ABSTRACT

TONEY, STEPHANIE HORNER. Educational Philosophy Interactions in a Middle School Interdisciplinary Team: A Case Study. (Under the direction of Dr. Candy Beal.)

The purpose of this case study was to examine the interactions of middle school teachers each of whom had a unique and personal educational philosophy. The formation and development of the personal educational philosophy and the interactions within the middle school team brought on by the personal educational philosophy of each teacher were also examined. The educational philosophy of the individual participants was identified using Zinn’s Philosophy of Education Inventory. The sample selection for the case study included one team of three middle school teachers during the 2010-2011 academic year with a range of teaching experience from three years to ten years in the classroom and represented the core disciplines of humanities (combined language arts and social studies), science, and mathematics teaching. The teachers were employed at a suburban middle school with an enrollment of approximately 750 students. A triangulation of teacher interviews, classroom and team meeting observations, inventories, surveys, and documents helped to provide accuracy and validity.

Participants were interviewed on the topics of personal educational philosophy, their understandings of middle school philosophy as defined by the Association of Middle Level Education (AMLE), and their understandings of generational characteristics of themselves and their colleagues. The data were analyzed using N-Vivo 9 for common themes. The analysis of the individual teachers’ manifestations of the personal educational philosophies during interactions within the middle school team was further broken down to examine 1) the personal educational philosophy development and manifestations within the classroom and within the team, 2) relationships within the team and within the academic departments of the
school, 3) the understanding of the AMLE middle school philosophy tenets and its relevance to the teacher and his or her educational philosophy, 4) the interaction of personal educational philosophy on the selection and delivery of curriculum-based assignments, and 5) the interaction of personal educational philosophy in the preference of teaching team members.

Findings of the study concluded that: 1) Educational philosophy is a determining factor for how teachers on a middle school teaching team interact within the team setting; 2) understanding the tenets of the broad educational philosophies allows team teachers to be more tolerant of differences between teachers and to provide a more harmonious work setting; 3) placement of teachers on a team who have complementary philosophies enables more positive interactions among the team members than if team members had competing philosophies; 4) knowledge of generational characteristics and grounding in middle school philosophy are factors in the establishment of educational philosophies.
Educational Philosophy Interactions in a Middle School Interdisciplinary Team: A Case Study

by
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DEDICATION

No work this extensive is undertaken alone. I am the grateful recipient of much help along the way from family and mentors. It is to these people that my work here is dedicated.

To my mother, Dr. Sally M. Horner, who raised me to understand that all doors were open to me through education and that education is the most rewarding work of all. To my husband, Glen, who has worked tirelessly my entire adult life to make my dreams come to fruition. To my children who have supported me in all of my endeavors and are a constant joy in my life.

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And, finally, to my great-aunt, Lina Melvin, who taught seventh grade for 53 years. No one could have been a better role model.
BIOGRAPHY

Stephanie McKay Horner Toney was born on April 29, 1955, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. She married Glen Toney in 1974 and they have two sons, Stephen and Carey. She received her B.A. from Meredith College in Biology (1978), an M.B.A. from Meredith College (1987), an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from Coastal Carolina University (2001). At North Carolina State University, she completed the requirements for the Ph.D. degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in Middle School Education.

Toney worked in the scientific field at the Environmental Protection Agency, Northrop Services, and Duke University before beginning her career in education. She has spent more than twenty years in the classrooms of middle schools teaching science to early adolescents. She holds National Board Certification in the area of Early Adolescent Science. Toney was selected for the Albert Einstein Distinguished Educators Fellowship in 2001. This national fellowship places educators in the offices of public policy makers and allows fellows to provide practical insight in the establishment and operation of educational programs. Toney spent her fellowship year in the offices of Representative Ruben Hinojosa and views this year as a life-changing event.

Toney has served as an instructor at Coastal Carolina University and North Carolina State University for both online and face-to-face undergraduate courses for pre-service teachers. She has several publications from her time in the scientific community as well as in the education field. She regularly presents at both national and state level conferences.
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CHAPTER ONE

Statement of the Problem

Introduction

Youth awakes to a new world and understands neither it nor himself. The whole future of life depends on how the new powers now given suddenly and in profusion are husbanded and directed. Character and personality are taking form, but everything is plastic. Self-feeling and ambition are increased, and every trait and faculty is liable to exaggeration and excess. It is a marvelous new birth, and those who believe that nothing is so worthy of love, reverence, and service as the body and soul of youth and who hold that the best test of every human institution is how much it contributes to bring youth to the ever fullest possible development, may well review themselves and the civilization in which we live to see how far it satisfies this supreme test. (Hall, 1904, p. xv)

For more than a century, the plight of youth has been an ongoing concern for those in the educational community who seek to contribute to the fullest possible development of these youngsters. Changing times have demanded new approaches as teachers seek to review, revise, and rededicate themselves to teaching today’s adolescents. Remaining current means the ongoing re-examination of one’s own beliefs. Do the tenets we hold remain solid and timely?

An educational philosophy defines for an individual who we will teach, what we will teach and why we will teach (Gutek, 2004). Educational philosophies create a foundation for
the belief system of a teacher (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). The belief system, in turn, forms a foundation for the teaching and learning approaches that a teacher employs within the classroom and within the middle school team environment (Arnold & Stevenson, 1998; National Middle School Association, 2010b). The philosophical interactions that a teacher has with teammates directly influence practices and methodology utilized within his or her classroom (Arnold, 2004; Erb & Doda, 1989). In the middle school environment, the practices and methodologies of teachers within a team may be enhanced or stifled depending on the interactions with other team members. Those interactions are a direct result of the educational philosophy of each individual team member.

Middle school teachers are unique in the field of education. These teachers have dedicated themselves to the youth to whom Hall in the 1904 quote refers. Middle school educators have chosen a field that is responsible for teaching and guiding unique individuals, not children, not adults, but those in the middle, early adolescents in need of guidance and advocacy as they seek to educate themselves to become citizens of our world.

To respond to the needs of the developing adolescent, middle school teachers are required, through the very structure of their educational setting, to collaborate on a daily basis with their colleagues. They do this to a far greater degree than any other level of educators. Elementary grades teachers are self-contained within their own classrooms. They teach all of the subject areas themselves, or pair with a friend and switch children for one subject, usually mathematics, to facilitate grouping of ability levels. High schools are departmentalized in their structure, so it is a rare occasion to see cross-departmental
collaboration. (The one notable exception at the high school level is the use of Paideia seminars that combine literature and history instruction.) For the most part, the level of collaboration at the middle grades level stands unique in the K-12 environment.

Teachers in the middle grades are formed into teaching teams based upon their licensure areas and are expected to begin collaboration immediately. In the formation of the middle school team a major factor to the success of that team, the team members’ educational philosophies, is often overlooked or under-utilized. Middle school principals and teachers would attest that the educational philosophy of individual teachers is rarely considered in the decisions leading to the formation of a teaching team. It is acknowledged that a teacher’s personal educational philosophy will influence curriculum delivery choices, the personal grading practices, and the manner in which district and local policies are interpreted. However, in most instances, team formation is not based on educational philosophy matching (P. Hamler, personal communication, January 2010; L. Johnson, personal communication, October 2005; F. Lowman, personal communication, May 2006).

Middle school education itself has a defined philosophy. The National Middle School Association constructed the philosophy, and has refined it repeatedly since 1982, in the position papers that bear the name, This We Believe (National Middle School Association, 1982, 1992, 1995, 2003, 2010a). Because not all teachers are trained and licensed for middle grades teaching, some middle school teachers may not be aware of the six foundational characteristics and six major program components that define the philosophy of middle school. Most middle school teachers are, however, familiar with the philosophical
components of an adult advocate/advisor for each student, a flexible structure for academic instruction, a focus on a curriculum that is integrated and exploratory in nature, and the practice of hiring educators that are dedicated to the unique characteristics of early adolescents (National Middle School Association, 2001). To be effective teachers of early adolescents, middle school teachers should have an understanding of these philosophical components, and each of the components should be incorporated into their personal philosophies. Middle school philosophy is based on the understanding of the development of the adolescent and the unique characteristics that are manifested in each student’s academic, social, and emotional needs (Alexander, et. al., 1969).

For students, their family life, kin, network of friends, organizations to which they feel a sense of belonging, and community-based health, recreation, housing, and other services impact their ability to develop and learn just as much, if not more so, as what they learn in the classroom. (Comer, 2004, p. 285)

Bronfenbrenner (1986) found that for adolescents, the effects of both family and school were greater than the effects of either socioeconomic status or race. Bronfenbrenner described four concentric circles of influence that affect an individual. At the innermost circle, we see the influence and impact of the family, the classroom, the peers, and the religious community of the child. The second circle is created by the direct interactions of the child with the family and classroom. As time progresses and the person moves into adolescence expanding his or her interactions with the community, the influence of the third circle is seen in interactions with multiple teachers and faculty of the school and a greater number of peers within the
school. The third circle includes interactions with doctors and dentists through health agencies as the individual becomes aware of the workings of the body and also a larger community view that comes from the influence of mass media in the form of television, films, and the Internet. The outermost circle is the broadest level of influence for the individual and includes society as a whole, the culture, and nationality of the individual, as well as the economic and political climate that surrounds the person.

Garbarino, building on Bronfenbrenner’s work, discussed the reliance of youth on the adults within their social map to provide a stabilizing influence. Garbarino defined social maps as “a product of past experience and the cause of future experience” (Garbarino & Bedard, 2001, p. 39). Social maps are a mental chart for the child fashioned by individuals who have created the support structure for the child’s life. Social maps begin at the earliest stages with parents and teachers. The social map “continues to develop in ways that reflect the child’s experience and [his] emerging capabilities” (Garbarino & Bedard, 2001, p. 39). The social map is created through interactions, both positive and negative, with these adult supporters and forms a basis for the future actions of adolescents. For early adolescents, the adults most often included in their social maps are parents and teachers (Garbarino, et. al., 1978). The adolescent who has found positive support from parents and teachers is more likely to be confident and secure within himself. The adolescent who has found negative experiences surrounding his interactions with these supporting adults is likely to feel insignificant and surrounded by hostile situations (Garbarino & Bedard, 2001, p. 40).

An individual philosophy of education represents a teacher’s values and beliefs that
affect teaching (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). To ignore, or be unaware of the existence of
teachers’ philosophies when forming a middle school team may lead to interactions fraught
with frustration and conflict rather than team-wide cooperation and accord. Zinn (1999), in
her inventory of educational philosophies, presents the role of the teacher as being on a
continuum from “Teacher as Expert” to “Teacher as Facilitator.” This continuum spans the
domains of instructional planning, student learning, assessment, and educational purpose.
Teachers who understand the tenets and constraints of another person’s philosophy, or who
share the same educational philosophy as a teammate are more likely to have a harmonious
working relationship with that individual.

Although principals may attempt to take into consideration the educational
philosophies of the teachers when they are hired or when they are placed onto teaching
teams, teachers and principals will attest to the reality that hiring and team formation
decisions are often dictated by who is available and what licensure and certifications that
person holds (P. Hamler, personal communication, January 2010; L. Johnson, personal
communication, October 2005; F. Lowman, personal communication, May 2006). When
principals’ choices result in successful teams, they may have a tendency to attribute it to
good students or excellent leadership. When faced with a dysfunctional team, principals
usually disband the grouping to try to find a “better fit” for the teachers and to spread out the
strong teachers (L. Johnson, personal communication, October 2005; F. Lowman, personal
communication, October 2007). It is possible that in both of these situations the team
interaction is the manifestation of educational philosophies in harmony or in conflict.
Generational Attitudes and Educational Philosophies

As principals create teams, another factor they consider is the ages of the individuals making up the team. Lovely and Buffum (2007) define four generations and the key experiences, viewpoints both moral and political, as well as the work ethics that define these cohorts of teachers who are currently teaching within the educational workforce. The generations within the education environment cover approximately eighty years and include teachers entering the profession as well as those individuals leaving the system through retirement. Each cohort spans about twenty years and is made up of people who have shared broad cultural experiences. The generational cohorts are defined and identified by the “race, gender, socioeconomic status, moral or religious views, music, politics, heroes, headlines, scandals, and world events” that they have in common simply by living within a defined range of time (Lovely & Buffum, 2007, p. 4). These four generational viewpoints are instrumental in determining and refining individual educational philosophies. Generational interactions among team members, as well as among administrators, parents, and students, must be examined as a manifestation of educational philosophies.

Veterans.

Veterans, who make up the oldest generation of educators, “are focused on building a legacy” within society and within the educational system. Their legacy is built on respect, hard work, and adherence to the rules (Lovely & Buffum, 2007, p. 9). The Veterans, born after World War I and through the end of World War II are declining in numbers within the education field but because of their seniority may hold some of the most influential positions
within educational administration. As educational leaders, they will be responsible for the development and creation of much educational policy.

*Baby Boomers.*

Baby Boomers, born at the end of World War II through the early years of the space race in the early 1960’s encompass the largest number of individuals in district administration and educational policy making. As a group, this cohort is “better educated and more confident” of their own abilities and more “me-centered” than the previous generation. Baby Boomers believe that education will provide the best path to fulfilling careers. They see that their task is to prepare students to be “inner-driven idealists” (Lovely & Buffum, 2007, p. 18).

*Generation X.*

Generation X has a completely different outlook regarding the purpose and need for education. Gen X’ers, 1960-1980, were born as family dynamics were changing. A greater number of women were entering the workforce, while technologies such as microwave ovens, cable television, and video games were emerging to change lives at home. “Sometimes thought of as detached, morose, and unmotivated, Generation X has had a tough go of things” (Lovely & Buffum, 2007, p. 5). Gen X’ers have had to survive on their own. They see college as the only hope for a career to achieve and support the life style demonstrated on television. At the same time, they have found that costs to fund their dream have skyrocketed. This cohort makes up the mid-range group of teachers and administrators in education. Retirement is still in the distance and there is a younger group fast on their
heels, ready with their own ideas of how things should be done. Gen X is also is made up of parents with expectations of their own for their children’s education. These parents bring their own ideas and personal educational philosophies to the table to interact with teachers and administrators, either in harmony or in conflict.

*Millennials.*

The last group, the Millennials, born after 1980, has entered an educational environment found to be wanting. Condemned as mediocre, at best, by the Commission on Excellence in Education, “*A Nation at Risk* set in motion a defining moment for educators” (Lovely & Buffum, 2007, p. 15). It was no longer sufficient to simply graduate; individuals must be educated for the best colleges and the top positions in a global society. This cohort has seen an explosion of technology that has changed every facet of life. Global, immediate, around the clock news has changed the expectations for current events and global cultural understanding for our students. No longer is a computer something that is used in the workplace. Computers are our personal telephones, our method for listening to music, playing games, or watching movies. Students are expected to be facile at utilizing all facets of the technology and at quickly seeing uses for new technology in their own lives.

These four generations seek to work together in the educational workplace. As they move into retirement, the Veterans prepare to pass on the legacy that they have built. From district level positions, the Boomers continue to influence curriculum and policy decisions and remain steadfastly idealistic about the worth of education and the need for students to achieve to their potential. Gen X’ers are coming into their own as they move into
administrative and policy-making roles and are faced with providing educational excellence in a challenging economic climate. The Millennials will change their approach to education as rapidly as the technology. Change is an integral part of their lives. Now four generations must guide and teach the fifth generation, the Net generation, to be prepared for leadership in the 21st century. The Net generation is techno-savvy, creative, and collaborative problem solvers. The many needs of Netters will force teachers and parents to reconfigure their own educational philosophies. The immediacy of society today demands flexibility from everyone, teachers, parents, and students alike.

*How One Builds an Educational Philosophy*

Teachers interact with a large number of individuals throughout their own education as well as in the preparation for their teaching career. Parents and family members, teachers from elementary, middle, and secondary schooling, college professors, cooperating teachers from student teaching experiences, peers within the student teaching cohort, students he or she will teach, colleagues, administrators, parents of students, and professional development experts, all influence the development and refinement of a teacher’s educational philosophy (Boschee, Prescott & Hein, 1978).

Some schools of thought hold that a philosophy of education can be taught through pedagogical coursework (Petress, 2003). It is quite common for introductory education courses to require as an initial assignment that pre-service teachers prepare a personal philosophy of education (personal communication, G. Hunt, March 2010). These first attempts at a personal philosophy are almost surely based on the pre-service teacher’s own
experiences as a student in the classroom observing his or her own teachers (Peters, 2009). As Tennyson observes, “We are a part of all that we have met” (1883). Engel (2009) describes as an ideal situation, novice teachers hired in large groups at a single school. As a cohort, these beginning teachers would form their own community of educational professionals. In this situation, these teachers have “shared experiences” to discuss that may assist them not only in handling routine paperwork, discipline, and curriculum delivery, but also in furthering the development of their personal educational philosophy as they consider together the why’s of what they are doing. In some instances, the establishment of this cohort may provide a bedrock for the building of a philosophy where one did not exist before. Whether beginning teachers are hired in large groups or individually, at some point one’s personal philosophy of education will determine how she or he interacts with fellow faculty members.

The establishment of Professional Learning Communities – PLCs (DuFour & Eaker, 1998) as a regularly scheduled professional interaction within a school, a team, or a department has become commonplace in education. The PLC has the potential to shape and refine an individual’s personal educational philosophy through sessions, which engage teachers in the discussions of teaching, and learning approaches, grading practices, assessments, and student growth. It is reasonable to assume that a PLC may lead to a better understanding of colleagues’ different philosophical styles. Participation and engagement in PLCs as they relate to development of an educational philosophy must be considered as we look at the interactions between colleagues in a middle grade team.
Teacher education researchers have debated about the “correct” educational philosophy since 1890 (Null, 2007). It is logical that individuals who view education from different philosophies will have various understandings of what should be taught in a school curriculum (Hirst, 1963). In addition, how it is taught, assessed, and experienced by both teacher and student are important parts of how one regards the teaching process. Therefore, if we expect teachers to collaborate within the teaching teams of middle schools, we must come to an understanding of the educational philosophies of our colleagues. Through the understanding of the differences that we all bring to a team, we can develop compromises that allow us to teach a mutually satisfactory curriculum that benefits our students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to examine the interactions of middle school teachers, each of whom has a unique and personal educational philosophy. The educational philosophies of these teachers will create a basis for ongoing interactions within the team itself, as well as with other faculty members, administrators, and students and parents. The interactions of philosophies are also seen in the implementation of policies and procedures coming from the school and district level. The formation, development, and interactions brought on by the personal philosophy of each teacher will be examined. A pilot study on the factors leading to the formation of educational philosophies for middle school teachers was conducted in the fall semester of 2007 and serves as the foundation for this expanded research study.
Significance of the Study

The significance of this study comes from the need to understand how an individual’s educational philosophy interacts with the philosophies of other teachers as they work together. Within the middle school environment, a teacher will develop a general philosophy of education in concert with the middle school philosophy of education. This multi-dimensional philosophy will provide a lens for that middle school teacher as he or she negotiates the academic year and interacts with students, parents, administrators, and colleagues. This study is based upon the belief that when faculty and administration of a school understand the philosophical makeup of the teachers comprising a middle school team, the teaming experience and outcomes can be improved for all parties.

Overview of Existing Literature

An overview of the existing literature shows a large concentration of work on the middle school team as a critical part of the structure of the middle school organization. A large body of work exists that focuses on various aspects of the middle school team. Beane (1993), Erb and Doda (1989), and Mertz (1994) have all discussed the steps in the creation of interdisciplinary middle school teams.

Kruse and Louis (1997) proposed that dilemmas arise when a team of middle school teachers forms a primary identification with the team and not with the larger entity of the whole school. Kruse and Louis identified four dilemmas, that if not specifically addressed through the whole school setting, become areas for conflict within the middle school teaming structure (pp. 272-279):
• time for team-based planning and functions versus time for whole-school based planning and functions,
• team autonomy versus whole school decision making,
• staff development focus on teaming activities versus a focus on whole school practices,
• agreement and alignment of goals between grade levels or department versus goals that are team-based only.

Many researchers have studied how to structure the school day to accommodate teams as well as to group students in order to create middle school teams (Alexander & George, 1993; Arhar & Kromrey, 1993; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Wiles & Bondi, 1993). Arnold and Stevenson (1998) addressed how to organize team meetings while keeping those meetings productive, how to assign teachers to teams, and how to assign responsibilities among the team members.

Flaherty (2006) delved into the analysis of a teacher’s interpretation of middle school philosophy and the use of that interpretation in the functioning of a middle school team. Flaherty found that when teachers on a team hold common beliefs regarding interdisciplinary teaming, that these common beliefs influence the leadership and direction of the team’s daily practices.

Flowers, Mertens, and Mulhall (1999) summarized five positive outcomes of middle school teaming structures:
• common planning time within a team “allows teachers to better support and understand the educational needs of students” (p. 58),

• teaming structure leads to better job satisfaction and teachers “also show an improvement in their job satisfaction over time” (p. 60),

• teacher teaming improves the overall work climate,

• teaming increases the parental contact not only concerning individual student achievement but also with regard to general parent involvement with the school itself,

• teacher teaming is associated with higher student achievement as measured by standardized testing.

What has not been studied in the literature is the interaction of individual philosophies within the structure of a middle school team. This study will provide insights into the role educational philosophies should play in the formation of middle school teams, the significance of a comprehensive understanding of different educational philosophies by teachers on those teams, and finally, the importance played by ones' grounding in middle school philosophy.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the interactions of middle school teachers whose educational philosophies may or may not be compatible. The key questions and sub questions that will be examined are:

1. What are the educational philosophies of the participants as indicated by the educational philosophy inventory?
2. Does the educational philosophy as measured by the inventory align with the teacher’s perception of his or her own educational philosophy?

3. What factors contribute to the development and refinement of the general educational philosophy for each teacher?

4. In what ways do the educational philosophies of the middle school team teachers manifest themselves during interactions within the team over a semester of time?

Limitations of the Study

Generalizability will always be a limitation of a qualitative research study. It is not the purpose of this study to attempt to generalize to a larger population, but instead to explore in some depth the factors that contribute to the formation and development of an educational philosophy and the ways in which philosophies interact within a middle school team. This case study is limited to one team of teachers from a single middle school over the course of one academic semester. In order to draw comparisons and conclusions from this data it would be necessary to study multiple teams of teachers in various community settings over multiple years.

The participants of the study were volunteers who may or may not have been teamed in the past. Teachers participating in the research study may have similar or widely disparate educational philosophies. Other factors that cannot be controlled and may limit the study include race, gender, licensure areas, advanced degrees held, additional certifications held, ages of the participants and the number of years in the teaching field for the teachers volunteering for the research study.
Researcher Subjectivity

The way that we apply meaning, the lens through which we look, is the subjectivity that we apply to the research. We presume that others experience events in the same manner as we do (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994). It is important that the experiences brought by the researcher not influence the result to the point that the data is skewed to represent what is not there.

I have spent many years through graduate school and through the National Board certification process, studying the middle school educational process and as such, have extensively examined my own philosophy of education. Through my work as an adjunct faculty member in the middle school education department of my previous university, I have spent six years teaching pre-service teachers middle school philosophy. Throughout my higher education teaching experiences, I continued to refine my understanding of my own philosophy and worked on methods for bringing about that understanding in others.

I served as the chairperson of the school improvement team for my school for eight years and spent two years as a Master Teacher working for improvement in the academic setting. I have been a middle school team leader for eighteen years and a department chairperson for four years. The melding of these different people into a working unit necessitated my understanding of individuals’ varying backgrounds and educational philosophies. My work with these groups has increased my attention regarding the importance of the nuances evident in individuals’ philosophies. My previous experiences have played a role in heightening awareness of the ways in which I interact with other
teachers, the manner in which I listen in interviews, and the questions that I develop for an interview.

I spent a year as an Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator fellow in Washington, D.C., reviewing and observing educational programs, as well as, developing new programs for special-interest groups within education. My year spent with individuals from vastly different backgrounds who were brought together for a common purpose gave me a new understanding of philosophies of education. As the only Middle Grades Fellow, I spent the year explaining the philosophy of middle grade education and its place in the entire educational process. This experience provided a “think-tank” environment for professional growth that has made a life-altering impression upon the person and the educator that I am.
Definition of Terms

Educational Philosophy – An educational philosophy is a belief that each teacher uses to make sense for himself or herself regarding the educational decisions that define who should be taught, how they should be taught and why, or for what purpose they should be taught. The educational philosophy further defines the parameters for an individual and dictates the response that he or she will have to questions of educational policies, curriculum theories, human (adolescent) development needs, and pedagogical methods (Gutek, 2004).

Educational Belief System – An educational belief system is a relatively stable set of beliefs about how students learn and the desirable ways and approaches for teaching. Belief systems are generally influenced by the individual’s own schooling experiences (Hermans, et. al., 2008).

Personal Epistemologies – A personal epistemology is a teacher’s understanding of what knowledge is and how it is acquired. Epistemologies develop over time with additional experiences and with increased study in the field (i.e. graduate education).

Middle School Team – A middle school team is a grouping of teachers with specialty licensures in the core curriculum areas (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) for middle school. Ideally, these teachers cooperatively plan their lessons with other team members in order to provide an integration of the subject areas relevant and meaningful to the students.

Interactions within the Middle School Team – The normal interactions of a middle school team include but are not limited to: cooperative planning, development of integrated
curriculum lessons and activities, team discussions of student achievement, participation in professional development activities as a team.

Factors that influence the development of educational philosophies – A large collection of experiences and interactions are factors that influence a teacher in the development of an educational philosophy. These factors may include, but are not limited to, the following: the generation to which the person belongs, family attitudes toward education and teachers, individual educational experiences, pre-service teacher coursework, student teacher experiences, interactions with cooperating teachers, interactions with colleagues, professional development activities, scholarly work and readings.

Development of an educational philosophy – The development of an educational philosophy is based upon the gross constructions of the attitudes that define the purpose of education, the role of participants in the education process (students, teachers, parents), and the outcomes of the education process.

Refinement of an educational philosophy – The subtle shaping of an educational philosophy that comes from advanced scholarly work, self-reflection, and advanced professional development all serves to refine an educational philosophy.
Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was to examine, in detail, the interactions of middle school teachers whose educational philosophies may or may not be compatible. The study focused on the identification of the teacher’s philosophies within the context of generally recognized schools of educational thought and the philosophical components of these same schools of thought. The teacher’s perception of his or her own educational philosophy was examined along with the factors that contributed to the development and refinement of the philosophy. Finally, the ways that the individual philosophies manifest themselves through the interactions within the team was examined. The significance of this study comes from the need to understand how an individual teacher’s philosophy interacts with other teachers on a middle school team. This study will provide insight into forming more successful middle school teams when the decisions leading to selecting a team of teachers includes the consideration of matching compatible philosophies. In addition, it will provide insight into creating a more harmonious working environment when faculty members have a comprehensive understanding of educational philosophies in general and the differences that these philosophies will create in teaching situations.

The following chapters provide support for this study. Chapter Two provides an in depth literature review which addresses the identification of the generally recognized schools of educational philosophy, the study of how generational differences affect education, an overview of the middle school movement, middle school philosophy, and the individuals who defined middle school education.
Chapter Three examines in detail the design and methodology of this case study and details the pilot study that preceded this work. The selection of a site and participants as well as the methods for data collection and analysis are addressed within this chapter.

In Chapter Four, the data are analyzed to provide a picture of the individual teachers making up this middle school team. The analysis starts with the initial identification of their individual educational philosophies and how closely that identification matches their self-image of their educational philosophy. The data are analyzed to determine how interactions with the other members of the team and other faculty members are influenced by each teacher’s own educational philosophy.

Chapter Five summarizes the findings and provides a reflection on the findings. Implications and suggestions for the use of this study by administrators in team formation are given and future research questions are proposed.
While the literature on the formation and interaction of educational philosophies is limited, there is a plethora of literature that describes different educational philosophies and theories. This review has specifically selected writings that address the formation and interactions of a philosophy in a particular individual.

*Educational Philosophy*

The focus of this research project is the interaction of teachers in a middle school team who have separate and distinct educational philosophies. Prior to examining the interactions among middle school teachers who are on the same team, one must first study the formation and substance of an individual’s educational philosophy. Why should educators be concerned with an educational philosophy at all? Philosophy has implications for educational practice, just as it has implications for life itself (Hirst, 1963). Hirst provides guidance in this area as he makes the point that “if people differ about the nature of ultimate reality they must differ in judging what is important in the school curriculum” (p. 51). Philosophy describes how we go about the business of our lives, and an educational philosophy describes “what ought to be and what ought not to be done in educational practice” (Hirst, 1963, p. 63). Therefore, if we are to be able to analyze fully the inner motivations of an educator, we must begin to look at the elements that go into the formation of that educator’s educational philosophy. Hirst does not go further in the discussion of formation of a philosophy than to indicate that the theorists, and ideas that make up the field
of educational theory, contribute to the formation of an individual educational philosophy. He states that social and psychological understandings are contributing factors that must be considered in the formation of an educational philosophy (Hirst, 1963).

