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Running Head: Efforts to Enhance Personal Growth

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### **Abstract**

As students with disabilities are placed in general education settings, regular education teachers increasingly are faced with more academically diverse groups of students. This development has altered the work environment of teachers. It has also had an impact on teachers' professional growth, since meeting the educational needs of all learners has become a larger and more pervasive challenge.

This study was undertaken to identify what kinds of professional growth experiences teachers value within the context of the challenge presented by academic diversity in their classrooms. The research was carried out with teachers participating in small Cooperative Study Groups discussing issues related to professional growth in teaching. Teacher responses were then analyzed to discern trends and patterns.

Teachers most often indicated they experience professional growth when they themselves face new challenges or have opportunities to learn. They also value opportunities to work with colleagues and with flexible and supportive administrators and support personnel. If teachers are to have more opportunities to work and learn with colleagues, it appears that they and administrators must actively work together to set aside time for professional learning and growth.

## **Efforts to Enhance Personal Growth When Teaching Academically Diverse Classes**

Increasingly, students with disabilities are being placed in general education settings for a major part of the school day (Lovitt, 1989), usually adding to the diversity that teachers encounter in public school settings. Such diversity, in turn, increases the demands on teachers to plan for individualized instruction, including making appropriate instructional accommodations to meet individual students' needs (Graden, Zins & Curtis, 1988). On the secondary level, the ability of teachers to meet these demands is diminished due to the way secondary schools are organized. For example secondary schools have been described as the most structurally rigid in our educational system with regard to planning, adapting, and individualizing instruction for students with disabilities (Brandt, 1989).

Further adding to the challenge of teaching at the secondary level, the amount of student contact time is significantly greater for secondary teachers than it is for elementary teachers. At the elementary level, the self-contained classroom is the dominant mode of instruction delivery in regular education. As a result, elementary teachers spend about five hours each day with the same group of 25 students; in comparison high school teachers see five groups of 25 or more different students for less than one hour per day. Furthermore, in the elementary school, the potential for flexibly adjusting instruction to meet individual needs, accommodate for absences, and provide additional assistance or adaptations is immeasurably greater than in the secondary school (Schumaker & Deshler, 1988).

The work environment presents many obstacles to growth for teachers. The present study was undertaken to develop an understanding of the relationship between teacher characteristics and work environments as they affect teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness with students from academically diverse classrooms.

In examining the research on teaching, planning and professional growth for teachers, the Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities (IRLD) staff selected a collaborative research-and-development process involving teachers, administrators, and researchers. This approach was chosen based on our belief that the knowledge teachers have about teaching and about ways in which their personal growth as teachers can be facilitated can provide critical insights into the research and development process. The approach is also consistent with the growing recognition by educational researchers and reformers that "improvements in educational quality require working through teachers rather than around them" (Porter & Brophy, 1988, p. 74). Finally, it is consistent with the spirit of educational reform recommendations of such national research and advocacy groups as the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the Coalition of Essential Schools, and

the Rand Center for the Study of the Teaching Profession. All these groups have asserted that teaching must not be regarded merely as an occupation but as a profession whose members have skills, knowledge and decision-making abilities needed to serve the educational needs of students ("Big Question," 1988; Hechinger, 1989; "Proposals," 1986).

To incorporate teacher knowledge and experience, we revised the traditional research and development process. We established a cooperative *relationship* between our research staff and participating teachers for the purpose of identifying problems that face teachers of academically diverse classes and conceptualizing studies on teaching that would result in immediately usable information and products related to instructional practice. This cooperative relationship was operationalized through the creation of small work groups, Cooperative Study Groups (CSGs), comprised of teachers and investigators representing the research project. These work groups served as the primary force in determining the research direction and carrying out various research activities. Teachers made a four-year commitment either to serve directly in the Cooperative Study Groups or to support the direction of the groups by carrying out CSG initiatives. In all instances, the primary purpose of the CSGs was to explore teachers' experiences with planning for and teaching in academically diverse secondary science and social studies classrooms. This report, which presents findings from the work of the Cooperative Study Groups, addresses the issue of key characteristics of an effort to enhance personal growth in teaching.

## **Method**

### **Initiating the Cooperative Study Group Process**

An invitation to apply for project participation was extended to all secondary social studies and science teachers in two school districts in eastern Kansas. We sought teachers who were interested in jointly conducting research related to meeting the challenge of planning and teaching in the face of academic diversity.

