

Professional Development: Attendees' Perceptions From Previous PD Opportunities/Preferences for Follow-Up Activities

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Submitted:

June 25, 2026

Accepted:

July 20, 2026

Revised:

August 3, 2026

Published:

September 18, 2026

Citation:

Knox, J., & Krupke, D. (2026). Professional Development: Attendees' Perceptions From Previous PD Opportunities/Preferences for Follow-up Activities. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 26(3), 196–210.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions attendees have of Professional Development meetings. In addition, attendees were asked to state their preferences for PD follow-up. Data were analyzed in terms of attendee assignment, and career stage (based on Huberman, 1989).

Results indicated that both assignment and career stage were not significantly related to perception. Follow-up preferences were varied, indicating individual needs.

This information is important for PD providers, who must be kept accountable to attendees for relevant information.

Keywords: attendees' perceptions, attendees' preferences, curriculum & content, follow-up, professional development

LITERATURE REVIEW

Background

High-quality Professional Development (PD) is an integral part of nearly every proposal for improving education (Guskey, 2002). PD programs are systematic efforts to bring about change in classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students (Guskey). PD hours are important to reveal new instructional techniques. The utility of these PD meetings, however, also depends on a number of factors. Among those are the willingness of the educator, especially those dealing with elementary school age children, to be receptive to something new. This willingness may be able to be measured in terms of the overall perceived utility of the PD meeting. This perception is very personal, but may also be dependent on a number of factors, such as career stage and

assignment. Perception may also depend on what teachers think they should gain from PD attendance. How is this going to help me be a better teacher?

Characteristics of Professional Development

Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon (2001) report the results of a survey of 1,027 teachers concerning the effects of professional development on teacher learning. Their sample was familiar with many forms of professional development, including the traditional workshop format, institutes or conventions. These, according to the survey, were basically inefficient in providing teachers with sufficient time, activities, and content necessary to increase knowledge (Garet, et al).

Hirsh (2006) defines the characteristics of good PD meetings. These include activities that improve and expand teachers' knowledge, are an integral part of school-wide and district-wide educational improvement goals, help teachers address challenges in academic content, are high-quality, sustained, and classroom-focused, and are not one-day or short-term (Hirsh).

Typical PD meetings involve the transfer of information. That transfer can be passive, or it can be active. The attendee can sit and listen, take occasional notes on the presentation, or engage in other activities. On the other hand, the attendee can become active, can ask questions, get involved in a discussion, and make the material relevant. This is best accomplished if the PD meeting is "close" to where the material would be used. In other words, within the educator's own school. Sparks (2002) concludes a long discussion of PD meetings by indicating that meetings that pull teachers out of their school buildings and have little to do with the problems in their classrooms are less useful (Sparks).

The attendee's perception of this information transfer is important, especially if the attendee has had little input into the PD meeting. Does the material presented have the possibility of making me a better teacher, or is the material presented but just not something I can use on Monday morning with my class? These are the "ground-level" complexities in the perception of the value of a PD meeting that cannot be planned in advance (Schmoker, 2004). This perception could depend on whether there is follow-up to the PD meeting. Hirsh (2001) describes the PD process in terms of skill attainment and application. She suggests that adding follow-up involving mentoring, coaching, study teams, or peer visits increased the application rate from 5% to 90% (Hirsh).

Professional Development Follow-Up

It has long been recognized that if the basic aim of PD is to help teachers develop new skills and integrate those skills into their practice, then feedback is crucial (Joyce and Showers, 1995). Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis (2005) further define the effective integration of new skills as requiring opportunities to practice those skills and to receive feedback from a coach or a supporting teacher (Ingvarson et al.).

Guskey & Yoon (2009) reviewed the existing PD literature, over 1300 studies. They concluded that virtually all the studies that showed positive student improvement as a result of PD had amounts of structured and sustained follow-up (Guskey and Yoon).

PD meeting follow-up can take many forms. Hirsh (2006) describes the formation of "learning communities" within a school in a professional learning format. This allows for the initial planning of PD, as well as feedback from such meetings, to be more readily available than the usual model would suggest (Hirsh). In fact, Hirsh (2001) has written that PD without follow-up is "malpractice" (Hirsh).

What if attendees were given a menu of feedback options? What would their preference be? Would it be possible to achieve the goals of PD while giving attendees a choice?

Role of Career Stage in Professional Development

The ability of a teacher to participate in PD activities may be related to experience (Richter, Kunter, Klusmann, Ludtke, & Baumert, 2011). Huberman (1989) suggests that a teaching career can be divided into consecutive stages (five in total), each with different implications for participation in PD. Richter et al (2011) state that the Huberman categories provide an in-depth description of the teaching career from start to finish. Huberman (1989), in fact, suggests that teachers may make use of different types of learning opportunities across their careers. This model has been frequently used as a theoretical framework for

interpreting study results (Anderson & Olson, 2006, for example). See Table 1 for a more in-depth outline of Huberman's stages of the professional life of teachers. Beijaard (2006) suggests that perception of the value of PD may be progressive. That is, as careers move on, perception may increase (Beijaard). Yet it might not be age, but years of experience that explain this change in perception (Richter et al., 2011).