Many different elements combine to form a person’s educational philosophy. Some of these elements include influences of parents, former teachers (Hirst, 1963), cooperating teachers, and education coursework (Boschee, Prescott, & Hein, 1978), discourse with teaching colleagues (Gutek, 2004), and district professional development workshops and discussions of curriculum (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). Noddings in her statement, “we learn from our teachers about ourselves and others and about life in general” (p. 70) indicates the importance that we place on previous teachers as we develop our own philosophy.

*American Educational Philosophy*

Gutek (2004) and Noddings (2007) provide an in-depth look at the evolution of educational philosophies and the factors that contribute to the formation of a philosophy in an individual. Educational philosophies define for us the purpose of education. These philosophies build on the teachings of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle and help us examine the differences in our concepts regarding who should be educated and how they should be educated. Educational philosophies envision education differently. They define how a teacher approaches education and what endpoint we may expect for the students.

Null (2007) gives an informative look at the different educational philosophies, and the pedagogy that accompanied these philosophies, as they emerged at different times in American education. A brief overview of these five groups makes a clear distinction among
motivations for teaching. It becomes obvious why these groups do not mix well.

Throughout history, there are many branches of philosophical thought, or philosophical schools, that have emerged. These many schools can be represented in the five educational philosophies that are defined in Lorraine Zinn’s Philosophy of Education Inventory. Table 1 (Appendix) shows how the numerous branches of philosophy may be represented in these five philosophical schools (Gutek, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Null, 2007).

Philosophical Schools that Merged to Form the Comprehensive Educational Philosophy

Idealism.

The most ancient of philosophical schools is Idealism. Socrates belonged to the School of Philosophical Idealism. As he searched for the truth, Socrates used the technique of questioning an individual’s assumptions. By asking universal questions, Socrates’ students used critical thinking skills to examine their own assumptions and their understanding of “truth.” Plato believed that knowledge was absolute and eternal and that ideas were pure and represented the highest level of knowing. In an educational context, this means the teacher is a guide for classical studies working with a set of required core subjects designed to prepare one for adult life (Gutek, 2004). Idealism is evident in character education programs. “The idealist feels that with the growth of a fine moral character as well as personal reflection, wisdom is gained” (Maheshwari & Bansal, 2010).

Perennialism.

Arising from Idealism, Perennialism, focused on the classics but showed inflexibility
regarding specifically which classic works to be studied. By requiring the study of the “Great Books” of western society, no room was left in the curriculum for additional classics or for contemporary works (Boschee, Prescott, & Hein, 1978). Perennialism focuses on the enduring themes and ideas that span history. Perennialism is concerned with “cultural literacy” and the understanding of the ideas that have created our culture. Students in the classroom learn, not from textbooks, but directly from the “Great Books” written by the great minds of western culture. Perennialism is found in many parochial schools because they study the great books of different religions. Unfortunately, this educational philosophy is not designed to bring the love of great classics to all students. “Perennialists see education as a sorting mechanism, a way to identify and prepare the intellectually gifted for leadership, while providing vocational training for the rest of society” (Sadler & Zittleman, 2008, p. 207).

Realism.

Realism is an ancient philosophy. Aristotle, John Locke, and Pestalozzi are representatives of the School of Realism. Realism focuses on the teacher as an expert, one who teaches an accumulation of learned skills to students deemed capable of learning the subject matter. The purpose of Realism is to produce an educated human being whose theoretical knowledge is on a higher plane than vocational knowledge (Gutek, 2004). Realism prepares the student for real life, but can be rigid and demanding. As a philosophy, it focuses on facts and objects, not on intellectual abstractions. Within the classroom, Realism is seen in the study of scientific observations. Through scientific study, the student sees the
world is made of matter and, therefore, is real. The universe operates through laws of nature, and Realism shows the truth of the world discovered through scientific methods.

**Traditionalism.**

During the 1870’s to 1880’s, Traditionalists defined what eventually became Comprehensive philosophy. This Traditionalist philosophy was based on the teachings of Plato; whose belief was that education should strive toward a higher truth, with an emphasis on the subject discipline, itself (Null, 2007). Traditionalists did not promote equal education, but believed in ability grouping and education for the elite. Lecture and direct instruction by teachers who had a “calling” to teach formed the basis for traditionalism and dominated the American education system for decades. The traditionalist teacher educated students for a role in life based on social and economic status.

**Comprehensive.**

Bits of Idealism, Perennialism, Realism, and Traditionalism can be seen in the general Comprehensive philosophy. Comprehensive educational philosophy is based on the development of the intellectual properties of the mind and serves to provide a well-rounded education for those students who are capable of grasping the concepts. The teacher is the expert in the classroom, transmitting knowledge to the students in a direct, well-defined instructional manner. Students are challenged to think, seek out the knowledge, and understand multiple disciplines, both conceptually and theoretically. The teacher uses lecture, teacher-directed questioning, teacher-led discussions, critical reading and analysis, and standardized testing as instruction methods (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164).
Philosophical Schools that Merged to Form the Progressive Educational Philosophy

Pragmatism.

Pragmatism was developed by a group of American philosophers that included John Dewey. Pragmatism supports the vision that education occurs through a series of experiences as the student interacts with his or her environment (Gutek, 2004). Dewey did not indicate that all experiences were equal in quality and saw the teacher as essential to guide the experiences for the students. “The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other” (Dewey, 1938, p. 25). Dewey strongly held the viewpoint that teachers must guide the students through these experiences but that the students must have a voice in the experiences as well (Noddings, 2007).

Integrationism.

The School of Integrationist Philosophy was refined and defined during the 1920’s through the 1930’s. This school of philosophy concentrated more on the preparation of the teacher rather than on the instruction of the student. This philosophy was based on the teachings of Kandel and Felmley. By the end of the 1930’s, this group had fractured and is now seen in other, more general, philosophical schools. The splinter faction of the Integrationists that most closely followed the teachings of David Felmley was incorporated into the Progressive School of Philosophy. The Integrationists are most visible in the early Normal schools. Normal schools, under the guidance of David Felmley, concentrated on the integration of knowledge and experience in their development of teachers and promoted a
form of the democratic education with pedagogically trained educators. Teaching methods were designed to interest students in the curriculum while maintaining a moral commitment to civic purposes as an end product. The integrationists concentrate on the what, the how, and the why to teach (Null, 2007).

*Essentialism.*

William Bagley’s dedication to the idea that there must be an approved curriculum, in addition to a pedagogically trained and content-knowledgeable teacher leading the experiences of the classroom, led to a splintering off of Essentialism from Pragmatism (Bagley, 1938). Bagley did not see the elements of an approved curriculum and content-knowledgeable teachers in his interpretation of the philosophical ideas of his colleague, John Dewey.

*Progressive.*

Elements of Pragmatism, Integrationalism, and Essentialism were blended together into what has come to be called the Progressive School of Educational Philosophy. The Progressive educational philosophy expects that students will be given practical knowledge that they are able to fully utilize in problem solving elements of their daily life. The teacher takes the role of an organizer and sets up experiences that will be valuable and meaningful for the students. Instruction takes the form of active inquiry, laboratory experiments, field trips, and community service. Students are expected to take an active role in the design of experiential instruction. The students work cooperatively through the classroom experiences to become responsible members of society (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 1640).
Philosophical Schools that Merged to Form the Behavioral Educational Philosophy

Technicians.

Technicians formed during the 1900’s to 1910’s and based their philosophy on the teachings of Edward Thorndike and W.W. Charters. Technicians believed that actions and behaviors were measurable and that these measures could provide information on how to fix bad teaching. Drill and practice, with teachers as controllers of the learning experience provided the order that was needed in the classroom for learning to take place. The Technicians would later broaden their focus to be called Behaviorists.

Behavioralism.

The Behaviorists broadened the idea of drill and practice to include skill development, an element necessary for vocational education and learning for mastery. Benjamin Bloom would further develop the “Learning for Mastery” elements of this philosophy in the early 1960’s (Guskey, 2005). The Behaviorist philosophy is methods-based with a belief that anyone can teach anything. The focus of the Behaviorists is on how to actually teach the material (Null, 2007). Students are not involved in the development of the curriculum in the Behavioral philosophy; instead, they are expected to master the set of predetermined skills in the order designated by the teacher. The teacher is the controller of the classroom, determining the objectives and goals, setting the standards for acceptable performance, and managing the behaviors of the students. Instructional methods include drill and practice, testing and retesting until a skill was mastered, computer-aided instruction, and criterion referenced testing (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164).
Philosophical Schools that Merged to Form the Social Change Educational Philosophy

Integrationism.

When the Integrational School of Philosophy fractured, a faction of the Integrationists that most closely followed the teachings of Isaac Kandel was incorporated into the School of Social Change Philosophy. This group was concerned with using the past as a basis for understanding the problems of present day society. This faction was seen in the disciplines of political studies. This school of thought was more closely aligned with students who were older, those who attended high schools and colleges.

Social Change.

The Social Change Philosophy is currently represented by theorists such as Paulo Friere and Jonathan Kozol. Social Change Philosophy is concerned with identifying injustices and bringing about change needed to correct injustices. The belief that education is the key to fundamental social, cultural, political, and economic change is basic to this philosophy. The student in the learning process is considered to be equal to the teacher. The teacher serves as a coordinator making suggestions and posing problems for the student to analyze and react to (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164).

Philosophical Schools that Merged to Form the Humanistic Educational Philosophy

Romanticism.

The Romantics had their heyday from 1910 to 1920, but lost favor at the onset of the Great Depression. Their philosophy was based on the teachings of Rousseau, who believed human nature was essentially good and that education should follow the natural development
of the individual. Romantics believed that children learned only through experiences that were of interest to the student. They denigrated knowledge from books because they offered only isolated facts, rather than information that supported the child’s development.

Proponents of this philosophy insisted that nothing could be measured precisely and were convinced that by solely following the child’s interests within the classroom the result would be a fully self-actualized, useful citizen (Null, 2007). The Romantics would eventually be absorbed into the Humanistic School of Philosophy in the 1940’s.

**Humanistic.**

Humanistic philosophy can be seen in the teachings of Abraham Maslow and A.S. Neill. Both men believed that education could not be achieved without having first met the basic needs of the child. Through his school, *Summerhill*, A.S. Neill demonstrated his belief that children would select educational experiences when left to explore on their own (Neill, 1960). In the Humanistic philosophy, the teacher is a mutual participant in the learning exchange. Students are expected to be highly motivated and self-directed. Students are involved in the learning efforts and provide the big questions that direct their learning. Teachers provide support for the learning process for all students by guiding students to resources and by posing larger questions and ideas for examination (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164).

When tracing the development of educational philosophies, it becomes clear that often elements in each can support one another, such as Progressive and Humanistic or Behavioral and Comprehensive. However, equally clear is that some philosophies due to
their diametrically oppositional ideals, cannot co-exist with one another, such as Comprehensive and Social Change or Behavioral and Progressive. To know one’s own philosophy enables grounding in educational thought and practice. To know one another’s philosophy allows colleagues to examine connections and disconnections in teaching and learning approaches that will influence students’ classroom experiences. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) discuss the interrelationships of teachers and how these different philosophies define how individuals approach teaching. In their book on teacher leadership, they indicate that the self-knowledge of one’s own philosophy leads to an understanding of areas of inconsistency or disagreements among all members of the education community. They go on to point out that the knowledge of one’s own personal philosophy can lead to better understandings between colleagues and improve teaming situations. Understanding one’s own philosophy helps a person to know why choices in curriculum delivery methods and assessment practices appear to be the “right” decision. Recognizing the tenets of a colleague’s educational philosophy provides a person with the knowledge of how that philosophy may differ or even contradict his or her own. Once these differences are known to be philosophical differences, rather than the whims of a contrary person, there can be a foundation of respect between colleagues rather than a foundation of conflict.

Societal Impact

The formation of an individual educational philosophy is linked to a person’s experiences as well as to societal issues and events that cause a shift in national educational philosophy. An example of a societal shift is the refocus on science and mathematics.
instruction following the launch of SPUTNIK.

In this 1957 example that demonstrated society’s impact on education, America expressed its collective embarrassment at having placed second in the space race. Teachers, blamed for the poor science and math performance of the nation’s students, were seen as having failed to prepare youngsters to compete. “American education became an attack point for why the Soviets had won the first leg of the ‘race to space’” (Eichhorn, 1998b, p. 78). This “national shame” created a shift in national educational philosophy. The result increased the emphasis on pure science and mathematics at any cost (Noddings, 2007, p. 48).

In reality, the educational system in our country was not an embarrassment. Curriculum restructuring was the focus of the 1930’s and 1940’s. In fact, 1932 marked the beginning of what would become the Eight Year Study. Educational reform had stagnated in the high schools because of the domination colleges had in determining curricular requirements for entering college students. Grant money in the amount of $700,000 from the Carnegie Foundation and the General Education Board was made available to thirty high schools in order to examine how changes in their curriculum would affect the knowledge base for their students. The schools were guaranteed that their students would be accepted into college “without reference to the particular subjects they had taken and without examination in those subjects” (Kliebard, 2004, p. 179). High schools participating in the study developed courses that integrated curriculum. In addition, they implemented coursework using different teaching and learning methods. The result of the study showed that these students were on the same level as others who had participated in a traditional,
discipline-focused standard course of study in high school. This revolutionary study showed
that America was actually at the forefront for curriculum integration. We were not an
embarrassment; rather our focus was simply elsewhere. Rather than a focus on fact-loading,
our teachers taught for the application of ideas in practical situations.

Generations

Significant societal events such as SPUTNIK, the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the
assassination of President Kennedy, or September 11, 2001, form part of the collective
societal foundations underlying different cohorts or generations of workers. In the field of
education, there are four distinct cohorts of educators that are currently guiding students in
the classroom (Lovely & Buffum, 2007). Veterans (born 1922-1943) are the smallest group
still employed or volunteering in the schools, but the most likely to leave behind a legacy of
procedures and policies. The Veteran cohort believes in honor, loyalty, and commitment. The
Baby Boomers (born 1944-1960) make up the largest single group of workers in education.
Baby Boomers hold upper administration positions in many school systems. This cohort is
hard working, competitive, used to getting its own way, and believes in the team structure in
order to attain goals. Generation X (born 1960-1980) has experienced more divorce than
other cohorts and has survived the latchkey lifestyle, whether with a single parent or both
parents working. This group of individuals believes that you get ahead in life by changing
jobs, and they are not motivated by rewards for longevity and perseverance. They believe in
maintaining a life outside of school. These individuals make up the first group to embrace
and use technology in all areas of their lives. Millennials (born 1980-2000) are the youngest
group in the classrooms today. This group leads busy lives that are not necessarily centered
on a career. Millennials have done more and seen more through constant access to multi-
media than any other group. They have been praised throughout their lives and expect to be
able to use their creativity to show themselves worthy of continued praise.

Administrators who do not understand the dynamics created by different generations
within the school environment will not be able to match all faculty members so that they can
support one another and work together for student success. Mismatching generations without
each understanding the other can cause friction. Administrators and team leaders need to be
aware that off-hand comments can cause discord on a team. “When I was your age...” or, “we
are doing this because the district said so…” are trigger points for different age groups and
will prevent bonding. Understanding the distinguishing characteristics of each generational
group and seeing how those characteristics manifest themselves in people within the school
is an essential part of the process of melding different generational groups into a cohesive
force. Training the staff to understand distinguishing characteristics of each generation of
workers is a crucial step in a strategy that promotes a smoothly running school. “For a
school’s motor to run smoothly and powerfully, principals and co-administrators should
openly acknowledge differences and model strategies to deal with them” (Lovely & Buffum,
2007, p. 30). Table 2 (Appendix) provides an overview of the characteristics of the four
generational groupings.
Societal Environment

Great struggles in society create social movements that influence the lens through which we look. Our own philosophies are linked to these struggles and the societal movements of our times. We are “all, inevitably, immersed in the tasks and values of our historical situation” (Noddings, 2007, p. 72). Noddings (2007) examines the struggles of class within our society as it plays out in small daily struggles within the classroom environment. These classroom struggles mimic the struggles that we observe in the greater society and are factors in the formation of our philosophies. Noddings postulates that teachers will either reproduce those greater societal struggles in their own classroom or rebel against the struggles that they themselves battled in order to make the classroom a different environment for their students. Garbarino (1992) supports Bronfenbrenner’s work in describing the layers and characteristics of society with which an individual interacts. There are four ecological levels that make up the systems that interact to form the environment of the individual. The Microsystem includes 1) the home with parents and siblings, 2) the religious organization, the neighborhood and community, 3) peers and friends, and 4) teachers and classmates in school. The Mesosystem consists of the interactions among the elements of the Microsystem. One’s strength and support is seen in the number of connections among Microsystem elements. The Macrosystem rings the Mesosystem and surrounds the individual with the culture of the neighborhood, city, and country and provides additional connections among the elements of the Microsystem. The Macrosystem also holds those community connections over which children and adolescents have no control, job loss
of parents, moving away from the community to a new place, becoming a single-parented household due to divorce or death. The Exosystem encircles all levels of the system and includes connections to the government and an individual’s employment and career choices. The Exosystem defines the values, the guiding principles, and the philosophy of government and society in which an individual resides. “Systems at each level have distinctive characteristics that are relevant to a child’s development…these effects may be either positive or negative…the overall impact of the environment emerges from the dynamic balance among all influences over time” (Garbarino, 1992, p. 28). These experiences are all part of the person who becomes a teacher and thus contribute important values and beliefs to that teacher’s educational philosophy.

Parents, friends, the community, the religious institutions, the politicians and policies that govern our lives all become factors that must be considered in this philosophy formation (Noddings, 2007). What we value we use as a foundation for the people we become, and the ways that we interact with others, especially within the educational environment. Our theories of equalities, how we view our relationships, and our own racial and gender identities are critical to our own philosophy formation. As society changes the manner in which it values knowledge capital and cultural capital, a shift is made in the philosophy of an individual.

There are negative circumstances that Noddings indicates influences a teacher’s educational philosophy formation. These circumstances that teachers may experience include inequities in physical resources and curriculum (Noddings, 2007). Whether we are referring
to a poor child growing up without the proper schooling to become a teacher, or a young teacher who perceives that she is unable to teach properly due to lack of materials and a poorly written curriculum, these factors contribute to the formation of an educational philosophy. A teacher’s educational heritage matters. The schools that we attended, the teachers that we had as children, the interactions that we had over homework and projects, all contribute to the formation of our educational philosophy.

An educator’s personal philosophy offers a foundation for the manner in which he or she delivers curriculum, designs instruction, and makes evaluation decisions (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). This philosophy should be always “under construction,” an evolutionary process of renewal. For practicing teachers, the current research in education may sway the formation of philosophies. When new ideas are presented by a school district, when topics are studied in Professional Learning Communities, when professional development workshop presentations are authoritative and convincing, philosophies will shift, if the individual can find truth in the research (Noddings, 2007).

**Philosophy as a Function of Teacher Education**

Formulating one’s educational philosophy is a component of the pedagogical process in schools of education (Petress, 2003). Petress points out that the inability to articulate or define a philosophy leads to confusion and lack of focus. In the same way that we use a map to plan a journey, a teacher uses an educational philosophy to plan the journey that supports student learning. “A teacher without a philosophy is in danger of getting lost, of wandering without focus, and unsure of what aims are being sought” (Petress, 2003, p. 128). In the same
manner that a compass is a tool used for navigation, it is clear that Petress sees an educational philosophy as an important tool for a teacher.

A workable and useful teaching philosophy does need to be broad enough and rich enough to withstand doubt…stable enough to withstand challenge and question by students, colleagues, administrators, and accreditation agencies. (Petress, 2003, p. 133)

In an early research study, cooperating teachers were found to have some influence over the formation of two varieties of educational philosophies for their student teachers (Boschee, Prescott, & Hein, 1978). Cooperating teachers who espoused a philosophy of Perennialism (which has become blended into Comprehensive philosophy) or Essentialism (which has become blended into Progressive philosophy) were more likely to influence their student teachers toward similar philosophies. Perennialism as a philosophy focuses on the knowledge of the classics, on reading the “great books” of Western Culture. It focuses on studying the classic subjects that have shaped our society such as Literature, Mathematics, and History, rather than the blended subjects such as Language Arts, Social Studies, or Comparative Cultures. Perennialism defines the goal of education as the pursuit of truth that is universal and unchanging. The goal of Essentialism is to provide the student with basic knowledge and skills that will allow the student to understand the outside world. Essentialism as a philosophy focuses on the personal growth of the student within the curriculum and is directed by a trained and knowledgeable teacher. Essentialism would encourage the student to experience a variety of literature, including contemporary or local-author literature,
through a variety of experiences that the teacher conducts within the classroom. Essentialism would promote an understanding of local government and civic responsibilities in addition to a historical perspective of the country through teacher-directed classroom experiences. In the eyes of a student teacher both of these philosophies would create a classroom environment that is very controlled and traditional.

Early research with cooperating teachers and student teachers found that student teachers were likely to shift their educational beliefs to conform more to the beliefs held by the cooperating teacher (Price, 1961). Pope’s work (1983) showed that, contrary to the expected, by the end of the student teaching experience student teachers did not become more like their cooperating teachers in terms of educational beliefs (p. 73). However, Pope did notice a shift of the educational beliefs for the cooperating teachers in her study. She attributes this shifting to the self-reflection on the part of the cooperating teacher, an affirming, or re-evaluation of the educational beliefs of the cooperating teachers,

He may re-examine himself as a teacher so as to renew his philosophy and to provide model directions for the student teacher. He may also sense a great responsibility in helping to mold a future teacher, thereby increasing expectations of himself as well as the student teacher. Participating in the student teaching experience may provide an opportunity for self-renewal and growth as the cooperating teacher comes in contact with an inexperienced, idealistic teacher fresh with new ideas. (Pope, 1983, p. 81)

*History of the Development of Middle School Philosophy*

The context of this study is the middle school team; therefore, it is critical to examine
the development of the philosophy of middle schools. Middle grades education has its own philosophy that has evolved over time. An understanding of the middle school movement, its history, and philosophy is essential for any teacher who intends to fully participate in a true middle school.

Prior to 1910.

Middle schools evolved from the junior high school movement that began in 1888. Charles Eliot, the President of Harvard, concerned that students were not being prepared to enter college, called for a philosophical change in our schools. A bridge needed to be built between the broad general education in the public elementary schools (grades 1-8) and the academic rigor of high schools (grades 9-12), whose students were being prepared for college. Eliot proposed restructuring schools to include seventh and eighth grade in the academically focused high schools. These new schools, grades 7-12, would ensure a more rigorous academic curriculum, and thus better prepared college students (Hunt, Wiseman, & Bowden, 1998). The academic high schools were not the middle school model of today. Their purpose was to cull students who would not be successful in college rather than to raise the academic growth of all students.

A psychologist and an educator, G. Stanley Hall was concerned about the place that high school had in American education. His concerns were that high schools were not preparing students for college; they were too different in their structure and their programs. Hall added critical information to the body of knowledge of educators through his publications: *The Contents of Children’s Minds* in 1883, *Adolescence* in 1904, and
Educational Problems in 1911. Hall contributed to the understanding of human development with the landmark publication of his two-volume book, Adolescence in 1904. Unfortunately, this early work led to the nefarious stereotyping of the young adolescent as an individual controlled by the “storm and stress” of hormones and flights of temper. This misnomer, ingrained in our society, continues to prejudice our views about adolescents. The erroneous image that it paints hampers efforts to see the possibilities and promise of middle schools and negatively influences middle school education efforts.

Beginning the academic year of 1909-1910, the first junior high schools opened simultaneously in Columbus, Ohio, and Berkeley, California. The organization of the school grades was now moving to a 6-3-3 configuration. This new junior high school was intended to decrease the dropouts and failures in high school by providing a bridge between the elementary grades and the secondary grades. The junior high school concept was well received by the education community and it saw rapid growth over the next sixty years. The National Education Association Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education officially endorsed the concept of junior high schools in 1918 (Hunt, 1998).

1910 to 1960.

Leonard Koos (1920) provided the first statement of purpose for the junior high school.

The program of studies should be of the constants-with-variables and not of the single curriculum or the multiple-curriculum type. It should in its constants provide the training necessary for all in achieving the physical, social-civic, and avocational aims,
and in its variables give latitude for the individual choice which is possible and advisable in achieving the vocational and, in some part, the avocational aims. Both constants and variables should be administered as far as possible to recognize individual differences in ability. Some measure of departmentalization, is desirable, although complete departmentalization, if provided at any point, should perhaps be deferred to the ninth grade or later. Promotion should be by subject. The work of the classroom should not be restricted to the “examination” method, but should give large recognition to study under supervision and to the project and problem. There should be an advisory system which will, of course, be concerned with the school behavior of the child. It must in addition comprehend his other interests, educational, vocational, social, and recreational. (Koos, 1920, p. 178)

This statement laid the groundwork for Gruhn and Douglass in the mid 1940’s as they identified the basic functions of junior high school (Hunt, Wiseman, & Bowden, 2003). These functions included:

- Integration of subject matter into effective behaviors,
- Exploration in order to make better vocational and academic choices as well as to widen interests in a variety of areas,
- Guidance to help students make better decisions and to make satisfactory social, emotional, and academic adjustments,
- Differentiation so that each student regardless of individual differences can achieve economically and completely the aims of the education,
• Socialization in order to prepare students to be full participants in the general social order,

• Articulation to provide a transition in the communication skills from elementary school to a student ready for high school.

1960 to 1970.

The 1960’s saw the beginning of the Middle School Movement. Junior high schools had grown too rapidly for the original concepts to become a reality. More importantly, these schools did not take into account the developmental needs of early adolescents. Most junior high schools had retained the traditional scheduling seen in high schools, employed secondary trained teachers, and structured activities around a high school model. All of these factors led to a failure to fulfill the promise of the junior high schools and paved the way for the middle school movement (Hunt, Wiseman, & Bowden, 2003). The dream of a bridge to high school was never achieved as many unsuccessful students simply dropped out of school.

In 1960, James Conant (Harvard University President) published Education in the Junior High School Years. His book called for public school reform with a focus on the “New Math” that focused on mathematical concepts rather than arithmetical calculations and the “New Science” that focused on inquiry and exploration rather than the historical fact building focus that was traditional. Conant also called for the return of grade nine to the high school setting to expand academic study in the secondary school (Hunt, Wiseman, & Bowden, 1998).
William M. Alexander, is known as the Father of the Middle School Movement because of his “pioneering efforts in the creation of and advocacy for this new institution” (McEwin, 1998, p. 35). Alexander was the first to use the term “middle school” (Lounsbury & Vars, 2003). In his 1963 address at Cornell University he said:

Indeed, we doubt whether any institution can have real purpose and vitality if its role is subordinated either to the separate institutions it bridges or the one for which it serves a preparatory function. I would vote for elimination of the separateness of current elementary, junior and senior high schools, with the resulting need for bridges, and instead a 12- to 14-year institution, with three levels in its vertical structure, each of which has a program and organization appropriate to its place in a sequential educational pattern. Thus there would be a lower, middle, and upper level, or a primary, middle, and high school. (Alexander, 1998, pp. 4-5)

The Cornell proposal listed several purposes to be addressed by the new middle schools (Alexander & George, 1981, pp. 13-14):

1. To give the middle school a status of its own rather than its current junior status.
2. To provide for some curricular specialization and team teaching in grades five and six.
3. To facilitate the reorganization of teacher education programs to provide teachers who were competent to address the needs of middle school students.
4. To clearly define and put into practice the desirable characteristics that Gruhn and Douglass had articulated in the 1940’s: a well articulated 12 – to 14 – year system of education, preparation and transition to adolescence, continued general education, and abundant opportunities for exploration of interests.

Donald Eichhorn called for the complete restructuring of the middle school to include grades six through eight in a student-centered focus based on the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual factors that are in flux during early adolescence. He was adamant that a quick fix instead of a complete restructuring to the junior high school was not sufficient.


In 1973, the National Middle School Association (now renamed the Association for Middle Level Education) was established as a voice for professionals and all others interested in early adolescent education. The organization is “dedicated to improving the educational experiences of early adolescents by providing vision, knowledge, and resources to all who serve them in order to develop healthy, productive, and ethical citizens” (National Middle School Association, 2010b).

Controversy entered the middle school conversation in 1978 with the report by Herman Epstein and Conrad Toepfer on brain research. Their work reported that the brain enters a cognitive plateau between the ages of 12 to 14, and consequently, a cognitive-based curriculum would be detrimental to the young adolescent. Instead, they recommended a review and reinforcement course of study regarding material learned at previous grade levels. This contributed to the image of middle school providing a watered-down curriculum. Many
educators strongly disagreed with this research (Hunt, Wiseman, & Bowden, 1998). In fact, later studies of cognitive function in early adolescents found “there was no evidence for cognitive disruption over early adolescence” (Graber & Petersen, 1991, p. 259).

1980 to 1990.