Each teacher's class schedule and class composition was requested to determine the extent of academic diversity in their classes and to screen for students participating in special education programs. Since our goal was to identify a pool of teachers with whom we could work for the duration of the project, we also identified those teachers who had previously worked with students with mild handicaps and who would likely continue to have these types of students in their classes. Nevertheless, it was impossible to ensure that these teachers would continue to have students with mild handicaps in their classes throughout this project.

Approximately 76 teachers expressed an interest in participating. This number was reduced to 51 as a result of phone calls to each applicant explaining the time commitments involved. Participating teachers were informed that they would become part of a research team that would meet and discuss problems and solutions related to teaching in diverse secondary classrooms. For the first and second meetings, teachers were organized into groups of four to eight members. These groupings, referred to as Cooperative Study Groups, served as the basis for identifying key characteristics of efforts that would enhance personal growth in teaching.

To facilitate the work of the Cooperative Study Groups, a set of questions was developed related to personal growth in teaching, given the demands posed by students in academically diverse classes. The questions and questioning process were first discussed with Dr. Christopher Clark of Michigan State University, who served as a project consultant on teacher research and growth. Procedures for conducting the CSGs were developed and delineated in writing. Additionally three project staff members were trained as moderators and six research assistants were trained as note takers and recorder assistants. Finally, the duties and responsibilities of note takers and recorder assistants were specified in writing.

### **Subjects**

Fifty-two teachers participated in the first CSG meetings. For 51 of the 52 teachers for whom demographic data was collected, 25 were men and 26 were women. With a mean age of 46 years (range=31-63 years), most were very experienced teachers, having taught for an average of 20 years (range=1-36 years;  $SD=8$  years); only six teachers had taught for less than 10 years. Eleven were middle-school science teachers, 18 high-school science teachers, eight were middle-school social studies teachers and 14 were high-school social studies teachers. Four of the teachers held part-time positions (i.e., they taught 1-3 classes per day), the remaining taught full-time.

The teachers were teaching an average of 4.66 classes per day, with a total average student enrollment of 107. They averaged about two class preparations per day (range=1-4) and had one class period for planning within the school day. Participants reported that an average of 5.7% of the students in their classes were students with learning disabilities and an additional 11% could be considered at-risk for failure in school.

**Personal growth study subjects.** To specifically address the issues surrounding personal growth, 42 of the 52 teachers described above participated in the second set of cooperative study groups. Based upon knowledge gained from previous CSGs that middle-school teachers felt uncomfortable when mixed with groups of high-school

teachers, seven study groups were formed in which an effort was made to group these teachers separately. Due to teachers' personal schedules, this proved feasible only for four groups: two high-school science groups ( $N_s=8$  and 8), one high-school social studies group ( $N=8$ ), and one group of six middle-school science teachers and one middle-school social studies teacher ( $N=7$ ). The remaining three groups included one with two high school and two middle school social studies teachers ( $N=4$ ), one with two middle-school social studies teachers and one high-school science teacher ( $N=3$ ), and one with two middle-school social studies teachers, one middle-school science teacher and one high-school science teacher ( $N=4$ ). Assignment to a group was based on geographic location and compatibility of after-school schedules.

Three additional teachers were unable to attend any of the scheduled CSGs. Staff members interviewed these teachers individually to discuss the questions related to personal growth in teaching. These interviews were audio taped and transcribed. These teachers' comments served as a basis for qualitative descriptions in the report; however, they were not included in any of the quantitative analyses.

### **Procedures and Measures**

Teachers were asked to meet as a group three times in the spring of 1990. The second set of meetings for seven groups was held in April and May. The teachers met for a two-hour period after school in one of the district administration offices or in a meeting room on the campus at the University of Kansas. No meeting was held in the teachers' schools. Teachers received ten dollars in appreciation of their participation in each of the meetings.

