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THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER GROWTH

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

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College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
School of Teacher Education
Educational Studies

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This dissertation by Melody J. Person

Entitled: *The Connection Between Professional Development and Teacher Growth*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Education in the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in the School of Teacher Education, Educational Studies program.

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ABSTRACT

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Teachers spend hours each year attending professional development designed to further their professional growth and ultimately provide richer learning opportunities for their students. But how effective is that professional development? This dissertation explored teachers' motivation for continuing their professional growth while determining what type of professional development teachers found inspiring. It also probed how often professional development learning was carried over into the classroom. The research was completed at a small high school in northern Colorado. Of the 53 non-probationary teachers surveyed to begin the research, three teachers were chosen for interviews. Two focus groups were conducted that consisted of three teachers, also chosen from the survey, in each group. Teachers representing various years of experience provided a broad scope of information by which to identify generalities applicable to secondary teachers. The study indicated the majority of teachers at this high school were intrinsically motivated to continue their professional growth; while monetary gain was important, it was not the main motivating factor for teachers. Professional development comprised of content or personal learning connections and chosen by the teacher was determined to be effective. Teachers preferred to have choice in professional development rather than only attending traditional professional development of the one-size-fits-all chosen by the school district or building. It was further determined teachers

occasionally utilized professional development learnings in the classroom that were counterproductive to the reason for professional development. The personnel in school districts or at the building level designing professional development opportunities for their staff would benefit from providing teachers choice in their professional learning and providing support for teachers' new learning, thereby enhancing classroom instruction for students.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many professions have long required continuing education to ensure the continued growth of professionals in their specific field. In fact, continuing one's learning is a part of any position of employment and is as varied as the positions requiring it. Licensed professions such as teaching require a specific number of continuing education hours for renewal of the teaching license. Typically, continuing education is referred to as professional development (PD) in the world of teaching. Educational PD refers to a variety of further learning opportunities and formats. Those opportunities are designed to enhance or increase teachers' content knowledge, increase competence in various areas of teaching, and promote overall greater teacher effectiveness and professional growth that is manifested in the classroom. Guskey (2000) acknowledged teachers "...must keep abreast of this emerging knowledge and must be prepared to use it to continually refine their conceptual and craft skills" (p. 3).

Traditional or personalized PD was created for and intended to promote the professional growth of teachers and to enhance student learning. Professional development chosen by administrators regardless of the wants or needs of the teaching staff is referred to as top-down PD. Diaz-Maggioli (2004) explained, "Traditionally, professional development arrangements are made by administrators and consultants rather than teachers" (p. 2). Teacher choice was not involved, which led to a lack of ownership; in turn, this caused teachers to question the importance of PD and why they

needed to make changes in their respective classrooms (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). Lucilio (2009) was of the same opinion: “Teachers must be the first ones consulted when assessing what is needed to improve the classroom and learning” (p. 54). Professional development delivered to all staff members at the same time seldom serves all the teachers well or the students of those teachers. Robb (2000) stated, “The traditional in-service model, with one-size-fits-all, one-time presentation that does not support teacher growth and student learning” (p. 135). For many years, this was the primary form of PD for teachers; however, teachers became disillusioned with a traditional PD format since too often teachers felt their voices were not heard (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004).

Traditional Professional Development

Professional development in the past was typically taken as an entire staff during a school day without students and was usually referred to as in-service or PD days. The staff were all in the auditorium or cafeteria of the school. Generally, a professional speaker would provide new information on a variety of subjects. “Early professional development was of the ‘sit and get’ variety, which usually involved teachers attending assigned sessions for a designated number of hours” (Ende, 2016, p. 4). Topics ran the gamut, were generic in nature, and were not content area specific. Van Driel and Berry (2012) advocated for PD that was “closely aligned with teacher’s professional practice...and should include opportunities to enact certain instructional strategies and to reflect, individually and collectively on their experiences” (p. 26). Professional development delivered in the traditional format—everyone together obtaining the same information—did not reflect the ideas suggested by Van Driel and Berry.

In the 20th century, John Dewey (1938), an educational theorist, advocated for education through experience. He also argued for teachers to be cognizant of students' educational needs and to design lessons to enhance and continue their learning. The one-size-fits-all approach was not deemed to be best practice for the teaching of students so it was concerning that the traditional approach of one-size fits-all PD should be deemed appropriate for the professional growth of teachers. Dewey's (1916) belief that learning never ends and lessons and/or educative experiences should be based on interests and/or the needs of the students could also be applied to the teaching profession when considering teacher professional growth and PD opportunities offered to teachers.

Educational researchers have questioned why educational reforms often are not carried over into classrooms. Guskey (2000) believed "educators themselves frequently regard professional development as having little impact on their day-to-day responsibilities" (p. 4). One answer that surfaced was described as a "gap between theory and practice" (Korthagen, 2017, p. 387). When teachers receive PD that tells them what to do rather than shows them, the carry through into the classroom is not obtained, thereby not passing on the reform to the students or to their learning. Often teachers are less than enthusiastic when faced with academic information not pertinent to their practice or content area. In other words, "a major problem of teaching and education is the problem of moving from intellectual understanding of the theory to enactment in practice" (Korthagen, 2017, p. 388). A new trend of educational PD is that of a more personalized form of PD.

Personalized Professional Development

The disillusionment teachers have with traditional PD is reflected in a recent trend toward a more personalized form of PD. One day workshops or conferences that are not directly connected to a school's academic program, or to what teachers are teaching, are generally considered to be less effective than training and learning opportunities directly connected to what schools and teachers are actually doing on a daily basis (Glossary of Education Reform, 2013).

Due to its many facets, personalized PD is difficult to define; however, it can be defined as simply allowing teachers to oversee or to direct their own professional learning. Support for this idea was shared by Wilshaw (2012) who stated, "We need to celebrate diversity, ingenuity, and imagination in the way we teach" (p. 17). Education has long supported individualized learning and differentiation for students and is now beginning to recognize the need for more individualization of PD. Beavers (2011) argued, "Teacher professional development must recognize that teachers have different needs and appreciates that practice is unique for each teacher with each class" (p. 29). Shifter (2016) further explained, "Personalized professional development takes the notion of individualized instruction for students and applies it to teachers" (p. 221). Applying a more individualized approach to PD for teachers might then create increased professional growth for teachers.

Richardson (2003) identified attributes that make PD effective for teachers' continued growth as "school-wide, long-term with follow-up, encourage collegiality, supportive administration, develop buy-in among participants" (p. 401). Professional development offered in the one-size-fits-all plan does not include those attributes.

Korthagen (2017) also addressed this issue, suggesting PD should attend to the whole individual and take into consideration the teacher's feelings, thoughts, and ideas in order to connect academic knowledge with their personal strengths, thus connecting to the emergent thinking that "teachers do not want to be taught" (Smith, 2017, p. 22).

Teachers tend to seek out PD opportunities that are not only applicable to their needs or content area but they search for opportunities to provide motivation to continue their professional learning; "adult learners like to be in control of their training or at least play a role in it" (Dalto, 2015, p. 80). Providing various learning venues might better connect teachers to their professional growth.

Broadening PD opportunities as addressed by Vaughan and McLaughlin (2011) "include any learning opportunity that provides teachers with new skills, competencies, or ways of thinking are needed to facilitate improvement in the classroom" (p. 50), which seems a logical argument for personalized PD. Smith (2017) further asserted effective PD should entail the integration of the teachers in the selection of the type of PD offered to further their professional learning. Most teachers acknowledge the need for PD for new technologies, new or updated standards, or new pedagogies, thus reflecting Guskey's (2000) assertion regarding professionals, including teachers, who need to stay informed of current trends and techniques related to the field of education.

Considering the link or the lack of a link between academic knowledge or reform and the classroom, Diane Ravitch (2000) suggested, "Children need well-educated teachers who are eclectic in their methods and willing to use different strategies depending on what works best for which children" (p. 453). If differentiation is

admirable in teaching to a variety of learning styles of students, it would appear the same logic would hold true when planning for PD opportunities for teachers.

Teacher Motivation

Individuals become teachers for a myriad of reasons but those reasons could be placed into three categories: altruistic, intrinsic, and extrinsic (Thomson & Turner, 2015). Altruism reflects ideas of social benefits connected to teaching. Intrinsic reasons are related to teaching itself—a passion for the subject taught or a love of teaching. Extrinsic reasons are sometimes referred to the “perks of the job,” which might be the teaching schedule: holidays, summers off, or other job benefits (Thomson & Turner, 2015). Teachers who remained in the profession for 20-25 years cited altruistic and intrinsic reasons for remaining in the profession (Thomson & Turner, 2015). Professional satisfaction was the reason most identified when teachers were questioned about longevity in teaching. Studies have also shown “effective teachers are more prone to remain in the profession than ineffective teachers” (Thomson & Turner, 2015, p. 579).

Professional development is a tool that allows teachers to become or remain effective in the classroom. Hein (as cited in Beavers, 2011) supported this idea: “Growth and improvement of any educational institution, teacher professional development becomes a milestone in teachers’ continuum of life-long learning and career progression” (p. 25). Too often, new technologies, updated standards, or new classroom strategies, which are important areas of growth for teachers, become mandated, changing the emphasis from professional learning to credit counting (Beavers, 2011). Teachers are motivated to attend PD related to their content area or teaching needs. Effective teachers are more likely to delve into PD because they possess a self-efficacy that allows them to

take risks in the classroom or embrace new ideas (Thomson & Turner, 2015). When PD is designed utilizing teacher input, “teachers feel they are growing...feel the excitement of new possibilities” (Riley & Roach, as cited in Beavers, 2011, p. 26).

Education is a profession demanding change and continual learning by those responsible for educating others—teachers. Teachers who do not partake of PD opportunities are at risk of being “left behind” and so are their students. Professional development then becomes an integral part of education—of being a teacher. “It is important to remember that professional development is an ongoing and dynamic process of learning” (Avidov-Ungar, 2016, p. 666). Professional development opportunities should be offered that are reflective of a teacher’s growth paradigm and address both the motivation and aspirations of teachers (Avidov-Ungar, 2016). Personalized professional development as model for the continued professional growth of teachers should match teachers’ motivational characteristics for continuing their learning.

Statement of the Problem

Professional development is a required and, in some instances, a mandated component of teaching with most states requiring continuing education for licensure renewal (Teach Tomorrow, 2018). However, current research has addressed the effectiveness, or the lack thereof, of the connection of PD to classroom instruction. In other words, educational research has questioned whether PD in its current model contributes to the professional growth of teachers. Teachers, in general, have long lamented the day long, one-size-fits-all, district-decided traditional PD (Robb, 2000). Lucilio (2009) stated, “Teachers must be the first ones consulted when assessing what is needed to improve the classroom and learning” (p. 54). Some teachers participate in

learning opportunities even when it is not required. Others take only what is necessary or required.

Research was limited regarding teacher motivation to grow professionally through professional development, especially at the secondary level and specifically the high school level. Also, research was limited in the connection of professional development influencing classroom changes (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). The problem addressed in this study was the motivation of teachers to continue their professional growth and effective PD. The study also endeavored to determine how PD learning was carried over into the classroom.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Professional development is needed for the continued professional growth of teachers. School reforms are often implemented through PD and some professional developments are mandated by the state or by the school district. Opportunities for teacher growth through PD are varied and many; however, the most common form of PD has been the traditional “one-size-fits-all” that is delivered to the entire staff at the same time (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). Personalized professional development is a recent trend to provide teachers with more choice as to the types of professional development they take and to also provide teachers with a variety of delivery modes: self-directed study, learning communities, mentoring, collaboration, and coaching (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Richardson 2003; Shifter, 2016). Motivation (“What is motivation,” n.d.) has been described as “literally the desire to do things” (p. 1). Teacher motivation is an important aspect of professional growth and professional development. Motivation is an individual characteristic of teachers, which might connect to the type of PD teachers seek out for

themselves throughout their teaching career. This study was conducted to determine the role PD plays in the professional growth of teachers. The following research questions guided this dissertation:

- Q1 What motivates secondary teachers to continue their professional growth?
- Q2 What type of professional development inspires secondary teachers to continue their learning?
- Q3 How does professional development inform secondary teacher's instruction?