In 1982, a taskforce commissioned by the National Middle School Association was charged with creating a position paper that provided a clear philosophical and programmatic foundation for middle level education throughout the country. The taskforce was made up of the most influential middle school educators: William Alexander, Alfred Arth, Charles Cherry, Donald Eichhorn, Conrad Toepfer, Gordon Vars, and John Lounsbury. The position paper, *This We Believe (TWB)*, identified the dramatic changes that characteristically occur physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually in the middle school student (National Middle School Association, 1982). *TWB* defined the essential elements that must be present in a true middle school. These include:

- an educator knowledgeable about and committed to early adolescents,
- a balanced curriculum based on the needs of early adolescents,
- a flexibility within the organizational arrangement,
- a variety of instructional strategies,
- a full exploratory program,
- a comprehensive advising and counseling program,
- a focus on continuous progress for all students,
- an evaluation procedure that is compatible with the nature of early adolescents,
• a cooperative planning process among teachers,
• a positive school climate.

*This We Believe* was reissued in 1992 with updates that addressed parent involvement, cultural diversity of students, rural education, inclusion of special education students, opposition to corporal punishment, the need for substance abuse programs, and a call for systemic research in middle schools (National Middle School Association, 1992).

The political force of the nation had been relatively quiet on the subject of education since the reconfiguring of the math and science curriculum after the launch of SPUTNIK in 1957. However, in 1983 the National Commission on Excellence in Education was directed to examine the quality of education in the United States and to report the results to the nation. The commission was charged with assessing the quality of teaching and learning in all schools, comparing America’s schools with other nations, studying the relationship between college admissions and high school achievement, identifying programs that resulted in college success, assessing the degree to which major social and educational changes over the previous twenty-five years had affected student achievement, and defining problems that must be addressed in order to pursue a course of excellence in education. Their report, *A Nation at Risk*, concluded that the “declines in educational performance are in a large part the result of disturbing inadequacies in the way the educational process itself is conducted” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The commission determined that the curricular content had been “diluted and diffused to the point that they no longer have a central purpose” (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The expectations
for student preparation had fallen with home preparation decreasing, grades inflating, and “minimum competency” examinations falling far short of what the minimum expectations should be. The amount of time that America’s students were spending in the classroom was dramatically different from similar schools in England and other industrialized nations. On an average, our students were attending class two hours less every day for as much as twenty fewer days per year. Finally, the preparation of our teachers was found to be sub-standard in their content area preparation.

John Goodlad undertook a sizeable study of over one thousand American classrooms to determine how effective the schools were, how accessible knowledge was to students, and how teachers delivered the curriculum to students. His 1984 publication, *A Place Called School*, was primarily optimistic, but pointed to areas for improvement at all grade levels. Goodlad stated that schools should be a welcoming environment of non-graded classrooms that provide students with material and skill lessons as they become ready. He recommended the restriction of school size to 600 - 800 at the secondary level with students sub-grouped into units of no more than 100 (Goodlad, 1984). Goodlad’s vision, accepted as a school model enabling student and teacher success is now stretched beyond the norm as over-enrollment and financial realities creates difficulties for maintaining the model.

In 1985, the National Association of Secondary School Principals Council on Middle Level Education published their report, *An Agenda for Excellence at the Middle Level*. The authors of this report again represented some of the best minds in middle school education, Alfred Arth, John Lounsbury, Conrad Toepfer, Howard Johnston, and George Melton. The
report identified essential elements critical for an effective middle school (Arth, et. al., 1985). These included:

- a guiding set of values,
- a supportive school climate,
- a foundation that is developmentally appropriate,
- a balanced curriculum,
- a focus on appropriate instructional strategies,
- an organizational structure that maximizes the learning environment,
- a curriculum that requires students to become technologically literate,
- a faculty that is trained and certified specifically to teach early adolescents,
- a program that allows students to make a smooth transition from the elementary environment to high school,
- a strong administrative leader,
- a support and communication system that connects the school to the community,
- a student-centered environment that is responsive to the developmental needs of early adolescents.

In 1989, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development published a landmark document, *Turning Points: Preparing America’s Youth for the 21st Century*. The document described an ideal fifteen year old as an intellectually reflective person enroute to a lifetime of meaningful work. The fifteen-year-old was characterized as a good citizen, as well as a healthy, caring, and ethical individual. The report cautioned that substantial numbers of
America’s young adults were at risk of reaching adulthood as nonfunctioning members of society. Our changing society had caused negative at-risk behaviors in youth due to the availability of drugs and alcohol. In addition, adolescents were beginning sexual activity at a younger age. At the same time, the sense of community was eroding and close-knit relationships were rare, thus creating isolation in young people. The workforce requirements were changing to a more global focus, one that needed flexibility, creative thinking, and a technical understanding. Studies indicate that the fastest growing racial groups were performing at the bottom of the educational ladder. Middle schools, with their focus on the academic, social, and emotional needs of the young adolescent, were identified as having the best chance to recapture the individuals who were failing. *Turning Points* pointed out a need for rededication to the middle school concept. Many middle schools were in name only. They had been ignored in the education reform of the 1980’s and they were still functioning with a junior high school model, large, impersonal schools with departmentalization creating barriers to relationships. Little attention had been paid to the social, emotional, and physical development of the students. Disconnected and irrelevant curriculum presumed that students did not have the ability to master new material. The report made recommendations for transforming middle level education by creating small communities of learning, providing a core academic program to ensure success for all students and by fostering improvement in academic progress through an emphasis on health and fitness. *Turning Points* recommended empowering teachers and administrators to make decisions about the experiences for middle school students, to staff middle schools with teachers who had expertise in teaching early
adolescents, to reengage families in the education of early adolescents and to connect schools to the communities (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). States throughout the nation convened their own statewide “Turning Points” Conferences seeking to model their systems after the national recommendations.

1990 to 2000.

In 1990, Lounsbury and Clark published *Inside Grade Eight: From Apathy to Excitement*. Their book pointed out that teacher quality was the most important factor in the development of effective middle level schools. They addressed school organization as a means to eliminate tracking and supported interdisciplinary instruction and its use within the context of content integration and team teaching. Lounsbury and Clark called for an educational response that was developmentally appropriate for early adolescents, *i.e.*, students experienced immediate success, engaged in a curriculum that avoided developmentally inappropriate requirements, and taught by educators who recognized the social needs of early adolescents. Lounsbury and Clark believed students should be given the opportunity to become involved in the learning process. They should be engaged in learning activities that focused on higher levels of intellectual behavior and analytical thinking. The curriculum should be relevant, and taught by educators who raise the level of expectations and excitement about school (Lounsbury & Clark, 1990).

In 1992, John Arnold delivered a paper, *A Curriculum to Empower Young Adolescents*, at the annual meeting of the National Middle School Association. Published the next year in *Midpoints*, a publication of the same organization, Arnold called for elimination
of the damaging stereotyping of adolescents. Stereotypes such as “weird, crazy, brain-dead, hormone-driven and in a world of their own” served only to ridicule and isolate adolescents (Arnold, 1993, p. 2). Arnold called for a curriculum grounded in a “positive view of young adolescents which respects their abilities and potential” (p. 7), a curriculum that allowed for “young adolescents to assume control of their own learning” (p. 7), to make sense of and understand their own place within the world, to contribute to the community and feel needed and useful, and to understand and eliminate the forces that were holding them back from fully developing as useful and productive members of society.

In 1995, the National Middle School Association established a committee to re-envision the middle school. Their final publication, *This We Believe: Developmentally Responsive Middle Level Schools*, restated the rationale for middle level schools. Additions to the previous position statement included a discussion of the changing society as it affected early adolescents: students confronted with conflicting messages about sexuality and appropriate behavior, change in the family structures, influence of the electronic and print media, a lack of social skills in youth, an indifference to learning, wide disparity in disposable incomes for adolescents (too much or none at all), an entertainment industry fostering superficial values, and negative influences that were confronting early adolescents. After identifying the problems facing early adolescents, the position paper called for six necessary characteristics of middle schools: educators committed to early adolescents, a shared vision, high expectations for all students, an adult advocate for each student, family and community partnerships, and a positive school climate. In addition to the organizational
and staffing characteristics, there were six program components that were identified as essential: challenging curriculum that is integrative and exploratory in nature, varied re-teaching and learning approaches, assessment methods that promote learning, comprehensive guidance and support services, flexible organizational structures, and programs that foster health, wellness, and safety (National Middle School Association, 1995).

In 1995 the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development published *Great Transitions: Preparing Adolescents for a New Century*, a follow-up report to *Turning Points*. This document outlined an approach to foster healthy development during adolescence. The report described six basic concepts about adolescence:

- early adolescence is a critical turning point in life’s pathway,
- education and healthy lifestyles and health care are linked,
- destructive behaviors in adolescence tend to cluster together,
- common underlying factors lead to problem behaviors,
- preventative interventions are more likely to be successful if they address the underlying factors,
- institutions that serve adolescents will be more successful working together.

The report went on to recommend ways to combat these problems: re-engage parents with their children, create developmentally appropriate schools, develop health promotion strategies, strengthen communities interactions, and promote the constructive potential of the media (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995). In addition, the observation was made that little progress had been made since the initial 1989 *Turning Points* report.
The Carnegie Council revisited *Turning Points* in 2000 with a follow-up study, the Middle Grades School State Policy Initiative. The purpose of this follow-up was to assess the implementation of their original recommendations, determine the nature and extent of the benefits from the implementations, and to present a “lessons learned” from this study and other improvement programs, as well as from current research in the field. Whereas the original *Turning Points* document gave a framework of recommendations, *Turning Points 2000* fleshed out the recommendations. This document provided a bridge between researchers and practitioner and provided a guide for practitioners on how to implement the original implications.

*Turning Points 2000* had a strong focus on curriculum, assessment, instruction in the classroom and defined the parameters of high-quality professional development as originally described the 1989 report. The authors pointed out that structural and organizational changes were not sufficient without an improvement in the teaching and learning. The original recommendations of *Turning Points* were:

- dividing large middle schools into smaller communities for learning,
- teaching a core curriculum to all students,
- providing a school organization to ensure success for all students,
- empowering principals and teachers with the responsibility and decision power to change the schooling for early adolescents,
- providing a flexible organization that maximizes the learning environment,
- establishing schools promoting good health,
• connecting families and communities with schools,
• establishing school and community partnerships in the education of students.

Turning Points 2000 made the point that all of these original recommendations were integral parts that, when changed, influenced the potency of the other recommendations. Turning Points 2000 cautioned that nothing should be adopted in isolation (Jackson, et. al., 2000, p. 2). The report went on to reiterate and refine the core values and the recommendations that had been discussed in the original document.

2000 to Present.

In 2001, the National Middle School Association produced a follow-up to their position statement issued in 1995 as This We Believe: Developmentally Responsive Middle Level Schools. In this new publication, This We Believe... And Now We Must Act, the committee provided concrete guidelines to implementing the previous report. It examined the entire middle school experience and gave in depth examples of each of the twelve characteristics that had been identified in the 1995 publication. The point was made that it was important to implement all of the elements of the reform and to maintain them over time in order to see successful student achievement (National Middle School Association, 2001).

January of 2002 saw the implementation of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, popularly known as No Child Left Behind (U. S. Department of Education, 2002). The underlying philosophy of the new legislation was to provide every student the opportunity to learn in a safe, supportive, standards-based environment. Patricia George, writing for the National Middle School Association, quickly brought to press an
analysis of what this new legislation would mean to middle schools. *No Child Left Behind: Implications for Middle Level Leaders* gave an overview of the legislation and the points of change for schools. These included:

- a stronger accountability by the implementation of a standards-based testing program for students in grades three through eight,
- an increased flexibility in the use of federal funds to achieve their goals,
- a provision of more information and options to parents,
- an emphasis on research-based teaching methods.

No Child Left Behind had many key programs:

- an emphasis on reading to attempt to increase the general level of reading and reduce the need for remedial reading instruction,
- a required participation of special programs students in grade level state assessments,
- a required participation of bilingual and limited English proficiency students in grade level state assessments
- an increase in the technology use within the classroom for students and teachers
- a provision that programs ensure that all schools are safe and drug free,
- and the increase of interaction between the school and the community.

The assessment portion of the legislation was of the most concern to school districts. One hundred percent of all students were required to be ranked as proficient (as defined by their state) by the academic year 2013-2014. Until the deadline, schools were required to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward the 100% proficiency requirement or face
interventions or severe sanctions if the mark is missed for more than two years (George, 2002). In addition, all students were tested according to the grade in which they were currently enrolled. No allowance was made for English as a second language status, special education status, or socially-promoted students who were known to be not on grade level.

In 2003, the National Middle School Association published two companion volumes to establish a vision to guide the decisions of those responsible for shaping educational programs for early adolescents, and to provide the research studies and related resources to support sound educational practices for early adolescents. Once more, the committee, writing for the association, stated the importance of implementing all together the twelve characteristic elements of a middle school, noting that all of the characteristics were interdependent.

The research volume made the point that solid research is the way to debunk the oft-stated myths that middle school programs are academically weak. This volume provided an operational definition of research as being original work that reports the methods and findings along with a systematic collection of data and analysis of the empirical data. It found that one of the major flaws in the middle school research was that so little of it is a replication of prior work, a necessity in order to validate previous research findings. Four major studies that examined the middle school concept as an integrated reform model and showed the effects on student academic and social-emotional performance were discussed in this volume (National Middle School Association, 2003a, 2003b). The conclusions that were drawn included:
• there are generally too few educational studies,
• the studies have weak research designs,
• there is a difficulty in comparing studies because of conflicting research designs,
• too little attention is paid to variables.

The future needs for research in this area included:
• large scale longitudinal studies,
• studies that combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies,
• studies that replicate previous methods and designs,
• a need to design and conduct more experimental studies that use randomization and controls,
• studies that examine more than one middle school reform recommendation,
• the need to create a national database of middle school research.

In 2005, the National Middle School Association built upon the work started in This We Believe...And Now We Must Act. In this new compilation, This We Believe in Action, each of the characteristics of a developmentally responsive middle school was spotlighted in a particular middle school throughout the country. This volume and the accompanying DVD provided an in-depth example of these characteristics in actual school settings. Erb, editor of This We Believe in Action, pointed out the need to stay the course in implementing developmentally responsive middle schools, especially in the face of today’s educational
reform movement. As the limitations and negative effects of educational reform by tests and sanctions become ever more apparent, and as further examples of marked success by middle grades schools that pursue vigorously this vision become known, the middle level movement will experience dramatic new acceptance. (Erb, 2005, p. 184)

*Breaking Ranks in the Middle: Strategies for Leading Middle Level Reform* was published in 2006 by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. This volume was intended to follow in the footsteps of *Breaking Ranks II*, which dealt with high school reform. The purpose of the publication was two-fold. It provided a method for high schools and middle schools to join forces in reform efforts, and it served as a field guide in implementing school reform and improvement. The publication included questions and answers from experts in the field of middle school education (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2006).

The National Middle School Association (2010) revisited their position statement in the publication, *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents*. This work updated and identified the key elements for early adolescents to become fully functioning members of society as well as to achieve self-actualization. In this more global focus on early adolescents, the authors indicate that adolescents should become actively aware of the world surrounding them, ask significant relevant questions, think rationally and critically, express themselves clearly, read deeply, use technology to explore their world, and become good stewards of the earth.
Educational Theorists Who Shaped Middle School Philosophy

John Dewey.

John Dewey was one of the leading thinkers of his time. He is known as the Father of American Education.

The focus on change in the public school system that was occurring in 1888 piqued Dewey’s interest in the philosophy of education, especially in writing a philosophy of pedagogy (Jackson, 1992). His 1897 article, My Pedagogic Creed, said a great deal about his ideas regarding how teachers should address education. He saw teachers as perpetual students of the field of teaching, always observing, analyzing, and reflecting on their classroom and their teaching. “I believe that only through the continual and sympathetic observation of childhood’s interests can the adult enter into the child’s life and see what it is ready for, and upon what material it could work most readily and fruitfully” (Dewey, 1897, p. 15).

Dewey’s referred to his educational modification of the philosophy of Pragmatism as Instrumentalism. Pragmatism believes that truth is modified as discoveries are made and is relative to the time and place and purpose of inquiry. Instrumentalism believes that the various modes and forms of human activity are instruments developed by human beings to solve multiple individual and social problems. Dewey saw the schools as a vehicle for students to experiment with ideas and truths in order to integrate culture and a vocation effectively. His books of this time, School and Society in 1899, and The Child and the Curriculum in 1902, outline his views of what the school should be and how the schools
should serve the child. He describes a school setting that would be embraced in the middle school model through the ideas of an integrated curriculum with students involved in the selection of the big ideas to study in cooperative learning groups.

The mere absorption of facts and truths is so exclusively individual an affair that it tends very naturally to pass into selfishness. There is no obvious social motive for the acquisition of mere learning, there is no clear social gain in success thereat. Indeed almost the only measure for success is a competitive one, in the bad sense of that term – a comparison of results in the recitation or in the examination to see which child has succeeded in getting ahead of others in storing up, in accumulating the maximum of information. So thoroughly is this the prevalent atmosphere that for one child to help another in his task has become a school crime. Where the school work consists in simply learning lessons, mutual assistance, instead of being the most natural form of cooperation and association, becomes a clandestine effort to relieve one’s neighbor of his proper duties. Where active work is going on all this is changed. Helping others, instead of being a form of charity which impoverishes the recipient, is simply an aid in setting free the powers and furthering the impulse of the one helped. A spirit of free communication, of interchange of ideas, suggestions, results, both successes and failures of previous experiences, becomes the dominating note of the recitation. So far as emulation enters in, it is in the comparison of individuals, not with regard to the quantity of information personally absorbed, but with reference to the quality of work done – the genuine community standard of value. In an informal but all the more
pervasive way, the school life organizes itself on a social basis. (Dewey, 1899, pp. 29-30)

In 1916, Dewey published his most well known book, *Democracy and Education*. Dewey saw democracy as a primary ethical value that was applicable in all situations, not the least of which being within the classroom. This book demonstrated the application of his philosophy of education, including the rights of the child in the schoolroom and freedom within the classroom.

*John Lounsbury.*

John Lounsbury is one of the founding fathers of the middle school movement. He, more than any other person, has researched and written about the implementation of the philosophy of middle school as a whole rather than dissecting the individual components that make up that philosophy. One of Lounsbury’s first publications concerned the junior high school’s inability to have reached the original goals for this institution. The junior high school model began to wane in the 1940’s. Lounsbury supported the junior high school model by pointing out the major shift that education at-large was overlooking. “Though the junior high school was originally conceived and carried out as a downward extension of secondary education, the modern junior high school – despite its label – now appears to be increasingly an upward extension of elementary education” (Lounsbury, 1998a, p. 103). Lounsbury noted the organizational elements that held back the junior high movement: inadequate facilities, a lack of standards, a lack of prestige among educators, an attitude that the institution was simply a junior member of the schooling team, and a lack of specialized teachers.
The preparation of junior high school teachers is the ‘blind spot’ in teacher education. While the colleges are partially at fault for this state of affairs, they are by no means completely responsible for it. Certification requirements are vague, overlapping, or nonexistent with respect to junior-high-school teachers. (Lounsbury, 1998b, pp. 108-109)

As the editor of the *Middle School Journal* for fourteen years, Lounsbury had multiple opportunities to comment on current issues in the middle school arena. He often issued calls for action in support of middle school education.

Middle school educators must not sit back and bemoan the inadequate understandings of early adolescence. Rather they must assume a proactive posture. The heart of the middle school movement is in serious jeopardy as recommendations for the high school are misapplied to the middle level. (Lounsbury, 1991, p. 2)

He called for the commitment of educators and school to the philosophy that surrounds middle school to declare themselves.

I do believe we ought to, individually as teachers and collectively as faculties, commit our basic beliefs to writing. Putting your philosophy in writing is not just a nice idea or something you have to do as part of a self-study. It is a basic and necessary step in the process of achieving a truly effective school. A vibrant, widely accepted, and clear philosophy is a distinguishing characteristic of such schools. Certainly just writing out one’s beliefs is not enough, but the chances of implementing a philosophy that has not been put down in black and white are slight.
So wrestle with your set of middle school beliefs, firm up your educational philosophy, and put it in writing. (Lounsbury, 1991, p. 4)

Lounsbury’s largest contribution to the field is his presence on every committee selected to re-examine and re-issue the position statements for the National Middle School Association since first release in 1982. His understanding of the need for all elements of the philosophy to be implemented at the same time is clear in his writings. For middle school, the whole is truly greater than the sum of its parts.

*James Beane.*

James Beane is best known for his work in middle school integrated curriculum design. In 1990, his publication, *A Middle School Curriculum: From Rhetoric to Reality,* was published by the National Middle School Association. Three years later the second edition of this book was released (Beane, 1993). Beane’s work calls for an approach to curriculum that is based on:

- a general education focus assisting early adolescents to explore self and interactions with others,
- a respect for the dignity and diversity of early adolescents,
- a classroom that practices democratic principles,
- a curriculum of great personal and social significance, relevant and integrated into life,
- a teaching and learning approach that enhances knowledge and skills for all students.

Beane, like Dewey before him, believes that teachers and students must both be
involved deeply in the development of the curriculum, “A curriculum developed apart from the teachers and young people who must live it is grossly undemocratic” (Beane, 1993, p. 16). The integrated curriculum that Beane supports is one that is based on the intersection of personal concerns and social issues. The tenets of an integrated curriculum are four fold: students ask the “Big Question” that drives the pursuit of knowledge; teachers use differentiated instruction (teaching approach, variety of assignments, multiple ways of assessments) that reaches all students at their particular level of interest and ability; there is continuous informal assessment of learning; and students present their final projects to the group as a whole. In order to explore in depth a topic that is of interest to the students as well as of concern to society, students must have skills to complete their investigations. Students must have the ability to think reflectively, to problem solve, to make critical judgments on the morality of situations, to identify and clarify their personal beliefs, to describe and evaluate their personal interests, to understand meaning in a diversity of cultures, and to actively participate in social action. Beane points out that some people may feel that students do not have the skills needed for this type of higher order inquiry. He disagrees.

A more accurate line of reasoning is that early adolescents may not have these skills for precisely the reason that they have been taught in isolated parts of the program where they are removed from functional application. … maybe more early adolescents than we think have certain skills – they just do not demonstrate them in our version of the curriculum. (Beane, 1993, p. 63)
Beane distinguishes between integrated curriculum based on a theme and multidisciplinary or thematic instruction. Teachers are often asked to produce integrated units and mistakenly produce thematic units, which require little to no integration of the subject areas. Beane provides guidance in distinguishing between these two different approaches. Thematic or multidisciplinary instruction is not an integrated curriculum. In thematic instruction, a theme is selected and each subject teacher makes that the focus of the instruction within the classroom for the specified period of the unit. Many schools have units set aside for what they have incorrectly termed integrated curriculum units. Often teachers rebel at having to take time away from their curriculum to participate in these contrived thematic units.

It is worth noting that subject-loyal teachers frequently rebel more over the prospect of a real integration of knowledge. This is probably due to the fact that multidisciplinary arrangements retain the identities of subjects and, therefore, imply no changes in content coverage or sequence. (Beane, 1997a, p. 13)

Integrated curriculum based on a theme is a completely different focus. The theme remains the overall goal within a unit of study, but there is input on the part of the students, as to the theme’s big ideas that must be explored (Alexander et.al., 1995). The focus then turns to exploring these big ideas in relationship to the theme and to the other concepts through whatever classes one attends. The disciplines are not ends unto themselves, but are the tools used to investigate the big questions asked of the theme.

In curriculum integration, planning begins with a central theme and proceeds outward
through identification of big ideas or concepts related to the theme and activities that might be used to explore them. This planning is done without regard for subject-area lines since the overriding purpose is to explore the theme itself. (Beane, 1997a, p. 10)

Beane challenges us to make this approach to curriculum the driving force in a middle school environment.

Practically any document prepared under the regime of federal or state standards continues the Perennialist and Essentialist purposes of subject and skill mastery. And the contemporary work around progressive curriculum integration carries forward the theme of democratic education and the 'core' curriculum. (Beane, 1997b, p. 205)

The curriculum should not fit itself into the schedule, teacher’s planning periods, the grouping of students, the assessment of work products; instead all of these elements fit themselves around the curriculum and are flexible enough to change as needed. Teachers will have to become more comfortable with change and with listening to the ideas of students as planning tools. “To implement the new curriculum the role conception of teachers would have to change considerably” (Beane, 1993b, p. 90).

Gordon Vars.

Gordon Vars focused on the education of the people who would teach in middle schools. Vars bears the distinction of being the first president of the National Middle School Association in 1972.

Vars major contribution to the field of middle school education lies in his research in training pre-service middle school teachers in developmentally appropriate pedagogy. Even
before middle school formation, Vars objected to the idea of restricted licensure of junior high school. Instead, he called for overlapping licensing (K-9 or 6-12) with endorsements in junior high school fields (Vars, 1998a). Vars has a clear preference for elementary trained teachers in the junior high model and in the middle schools that followed them. “As we have seen, some of the ills of the junior high are attributed to the fact that they are staffed primarily with secondary teachers, presumably rather narrowly trained and concerned mainly with subject matter” (Vars, 1998b, p. 217).

Vars supported the middle school concept of every student having an adult advocate (Lipka, et.al., 1998, p. 141). A commitment on the part of the teacher advocate was seen as necessary and the willingness of the teacher to participate was critical (Vars, 1989).

*Thomas Erb.*

Thomas Erb, editor of the *Middle School Journal* for many years, focused his research on the organization of teachers into interdisciplin ary teams. Erb believes that the ability of teachers to work together in interdisciplinary teams is one of the chief determinants of a successful middle school.

When the complexity of teaching is acknowledged so that teachers come to believe that their effective functioning is dependent on reciprocal relationships with teammates, then teachers will work together to create unique pedagogical solutions for the learning problems that their students present them. (Erb, 2004, p. 37)

Erb points out that all interdisciplinary teams will have to move through stages of adjustment and growth in order to maximize their effect with students. Teams must learn to
handle the organizational structure before they can move on to integrating their curriculum areas. Teams need more than one year to move through these stages, and should be given the time and the resources to develop fully before changes are made (Erb & Doda, 1989).

John Arnold.

In addition to his groundbreaking white paper, *A Curriculum to Empower Young Adolescents*, one of Arnold’s major contributions to the field of middle school education is in the actualization of the teaching team organization. He provides teachers with the tools to build and maintain a successful interdisciplinary team.

John Arnold’s focus on middle school teams supports the work of Tom Erb. Arnold identifies many advantages that teaching teams have:

- Teams can create personal atmosphere and positive climate where risk taking is appreciated.
- Teachers are cognizant of student needs, interests, and abilities and can create activities that address these areas.
- Teachers can collaboratively plan and implement special activities thanks to flexibility of time and groupings (Arnold, 2004, p. 443).

Arnold stresses the need to form teams of teachers of similar educational philosophy. “Team selection is critical to all aspects of teaming and particularly to curriculum. Keeping overall school equity in mind, teachers with reasonably compatible philosophies of education should be grouped together” (Arnold, 2004, p. 444). Arnold suggests the two or three teacher team structure in order to decrease the number of students assigned to the team and to decrease the
number of teachers interacting in decisions. He also indicates the need for improvement in the manner in which teams are developed, “studies indicate that the majority of teams in most middle schools are not coming close to maximizing their full potential” (Arnold & Stevenson, 1998, p. 3). In order to maximize their potential, teams need a philosophy that guides the team, a mission, and daily standards that are adhered to by all members. Teams that are able not only to develop a philosophy, mission, and standards, but are also able to communicate these clearly to colleagues, students, administrators, and parents will improve their effectiveness throughout the school year.

Once established, teams must develop a team vision. “A team vision defines its ideals in writing – a team vision, of necessity, involves each other’s personal aspirations and necessitate compromise. Voting has no place in the visionary process because split votes about fundamental issues inevitably lead to dissension” (Arnold & Stevenson, 1998, p. 51). It is important that teams be allowed to create their own vision and not have to simply adopt a school dictated vision, “a variety of team visions is to be expected in a single school” (Arnold & Stevenson, 1998, p. 51).

Charity James.

James’ major contribution to the field of middle school education is the understanding of the needs of adolescents. Charity James, a British educational theorist, developed the Needs Polarity Theory. This theory explains the twelve psychological and developmental needs of adolescents in terms of six continua with the intensity levels of the needs in constant movement along each continuum from one extreme to the other (James, 1974).
The twelve needs are paired with their polar opposites, two on each continuum:

- Need to be Needed – Need to Need,
- Need to Move Inwards – Need to Affect the Outer World,
- Need for Intensity – Need for Routine,
- Need for Physical Activity - Need for Stillness,
- Need for Separateness – Need for Belonging,
- Need for Myth and Legend – Need for Fact.

