge of the profession and must take responsibility for the application of that knowledge in diverse situations.

The Professional Learning Framework requires that teachers engage in examination of their practice by:

- Documenting and showing evidence of teaching practice through the use of a professional portfolio, personal journal, interactive journal or other means
- Reflecting upon one's practice to link the theoretical frameworks and broader purposes of education to one's actions in the classroom
- Dialoguing with peers and administrators to consider educational judgements made and how they link one's knowledge and practice
- Giving consideration to other relevant perspectives
- Finding ways for research to inform practice as well as for practice to inform research
- Acting upon new understandings
- Preparation of an Annual Reflection on Professional Learning to be discussed with administrators and submitted to the Superintendents' Department for placement in the personnel record

In the Professional Learning Framework reflection, dialogue and action are built upon enabling conditions of trust and open communication. Leadership built on trust and communication will foster the professional learning which results through reflection, dialogue and action. Administrators and teachers benefit from collegial discussion of education and teaching and are encouraged to engage in such discussion frequently. Educational judgement is negotiated through reflective dialogue.

DOCUMENTATION

The documentation package is the record of the individual teacher wherein the teacher defines his/her situation, interprets what is seen to be important and documents the practices that were applied. The highly unique nature of the documentation package precludes any definitive description.

The teacher's documentation is a tool for the professional development of the teacher. In that it supports reflection on practice and is part of his/her professional duties. This will be kept by the teacher in a secure location and will be accessed only under the teacher's direction.

REFLECTION

Teachers are called upon to make hundreds of decisions or judgements each day. It is important to be able to stop and to reflect upon the assumptions, ideas, beliefs and values that underpin the actions that are taken. It is also important for educators to talk to each other about what they are doing and why.

Teacher reflection must be informed by knowledge about learning and pedagogy and grounded in instructional purposes and concerns for the effects of one's actions on learners (Linda Darling-Hammond, 1999, p. 32).

PROFESSIONAL DIALOGUE

Teachers are expected to engage in professional dialogue about teaching. Dialogue is a public, collective activity through which one explores purposes and negotiates educational judgements. In a discussion, different views are presented and, sometimes defended. The aim is to reach a decision or a course of action. On the other hand, a dialogue does not seek agreement, rather views are presented as a way of discovering/reinventing new views. Consensus is not required in dialogue.

(Pourdavood and Fleener, 1997, p. 52)

The purpose of a dialogue may arise as a result of a specific teaching experience, student feedback, results of action research, responses to current literature and research, exploration of broader purposes of education, questions raised by parents or the broader community and so forth.

Administrators are expected to assist in structuring opportunities for such dialogue to occur.

CONSIDERATION OF OTHER PERSPECTIVES (IMAGINATION)

Teachers are expected to think about other relevant perspectives as they plan their work. For example, imagine the implications of decisions as seen through the eyes of a six year old or a sixteen year old or a parent or a particular culture.

LINKING OF PRACTICE TO RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

Teacher reflection must be informed by knowledge about learning and pedagogy and grounded in instructional purposes and concerns for the effects of one's actions on learners. The capacity to reflect in an informed and thoughtful manner is critical to the transformation of complex knowledge into action and to the development of further knowledge based on practice (Linda Darling-Hammond, 1999, p. 32).

ACTION (PRAXIS)

Seven Oaks School Division recognizes that teachers have the capacity to make a difference in the world of children. There is an inherent responsibility to continually consider the interrelationships between our thinking, judgments and actions.

ANNUAL REFLECTION ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Teachers will be required to submit to their administration a commentary on their professional learning once each school year. It is intended that the Annual Reflection on Professional Learning give evidence of the professional growth and development of the teacher.

The commentary should address ways in which teaching practice may change as a result of this process.

The commentary will form the basis of a discussion with the administrator and/or with a cadre of colleagues selected with mutual agreement of the administrator and teachers. The commentary will be signed by the teacher and administrator and forwarded to central office for placement in the teacher's personnel file.

First or final drafts of Annual Reflections of Professional Learning must be submitted to school administrators NO LATER THAN May 1st.

Teachers have the right to request a written evaluation from their administrator. The format of this evaluation shall be decided by the teacher and administrator, and shall be for the teacher's use only. Teachers have the option of forwarding a copy of this evaluation to central office for their personnel file.