Research Question One

Motivation, the reason for partaking in professional learning, varies from teacher to teacher. Motivating factors could be intrinsic—driven from within or extrinsic—driven from outside sources. Currently, teachers in Colorado are evaluated yearly using a state-mandated standardized form containing a box to be checked in reference to the PD undertaken by the teacher (“Teacher quality standards,” n.d.). As part of teacher licensure teachers are required to complete a specific number of continuing education credits for license renewal. The requirements provide examples of extrinsic motivation (“Teacher quality standards,” n.d.). Intrinsic motivation varies with the individual. With regard to professional growth, intrinsic motivation might be regarded as an important aspect of positive teacher outcomes (Klaeijsen, Vermeulen, & Martens, 2017). Answers to this question determined, through interviews, what factor or factors provided teachers the motivation to continue their professional learning.

Research Question Two

Teachers are provided PD opportunities through the school district or the school where they work. Typically, this PD is provided to the entire staff at the same time, the

same day, and sometimes no choice is given to the teacher. This type of professional development has been linked to recent educational reforms. This type of PD format was referred to in research as traditional PD (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). A fairly new form of PD has been referred to as personalized PD and is based on the theory of student-based personalized learning (Sparks, 2019). Personalized PD allows teachers to choose which PD opportunity to pursue and they are able to choose a delivery mode that reflects their own learning style (Shifter, 2016). This researcher utilized andragogy (adult learning theory) as a lens to review teacher descriptions of their PD experiences.

Research Question Three

Dewey (1916) believed learning was never final as one continues learning throughout life. This thought is connected to teaching as teachers remain as students throughout their professional lives. Often educational reform is initiated through PD. The premise for professional development has always been to enhance teacher learning and thereby improve classroom instruction (Lucilio, 2009). Through the research undertaken to answer this question, this researcher hoped to determine if the PD taken did indeed inform classroom instruction.

Introduction to the Setting and Participants

This study was undertaken at Windsor High School (WHS) to obtain the perspectives of secondary teachers regarding PD. Participants were chosen from the 70 certified teachers on staff at WHS. This high school is currently the only high school in this school district and has an enrollment of approximately 1,600 students. Teachers at this high school and school district partook in what is termed traditional professional development; recently however, the district has moved toward more personalized PD. I

met with the district director of instruction to formally obtain permission for the study. The superintendent of the district, the director of instruction, and the building principal were all aware of this project and verbally consented and supported the study.

Participants were chosen for the study through a survey asking general questions of teachers regarding years of teaching, types of PD attended, and/or preferred and willingness to take part in the study. This allowed me the opportunity to select teachers with varying experiences of PD, content areas, and years of teaching experience. Teachers were chosen from those willing to partake in this study and formed the case studies. Information was obtained through interviews using open-ended questions. Two focus groups were also conducted; each group was composed of teachers based on years of experience. One group was comprised of teachers with up to five years of teaching experience and the other group was teachers with six or more years of teaching experience. Teachers in the groups taught in various content areas to provide more perspectives for research questions. Focus group interviews “promote interaction among the individuals that leads to a richer understanding of whatever is being studied” (McMillan, 2016, p. 347). Focus groups met up to three times to allow for follow-up or question clarification. I served as facilitator for the groups, allowing the group conversation to flow organically.

Validity

It was important to address the issue of validity in the introduction to this study. I am the librarian and information literacy coach at the school district and at the high school where the study was conducted. Glesne (2016) referred to this as “backyard research” (p. 48). When researchers have previous experience with the participants or the

setting of a study, it could hinder effective data collection. I was an English teacher for 19 years before moving into my current role of librarian and information literacy coach. Glesne explained because of this, “those around you may experience confusion over which role you are or should be playing at a particular moment” (p. 48). While this might be true, the number of staff members has grown considerably since I started teaching there and many of the teachers I was closest to have retired. In my new role of information literacy coach, I have endeavored to create a new persona of coach rather than friend, especially with the new teachers. In my role of librarian, I have learned to be very objective with everyone I work with and felt the study would not be hindered by my familiarity with the setting and possibly some of the participants; rather, it would be enhanced by my teaching experience.

Need for the Study

Currently, there is a gap in the research regarding teacher motivation for professional growth through PD. McMillan, McConnell, and O’Sullivan (2014) recognized that research probing the reasons for teachers taking PD would offer valuable information into the effectiveness of PD; however, “such research is rare” (p. 152). Similarly, Guskey (2000) believed little research existed regarding teacher motivation for continued professional growth. This study assisted in filling that gap. Researching the motivating factors of teachers to partake of PD, to continue their professional growth, and to enhance classroom practices might provide information to assist in creating more meaningful PD opportunities.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter I provided an overview of the study through the identification and definition of professional development, traditional professional development, and personalized development. Professional development opportunities are provided to teachers to continue their professional growth. I examined teacher motivation and its connection to professional development. Chapter I also furnished an overview of the type of research to be completed in the study. Chapter II provides a review of literature pertaining to adult learning as well as background information on teacher motivation. Other research literature in this chapter focused on traditional professional development and personalized professional development. Attention was paid to articles attempting to connect PD to classroom changes based on professional development. Articles chosen for the review highlighted secondary classroom teachers since I hoped to add to this pool of literature. Chapter III explains the methodology utilized to conduct the study. Qualitative research through case studies was the focus of this section. An explanation of the interviews, how participants were chosen, and how data were analyzed are addressed. Chapter IV provides how answers to the research questions were obtained. Transcripts of the interview questions and the focus group transcriptions were included. The research process of the study was described in detail. Chapter V presents the findings of the study. The research questions were reiterated and connected to the data obtained. Information regarding the significance and/or the importance of the study was elaborated on to narrow the gap in related literature regarding professional development and growth for secondary teachers and education.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Professional development is the process by which teachers continue their learning. Professional development allows teachers to grow professionally in their content areas or in pedagogy and is widely regarded as the process providing teachers opportunities to continue their professional growth. Professional development is generally offered in two forms: traditional and personalized; both forms are defined and addressed as to the connection to the continued professional growth of teachers. Teachers, like the students in their classrooms, have a variety of learning styles. Personalized PD addresses this idea more than traditional PD as it allows teachers more choice of content and delivery mode than does the traditional approach. Traditional PD typically offers little or no choice of content or mode of delivery and is often delivered to the entire teaching staff at the same time. This study attempted to determine the role PD, despite type (traditional or personalized), played in the professional growth of secondary teachers. The ultimate purpose of PD is carry-over to the teacher's classroom to impart new content, pedagogy, or augment best practices already being utilized in the classroom.

The literature presented here addresses PD in general and its connection to teachers' professional growth. It also provides background research for the study. The effectiveness of PD is addressed as is traditional and personalized professional development. Adult learning theory, andragogy, is presented in connection with teacher

motivation in determining which PD opportunities teachers choose to participate in for continued professional growth. A description of the foundational philosophy of the study is explained. The common thread of the study is PD; thus, this study first reviews the reasons for PD.

Reasons for Professional Development

Professional development in general is undertaken by teachers at all levels to enhance their professional learning and, ultimately, their students' learning. The reasons for taking PD are varied. Often PD is required of the teacher by the school district or the individual school. The state of Colorado, where this study was set, requires "professional development activities totaling six semester hours or ninety clock hours and shall be completed within the five-year period preceding the date of expiration of the license to be renewed" ("Renewal of a Colorado professional license," n.d.). The PD taken for renewal needs to be related to instructional skills or the content area of the licensed teacher ("Renewal of a Colorado professional license," n.d.). In May of 2010, the Colorado State Senate passed SB 191, a bill establishing a standardized form for teacher evaluation based on five quality standards that address varying components of teaching ("Teacher quality standards," n.d.). Quality Standard IV requires teachers to reflect on their practice and element B of that section specifically addresses professional development and professional growth ("Teacher quality standards," n.d.). Both SB 191 and the teaching license renewal process in Colorado are two mandated reasons related to motivation for teachers to participate in some form of PD. Other teachers take PD to gain a higher degree (master's or doctorate) or a certificate in a new or different area of

teaching and some teachers take PD to benefit their own professional learning. Avidov-Ungar (2016) stated,

Professional development plans can be offered to teachers to progress hierarchically (i.e., vertically) and different professional development plans can be offered to teachers who wish to delve further into their current fields and aspire to develop laterally. (p. 666)

Using professional learning plans would allow teachers to have a more focused, goal setting approach to their professional learning, especially if teachers were the ones creating those professional development plans described by Avidov-Ungar.

Professional development is the cornerstone of professional growth for a teacher. Despite any short-comings that have been identified, PD is the route available for teachers to improve and enhance their learning and, ultimately, the learning of their students. Professional development is the learning experience of teachers for their professional growth. This study focused on those teacher experiences with PD. The philosophy of pragmatism provided the foundation from which to view teachers' experience with PD and was the lens for this study.

Philosophy

Pragmatism comes from the Greek root word for work. Acknowledging activity as the main component of educational pragmatism, Sharma, Devi, and Kumari (2018) described pragmatic education as “continuous re-organizing, reconstructing and integrating the experience and activities” (p. 1551); this also describes the daily life of a classroom teacher. Pragmatism (n.d.) in education has recently “seen a resurgence of interest” (para. 3) through project or problem-based learning and personalized learning

for students. John Dewey (cited in Gordon, 2016) is typically credited with establishing pragmatism in education and his ideas and teachings continue to influence educators in the 21st century.

John Dewey (1916) believed learning never stops and while Dewey spoke directly to K-12 education, his philosophy could also apply to teachers. Kohli (2018) supported this idea: “I think his philosophy can be readily applied to all ages” (p. 57). Even though learning through experience was the basis of Dewey’s educational pragmatism (1938/2015), Kohli clarified, “Everything depends on the quality of the experience which is had” (p. 27). Cox (2015) echoed this thought:

Learning that involves facilitating adults to draw on their experiences and so create new learning based on previous understandings and is important to consider when creating professional learning opportunities for teachers, while connecting to Knowles’ characteristics of andragogy. (p. 29)

Stoller (2018) concurred: “For Dewey, knowledge is not a thing-in-itself but instead is a tool crafted by and for particular situations through a systematic process of inquiry” (p. 453), which offers a correlation to PD in that teachers grow professionally their entire careers. While PD might be the cornerstone of professional learning for teachers, PD must be quality PD; thus, PD that is one-size-fits-all does not always equate to a quality experience for all teachers. For teachers, quality PD connected to their content, their classroom, or their needs as teachers enhances their learning experience.

Dewey (2017) advocated for teachers to meet students where they are in their learning stating, “Education must begin with insight into the child’s capabilities, interests, and habits” (p. 34). I believe this idea holds true for teachers’ professional learning as

well. Professional development should meet teachers where they are to reflect their interests and their needs. Day (1999) stated, “Continuing, career-long professional development is necessary for all teachers in order to keep pace with change and to review and renew their own knowledge, skills and visions for good teaching” (p. 2). Adults might learn through different venues or for different motivations. Shifter (2016) stated, “Teachers are adults, and thus consideration of how adults learn is an important aspect of both professional development as a whole, but personalized PD in particular” (p. 230). Beuder (2014) echoed Shifter, “We can lecture for hours on end about what we want our participants to learn, but nothing comes close to training individuals by making them actually do what they need learn” (p. 10), which connected to Dewey’s experiential education. Providing teachers time to create an implementation plan of the new learning and support for the implementation of the plan allows teachers to have the experiential learning Dewey advocated. The ultimate purpose of PD is to enhance student learning; for this to happen, PD must carry over into the classroom. Beuder posited, “Perhaps the only test of retention is when the participants are actually able to do and apply what they learned” (p. 11). Teachers implementing new learning with their students is the first step in PD carryover into classrooms.

Just as students are not vessels to be filled with knowledge by teachers, “teachers need more than passive transfer of knowledge from one person” (Chan, 2010, p. 33). Professional collaboration is one means for allowing teachers to reflect on new learning and creates a support structure for the application of taking risks in the classroom by applying PD. The philosophy of pragmatism (n.d.)—learning through experience—formed the foundation of this study, which was focused on teachers’ professional growth

through their experience of learning through PD. Unfortunately, many PD opportunities are not created from a pragmatic base nor are they created through the lens of adult-learning theory—*andragogy*.

However, I used the lens of *andragogy* to complete my study on teacher professional development. Using this lens, I researched the role of motivation for taking PD, what teachers believed effective PD to be, and how teachers used new learning through PD to inform their classroom practice—all topics related to the principles of *andragogy*. Those principles provided the characteristics of adult learners and created a framework for examining PD offered to teachers.