Each student is constantly shifting his or her needs as those needs are met or unmet along the continuum. In addition, students’ needs shift depending on the needs others have in the classroom. This constant adjustment of each individual need, for each student, provides the foundation of a middle school classroom. The balancing act for a middle school is to provide an education that will address the constant adjustment of the needs for each student so that all of the students’ needs are met.

Self-discovery and self-actualization are undoubtedly central life-tasks for adolescents, but it is perhaps useful to suggest to teachers that they will be best achieved in a school which acknowledges a need to be needed, a need to need, a need for myth, a need for intensity, a need to relate with adults. (James, 1974, p. 18)

It is important for the team teachers to understand James’ theory and the needs of adolescents as they interact with students. Teachers who do not acknowledge these needs will create a discordant environment with the students, which in turn influences the interactions with other team teachers.
Summary.

Middle school pioneers provide a foundation upon which to build an educational system that maximizes the potential of early adolescents. These visionaries of middle grades education understood the social, emotional, physical, and academic needs of early adolescents. Together they defined and established the means to successful and productive education of our youth. John Dewey focuses on academic experimentation and active learning by the child within the classroom setting. Lounsbury opposed the cafeteria-style picking and choosing of various essential components and the discarding of those deemed too difficult to implement. Beane and Arnold stand firm on the need for curriculum to mirror the needs and interests of the adolescent and for the adolescent to be empowered through their own contribution to the specifics of the instruction of that curriculum. Vars supports the middle school student by ensuring that those who teach them are the best trained for the job, understanding not only a subject area, but also the students who are entrusted to their care. Erb and Arnold provided guidance on the formation, organization, and daily routine interactions of integrated teaching teams. James’ work provides a cautionary note to educators on the intricacies not only of working with a single adolescent, but the need for understanding how the interactions of adolescents within a classroom must be considered in order to bring about the best possible education for all students.

Selection of a Survey Instrument

In examining the interactions and inter-relations among the teachers on a middle school team, it is important to first establish the underlying educational philosophy for each
of the individual teachers. In order to accomplish this goal, a standard instrument was selected. This instrument enables comparisons on philosophies to be drawn based on a consistent set of understandings. Five different survey instruments that purport to measure the educational philosophies of teachers were considered for this study.

**Criteria for Selection of a Suitable Instrument.**

The initial criteria for the selected survey instrument took into account the need to be administered to several middle school teachers as a part of an academic semester-long case study. The teachers would begin the data collection for the case study by answering the questions of the survey instrument in order to establish an individual educational philosophy.

It was established that the survey instrument should have:

- clear and simple directions that can be understood without a second party to explain the method for selecting an answer.
- questions that are relevant to a modern middle school setting, students, and teachers.
- a scoring system that is understandable for correctly scoring the survey instruments and that provides for differentiation between individuals with different educational philosophies.
- a delivery system that is comfortable for the individuals participating in the survey administration.
Instruments Considered for Use.

There were five instruments that were reviewed for possible use in this study.

1) Philosophy of Education Inventory (Zinn, 1999)

2) The Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory (Cook, Leeds, & Callis, 1951).


4) Teaching Perspectives Inventory (Collins, Selinger, & Pratt, 2003)

5) Education Philosophy Inventory (Leahy, 2004)

Philosophy of Education Inventory.

Background of Instrument Selected.

The Philosophy of Education Inventory (PEI) was designed in 1999 by Lorraine M. Zinn (Zinn, 1999) and is included in the appendix of the book, Awakening the Sleeping Giant (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). The publication of this inventory in Katzenmeyer’s book has clearly given this particular inventory a widespread audience that will be very familiar with the questions and the designations of Behavioral, Comprehensive, Progressive, Humanistic, and Social Change educational philosophies. Zinn’s purpose with this inventory is to provide educators with a simple method of clarifying their personal educational philosophy in a manner that “links beliefs and values to educational decisions and practices” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 142). Zinn sees the inventory as a method for opening up conversations among our colleagues on why we teach the way we do, not simply as a way to label ourselves based on an educational philosophy.

The PEI is designed as fifteen partial statements (stems) with five different endings.
For each ending the individual is asked to select a number on a seven digit Likert scale indicating the degree of agreement or disagreement with the ending to the stem. This format produces seventy-five responses for evaluation, despite appearing to only ask fifteen questions. The language of the inventory is accessible to all while remaining professional in the focus.

The scoring of the inventory uses a matrix format that indicates the degree to which each of the five philosophies is developed within the individual completing the inventory. This information can then be analyzed and a comparison made between a set of colleagues in order to differentiate between members of a teaching team.

The majority of Zinn’s work is with the PAEI, the Philosophy of Adult Education Inventory, which was not an appropriate choice for this middle-grade based research study. However, with the PEI, Zinn discusses the possibility of using this instrument as a method of establishing your individual educational philosophy and exploring “how your personal educational philosophy may be well suited - or perhaps not the best match – for the educational setting in which you work for a team-teaching approach” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 165). The mentioning of the team-teaching approach is most appropriate for a middle-school team situation and this research study.

Suitability for Use.

Zinn’s instrument provides contemporary language that is familiar and comfortable for the participants. The sensitivity of the inventory is the largest point in favor of the selection of this instrument. The stem format reinforces the philosophy selection by having
the participant react to each measured philosophical concept for each question. This format provides a more sensitive reading of the individual’s educational philosophy orientation. The ability to analyze the subtle differences between individuals completing the inventory appeals as a data collection tool. The ability for team-teachers to identify subtle differences between their own educational philosophy and a teammate that seems very much like them may generate conversations that are extremely useful to the body of research. Conversely, polar opposites will still be able to see that there are some areas that engender common ideas and ideals despite their differences. The matrix format of the scoring allows for both of these situations to be maximized in the score reports.

Zinn’s PEI was administered in both a paper format and an electronic format. The scoring matrix was not sent to the participants when the inventory was given to the subjects. The individual completing the inventory submitted the inventory to the researcher for scoring. In this way, the researcher avoided the problems that are inherent in individuals wanting to skew the results to reflect a more desirable educational philosophy if they have seen the scoring parameters in advance.

The instructions are clear and the format for selecting an answer is easy to complete and unlikely to lead to confusion on the answer selection. The researcher prior to this study used this instrument in a pilot study. Visually monitoring the instrument for completion and redirecting attention to blank questions before accepting the inventory from the participants avoided problems with answer selection in the pilot study. Zinn’s instrument meets the criteria for selection as a primary instrument for identification of an educational philosophy.
Summary

Philosophy drives every part of the middle school program. An understanding of the middle school program itself is based in the philosophy of the education of early adolescents, of the understanding of the physical changes during adolescence, of the social and emotional connections for adolescents, of their dependence on family and peers yet their need for independence as they become a part of the world surrounding them. In addition, the program must provide a curriculum that is global in perspective, relevant and timely, but rigorous in scope while being differentiated for all of their individual needs. The individual philosophies of the teachers and administrators that are responsible for teaching early adolescents interact on a daily basis. The interactions with their colleagues, parents, and students are driven by these educational philosophies. An understanding of these philosophies and the consequent interactions determines the effectiveness of our teachers, their overall satisfaction with their careers, and our ability to prepare students for the future. This research seeks 1) to examine how these philosophies interact within a middle school team and 2) what conclusions can be drawn when teachers examine and are aware of each other’s educational philosophies.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the interactions of middle school teachers whose educational philosophies may or may not be compatible. Four key questions framed this study:

1. What are the educational philosophies of the participants as indicated by the educational philosophy inventory?
2. Does the educational philosophy as measured by the inventory align with the teacher’s perception of his or her own educational philosophy?
3. What factors contribute to the development and refinement of the general educational philosophy for each teacher?
4. In what ways do the educational philosophies of the middle school team teachers manifest themselves during interactions within the team over a semester of time?

Rationale for the Selection of a Case Study Method of Research

Creswell (2007) describes case study research as the examination of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system. The purpose of this research study was to examine the interactions of middle school teachers teamed together for an academic year, all of whom have unique and personal educational philosophies. Within this research, the issue is the interaction of educational philosophies, and the bounded system was the middle school team structure.
Middle school academic teams are generally selected by the principal of the school (the administrator) based on licensure areas, number of years of experience, gender (for example: spreading out male faculty among the teams), and personalities (if the person is known to the administrator). Rarely are educational philosophies taken into consideration, simply because the certification issue alone often is the driving factor (P. Hamler, personal communication, January 2010). The purpose of this case study was not to form a basis for generalization to other existing teams, but to study in detail the interactions of the team as those interactions pertain to the interplay of the educational philosophies. Stake (1995) makes the point that, “We do not study a case primarily to understand other cases. Our first obligation is to understand this one case” (p. 4). This study therefore focused on a single middle school academic team.

Middle school teams usually stay together for an academic year or longer depending on the stability of a school in terms of student membership numbers, administrator turnover, and faculty turnover. It is not unusual for academic teams to be changed every year. Therefore, the selection of a period of one semester gave a reasonable approximation of the time that these selected teachers would normally have to adjust to each other and form a cohesive working team.

The case study design for this research may be further described as a longitudinal embedded single-case study because the individual team teachers are each viewed as a “distinct unit of analysis” that were examined at different points in time. Yin (2009) gives a rationale for the further description needed in this case by stating that within embedded case
studies the same single-case study may involve more than one unit of analysis in which instance attention is also given to a subunit (p. 50). The case may be called a longitudinal case when one is studying the same single case at two or more different points in time (Yin, 2009, p. 49). Specifically, individual teachers were examined for the identification of their educational philosophy and the manifestations of this philosophy at three specific points in time: beginning of the academic year, at the mid-point of the first semester, and the end of the first semester.

_Pilot Study_

In preparation for this research study, a pilot study was conducted in the fall semester of 2007. The purpose of the pilot study was to “refine [the] data collection plans with respect to both the content of the data and the procedures to be followed” (Yin, 2009, p. 92). The pilot study centered on interviews with three team teachers on the topic of their own educational philosophy. All teachers were asked to complete a survey of educational philosophies and to provide student assignments that were original and created individually. The participants submitted these assignments as the most representative of their own teaching and educational philosophy. The documents were analyzed to identify how closely they matched the identified educational philosophy from the survey.

The pilot study results showed that the development of personal educational philosophies of teachers who came from first generation college families were influenced by their own middle school experiences. The teachers were surprised, and pleased, at how closely the inventory matched their own perceived educational philosophy. The assignments
that teachers submitted as the best indicators of their own educational philosophy best matched the philosophical tenets when the results had indicated a strong match with an educational philosophy.

*Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical framework that underpins all of this research is that of the middle school philosophy. Middle school philosophy is detailed through the National Middle School Association’s publication, *This We Believe* (National Middle School Association, 1982/1992) and the updated publication, *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents* (National Middle School Association, 2010).

True middle schools, the ones that espouse the philosophical tenets in *This We Believe*, believe in instruction that is integrative in nature and centered on the development of the young adolescent, as he or she becomes a productive member of society. True middle schools have a team structure focused on collaboration and integration of subjects. Individual members of that team respect and work with individuals with different educational beliefs. The individual teachers of a middle school form a collective whole that espouses general educational beliefs tied to the specifics of a middle school philosophy. True middle schools have teachers who believe in authentic work products and meaningful educational experiences that include an active parent and community involvement component.

For middle school teachers to be considered true middle school professionals they must have an understanding of middle school philosophy and have integrated it into their own educational philosophy.
Site Selection for the Case Study

For this study, a team of teachers at a middle school in the central region of an eastern state was approached to participate in the case study. The school district was relatively close in proximity to the researcher and allowed for travel to and from the site during a routine academic day for observations and interviews. The researcher has never been employed in this school district, making it unlikely that there would be connections to the researcher that might influence the data collection. The selected school district has approximately 31,000 students and over 4,200 employees. There are nine designated middle schools that have a sixth, seventh, eighth grade configuration within this district. Any of the nine designated middle schools (6-8) were considered appropriate for the study since their configurations adhered to the tenets of middle school philosophy. When permission was requested for the research study, the selected school was recommended by the superintendent of the school system.

Sample Selection for the Case Study

The sample selection for this study was purposefully selected to provide for an information-rich case (Patton, 2002). The principal of the selected middle school gave a recommendation of which teachers to approach, based on their willingness to participate in the research study. The unit for analysis was “people focused,” in that the individual members of the middle school team were studied as they interacted with other members of the team. The middle school team selection was chosen to represent typical case sampling. A standard sixth, seventh, eighth grade middle school configuration was selected to remove any
overshadowing effects to the research that might have occurred with a non-standard grade configuration.

The sample selection for the case study included one team of three teachers representing the core disciplines - humanities, science, and mathematics teaching during the 2010-2011 academic year. Each teacher was responsible only for his or her own discipline and there was no expectation that two teachers would be teaching the same subject area. The humanities class combined the subject areas of language arts and social studies into one subject class.

Data Collection

Qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus. However, the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomena in question. Objective reality can never be captured. Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation but an alternative to validation. The combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, and depth to any investigation. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2)

This study examined an elusive and constantly refining phenomenon, the educational philosophy of a person. It is necessary to look not only at the philosophy itself but also at the evidence of the presence of the philosophy. Therefore, several types of data must be examined in the search for this evidence. A qualitative research approach was selected in order to examine those traces of evidence.
Data were collected from a variety of sources (richness) in order to provide for depth (thickness) of evidence of both the individual’s educational philosophy and of the middle grade teachers as a team. There are several categories of data collection that are a part of this research study. These categories include 1) Interviews, 2) Surveys, 3) Student Assignments, and 4) Field observations.

Interviews were both structured and open-ended depending on the topic of the interview. The **structured interview format** was used once at the beginning of the academic year for the participants to identify for the researcher their background in middle school teaching and to discuss the results of the educational philosophy inventory. The **open-ended interview format** was administered two times during the study. The topics covered included instructional and grading practices, participant’s interactions with colleagues, an understanding of the generational characteristics of colleagues, and an understanding of middle school philosophy. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Field observations were completed for three classroom observations of an unannounced lesson observation (one for each participant), one team meeting, and one unannounced observation of an Academic Advisement meeting. Two of the participants offered copies of assignments that they had designed for their specific courses to be used in the research.

A Philosophy of Education Inventory and a Curriculum Delivery Methods (Table 9) survey were administered to the teaching participants. Although a quantitative approach was used in the inventory administered to participants at the beginning of the research, this is not
the main focus of the study. Naming the educational philosophy neither enhances nor detracts from the study. The focus and interest of the study is in the evidence of that philosophy in the interactions, the work products, and the environment that the teachers create. The survey for this research study was The Philosophy of Education Inventory designed by Lorraine Zinn (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). The purpose of the Curriculum Delivery Methods survey was to determine how closely the instructional methodologies and grading practices of the individual participant matched the espoused philosophy of the participant. In advance of the initial interviews with the teaching participants, inventories were sent by both email and regular mail in order to allow for participant preference in completing the materials. The submission of surveys before the first interview allowed the researcher to share results with the teaching participants during the first interview.

Selection of Instrument

Lorraine Zinn’s Philosophy of Education Inventory was the most appropriate selection for the research. The statements are arranged so that every educational philosophy has a representative statement requiring a response for each of the fifteen categories. This organization does not require that an individual choose between one philosophy and another, it simply expresses the idea in the terms of each philosophy and asks for a response from the individual. This effect creates a statement not only about the dominant educational philosophy, but indicates the understanding and level of agreement with all of the different philosophies. The statements for the Zinn inventory are expressed in a language that is understandable and in terms that relate to a modern school situation.
The instructions and the introductory paragraphs explaining the purpose of the inventory are easy to read and understand. The hand scoring that is required yielded additional information that is available through the matrix scoring system. The ability to deliver the inventory in a hard copy format or in an electronic format allowed for flexibility depending on the preferences of the individuals who participated in the case study.

The Zinn inventory met all of the requirements for selection that were established in the initial criteria. Permission from the Copyright Clearance Center was secured for inclusion of this inventory in the research.

Data Analysis

The data were stored and analyzed using the NVivo 9 computer program (Welsh, 2002). The researcher gained familiarity with NVivo 7 computer program during the pilot study in 2007 and that familiarity provided a valuable asset in the start-up time for the data analysis. However, to further understand the flexibility of the computer analysis possibilities, the researcher attended an intensive workshop presented by QSR International specifically for researchers using NVivo 9. This computer program allows for the uploading and storage of multi-media data within a case analysis template. The volunteered lesson plans, transcribed interviews, field notes from the observations, as well as the raw data from the surveys was able to be quickly uploaded and integrated into the software program. Memos and notes by the researcher were also recorded and stored as a part of the data analysis. Open source coding was able to be done on all data sources and comparisons between the documents completed as a function of the software.
The researcher scored the inventories and surveys using the scoring instructions included with the inventory. Individual responses were plotted on a matrix provided with the PEI instrument and the numerical values tabulated. The resulting scores were plotted within a range of values for each of the educational philosophies allowing for an identification of the strongest philosophy for the individual.

Interviews were analyzed by thematic approach using the research techniques of Fontana and Frey (2003). The first stage of the analysis began with open coding based on the key elements of educational philosophy and interactions within the teachers on the middle school team (LeCompte, 2000). Anticipated themes, or categories, for analyzing the interviews included: cooperative planning, team identity, feelings of belonging, adolescent development, and curriculum overlaps. As the interviews were transcribed and coded, more detailed themes were identified and included. Interviews were coded twice in order to find any themes overlooked from the first coding. The results of the multiple codings were merged and duplicates discarded. Researcher-created nodes were arranged into related categories and relationship trees were constructed (Tree Nodes) for comparison of data (Welsh, 2002). The relationship trees were used to construct an interpretation of the influence of educational philosophy on the interactions among team members (Welsh, 2002).

Sample student assignments and anecdotal field observations of team meetings and interactions within the classroom were treated only as supplemental data.

*Research Validity and Reliability*

The multiple data sources of this study provide for triangulation of the data.
Triangulation of data is a technique whose purpose is to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic in order to more fully understand the topic of the research (Morse, 1991, p. 122). In this research study, the triangulation comes through the analysis of the survey and inventory, structured and open-ended interviews, field observation of the team meetings and classroom interactions, and sample assignments.

For the purposes of the inventory, the reliability and validity measures were obtained on the instrument from the author’s initial work.

Johnson and Turner (2003) indicated the following strengths of interviews (p. 308) in qualitative research:

1. Good for measuring attitudes and most other content of interest.
2. Allow probing by the interviewer.
3. Can provide in-depth information.
4. Allow good interpretative validity.
5. Low dross rate (trivial or unusable material) for closed-ended interviews.
6. Very quick turnaround for telephone interviews.
7. Moderately high measurement validity for well-constructed and well-tested interview protocols.
8. Can use with probability sample.
9. Relatively high response rate often attainable.
10. Useful for exploration and confirmation.
Interview weaknesses were indicated to be:

1. In-person interviews expensive and time-consuming.
2. Possible reactive and investigator effects.
3. Perceived anonymity by respondents possibly low.
4. Data analysis sometimes time-consuming for open-ended items.

Johnson and Turner (2003) indicate the following strengths for observational data (p. 315) such as would be collected by field observation of classroom interactions and team meetings:

1. Allow one to directly see what people do without having to rely on what they say they do.
2. Allow relatively objective measurement of behavior.
3. Can be used with participants with weak verbal skills.
4. Good for description.
5. Can give access to contextual factors operating in natural social settings
6. Moderate degree of realism (when done outside of the laboratory).

The following weaknesses of observational data are reported by Johnson and Turner:

1. Reason for behavior possibly unclear.
2. Possible reactive and investigator effects when respondents know they are being observed.
3. Possibility of observer being biased (selective perception).
4. Possibility of observer “going native” (over-identifying with the group being studied).
5. Interpretive validity possibly low.
6. Cannot observe large populations.

7. Unable to observe some content of interest.

8. Dross rate (trivial or unusable material) possibly moderately high.

9. More expensive to conduct than questionnaires and tests.

10. Data analysis sometimes time-consuming.

The validity and reliability of the interviews and the transcriptions of the videotapes are addressed using the techniques recommended by Altheide and Johnson (1994). These techniques include interviews being coded at least twice in order to assure consistency of coding and member or participant checks conducted with each participant for each type of data. Each participant was provided with a complete set of transcripts and the opportunity to remove any or all information from the study.

The validity of field observations is very low according to Johnson and Turner (2003) and is only used as supplemental data.

Ethical Issues

This study did not proceed without the permission of the internal review board that oversees all research at North Carolina State University. Participants were all volunteers and signed a consent form before participation in the study assuring their privacy and confidentiality of all data sources. All documents were coded so that the use of names is unnecessary. Student names or photographs were not necessary in this study. Names were changed for teachers, schools, districts, and any other identifiable entity. Participants were allowed to leave the study at any point in time. Data is password secured and is not available.
on a network server.

Participants were asked to participate in member checking of all data before any publication and had the ability to remove their data before any publication.

Limitations of the Study

Generalizability will always be a limitation of a qualitative research study. It is not the purpose of this study to attempt to generalize to a larger population, but instead to explore in some depth the factors that contribute to the interactions of an educational philosophy within the team structure of middle school and to begin the process of developing theories on team formation based on the educational philosophy. This case study is limited to three core teachers from a middle school with three interview visits throughout the fall semester of September 2010 to January 2011. Additional field observations of team meetings and classroom interactions as well as the review of voluntarily provided student assignments was necessary to flesh out the picture of these individuals in order to begin to draw comparisons and conclusions on this data.

The participants were all volunteers with no control by the researcher of race and gender, so differences in race and gender are not explored in this study. Other factors that may limit the study include the ages of the participants, socio-economic background, and the number of years in the teaching field. The participants did not represent a complete age range, or a complete representation of a range of teaching experiences (different districts or states, teaching in different grade levels). The certifications that these teachers held were planned to be a representative sample of the core teaching areas which could include
language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science, but not inclusive of all possible certifications available to these participants. This particular team configuration is also not the only acceptable team configuration that still adheres to middle school philosophy and so there cannot be a generalization to all possible team configurations or to all certification areas. Advanced certification through National Board Certification or through mentor certification may or may not be present with the participants, which would have an effect on their own self-analysis and self-reflection process that may be lacking in other participants.

Summary

The methods selected for this study provide for a complete overview of the teachers involved through the examination of their educational philosophies and how those educational philosophies interact with other teachers and their educational philosophies. Through this detailed look, we can draw conclusions that can be used to examine ramifications of middle grades teaming selections and the resulting situations and structures that determine the academic experiences for students and teachers alike. Theories may be generated based on the analysis of this data regarding the possible optimization of team structure by administrators who use identified educational philosophies to build their team of teachers.
CHAPTER FOUR
Findings and Analysis

This chapter explores the philosophical makeup of the teachers on a middle school teaching team. The research was conducted over the time period of one semester. Subjects were examined based on four research questions.

1. What are the educational philosophies of the participants as indicated by the educational philosophy inventory?

2. Does the educational philosophy as measured by the inventory align with the teacher’s perception of his or her own educational philosophy?

3. What factors contribute to the development and refinement of the general educational philosophy for each teacher?

4. In what ways do the educational philosophies of the middle school team teachers manifest themselves during interactions within the team over a semester of time?

The Participants

The individuals participating in this case study were three middle school teachers teamed together for the first time during the academic year 2010-2011. All names have been changed for the participants, the individuals that are referenced by the participants, as well as the school, any other locations, and the school district itself. The school is a suburban middle school built in 1991 that currently houses 750 students. Class sizes average 24 students and this particular team has 76 students. Each teacher teaches three subject-area classes and an advisor-advisee group. The advisee group has about 15 students from a mixture of grade
levels. Table 7 (Appendix) is a summative table of participant characteristics but are described in more detail in these profiles.

Aaron

Aaron is a 30-year-old third-year science teacher. Throughout the interviews and observations, he was enthusiastic, cooperative, and forthcoming on all questions. He appeared to be cheerful and to enjoy working with middle school students. Aaron was respectful when speaking about his colleagues and held a genuine respect for their opinions and their ways of managing students and the classroom environment.

Aaron began his college career in mathematics but ran into difficulties with the concepts taught in upper level courses and changed majors. As a result, he finished college with an interdisciplinary studies degree. Teaching was not his first career plan. He entered the teaching field four years after graduating from college. Aaron pursued a teaching certificate through a lateral entry or an alternative licensure program. His degree in interdisciplinary studies allowed him to be certified in multiple areas (mathematics, science, language arts, social studies) and his lateral entry certification specified middle school as the grade level range for his teaching. All of Aaron’s teaching experience has been in seventh grade, teaching science at his current school. He has been on two other teams during his time at this school. After completing college, Aaron’s first career path was professional athletics, and he still participates in sports in his off-hours.

Bailey

Bailey is a 45-year-old math teacher. Although he began teaching twenty years ago,
he left teaching and was involved in the ministry for ten years before returning to the classroom. Bailey was pleasant and forthcoming during all interviews and observations. His tone was passionate, and he clearly enjoyed working with middle school students. He spoke enthusiastically about methods for teaching and the progress that his students were making with these methods. It was evident that, although he did not always agree with colleagues, he did respect them and attempted to have a pleasant working environment at all times. Bailey appeared to be the sort of person who is always planning the next lesson and thinking about how to reach that next student.

Bailey began his college career as an engineer major but changed to math education in his junior year when he responded to what he described as a “calling to teach.” He has now been teaching for ten years, nine of those years in math and one year in science. He taught math for four years at the high school level before taking time off for his work in the ministry. Since his return to teaching, he has taught only at the middle school level. This is Bailey’s third year at his current school. During the previous school year, he taught science on a sixth grade team where he was teamed with Cadie (the third member of this team) for the first time. He and Cadie found that they had many similarities in their approaches to teaching. They began discussions about following their sixth grade students to the next grade level and teaching them as seventh graders. This is a process called looping. No other sixth grade faculty members were particularly interested in looping with Bailey and Cadie, so Aaron was assigned to their team from another seventh grade team. Bailey is planning to pursue an administration track at the conclusion of the current school year. He has a smaller
advisor-advisee group because he volunteered to work with a group of high-risk students. His advisee group consists of students who failed the previous academic year, and have been retained. If these students make satisfactory progress during the first semester, they will be placed into the next grade level.

*Cadie*

Cadie is a 39-year-old teacher who is teaching a combined Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum that her school has designated Humanities. She is an alternative licensure teacher who has been teaching for nine years. Cadie is an infectiously cheerful person and enthusiastic about every aspect of teaching middle school. She gave in-depth responses to all questions, and welcomed observations and requests to share her work products. Cadie spoke respectfully of all colleagues and kindly suggested that a few of the teachers at her school had not found their true calling in middle school teaching.

Cadie studied journalism as an undergraduate and worked in the music industry after college. Prior to this academic year, she taught language arts on four-member teams and has had several different teams in the eight years that she has taught at this school. She has taught at both sixth and seventh grade levels. When she and Bailey were teamed together during the previous school year, she began to explore looping as an effective grouping and teaching concept and found that both of them were interested in the possibility of continuing with their same students this year. Approximately sixty percent of the students that they taught in the sixth grade have moved with them to the seventh grade this year.
The research study process began with the administration of the selected inventory followed by the examination of the educational philosophy indicated for each participant.

Research question 1: What are the educational philosophies of the participants as indicated by the educational philosophy inventory?

The Philosophy of Education Inventory by Lorraine Zinn was the instrument used for determining the individual teacher’s educational philosophy.

The matrix-scoring concept of this inventory groups the 75 individual responses into five possible broad philosophies. The highest possible matrix score for a philosophy is 105 and the lowest possible matrix score is a 15. The instructions for scoring provide the information that “a score of 95-105 indicates that you strongly agree with that philosophy” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 165). Conversely, “a score of 15-25 indicates that you strongly disagree with a given philosophy” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 165). These extremes were not seen in the individual teacher’s responses. A score of 60 indicating a middle ground response of neither strong agreement nor disagreement would indicate a lack of commitment to any of the tenets of the individual philosophy. None of the scores fell below 67 for any of the philosophies. There did appear to be sufficient indications of an agreement preference for a philosophy or a pairing of compatible philosophies for each of the participants.

The inventory was provided to the teachers in both an electronic and hardcopy format. The decision on which format to use was left up to the individual. All of the subjects returned the inventory by email before the first interview. The matrix for scoring the
inventory was not shared with the subjects but was used by the researcher to determine the dominant educational philosophy for each teacher. The matrix scores for each participant are summarized in Table 8 (Appendix).

Aaron

Aaron showed a preference for a Progressive educational philosophy with a matrix score of 79. There was a seven-point difference between the preferred Progressive philosophy and the next highest-ranking philosophy, Social Change, with a matrix score of 72. The lowest matrix score was tied with the other three philosophies, Behavioral, Comprehensive, and Humanistic, all having a matrix score of 67 (Table 3 Appendix). There was no indication that he was masking another philosophy preference.