At each meeting, participants were asked questions related to personal growth in teaching, given the demands posed by students in academically diverse classes. Each group was to be asked the same set of four questions. Due to time constraints, however, not all groups discussed all four questions. The first and second questions were discussed by all seven groups. The third and fourth questions were discussed by six of the seven groups. Teachers were asked questions that required them to think about their personal growth in teaching, given the demands posed by students in academically diverse classes. An "academically diverse" class was defined as "a class comprised of students with widely varying achievement levels such as a class with students with learning disabilities, other low-achieving students, as well as average-achieving students." The third question, the one reported on here, was "What would be the key characteristics of an effort to enhance personal growth in teaching science or social studies to an academically diverse group of students?"

Each question was posed, one at a time, by a researcher who served as a moderator for the group. Also present were two research assistants; one took notes about teachers' responses, the other audio taped the session. The teachers discussed each question for 15-20 minutes. When additional responses were not forthcoming, the moderator summarized (orally and in list form on a large tablet) the major points expressed so far in the discussion. The moderator then asked the group members to check the accuracy of the summarized statements. The teachers also were asked whether they wished to add anything to the listed responses. Any new suggestions were added to the list.

Next, the teachers were asked to indicate to what degree they agreed with each item or to what degree it represented a barrier or problem for them. Two groups used a special form on which they wrote down the summarized statements and indicated their agreement with each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale (ranging from 1 - "I strongly agree" - to 7 - "I strongly disagree"). For each of the other five groups, the summary statements were recorded and presented to each group at their next meeting at which time the teachers indicated their agreement on the Likert-type scale for each item that had been generated in their groups. This process of finalizing the list and rating the responses was referred to as the "Member Check" phase of data collection.

Because six teachers attended a different group after the first meeting, they indicated their degree of agreement with summary statements generated in CSGs other than the one they had previously attended. Additionally, Member Checks from one group were inadvertently omitted from the categorization process and one teacher's Member Check ratings were not turned in.

### **Data Analysis**

The CSGs yielded several types of information: basic demographic data about the teachers and transcripts of all CSG meetings. Reliability checks were performed on the accuracy of these transcriptions and the data collected through the Member Check process were compiled and categorized.

The data were analyzed by two methods: transcript evaluation and quantitative compilation. For the transcript evaluation process, the audio tapes of the meeting and the notes taken by the research assistant and the moderator were used to create a transcript of the meeting. These transcripts were used to interpret the meaning of items generated through the Member Check process and to identify themes and trends in the data that were not apparent from the Member Check data. The transcripts were read and major impressions were summarized by two independent readers who had participated in the

Cooperative Study Group meetings. These impressions were synthesized, and a set of summary statements was generated.

After all groups had met, project staff developed categories for grouping (sorting) teacher responses. All responses in the Member Checks from the seven CSG meetings were placed on individual 3X5 cards and grouped by the question to which they related. Each group of cards was then sorted into categories. The wide range of responses made the categorization process difficult. The following four category headings were established: **(A) Professional Issues** -- opportunities for collegial interactions or professional development; **(B) System Administrative Issues** -- matters related to organizational or structural patterns in schools, and **(C) Instructional Issues** -- factors directly related to providing instruction that engages all learners, maintains their engagement, and results in success in the learning process.

A project staff member and a research assistant devised subcategories within each category as appropriate for each question. Another research assistant then sorted the cards into the categories and noted any difficulties matching individual responses or categories. Some categories were revised in response to this feedback and some responses were accepted as being related to more than one category: 46.8% of all responses for this question were sorted into two categories. Using a final set of categories and subcategories, interrater reliabilities of 76.6% and 85.1% were achieved. These reliabilities were achieved by having two research assistants not involved in developing the final categorization sort responses independently into the developed categories.

Since the teachers had indicated on the Member Check forms their level of personal agreement with each item generated in their group in response to each question, it was possible to determine the relative agreement between the group-generated Member Check items and an individual teacher's viewpoint. Since Member Check items were not consistent across groups, an attempt was made to determine within-group agreement, or the homogeneity of attitudes toward stated Member Check items within each group. A homogeneity index was calculated for each respondent under each question by taking the standard deviation of his or her responses to the Member Check items under each question and then calculating its reciprocal (or dividing one by the standard deviation value). To determine the degree to which individuals in each of the groups were in consensus on each question, the standard deviation of the homogeneity indexes for each respondent was calculated. This calculation was carried out for each of the four questions.