TABLE 1
CAREER STAGES OF TEACHERS, ACCORDING TO HUBERMAN (1989)

Stage	Years of Experience	Descriptors
Early	0-3	Survival, discovery, initial enthusiasm drops, professional ideals in conflict with reality
Stabilization	4-6	Definite commitment to the profession.
Experimentation Activism Reassessment	7-18	Take stock of career. Question some choices
Serenity	19-30	Greater sense of confidence. Gradual loss of energy
Disengagement	31-40	Serenity

Perception of Professional Development

There have been several reports on the relationship between attendee perceptions of the PD process and the outcomes of individual meetings. Diaz-Maggoli (2004), for example, indicates that the ongoing nature of the PD process allows teachers to review their teaching practices and be more responsive to student needs. Often attendees have a negative attitude towards PD (Yurtseven, 2017). Many times, that relates to the nature of typical PD meetings: single-session seminars or programs arranged by administrators that tend to have little to do with everyday educational problems. As Charbaji (2017) points out, when employees are empowered and recognized, their motivation to work increases. If the main objective of PD is to increase the diversity of teacher practices to meet students' needs, then taking into account their perceptions of that PD will improve teaching (Warren-Little, 2012).

Purpose

Specifically, the following questions were asked:

1. Are there differences in attendee perception of the utility of PD meetings depending on career stage?
2. Are there differences in attendee perception of the utility of PD meetings depending on attendee assignment?
3. Are there differences in preferences for PD follow-up depending on career stage?
4. Are there differences in preferences for PD follow-up depending on attendee assignment?

METHOD

Attendees

One hundred and forty-four education professionals attended a day-long professional development meeting organized by PD committees at the local school districts. The topic of the meeting was *See the Sound Visual Phonics (STSVP)*, which is a gesture system used to supplement literacy instruction. The attendees were all early elementary educators or adjunct personnel in those programs, such as reading teachers, special education teachers, and speech-language pathologists. The attendees were employed in six midwestern school districts, four from small or consolidated districts, and two from either a medium-sized urban area or a suburban district near a larger city. All six districts had had previous training sessions with

this technique and had requested an additional meeting. The majority of the attendees were female (96%). In all cases, the professional development meetings were held at the attendees' school during a designated in-service or professional development time.

Attendees were asked for permission to use their responses to the survey. They were assured that responses would be grouped and anonymous. This was done in conjunction with the procedures established by the St. Ambrose University IRB. Permission was received via an email from the Chair of the St. Ambrose IRB, dated February 3, 2016.

The following figure shows the distribution of the attendees according to current teaching assignment, where 65% (93/143) reported having changed teaching assignments sometime in their careers. The "other" category included junior high school teachers and one administrator. The attendees were also grouped in terms of career stage, according to the system discussed by Huberman (1989). This system is outlined in Table 1. Figure 2 presents the experience data.