Aaron’s selection of a Progressive educational philosophy would establish his purpose for education to be a means by which to support responsible participation in society and to afford his students practical knowledge and problem solving skills (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164). Aaron repeatedly stated in his interviews that his desire in the classroom was to “be real” with his students. By this, he meant that he wants to be thought of as a person who students can talk and relate to, not a teacher who is aloof and removed from his students’ world and their experiences. Aaron referred to the real world in statements such as:

The kids are going to do the work because you have actually been real with them….I try to be real with them every day….Five years from now, they are going to be in the real world, and they just need to know what it’s like.
Aaron’s comments about the “realness” of his teaching mesh with the purpose of Progressive philosophy, *i.e.*, to provide practical knowledge. He also indicated his admiration for a colleague who provides practical knowledge through his instruction. “Mr. J is a science teacher over on the eighth grade hallway and he brings a lot of humor and real life situations to his class and stuff like that so I guess he would be [the person I admire].”

The Progressive philosophy expects that the needs and experiences of the student are valued (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164). Aaron’s interview comments showed a concern for his students outside of the classroom as well as within the classroom setting. I find that I get through faster to the kids when I give them, maybe five or ten minutes on a daily basis of non-serious, kind of talking to them…. Just have a conversation with them about what is going on in their lives…. Have a good time with them and maybe, hopefully, that got them to know me better and me to know them better.

Aaron expressed his wish that his own teachers would have been more involved in his life when he was in school. “I was wishing they [my teachers] would have [talked to me], but I can’t think of a teacher, right off hand, that I remember doing that.”

Students are expected to take an active role in a Progressive philosophy classroom (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164). Aaron did not make statements that indicated that he has students taking an active role in planning the instruction. However, his comments did indicate that the students are active within the lessons that he has planned. “The fact is it’s a hands-on subject…. I have the kids up out of their seats doing stuff…. I don’t like teaching where the kids are just sitting there soaking in knowledge.”
If Aaron is following the teachings of the Progressive philosophy, Aaron’s role in the classroom should be focused on organizing and guiding the learning process with real-life situations and helping students to work cooperatively (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164). His comments in his interview indicated this is the case.

A lot of times I’m basically just a kind of mediator in a discussion…. It’s more interesting [as a mediator] and I’ve gotten more feedback from the students…. I want my students to have fun, yeah I want them to do the work…and if they can do that in groups, they can do it in groups.

_Bailey_

Bailey showed a preference for Progressive philosophy with a matrix score of 86. There was an eleven-point difference between his preference and the next highest preference, Social Change, with a matrix score of 75. Behavioral philosophy followed Social Change with a 74 matrix score and Humanistic directly below that with a 73 matrix score. The lowest philosophy score was Comprehensive with a 69 matrix score (Table 4 Appendix).

Bailey’s selection of a Progressive educational philosophy indicated a teacher whose purpose for education is to support the development of skills that enable his students’ responsible participation in society (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164). Bailey’s comments throughout his interviews supported this purpose of education.

With them, [Academic Advisement group] I’m focusing more on the character development…. I told them [Algebra class] one day you will grow up to be the leaders of our society so, you are being held to a higher standard and I’m going to
expect a whole lot more out of you…. I mean that is really what school is all about – can I be a productive member of society, and am I developing as a person and am I sharing that with other people, other folk, to make the world a better place?

The other elements of Progressive philosophy’s purpose of education are to give students practical knowledge and problem solving skills (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164). Bailey showed his commitment to these elements in several comments in his interviews.

So I tend to teach that way to try to make learning exciting, to try to show, particularly in math class, to show the connections between different concepts. I try to pull in other things to see how things are related. I’ll get off topic a lot and sort of explore…. I wanted to try some different types of assessments, you know, let’s give them an application type of assessment, let’s give them a recipe or something like that.

A Progressive philosophy teacher values students’ needs and experiences (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164). Bailey’s interview responses indicated his respect for the needs and experiences of his students. “If I can instill expanding your mind in these kids and get them thinking [so they will] not see this as a concrete block facility that is here to suck the life out of them, that is what I want to do.” In referencing his Advisor/Advisee group he noted that, “They’ve got some very deeply ingrained hatred of school so I am able to work with them [on their issues].” He continued his discussion about his classroom teaching and his students by saying,
There are some kids in here, for the first time in their life they are faced with something that they can’t “get,” by the second time [it is presented]. That’s a lot of frustration for them…. Not everybody is going to learn at the same rate, they’ve got other circumstances on why something is not done.

A Progressive philosophy expects that the student will take an active role in the learning process (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164). As indicated by his interview responses, Bailey’s students have a very active role in the learning within the classroom.

The kids have to assess themselves on their mastery, proficiency, etc. They give themselves [grades] on overall progress and we individually conference about that…. Kids would have questions about things that we either didn’t have time to answer, or I didn’t know the answer to. A couple of times throughout the year kids got to pick whatever question they were interested in, research [it] and present it to the class in whatever form they wanted to.

Bailey also spoke of a former teacher of his who actively involved the students. “Mr. S, he had this way of making Social Studies exciting. He empowered the students. We had roles. There was a helper everyday and they got to make some of the decisions.”

Within the Progressive educational philosophy, a teacher’s role is that of an organizer who guides the learning (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164). A teacher provides real life learning applications and helps students work cooperatively. His comments in his interviews supported this role for a teacher.
I see myself as a guide regardless of what kind of delivery method I am using. I use it [the delivery method] as a way of opening a door to get that thought process going to trigger the development of abstract reasoning…. So many times math is taught in a sterile environment, separate from anything else. There is no connection to anything else. I don’t want kids to get that kind of perspective [on math].

Regarding his approach to teaching, Bailey noted, “I can put them into centers and have them rotate and do some collaborative things, give them some opportunities to explore on their own.” Bailey remembered teachers from his schooling experience whom he admired for the way they guided the learning. “My second grade teacher, she differentiated before differentiation was what we were supposed to do. She was always sliding me new little things I could do.”

Bailey’s preference for a Progressive educational philosophy matched with the inventory assignment of philosophy type and did not appear to be a contrived choice.

Cadie

Cadie showed a dual preference for Progressive philosophy and Humanistic philosophy, both with a matrix score of 83. The next highest philosophy matrix score was a 78 for Social Change. Cadie’s lowest matrix scores were Comprehensive with a 71 and Behavioral philosophy with a 70 (Table 5 Appendix).

Cadie’s balanced selection of both Progressive and Humanistic educational philosophies indicated her purpose for education was to prepare students for responsible
participation in society and teach them practical knowledge and problem solving skills, (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164). Cadie’s interview comments supported this purpose for education.

I noticed a lot of the students were struggling, they didn’t have the learning skills that they’re going to need to function…. I developed the centers so they could learn the content but also so they would learn the important skills that go along with seeking out answers on their own and becoming that independent learner.

This blend of educational philosophies indicates a dual purpose for education, to enhance the student’s personal growth and facilitate their self-actualization (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164). Cadie addressed this aspect in her interviews.

It helps me to see them as real people and know what they’re bringing to the classroom and what their struggles are, what their strengths are, and how I can help them use that to have a good life and grow up to be a good person.

Cadie noted that her teaching approach enabled positive progress, “We have definitely seen growth in them, hearing their aspirations, seeing how that’s changing or forming, solidifying…. I’ve seen kids’ philosophies on learning change. They’re feeling proud of all they’re learning.”

A Progressive-Humanistic educational philosophy considers the student as a person whose needs and experiences are to be valued, is highly motivated and self-directed and takes an active role in all aspects of the learning process, including planning of the learning (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 164). Cadie’s interview comments supported this focus on the student.
We [our team] are sort of the odd-man-out with how we treat our kids, we are all different, we’re all coming from different places, and we all have something to offer…. We’ll do reflections at the end, how did this work for you, what did you like about this activity, what didn’t you like about this activity?…It’s important for them [the students] to know they know how best they learn and to know all the different ways out there [to learn]…. I try to give them many opportunities to [learn], you can choose to work in a cooperative group, or you can do a report yourself, or do a demonstration.

Cadie talked fondly about a teacher that she remembered who had given her the autonomy to direct her own learning.

She brought in speakers and we were allowed to write questions for the speaker so they developed their talks based on our questions…. When we did a big project, we were encouraged to just run with it, there were no parameters, and no limits were put on it.

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) define the role of the teacher with a Progressive-Humanistic educational philosophy as an organizer, a guide to the learning process who uses real-life applications. Cadie made statements in her interviews that defined her role as a Progressive-Humanistic teacher. “What’s the best way to help these kids grow and become functioning members of society?” Cadie explained how she had taken the delivery method of centers that she adapted for the middle school environment and used the centers to deliver the Social Studies curriculum. “[I’ve] taken the centers and developed that into making the
content Social Studies and the skills are Language Arts, reading and research skills…. So, they’re really learning what they’re supposed to.”

The Progressive-Humanistic teacher helps students work cooperatively and is a mutual participant in teaching-learning exchanges. She is a facilitator who supports the learning process. Cadie’s interview comments supported this vision of the role of the teacher.

You [the teacher] are not the center of attention…. Cooperative learning is an effective way to learn and teach and it added a lot, to what I already wanted to be [as a teacher]…. You know you get all kinds of students. I just can’t imagine doing [only] one thing one way…. We have all these big ideas about collaborating and how we can integrate this into a big community service project…. They start turning in their work, and you’re evaluating it and giving them feedback and they’re really getting it, it’s so exciting.

Cadie’s preference for a Progressive-Humanistic balanced educational philosophy was supported by her interview statements and appeared to be a natural fit for her.

Table 8 (Appendix) gives a comparison of the Zinn matrix scores for each of the identified philosophies and shows the differences between each of the participants. Graph 1 (Appendix) shows a visual representation of the matrix scores as data points beyond the no preference score of 60. Aaron’s scores were lower for each philosophy than either Bailey or Cadie, possibly due to his lack of experience in the field and, therefore, a possible lack of confidence about his philosophical ideology. His matrix scores, although lower in each category, appeared to mirror Bailey’s scores and may indicate that he picked up ideas from
Bailey concerning these philosophical tenets.

Bailey expressed the highest preference for the Progressive philosophy of the three individuals. Bailey’s determination that he had a “calling to teach” may indicate a similar determination that drives his philosophical leanings and created the more marked difference over his colleagues.

Cadie’s score was substantially higher for the Humanistic philosophy than either Aaron or Bailey and showed the greatest difference between the three individuals for a single philosophy preference. This dual Progressive – Humanistic philosophy is substantially different from her colleagues and may indicate a more developed understanding of her own educational philosophy than even she is aware.

Having determined each teacher’s educational philosophy, the researcher next sought to determine if each teacher’s educational philosophy matched what the teacher perceived to be his or her educational philosophy.

*Research question 2: Does the educational philosophy as measured by the inventory align with the teacher’s perception of his or her own educational philosophy?*

Research subjects were told the results of their Philosophy of Education Inventory (PEI) and the underlying beliefs of that inventory as it related to the purpose of education, the student role, and the teacher role within the classroom. The teacher participants were also told the key concepts, the curriculum delivery methods, and the theorists most closely associated with the particular philosophy. Participants were then asked to evaluate how closely this scored philosophy aligned with his or her perception of a personal philosophy of education.
All of the participants affirmed that the PEI had given a response that matched their own views of their educational philosophy. These teachers had all been unaware of the body of research in the field of educational philosophies prior to their encounter with the PEI and the interviews that followed.

_Aaron_

Aaron indicated that the description of the philosophy that matched his responses for the PEI “sound[ed] basically like me” but went no further in his description of the alignment with the instrument. Later statements from his interviews may have indicated that Aaron had not fully developed an educational philosophy and, therefore, was willing to accept whatever was placed before him.

I really didn’t know my teaching style. It took me a year to even really get a style….

I’m learning more about my style every day. But it took that first year to really know; hey, this is who I want to be…. Last year I got a little more comfortable in the classroom.

_Bailey_

Bailey was pleased with the results of the PEI and stated, “It does sound like me.” He went on to indicate his pleasure at knowing the results.

…having a name for my philosophy. I wasn’t aware that anyone had actually taken the time to categorize all of the stuff. It has been really interesting to stop and think, this is what drives everything we do. It really is a world-view and whatever your world-view is will drive how you interact with the world. Seeing that global
educational philosophy and seeing how it plays out in everything you do within the classroom as a teacher or as a principal who leads the school.

_Cadie_

Cadie indicated that her PEI results “sounded pretty much like me as a teacher.” She went on to state her pleasure in finding a philosophical support for her ideas.

[The results] just added to the idea [of what I should be doing] and gave support for [my ideas]. So, I wasn’t just some crazy person with crazy ideas of what it’s like to be a teacher…. Sometimes when I’m listening to myself talk I think, you are such a fluff muffin, but it’s really not all hugs and Kumbayah. There’s definitely evidence to support our fluffy hugs and ways.

All three participants quickly saw themselves as they were described by the educational philosophy identified in the Zinn inventory. For Cadie and Bailey, it began an immediate process of self-reflection that allowed the teachers to define themselves within the parameters of how they went about the process and mechanics of teaching, what outcomes they envisioned for their students, and what their overall purpose was in the education of early adolescents. Had these participants been introduced to educational philosophies earlier in their teaching career one can only imagine how this knowledge would have shaped their teaching.

In establishing the roots of the individual educational philosophies for these teachers, the researcher now needs to consider what has contributed to the formation of these individual philosophies. What role did family and early school experience play in the
development of the educational philosophy for each person? Was the driving force in the
development specific individuals or events that made deep, life-long impressions on him or
her? Was the university preparation for a teaching career what has led to the establishment of
an educational philosophy that drives the classroom of this teacher?

*Research question 3: What factors contribute to the development and refinement of the
general educational philosophy for each teacher?*

The interviews, both initial and final, were structured to delve into family and prior
schooling experiences as well as colleagues and professional development situations that
would have had an effect upon the development of an educational philosophy. The coding of
the interviews included nodes for positive as well as negative experiences that had laid the
foundation for the development of the individual educational philosophies.

During the final interview, the subjects were asked about their understandings of
generational differences and similarities, both among their teaching partners on their team
and within the faculty at large. The coding of this interview included nodes for understanding
of generational characteristics, similarities in educational philosophies attributed to
generational characteristics of other colleagues, and differences in educational philosophies
attributed to generational characteristics with other colleagues.

*Aaron*

Aaron’s foundation for his educational philosophy is primarily influenced by two
types of interactions: colleagues from his teaching career, and professional development
activities.
Influences in the development of educational philosophy.

Aaron described the colleagues he admires and who helped him to develop his educational philosophy.

He [colleague] brought a little bit of humor to it [instruction], and it was, hey, you know, I need to do that…. I see her [my mentor] once a month now but if I ever have a question or anything, I can go to her…. Mr. B is a science teacher on another team and is extremely knowledgeable. I wish I had more of that [content knowledge]. … Mr. J is a science teacher on the eighth grade hall and he brings humor and real life situations to his class…. Cadie and Bailey, there’s a lot of ideas that they had, and I was like, wow, you know I didn’t even think of that [idea].

Aaron, as a third year teacher has not had many choices regarding which professional development activities to attend. He is required to attend many workshops as part of his alternative certification program. It is apparent that he has had many strategy-based workshops but has not attended classes that discuss the development of an educational philosophy. “The lateral entry program saved my butt, because it gave me a lot of strategies…. For first year teachers, the new teacher program, the strategies and stuff was the best workshop I’ve ever gone to.” Aaron’s undergraduate work changed from math, to golf management, to interdisciplinary studies, and was not focused on a teaching certificate. His lateral entry program was focused on strategies for curriculum delivery and classroom management.

Despite probing questions, Aaron was able to remember only one teacher from his
own schooling experience who influenced the development of his educational philosophy. “I had a teacher in seventh grade and he was influential because [he was] one teacher who tried to make it real to seventh graders.” His lack of teachers who influenced him may stem from the fact that he does not believe that he was a particularly successful student himself. He repeated multiple times the disparaging comment, “I wasn’t a great student.” Noddings (2007) touches on what an unsuccessful former student turned teacher brings to the development of an educational philosophy as he or she tries to overcome personal educational history through the ways that he or she interacts in the classroom with a new generation of students.

Aaron talked about his awe and fear of his teachers, perhaps the basis for his needing to be a different type of teacher for his own students, “I remember I was semi-afraid of this guy [former teacher].” In talking about his current assignment as a science teacher, he indicated that he was indifferent to a specific teaching content area and that he did not particularly care for his current teaching assignment, “Science was never my favorite subject, by any means.”

Family did not play a major role in the development of his educational philosophy. He mentioned his mother as being an educator but quickly qualified it but did not mention an influence from this relationship. “My Mom’s in education. Well, she’s not a teacher, she is more of a TA (teacher’s assistant).”

Aaron has the least amount of time in the classroom and the least amount of time that has been spent on the development and refinement of his educational philosophy. As he
grows as a teacher and settles in to the profession, he will continue the process of refining and defining his educational philosophy. Aaron had begun to see where he could have been more effective and is making changes to reach his students.

I think my first year I was basically trying to do what I thought a teacher should do. I was like, you know, I didn’t even think about that [how to teach]. Yeah, there’s really no boundaries. You do what you wish, but it has to be appropriate, obviously….

Comparing myself now with where I was two years ago, I can think of some faces that if they were in my class now; I think I could have gotten through to them. So, yeah, I basically do what I can to change my style to try to get to each student.

*Generational knowledge.*

Aaron had only a rudimentary understanding of generational characteristics even after an explanation of the four major generational subdivisions present in the education system today, yet he displayed the characteristics of his generation. He classified himself as a Millennial based on the date of birth only. He classified his teammates as Gen Xers based on his knowledge that they were older than he was. “They are a little bit older than me, so they would be in Generation X versus where I would be in Millennials.” He expressed concern that Bailey and Cadie do not display all of the characteristics of a Gen Xer. “I don’t think that they challenge authority a whole lot.” Aaron appeared to understand challenging authority only in the context of arguing with people, not in holding fast and pursuing a course of action as Bailey and Cadie had done with the desire to loop with their students from sixth grade.

Aaron showed many of the characteristics of Millennials as described by Lovely and
Buffum (2007). Aaron clearly “responded well to mentoring” (p. 8), or at least has a good relationship with his mentor. He felt that he could approach her whenever he had questions or concerns. “If I ever have a question or anything, I can go to her and ask her something. She’s very nice. She’s very real.” He “enjoys working with idealistic people” (p. 8) in his teaming with Bailey and Cadie. He spoke of his respect for both of them several times during the interview process. “There are a lot of ideas that they have that I didn’t even think of and it is like, Wow!”

Aaron’s focus on humor and fun in the classroom solidified his standing as a Millennial and showed a definite influence in the development of his educational philosophy based on his generational characteristics. “Humor, a bit of silliness, and even a touch of irreverence will make your school more attractive to Millennials” (Lovely & Buffum, 2007, p. 84). His interview statements made it clear that he identified with this characteristic.

I get through faster to the kids when I give them five or ten minutes a day of non-serious talking to them…. I have a sense of humor, I joke around with certain kids, I can’t be serious a hundred percent of the time…. My personality, I have to be a little bit joking, a little bit sarcastic.

Aaron expected to have friendships, not simply working relationships, with his colleagues. “Millennials want to work with people they like and have a strong desire to establish friendships on the job that turn into friendships off the job” (Lovely & Buffum, 2007, p. 84). When questioned about how he would handle a colleague relationship that was diametrically opposite to what he believed in every way, within the school or environment,
Aaron gave a single pronouncement that appeared to sum it up for him, “I wouldn’t be friends with them outside of school.”

Aaron’s most telling generational characteristic was his desire for the flexibility to pursue his own interests during his off-hours. His interview comments suggested that this teaching position is a job, not his whole life.

[What made you want to go into education?] I needed a job…. I’m more of a morning person than a night person, so for me this type of job, where you’ve got to get up in the morning and go to school, and then I’m done by 3:00 in the afternoon. I’ve got the afternoon to do something I want to do. It just fits my lifestyle pretty well.

Lovely and Buffum note that, “This busy generation isn’t going to give up activities just because of a job. Young people want control of their time and seek meaning in their lives beyond work” (Lovely & Buffum, 2007, p. 84).

Bailey

Influences in the development of educational philosophy.

The foundation for Bailey’s educational philosophy came from his prior schooling experiences. Bailey cited classroom interactions and teaching method examples from his second, fourth, and eighth grade teachers, as well as high school and college instructors. These teachers’ actions have become an integral part of the teacher that he is today.

Comments from his interviews about these teachers lend weight to Noddings (2007) assertions that personal experiences in school are integral components in the development of individual educational philosophies. These personal experiences with teachers that Bailey
admired demonstrated their lasting effect on Bailey, “The class I just loved…. I remember having that opportunity…. He had this way of exciting…. She really knew her stuff…. I remember thinking, man, this is so cool.” He even mentioned a student teacher that he had in the eighth grade who modeled her teaching after one of Bailey’s former teachers. “She [student teacher] implemented the same thing [as his eighth grade Social Studies teacher] in her science class.”

Bailey continued the development of his philosophy through his individual quest to refine his teaching. He expanded his collegial interactions outside of the walls of his school building as he used the constantly evolving social media to interact with teachers and educators from around the world.

[Experiences that] enhanced what I do or improved what I do are things that I have done informally, through Twitter, through Facebook, on the network with several hundred educators around the world involved in conversations, reading blogs with those folks, [and] some of the books that I might pick up on my own to read. He participated in professional development activities that were offered by the school district but found them to be totally lacking in substance. “Most professional development that I have attended has been, ‘Why am I here? This is adding nothing to what I am doing.’”

Bailey found most interactions with colleagues and Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s) to be less than helpful in the refinement of his teaching and in shaping his philosophy. His interview comments indicated a feeling that he was different from his colleagues and that difference led to disappointment with the status quo.
I don’t share the same philosophy of assessment as the other department members…. For whatever reasons, the geometry teachers could never get it together. That was kind of a disappointment to me…. So, in terms of being assigned a mentor that helped to guide me, not really so much…. I thought that’s what PLC is supposed to be about, but there just wasn’t any cooperation there and it really kind of ticked me off.

In recent years, there were colleagues who provided role models and interactions that helped in refining Bailey’s philosophy. “Mr. B who teaches on this hallway, I’ve tried to adapt [his strategies] to make that happen in the math classroom.” His professional interactions with Cadie made an impression on him and helped to refine his educational philosophy. “Of the people I have modeled professionally, and that I have taught with, Cadie is one of those [that I admire]…. Cadie and I had been in a book group. In that group we found out that we shared a lot of the same ideas.”

Family did not provide a basis for Bailey’s educational philosophy development. His father was not in favor of his pursuing a career in teaching. Bailey attributed the concern on his father’s part as being motivated by a desire for Bailey to be financially secure. He related the story of his conversation with his father when he decided to become a teacher. “It did not go over well. His anticipation was that you’re going to be poor for the rest of your life. I’m not letting you go off to college for four years for that.” His father was not able to pursue a career beyond the family farm since he was not able to go to college. “My father could have gone to college, he had the grades and everything. He didn’t have the finances.” Despite the fact that Bailey did not have direct family-based experiences that shaped his educational
philosophy, his concern for students with situations beyond their control could easily have come from his own father’s situation, a subtle refining of his philosophy. “In terms of getting things in late, they’ve [all] got different circumstances on why something is not done, turned in on time. I don’t think I should be penalizing for that so, I don’t.”

*Generational knowledge.*

Bailey had prior knowledge of the generational characteristics that people display within the educational environment and how he and his teammates fit into the classifications of different generations. “I would definitely say that Cadie and I are Gen Xers.” Bailey, in trying to fit Aaron into a generation indicated that he does not know him very well and that he is not that familiar with the generational characteristics, “I don’t know where to put Aaron to be honest. I don’t know Aaron very well. Honestly, sometimes he is more like a Boomer so that is where I would put him characteristic wise.” When further questioned about the reason to place Aaron in this category he reiterated that he did not know him that well.

He was aware of how his own generational characteristics had influenced the refinement of his educational philosophy. His commitment to a class setting that allows students to work at their own pace, his concern about boredom and staleness within the classroom, and his desire to give the students lots of feedback placed him solidly within the characteristics of the Gen Xer (Lovely & Buffum, 2007, p. 64). Comments from his interviews support these characteristics, as displayed in Bailey’s educational philosophy.

Not everyone is going to learn at the same rate. I don’t think I should be penalizing for that…. Children should be able to go back and take a test again to show their
mastery of a subject…. I believe in multiple approaches, but sometimes I go home at the end of the day and say, “Are those different things, really different than the chalk talk but just with cooler looking tools?” … Then the kids have to assess themselves on their mastery, proficiency, etc. They [the students] give themselves [grades] for each of the content areas, goal areas rather. When that goes home [the students] tell the parents, that is a 93 or an 85 grade.

_Cadie_

*Influences in the development of educational philosophy.*

Cadie defines her primary influence in the development of her educational philosophy as her family, specifically her mother.

My mom specifically was very influential in my educational philosophy. We had family councils where we would write everything down, and look at all the pros and cons, and discuss everything. More of an open, learn about it, discussions, and work-it-through kind of attitude. I think that was [what] fostered that sort of open classroom – seek about, learn about.

Also important in the development of Cadie’s philosophy development were two of her own high school teachers. She described these two teachers and identified them as the source of her enthusiasm and commitment to the students understanding why they are learning.

Mrs. K, you know the first day she told us whenever we’re doing something, ask me why. I think that influenced me in my teaching because it’s important for them to
understand why or how this is going to fit in somewhere…. Miss W, she was so 
enthusiastic about everything she taught. She really fostered that flame for learning.

One of her high school teachers became an unofficial mentor to Cadie as she began 
her teaching career, extending her influence into Cadie’s first teaching experiences. “You 
know [she’s] an open door and [she] allowed me into her class to observe and she is just 
amazing still.”

Cadie specifically mentioned her education coursework as an influencing factor in the 
development of her educational philosophy. Pre-service undergraduate teachers normally 
expect to take six to eight college classes in education theory over a four-year period. Cadie’s 
alternative route will have compacted the time frame for these classes and may have 
increased the impact these classes had on the development of her educational philosophy. 
She mentioned her Educational Theory class as well as an Adolescent Psychology class.

I think about the kind of teacher that I wanted to be, the things we read and studied 
just added to that and gave support to it. I mean there were things that the classes 
actually supported…. One of my Adolescent Psychology classes showed me effective 
ways to learn and teach. I think it just added to a lot of what I already wanted to be.

*Generational knowledge.*

Cadie was enthusiastic when discussing her own generational characteristics but 
pointed out her variations from the classifications and the generational characteristics that she 
has observed.

I would say that Bailey and I …I mean just based on our ages would be in Generation
X and Aaron would be more in Millennials. I’m not sure that I fit the typical Generation Xer profile. [I fit better as a] Baby Boomer. See I’m not really at all like the Millennials...like from my observations, I see Millennials in the work force now have trouble building rapport with their colleagues. They are not respectful of authority ‘cause they think they have the answer to do the job and not the boss. I would place myself more with the Baby Boomer characteristics, ‘cause that’s who I was raised by, I guess.

Although Cadie classifies herself as a good fit for a Baby Boomer, she displayed a number of the characteristics of Gen Xers and one can see the generational influences in the development of her educational philosophy. Lovely and Buffum (2007) list characteristics of a Generation Xer as enjoying working on teams with freedom to complete tasks her own way, working best with teammates of her own choosing, hating being taken advantage of, and being able to create and support alternative workplace structures (p. 8).

The decision to loop with her students was one way that her generational characteristics were displayed in her educational philosophy. Looping is not common at her school and several people had to change positions within the school to accommodate the request for students to remain with Bailey and Cadie for the following year. “Bailey and I are fortunate because we’re teaching the same group for last year and this year. We’ve definitely seen growth in them [students] and you know, I think that has probably been the most interesting thing.”

Cadie touched on her irritation with colleagues who asked her to share teaching
strategies and then failed to follow through with her suggestions. To Cadie it was obvious that people were patronizing her. As indicated in studies by Lovely and Buffum (2007) her unwillingness to be patronized is a trigger point for her generation.

I’ve been around for a while. I’ve met a lot of different kinds of people. So, if they’re open to it [curriculum ideas], I share it. But, if they’re not open to it, I’ll talk about what is on the agenda. I’m not going to waste my time sharing something that they’re not interested in anyway.

Cadie created an alternate workplace structure by organizing her classroom around a model of centers-based instruction. This approach, usually seen in elementary schools is rarely seen in middle schools, but was successful for her students.

I mean, going to centers was a huge jump. It was something that I wanted to do and I kicked around for two years. I had done some research on it. There wasn’t a lot out there for middle school at the time and so I had to kind of figure out how to make that work for my students and myself in my school.

Summary

To some degree, all of the participants shared the Progressive educational philosophy, but arrived at the development of this philosophy through different pathways. Aaron did not knowingly draw on his own school experiences either as a student or with his own teachers, although he might have been attempting to develop a philosophy that would negate what he remembered in his own teachers. Aaron’s refinements of his educational philosophy came through the professional development activities that were offered to him and through the
mentors and colleagues that he observed at his current school.