Adult Learning: Andragogy

Andragogy is a theory of adult learning as opposed to *pedagogy* which, according to Knowles (1970), is “specifically the art and science of teaching children” (p. 37). The traditional definition of *pedagogy* focuses on the “transmitting of information and skills” (Holmes & Abington-Cooper, 2000, p. 51). *Andragogy* is defined as the art and science of helping adults learn. The focus of *andragogy* is on the process of providing procedures and resources for adults to acquire new skills or information (Knowles, 1970).

Andragogy gained prominence with those attempting to characterize or describe adult education as different from other types of teaching (Merriam, 2001). However, some educational theorists felt there was no need to apply separate learning ideologies to children and adults.

Andragogy was questioned as whether it was indeed a “theory” of adult learning with some believing it was set of descriptions of what an adult learning should look like. It was also questioned whether the attributes of adult learning identified by Knowles

(1970) were exclusive to adult learners since children could exhibit some of the same attributes (Holmes & Abington-Cooper, 2000). Still others questioned Knowles' lack of "looking at the big picture" regarding the influence of culture and society on the learner (Merriam, 2001). While the concerns and debate questioned andragogy as an adult-learning theory, it was considered a guide to adult-learning practice (Merriam, 2001). The disparities regarding andragogy were "indicative of the perplexing nature of the field of adult learning" (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1973/1998, p. 1).

Knowles et al. (1973/1998) answered the criticism regarding the strength of andragogy stating, "It is a set of core adult learning principles that apply to all adult learning situations" (p. 2). While Knowles et al. was not specifically addressing educational learning situations, teachers are adult learners with unique learning opportunities and requirements and if Knowles et al.'s theories of andragogy are applied, they could create more meaningful learning experiences. Despite the controversy surrounding andragogy as a theory of adult learning, it had merit as a lens when applied to educational professional development (Merriam, 2001).

In *the Modern Practice of Adult Education*, Knowles (1970) provided what he deemed "superior conditions of learning" (p. 52). He explained the conditions of learning, when teaching adults, were more "conducive to growth and development than others" (p. 52). Those superior conditions of learning incorporated the adult learner's needs, the environment where the teaching-learning took place, and shared a sense of learning goals, collective planning, and monitoring progress toward goal(s; Knowles, 1970). He further explained that too often adult learning opportunities, as with PD, were planned and taught through the lens of pedagogy instead of andragogy.

Upon further research in the field of adult-learning theories, Knowles et al. (1973/1998) elaborated on his earlier superior conditions of learning and reiterated them as six andragogical principles: “1) learner’s need to know, 2) self-concept of the learner 3) prior experience of the learner, 4) readiness to learn, 5) orientation to learning, and 6) motivation to learn” (p. 181). It would follow that successful or effective PD would incorporate the above principles. As with students, all teachers do not fit neatly into the six principles of andragogy just as a “one-size-fits-all” approach does not fit all teachers as a form of PD. Knowles et al. advised an andragogical approach should be customized to the learner (teachers) as “an essential feature of andragogy is flexibility” (p. 153). The principles of andragogy are reflected in the current trend of personalized professional learning opportunities for teachers.

Mezirow (1991b) referred to andragogy as the “professional perspective of adult educators” (p. 199). He explained the connection of andragogy to PD by identifying the major goal of adult learning was to “help learners learn what they want to learn” and to “acquire more developmentally advanced perspectives” (Mezirow, 1991b, p. 199). Both attributes are tailor-made for effective PD. Teachers, like students, are more receptive to new learning when the topic is of interest to them or affects them directly. Personalized PD allows teachers to learn what they want to learn and/or need to learn in order to continue meaningful professional learning.

Change is not easy for everyone; teachers are no exception. A veteran teacher might have been teaching in the same content area for many years or using the same teaching methods for many years. This teacher is often reluctant to embrace new learning or new ideologies. Professional development, personalized or not, that offers

teachers time to change their thinking and “acquire more developmentally advanced perspectives” allows for authentic professional growth (Mezirow, 1991b). Time for reflection or time to process the new learning is often missing from PD. “In order for high-quality professional development to have an impact, teachers must be committed to the change” (Thomson & Turner, 2015, p. 582) and time for processing the change needs to be a part of professional learning.

Andragogy, Knowles’ (1970) theory of adult learning, provides a lens to address the effectiveness of PD, traditional or personalized. Knowles created the guidelines that were utilized to approach PD from an andragogical point of view instead of a pedagogical perspective, acknowledging adults learn differently than children; adults learn through different avenues than children. Mezirow (1991b) explained the connection of the adult learner (teachers), andragogy, and PD through reflection, choice, and self-directed learning.

Reflection, Choice, and Self-Directed Learning

Reflection

Mezirow (1991a) addressed reflection in conjunction with adult learning through andragogical principles, defining reflection as “the process of critically assessing the content, process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience” (p.104). Reflection, when utilized in this manner, allows adults (teachers) to reflect on their perceptions of the PD. It also allows for thinking about the PD or process, judging, and analyzing changes that might have taken place due to the PD. Teachers might also reflect to connect the new learning with their current teaching practices, content knowledge, and/or further PD needs for professional growth. Mezirow further

acknowledged reflection is not typically a component of PD; however, reflection should be a major goal in fostering transformative learning, which is the purpose of most PD. Appova and Arbaugh (2018) similarly addressed the component of reflection in PD. Their study on teacher motivation found reflection needed to be a built-in component to PD to allow teachers to analyze “learning and progress” and “learner’s growth and development (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018, p. 8). Through the reflection process, teachers might identify other areas of learning they might choose to further their professional learning.

Choice

Important to adult-learning is the matter of choice, which is referred to as volition—wanting to feel they have a choice in their learning (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1973/1991). Smith (2017) addressed the idea of choice as a motivating principle for adults, finding adults had greater motivation when they were a part of the process along with higher achievement. Connecting choice to PD, Vaughan and McLaughlin (2011) determined increased professional growth among teachers occurred when teachers had a choice and felt ownership of their professional development. Teachers in their study felt confined in their teaching because of mandated programs (curriculum that was purchased by a district and created by individual teachers in their classrooms) they were required to use. Given more flexibility and the opportunity to choose differentiated PDs that were focused on current needs, teachers “intentionally sought out their professional development or altered institutionalized professional development to meet their needs” (Vaughan & McLaughlin, 2011, p. 54). Providing teachers choice in professional learning opportunities through PD encourages those who

are self-directed learners and might encourage those who are not to increase their self-motivation.

Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed learning is the sum of the principles of andragogy and a form of teacher PD. As an individual matures, more self-directed learning emerges in direct relation to their need to know. Merriam (2001) explained it as “learning that is widespread...that is systematic yet does not depend on an instructor or a classroom” (p. 8), and thus relates to the new trend of personalized PD for teachers. Just as flexibility is urged when using the principles of andragogy, the same is true for self-directed learning. Merriam (2001) stated, “Educators should not assume that because a person has been self-directed in one situation, he or she will be able to succeed in a new area” (p. 10), which also relates to teachers’ professional learning. Some teachers excel with learning new technology, i.e., on their own, and other teachers need more instruction and support. Bubb and Earley’s study (2013) supported self-directed learning concluding, given the opportunity, teachers will “immerse themselves thoroughly in developments within their own curriculum areas to extend their subject knowledge and skills” (p. 244), connecting the idea of PD through teacher choice and those who are self-motivated learners.

Regarding andragogy and PD for teachers, Appova and Arbaugh, (2018) concluded, “Content specific PD is not enough to ensure productive teacher learning” and further suggested “content specific PD be differentiated to specifically address and accommodate the differences in teachers’ professional and learning needs” (p. 17). Allowing teachers to identify their interests and needs assists in creating a professional learning culture within schools. Their study supported using andragogy for planning PD

and the growing trend to offer personalized PD to teachers while acknowledging differentiation could take many avenues including collective as well as individual PD opportunities based on the needs of the teacher. Further support for personalized PD's connection to andragogical principles was identified by Thomson and Turner (2015): "Professional development programs were perceived to be successful if teachers found the training relevant to their instructional needs" (p. 580). Chan (2010) advocated for andragogy in PD: "The pedagogical approach has become less effective in teaching adult learners. Adult learners need more than the passive transfer of knowledge from one person to another" (p. 33). Learning through experience, providing collaboration, and reflection time allows teachers to utilize new learning, making the learning non-passive. Teachers have unique needs and are appreciative of PDs that recognize this and provide authentic learning opportunities (Beavers, 2011, p. 29).

"Personalized individual professional development is not easy, but it has to be considered if the most is to be gained from the learning opportunities made available" (Bubb & Earley, 2013, p. 244). Reflection, choice, and self-directed learning are important components of personalized PD. Reflection allows teachers to consider the PD and how it might be utilized in their practice. It is also a powerful tool in reviewing the effectiveness of the PD. Choice allows teachers to partake in PD they feel would assist them in their professional growth, more than taking PD that did not connect to their needs. Districts offering teachers self-directed learning afford teachers the opportunity of choice. For teachers to avail themselves of any type of PD, they need to be motivated to do so. This study also considered the role motivation played for teachers to pursue professional learning.

Motivation

Simply put, motivation is the reason one does something. Motivation typically is divided into two categories: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation comes from sources outside oneself and intrinsic motivation comes from within oneself. Extrinsic motivation typically occurs to obtain a reward or to meet a requirement. Intrinsic motivation typically occurs from an internal desire or to obtain a sense of fulfillment or self-satisfaction. “Teachers may have both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for professional development” (de Wal, den Brok, Hooijer, Martens, & van den Beemt, 2014, p. 28). Extrinsic motivation for teachers typically is found in state requirements for license renewal or due to a section in their yearly district evaluations or a desire to “get in their hours” (Guskey, 2002, p. 15). Intrinsic motivation speaks directly to Knowles et al.’s (1973/1998) principles of andragogy, namely the self-concept of the learner and the learner’s need to know. Day (1999) concluded when comparing teachers to students, “the key to successful learning is motivation which cannot be achieved by means of tight, centralized control” (p. 206). Connecting learning to the individual teacher and his/her needs can be a catalyst for increasing motivation to continue professional learning.

Appova and Arbaugh (2018) also addressed the issue of teacher motivation: “Teachers’ motivation to learn is not a ‘carrot and stick’ phenomenon—it is predominantly based on teachers’ professional and learning needs, and the readiness to learn” (p. 17). Their study identified other areas of teacher motivation: motivation to learn from others, to become a “better” teacher, to fulfill accountability requirements, to seek and join learning as a habit, and to gain more knowledge about teachers’ interests (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018). Based on their study and the different areas of motivation,

Appova and Arbaugh created four specific categories of motivation for teachers: “to learn efficacy, self-determination and classroom teaching, to learn policy, accountability and opportunities to learn, to learn professional development and andragogy” (p. 17).

Professional development that addresses these categories of motivation is a powerful tool that increases teachers’ professional learning.

Thomson and Turner (2015) researched teacher professional growth and motivation and found “teachers’ motivation for engaging in a professional development program was strongly connected to their expectations and values attributed to the program” (p. 580). Thus, the perception and/or expectations of the PD influenced the motivation not only to attend the PD but the motivation to learn as well. Self-efficacy of the teachers was also related to teacher motivation regarding professional learning.

Thomson and Turner stated,

The greater self-efficacy a teacher maintains, the greater willingness the teacher has to try new things, because the teacher then has a sense of commitment to students’ achievement and believes in his/her own ability to impact students learning. (p. 581)

Creating opportunities through PD to build teachers’ self-efficacy increased a willingness to utilize new learning in the classroom, thus generating a real connection between PD and classrooms.

Motivation was addressed by Knowles et al. (1973/1991) in connection to his principles of andragogy. He believed “adults tend to be more motivated toward learning that helps them solve problems in their daily lives or results in internal payoffs” (p. 149). By applying this idea to teachers and PD, daily problem(s) to be solved could very well

be a classroom issue, new technology, or any number of other pertinent topics. A new or renewed sense of accomplishment or self-confidence could come from PD as well.

Knowles et al. further stated, “Adult learners will be most motivated when they believe that they can learn the new material and that the learning will help them solve a problem or issue (p. 150).

Despite the varied motivating factors for teachers to attend PD, it remains “a long, time-honored tradition” (Shifter, 2016, p. 221) and is a required component of teachers’ continued professional growth. “Understanding teachers’ motivation and means of adaptations in considering PD can inform PD provider programs how to be more effective and responsive to teacher needs” (Van Duzor, 2011, p. 372). Professional development designers who acknowledge and utilize the characteristics of motivation to create PD offer their teachers more effective PD opportunities.