FIGURE 1
DEMOGRAPHICS. PD ATTENDEES BY ATTENDEE ASSIGNMENT

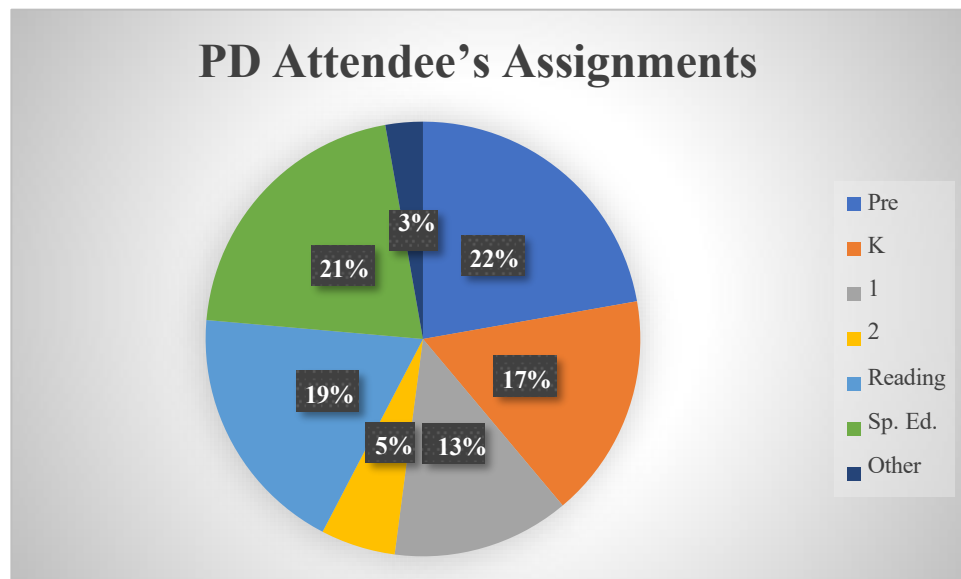
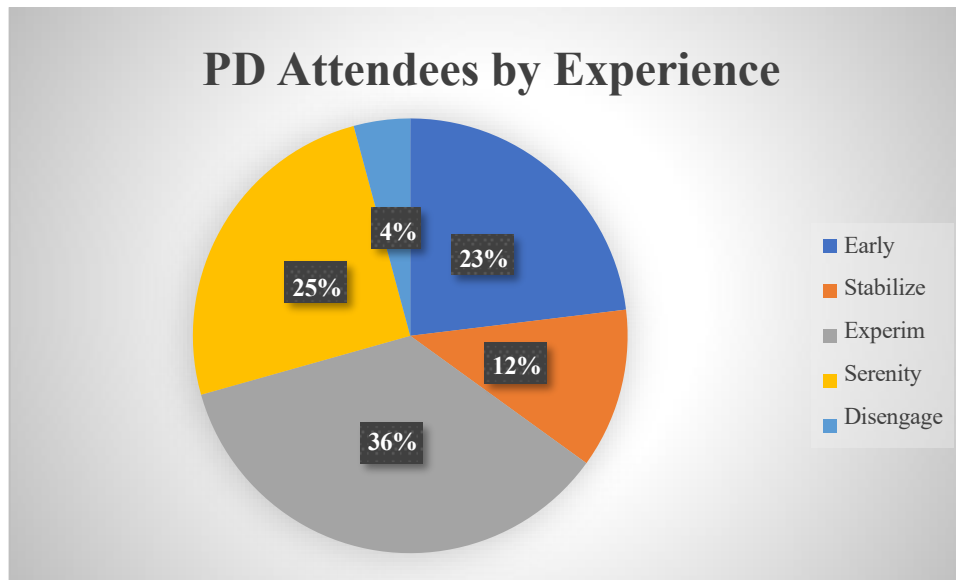


FIGURE 2
DEMOGRAPHICS. PD ATTENDEES BY EXPERIENCE



The largest group of PD attendees fell into the “experimentation” category, generally indicating the mid-point in most careers. They had somewhere between eight and seventeen years of experience. The next two largest groups were those at the very beginning of their teaching careers, or “early”, and those somewhat beyond the midpoint, or “serenity.”

7.7% (11/143) of the attendees were in their first year of experience. In all cases, these new teachers reported having attended PD meetings either during their preservice experience or during the current school year.

The assignment and experience characteristics of the PD attendees are combined in Table 2. Each assignment category, except kindergarten teachers, contained attendees with experience across all of the categories suggested by Huberman (1989). Attendees identifying as kindergarten teachers did not have representatives in the “disengagement” category with over thirty years of experience.

TABLE 2
PERCENT OF PD ATTENDEES BY ASSIGNMENT AND EXPERIENCE

Assignment	Early	Stabilize	Experimentation	Serenity	Disengagement
Preschool	21%	18%	34%	21%	6%
Kindergarten	27%	14%	36%	23%	0%
First Grade	47%	5%	26%	16%	5%
Second Grade	25%	0%	38%	25%	12%
Reading	7%	4%	37%	48%	4%
SE/SLP	24%	24%	24%	24%	3%

Data Gathering/Compiling

Survey Instrument: PD attendees were asked to fill out a short survey at the beginning of a scheduled PD meeting. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A. This is a survey we have used for several years, and it provides information useful to the PD presenter and to keep data on attendees' perceptions and preferences. These are used by the PD presenter to modify his presentations, both in subject coverage and in presentation style. Completion of the survey is very quick, taking only 5-10 minutes. All attendees were asked for their permission to use the results of the survey for study purposes. They were able to opt out at their discretion. This was done within the protocols of St. Ambrose University IRB procedures. All attendees agreed to allow their responses to be used, in a group and anonymous manner, for this study. For purposes of this project, attendees' responses to question 5 (asking for the perception of PD meetings in general) and question 6 (asking for attendee follow-up preference) were analyzed.

Attendees' responses to question number 5 concerning their perception of the usefulness, or utility, of PD meetings they had attended to their instructional capabilities. They responded using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "very useful" to "not useful."

Attendees were asked to indicate preferences for PD follow-up. They could indicate as many of the foils as needed. These ranged from "face-to-face meetings" to "meetings with colleagues in school" to "video conference follow-up meetings," to "meetings with other districts." Attendees were encouraged to add follow-up possibilities not present in the menu of choices.

Responses to the two questions were compiled according to attendee assignment and attendee career stage.