Bailey did not have family influences to help in the crafting of his educational philosophy, instead he developed his educational philosophy through his interactions that he had with his own K-12 teachers and through his self-directed study with colleagues throughout the world. His self-directed focus and pursuit of the reasons for the ways that he wanted to teach through blogs, chat-groups, and a variety of other interactive social media methods focused on education may be reason that his matrix score is higher than the other two individuals.

Cadie developed her educational philosophy based on the family relationships and interactions that drove the learning that was a part of her daily life. She relied on her own schooling and the relationships that she developed with her own teachers, both in high school and in her education coursework to continue to shape and refine that philosophy.

After having identified the major sources that helped to develop their educational philosophy, we turn now to the manners and ways in which their philosophical similarities and differences affected their working relationships with their teammates and colleagues throughout the school.

*Research question 4: In what ways do the educational philosophies of the middle school team teachers manifest themselves during interactions within the team over a semester of time?*

The manner in which the research participants interact with their colleagues, both their teammates and the other faculty members, is an expression of the individual educational philosophy that they each have developed over time. These interactions may create harmony
or cause conflicts among the members of a team. The interview questions were developed to probe the relationships and interactions, not only of the team members, but also of other faculty within the school, such as department members or PLC members. Interview questions were also designed to delve into the types of team members that would be desirable for each person and to identify if there were people who would be judged unsuitable as a prospective team member. Clearly, relationships would be unsatisfactory with potential teammates that were judged as unsuitable as a prospective team member. The participants’ understanding of the tenets of the middle school, critical in ultimately meeting the needs of early adolescents, were probed in this section of the research. The coding of the interviews included nodes, which examined harmony and conflict of the interactions with other individuals. Observations of classroom interactions and team meetings, curriculum delivery methods checklists (Table 9, Appendix), and teacher-provided examples of lessons were included for the data analysis of this research question.

Aaron

*Educational philosophy.*

Aaron has not spent much time in introspection and reflection on the reasons for education or how he approaches the classroom environment, perhaps because he has not been shown the techniques needed for effective reflection. When questioned about his choices for curriculum delivery methods he indicated a lack of reflection on different methods for use in the classroom. “I’ve never done anything like that before.” Aaron classified 42 of the suggested 165 curriculum methods (Table 9) as “not applicable” to his classroom setting.
During the final interview, he did reflect back on the curriculum delivery methods checklist and commented on his reaction to the checklist.

I think that inventory [the curriculum delivery methods checklist] that you had us fill out was very informative. I guess it really made me think about what I’m doing here, or why I’m here. I guess just forcing me to think about if this is what I want to do with my life and why I’m doing it. What is the purpose of me being here? Is it so I can just babysit 76 kids all day, or am I here to actually teach them something? I like to think that I get through to some kids now and then, but I guess that only time will tell.

Relationships.

Aaron did not disclose any stories to indicate he had shared materials or ideas with his teammates or his department. Aaron did not offer any lessons or materials that were uniquely his as support for his educational philosophy. His interactions with others were egocentric with the expected gain solely for himself and his classes. Aaron had taken lesson ideas from other colleagues within the department but had found these to be less than satisfactory.

[On a project from Mr. B] Well, this project that I’m doing the last two days, edible cells, [has] given me a headache. I’m probably not going to do this again in the future. Mr. B, he chose not to do this project because he didn’t think there was a whole lot of educational value out of it, which I’m finding to be very true.

It was clear from previous comments that Aaron respected the other members of the
science department. He indicated that he admired their mastery of the content, their ability to bring humor to the classroom, and their real-ness with students. However, through his comments in the interview Aaron indicated his ambivalence on interacting with or challenging colleagues in the science department.

I’m kind of very much a go-with-the-flow kind of person. I’m not going to be somebody to rock the boat on a certain issue. It’s very, very rare that I would feel so strongly about something that I would maybe voice a very huge opinion on it. If the other science teachers wanted to teach about rocks, okay, we’ll teach about rocks. I’m not going to say we have to teach about this, we have to teach about that.

It is unlikely that colleagues within the department are aware of Aaron’s educational philosophy or have had interactions with him that have highlighted defining characteristics of his philosophy.

Aaron was cooperative with his teammates, and took an active part in the team meeting. He made suggestions for the decorations and the booths at the planned October parent night. During the team meeting, he was compliant with suggestions for distribution of academic progress reports and announcements from the parent teacher association.

Aaron did not discuss his interactions with his teammates unless prompted. Even with specific questions that asked for examples of these interactions, the responses were minimal and the subject was quickly changed back to a conversation about himself. He did not talk about the reasons behind his addition to his current team of teachers. Bailey and Cadie were very forthcoming about this. “I never teamed with Bailey or Cadie before.” Aaron is positive
in his comments about his teammates. “Bailey and Cadie are awesome to work with.” He did not seem to know a lot about the educational philosophies of his teammates. He seemed at a loss for words as he attempted to describe the classroom environment of his teammates and it became clear that he really did not know what went on in their classrooms. “Cadie is, I think, [pause for thinking] I think Cadie and Bailey are both more of a, [pause for thinking] Cadie less I guess than Bailey, [pause for thinking] Bailey is kind of a you stay in your seat, you do not get up and move kind of teacher.” In his interview, Aaron stated that the team frequently adopted Bailey and Cadie’s ideas, presumably, such as the October parent night, although he was unable to articulate specifics. “Because, there’s a lot of things like working with Bailey and Cadie, [pause for thinking] there’s a lot of things that [pause for thinking] ideas that we actually do.” When asked if he was comfortable approaching Bailey for joint science and math projects he gave a resounding “Oh, Yeah!” but was unable to elaborate on what type of projects that would be. Aaron was more comfortable talking about procedures within the team and gave academic progress reports as the example. “Bailey and Cadie, they both, I am pretty sure, require the progress reports to be returned. But, it’s not something that I require to be returned. If they return it, they return it, if they don’t, they don’t.” It appears that although he was enthusiastic about working with both Bailey and Cadie, he did not know much about the philosophical characteristics that drove their classrooms and the educational philosophies that defined his teammates.
Aaron is unfamiliar with the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) and the tenets that define the ideal middle level education for early adolescents. “I’m not a member. I certainly don’t spend any time on their website.” Aaron was given a copy of the beliefs (Table 6, Appendix) that are the foundation of the AMLE to examine and discuss how closely his own views are to these beliefs. His comments were supportive of the beliefs, and indicated that they mirrored the classroom environment that he fostered. However, observational data and interview comments suggested that in actuality his classroom did not match these ideals. He does not involve the parents as an integral part of the education process and he does not support and fully participate in an advisor/advisee program.

Aaron saw himself as a teacher who followed the tenets of *This We Believe* (2010b) and “used multiple learning and teaching approaches” by integrating technology frequently. “I would say definitely that one fits me simply because I try to integrate technology as much as I can.” Aaron’s classroom has no student computers. His teammates each had three or four student computers. He did not have a computer projector for projecting web pages or PowerPoint presentations. On the curriculum delivery methods checklist (Table 9, Appendix) he classified all of the following technology-related curriculum delivery methods as “not applicable to his classroom”: student-created PowerPoint, student-searched websites, student-created film clips, textbook publisher film clips, textbook publisher websites, student-created web pages, pod-casts of any type, television shows, and individual student computer use. Aaron may have intended to include technology but was unable to visualize how he would
use it within the limits of his classroom.

When prompted, Aaron acknowledged that the Advisor Advisee program is one of the beliefs of the AMLE. While Aaron’s school does have an Advisor Advisee program, he did not seem invested in this program and seemed to have missed the point of the program altogether.

I had fourteen boys in my group before we switched some [students] around. My group, we basically just played games. It was very laid back. There wasn’t any educational value in my advisee advisor. Basically, a kind of wind down time at the end of the day. We just played games. Our principal basically told us AA time was to be used as the time for the teacher to interact with the students to get to know them better. The one way I know how to do that is to play games with them.

Selection of curriculum-based assignments.

Assignment selection is a very personal choice by a teacher and is a tangible example of his or her educational philosophy. Despite pacing guides, best-practices workshops, or district provided notebooks of curriculum activities that appear to dictate the assignments, a teacher still selects and implements assignments within the classroom. Even when Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) meet and select a set of assignments for each teacher in the PLC to use, there are differences in how an assignment is presented in an individual classroom. These individual choices, some subtle and some grossly different, are demonstrations of a teacher’s individual educational philosophy.

Aaron had borrowed a project-based assignment from a colleague for the study of
cells. Students were expected to create edible cells and present their projects to the class. The stated objective of the assignment was for students to analyze the consistency (grainy, gooey, stiff) of cell parts, the relational size of the various organelles, and to be able to explain the function of each cell part. The ability to eat the final product simply added an element of fun to the assignment. The classroom observation was done on the day of this assignment.

The borrowed assignment appeared to fit with Aaron’s espoused educational philosophy in that it provided a hands-on activity that pulled in elements from real life. Presumably, the selection of appropriate ingredients to show the grainy and gooey consistency of the cytoplasm or the elasticity of the cell membrane should have demonstrated an ability to show the transfer of knowledge into a different situation by the student. However during the classroom observation it was apparent that Aaron’s students simply decorated sheet cakes and cupcakes with squiggles and round “cell parts” drawn on the icing. Aaron was disappointed in the results of this assignment and said that he was unlikely to use it again. Aaron did not appear to understand his role as the teacher facilitator to explain the objectives of the assignment, to demonstrate a correctly created project, to share a rubric for the grading at the time of the assignment, or to critique the projects when presented. When questioned about the introduction of this assignment he indicated a complete lack of student preparation. “It was a project. They are supposed to do these at home. I gave them two weeks."

In the interview Aaron shared a textbook assignment on volume measurement that he had used successfully. The assignment required students to read a graduated cylinder
correctly and to convert volumes to different scales (cups to ounces, milliliters to liters). The assignment was included in the text with sufficient directions for the student without much input from the teacher. Although it was a successful assignment in that students were able to complete it correctly, Aaron was not able to articulate why he considered it a successful assignment or what the objective was for the assignment. “Well…(pause for thinking)…they all turned in the assignment, and they were having a good time while they were doing it. You know, it was a real assignment.”

*Selection of teaching team members.*

Finally, the subject of selecting people with whom to work was broached with Aaron. He had definite opinions about people with whom he would not wish to work.

Some of the older teachers are still teaching from some older textbooks, from fifteen or twenty years ago, so yeah, that’s rough. Times change over the course of twenty years. That’s just hard to fathom that somebody is teaching from technology that is twenty years old, or teaching from a textbook that is twenty years old. When pressed, he could not identify who these teachers might be or what subject they were teaching. He did not reflect on the fact that, despite his disdain for teachers using twenty-year-old books or technology, his reported routine curriculum delivery methods for his classroom centered on lecture, question and answers, note taking, and testing.

Aaron identified, albeit weakly, that he preferred to work with people who shared his educational philosophy, not people who had a greater expertise in their subject area.

I guess I would say that it’s more important because, I mean, my first year my content
knowledge was not the greatest. But as far as educational philosophy goes, yeah, I would definitely hope that I got paired with somebody who believed in technology, who believed in the kids, who put the kids first. I mean their learning is most important, being safe, having a safe environment, obviously. Wanting the best for the kids that we have, I guess. I mean, it’s difficult when you have to work with somebody who didn’t want to put the student first, because I firmly believe that.

**Bailey**

_Educational philosophy._

On the other end of the spectrum from Aaron is Bailey. He has spent the majority of his adult life reflecting on his career and the educational philosophy on which it is based. He believes that most teachers do not reflect upon their teaching and their students.

One of the things that I am discovering is self-reflection is not a real common characteristic for a lot of people. Even among educators, when we are trying to teach students to reflect on what it is they’ve done, what they’ve learned, how they’ve learned, and things of that sort [reflection is not common]. I think teachers struggle with trying to teach a student how to do that, because they are not very good at that themselves.

Bailey indicated that his attempt to include a wide variety of curriculum delivery methods was “indicative of [his educational] philosophy.” In discussing his views on the curriculum delivery methods that he uses, he described the methods as one would describe a tool. “I kind of use it as a way of opening a door to get that thought process going to trigger the
development of the abstract reasoning.”

*Relationships.*

Bailey used the discussion of curriculum delivery methods to begin a conversation on philosophical interactions within his department. Clearly, he differed in educational philosophy from his departmental colleagues. Bailey used the term “vertical” when he referred to his departmental colleagues rather than his grade level colleagues.

From a vertical [departmental] standpoint, working with people of different philosophies does make it a little more difficult in my work with the other two math teachers. In terms of how we approach grading, how we approach remediation, how we approach the whole assessment aspect. [It’s] very, very, very different. He went on to discuss his frustration with his departmental colleagues, continually referring back to his educational philosophy as the basis for the frustration.

Well, the rest of the department uses grading as a percentage of the [number of] problems correct as a grade. My philosophy of grading is [that] I’ve gone away from all these individual assignments. Everything is broken down by content standards and it gets grouped into a goal. I don’t give an 87 on the chapter test. I have it grouped by goals so you get five different assessment ratings on the same test. That’s my philosophy, ‘cause I also think that you can miss one and still deserve a 100.

Bailey stated unequivocally that there are people who he simply could not work with because of their educational philosophies. “Absolutely, I have a list!” When asked to explain how the people qualified for his list, he gave examples of interactions with departmental
We’ve got kids who clearly have not grasped certain concepts, but yet I don’t see anything different being done…. One thing I do know, and this is probably more of a difference in philosophy than necessarily curriculum delivery, is an attitude of, “I’ve done everything I can, it’s up to them to get it now.”

Bailey described the differences between his colleagues and himself. “What I often see is, ‘I only know one way to give this thing and if they can’t get it that way, then I don’t know what to do.’” He described a disappointing example of when he called on a departmental colleague to assist with a student he was having trouble reaching.

I said, “I need to send a couple of my kids to you during ER [enrichment/remediation time] and see if you can get these concepts across.” She said, “No. I can’t do that. I can’t get it across to my kids.” There just wasn’t any cooperation there.

In conversations within his PLC, he described differences in opinion on assessments.

I wanted to try some different types of assessments but my PLC didn’t want to do that as our common assessment because it would have been too hard to grade. Those are the kinds of battles that I face in terms of differences of philosophy in curriculum delivery.

When discussions of the Academic Advisement program arose, Bailey found philosophical differences in dealing with school colleagues. He described one event when another teacher could not handle a difficult student in her own AA group.

There’s been a lot of talk in the last few weeks. ‘Oh we need to put S in Bailey’s AA
group ‘cause he’s fast track.’ Really, what it comes down to is they’re trying to pawn the kid off. That frustrates me ‘cause it has nothing to do with the kid. What it comes down to is a huge philosophical difference. [Her] starting point is that it’s about the teacher. I don’t care whether you teach in middle school, elementary school, or high school; it’s never about the teacher.

Bailey did have colleagues within the school with whom he had positive interactions and similar philosophical interactions. He discussed those colleague interactions and the staff development activities that have refined his own educational philosophy.

Mr. B who teaches on this hallway, he’s a science teacher, he’s brought back some AVID strategies related to interactive science notebook that I’ve tried to adapt to make it happen in math…. Most of the professional development that I have done has enhanced what I do or improved what I do.

Although Bailey shared the same educational philosophy as Aaron, he did not feel that he would have significant philosophical interactions with Aaron. “He works more closely with his vertical [department] and he is very similar to the other two in his vertical [colleagues in his department], so I think that is where most of his influence will come from.” Bailey indicated that the majority of his interactions with Aaron, and therefore any influence on Aaron’s educational philosophy were not so much philosophical in nature, but rather procedural. “I do know he has used discipline [ideas] and he has used what really needed to be happening at school [such as the submission of grades and paperwork].”

Bailey was more enthusiastic about the interactions that he had with Cadie.
In terms of within the team, when we go across discipline areas it helps, it definitely helps, the fact that we had the same philosophy. That Cadie and I are very close in philosophy makes all the kind of decisions that we make, planning, so much easier because there is none of that, ‘Okay, let’s make sure that you understand where I am coming from and I understand where you are coming from.’ You can just kind of jump into it. It makes things comfortable quickly and [we can] possibly plan bigger [team projects].

The philosophical interactions between Bailey and Cadie were noticeable in the team meeting interactions. In the discussion of students with academic difficulties, he and Cadie made several similar suggestions regarding the use of the Enrichment/Remediation morning time and referring to the student’s Academic Advisor for motivation coaching. In the conversation at the team meeting regarding the establishment of “Dream Team Moms,” Bailey supported and offered help on what was initially Cadie’s idea.

Two years previously when they participated in a staff development opportunity, Bailey and Cadie identified the similarities of their educational philosophies. “Cadie and I had been in a book reading group two years ago. In that group, we found out that we shared a lot of the same ideas, a lot of the same philosophy about how to do things.” After the book group interactions, Bailey requested to be teamed with Cadie for the following year. “Last year I was intentionally grouped with Cadie.” Bailey and Cadie wanted to continue their work together and approached the administration with a way to make this happen.

We were excited to be put on the same team last year, and from the beginning of the
school year when we were in the sixth grade, we were talking. “Wouldn’t it be great if we could loop with these kids and follow them to seventh grade?” So, we kind of worked all year long to try to find a way to make that happen.

The close philosophies and the previous teaching time support an explanation regarding the positive working relationship between Bailey and Cadie. It also explains their lack of initial closeness with Aaron, there is no previous relationship, and despite the similarities in educational philosophy, they just do not know each other very well. Whereas, Bailey and Cadie had asked for and chosen this team arrangement because of their similarities in philosophies, Aaron appeared to have simply been an extra body to fill a gap. “Cadie and I were the only ones who were interested in doing that and they formed us into a three-person team and Aaron joined our team.” Bailey tried some of the methods of instruction in his classroom that Cadie pioneered. “I can put them into centers and have them rotate that way and do some collaborative things, give them some opportunities to explore some things on their own.”

*Association for Middle Level Education.*

Bailey was very aware of the AMLE and felt that his own educational philosophy matched the philosophy of the AMLE “one hundred percent.” He wished that health and wellness as a concept was more supported at his school, but did not have specifics on how this could be accomplished. Bailey thought that there was more work to be done in the area of parent and community involvement.

I don’t feel that we are really actively involved in families, but that is something that
is on the rise. We are trying to develop the culture that encourages that and create vehicles and methods by which that can happen…. We are really doing some brainstorming to try things, the Trick-or-Treat thing that we did was one of those ways of just opening up to the community.

The interactions that Bailey had with his students were observed by the researcher during his AA time, and highlight his educational philosophy. The purpose of the Progressive educational philosophy is to support responsible participation in society. The discussion topic for his Academic Advisement group was “What will society, in general, expect of you as you reach adulthood and how does your behavior in the classroom relate to adult expectations?” He used simulation exercises to explore the questions that he posed to his students. “Why does Mr. T have a problem with you coming in late? Why did you need to be late? Why did you have to go to your locker again? Why did you not have your notebook?”

*Selection of curriculum-based assignments.*

Bailey spoke many times of designing his own assignments to fit what he believed should be the focus of his classroom, assignments that reflected his own educational philosophy. Despite the fact that mathematics can easily become a class filled with simply completing the problems in the book and taking tests, that was not the way Bailey selected assignments. He wanted to make his assessments an indicator of the students’ ability to apply mathematic concepts to real life situations. Although he attempted to include colleagues from his PLC in these assessments, he did not find support from other teachers in the department. Bailey designed complex assessments that included computational work with formulas and
situational problems that required students to decide how to solve the problem, what formulas to use, and how to present the final information. An example of this complex problem required students to analyze the ingredients in a recipe, decide how much the recipe would have to be increased for the expected guests, and create a shopping list based on money available for the party. Bailey expected students to complete the assessment correctly whether they were able to do this in one sitting or in multiple attempts. He made the point that students learn at different rates and assessments should be concerned with mastering the concepts, not finishing the textbook.

I believe in a student being able to go back and take a test again to show their mastery of a subject rather than one individual problem being wrong. Not everybody is going to learn at the same rate. Other teachers complain that we are way behind in our pacing guide and there isn’t time for that type of assessment. Maybe we do have kids who have not grasped certain concepts, but yet, I don’t see anything different in what they [colleagues] are doing. It’s all chalk and talk.

Bailey was observed during a classroom lesson. This lesson was based upon a textbook concept and set of problems. The concept was introduced and students sent to the board to complete example problems. As they worked, Bailey asked students to explain each step. He prompted the students with questions about what they were doing when solving the problem and why they were taking that particular step. Bailey encouraged students in the audience to assist in explaining “the why” of the problem, thus creating a feeling of partnership between the audience and the students at the board. The atmosphere of the
classroom was one of engagement of all students and enthusiasm on the part of those students at the board.

Bailey’s delivery of this textbook lesson demonstrated his educational philosophy. Although the same textbook lesson can be taught by a wide variety of teachers with a wide variety of educational philosophies, the lesson will have a different emphasis for each different educational philosophy. A teacher who espouses the Progressive educational philosophy challenges the students to think and invites the student to be a mutual partner in the teaching-learning exchange. A Progressive educational philosophy teacher wants his students to assume the responsibility for learning and expects them to gain a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the subject.

Selection of teaching team members.

Bailey summed up his feelings about people with whom he would like to work and whether he was most interested in the possible colleagues’ personalities, certifications, or educational philosophies. “It would be educational philosophies. I think about it all the time and I try to keep that in mind as I’m interacting with folks, how we can get on the same page for some of those philosophical differences.”

Cadie

Educational philosophy.

Cadie was more aligned with Bailey than Aaron in the area of self-reflection and understanding of her own educational philosophy. She started many of her interview topics with the phrase, “I started thinking about…” or “I started at looking at…” and goes on to
explain the thought process. “It’s important for them to understand why or how this is going to fit somewhere…. I think about the kind of teacher that I wanted to be…. It was amazing, it was kind of where my brain was headed.” She mentioned her own growth and the development of her educational philosophy. “My philosophy definitely has changed as I’ve grown as a teacher.”

In examining the curriculum delivery methods checklist, Cadie did not rate any of the choices as not applicable to her classroom setting, although she questioned two of the methods and said that she did not understand what they were. “I didn’t know what student dyads was.” Cadie added five suggestions to the checklist, including her own centers approach to curriculum delivery. She indicated her flexibility and openness about curriculum delivery methods.

For most things, pretty much if it’s out there, and someone tried it and liked it, I’ll give it a try and see if it fits. You know, you get all kinds of students, just can’t imagine doing one thing one way…. I thought that [the curriculum delivery methods checklist] could really be an interesting reflective piece on how you are reaching students, ‘cause delivery is everything.

The Progressive/Humanistic educational philosophy blend that Cadie espoused utilizes a wide variety of curriculum delivery methods that conform to this philosophical leaning. Cadie defended her large selection of methods as being indicative of her educational philosophy.

I think it reflects my [educational philosophy] ‘cause I’m trying to use a lot of
different ways to reach as many students as I possibly can. Although that is quite overwhelming at times, I try to use a bunch of different methods so they can figure out what works best for them. We do talk about a lot about that. You know, we’ll do reflections at the end. How did this work for you? It helps me kind of gauge what works well for them.

Relationships.

Cadie did not mention Aaron when discussing her interactions within the team; instead, she always referred to events and examples with Bailey. Aaron may fall into that category of new teachers who do not have a fully developed educational philosophy. Cadie said she found that annoying. She discussed the rapport that she and Bailey have from their shared educational philosophy characteristics.

Bailey and I are fortunate because we’re teaching the same group from last year.

Bailey and I have a kind of faith because we are sort of the odd man out with how we treat our kids and how the things that we do in our classrooms…. Bailey and I, we have all these big ideas about collaborating on all kinds of things. How we can integrate all this into a big community service project.

Cadie was comfortable with the seventh grade teachers as a general group. “The seventh grade hall tends to end up with people that have a similar [educational] philosophy and that understand seventh graders.” Cadie had primarily positive interactions with her departmental colleagues although they did not always agree with each other.

I think in PLC’s ideas are sometimes received more positively because it’s more one-
on-one. It’s a smaller group of people. It is a session where you, hopefully, are welcoming collaboration…. I’ve been around for a while. I’ve met a lot of different kinds of people. So, if they are open to [my ideas], I’ll share. If they’re not open, I’m not going to waste my time sharing something…. It has been interesting to see people who are not interested [in the centers approach]. They come by and poke their head in to see what’s going on in here.

She offered an explanation on why individual teachers may not be open to suggestions from colleagues.

Sometimes I think people’s feelings get hurt because they come up with an idea, or they heard about it and did try it, and it didn’t work for them. [They think] why didn’t it work for me?... People get so into, “This is my classroom. This is how I do things. Why do I have to change? Are you saying I’m doing something wrong?” It becomes a personal attack. So I think, that there’s a lot of personal feelings wrapped up in the sharing.

Cadie discussed an example of a departmental colleague who shared not only her ideas but also her educational philosophy. “It’s been interesting this year because the other teacher who is doing humanities, she’s been very interested in creating centers and things like that. It is nice when you have the same philosophy and it is easier to collaborate.”

When discussing colleagues throughout the school who have not shared her philosophical characteristics she talked about challenges that are a result of differing philosophical characteristics.
I don’t know that I worked with a polar opposite person, but I definitely worked with people that did not have the same teaching philosophy. Even as adults and professionals, it does present its challenges. It’s interesting because some things you may butt heads on and you just can’t resolve it and you agree to disagree. Sometimes the blood pressure rises and you walk away and grumble. Other times it is a learning experience and sometimes, maybe it shakes you out of your box. So good things can come, but usually [it] can be kind of a struggle.

*Association for Middle Level Education.*

Cadie was very familiar with the AMLE and had attended the annual conferences. She talked about the similarities between her educational philosophy and the AMLE beliefs. We just read *This We Believe.* As I read it, I chuckled and thought, I hope other people are actually reading this too. If this is what middle school philosophy is, I was right on board with using the multiple learning and teaching approaches and varied and ongoing assessments.

Her concern for the students and their individual differences was clear as she considered the tenets of middle school philosophy in forming teams and student assignment to those teams. She made clear her understanding of the different philosophies of teachers and the different needs of students.

The shared vision, that’s a hard one. It’s one thing when you put a team together and they have a shared vision and go forth with that vision. When you start pulling that out into that bigger group and you look at all these different characteristics and
philosophies. It becomes very difficult to do it in a large group setting. If you took this to a different level and say, “Let’s put these folks together, and these folks, and these folks.” and then start looking at the students. The students are all different too. Some students would do better with rules and order and others would do better with different types of teachers. Maybe one kind of student would do better on a team that’s like more traditional structure. Sometimes when people read this they think that this means that the whole school has to buy into the same exact thing. It’s just you have to buy into the idea of what is best for the children and that’s not the same for all of the children.

Cadie believed that schools need to do more to advocate for children and felt stifled by the status quo. “It’s like we’re not allowed to speak up. If we’re not going to speak for the students, who is?” She, like Bailey, believed that more could be done in the health and wellness area and was frustrated by the cafeteria situation. “Why are we throwing lunches away?” Cadie thought that middle schools need to do a better job of actively involving parents. Her excitement was observable during the team meeting as she introduced her vision of the Dream Team Moms. “Parents want to be involved but they don’t know how to be involved because their kids are teenagers.” Cadie made the point that just because these ideas were difficult to implement and sustain did not allow schools to simply ignore major sections of middle school philosophy. “I think it is important to be ‘on board’ with these things. It is a philosophy and sometimes those things aren’t as practical, but it doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t shoot for them.”
Selection of curriculum-based assignments.

Cadie shared an assignment that she had written specifically for her classroom. This assignment was part of a unit she designed to teach the integrated Social Studies and Language Arts subjects in a center format. The assignment had several pages of instructions on student behaviors within a group setting. Included in the student behavior expectations were instructions for how students were to interact within the group, how the group would function within a classroom filled with other groups, how work was to be submitted, how students were to signal the teacher that help was needed, and how the workspace would be left each day. Detailed rubrics for researching, writing, and reporting in general, as well as a rubric that covered the specific assignment were a part of the assignment packet. It was clear that nothing was left to chance on the functioning of the classroom.

There was a great deal of latitude allowed to the students on the interpretation of the specific assignment. While remaining on the specific topic, students were directed to read about the specific time in history from a choice of non-fiction and fictional sources, to interpret the differences found between the two sources and as a pre-writing assignment to create comparison charts between the two sources. Students worked within a group and created individual essays based on the pre-writing with each essay on a slightly different aspect of the overall topic. After several sets of peer edits and refinements to the essays, students submitted their essays for teacher review. They then proceeded with the next step in the process, the presentation of their topic to the class. The group planned the presentation of their topic in whatever way they chose. Through the instructions, additional
recommendations were made to consider the addition of fine arts elements with skits, artwork, music, or film clips to the presentation. The assignment packet clearly was designed not as a special project, but as one of many routine assignments that was used to blend the Social Studies and Language Arts subjects into the Humanities classroom.