Teacher motivation can be either intrinsic or extrinsic. The motivation for teachers to attend PD might be connected to the type of PD opportunity. Determining the connection would provide insight to how teachers choose to continue their professional growth. While many types of PD are available to teachers to continue their professional growth, this study focused on two: traditional PD and personalized PD.

Traditional Professional Development

Professional development is the means by which teachers continue to learn long after they have graduated from their respective teacher education programs. Professional development can be defined in a variety of ways and be difficult to explicitly define. Ende (2016) elaborated, “Professional development is often easy to spot but difficult to categorize. We know it when we experience it and can see it happening, but we don’t

always know what it's all about" (p. 3). Despite the mode of delivery, PD is recognized as "the primary mechanism that schools can use to help teachers continuously learn and improve their skills over time" (Glossary of Education Reform, 2013, Reform, para. 2). Professional development might mean different things to different teachers. For some, it is a one-day, one-time conference, or a workshop held over a period of time, or it is pursuing an advanced degree that is spread out over time, and everything in between. (Glossary of Education Reform, 2013). Ende (2016) explained, "Early professional development was of the 'sit 'n git' variety, which usually involved teachers attending assigned sessions for a designated number of hours" (p. 4). This type of PD has been the norm in education for many years.

Keeping with the broad nature of the definition, PD can be provided through many avenues. Professional development can be offered locally through school districts or individual schools. Colleges and universities offer PD classes and workshops for teachers; often these are now on-line. Teachers can choose to attend conference or workshop offerings paid for by their school or by the teachers themselves. Sometimes the PD is mandated by the school district and provided to the staff at the school. Despite the delivery mode of the PD, it is generally believed PD enhances the quality of teaching and enhances the learning of students in the classroom (Avidov-Ungar, 2016).

Under the umbrella of the PD definition are two major types of PD: traditional and personalized. While both aim to provide teachers with continued professional learning, they do not do so in the same manner. Traditional PD is often referred to as "sit and get" and is typically conducted for the entire staff at the same time; it does not typically allow for teacher choice. Richardson (2003) admonished the traditional

approach to PD because it “pays little attention to what is already going on in a particular classroom...and offers little opportunity for the participants to become involved in the conversation and provides no follow-up” (p. 401), thereby eliminating choice and meaningful PD experiences. Emo (2015) concurred: PD opportunities that “are collaborative, on-going networks are often more effective learning experiences than those which are lectures” (p. 177). There has been little change in the traditional format of PD even though follow-through into the classroom is not always evident. Richardson stated, “We have been engaged in this form of staff development for years, knowing full well that this approach is not particularly successful” (p. 401).

Robb (2000) identified the attributes of traditional PD that lead to the ineffectiveness, perceived or not, with which teachers view traditional PD: “one-day teacher training, one-size-fits-all presentation, minimal administrator participation, lack of follow-up support” (p. 7). One-day trainings tend to feel overwhelming to teachers, creating an overload of information in a short period of time and causing confusion for teachers. One-size-fits-all typically means an administrator has hired an outside professional who brings with him/her a presentation he/she gives to other districts. Minimal administrator participation is noticed by teachers when the administrator does not partake of the PD the rest of the staff is taking and chooses to spend time completing other tasks. Lack of follow-up support for teachers to attempt new ideas in their classrooms might limit the effectiveness of the new information (Robb, 2000).

The sole purpose of teacher PD is to enhance teacher professional learning and, in turn, better the education received by students. Unfortunately, teachers have come to dislike PD days mandated by either the district or an individual school. Diaz-Maggioli

(2004) stated, “The term ‘professional development day’ conjures only images of coffee breaks, consultants in elegant outfits, and school barren of kids” (p. 1). Professional development was implemented to increase teacher professional growth and in turn increase student learning; however, researchers and teachers have questioned the effectiveness of traditional PD. Diaz-Maggioli identified issues, as he saw them, of traditional PD:

Top-down decision making, the idea that teachers need to be “fixed,” lack of ownership of the professional development process, the technocratic nature of professional development content, universal application of classroom practices regardless of subject, student age, or level of cognitive development, lack of variety in delivery modes of professional development, inaccessibility of professional development opportunities, little or no support when transferring professional development ideas to the classroom, standardized approaches to professional development that disregard the varied needs and experiences of teachers, lack of systemic evaluation of professional development, little or no acknowledgment of the learning characteristics of teachers among professional development planners. (pp. 2-3)

Having identified the short-comings, Diaz-Maggioli proposed a new model addressing the issues he believed to be at the root of the traditional PD dilemma—one focusing on the professional growth of teachers through meeting the needs of individual teachers.

Disillusionment with traditional PD has led to the current trend of more personalized PD. Personalized PD is a shift toward authentic teacher growth and change rather than teachers being “changed” through PD. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002)

explained the change to teachers as “an event with teachers as a passive participant” (p. 948). They argued for change to take place with teachers as “active learners,” believing “the motive for teaching is not to repair a personal inadequacy as a teacher but to seek greater fulfillment as a practitioner” (p. 948). In other words, PD that is personalized allows teachers to grow professionally so they can provide richer learning opportunities for their students. Teacher change was addressed by Richardson (2003) who believed teachers change all the time. Teachers make changes to their daily classroom routines, the physical layout of the classroom, or the changing of texts from year to year; some are reflective changes teachers make to bring about improvements in their teaching or their classroom. Richardson suggested “the approach to professional development must meet the specific goals of the institution or the individual planning to use the process” (p. 405) and therefore advocated for a more personalized PD format.

The movement toward personalized PD has shifted from “programs that change teachers to teachers as active learners shaping their professional growth through reflective participation in professional development programs and practice” (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002, p. 948). McCray (2018) asserted PD should be applicable to teachers’ skill set and related needs and include teacher involvement. Personalized PD appears to offer opportunities for a more individualized form of PD for teachers.

Personalized Professional Development

Personalized PD addresses the needs, strengths, and interests of individual teachers and provides teachers with choices in the focus of the PD and the mode of delivery for the PD. Lucilio (2009) believed “teachers must be the first ones consulted when assessing what is needed to improve the classroom and learning” (p. 54).

Personalized PD offerings can be as varied as the needs of the teacher; just student needs vary in the classroom. Shifter (2016) explained,

PPD for teachers includes many facets, such as developing their skills to use multiple methods of teaching for each child's strengths and challenges, but also developing teachers' own professional knowledge and skills based on their own strengths and weaknesses. (p. 221)

Teachers want to improve their teaching skills or content knowledge and they want PD that affords them the best means to accomplish professional growth goals (Lucilio, 2009). Personalized PD opportunities allow teachers "to design their own professional development by planning and making meaningful changes in their teaching practices" (Strahan, 2016, p. 678). Through goal setting, planning and implementing, and reflecting on the effectiveness of the learning task, teachers experience agency as it pertains to their own professional learning (Strahan, 2016).

Personalized PD does not make "the assumption that intellectual development and ability and prior knowledge and experiences are the same for everyone" (Robb, 2000, p. 135). This is similar to the idea of all students learn at the same rate and in the same manner. Personalized PD utilizes what is known about student learning and applies it to teacher learning. Teachers are the ones who elicit change in the classroom and personalized PD is the agent generating that change (Lucilio, 2009). Many personalized PD modes are available to teachers who are searching for new or different opportunities. Among those gaining momentum in the PD realm are micro-credentials (scout badge-like), higher education degrees, learning cohorts, professional learning committees, book studies (individual or group), mentoring, college courses, and workshops (chosen by the

teacher; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Horn & Arnett, 2017; Lucilio, 2009; Robb, 2000). Diaz-Maggioli (2004) succinctly identified the major differences in traditional PD and personalized PD (see Figure 1).

Characteristics of Traditional Professional Development	Characteristics of Visionary Professional Development
Top-down decision-making A “fix-it” approach Lack of program ownership among teachers Prescriptive ideas One-size-fits-all techniques Fixed and untimely delivery methods Little or no follow-up Decontextualized programs Lack of proper evaluation Pedagogical (child-centered) instruction	Collaborative decision-making A growth-driven approach Collective construction of programs Inquiry-based ideas Tailor-made techniques Varied and timely delivery methods Adequate support systems Context-specific programs Proactive assessment Andragogical (adult-centered) instruction

Figure 1. Major differences in traditional professional development and personalized professional development (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004, p. 6).

Professional development has long been the means for teachers to continue their professional growth. Teaching has seen many changes and reforms and often those changes are made known to teachers through PD. However, it is unclear how effective PD actually is in enhancing the learning of the students or promoting the professional growth of the teachers.

Effectiveness of Professional Development

Professional development’s effectiveness, or lack thereof, has been informally discussed among educators and school leadership. However, PD should be evaluated insofar as it provides quality PD that informs classroom change and professional growth for teachers. Effective PD is a learning pathway to schools that creates learning communities for all within their walls.

“Quality teaching in all classrooms and skillful leadership in all schools will not occur by accident. They require the design and implementation of the most powerful forms of professional development” (Sparks, 2002, p. 14). To obtain quality teaching and leadership, PD needs to be effective so professional learning goals can be achieved. “Professional development is an essential part of being a teacher” (Avidov-Ungar, 2016, p. 658) but there is unrest among educators as to the effectiveness of PD. Guskey (2002) concluded many factors might play a role in the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of teacher PD. Sparks (2002) believed everyone involved in student learning should also be learning all of the time, creating a district culture of learning to enhance PD opportunities undertaken. For any PD to be successful, Day (1999) affirmed “professional development must be concerned with teachers’ whole selves since it is these which bring significance to the meaning of the teaching act and the learning which results” (p. 206). Teacher disillusionment or low morale, for whatever reason, should be addressed since it might affect PD and carry over to students. Ende (2016) confirmed Day’s stance: “Professional development for learning should be meaningful for the deliverer, the audience, and those learners who are the end recipients of the learning” (p. 7). When that happens, the PD has been successful in all realms.

Diaz-Maggioli (2004) explained, “Effective professional development should be understood as a job-embedded commitment that teachers make in order to further the purposes of the profession while addressing their own particular needs” (p. 5). With this statement, Diaz-Maggioli stressed the importance of utilizing adult-learning theory, particularly the self-learning component. Echoing the importance of teacher self-efficacy in the role of continued and effective PD, Thomson and Turner (2015) stated, “The

teacher then has a sense of commitment to students' achievement and believes in his/her own ability to impact students' learning" (p. 581), which is the ultimate goal of all PD.

When discussing successful PD programs, Wenzlaff and Wiesman (2004) believed, "For the learning to be meaningful it must be authentic and connected to the teachers' classroom practice" (p. 123). They further advocated for the use of collaboration through cohorts to create authentic and successful PD experiences, thereby creating teacher learning and establishing a culture of learning at the building level. Guskey (2000) supported the idea of building a culture of learning: "If changes at the individual level are not encouraged and supported at the organizational level, the most promising innovation will fail" (p. 21). Support for new professional learning is often missing and teachers become reluctant to take risks if they feel alone in that new learning. Guskey further believed effective PD should be ongoing and not only minimal days scheduled during the school year; it should be an "ongoing, job-embedded process (p. 19), ensuring a climate of learning for an entire staff. Professional development that is continuously part of teachers' everyday lives and creates collective learning and teacher inquiry needs to be instigated by the school district (DuFour, 2000). If this model of ongoing PD opportunities was the norm rather than the exception, teachers' viewpoints of PD as something to be endured might give way to an increased intrinsic motivation to learn. In other words, embedded authentic PD might provide teachers with a desire to continue their professional learning while creating a culture of learning school-wide.

While the ultimate goal of PD might be to increase student learning, focusing on student achievement data alone might not be the best indicator of successful or effective PD. Effective approaches to PD include "1) A clear focus in learning and learners, 2) An

emphasis on individual and organizational change, 3) Small changes guided by a grand vision, 4) Ongoing professional development that is procedurally embedded” (Guskey, 2000, pp. 36-38). Effective PD is an ongoing process that takes place, daily, weekly, monthly by continually building on past learning and experiences.

Designing PD is guided by a “grand vision” but broken into manageable sections, it is more likely to be successful. Each accomplishment builds on the previous one, all working toward the obtainment of the unified purpose of the PD (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). Embedded PD that is part of each day and ongoing leads to success. Professional development occurring only on district mandated PD days does not create a climate or culture of learning; however, PD rooted in daily routine of the staff promotes authentic and continuous learning (Guskey, 2000).