The Member Check ratings also allowed us to calculate teacher agreement with the pooled items in each subcategory. In order to analyze this level of agreement, teachers' numerical ratings for items assigned to a specific subcategory were totaled and divided by

the number of teachers who had ranked those items in that subcategory. Items, or responses, with an average rating close to "1" showed that most of the teachers agreed with it (i.e., it held personal meaning for them) whereas responses having an average rating closer to "7" showed that most of the teachers did not agree with it (i.e., it did not hold personal meaning for them.)

## Results

When teachers in the study groups were asked, "What are the key characteristics of an effort that would effectively enhance your personal growth in teaching?" they most often identified new challenges and opportunities to learn. A second important response was flexible and supportive school districts, administrators, and personnel systems. Table 1 summarizes the Member Check information for this question.

**(A) Professional Issues.** In thinking about ways to enhance personal growth as a teacher, participants identified a number of professional development activities, ranging from facing new challenges as individual teachers to having more opportunities to interact and share professional concerns with colleagues. The largest single subcategory of responses under "Professional Issues", generating 13 responses across four groups, was new challenges and opportunities to learn. This was also the largest single subcategory among all subcategories of responses to this question. Related to wanting new challenges was the second largest group of responses in this category, teacher personal growth and professional development. This included items such as having opportunities to learn from and meet with peers at conventions or at times other than inservice sessions. This subcategory included seven responses across five groups. A similar number of items were mentioned about collegial/collaborative involvement. These seven items were generated in three groups. They obtained the highest Member Check mean agreement rating of all responses to this question, indicating that most teachers in these three groups agreed and felt strongly about the importance of collegial interaction in any effort to enhance personal growth in teaching. Indeed, in one group of social studies teachers, a Member Check item identifying the opportunity to share and learn from others received an agreement rating of "1" by all seven participants, indicating that they all felt that the statement was "very true" for them. Receiving recognition for a job well done was mentioned twice in two groups.

**(B) System/Administrative Issues.** The subcategory with the second largest number of responses among all responses to this question, and also with the largest number of responses within this category, was the importance of flexible and supportive school, administrative, and personnel systems. This subcategory included nine items mentioned in four groups and had a high mean Member Check agreement rating of 1.87, indicating that the

Table 1

CSG Member Check Results for Question 3: Key Characteristics of an Effort to Enhance Personal Growth in Teaching Academically Diverse Classes

Response Categories/Subcategories	No. of Items	No. of Groups (N= 6)	Mean Agreement Rating*
<b>Professional Issues</b>			
Teacher Personal Growth and Professional Development of Teacher	7	5	2.09
New Challenges, Opportunities for Teacher to Learn	13	4	1.99
Teacher Recognition	2	2	2.23
Teacher Collegial/Collaborative Involvement	7	3	1.58
<b>System/Administrative Issues</b>			
Additional Instructional Resources/ Opportunities/Equipment	5	2	2.35
Alter Class Configuration/ Reduced Class Load/ More Planning	3	2	2.25
Availability of Classrooms/Pleasant Meeting Places, etc.	2	2	1.86
Flexible and Supportive School/ Administration/Personnel System	9	4	1.87
Inservice	2	1	2.36
Time Factors/Constraints/Problems	4	2	2.04
<b>Instructional Issues</b>			
Alternate Methods of Meeting Students Needs	4	3	2.65
Opportunities to Try New Approaches	4	2	2.00
Contact with Outside Experts	3	2	2.10
Time for and Opportunity to Work with Individual Students	4	2	2.39

\*7 = Low Agreement; 1 = High Agreement.

item was meaningful or very meaningful for most teachers discussing the item. One group of high-school science teachers spent most of the discussion time on this question articulating their desire for more contact and better rapport with administrators. Other subcategories of responses included (a) additional resources (five items across two groups), (b) more time to work with students and other teachers (four items across two groups), (c) fewer, shorter, or smaller classes, (d) pleasant meeting places for teachers and (e) better inservice opportunities. While the quality of inservice opportunities appears in the

Member Check data only twice, it should be noted that a group of high school social studies teachers talked at length about their dissatisfaction with inservice opportunities in their district.

**(C) Instructional Issues.** Within this category, teachers identified methods or activities related to instruction that they would like to undertake or had already undertaken as a means of enhancing their personal growth as teachers. In three groups teachers responded that they wanted to learn more about and have opportunities to try alternate methods of meeting student needs. Four items in two groups indicated that teachers want to try new approaches with students and four items in two groups related to having time and opportunities to work more with individual students. More contact with outside experts in content and instructional methods was also seen as a way to enhance personal growth.