Data Analysis

Perception of PD meetings: Several assumptions were made in the analysis of the compiled perception data. The results of this question were coded. This assumes an ordinal scale for the perception information, varying from "very useful," coded as a "5," to "most were not useful," coded as a "1." This coding enabled further analysis of the data using both descriptive and inferential statistics. It was possible to calculate an expected score from survey results, following the procedure outlined by Nielson & Levy (1994). They calculated a coefficient of .8 to estimate the overall population mean for Likert-scale data, as most responses clustered around the top two foils (Nelson & Levy). In our case, this value was 4 ($5 \times .8$).

Our analysis procedure involved both descriptive (mean, standard deviation, percentile, coefficient of variation, and skewness) presented in tables and charts, as well as inferential measures (Chi-square and effect size), discussed in the body of the document.

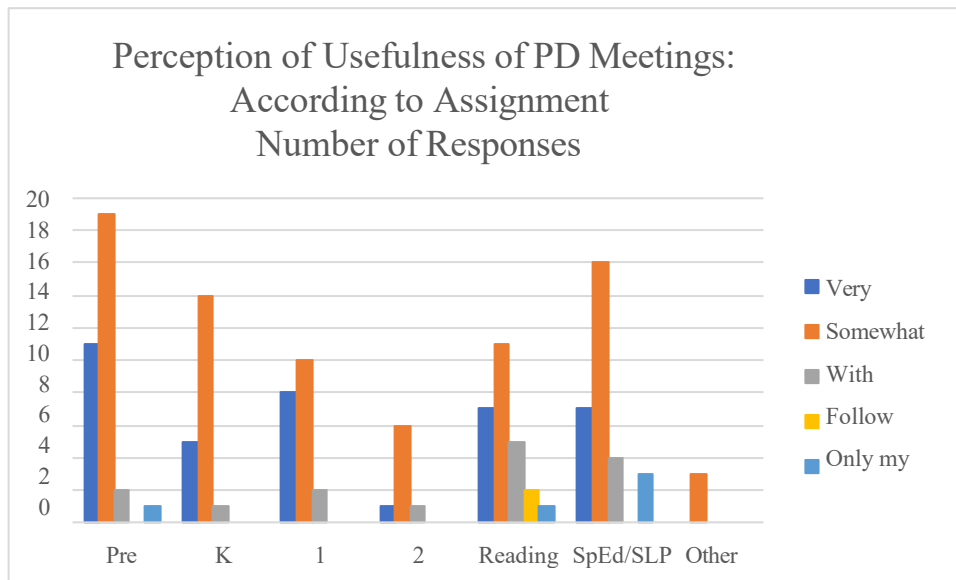
Preference for PD Follow-up: Attendees' preferences for follow-up activities were analyzed using descriptive statistics (number in each category and percentile). These results will be presented in charts and tables. This allows for the determination of any trends that may be present according to the two above characteristics.

RESULTS

Perception of Usefulness of PD Meetings by Assignment

Figure 3 displays the compiled data on the perception of PD meetings by assignment category for the PD attendees. These data represent the total number of responses from attendees in each assignment category.

FIGURE 3
PERCEPTION OF PREVIOUS PD MEETINGS BY ASSIGNMENT: NUMBER OF RESPONSES



Preschool teachers tended to have a more favorable perception of the utility of PD meetings than did any of the other groups. All groups felt that utility could be increased if PD meetings were scheduled with their needs in mind.

These data were further analyzed by grouping the coded responses in each assignment category. The results are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
PERCEPTION OF THE USEFULNESS OF PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED PD MEETINGS
BY ASSIGNMENT

	Preschool	Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Gr.	Reading	SE/SLP
Mean Rating	4.167	4.173	4.235	4.000	3.808	3.893
Standard Deviation	.834	.491	.664	.534	1.122	1.128
Skewness	-1.861	.467	-.291	0	-.899	-1.448

Descriptive Analysis: The survey results tended to cluster around the upper end of the 5-point scale, between ratings of “5” and “4.” Indeed, the most popular measure was “4.” This result is much like previously discussed results from Likert-scale research (see Neilsen & Levy, 1984; Kelly, Harper, & Landau, 2008; Sullivan & Ardino, 2013, for example). In fact, eighty-three percent of the responses were either “5” or “4,” with “4” being the most popular. Fifty-five percent of the responses were “4.” Responses for the last three foils in the survey only accounted for seventeen percent of the total responses. Attendees who were assigned to first grade classrooms had the highest percent (40%) of ratings of “5.”

The highest mean response was 4.235 for the group assigned to attendees identified as first grade teachers. Two groups, reading teachers and special education/speech-language pathologists, both had mean response values below 4.0. In both cases, the standard deviation for the groups was above 1.0, indicating a large range of responses from just above 4.0 to just below 3.0.