Professional development should be a community approach that involves the entire school, even the administrators. To accommodate and create an environment allowing PD to be embedded in the daily routine, changes might need to be made by the principle or superintendent. According to DuFour (2000), “The most important resource that schools can provide to support quality staff development is time for teacher to work together in collaborative teams engaged in significant collective inquiry” (p. 2). Changes to schedules providing time for collaboration, peer observations, and other learning opportunities are necessary at all levels for PD to be effective.

Sparks (2002) put forth his criteria for effective PD:

Focuses on deepening teachers’ content knowledge and pedagogical skills, includes opportunities for practice, research, and reflection, is embedded in educators’ work and takes place during the school day, is sustained over time, and

is founded on a sense of collegiality and collaboration among teachers and between teachers and principals in solving important related to teaching and learning. (p. 17)

Effective PD requires and thrives when this team approach is utilized by all involved.

Robb (2000) agreed that effective PD should promote schools that are learning communities “where teachers and administrators pose questions, pinpoint problems, study and reflect and collaborate to discover possible answers” (p. 19). In other words, PD should be the instrument that creates schools that are learning environments for students and teachers. Eisner (2017) contended effective PD should be utilized to create schools that are learning centers for teachers, thereby creating learning centers for students. Furthermore, Robb believed “effective teachers develop from collaborating, studying together, exchanging ideas, and teaching their students and one another” (p. 142), which describes effective and embedded PD. Stewart (2014) concurred: “This is a shift from passive and intermittent PD to that which is active, consistent, based on the learning environment, and supported by peers” (p. 28) but this shift does not happen quickly. It is a process with characteristics for success.

Characteristics of PD design have been identified to enhance its effectiveness. Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2001) recognized effective PD as focusing on “a) the form of the activity, b) the duration of the activity ... the span of time over which the activity takes place, and c) the degree to which the activity emphasizes the collective participation of the groups of teachers ” (p. 920). When designing PD, close attention needs to concentrate on the activity of the PD and collaboration provided in the PD. Garet et al. also concluded from their study that “to improve professional

development, it is more important to focus on the duration, collective participation, and the core features (i.e., content, active learning, and coherence) than type” (p. 936). Quality of the learning experience is key to designing effective PD. While not being identical to Guskey’s (2002) principles stated earlier, similarities exist and provide another view of how to create effective teacher PD. Effective PD does not happen by accident but with ambitious learning goals for teachers and students and through changes made to the system (Sparks, 2002). To determine if the PD is effective and elicits the change hoped for, it must be evaluated.

Guskey (2000) defined evaluation as “the systematic investigation of merit or worth” (p. 41) and further stated, “Good professional development evaluations provide sound, meaningful, and sufficiently reliable information that can be used to make thoughtful and responsible decisions about professional development processes and effects” (p. 68). Evaluation of PD is typically completed by participants upon completion of PD but other methods of evaluation exist.

Guskey (2016) indicated PD evaluation should focus on five areas. He created a model “hierarchically arranged, moving from simple to more complex,” each level layering on the level preceding it (Guskey, 2016, p. 32). The five critical levels of professional development evaluation include (a) a participant’s reactions, (b) a participant’s learning, (c) an organization support and change, (d) a participant’s use of new knowledge and skills, and (e) student learning outcomes (Guskey, 2000, p. 82).

Participant reaction is the most common form of evaluation. It typically addresses superficial issues, i.e., if the participant liked the PD. Guskey (2000) referred to this as “happiness quotients” (p. 82) since the level of evaluation tended to take

measure of how well the participant liked the activity and not necessarily the worth or quality of the PD (Guskey, 2016). However, this level of evaluation is a starting place and a foundation for the levels to come.

Participant learning was the second level addressed. While questionnaires could be completed after the completion of the PD, participants might need time to implement new learning. Reflection could be a powerful tool at this level. Participants might reflect on changes in practice or attitude after attending the PD. Participants might also inform the presenter of ideas of how to implement the new learning in their classroom (Guskey, 2016).

Level three addressed the organizational elements and attributes required for successful implementation of the new learning (Guskey, 2016). Typical questions at this level are specific to building support the participant needs upon attempting to alter previous practices. Obtaining answers to level three questions would be more involved than the previous two levels. Interviews with administration, reviewing minutes of follow-up meetings, and school visits might be necessary to provide useful information (Guskey, 2016).

Feedback addressing participants' use of new knowledge or skills was the focus of level four (Guskey, 2016). Whether learning new knowledge or a new skill made a difference in their classroom practice was the primary concern at this level. Once again, this information would not be available at the completion of the PD so follow up would be necessary by the presenter. Answers might be obtained through questionnaires or by interviewing the participants after enough time has passed for results to be noticeable (Guskey, 2016).

Considered at level five was student learning outcomes—the ultimate goal of teacher PD. Information gathered for this level would focus on the effect of the PD on student performance. Teachers could utilize a variety of assessment tools to determine student learning and developers of PD would benefit from making use of the multiple modes of assessment used by teachers. Gathering information at each level could lead to improved PD for teachers' learning and ultimately improved learning for students. Unfortunately, much of the feedback obtained would be at level one (participants' reactions) or the evaluations did not continue past level two—participants' learning (Guskey, 2000).

Professional development that is multifaceted would allow districts to improve classroom teachers' professional growth and a multifaceted evaluation of district PD would provide effective PD (Guskey & Sparks, 1991). Ultimately, the goal of PD would be to enrich the learning experience of students in the teacher's classroom through the professional growth of teachers.

Summary

This chapter reviewed literature pertaining to PD for teachers. Professional development is the avenue taken by teachers to increase their professional knowledge and/or obtain new teaching skills. Traditional professional development was defined and juxtaposed against the current trend of personalized PD. The literature presented assessed the effectiveness of traditional and personalized PD as well as provided a glimpse of teachers' perspectives on both types of PD.

Andragogy as an adult-learning theory was established by Malcom Knowles (1970) who advocated for PD to be planned based on the principles of andragogy instead

of pedagogy. Pedagogy refers to the teaching of children and, typically, PD is planned through pedagogy rather than andragogy. Andragogy refers to how adults learn and was presented as the lens for this study. Educational PD is offered to teachers to increase their content knowledge or to teach them new skills. The connection between PD and andragogy was explored and explained.

Motivation could be seen as a driving force for choosing specific types of PD. Motivation was defined and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were addressed in connection to PD taken by teachers. Andragogy was also connected to the motivation of adult learners—in this case, teachers.

The effectiveness of PD was reviewed in connection to the evaluation of PD. Guskey (2000) identified five levels of evaluation for PD, each of which was explained regarding the professional growth of teachers.

A gap in the research existed regarding professional development at the secondary level. Teachers participate in PD to increase student learning or changes in practice and they take PD to grow professionally. Motivation is an integral component of determining which PD to choose. My research added to the literature by examining these issues through an andragogical lens.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Methodology

Professional development is the means by which teachers continue to learn and grow professionally; it often provides the first step in educational reforms. Various PD opportunities are made available to teachers—some through their school districts and others they seek out themselves. The expectation is for the transfer of PD learning to the classroom and the students. Teacher motivation drives PD choice as does the type of PD offered. Using qualitative research methodology, I researched teacher motivation regarding PD, effective types of PD, and how PD informed teachers' classroom instruction.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is defined as “understanding the meaning people have constructed” (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). People attempt to make sense of their world and this study attempted to make sense of experiences teachers have had with PD including teachers' perspectives of the effectiveness of the PD to inform their classroom practices. Constructivism operates on the premise of “meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage in the world they are interpreting” (Crotty, 1998, p. 43). Since I researched those constructed meanings regarding PD experiences, I conducted this research through the lens of constructivism using qualitative methods. Guskey (2000) identified PD as “those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills,

and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students” (p. 16). Teachers utilize PD that allows them to improve their practice and in turn their students’ learning, thus contributing to teacher professional growth.

This study explored the role of PD in the professional growth of secondary teachers, primarily the use of PD to inform classroom practices as well as the motivation of teachers to take PD. To accomplish this task, I used qualitative methods. Individual interviews, focus group interviews, and a survey were the data sources that informed the answers to the following research questions:

- Q1 What motivates secondary teachers to engage in professional growth?
- Q2 What type of professional development motivates secondary teachers to continue their professional growth?
- Q3 How does professional development inform secondary teachers’ instruction?

Qualitative research is an inductive process whereby the researcher gathers data to prove a theory based on observations and understanding gained from fieldwork (McMillan, 2016). The fieldwork for this study took place at Windsor High School (WHS) in a northern Colorado school district so the data were gathered in a natural setting. This allowed me to “understand the behavior and perceptions that occur naturally” regarding teacher perspectives of PD (McMillan, 2016, p. 306). This research focused on understanding the meaning teachers had constructed in their own environment and through their own experiences with PD including their motivation. This research was reflective of social constructivism, a characteristic of qualitative methodology (McMillan, 2016).

Case Study

Case study is defined as “in-depth analysis of one or more real-life ‘entities’- events, settings, programs, social groups, communities, individuals or other ‘bounded systems’ in their natural context” (McMillan, 2016, p. 314). Since the location was one high school in a local northern Colorado school district, it met the criteria of a bounded system. Stake (1995) stated, “Case studies are to obtain the descriptions and interpretations of others” (p .64), which was the goal of my research.

Using a collective-intrinsic case study model provided teacher’s opinions and feelings about his/her PD experiences (McMillan, 2016). Specifically, I analyzed teacher motivation to partake of PD opportunities, the type of PD teachers found to be effective, and the role of PD in informing classroom practice. The research included more than one participant to determine generalizations (McMillan, 2016) regarding teacher perspectives of PD. Using multiple participants allowed me to determine a broader view of PD and its effect on teacher professional growth. Participants were chosen based on their years of teaching experience, content area they were teaching, core subject or an elective subject, and the grade level (9th-12th grade). I was able to gather varied perspectives of PD because of the multi-faceted experiences of the participants, which comprised the data needed to inform the study.

Data Collection

Data collection began with identifying the site, general participants needed to address the research questions, and the vehicle(s) to best provide data needed to complete the study (McMillan, 2016). Participants necessary for this study were non-probationary secondary teachers and the vehicles to gather the data were surveys, interviews, and focus

groups. The site was a mid-size high school from which the participants were chosen for the study. Andragogy was the lens applied to the data collected, providing a basis for connecting teacher motivation to PD and the professional growth of the participants in the study.

Participants

Participants were defined by Merriam (2009) as “the individuals being studied” (p. 162). Merriam further explained the term *participant* referred to an individual who is willing to participate in a research study. Participants for this study were made aware that their participation was completely voluntary. Glesne (2016) stated, “Qualitative researchers tend to select each of their cases *purposefully*” (p. 50). Keeping this idea in mind, I chose teachers using a variety of filters. To begin with, I did not include probationary teachers (one to three years of teaching experience) due to their limited experience with PD. Teachers from the four core content areas and those who taught elective subjects (those subjects outside the core) were selected for interviews and focus groups to obtain a balance of subject representation. In selecting teachers for the interviews, I also referred to questions 6-8 on the survey (see Appendix A) to achieve varying responses to the interview questions regarding aspects of PD. Question 6 asked teachers which type of PD they found more effective: traditional (district choice of topic) or personalized (teacher choice of topic). Utilizing this question allowed me to choose interviewees who did not all have the same opinion regarding the effectiveness of PD. Question 7 asked teachers to choose their motivation for PD; a variety of options were listed. This question allowed me to choose teachers with varied motivating factors in choosing PD. Question 8 asked teachers how they determined which PD to take; again,

choices of the determining factor were provided. These survey questions acted as a filter so I had participants with varying opinions, which provided more varied and complete information regarding PD. However, I used question 6, the effectiveness of PD, as the first filter to choose teachers from both traditional and personalized PD leanings. In the selection of the focus groups, I also used the grade level the potential participant taught (9th-12th grade) as a criterion for selection, which provided yet another layer of experiences for the focus group. I included a teacher from 9th, 10th, and 11th grades for focus group A and teachers from 10th, 11th, and 12th grades for focus group B. Question 5 was used in selecting participants for the focus groups, which allowed me to obtain varied opinions in the connection of PD to the classroom. Question 5 asked teachers how often PD informed their classroom instruction and frequency choices were provided. Having a variety of teaching experiences provided more varied data for the study.