**Within-group agreement results.** Based on the indexes of homogeneity of attitudes toward listed Member Check items in each group, the groups can be divided into three categories: most consistent, moderately consistent and nonconsistent. Table 2 lists the within-group agreement results for the five groups discussing this question. Values are to be interpreted in the same manner as standard deviations, that is low values indicate less variation and more agreement whereas high values indicate more variation and less agreement.

Table 2

Standard Deviations for Homogeneity Indexes for Cooperative Study Group Question #2.3

Group	Question 3
Group 1	.51
Group 2	.42
Group 3	.75
Group 4	.75
Group 5	*
Group 6	.73
Group 7	* *

\* Question not discussed

\*\* Member Checks not tabulated

Inspection of the statistics indicates that there were no groups with more than moderate consensus, that is, instances where the variability observed in members' indexes was low. Groups #1 and 2 had moderate consensus and groups #3, 4 and 6 were nonconsistent with the least degree of consensus.

### Discussion

In his study *A Place Called School* Goodlad(1984) noted that teachers encounter in schools "many realities not conducive to professional growth" (pp. 194-195). These realities include long hours of teaching large numbers of students, with all the physical and emotional demands such teaching involves. Similarly, Johnson (1990) pointed out that schools "are in the business of promoting students' learning and growth" but "ironically ... not in the business of promoting teachers' learning and growth. For teachers, learning and growth are personal rather than institutional responsibilities, occurring largely at the margins of their work" (p. 249).

Acknowledging the reality of limited opportunities for personal growth, the teachers in our study groups indicated that while they envision a range of personal, collegial, and institutional efforts that would enhance their personal growth as teachers, in most cases they do not now have the time or opportunities to engage in such efforts. Further, if teachers manage to arrange some professional development activity, they often do so on their own initiative - not within any framework provided by their district or school. One middle-school teacher who wanted to observe how other teachers on his team taught said "I took time to visit the classrooms of teachers on my team. It was a pleasure. It was nonthreatening and you see kids in a different light." He noted, and other teachers in his group agreed, "It [observation] should be built into the program." These teachers are not the first to express a desire to observe other teachers teaching: three-quarters of the teachers at all levels surveyed in Goodlad's study (1984) said they would like to observe other teachers at work. A majority of them indicated that they had never observed instruction in other classrooms.

Most public schools attempt to address the professional development of their teaching staffs through inservice days or workshops. However, some teachers in our groups viewed inservice opportunities as not addressing their interests or concerns. They complained that inservice workshops rarely related to anything directly usable in their classrooms. For example, one teacher stated that "inservice is a total loss for me." Another teacher wished that inservices had "flexibility, something workable so I think I'm glad I'm there instead of thinking I should be somewhere else." Yet another teacher said, "If we were left to our own devices to pursue things we know would benefit our individual teaching, our love of the

course, that would all be reflected in our instructional effectiveness. But that won't happen. We have to attend indoctrination sessions. The benefit will be marginal."

This discontent with inservice opportunities is not unique. Numerous studies have shown that inservices are often planned without adequate consideration of teachers' needs or the ways in which they will be motivated to become engaged in such a learning process. For example, teachers in one study described inservice opportunities as "generally ... superficial and irrelevant" (Johnson, 1990). Other studies have argued that traditional staff development activities often do not meet the individual needs of teachers or take into account their individual styles or visions for classroom life (Strong, Silver, Hanson, Marzano, Wolfe, Dewing, & Brock, 1990; Swan, Carnes & Gilman, 1988). McLaughlin & Marsh, (1978) noted further that the professional development needs of experienced teachers differ from those of new teachers, hence when all teachers are required to participate in the same staff development activities, problems arise.

Studies have shown that the characteristics of successful staff development activities include, most importantly, choice and collaborative planning (McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978; Showers, 1990). That is, teachers need to feel some ownership in the process for it to be meaningful to them. When there is no ownership - when teachers are directed from above to participate in inservices they have no role in planning or developing - they are unlikely to incorporate the learning into their teaching practices (McLaughlin and Marsh, 1978). Rather, as one of the teachers in our groups complained, they are apt to "resent" that their time and attention are being taken up with matters they view as unrelated to their more pressing instructional concerns.