Cadie’s Progressive-Humanistic educational philosophy was evident in the assignment that she submitted. Respecting all students was clear from the initial pages of the assignment. Students were directed about how to have positive interactions within the group and within the classroom. Students demonstrated self-direction, were active within the learning process, set goals for themselves, measured their success toward the attainment of those goals, and were highly involved in planning the learning experience. The students made choices within the assignment on which books to read, the focus of their individual essay, and the final presentation product.

Selection of teaching team members.

Cadie talked about the faculty members with whom she simply could not work as coming mainly from the Veterans generational group. “I think there’s definitely people on my list but they usually don’t stick around. Usually for Veterans, it’s educational philosophy, that you’ve been doing it this way and [you are] not willing to change.” Cadie also expressed her frustration at very new teachers. “Maybe it’s a lack of an educational philosophy that they just don’t have and they don’t know how to get one.” Cadie shared an example of a teacher who was teamed with colleagues who were polar opposites as a worst-case situation with which she had never been faced.
One of my friends had that issue last year. She was alone. She was an island on her hallway, [surrounded by] people with a different philosophy. It was an absolutely heart-breaking experience for her. She was doing what was best for children and doing everything that she could to help children succeed with people who just came from a different place. So it was a very frustrating experience for her and I don’t think I would’ve been able [to stick with it] I mean if it came down to you can work with this group over here and you’re not going to have any allies. I would possibly consider going somewhere else.

Cadie was clear that she thought some of her colleagues had no business in the teaching profession. “You come to school and you look at a colleague and you say ‘Why are you doing this, you seem to hate children, surely you’ve got something else to do?’ [These teachers] shouldn’t be allowed to continue to teach!” She brought in the issue of philosophies that were incompatible with the realities of working with middle school students.

You’ve got to find a way to make it [your teaching] work within the middle school system. If it’s not working, then you need to look at what you’re not doing for middle schoolers. Maybe there is something wrong with your philosophy. Maybe it’s not the kids if it is year after year. You know, maybe it’s you.

When asked about the importance of philosophy versus certification or personality in the selection of teammates she was very clear that educational philosophy was the most important factor.

Certification level doesn’t mean anything to me. You know, I’ve known a lot of good
teachers that went an alternate route to become a teacher. I don’t think certification necessarily has anything to do with anything other than producing a certain set of skills. I think that educational philosophy would probably be the most important thing I would look at. I can get along with most people, personality is rarely an issue, but philosophy could absolutely be an issue.

Conclusion

The three participants were very similar in the educational philosophy with which they identified. Aaron’s Progressive educational philosophy does not appear to be as well defined and his commitment to the philosophy does not appear to be as strong as Bailey’s philosophy. Cadie has a dual preference that includes the Progressive educational philosophy that both Aaron and Bailey share. Her dual Humanistic educational philosophy is compatible with the Progressive educational philosophy and the two philosophies share some elements that compliment each other. The statement of purpose for Progressive philosophy is to support responsible participation in society this is enhanced by Humanistic philosophy’s purpose that a student achieves self-actualization through personal growth and development (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 165).

Although the educational philosophies are very similar among these three teachers, each participant has developed his or her own educational philosophy from a different set of personal experiences. The intensity of those personal experiences may have created the differences in the commitment to an individual’s personal educational philosophy that we see in Tables 8 and Graph 1 (Appendix).
The ways in which the educational philosophy of the individual teacher is expressed both in the lessons that are designed by the teacher and in the methods that are selected for imparting the lessons of the classroom is apparent. Aaron shows less commitment to his espoused educational philosophy in his lesson delivery, but Aaron also is less experienced than the other teachers and is the least definitive in his philosophical understandings. The interactions within the team show a harmony among team members with their similar educational philosophy even if the relationship with Aaron is not as strong as between the two teachers who have worked together longer. Aaron appears to be following the lead that Bailey provides in the finer development points of his educational philosophy and in the routines within the daily operations on the team.

In this chapter, the participants were introduced using the initial research questions as a basis for explaining the development of those individuals. The interview responses, the classroom observations, the team meeting observation, as well as the inventory and checklists completed by the participants provided the details to flesh out the daily teaching interactions and activities of the teachers, providing a fuller and richer understanding of the person.

The participants were compared to each other through an analysis of the data. The data analysis painted a picture of each individual participant and detailed interactions with colleagues and teammates. These made apparent the defining characteristics of each teacher’s educational philosophy and how that educational philosophy has been formed through interactions with family (Noddings, 2007), with teachers from the elementary and secondary schooling experiences (Garabino, 1992), with college professors (Petress, 2003), and through
student teaching (Pope, 1983) and mentoring experiences (Price, 1961).

The data indicate how each teacher’s understanding of the needs of early adolescents (National Middle School Association, 2010b) has shaped and determined the development of their educational philosophies and has influenced their classroom interactions with these young people (National Middle School Association, 2003b). In addition, their philosophies have shaped and defined their professional interactions with a wide variety of people throughout the school environment (National Middle School Association, 2003a).

In the final chapter, the results of the data analysis will be further addressed and will be summarized for conclusions that may be drawn from this research. Chapter Five will also examine a more active use of educational philosophies within the middle school environment by both administrators and educators themselves. Finally, suggestions will be made for further areas of research in this area.
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

This research study examined three middle school teachers on the same team over a semester of time in order to ascertain their individual educational philosophies and the manner in which, based on these philosophies, the teachers interacted with each other and with their colleagues within the school environment. The teachers were interviewed to develop insight into the people and events that helped shape each person’s educational philosophy and draw conclusions as to the perceived ways and manners that they interacted with colleagues based upon these philosophies. The participants were observed within their classrooms to identify practices that were directly tied to their espoused educational philosophies.

The research questions upon which this research is based are:

1. What are the educational philosophies of the participants as indicated by the educational philosophy inventory?
2. Does the educational philosophy as measured by the inventory align with the teacher’s perception of his or her own educational philosophy?
3. What factors contribute to the development and refinement of the general educational philosophy for each teacher?
4. In what ways do the educational philosophies of the middle school team teachers manifest themselves during interactions within the team over a semester of time?

Triangulation of rich data enabled the researcher to draw the following conclusions:
1. Educational philosophy is a determining factor for how teachers on a middle school teaching team interact within the team setting.

2. Understanding the tenets of the broad educational philosophies allows team teachers to be more tolerant of differences among teachers and to provide a more harmonious work setting.

3. Placement of teachers on a team who have complementary philosophies enables more positive interactions among the team members than if team members had competing philosophies.

4. Knowledge of generational characteristics and grounding in middle school philosophy are factors in the establishment of educational philosophies.

Discussion

Educational philosophy is a determining factor for how teachers on a middle school teaching team interact within the team setting

Early adolescent needs require that students be known and valued as individuals (James, 1974), and the teaming structure of a middle school provides that opportunity (Arnold, 2004; Erb, 2004). Numerous studies on adolescent development such as those by Arnold (1993), Bronfenbrenner (1986), the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989, 1995), Eichorn (1998a), Garbarino (1992), and the National Middle School Association (1982/1992, 1995) have established the requirement that early adolescents be taught in an environment that is focused not only on their educational needs but also on their unique social, emotional, and developmental needs. The three or four person interdisciplinary
educational team structure that is present in a middle school setting provides multiple teachers to share the responsibility and the requirements of a middle school team, but also requires those teachers to interact for the good of the team and the students (Arnold & Stevenson, 1998; Erb & Doda, 1989; Flaherty, 2006; Flowers, Mertens, & Mulhall, 1999, Kruse & Louis, 1997, Mertz, 1994, National Middle School Association, 2003a, 2010a).

All of the participants in this study have complementary philosophies, although at this point in his career Aaron does not appear to have completely developed his educational philosophy. When questioned about his educational philosophy, Aaron may have been simply supplying the answers he believes are expected, or he may not yet understand how to implement the philosophy-based ideas that he has for his classroom.

The Progressive educational philosophy fits well with middle school philosophy as defined by the Association for Middle Level Education (National Middle School Association, 2010b) so it is a natural fit that teachers who believe strongly that the middle school environment is best for early adolescents would also self-identify with the Progressive educational philosophy. Attributes of both philosophies are:

- Student’s needs and experiences are valued
- Student’s culture and family are valued
- Students take an active role in the learning process
- Students should become responsible participants in society

Bailey and Cadie talked repeatedly in their interview responses about the ease of working with each other. Arnold and Stevenson (1998) would attribute this to the
methods of communication that they have developed from the previous year of working in a successful team structure. Bailey and Cadie attributed this solely to the similarities in their philosophical approach to teaching, and it is understandable that teachers who share a philosophical outlook can easily establish those communication methods. These two teachers deliberately sought each other out as teammates for this year, choosing to remain with the same students for the seventh grade year and continuing to implement the ideas that they have read about, talked about, and previously researched. It is clear, however, that had the opportunity to loop with their children not worked out they would still have planned to teach together for the upcoming school year. It is important to them to preserve the working relationship that they had established, one based on their shared philosophy.

Aaron’s espoused philosophy is the same as Bailey’s philosophy, although as noted previously, the commitment to the philosophy is not as strong as Bailey’s. Aaron is willing to accept suggestions from Bailey in the areas of discipline techniques and routine daily procedures. He does not take curriculum delivery ideas from Bailey, nor does Bailey take these ideas from Aaron. However, Aaron likes to think that he demonstrates in the classroom the technology delivery ideas that Bailey is already using. Aaron, at this point, has only a collection of practices that he presumes to be based on his partially formed educational philosophy. However, Aaron’s collection of practices has not been deliberately chosen as methods to carry out the tenets of his educational philosophy as Bailey’s and Cadie’s have been. Perhaps, with time and experience, Aaron will begin to accept and ask for suggestions from Bailey, or other colleagues, as his philosophy matures and he becomes more adept at
identifying methods for expressing this philosophy within the classroom. Since Aaron did not approach his teaching career in the traditional manner with a student teaching experience, he has not had the opportunity to observe, uninterrupted, the day to day classroom interactions of an experienced teacher, nor has anyone had the opportunity to observe Aaron for long stretches of uninterrupted time within his classroom environment. Perhaps had Aaron had a traditional student teaching experience then his educational philosophy would be more firmly established, either as a reflection of his own beliefs or as a melding of his beliefs with that of a cooperating teacher (Pope, 1983; Price, 1961).

Bailey and Cadie have similar complementary educational philosophies and relish working with each other and sharing curriculum delivery ideas. Bailey talks about trying to implement, within the math environment, the centers approach that Cadie has successfully transferred from the elementary setting and is using in the humanities area. The two of them are familiar with each other’s classroom interactions and inherently understand the reason for the curriculum delivery methods that are being used, as well as the underlying philosophy that determines the selection of these methods. Their successful efforts at interdisciplinary teaching are based on a solid grounding in research evident in the works of Arnold (2004), and Beane (1993, 1997a). Cadie’s classroom environment is a model of the use of curriculum integration. Her interdisciplinary teaching approach is driven by students asking and researching overarching curricula questions (Alexander et.al., 1995).

This research indicates that these three teachers, through their shared educational philosophy, have formed a successful, working team environment that benefits the early
adolescents in their care. Aaron, Bailey, and Cadie are not simply teaching a collection of academic subjects to a group of the same students on the same hallway. Their shared educational philosophy that enables students to acquire the tools to become responsible participants for society is evident through their interviews and the observations in their classrooms. Interviews also indicate a concern for the need to provide for family interactions with the school community. This goal is accomplished through their Halloween Family Night. These teachers demonstrate pride in the behavior of their students within the school as a whole. They also express a desire to educate their students in ways to resolve disagreements rather than to increase conflict. Each teacher has contributed to the development of the team by filling the space that leads to a fully integrated team structure.

*Understanding the tenets of the broad educational philosophies allows team teachers to be more tolerant of differences among teachers and to provide a more harmonious work setting.*

The interactions of teachers with different educational philosophies have been researched numerous times. Boschee *et al.* (1978), Clark and Jarvis-Selinger (2005), Collins *et al.* (2003), Deggs *et al.* (2008), Petress (2003), Pope (1983), and Price (1961) focused their research on the undergraduate, pre-service teacher and the development and interactions with a cooperating or mentor teacher. Gutek (2004), Hermans *et al.* (2008), Hirst (1963), Noddings (2007), Null (2007), and Peters (2009) conducted research that was primarily concerned with teachers already in the field and, therefore, the teacher interactions that they studied were within the whole school environment. This case study has examined three teachers who have been found to have similar educational philosophies. They differ only in
the degree of commitment to their individual educational philosophy. The interactions that these individuals have with colleagues within their departments and with other teachers within the school as a whole also serve to demonstrate their differences in their educational philosophies.

Aaron shows his inability to be tolerant of other teachers’ philosophies. His general discomfort with his teaching assignment and his inexperience in the field may be the cause of this lack of tolerance. As he grows as a teacher and further develops his educational philosophy, he may better understand why other teachers approach the classroom in different ways. At the present time he does not connect his differences in style and approach with those of others as philosophical in nature. This point is obvious when he discusses the older teachers who use, to his mind, completely out-of-date textbooks in their instruction. He does not know the reasoning behind using older books and does not seek to understand it. He cannot say whether these older teachers are English teachers using a literature textbook with favorite poems and short stories, or math teachers using a textbook that has a particularly good method of explaining problems that works with very bright students. Neither can he say whether the teachers are using older textbooks because they do not have the funding to purchase new textbooks. He simply dismisses anything that is “old” as a bad teaching decision that comes from bad teachers.

Interactions with colleagues outside of a team setting often are reduced to responding to the practices that are the result of an individual’s educational philosophy. How students are graded on assignments, how the grading is structured for the class in general, whether or
not late work will be accepted are all practices that demonstrate a teacher’s educational philosophy. These specific practices often become important at the department level when everyone is asked to adhere to a common set of practices for grades. As an example, a math teacher with a Behavioral educational philosophy grades papers for accuracy not effort (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). After spending the prescribed quantity of time practicing the lessons that were presented in class, this student must demonstrate the correct answer on the chapter test. The Behavioralist teacher feels strongly that there is a sizeable difference between a 70 passing grade and a 69 non-passing grade and will likely feel that he or she is being treated in a disrespectful manner when a school system puts in to place “minimum grades” or “no zeroes” policies. Conversely, for Bailey and other teachers of the Progressive educational philosophy, a student might not arrive at the correct answer the first time he takes the test, but with additional work and further explanations that student will attempt the problem again and show his mastery of the subject and still receive a passing grade of 70. Bailey’s educational philosophy drives him to guide his students through the learning process, to stop and provide additional assistance when they encounter roadblocks and to encourage students to pursue that knowledge until they have mastered the concepts thoroughly. For Bailey, there is no perceived disrespect of his practices with the “minimum grades” or “no zeroes” policies because his own philosophy does not allow him to stop working with a student until that minimum would have been exceeded or that zero would have been a moot point.
Bailey is unlikely to understand the grade rigidity espoused by the Behavioral educational philosophy teacher and the Behavioral teacher is unlikely to understand what he might perceive as a “loosey-goosey” flexibility in Bailey’s grading practices. Bailey talked about the areas of conflict that arose in departmental conversations, specifically mentioning grading. By the end of the interviews, Bailey had realized that what he had described as intolerance in his colleagues was actually a result of the differences in their educational philosophies. These philosophy driven differences captured his interest and he wanted to explore this concept in more detail. Bailey discussed the need to consider the educational philosophies of each person within the school when he talked about his desire to move into an administrative role.

Lesson selection is another prime example of a teacher’s educational philosophy. In examining the lessons that Bailey presented in the classroom, the observer can see the clear reflection of his educational philosophy. Bailey moves to the side of the classroom and has students go to the front to present a problem. His physical presence is beside the students, encouraging their own forward movement, not in front of them as a leader for them to follow. All students are encouraged to assist whoever is at the board working on a problem, thereby creating a cooperative atmosphere rather than a competitive one (Null, 2007). The Progressive educational philosophy expects a student to take an active role in the learning process and to assume responsibility for the learning activities. Having been given the opportunity to reflect on educational philosophy, Bailey has come to understand that departmental colleagues who choose to lecture from the front of the class are not wrong in
their approach; they simply have a different educational philosophy.

Bailey and Cadie both indicate that their understanding of other teachers’ philosophies adds to their own acceptance and tolerance of these individuals, although they reserve the right not to be teamed with these individuals. Bailey was most vocal about the teachers within his department who possessed a competing philosophy to his own. His initial irritation at what he saw as an unreasonable attitude in a colleague lessened as he explored his own philosophy and realized that his colleague also had an educational philosophy that was driving her decisions. He wanted to share the educational philosophy inventory with colleagues and wanted to have this as a basis for conversations with his departmental colleagues.

Plethoras of “best-practices” staff development workshops are built around student success in the classroom. Dr. Thomas Guskey makes the point that there is no such thing as “best-practices” or these techniques and activities would be successful every time with every student (T. Guskey, personal communication, March 2, 2011). Teachers select activities and techniques from a best-practices workshop to incorporate within their own classroom based on their own educational philosophy. Cadie discussed colleagues who presented vocabulary strategies in a best practices sharing. These were not ones she would choose to implement, but they worked well for her colleagues. She emphasized that while these strategies were good ideas that had worked for them, she was not sure why these same ideas would not work in her classroom. What Cadie came to understand was that the differences between what worked for her and what worked for her colleagues were simply differences in educational
philosophies. The drill and practice activities were valued by other teachers who valued traditional knowledge instruction and saw their own role as the expert within the classroom. When Cadie shared her own best practices, they were often ignored, not because they were not good ideas, but because Cadie’s own educational philosophy had shaped them to the point that other teachers could not recognize their value for their own classrooms. They could not see how to make them fit into their understanding of good teaching, as defined by their own educational philosophy.

From the beginning, Cadie’s philosophical duality, Progressive with Humanistic educational philosophy provided a basis for personal growth and self-actualization. This enabled her to be far more tolerant of colleagues who had a different philosophy from hers (Null, 2007). She talked of sharing ideas with colleagues if they appeared to be open to the sharing, but not bothering if they did not wish to share ideas. Cadie understood that all teachers did not subscribe to her philosophy and some were unlikely to be swayed by demands that everyone participate in the latest “best practice” as outlined at a staff meeting. She believed that this method of introducing ideas caused hurt feelings and further resistance by implying that there was something wrong with the way classrooms were currently being run. Cadie indicated that she had some measure of success in sharing ideas with people of different philosophies simply by conducting her classroom as she normally did and inviting questions and discussion when these colleagues came to her with inquiries of “what she was doing that seemed to excite the students.”

In a follow-up comment, Bailey states that simply discussing educational
philosophies through this research study changed the person that he is, and the administrator that he will become. Cadie spoke several times about the relief that she experienced when she realized there were other teachers who shared her educational philosophy. Both Bailey and Cadie were excited about the possibility of exploring the educational philosophies of their colleagues.

The understanding that each teacher and each administrator brings a personal and uniquely shaped educational philosophy to the school every day is an understanding that must be built within the school community. A basic understanding, such as the understanding that Aaron, Bailey, and Cadie gained, of the general tenets of each of the different educational philosophies can only help to open communication and understanding among the faculty.

*Placement of teachers on a team who have complementary philosophies enables more positive interactions among the team than if team members had competing philosophies*

Arnold and Stevenson (1998), as well as Erb and Doda (1989) have addressed this conclusion in their own research. Erb and Doda (1989) commented on the importance of staffing selection when creating a team and included the caveat that teachers should be allowed to express their opinion when creating teams. “Asking teachers to indicate any individuals whom they feel they could not work with is a wise measure that can head off future problems with the staffing of teams” (p. 16). They go further to provide an example of a staffing preference form (p. 17) for teachers to complete to assist with the creation of teams. A suggestion is also made to consider inventories or other instruments to identify
characteristics of individuals prior to assignment to a team.

Cade provides the clearest example that complementary philosophies will enable more positive interactions of the three participants. Cadie states unequivocally that she will choose to transfer to another school if placed on a team with team members who are opposed to her own educational philosophy. Of note is that she does not indicate that she would ask for a different placement, but that she would leave the school altogether. In an environment where administrators do not understand the influence of educational philosophies, faculty members may be lost to other schools when these teachers do not see the possibility of being teamed with colleagues of similar philosophies. In situations where educational philosophies are never discussed nor identified, teachers may not even be aware of what seems to be wrong when they experience unsatisfactory interactions with colleagues.

Administrators who presume that personality is the driving factor in a teacher’s success and not educational philosophy may make team placement decisions that are unsatisfactory and unsuccessful. Erb and Doda (1989) specifically warn administrators not to fall into the trap of staffing a team with teachers who are best of friends, but instead to base it on a variety of characteristics including teaching style, personality type, leadership style, and certification (p. 16). They go further to recommend that the team teachers have discussions with each other to describe their ways of teaching, and their preferences for leadership and interactions within the school environment (pp. 16-20). Certainly the teaching style and leadership style that Erb and Doda refer to can be seen to be manifestations of the educational philosophies that a teacher has developed and refined over his or her career.
All three teachers in this research study had pleasant, cooperative personalities. They were courteous when speaking about other people and in their interactions with each other and with their students. Cadie shares the personality traits of “hard-working” and “motivated” with other members of her department but has a vastly different educational philosophy from her colleagues. Bailey shares the personality traits of “focused” and “determined” with other members of his department, but again, has a vastly different educational philosophy from these colleagues. It is not a teacher’s personality that determines how a team will function, but instead, it is how the educational philosophies of the team members will mesh or clash that determines how the team functions.

All three teachers indicate a preference for a team relationship that is based upon a similar educational philosophy rather than based only on a certification match. Bailey is articulate in describing the placement of team members closely associated in their espoused educational philosophy. He recommends that administrators place teachers on a team who have what he refers to as “adjacent philosophies.” (Examples of adjacent philosophies would be to pair Behavioral and Comprehensive philosophies or to pair Progressive and Humanistic philosophies.)

Cadie takes the idea of matching complementary educational philosophies a step further and proposes to match students with the philosophy of the teachers on their team. She sees the possibility of maximizing a student’s educational experiences by maximizing the positive interactions with his teachers.

Arnold and Stevenson (1998) are clear in their discussion of creation of teams and in
the maintenance of established teams. Whereas, teams that are not working must be reconfigured, teams that are working well should be supported and helped to mature (p.18). They go further to indicate that “Teachers must have considerable say in deciding about the size as well as the composition of teams. Their voice is important in forming new teams as well as in shifting faculty among existing teams.” (p. 19). Positive interactions within the team, with other school faculty, with parents, with administration, and above all else with students should be the motivating force in team creation.

**Knowledge of generational characteristics and grounding in middle school philosophy are factors in the establishment of educational philosophies**

The Association for Middle Level Education (as the National Middle School Association) first published its beliefs on the education of early adolescents in 1982 based on the work of educators since the first junior high school opening in 1909. The AMLE has continually refined and expanded that information over the last thirty years giving us recommendations for staffing, programs to support the middle school environment, and curriculum to support the global education of these early adolescents. No teacher working with early adolescents today can afford not to be familiar with the tenets of middle school philosophy.

Lovely and Buffum (2007) have researched the interactions of individuals within the educational environment. They have examined how multiple generations work together and mix differing motivations that they bring to their work, their expected reward for the work itself, and the relationships they form as a part of that work. These characteristics cannot be
ignored. Failure to address differences results in the creation of a hostile work environment. “Bridging the gap and managing the friction means employee wants, needs, hopes, and fears have to be noticed and appreciated” (p. 2).

Aaron displays the characteristics of his Millennial generation even when he is unsure of the educational philosophy that he is developing. Factors such as, his desire to have a career, or at least a job, that does not interfere with his afternoon and evening hours, to have interactions with his students that are fun and humorous, and his belief that the people he works with should also be his friends are examples of the fundamental characteristics of the Millennial generation. His choice not to “rock the boat” within the school by joining committees and debating the issues within the school is a classic Millennial response. Lovely and Buffum (2007) point out that Millennials display a “lack of willingness to debate issues for which there seems to be a consensus among their peers” (p. 78). Without a solidly defined educational philosophy, his curriculum delivery choices and activities appear defined more by his generational characteristics. “Because taking risks is not part of this generation’s repertoire, it may lead to classroom environments that are somewhat bland” (Lovely & Buffum, 2007, p. 78). These characteristics will continue to define the teacher that Aaron will become in later years, even as his educational philosophy is developed, reshaped, and refined through encounters with colleagues, life experiences, and workshops or staff development activities.

Aaron’s lack of grounding in middle school philosophy will eventually create difficulties for him within the school environment. His laissez faire attitude about progress
reports to parents and his lack of planning for rigor in his curriculum are two areas that demonstrate his lack of understanding of the educational requirements for middle level adolescents. The AMLE (National Middle School Association, 2010b) has established that early adolescents need a rigorous curriculum to provide challenge for their developing minds and to provide them with a wealth of experiences. Parents should be partners in the education process (National Middle School Association, 2010b) and should be kept informed not only to avoid conflicts at report card time but so they can assist with the learning process.

Bailey not only understands his own generational characteristics but he understands that his colleagues are defined by their own generational characteristics. He may not like the disagreements over assessment practices that he has with the seasoned and experienced teachers from the Veterans generation, but he respects them as teachers functioning within their own classrooms. Lovely and Buffum (2007) describes Generation X as educators who seek independent study and participate in distance learning (p. 64). Bailey displays these Generation X characteristics as he continues to expand his professional knowledge and professional contacts through online discussion groups, LinkedIn membership, Twitter, and professional education blogs.

Cadie understands and appreciates the differences that the generational characteristics bring to the school as a whole. She recognizes that she clashes with the Veterans generation over her “fluffy” ways of handling her classroom and does not insist that people who are not interested in her methods have to listen to her suggestions. Lovely and Buffum (2007) accurately describe the teacher that Cadie is when they note the style of the representative for
this generation as “earning their respect, not hovering over [the students], and gives lots of feedback” (p. 64).

Both Cadie and Bailey have a thorough grounding in middle school philosophy and make every attempt to utilize the tenets of this philosophy in the planning of their lessons and in the organization of their team. This is demonstrated in their outreach to parents through the Halloween Trick or Treat Parents’ Night that included student skits on bullying, through the Dream Moms Corps of volunteers that they organized, and through their concern about what the students were wasting in the cafeteria. They both indicate a desire for the school to be more proactive in the involvement of social services departments of the local government to assist those students who have physical and mental health issues.

Bailey displays his understanding of middle school philosophy in his concern for a rigorous curriculum and his understanding that early adolescents have different needs and require different curriculum delivery methods (National Middle School Association, 2010b). This is seen through the organization of his classroom which focuses on the mastery of an objective rather than the steps that lead to that mastery. Cadie shows her understanding of the need for relevance and connections in the middle school classroom (National Middle School Association, 2010b) through her use of the centers she designed. Her approach allows students to learn the reading and writing skills that are a part of the language arts curriculum by using the readings and focus of the history curriculum.

*Implications for Educators and Administrators*

Middle school education requires a different approach to the placement of teachers
within the school. It requires a teaming structure that is unlike elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools (Alexander & George, 1981; Alexander et.al., 1969). For middle school teams to function well, and for a student to receive an education that prepares him or her for the rigors of high school and college, there must be a great deal of thought that goes into the creation of the teams of teachers (Arnold & Stevenson, 1998; Erb & Doda, 1989).

It is insufficient to match teachers based only upon their certification qualifications and hope that everyone gets along (Arnold & Stevenson, 1998). In addition, teams should not be formed to spread out the difficult teachers placing one in each team in hopes that someone will finally be able to work with that difficult soul (Erb & Doda, 1989). There must be a plan for the school that focuses on educational philosophies in order to address these recommendations.

1. Identify the educational philosophies of the current members of the faculty and explore what their philosophies look like within the classroom.

2. Identify the educational philosophy of teachers during the interview process to ascertain how these individuals would fit within the existing school structure.

3. Ensure that the school has fully functioning teachers like Bailey and Cadie by providing newly licensed teachers, like Aaron, with a support structure that will allow them to fully develop their educational philosophy, not just their bag of tricks.

4. Match the mission of the school with the educational philosophies of the teachers within the school.
Schools cannot expect to prepare students for a global economy that requires abstract thinking when these students are taught primarily by teachers who have an educational philosophy that prizes drill and practice above all else.

Educators must be given the opportunity and the guidance to explore their educational philosophy and examine how it is represented in the classroom. They must have the chance to network with others whose philosophies are complementary to understand how those philosophies can be made compatible. They must be helped to understand conflicting philosophies, and how teachers with unlike philosophies can work together. Teachers must be given the guidance and the knowledge to enable them to gain respect and understanding for all of the different educational philosophies.

Educational philosophy is the foundation that a teacher returns to repeatedly for decisions on lesson selection, curriculum delivery, and student and teacher interactions. Educational philosophy cannot remain a hidden attribute of teachers. It must be given an acknowledged position of importance in all decisions within our schools mirroring the importance that it holds within all of our teachers.