Since the study was concerned with the connection of teacher growth and PD for secondary teachers, teachers who volunteered for the study were chosen from the one high school in the district—WHS. I chose not to include secondary teachers from either of the district's middle schools due to the uniqueness of high school teaching—a more individualized approach was taken as opposed to a team approach. As established, the gap in the research literature was at the high school level so I hoped this study would help to narrow that gap. Three of the participating teachers were interviewed individually. Stake (1995) stated, “Balance and variety are important; opportunity to learn is of primary importance” (p. 6). With this idea in mind, I included teachers with various years of teaching experience and teachers who taught in different content areas. To obtain this variety, I used maximum variation sampling. Glesne (2016) described

maximum variation sampling as “cases that cut across some range of variation...searches for common patterns across great variation” (p. 51). Variety provided multiple perspectives, which created a more complete picture of teacher perspectives regarding PD and its connection to the professional growth of teachers.

Participants referred to in this section are the survey respondents, interview participants, and the focus group participants. Similar information was asked of both the interviewees and the focus groups; however, the format of the focus group was a discussion rather than an interview. Participants were identified through the survey. A face-to-face visit with a potential interviewee or focus group participant took place, allowing me to explain the study in more detail including guarantees of confidentiality for their participation in the study. I also stressed involvement in the study was completely voluntary. I did inform the potential participant a report of the study would be provided to WHS and the district; however, the report would not contain any identifying information of the participants. Participants were also informed they could opt out of the study if they chose. Participant consent forms were completed for the interviews and the focus groups (see Appendix B). The first step in determining participants was through a survey.

Surveys

Surveys were the first step of my research, allowing me to gain a more accurate perspective of the teachers’ opinions of PD. McMillan (2016) stated, “Surveys are versatile in being able to address a wide range of problems or questions, especially when the purpose is to describe the attitudes, perspectives, and beliefs of a large population” (p. 226). My survey was distributed to a population of 53 teachers via email. A population

of this size afforded me the opportunity to establish a generalization of PD within WHS. I chose to include all non-probationary classroom teachers in this survey to provide a broad sampling to obtain more accurate survey results (McMillan, 2016).

I utilized a web-based survey, Google Forms, for the survey. Using the on-line survey was less intrusive and the ease of responding to email surveys hopefully increased the number of responses (McMillan, 2016). The surveys were designed with an introduction briefly explaining the study:

- Credibility of the researcher and sponsoring respondent or organization
- Purpose of the study
- Benefits of the study for the researcher, respondent, and profession
- Importance of a high response rate
- Protections related to anonymity and confidentiality
- Time limit for responding
- Request for cooperation and honesty
- Opportunity for respondents to receive results of the study. (McMillan, 2016, p. 227)

Informing takers of the survey created transparency and provided another level of credibility of the study. Looking for a response rate of 80%, I sent email reminders to the staff; a reminder was also sent to the staff as the due date approached to increase the return rate of the surveys. I hoped to have all of the surveys back within a week.

While surveys are typically utilized in quantitative studies, I used the surveys as a “nonexperimental method of collecting information from a designated population” (McMillan, 2016, p. 225). The surveys provided a pool of possible participants for the

study. It also provided data that assisted in refining the questions to be asked of participants in the case studies and focus groups. Surveys also allowed me to narrow the study from generalizations to specifics. By using a Google form for the surveys, I was able to view the responses via Google Sheets (a spreadsheet) which categorized the answers of the survey questions. Data collected were password protected; I was the only person who was able to view the results or saw who had completed the survey.

I conducted a pilot survey with two administrators who were not included in the study. Pilot studies are “not done to get data per se but to learn about the research process, interview questions, observation techniques, and yourself” (Glesne, 2016, p. 61). I also conducted a pilot interview with one teacher who was not included in the study. Using pilot studies allowed me to determine if I asked the correct questions in both the survey and the interviews with regard to the research questions. Semi-structured interviews provided a second tier of data for the study.

Semi-Structured Interviews

I conducted semi-structured individual interviews. Interviews have been deemed “the main road to multiple realities” (Stake, 1995, p. 64). This was true for my research since I did a collective case study to determine more than one teacher’s perspective of PD. Before the first interview of this study, I conducted a pilot interview to assist me in the interview process. Pilot studies allow for practice of the interview process. Pilots might also reveal unforeseen concerns with questions or the length of the interview (Glesne, 2016). The participant chosen for the pilot interview was not a participant in the research study but was a secondary teacher who was currently the learning coach and no longer in the classroom. This teacher was formally a math teacher and had seven years of

teaching experience at various grade levels. She was representative of the participants who were chosen for the study.

Research interviews began after the surveys were analyzed for themes and anomalies. I then chose three participants from the survey based on years of teaching experience and content area taught to provide more than one perspective and to determine commonalities and differences of teachers' perspectives regarding their professional growth through PD. Interviews were conducted in the WHS library conference room, a neutral location, after contract hours. The interviews were audio recorded to confirm accurate reporting of the interview. The semi-structured interviews allowed me to “capture the thoughts and feelings of the participants in their own language...that reflects their perspectives” (McMillan, 2016, p. 344). Since the study was based on the perceptions of the teachers, I was careful not to lead them with the questions, which was accomplished by using open-ended questions and very few “yes or no questions” (see Appendix C for interview questions). I interviewed each participant up to three times, if necessary, to obtain a clear understanding of their personal opinions. After the interviews were completed, I conducted focus groups to provide another layer of data.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are useful when gathering information on a topic that individuals in the groups are familiar with and are willing to discuss. Typically, this is a topic not “highly personal or sensitive” (Merriam, 2009, p. 94). Professional development fits this definition by being common to all teachers and is a topic about which teachers have opinions. Merriam (2009) also advocated for focus groups to be comprised of strangers. However, Creswell (2007) believed “focus groups will likely yield the best information

when interviewees as similar and cooperative with each other” (p. 133). While WHS is not considered a large high school, it is big enough for teachers to not know one another well. This is especially true at the high school level since teachers tend to be unfamiliar to those not in their content area, allowing for varied as well as similar information.

Focus group interviews were utilized to “promote interaction among the individuals that leads to a richer understanding of whatever is being studied” (McMillan, 2016, p. 347). I included focus groups to determine, in part, a deeper understanding of PD from teachers’ perspectives. To limit forming groups of individuals of the same mindset regarding PD, I used questions 5, 9, and 10 from the survey (see Appendix A). Survey question 5 asked teachers about the frequency of PD informing classroom instruction and choices ranging from always to never were provided. Question 9 asked teachers to rank the importance of the delivery method of PD with regard to choosing PD. Question 10 asked teachers to rank the importance of choice when choosing PD. I chose teachers with varying rankings for each question to provide a variety of opinions, which created a more in-depth discussion. The groups were homogenous with respect to years of teaching, which allowed for each group’s collective voice to be well represented and deter a domination of more experienced teachers’ opinions (McMillan, 2016). However, I believe having teachers from different grade levels enhanced the larger picture of the effectiveness of PD so in this sense, the groups were not homogenous but offered unique perspectives.

Each group had three participants for ease of transcribing. Group A consisted of teachers in the beginning years of teaching (four to eight years). Group B consisted of teachers at the later stage of teaching (nine years or more). Having two focus groups

allowed me to obtain a more complete picture of teachers' perceptions of PD and whether perceptions differed with years of teaching experience. Each focus group was to meet up to three times to assure accurate and complete data. However, this was not necessary; each group met once. Each meeting was audio and video recorded and transcribed soon after the meeting (see Appendix D for focus group questions and Appendix E for the focus group consent form). Focus group meetings took place during non-school hours and in a neutral location for the comfort of the participants. My role in the focus group was a facilitator. I asked the questions to initiate the discourse but then let the conversation proceed uninterrupted. The transcripts of the focus groups also provided data to be analyzed.

Data Analysis

Glesne (2016) explained, "Data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so you can figure out what you have learned and make sense of what you have experienced" (p. 183). The data analysis began with the survey results and continued through the transcripts of the interviews and the focus groups. Data analysis provides rigor to a qualitative study. This was accomplished through the use of "multiple levels of abstraction" (Creswell, 2007, p. 46). Levels of abstraction refer to viewing data from particulars to generalizations. Through the surveys, interviews, and focus groups, I was able to identify the particular opinions of teachers regarding PD and make generalizations from all the data gathered. The survey, the interviews, and the focus groups served to provide multiple data to answer the research questions through data analysis.

Merriam (2009) stated, “Data analysis is the process of making sense of the data” (p. 175). Analyzing data is a complex process but it allows the researcher to create “organized descriptive accounts, themes, or categories” (Merriam, 2009, p. 146). Determining the data that most closely related to or answered the research questions and identified themes in that data was where the qualitative data analysis began. Qualitative data analysis is referred to as coding.

Coding is the process of sifting through documents, transcripts, and field notes to identify and annotate pieces of information that might prove helpful (Merriam, 2009). I utilized open coding as a starting point to identify themes that emerged in the data collected since I collected data from various sources (Saldaña, 2016). Data sources for this study were survey results, interviews, and focus groups. Coding began by identifying similar themes in the data, teachers’ opinions regarding PD, professional growth, and classroom practices informed by PD. I then reflected on those themes and the coding process through the writing of “analytic memos” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 118). These reflective memos allowed me to categorize the themes and identify any emerging codes or significant differences in the data thus far. The second step in the coding process was values coding.

Values coding “reflect[s] a participant’s values, attitudes, and beliefs representing his or her perspectives” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 131). Answers to my research questions were found in the participants’ feelings, beliefs, and perspectives regarding facets of PD and the professional growth of teachers so values coding provided the means to further analyze the data. Once I confirmed and recorded the data electronically, I utilized InVivo, a software program, as a tool to further analyze and categorize the data. Each

interview was coded and then compared to the other interviews to identify similarities and differences. Focus group transcripts were coded in the same manner, first coding each focus group separately and then checking for similarities or differences between the focus groups. I was then able to determine generalities of teachers' opinions of PD in connection with their professional growth, motivation to take PD, and how PD was used to inform classroom practices. Coding also provided specific information regarding teacher perspectives of PD offered at WHS—the site of the study.

Data for this study were in the form of surveys results, the transcripts of interviews, and focus groups. Having multiple sources enhanced and corroborated the coding and the findings of the study (Saldaña, 2016, p. 132). Utilizing reflection through analytic memos after the open coding spoke to the credibility of the study.

Credibility

McMillan (2016) declared credibility is “the accuracy of reporting participant perspectives” (p. 356). The identities of the participants were kept confidential throughout and after the completion of the study. In the final exposition of the research, the names of the participants were replaced with pseudonyms carefully chosen as not to inadvertently reveal identities. The variety of data collection, the analysis of that data, and the protection of the data throughout the study created a study that was credible and trustworthy.

Completing the data analysis as data were gathered increased credibility because it was completed in a timely manner. In this way, thoughts and questions were “in the moment” and I did not have to rely on my memory. Working in a timely manner produced a more genuine and trustworthy study. Glesne (2016) referred to

trustworthiness as the “alertness to the quality and rigor of a study” (p. 53). I also utilized other means to maintain the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

Other avenues used to assure credibility were member checking and triangulation. Participants in the study were given printed or electronic versions of the interview with my conclusions so the participants could determine if I accurately portrayed their ideas (McMillan, 2016). Triangulation is “a technique that seeks convergence of findings” (McMillan, 2016, p. 357). I utilized triangulation to check my findings across the data sets I gathered in the study. According to Merriam (2009), “triangulation using multiple sources of data means comparing and cross-checking...interview data collected from different people with different perspectives or from follow-up interviews with the same people” (p. 2216). I utilized surveys, interviews, and focus groups to gather data, each of which provided a variety of perspectives. By employing member checking and follow up if necessary, I was able to compile credible information.

I am a teacher-librarian and information literacy coach in the school district and at WHS where I conducted the study. Glesne (2016) referred to this as “backyard research” (p. 48). When researchers have previous experience with the participants or the setting of a study, effective data collection could be hindered. A research journal was utilized for self-reflection with the purpose of identifying any subjectivity I might have had, which in turn allowed me to increase my objectivity. I was an English teacher for 18 years before moving into my current role of teacher-librarian and learning coach. Glesne explained because of this, “those around you may experience confusion over which role you are or should be playing at a particular moment” (p. 48). While this might be true, the number of staff members has grown considerably since I started teaching there and many of the

teachers who were my mentors or close friends have retired. In my new role of learning coach, I have endeavored to create a new persona of coach rather than friend, especially with the new teachers. In my role of teacher-librarian, I have learned to be very objective with everyone I work with. I feel my experience in the classroom assisted with the disseminating of the data I collected.