In addition to incorporating teacher collaboration and commitment, successful staff development must be relevant and usable and it must include follow-up and feedback (Maeroff, 1988; McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978; Showers, 1990; Swan et al., 1988). One teacher in our groups described this process: "I'd like to see it spread out. You introduce an idea, try it out, [then] come back and talk about it." Another teacher joined in, noting that "You're enthused, but then it goes downhill, because there's no support system."

Other professional development activities that are not currently "built into the system," but which the teachers in our study groups would like to have available, included opportunities to (a) share with and learn from colleagues, (b) learn new things about their content area or about how to reach their students more effectively, and (c) develop more productive relationships with administrators.

**Share and learn from colleagues.** While many teachers are not satisfied with inservices as a means of promoting or enhancing their personal growth as teachers, they nonetheless are, as Maeroff (1988) noted, "hungry for stimulating educational

experiences" (p. 41). And they are hungry, as one teacher said, for more opportunities "to share and learn" from their colleagues. Another teacher commented that teaching would be more rewarding for her if there were "more time for working together. In order to fulfill my other responsibilities I can't talk with others. It's a lonely job."

The isolation described by these teachers also has been described by others. Boyer (1983), for example, suggested that the one condition that separates teaching from most other professions is that "teachers spend little time in the company of other adults" (p. 158). Similarly, Goodlad (1984) noted that lunchtime at schools "falls short of providing for teachers the opportunities to establish personal relationships with each other" as professionals and workers in most other fields may do on their lunch hours (p. 170).

Building more opportunities for collegial interaction into school routines could have benefits beyond improving the quality of teachers' professional lives. Showers (1990) demonstrated that teachers organized into collegial study groups were not only successful in developing curricular materials and lesson plans, but the level of implementation of shared learning was high for more than half the participants. This program incorporated the elements of choice, collaboration, and ownership described as characteristic of successful staff development programs.

**Enhance knowledge in content area and in instructional skills.** Teachers felt their personal growth would be enhanced by improved opportunities to work with individual students and by knowledge of better ways to reach students. One teacher described his frustration: "There's a whole new group of kids out there today to deal with. These kids do not grow up with the same attitudes toward education that we all did. The kids are not responding to me. I need to know new ways to reach these kids." Another teacher commented that he was seeing "more unmotivated kids than I used to." These teachers seem to be expressing the *uncertainty* that Lortie (1975) described as a feeling characteristic of teaching: "teachers are not sure they can make all their students learn" (p. 132). This uncertainty is also echoed in the Carnegie report *The Condition of Teaching* (1990), where 39% of teachers surveyed agreed with a statement that "public schools cannot really expect to graduate more than about 75% of all students" (p. 29). In a similar report in 1987, only 21% of the teachers surveyed agreed with that statement.

The uncertainty described by Lortie may be exacerbated for teachers in our study groups by the increasing number of unmotivated students they are encountering in their classrooms. However, Lortie argued that the uncertainty experienced by teachers is related to an "unusual quality" of the occupation of teaching itself: "once tenured, a person can work for years without public recognition for his mastery of core tasks" (p. 161). According to

Lortie, the absence of any kind of formal recognition of or promotions conferring status on teachers means that teachers receive no reassurances. Further, "Deference can reassure people of their worth and competence; moving through a series of statuses therefore provides a gradient of increasing psychological support. Repeated indications of others' respect can quell self-doubt. Deference, in short, can help people who work with uncertainty and ambiguity" (Lortie, 1975, p. 161). Some teachers in our study groups substantiated this claim when they identified teacher recognition as something that would enhance their personal growth.

Within the context of factors that would improve instruction and enhance the personal growth of teachers, participants in our study groups identified having smaller and fewer classes to teach. This is consistent with a finding of the Carnegie report, *The Condition of Teaching* (1990), that among several changes that might make teaching a "more attractive profession," more than half of all teachers surveyed ranked as the first or second most important change that could be made "smaller classes and fewer students to teach" (p. 284). In addition, Johnson (1990) found that teachers were "decidedly more optimistic that they could reach and teach each of their students in smaller classes" (p. 114). Goodlad (1984) and Boyer (1983) also supported the idea that teachers should not be asked to teach so many classes. Specifically, Goodlad suggested that "It may be that an effective school day requires a shortened, more intensive experience with academics" of three or at most four hours (pp. 194-195). Likewise, Boyer recommended that teachers have no more than four formal class meetings a day, leaving two hours daily for small seminars and helping students with independent projects.