The skewness of the variable (perception, measured on a Likert-like scale) indicates differences in distributional shape across all assignment levels. Four of the six assignment distributions were somewhat skewed to the left. Both the distributions of responses for preschool teachers and special education/speech-language pathologists were found to be more highly skewed than the other distributions. The coefficient of variability, a measure of the relationship between the whole-group mean and standard deviation, was 19.7% for this group.

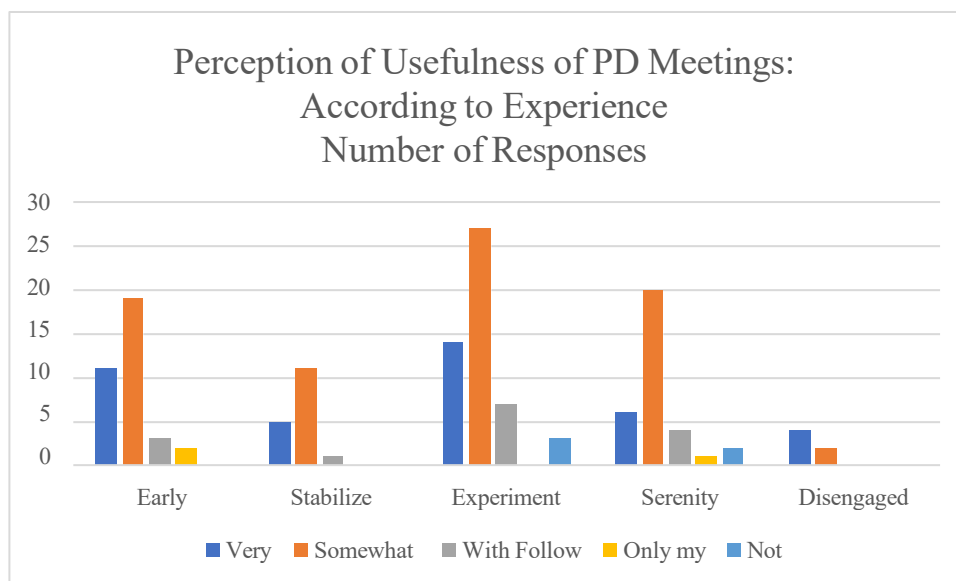
Inferential Analysis: We assumed that the expected value for our survey would be “4,” following the guidelines reported elsewhere (Neilsen & Levy, 1994). We were then able to compare our observed group mean with this expected mean. The results for the overall group did show statistical significance (Chi-square = 0.04, df=5, $p < .001$). In other words, ratings by the attendees tended to be larger than would have been expected. An effect size measure was calculated for each of the assignment categories. Pooled standard deviation values were used in the calculations. Effect size values tended to be small for all six assignment categories: ($d = .173$ for preschool, $d = .205$ for kindergarten, $d = .186$ for first grade, $d = .055$ for second grade, $d = .235$ for reading teachers, and $d = .203$ for special ed./SLP). These values indicate a weak relationship between perception of PD meetings and attendee assignment categories.

Perception of the Usefulness of PD Meetings by Career Stage

The following figure presents the data on attendees’ perceptions of the usefulness of PD meetings by career stage, following Huberman’s (1989) system. In general, usefulness seemed to increase, not surprisingly, when the PD meeting contained information pertaining to the educator’s own situation. Yet, this may have been an artifact of the Likert scale used in the survey.

The total number of attendees’ responses in each experience category is shown in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4
PERCEPTION OF PREVIOUS PD MEETINGS BY EXPERIENCE. NUMBER OF RESPONSES



The effect of teaching experience on the perceived utility of PD meetings agreed with the data presented above in terms of assignment. Only in one experience group, Disengagement, were the majority of the responses favorable towards existing PD meetings. All other groups favored having some type of input into PD meetings.

The data were further analyzed in a similar fashion to the data for attendee assignment. Those results are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4
PERCEPTION OF THE USEFULNESS OF PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED PD MEETINGS
BY EXPERIENCE

	Early	Stabilize	Experimentation	Serenity	Disengagement
Mean Rating	4.151	4.235	4.058	3.800	4.670
Standard Deviation	.712	.562	.881	.964	.516
Skewness	-.781	.083	-1.577	-1.453	-.968

Descriptive Analysis: The response data tended to cluster around the two highest values on the scale, “5” and “4.” This was true across all five experience categories (“Early” = 85%, “Stabilize” = 94%, “Experimentation” = 80%, “Serenity” = 79%, and “Disengagement” = 100%). The same reasoning would apply here as did for the assignment analysis. Previous analyses of Likert scales have found a typical clustering of responses around the two highest foils (see Neilsen & Levy, 1984; Kelly et. al., 2008, and Sullivan & Adino, 2013).