However, my position as a staff member of WHS might appear a concern; therefore, I needed to address any subjectivity in order to add credibility to the study. Merriam (2009) related the researcher's position is also referred to as reflexivity and further defined reflexivity as "the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher" (p. 219). One way to speak to reflexivity was to use self-reflection. Self-reflection afforded me the opportunity to directly address my own perspectives of PD (traditional and personalized) and teacher professional growth. This was necessary because as McMillan (2016) asserted, researchers "know that their subjectivity may influence results" (p. 358). Self-reflection undertaken in a research journal provided me with a richer learning experience. It also aided me in reflecting on my stance as a researcher.

Researcher Stance

I have been in education for 22 years; all 22 years have been at WHS. Nineteen of those years was spent as an English teacher. During those 19 years, I taught all grade levels and nearly all classes offered by our English department as well as designing and teaching three new class offerings. Throughout the years, I took part in many PD opportunities. Those opportunities included both traditional and personalized PD. I was a teacher who continued my professional learning through any means available and often during part of the summer break. I also pursued and obtained a master's degree in School

Library Education. After a few years, I began to wonder why all teachers did not avail themselves of opportunities to continue their own learning.

In my new role as teacher-librarian and learning coach, I was able to observe many teachers in their classrooms, team-teach, collaborate, and consult with teachers. It also gave me a unique perspective as an observer and not a practicing classroom teacher. I also had opportunities to have conversations about PD with teachers, coaches, and administrators. Since PD is the means through which teachers can improve their practice, thereby enhancing the learning of their students; my pondering of the connection among teachers, PD, and their professional growth continued.

Limitations

This small study took place at one mid-size high school in Colorado. It included three interviews and two focus groups. Fifty-three surveys were distributed that provided a foundation for the interviews and focus groups. This study took place in the spring semester of 2019, which could have affected teacher viewpoints compared to fall semester. Sometimes teachers' attitudes toward PD in the spring are not consistent with their attitudes in the fall when new-year optimism generally exists.

However, the data collected in this study offered a starting point for other studies or provided a new perspective. Teaching shares the common features of teachers, students, PD, and professional growth. The generalizations identified through this study were representative of other high schools and high school teachers.

Conclusion

This was a qualitative study that explored the connection between teacher professional growth, motivation for PD, and how PD was transferred to classroom

practices based on the self-reporting of secondary teachers. There was a gap in research undertaken at the secondary level, primarily high schools. This study assisted in narrowing that gap and the results of the study were provided in report format to the site of the research. Interviews and focus groups were the primary sources of data; however, a survey was the starting point of the study. The survey provided a foundation for the interviews as well as identified participants for the study. Professional development has been the vehicle of choice for professional growth regardless of teaching levels so the results of this study offered generalizations that would be applicable to teaching in general and to high school teaching specifically.

Overview of Chapter

This chapter explained how this qualitative study was conducted. Information provided described each step in the process of this research. A description of the case study was provided including the location of the study and the selection process for participants. Data collection and analysis were explained including questions asked and the codes used in the analysis. Andragogy was defined and utilized as a lens for the data gathered in the case study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the process undertaken to answer this study's research questions:

- Q1 What motivates secondary teachers to continue their professional growth?
- Q2 What type of PD inspires teachers to continue learning?
- Q3 How does PD inform secondary teachers' instruction?

Survey questions, interview questions, and focus group questions were created to answer these research questions. This study focused on the professional growth of teachers through professional development.

Survey

A survey (see Appendix A) created in Google Forms was designed and sent during March and April of 2019 to 53 non-probationary teachers at Windsor High School (WHS) to provide an overview of teachers' experiences and opinions of PD with its connection to their professional growth and with the purpose of obtaining volunteers for the interviews and the focus groups. Results were gathered electronically and compiled automatically into a spreadsheet. The results were analyzed quantitatively through graphs and qualitatively through actual comments. The survey elicited volunteers to be interviewed and members of the focus groups. Thirty-eight teachers completed the survey, creating a 72% response rate. The survey results revealed teachers who

participated in the survey had between 4 and 24 years teaching at WHS and between 4 and 26 years of teaching overall. All content areas were represented through the survey participants.

The norm was for high school teachers to teach more than one grade level; WHS was no exception and this was reflected in the survey data. Of the 38 teachers who participated in the survey, 31 teachers currently taught ninth grade (81.6%), 33 teachers currently taught 10th grade (86.8%), 32 teachers currently taught 11th grade (84.2%), and 27 teachers currently taught 12th grade (71.1%). The survey results indicated the majority of teachers believed the PD at WHS scored a 3 (somewhat effective) on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being the lowest (not at all effective) and 5 being the highest (very effective). Teachers ranked the frequency of PD informing their classroom instruction at 57.9% occasionally, 28.9% rarely, and 13.2% frequently. All 38 (100%) of teachers found personalized PD (PPD) to be more effective compared to 2.6% who found traditional PD to be more effective. The discrepancy in this data was due to one teacher choosing both traditional and PPD when asked to choose the more effective PD. Teachers identified a variety of factors that motivated them to take PD: personal learning (68.4%), content-related PD (63.2%), salary advancement (63.2%), professional goals (57.9%), re-licensure requirements (55.3%), required PD (44.7%), job advancement (21.1%), and new certification (5.3%). When asked to rank the importance of the delivery method of PD, teachers chose 4 (important) based on a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). When teachers were asked to identify the ways in which they chose PD, they identified topic (92.1%), recommended by a colleague (57.9%), delivery method (52.6%), ease of scheduling (52.6%), and other (7.9%). In a ranking of 1 (never

important) to 5 (extremely important), the importance of choice was ranked 5 with 65.8%. Teachers identified the following types of PD they had taken in the past two years: resulting in conferences (78.9%), book studies and individual learning (68.4%), on-line course (65%), face-to-face course (57.9%), seminar (39.5%), advanced degree program (31.6%), and other (5.3%). Fifty percent of the teachers responding to the survey were willing to be interviewed or part of a focus group.

Volunteers for the interviews were chosen based on content area taught in order to have a varied representation and answers given to the survey questions. Content areas represented in the survey were science, math, social studies, special education, English, world languages, visual art, performing art, family and consumer studies, business, agriculture education, and industrial technology. Filters were applied to those who volunteered; questions 6-8 on the survey provided those filters with participants chosen based on a disparity of answers to form heterogenous groups. The filters focused on which type of PD was preferred, teacher motivation for taking PD, how they determined which PD to take, content areas, and grade levels they were teaching. Using the described filters, the survey provided teachers who were representative of the staff at WHS and high school teachers at large to participate in the interviews and focus groups.

Interviews

Of the teachers who volunteered, three teachers were chosen to be interviewed. Those interviewed were Ms. Anderson, Ms. Winter, both electives teachers, and Mr. Reid, a core content area teacher. Survey questions 6-8 were applied to narrow the interview pool and to provide variety and breadth of answers in the interviews. Research question number 2 asked about the type of PD teachers were inspired by and survey

questions 6 through 8 focused on the type of PD they preferred, how they chose PD to take, and the importance of the delivery method of PD. Therefore, those survey questions were used as a filter since they were related to the research questions. Survey question 6 asked teachers whether they found traditional PD or personalized PD to be more effective. All teachers chosen for the interview selected personalized as did the over-whelming majority of WHS teachers who completed the survey. Survey question 7, the next filter question, inquired about teacher motivation regarding PD. While Ms. Winter, Ms. Anderson, and Mr. Reid all cited personal learning and content-related PD as motivating, their other motivating factors differed. Ms. Anderson and Ms. Winter also chose salary advancement and required PD as motivating. Mr. Reid was the only one who chose professional goals as being motivating. Survey question 8 asked teachers how they chose PD. While all three teachers chose topic, only Mr. Reid selected topic and nothing else when choosing PD. Ms. Anderson and Ms. Winter also considered ease of scheduling when choosing PD. While those chosen for interviews had identical or similar opinions, they also had held opinions that were different enough to provide a broad picture of PD in general.

Interviews for the study were conducted at WHS in a library conference room after school hours and lasted from 40 to 60 minutes with 50 minutes being the average length of an interview. Two interviews were conducted in May 2019 and one interview was conducted in June 2019. The three teachers interviewed had been teaching at WHS for 6 to 18 years with an average of 14 years. Survey questions were utilized as filters to provide a variety of PD experiences based on content areas taught and years of experience in those content areas.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups comprised of teachers at WHS were held to provide another layer of information regarding PD and teachers' growth. Each focus group met once in May 2019 for 60 minutes in a library conference room at WHS. Members of the focus groups volunteered via the survey and specific survey questions provided filters for choosing groups that would be representative of WHS and high school teachers in general. However, the filters for the focus groups focused on a different research question than the interviews. Question 5 of the survey specifically asked teachers about their experience having PD inform their classroom instruction, which was research question number three. The other filters utilized were teachers' years of experience, the grade level taught by the teacher, and survey questions 5, 9, and 10.

Focus group A was comprised of core content teachers of social studies and English (Ms. Mason, Ms. Cross, and Mr. Wilson who taught grade levels 9, 10, and 11, respectively) who had been teaching for four to nine years. While years of teaching experience was the major factor in choosing each focus group member, three survey questions were also utilized. Survey question 5 asked teachers to choose the frequency of PD informing classroom instruction (research question three). All three teachers chosen for focus group A selected occasionally, which was also chosen by 57.9% of those teachers completing the survey. Teachers choosing frequently or rarely either did not volunteer for a focus group or did not meet the years of teaching experience requirement for this group. Survey question nine 9 as to the importance of delivery method of PD. Ms. Mason and Ms. Cross both indicated a ranking of 5 (very important) and Mr. Wilson chose 4 (important). The rankings of those teachers taking the survey were 21.1% at 5

(very important) and 47.4% at 4 (important) so focus group A was representative of those results. Survey question 10 asked teachers to rank the importance of choice in PD. Ms. Mason, Ms. Cross, and Mr. Wilson all chose a ranking of 5 (extremely important). Once again, they represented those taking the survey whose results were 65.8% at 5 (extremely important). Although the survey questions provided filters for focus group A, the major filter was years of teaching experience as it was for focus group B.

Focus group B was comprised of one social studies teacher and two career and technology education teachers (Mr. Moore, Ms. Woods, and Ms. Andrews who taught grades 10, 11, and 12); those teachers had 10 to 23 years of teaching experience. Other than years of experience, certain survey questions were utilized as filters to narrow the size of the focus group. Question 5 asked teachers how often PD informed their classroom instruction. Mr. Moore and Ms. Andrews chose occasionally while Ms. Woods chose rarely. Ms. Woods' response reflected 28.9% of those teachers completing the survey. Survey question 9 asked teachers to rank the importance of delivery method of PD. Mr. Moore and Ms. Andrews chose 5 (extremely important) and Ms. Woods chose 2 (rarely important). Mr. Moore and Ms. Andrews represented 21.1% of the teachers completing the survey and Ms. Woods represented 5.3% of the those taking the survey. In choosing these three teachers for focus group B, I was able to get a cross-section of opinions reflecting the WHS teachers who completed the survey.

The filters utilized provided a variety of opinions and experiences that allowed for answers rich in their thoughtfulness; they represented specifics and generalities of the connection between PD and teachers' professional growth. Pseudonyms were used to represent those teachers who were interviewed and those who were members of the focus

group to honor their confidentiality. All teachers in the interviews and focus groups had taught in another district prior to teaching at WHS. Through the survey, interviews, and focus groups, information was obtained that assisted in determining teachers' views on their professional growth through professional development.

Research Questions

Professional development is an integral component of professional learning in education and a component with many layers. To determine the importance of PD to the professional growth of secondary teachers, research questions that focused on teacher motivation for their professional growth and the types of PD preferred were created for the study. Professional development is the vehicle for growth in the classroom; as such, another part of the study determined how PD supported change in teachers' instruction. Three research questions were asked to determine the role of PD in teachers' professional growth.

Research Question One

Q1 What motivates secondary teachers to continue their professional growth?

