Teacher satisfaction with professional development in rural elementary schools in New York State

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Professional development in education is designed to promote good, sound practice, and to comply with mandates designed to insure that professional development is accomplished. Effectiveness of such efforts lies in teachers' implementation, both immediately and sustained, which relies on teachers' acceptance of each initiative.

This project sought to answer the research questions "How Satisfied are teachers when participating in professional development events?", "What are the predictors of teacher satisfaction?", and "Does satisfaction lead to implementation?"

Through interviews with elementary teachers and administrators in four rural elementary schools in New York State, the project identified features of professional development events that satisfied or dissatisfied teachers participating in professional development events. The satisfying features were called "Teacher Satisfiers." The project identified which events resulted in implementation. Implementation was defined as change in a teacher's classroom practice or cognition.

Results revealed that four features were present in all of the professional development events that resulted in implementation. These features were: Quality of the presentation; Relevance to teachers' work; Hands-on, practical materials and practices; and On-going involvement of the school community. The study also revealed that teachers and administrators in these four districts identified the same four features present in all events that resulted in implementation.