The highest mean, or grouped, response was found in the “Disengagement” group. However, only six attendees were in that group. The only group mean below 4.0 was for those attendees indicating experience in the “Serenity” range. The standard deviation values for all experience groupings were small, less than 1.0. This indicates that responses fell into a relatively small range.

The shape of the distribution of scores, as measured by skewness, indicated a slope to the left for all but the “Stabilize” group. Skewness measures for the “Experimentation” and “Serenity” groups were higher than for the other three groups. The coefficient of variability for this group was 17.4%, which is somewhat less than was reported for the assignment groupings.

Inferential Analysis: A Chi-Square test was performed on these data, again assuming that the expected mean value for these data would be “4.” Using the “Goodness of Fit” model, the results did not indicate statistical significance (Chi-Square=.14, df=4, p=.9977). In addition, effect size was also measured for each of the five experience categories. We again used the pooled standard deviation values. Effect size results were small for four of the five assignment categories (d=.045 for “Early”, d=.080 for “Stabilize”, d=.155 for “Experimentation”, d=.448 for “Serenity”). The effect size for the “Disengagement” category was based on only six respondents and tended to be larger (d=.773). The sample size for this group influenced the effect size calculation.

In general, it appeared that for our data, career stage, as defined by Huberman’s categories, did not seem to affect ratings of the usefulness of PD meetings.

Perception Ratings: In general, both assignment and experience were found not to influence ratings of perception of the usefulness of PD meetings. There were some descriptive differences noted, but those may have been an artifact of the Likert scale.

Follow-Up Preferences

Attendees were given a menu of six common follow-up procedures. They were asked to indicate which of these fit their own situation. There was also provision for the addition of follow-up procedures not mentioned in the list. Attendees could choose as many from the menu as they wished. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics for both assignment and experience. Several of the attendees did not indicate a follow-up preference. The following analyses are based on 135 attendees.

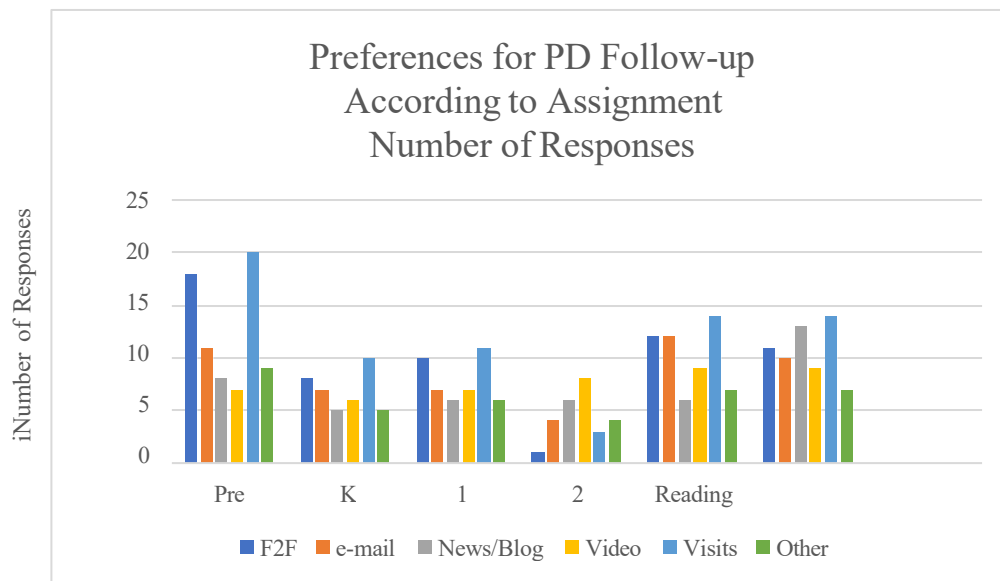
31.6% of the attendees chose only one item from the menu of preferences. A total of 39 single preferences were recorded. The most popular of these choices was “collegial visits,” preferred by 33% of the attendees. The second most popular choice was “video conference.”

Preferences for PD Follow-Up by Assignment

The average number of follow-up choices, for the 137 attendees, sorted by assignment, equaled 2.3. This represented a total of 317 choices. The average number of choices by individual assignment category was preschool, 2.4; kindergarten, 1.8; first grade, 2.5; second grade, 3.3; reading, 2.2; and special education/speech-language pathologist, 2.1. There was a wide range of attendees across all assignment categories, which would affect the calculation of a central tendency measure.

Figure 5 presents the numeric data for attendee follow-up preference, compiled by assignment.

FIGURE 5
PREFERENCES FOR PD FOLLOW-UP, BY ASSIGNMENT. NUMBER OF RESPONSES IN EACH CATEGORY



It is apparent that attendees preferred “visits with colleagues at school” as a method of follow-up to PD activities. This was true for attendees in five of the six assignment categories. Only attendees in the second-grade group preferred “video conferences” to “visits with colleagues.”