**Develop more productive relationships with administrators.** Teachers in our study groups believed that more support and recognition from administrators would enhance their personal growth. Support in this case ranged from the need for more resources and equipment, expressed principally by science teachers, to more frequent and more positive communication between teachers and administrators specifically about instructional issues. In addition, teachers would like to receive more recognition from administrators: "They need to walk in our shoes a bit" noted one teacher, while another said "If someone would just appreciate what we're doing."

In many schools the original concept of the principal as a *principal teacher* appears to be breaking down (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Tyack and Hansot described the adversarial relationship that grew up between teachers and administrators in the 1960s; teachers were demanding better salary and community groups were demanding equality of treatment leading to a "fragmentation ... [in] governance and program in public schooling" (pp. 258-259). This fragmentation has led many administrators to become more like bureaucratic

managers than instructional leaders. Many teachers in this and other studies appear to view administrators more as bureaucrats than as principal teachers and effective leaders. For example, teachers interviewed by Johnson (1990) "roundly criticized" the formal supervision and evaluation practices of their principals and emphasized that these practices "virtually never" provided an opportunity for learning (p. 266). Further, they noted that their administrator's evaluations of their teaching had "virtually no effect on their classroom practices" (p. 249).

That some administrators are not instructional leaders became clear as teachers in our study groups expressed a desire to have administrators visit in their classrooms more often: "I would like to see one of them walk through my classroom every day, or every week." Another teacher added: "And be able to discuss ... your subject." A teacher in another group asserted that administrators do not want to know more about what is going on in classrooms because "No news is good news; it is conservative. This is how centralized planning systems work."

Chapman and Lowther (1982) verified the important role of administrators in teachers' professional lives. Thus, they found that "the recognition actually received from administrators and supervisors had a strong positive relationship to career satisfaction" (p. 246). Similarly, to the extent that principals are leaders and have an impact on the goals and the sense of purpose in the schools, they also have an impact on teachers' job satisfaction since, as Goodlad (1984) noted, there is a relationship between teacher satisfaction and strong leadership by the principal. Further, McLaughlin and Marsh (1978) found that professional learning is strongly influenced by organizational aspects of schools, specifically by the leadership within the school.

While it may not be realistic to anticipate that, among administrators, principals in particular will be able to divest themselves of the complex responsibilities of school governance in modern school systems, they would do well to heed teachers' complaints and focus more of their attention on recognizing teachers' instructional competencies and contributions and supporting teachers in their efforts to address instructional problems.

### **Conclusion**

It appears that administrators play a crucial role in creating the circumstances within which teachers envision they could enhance their personal growth in teaching. For example, administrative cooperation and support would be instrumental in arranging time for collegial interaction. Such cooperation is also necessary in order to establish collegial activities like peer observations, as well as to improve the quality of inservice activities. To the extent that teachers want greater administrative assistance in improving their

instructional skills, administrators must play an important role. And administrators are obviously central in any response to teachers' desires for more recognition and reassurance.

Johnson (1990), however, asserted that "teachers themselves bear some responsibility for their schools' failure to address their learning needs" (p. 251). She pointed out that teachers rarely express "a sense of entitlement" (p. 251) to such learning nor do they assert that they should have a role in designing inservice activities . She further noted that often "strong norms of equity" (p. 251) among teachers discourage them from stepping forward to offer their expertise to other teachers. Finally, Johnson argued that "teachers themselves must ultimately take responsibility for collaboration" and overcome the "strong norms of autonomy and privacy" that characterize the profession (pp. 178-179). While believing that the initiative belongs to teachers, she acknowledged that "the responsibility for creating more collegial schools cannot be theirs alone" (p. 179).

Clearly if teachers' personal growth in teaching is to occur beyond what Johnson described as the "margins of their work" (p. 249) it must be undertaken cooperatively with administrators and school systems. In the process it may be necessary, as Johnson argued, for teachers to recognize and acknowledge that some of their autonomy may be sacrificed and that they, as professionals, must play an activist role in creating more institutional opportunities for their own learning and growth.

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