The three teachers in this research study came to understand that their own individual educational philosophies formed a framework for their team interactions. The work that they did to understand other educational philosophies allowed for their understanding of colleagues and served to create more harmonious interactions within the team as well as within the school itself.
Suggestions for Future Research

This study has left many avenues for future research. This research case study was, by design, a limited examination of the middle school team. It would have been a different study altogether had more teams been examined at the same time and may have yielded different findings. Certainly there is a need to look more closely at a larger number of teams in a variety of schools.

Currently no consideration of educational philosophies is made in team creation. Should team creation be implemented with educational philosophies in mind, research could be done to compare classrooms’ results.

The proposed research would provide a middle school faculty with a series of staff development workshops on educational philosophies, after which the faculty would spend an academic year observing the resulting interactions among the teams. The proposed research study would then extend the work done at said school, providing a set of data to compare against a school that has not focused staff development on educational philosophies.

Of equal interest is to study a school willing to allow the establishment of middle school teams based on the compatibility of the individual team members’ educational philosophies. In this proposed research study, the focus would be on job satisfaction, collaboration among the team teachers, and the administration’s satisfaction with the functionality of the teams.

Increased emphasis on standardized testing and decreasing staffing budgets, makes it less likely that administrators will have the flexibility to continue shifting team members
around hoping to find a good fit. With a focus on tighter controls on curriculum through state testing requirements teachers will lose the autonomy to run their classrooms. Perhaps the best way of dealing with this reality is to spend time educating our current faculty on educational philosophies to encourage insight, understanding, and tolerance for those whose educational philosophy is different from our own.

Epilogue

As a new school year begins, the team that was studied is no longer working together. Bailey has followed his desire and entered a preparatory program for school administration. Perhaps, as he mused in our last conversation, he is now researching educational philosophies and planning how he can educate his future faculty to understand how their educational philosophies can work together to form a cohesive school. Cadie has moved to a school closer to her home where she is a “specials” teacher who works alone in a pullout program to teach the humanities to students. One wonders if the driving factor in her leaving her previous employment was to get closer to home or, as she suggested in a comment made to me, to leave a situation where she was scheduled to be teamed with colleagues that were diametrically opposed to her educational philosophy. “I mean if it came down to you can work with this group over here, and you’re not going to have any allies. I would possibly consider going somewhere else.” Aaron remains a science teacher at the same school on a new team.
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Erb, T.O. (2004). Thirty years of attempting to fathom teaching: Battling potholes and hairpin curves along the way. In T. Dickinson & T. Erb (Eds.), *We gain more than we give: Teaming in middle schools* (pp. 19-60). Westerville, OH: National Middle School Assn.


Flaherty, D.A. (2006). Middle school team teachers and how their beliefs, values and understanding of middle school philosophy affect the overall functioning of the team (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 2006). Dissertation Abstracts International. 67(02).


National Middle School Association. (2001). *This we believe...And now we must act.* Columbus, OH: Author.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy and Prevalent Time Period</th>
<th>Theorists</th>
<th>Possible Educational Setting</th>
<th>Educational Goal</th>
<th>Distinguishing Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Idealism (most ancient)             | Socrates (Plato) Descartes        | Gifted programs Character education | To develop a knowledge of the classics | • Asking Universal questions  
• Teacher as expert  
• Socratic questioning |
| Perennialism 1930’s                 | Mortimer Adler                    | Gifted programs Elite schools | To develop a knowledge of the classics that shaped our society | • Inflexible  
• Specific curriculum based around the Great Books of Western Culture |
| Realism (ancient)                   | Aristotle John Locke              | Junior High Schools          | To learn skills and subjects in a cumulative, sequential, and systematic method | • Teacher as expert  
• Capable students  
• Individual subjects instruction  
• Focus on what is real  
• Higher plane than vocational skills |
| Traditionalist 1870’s               | Plato (refining his viewpoints would have placed him here) | Gifted programs Elite schools | To train a student for his or her role in society as defined by status | • Teacher as expert - who simply knows how to teach  
• Ability groups |
| Comprehensive 1940’s                | Socrates Plato Aristotle          | Junior High Schools Gifted programs | To develop general knowledge intellect | • Teacher as expert  
• Critical thinker |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy and Prevalent Time Period</th>
<th>Theorists</th>
<th>Possible Educational Setting</th>
<th>Educational Goal</th>
<th>Distinguishing Features</th>
</tr>
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<td>Pragmatism Instrumentalism 1890’s</td>
<td>John Dewey</td>
<td>Middle schools</td>
<td>To facilitate the growth of the student</td>
<td>Teacher as mutual learner • Problem-solving • Project learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrationists (one faction of integrationists split off to become progressive) 1840’s</td>
<td>David Felmley</td>
<td>Normal schools</td>
<td>To use the scientific method to attain moral ideals</td>
<td>Teacher as pedagogically trained and knowledgeable • Experiences • Democratic education • What, how, and why to teach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essentialism 1938</td>
<td>William Bagley</td>
<td>Middle Schools</td>
<td>To facilitate the growth of the student within the bounds of the selected curriculum</td>
<td>Teacher as pedagogically trained and knowledgeable • Experiences that are related to the curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive 1930’s</td>
<td>John Dewey, William Kilpatrick</td>
<td>Middle schools</td>
<td>To develop practical knowledge and problem solving skills</td>
<td>Teacher as organizer • Cooperative learning • Experience-based</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 1 (continued).

Philosophical Schools that Merged to Form the Behavioral Educational Philosophy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy and Prevalent Time Period</th>
<th>Theorists</th>
<th>Possible Educational Setting</th>
<th>Educational Goal</th>
<th>Distinguishing Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technicians 1930’s</td>
<td>Edward Thorndike W.W. Charters</td>
<td>General methods classes for all teachers</td>
<td>To analyze learning and fix ‘bad teaching’</td>
<td>• Teacher able to teach anything • Drill and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral 1940’s</td>
<td>B.F. Skinner Benjamin Bloom</td>
<td>Vocational training Certification examinations</td>
<td>To promote skill development</td>
<td>• Teacher as manager • Mastery learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Philosophical Schools that Merged to Form the Social Change Educational Philosophy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy and Prevalent Time Period</th>
<th>Theorists</th>
<th>Possible Educational Setting</th>
<th>Educational Goal</th>
<th>Distinguishing Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrationists (one faction of integrationists split off to become social change) 1920’s</td>
<td>Isaac Kandel</td>
<td>High Schools Colleges Political Studies</td>
<td>To understand the inter-relatedness of the past and present</td>
<td>• Using the past as a basis for understanding the problems of the current society • Critical thinkers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Change 1960’s</td>
<td>Paulo Freire Jonathan Kozol</td>
<td>Social-Action theater Voter education</td>
<td>To bring about social change through education</td>
<td>• Teacher as coordinator • Social action • Non-compulsory education setting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy and Prevalent Time Period</th>
<th>Theorists</th>
<th>Possible Educational Setting</th>
<th>Educational Goal</th>
<th>Distinguishing Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romantics 1750’s</td>
<td>Jean-Jacques Rousseau</td>
<td>Anti-intellectual schools</td>
<td>To produce problem-solving citizens who realize their true inner nature</td>
<td>• Teacher as a developer of projects&lt;br&gt;• Student interest directed&lt;br&gt;• Experiential only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanistic 1940’s</td>
<td>Abraham Maslow A.S. Neill</td>
<td>Summerhill School Montessori school</td>
<td>To facilitate self-actualization</td>
<td>• Teacher as mutual participant&lt;br&gt;• Learning exchange&lt;br&gt;• Self-directed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2. Characteristics of Different Generational Groupings  
(Lovely & Buffum, 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation ~ Birth Years</th>
<th>Work Characteristic</th>
<th>Leadership Characteristic</th>
<th>Team Participation</th>
<th>Defining Moments/Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterans 1920-1943</td>
<td>• Rules and order</td>
<td>• Value loyalty</td>
<td>• Need a leader</td>
<td>• Great Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Technology resistant</td>
<td>• Change is disruptive</td>
<td>• Need group roles</td>
<td>• WWII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uphold traditions</td>
<td>• Value top-down structures</td>
<td>• Respect experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers 1944-1960</td>
<td>• Need to prove themselves</td>
<td>• Conflict avoidance</td>
<td>• Build rapport</td>
<td>• Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Defer to authority</td>
<td>• Lead through consensus</td>
<td>• Stick to agenda and schedule</td>
<td>• JFK &amp; MLK Assassinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work long hours</td>
<td>• Enjoy personal development</td>
<td>• Value team work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X 1960-1980</td>
<td>• Dislike politics of job</td>
<td>• Challenge authority</td>
<td>• Prefer to pick own teammates</td>
<td>• Challenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expect fun</td>
<td>• Adapt to change</td>
<td>• Struggle building rapport</td>
<td>• AIDS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Prefer minimal supervision</td>
<td>• Functional and efficient environment</td>
<td>• Excel at technical competence and creativity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Multi-task</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials 1980-2000</td>
<td>• Respectful of authority</td>
<td>• Open to fresh ideas</td>
<td>• Accept group diversity</td>
<td>• Columbine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Excellent multi-taskers</td>
<td>• Lack experience with difficult situations</td>
<td>• Respond to mentoring</td>
<td>• September 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Anxious to “fit in”</td>
<td>• Able to work with a variety of people</td>
<td>• Expects to be included in decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Value continuing education</td>
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Table 3. Aaron Matrix Scores Report for PEI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response to Stem: (letters refer to classification of stem in Zinn’s inventory)</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>w</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>v</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>y</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>z</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stem Question # 1</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>7</td>
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**Notes:**
- **B** = Behavioral
- **C** = Comprehensive
- **P** = Progressive
- **H** = Humanistic
- **S** = Social Change

194
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**B = Behavioral   C = Comprehensive   P = Progressive   H = Humanistic   S = Social Change**
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| Response to stem Column total | 40 | 30 | 39 | 32 | 46 | 37 | 44 | 39 | 42 | 36 |
| Combined response to Stem column totals | C+W=B 70 | A+V=C 71 | D+X=P 83 | F+Y=H 83 | H+Z=S 78 |

B = Behavioral  C = Comprehensive  P = Progressive  
H = Humanistic  S = Social Change
Table 6. Characteristic Keys for Educating Young Adolescents as Defined by the Association for Middle Level Education
(National Middle School Association, 2010a)

<p>| Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment | Educators value young adolescents and are prepared to teach them |
|                                       | Students and teachers are engaged in active, purposeful learning |
|                                       | Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant |
|                                       | Educators use multiple learning and teaching approaches |
|                                       | Varied and ongoing assessments advance learning as well as measure it |
| Leadership and Organization           | A shared vision developed by all stakeholders guides every decision |
|                                       | Leaders are committed to and knowledgeable about this age group |
|                                       | Leaders demonstrate courage and collaboration |
|                                       | Ongoing professional development reflects best educational practices |
|                                       | Organizational structures foster purposeful learning |
| Culture and Community                 | The school environment is inviting, safe, inclusive, and supportive of all |
|                                       | Every student’s academic and personal development is guided by an adult advocate |
|                                       | Comprehensive guidance and support services meet the needs of young adolescents |
|                                       | Health and wellness are supported in curricula, school-wide programs, and related policies |
|                                       | The school actively involves families in the education of their children |
|                                       | The school includes community and business partners |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Aaron</th>
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<th>Cadie</th>
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<td><strong>Grade Level Teaching Experiences</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>College Degree</strong></td>
<td>Bachelor’s – Interdisciplinary Studies</td>
<td>Bachelor’s – Math Education</td>
<td>Bachelor’s - Journalism</td>
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<td><strong>Initial Licensure</strong></td>
<td>Alternative Licensure Program – Mathematics, Science, Language Arts, and Social Studies 6-8</td>
<td>Teacher Education Program - Mathematics 6-12</td>
<td>Alternative Licensure Program – Language Arts and Social Studies 6-8</td>
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<td><strong>Personality Attributes</strong></td>
<td>• Cheerful</td>
<td>• Pleasant</td>
<td>• “Infectiously” cheerful</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enjoys working with students</td>
<td>• Enjoys working with students</td>
<td>• Enthusiastic and eager during interview process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Respectful of colleagues</td>
<td>• “Lives” his work, “Calling” to teach</td>
<td>• Volunteers materials and welcomes inspection of teaching methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Respect for colleagues and their methods and management techniques</td>
<td>• Cooperative</td>
<td>• Shares materials and ideas with colleagues routinely</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enthusiastic during interview process</td>
<td>• Volunteers materials and invites inspection of teaching methods</td>
<td>• Forthcoming on all questions and requests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cooperative</td>
<td>• Enthusiastic and eager during interview process</td>
<td>• Cooperative and welcoming</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Forthcoming on all questions and requests</td>
<td>• Respects colleagues as individuals</td>
<td>• Respects colleagues as individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Forthcoming on all questions and requests</td>
<td>• Kind even in criticism</td>
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<td>• Creates pleasant environment whenever possible</td>
<td>• Creates pleasant and “peaceful” classroom environment</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Passionate about student success</td>
<td>• Passionate about student success</td>
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<td>• Seeks out “networking” opportunities with other educators</td>
<td>• Seeks out new methods of curriculum delivery</td>
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<td>• Seeks out “challenging” students</td>
<td>• Eager to develop meaningful mentor relationships with students</td>
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<td>• Develops meaningful mentor relationships with students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>Bailey</td>
<td>Cadie</td>
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<td>Progressive</td>
<td>Progressive-Humanistic</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Philosophy Attributes (Purpose of Education) (Katzenmeyer &amp; Moller, 2001, p. 164)</strong></td>
<td>• Students are responsible participants in society • Students have practical / problem solving knowledge</td>
<td>• Students are responsible participants in society • Students have practical / problem solving knowledge</td>
<td>• Students responsible participants in society • Students have practical / problem solving knowledge • Students work to enhance their personal growth • Students gain self-actualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Philosophy Attributes (Relationship with Student) (Katzenmeyer &amp; Moller, 2001, p. 164)</strong></td>
<td>• Students needs and experiences are valued • Student’s culture and family is valued • Students take an active role in the learning process</td>
<td>• Student’s needs and experiences are valued • Student’s culture and family is valued • Students take an active role in the learning process</td>
<td>• Students needs and experiences valued • Student’s culture and family is valued • Students are highly motivated and self-directed • Students assume the responsibility for learning • Students highly involved in planning and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Philosophy Attributes (Role of Teacher) (Katzenmeyer &amp; Moller, 2001, p. 164)</strong></td>
<td>• Teacher as organizer in classroom • Teacher as guide to learning • Teacher provides real-life learning opportunities • Teacher promotes student cooperative interactions • Teacher promotes transfer of learning activities</td>
<td>• Teacher as organizer in classroom • Teacher as guide to learning • Teacher provides real-life learning opportunities • Teacher promotes student cooperative interactions • Teacher promotes transfer of learning activities</td>
<td>• Teacher as organizer in classroom • Teacher as facilitator and helper • Teacher as a mutual participant in the teaching and learning • Teacher provides real-life learning opportunities • Teacher promotes student cooperative interactions • Teacher promotes transfer of learning activities • Teacher promotes authentic work products • Teacher empowers students and provides students autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
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<td>Bailey</td>
<td>Cadie</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-reflection and Analysis</strong></td>
<td>• No introspection or reflection on purpose for education</td>
<td>• Continual self-reflection on purpose for education</td>
<td>• Continual self-reflection on purpose for education</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Development Regarding Educational Philosophy</strong></td>
<td>• No reflection on relationship with curriculum delivery methods and</td>
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<td>• Continual reflection on relationship with curriculum delivery</td>
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<td>student’s role in the learning process</td>
<td>methods and student’s role in the learning process</td>
<td>methods and student’s role in the learning process</td>
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<td>• Identification of unsuccessful learning activities without</td>
<td>• Continual analysis and refinement of learning activities</td>
<td>• Continual analysis and refinement of the success of</td>
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<td>reflection on reasons for the lack of success</td>
<td>based on student academic success</td>
<td>learning activities based on student growth</td>
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<td>• No detectable reflection on how classroom environment mirrors</td>
<td>• Moderate reflection on relationship between classroom environment</td>
<td>• Active awareness of and commitment to relationship between</td>
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<td></td>
<td>educational philosophy</td>
<td>and educational philosophy</td>
<td>classroom environment and educational philosophy</td>
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<td>• Desire to be “real” as teacher supplants any other discernible</td>
<td>• Continual self-reflection, analysis, and refinement of role as</td>
<td>• Continual self-reflection, analysis, and refinement in of</td>
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<td>reflection on role as teacher</td>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>role as teacher</td>
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<td>• Deconstructs goals and objectives for education in order to</td>
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<td>develop learning activities that will achieve these goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
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<td>Bailey</td>
<td>Cadie</td>
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</table>
| **Factors Contributing to Development and Refinement of Educational Philosophy** | • Colleagues from science department  
• Professional development activities  
• Strategy-based workshops  
• Memorable seventh grade teacher (1)  
• Self-identified as mediocre student (negative factor)  
• Fear relationships with his own teachers (negative factor)  
• No family contributions mentioned | • Prior schooling experiences  
• Multiple memorable teachers (and student teachers) from elementary, middle, secondary, undergraduate experiences  
• Online networking and global education community relationships  
• Professional development activities (negative factors)  
• Professional Learning Community (PLC) relationships (negative factors)  
• Colleagues and team-mates from other departments  
• No family contributions | • Mother’s way of defining what the purpose of education should be, watching her mother interact within the parent/school relationship for her brother  
• Family interactions and methods for conflict resolution  
• Memorable high school teachers (2)  
• Memorable high school learning experiences (multiple)  
• Mentor relationship with previous high school teacher  
• Education coursework  
• Professional development workshops  
• Professional Learning Community (PLC) relationships  
• Colleagues and team-mates from other departments  
• Other work (not education) relationships |
<p>| <strong>Generational Self Identification</strong> | Millennial | Generation X | Generation X |
| <strong>Generational Birth Decade</strong> | 1980s | 1960s | 1970s |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Aaron</th>
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<tr>
<td>Generational Attributes (Desires)</td>
<td>• Anxious to fit in</td>
<td>• Likes to work as a team with freedom to complete tasks their own way</td>
<td>• Likes to work as a team with freedom to complete tasks their own way</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Lovely &amp; Buffum, 2007, p. 8)</td>
<td>• Exceptional at multi-tasking</td>
<td>• Technically competent and creative</td>
<td>• Technically competent and creative</td>
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<td>• Responds well to mentoring</td>
<td>• Works best with teammates of their own choosing</td>
<td>• Works best with teammates of their own choosing</td>
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<td>• Enjoys working with idealistic people</td>
<td>• Create an environment that is functional and efficient</td>
<td>• Create an environment that is functional and efficient</td>
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<td>• Needs a bit more supervision and structure</td>
<td>• Value process over product</td>
<td>• Value process over product</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expects to be included in all decisions</td>
<td>• Desires feedback on the process</td>
<td>• Respectful of colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wants friendships with colleagues on and off the job</td>
<td>• Value student interaction</td>
<td>• Creates and supports alternative workplace structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expects to pursue his own interests without interruption outside of school hours</td>
<td>• Value multiple teaching approaches</td>
<td>• Value student interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expects colleagues to be like-minded</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Value multiple teaching approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expects humor and fun in work environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generational Attributes – (Aversions)</td>
<td>• Out of date Technology</td>
<td>• Beating a Topic to Death</td>
<td>• Beating a Topic to Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Lovely &amp; Buffum, 2007, p. 64)</td>
<td>• Colleagues who are not “fun”</td>
<td>• Boredom and staleness</td>
<td>• Boredom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Strong dislike for rigidity of structure in the workplace</td>
<td>• Dismissive attitudes or advantage seeking behaviors in colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Strong dislike for rigidity of structure in the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Patronizing attitudes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Aaron</th>
<th>Bailey</th>
<th>Cadie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationsh...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* No sharing of materials or ideas with team...</td>
<td>• Identifies with vertical alignment of curriculum area, refers to department colleagues as “vertical”</td>
<td>• Does not mention Aaron at all when discussing team interactions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* One-sided sharing with departmental colleagues (taking relationship)</td>
<td>• Disappointment in colleagues who fail students rather than differentiating instruction</td>
<td>• Comfortable with grade level colleagues and expresses ideas that they have similar philosophical leanings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Egocentric interactions with others</td>
<td>• Disgust with colleagues who do not value academic advisement program</td>
<td>• Expresses annoyance at new teachers who do not know enough about their own philosophies to be able to articulate what they want from their students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Cooperative and compliant with teammates in team meetings</td>
<td>• Work with Aaron is procedural not philosophical in nature</td>
<td>• Shares her ideas with colleagues when it appears that the ideas will be welcomed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Unaware of teammates educational philosophy</td>
<td>• Work with Cadie is philosophical in nature and centered on student growth</td>
<td>• Tolerant of people who do not share her ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Unaware of teammates classroom structure and organization</td>
<td>• Identified colleagues with whom he cannot work (philosophical)</td>
<td>• Postulates that teachers who are resistant to ideas may feel threatened by those ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Does not adhere to policies of school or follow the same team-related policies</td>
<td>• Differs from “vertical” on assessment practices</td>
<td>• Willing to “agree to disagree” with colleagues who have differing philosophies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Waffles on description of his discipline and grading techniques</td>
<td>• Shares philosophical similarities with colleagues outside of the department</td>
<td>• Expects people to be in the field of education for the benefit of children and intolerant of people who actively dislike children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Respects colleagues from department</td>
<td>• Shares strategies for student learning</td>
<td>• Identifies strongly with administration and indicates desire to move into this field as a way to widen his influence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Admires mastery of content area in departmental colleagues</td>
<td>• Participates positively in staff development aimed at philosophical conversations (book group)</td>
<td>• Implements colleagues’ successful ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Admires use of humor and “real-ness” by departmental colleagues</td>
<td>• Not a “boat-rocker” within the organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>Bailey</td>
<td>Cadie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Association of Middle Level Education (AMLE) Experience** | • Unfamiliar with organization  
• “likes” organizational beliefs when shown but uninterested in actuality of AMLE’s middle school beliefs (academic advisement, parent involvement)  
• Sees himself as following the tenets of AMLE but reality does not support this vision (no technology component in his classroom or lessons, lack of multiple methods of curriculum delivery)  
• Would not consider joining membership  
• Unaware of annual conference  
• Does not see value of website information  
• Unaware of journal | • Very familiar with organization  
• Regrets lack of membership  
• Regrets lack of conference (annual) attendance  
• Identifies strongly with beliefs of organization  
• Sees value in using journal and website for curriculum ideas and references  
• Sees a lack of adherence to the beliefs of organization by current school (health and wellness component)  
• Strong advocate of the academic advisement component  
• Networks with individuals who are members of AMLE | • Very familiar with organization  
• Conference (annual) attendee  
• Regrets lack of personal participation in past conference presentations  
• Considering participation in future conference presentations  
• Knowledgeable about beliefs of organization (*This We Believe*)  
• Strongly identifies with beliefs of organization  
• Regularly reads journal at school  
• Has not used website much but familiar with site  
• Sees partial adherence to the beliefs of organization by current school (health and wellness component, healthy eating)  
• Enthusiastic about parent involvement components and looks for ways to increase involvement  
• Understands and is able to articulate the needs of young adolescents  
• Frustrated by school’s lack of advocacy for children component |
Table 7 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Aaron</th>
<th>Bailey</th>
<th>Cadie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Selection of Curriculum-based Assignments** | • Borrowed colleagues assignments and failed to notice or implement goals and objectives for assignment  
• Blame students on unsuccessful assignments  
• Standard textbook assignments are completed successfully  
• Inability to deconstruct the success or failure of a learning activity and explain  
• Unable to discern role of teacher in learning activities  
• Classroom practices described as innovative and student centered but in actuality are limited and “old school” | • Designs assignments to fit own educational philosophy and goals of the classroom  
• Selects assignments based on ability to apply math concepts to real-life situations  
• Focus of assignment is eventual success not immediate correct answer  
• Concern with mastery of concepts not completion of textbook | • Designs assignments to fit own educational philosophy and goals of the classroom  
• Assignments include development of student behaviors instructions (cooperation, respect for others)  
• Detailed rubrics are included in all assignments  
• Assignments allow for latitude in student interpretation of assignment specifics while adhering to the goals of the assignment  
• Student growth and development emphasized in all assignments |
Table 7 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Aaron</th>
<th>Bailey</th>
<th>Cadie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Reported Routine Use of Curriculum Delivery Methods</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Numbers refer to number of methods routinely used in a category versus the number of methods that were listed in the category. For example, Lecture = 2:4 would indicate that two lecture methods are routinely used of the four lecture methods that were listed on the Curriculum Delivery Methods Inventory)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lecture = 2:4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Class Discussion = 2:4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Textbook Reading = 0:10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Print Resources Used = 0:11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Questioning Methods = 1:4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Grading Methods Specifically for Question Sets = 3:7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Technology and Media Usage = 1:19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Note-taking Methods = 5:17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Project Methods = 3:19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Written Work Methods = 1:27</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Active Work Methods = 3:17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Test and Assessment Methods = 5:18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organization Methods = 4:8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions to Inventory = 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Additions to Inventory = 0                           |             |             |             |
| Additions to Inventory = 0                           |             |             |             |

| Additions to Inventory = 0                           |             |             |             |

| Additions to Inventory = 0                           |             |             |             |

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Aaron</th>
<th>Bailey</th>
<th>Cadie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selection of Teaching Team Members</strong></td>
<td>• Stereotypes “old” teachers as out of date, ineffective, undesirable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wants to work with “real” teachers rather than teachers with greater expertise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Articulation not clear on what an excellent fit would be</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Educational philosophy as the primary basis for selecting team members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Could not work with Veterans generational group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Does not wish to work with people who do not share her educational philosophy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Frustrated by very new teachers and their lack of an educational philosophy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Polar opposite educational philosophy team member would be a reason to look elsewhere for a position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Could not work with people who actively hate children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Could get along with most people, personality rarely an issue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Differences in philosophies “absolutely an issue”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>Bailey</td>
<td>Cadie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Behavioral 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Comprehensive 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>Progressive 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanistic</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Humanistic 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Change</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Social Change 78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9. Curriculum Delivery Methods Inventory Summation of Responses

Instructions for Curriculum Delivery Methods Inventory

Please examine the following inventory of curriculum delivery methods. Place a check mark in the “aware” box if you are familiar with the idea regardless of whether you have personally used this delivery method. Place a check mark in the “tried” box if you have tried the delivery method at least one time. Place a check mark in the “routine” box if you consider the method a normal part of your classroom instructional strategies. Place a check mark in the “N/A” box if you would not consider using this in your classroom for any purpose.

There is a space at the end of the inventory for you to list delivery methods that you routinely used that were not listed on this inventory.

*****************

Key: A = Aaron, B = Bailey, C = Cadie

Cadie is the only participant that added additional items
### Table 9 (continued)

**Curriculum Delivery Methods Inventory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Aware</th>
<th>Tried</th>
<th>Routine</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lecture Methods</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Minute Mini</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Minute Intro</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Minute Summary</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 Minute Detailed</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Discussion Methods</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question/answer review</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Minute probe for understanding</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Minute current issues opinion</td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 Minute Paideia style issues based</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Textbook Reading Methods</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided reading in class (w/outline or summary guide)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole class read aloud</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group read aloud (peers)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student dyad reading</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher read aloud</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>AC</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent reading in class</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent reading at home</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read aloud at home</td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio recording and follow along in book</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translated text for ESL student silent read</td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Print Resources Used</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks</td>
<td>AC</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workbooks</td>
<td>AC</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novels – teacher selected</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novels – student selected</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals – content specific</td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-fiction books</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular magazines</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almanacs</td>
<td>AC</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps/Atlases</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brochures/Booklets</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note-taking Methods</td>
<td>Aware</td>
<td>Tried</td>
<td>Routine</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullet style notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web style notes</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Column Cornell notes</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>AC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline notes</td>
<td>AC</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freestyle notes</td>
<td>AC</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foldable notes (Dinah Zike)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher created notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain storming notes</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-it affinity notes</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlining</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>AC</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlighting</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>AC</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture style notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comic book style notes</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher created graphic organizers</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student designed graphic organizers</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venn diagram notes - comparisons</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishbone notes – cause and effect</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Methods</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual home-based report</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual in-class report</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science fair style demonstration</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group inquiry designed</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual inquiry designed</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology based</td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine arts focused</td>
<td>AB</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini-project style (&lt;1 week)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term project style (&gt;3 weeks)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>AC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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**Organization Methods**

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Additional methods routinely used but not included in this inventory

- TEACHER CREATED CENTERS
- READING ROLES
- READING ROUNDBOUGHT
- CHUNK AND CHEW
- WONDOW PANE PROCESSING
Graph 1: Visual Comparison of Matrix Scores Above "No Preference" Mark

- **B** = Behavioral
- **C** = Comprehensive
- **P** = Progressive
- **H** = Humanistic
- **S** = Social Change

Line A = Aaron
Line B = Bailey
Line C = Cadie