Table 5 presents the preference information, by assignment, in terms of percentages. These are based on the number of choices recorded for each assignment group: preschool=71; kindergarten=41; first grade=47; second grade=26; reading=56; and special education/speech-language pathology=64.

TABLE 5
FOLLOW-UP PREFERENCES BY ASSIGNMENT. PERCENT CHOOSING

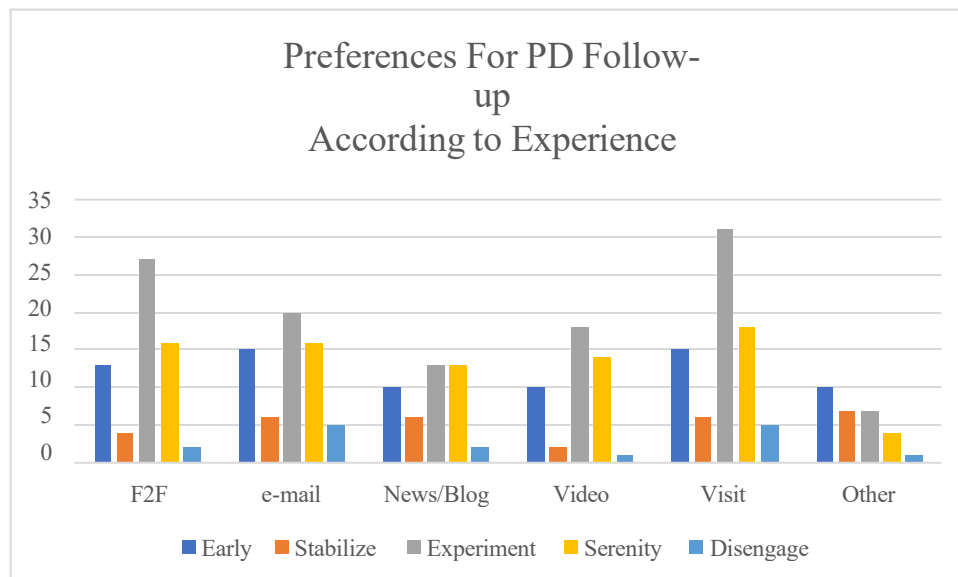
	Face to Face	e-mail access	Newsletters, Blogs	Video Conferences	Collegial Visits	Meeting with other
Preschool	24.6%	15.1%	10.9%	9.6%	27.4%	12.3%
Kindergarten	19.5%	17.1%	12.2%	14.6%	24.4%	12.2%
First Grade	21.3%	14.9%	12.8%	14.9%	23.4%	12.8%
Second Gr.	3.8%	15.3%	23.1%	30.8%	11.5%	15.4%
Reading	21.4%	21.4%	10.7%	16.1%	25.0%	12.5%
Sp.Ed./SLP	17.1%	15.6%	20.3%	14.1%	21.9%	10.9%

There were some differences in the percentages of particular choices made according to assignment. The range of choice within each group is evidence of the individual nature of follow-up preference. Grouped preferences of PD follow-up were:

Face-to-Face	19.0%
e-mail access	16.7
Newsletters	13.9
Video	14.5
Collegial	23.6
Other	11.7

The preferred follow-up methods by the attendees, compiled by experience, are presented in figure 6.

FIGURE 6
PREFERENCES FOR PD FOLLOW-UP BY EXPERIENCE CATEGORY. NUMBER OF RESPONSES IN EACH CATEGORY



The most popular follow-up method was “collegial visits at school.” Several other follow-up procedures did get some attention, including “e-mail with PD presenter” and “face-to-face follow-up meetings. Table 6 represents the preference of each follow-up method, for each of the five experience categories. The data is presented in percentages of attendees favoring each category of follow-up. These are based on the following number of preferences for each category: early=33; stabilize=17; experimentation=43; serenity=36; and disengagement=6.

TABLE 6
FOLLOW-UP PREFERENCES BY EXPERIENCE CATEGORY. PERCENT CHOOSING

	Face to Face	e-mail access	Newsletters, Blogs	Video Conferences	Collegial Visit	Meeting with other
Early	17.8%	20.5%	13.7%	13.7%	20.5%	13.7%
Stabilize	12.9%	19.4%	19.4%	6.5%	19.4%	22.6%
Experiment.	23.3%	17.2%	11.2%	15.5%	26.7%	6.0%
Serenity	19.8%	19.8%	16.0%	17.3%	22.2%	4.9%
Disengage.	12.5%	31.3%	12.5%	6.3%	31.3%	6.3%

The range of follow-up preferences within each of the five experience categories indicates a variety of individual preferences. Each type of preference was chosen from the menu presented to the attendees. Follow-up to PD is important. The nature of that follow-up, however, may be very individualistic.

