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**CASE STUDY: ENTRY-YEAR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (242 PP.)**

Director of Dissertation: Richard Ambrose, Ph. D

This qualitative case study was designed to investigate elementary first-year teachers' (EYTs') perception of the value of their professional development. Good teachers form the foundation of good schools. Improving educators' skill and knowledge is one of the most important investments of time and money that local, state, and national leaders make in education (American Educational Research Association, 2005). The challenge that reformers, policy makers and educators face with professional development is trying to evaluate the impact on teachers learning. Professional development evaluations must look at how to better understand the influence on teachers and to document its impact. My goal for this study is to shed light on entry-year teachers' views of their professional development and document impacts on teacher learning. In the context of my dissertation research, two entry-year teachers (EYTs) were studied - both teachers at Booker T. Washington Elementary School, a public charter school in northeastern Ohio.

Data sources for this case study included four (4) teacher interviews, thirty-six (36) teacher observations per participants, and field notes. Data sources were also triangulated in order to answer the research questions. The findings of this study confirm previous research on

how teachers view professional development. Specifically, this study finds the need for EYTs to be allowed latitude to participate in the planning and implementation of their own professional development activities. Furthermore, being able to work in a collaborative and collegial workplace are critical to teachers' professional growth. It was evident that during the study group meetings the EYTs focused more on their learning and the learners. Moreover, teacher perception of their professional development plays an important role as to how teachers learn the knowledge and skills and apply them in their classrooms. Professional development should be ongoing. The results of this study highlight several implications for entry-year teachers (EYTs) and professional development.

From the study findings, here are two areas for practice, policy and further research: (1) Study group, (2) teacher professional development.

Key Words: Entry-year teachers, professional development, teacher perception