APPENDIX

It is important to utilize the structures of our schools and school division to encourage time for the educational conversations as outlined in Policy GBI. Creative use of the following structures should be considered:

- staff meetings common preparation time
- professional learning days peer mentorship
- cognitive coaching action research groups
- symposia university studies
- publication of articles release time for specific purposes
- book discussions professional articles
- journaling interactive journaling
- mentoring teacher candidates/mentoring new teachers

Figure 1
Total Attitude Score

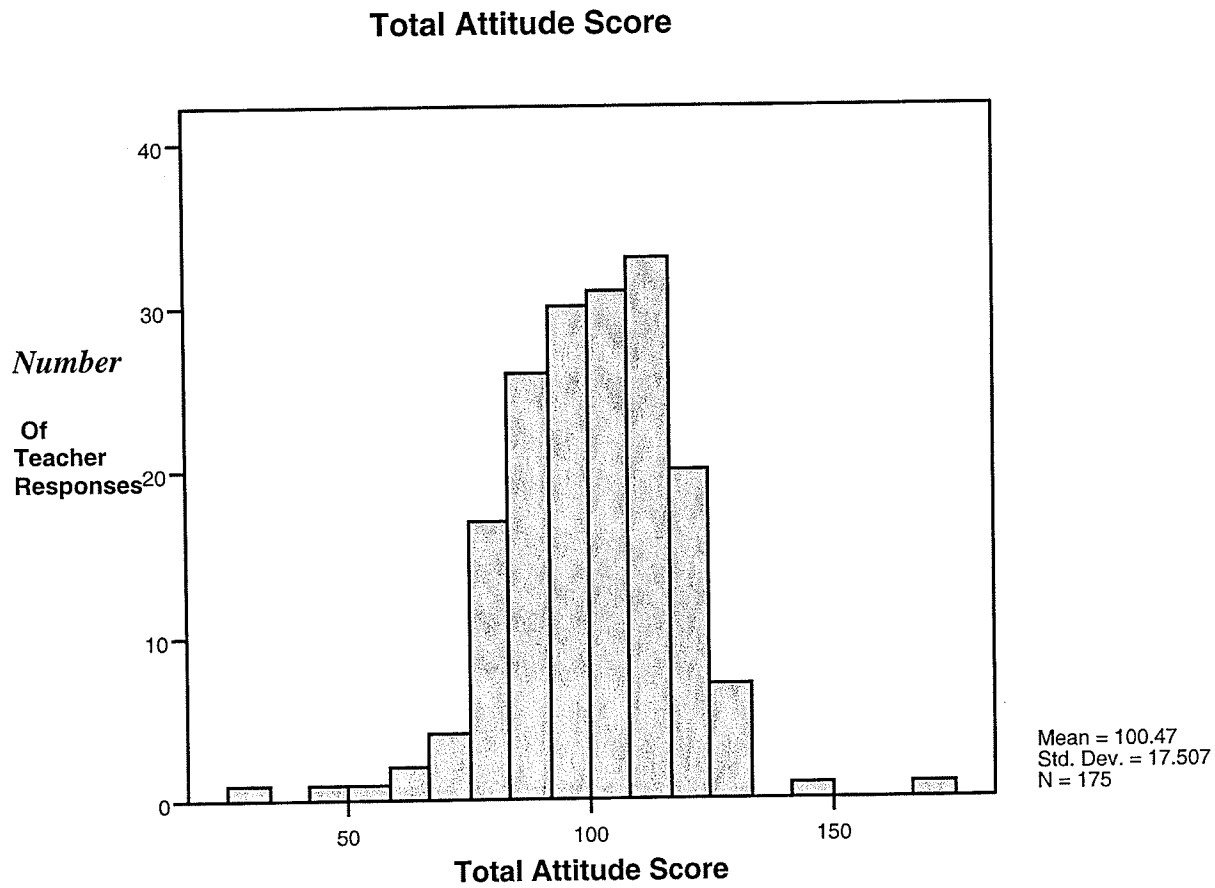


Figure 2
Total Agreement Score

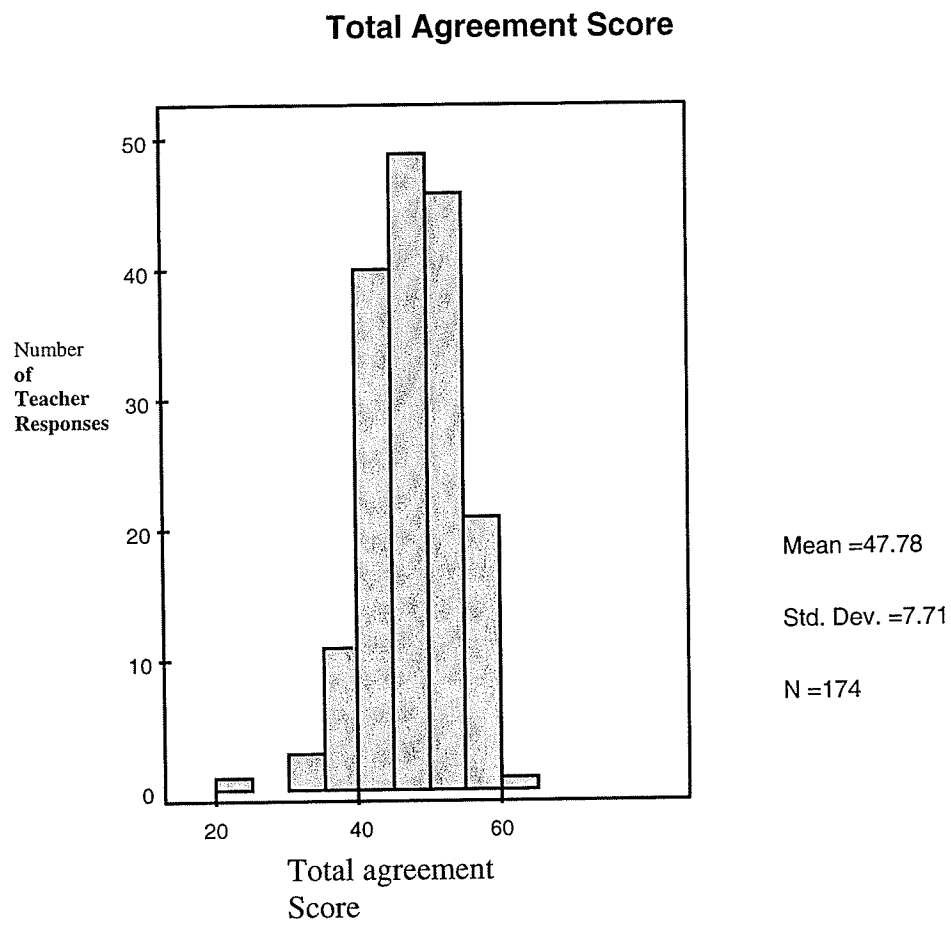


Figure 3
Usefulness of Activity

Activity	Not at all Useful	A Little Useful	Somewhat Useful	Useful	Very Useful	No Response
School based workshop	18	24	52	49	26	7
Dialogue with Administrators	23	20	50	49	30	4
Dialogue with Colleagues	4	6	30	57	78	1
Reflective on Practice	2	1	10	65	95	3
Reflective Writing	16	22	46	45	48	1
Journal Writing	48	25	49	25	26	3
Professional Portfolio	3	31	46	44	21	1
Professional Development Activity	10	15	33	62	61	6
Collaborative Projects	12	6	33	62	60	2
Professional Reading	7	12	44	52	60	1
Action Research	37	31	36	33	22	17

Figure 4
Frequency of Activity Use

Activity	Never	Once in a While	Sometim es	Most of the time	Always	No response
Portfolio	27	23	46	36	36	7
Journal Writing	68	27	41	16	19	5
Professional Reading	10	23	41	44	53	5
Professional Development	4	14	55	44	54	5
Admin Dialogue re content and style	64	40	41	13	14	4
Admin Dialogue re ideas	47	48	33	20	23	5
Admin Dialogue re beliefs	51	41	36	23	20	5
Colleagues Dialogue re content and style	30	35	48	35	23	5
Colleagues Dialogue re ideas	15	27	46	48	36	4
Colleagues Dialogue re beliefs	11	26	52	42	41	4
Policy/political	54	40	46	17	10	9
Reflection on Practice	1	2	14	44	109	5