DISCUSSION

Why do this? Why does this matter? Do perceptions of the utility of PD meetings and preferences for follow-up to those meetings vary according to assignment and career stage, or maybe a combination of the two? Results of the analysis of the survey data are mixed. Past experience certainly is a factor. The way PD is scheduled, including the topic, the presenter, the time, the place, and, certainly, the expectation for the attendee all need to be accounted for. The “mind set” that attendees may have when they go into a PD meeting will affect the outcome. If you think it will make you a better teacher, it may help. If you don’t think it will make you a better teacher, it won’t.

PD providers and those tasked with arranging PD opportunities need to be aware of this type of information. They may be able to make changes to their procedures which could improve the PD experience, now required, of their staff.

Typical PD is likely a “sit and get” activity, requiring little participation from the attendee. These meetings, often lasting a whole day, can be held at the attendee’s school or at a central location. The topics are often chosen in advance. These meetings are usually required, as part of local, state, and national education mandates, whether NCLB, Common Core, or, more recently, ESSA. Times, however, may be changing.

The discussion surrounding the purpose of PD now includes such concepts as Professional Learning groups at the local school level. Learning Forward is an organization dedicated to the improvement and advancement of instructional capabilities of educational personnel. The original title of this Texas-based organization was the National Staff Development Council. They advocate small learning groups of educators who would plan learning experiences focused on student achievement. Student achievement data tend to inform PD in most school districts. Learning Forward makes available much good information on

Professional Learning (think a new way of viewing PD). The “sit and get” meetings, while still popular, are now being replaced by professional learning conducted at the local school level (Learning Forward, 2011).

Professional learning might include, but not be limited to, journal groups, grade-level learning, across-district meetings, exchanging observations, and collegial interaction. The perceived utility of this form of instructional improvement would be much higher because the individual educator would be part of the planning and implementation processes. The results of this study tend to support that point of view. Perception of the utility of professional development was greater when the topic of the meeting had relevance to the educator.

Follow-up preferences to professional learning meetings continue to be very individual. Some might prefer one type of follow-up, while others might prefer something different. Preferences seem to vary somewhat according to level of teaching experience. Visits with colleagues were the follow-up preference most often chosen. There is no doubt that this would be the most convenient method of follow-up. Asking the person next door for advice is much more likely to result in a quick, efficient response, often leading to further discussion. Most attendees preferred face-to-face follow-up, whether in person, by video, or with a colleague. The former two personal contact methods would be with the professional development facilitator, the latter with a colleague.

So, why ask attendees what they think of previously attended meetings, and what follow-up they prefer? Teachers are being held accountable for their students’ performance. These meetings are an attempt to improve instruction, so that students can achieve greater success. They are also required and, many times, hold out the carrot of salary advancement or no advancement to the potential attendee. Organizations, such as Learning Forward, are making progress in individualizing professional learning. The improvement of student learning is the ultimate goal. The means to achieve that goal lie in the teacher’s instructional capabilities. Likewise, PD providers must be held accountable.

Previous perception and follow-up preferences are part of this accountability. By asking perception and preference questions, those who make in-service decisions can collaborate with teachers to increase student success. Nothing retards that success more than sitting in the audience for a meeting, which has little relevance to your situation. Follow-up should be mandated, but it often is not. Follow-up leads to success (Hirsh, 2001). The lack of follow-up does not. Just ask the attendees.

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APPENDIX: STAFF DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

Attendee Number:

Current Assignment:

Length of time in Current Assignment:

Total length of time in education:

Please answer the following questions:

1. Are you familiar with See the Sound Visual Phonics? (For example, you have attended a professional development meeting, participated in a discussion with colleagues who use this technique, readings, journal articles, etc.) Yes No
If you answered “yes,” please continue with question 2. If you answered “no,” please continue with question 5.
2. How often do you use STSVP in literacy instruction? (Choose one) Every Day
Weekly
Several times a semester
Very occasionally
Not at all
3. How useful have you found STSVP? (Choose one) Very useful
Somewhat useful
It could be useful
Need additional practice to make useful
Not useful
4. How comfortable are you using STSVP? (Choose one) Very comfortable
Somewhat comfortable
Comfortable sometimes
Need additional practice to make the use comfortable
Not comfortable
5. In your experience, how useful have professional development meetings been in learning instructional techniques which can be used in your educational setting? (Choose one)
Very Useful in all cases
Useful if the topic relates to my situation
Some have been useful; others have not been useful
Most were not very useful
Not useful
6. Follow-up activities have been found to improve the ability to professional development attendees to apply new instructional techniques to their educational setting. What follow-up activities would be best for you? (Choose all that apply)
Follow-up face-to-face meetings
Follow-up video conferences
e-mail access to professional development presenter
Meetings with colleagues at your school
Newsletters, blogs to discuss application
Meetings with other districts
Other (specify)

Please return this survey to Mr. Krupke.