Personal learning. Non-probationary teachers at WHS were most motivated to continue their professional growth through the following as established on the survey: personal learning, content related pd, and salary advancement. The lowest scoring motivations for PD were the following: new certification, job advancement, and required PD. Their answers are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Secondary Teachers' Motivation for Professional Growth

Motivation	%
Personal Learning	68.4
Content Related Professional Development	63.2
Salary Advancement	63.2
Professional Goals	57.9
Re-licensure Requirement	55.3
Required	44.7
Job Advancement	21.1
New Certification	5.3

According to the survey, personal learning was the biggest motivator for teachers to continue their professional learning. Dewey (1916) believed one never stops learning and living is educative; the survey results supported this thought. The two next most motivating reasons to take PD were tied: content-related PD and salary advancement. Research undertaken by Avidov-Ungar (2016) advocated for PD plans that allowed for learning progress to move teachers vertically on salary scales and PD plans that allowed teachers to dive deeply into their content areas supported the findings of this study. Teachers were motivated to learn new content or content that might be related to their current classroom teaching to create a broader educational experience for their students. Salary advancement was tied with content-related PD motivation in the top three reasons for teacher motivation. Salary advancement spoke for itself; everyone wants to be able to provide well for themselves and/or their families. However, salary advancement not

being identified as the primary motivating factor spoke to the fact that these teachers were largely more intrinsically motivated rather than extrinsically (monetarily) motivated with regard to PD.

Closely connected to personal learning as a motivation for professional growth was teachers being able to choose the PD they took. Being offered choice allowed teachers to personalize their learning and to focus on their professional learning.

Choice of professional development. Interestingly, the interviewees identified different reasons for motivation than did the survey. Personal learning was identified on the survey as the most motivating reason for taking PD. The most often mentioned reason in the interviews was choice; teachers were motivated the most when given the opportunity to choose the type of PD they might take, particularly when discussing PD provided by buildings or districts. On a separate question on the survey regarding the importance of choice in PD, 65% of participants ranked choice at 5 on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest and 5 the highest).

Ms. Winter supported the importance of choice in PD: “I think it's really important because I think, they, people need to trust us with our professional judgment.” Teachers not being trusted to use professional judgment or take relevant PD by the administration or the district leaders was a recurring theme when discussing teachers’ motivation for professional growth. Ms. Anderson further supported the importance of choice: “I think we need to have some freedom in doing things that make us feel like better teachers.” While this quote spoke to freedom of choice when choosing PD, the inferred thought was teachers knew what they needed for PD and what would make them better teachers. Smith (2017) found teachers had a greater feeling of empowerment and

accomplishment when they were allowed to choose the PD and were allowed responsibility for their professional learning, which supported the thoughts expressed by the teachers who were interviewed.

Teachers appreciated being able to choose the content and the delivery method of PD they took. When choosing their professional learning area, they were better able to connect their learning to their classrooms; the PD was relevant to their content or pedagogical style. These attributes supported Knowles et al.'s (1973/1991) premise that when PD was connected to the problem of practice, adult learners tended to be more motivated because there was connection to their need. Choice and voice in PD provided teachers the opportunity to continue their professional learning in areas of their interest or areas they identified as needed. In his interview, Mr. Reid stated, "It should entirely be my choice, and they should be listening to the teachers as to what they offer." This sentiment was echoed by others when PD was chosen by districts or building administration, especially when the same PD was offered to all teachers at the same time regardless of content or grade level taught. Overall, whether the teacher was interviewed or a member of a focus group, being given a choice in the PD was cited as the most motivating factor for taking PD.

Both focus groups A and B agreed with those interviewed and identified choice as the most motivating factor rather than personal learning. Ms. Mason had signed up for a particular PD offered by the school district because "It's something I'm passionate about," which spoke directly to the opportunity to choose. Through self-motivation, this teacher was able to focus on PD she was utilizing in her classroom and with staff members as well. Mr. Wilson, who had previously worked in a different school district,

commented, “My perspective coming here is I feel there has been a lot more choice [of PD] being here,” which was regarded as a positive change for this teacher. He was collaborating with teachers outside his department who had similar interests in activities for student engagement.

Focus group B meshed choice with personal learning rather than separating those motivating factors; however, Mr. Moore related, “But I think lately we've had the opportunity to choose, especially with this personalized PD stuff to find things that fit us and benefit us as an individual.” He echoed the issue of other electives teachers with his statement; the more traditional one-size-fits-all PD could be difficult to apply to all classrooms. Ms. Woods agreed and appreciated the choice: “But when I found things on my own that I really liked, that has motivated me and reinvigorated me in ways that things that haven't been building wide or district wide PD.” Evident in the discussion of focus group B was choice and personal learning were frequently connected as motivating factors for teachers when selecting PD opportunities for their professional growth and were supported by the research of Appova and Arbaugh (2018) whose study determined choice in PD provided constructive learning opportunities for teachers through personalization of their learning. Another motivator identified by teachers was the need for PD as a factor for continuing their professional growth.

Need for professional development. The teachers in the interviews and the focus groups discussed need in the sense that they knew what they needed to grow as teachers. “I just kind of base it on what I need at the time” (Ms. Winter). She explained she reflected on the year or the semester and determined which lessons or activities she did not feel went as well as she had expected and why this might have been the case.

This identified her need as she decided which PD to focus on for the summer and the upcoming school year stating, “I need something new that the kids don't know, to keep them on their toes” (Ms. Winter). She was not alone when reflecting on the need to determine future PD. The reflection process, when applied as a component of PD, allowed for learning that elicited change and growth for teachers (Mezirow, 1991a).

Mr. Reid also reflected on the year to determine his area of need for PD: “What weaknesses do I have there. What gaps do I need to fill?” He typically focused on content due in part to the subjects he taught. For himself, Mr. Reid believed self-motivation and need were closely related, which exemplified a self-motivated learner. Knowles et al. (1973/1998) believed intrinsic self-motivation to be instrumental in learning but it does not occur with PD that is devoid of teacher choice and controlled by school districts or administration. Mr. Reid also advocated for PD that was independent of the school district or at the building level, believing he and his evaluator were the only ones who knew what he might need to grow as a teacher. Salary advancement as a motivating factor was cited on the survey results but was only briefly discussed in the interviews and the focus groups.

Salary advancement with professional development. Interestingly, salary advancement was infrequently mentioned in the interviews as a primary motivating factor even though it was the second motivator listed on the survey. However, the topic of salary advancement was addressed more directly during the focus groups. A teacher in focus group A, Ms. Cross stated, “I mean in all honesty moving in the pay scale is part of what keeps me going towards particular programs as well.” Ms. Woods (focus group B) echoed this thought: “Sometimes I think the motivation is, I need two more credits to

move. I think for me monetary is huge,” but is not always the only motivating factor. Teachers might not identify salary advancement as the main motivating factor when considering PD but it certainly could be a component of that decision. Often salary advancement needs to be weighed against the cost of the PD.

Frequently, teachers choose not to attend a PD if the district does not pay for it due to the high cost. Ms. Woods liked to attend a yearly content-related conference but due to the cost, “if the district doesn't pay for you to go to the conference I usually don't go.” Ms. Anderson echoed the concern for the cost of attending PD: “I don't have you know oodles of money to spend on professional development, so I just try to figure out like you know dollar to experience to time.” Teachers discussed meaningful PD tended to be costly, especially for those with families or a single income. It was a difficult situation for many teachers; PD was needed to obtain licensure renewal and for salary advancement but PD was not always affordable to all teachers. Ms. Anderson explained, “So last year I was very concerned with getting 10 credits by the end of the year, and so I was looking for the most cost-effective way to do that.” While salary advancement was a motivator, it was often difficult for teachers to pay for PD that would advance their salary.

Time was a commodity there never seemed to be enough of in the world of education and was one that teachers identified as a motivating factor in their professional growth through PD.

Time. Any discussion of PD and education in general would be incomplete without the issue of time. There never seems to be enough time nor ways to obtain more time whether that refers to the time to take PD, to implement PD, or to reflect on PD.

Teachers interviewed in this study were no exception. Ms. Cross stated, “No we don't have the time; I feel like it's hard for us to find time because those of us who are doing that have a lot going on.” She specifically addressed the time to reflect on PD she had taken as well as the lack of time to plan the implementation of PD. A member of focus group B had much the same thought; Ms. Andrews surmised, “We all need more time, and I don't know how to get more time.” Time was certainly a concern and a limited commodity with regard to the many facets of PD.

Ms. Anderson reiterated, “I think my least favorite experiences are when it's a short time with too much information,” which spoke directly to the reflective piece and the implementation piece of PD. It also spoke to the effectiveness of PD; too little time often led to lack of usefulness or implementation of the PD. In his interview, Mr. Reid voiced his thought with a concise “Just get out of my way and give me time.” Given these thoughts, time needs to be a consideration of cost when determining PD to promote professional growth. Time was an issue that involved all the motivating factors: time to take the PD, time to implement the PD, and time to reflect on the PD. Professional development that was content related was often more well received than PD that was more general—the one-size-fits-all PD that happens frequently in school districts everywhere. Content-related PD was also seen as a motivator for teachers when choosing which PD to take.

Content-related professional development. Content-related PD was also identified as a motivating factor in the survey but was not directly discussed in the interviews or the focus groups. The importance of content-related PD was sometimes discussed in connection to years of experience. Focus group B member Ms. Andrews

stated, “They're starting to target not just the young teachers, but now there's some specific PD for teachers who are at 10-15 years that's where they've seen a big drop in teachers around that 12-15-year mark. So, we're starting to get some more professional development in those areas” when speaking of a content-related conference she attends as often as possible. Professional development changed for teachers as they taught longer but as Ms. Andrews noted, PD did not always meet the needs of the veteran teacher.

Focus group A member Ms. Mason spoke about her husband, an electives teacher in another district: “He being a specials teacher like I would hear a lot of the frustration because a lot of the PD did not apply.” Focus Group B member Mr. Woods concurred: “It wasn't really targeted towards all populations like it was PD that might have been great for a district wide initiative and it might have been great for elementary, and so they came to us [high school] and it seemed like it didn't apply to us.” Both thoughts reflected that PD intended for professional growth was better received when it was content specific rather than generic PD that can be difficult for all content areas to connect with.

When teachers were provided options for PD, they were able to choose the PD they needed, was connected to their content area, fulfilled credit requirements, or was in the area of their personal learning. Choosing PD then was related to the motivation teachers had to continue their professional development.

How professional development is chosen. To assist in determining that connection, a question in the survey asked teachers how they chose which PD to take. The results are found in Table 2.

Table 2

Choosing Professional Development

Professional Development Chosen	%
Topic	92.1
Recommended by a colleague	57.9
Delivery method	52.6
Ease of scheduling	52.6
Other	7.9

Topic was overwhelmingly the most frequent reason identified for choosing PD and was closely related to personal learning and content-related PD motivation for professional growth. Personal learning and content-related PD were the most motivating factors identified by teachers. This was supported by the survey question that asked teachers how they chose which PD to take. Topic was cited by 92.1% from teachers taking this survey and colleague recommendation was second with 57.6%. Delivery method ranked third of the top three reasons in the survey at 52.6%. Determining how teachers chose the PD they took connected primarily to the motivation of choice and personal learning; both were manifested through choosing PD. Related to the delivery method of PD was collaboration, a thought that was voiced in the interviews and the focus groups. Professional development offering opportunities for teachers to collaborate was also identified as important when choosing which PD to take.

Collaboration. Collaboration was discussed frequently in the focus groups as a motivating factor for choosing PD, whether it was collaboration with colleagues or from teachers outside of the school. In focus group B, Ms. Woods stated, “I also took PD with

friends and we went together and that helped too because then we could collaborate and take what we learned and build off of it.” Socialization is a component of collaboration and was discussed as such. On-line classes, while offering collaboration, did not provide the same socialization as face-to-face classes. Mr. Moore explained, “Having the online things that they're definitely not as collaborative. I don't get as much from them probably as I do when I'm in this conversation with other people in person.” Teachers frequently preferred PD that allowed for collaboration, whether that collaboration came from teachers outside of their district or the collaboration was with teachers from other disciplines within their own building. Ms. Woods described the social aspect she looked forward to on PD days as “looking outside yourself to collaborating with colleagues.” Teachers liked to hear what others were doing, wondering what they could take back to their classrooms, and hearing ideas and activities that had worked for others.

Working with other colleagues was discussed in focus group A as well. Ms. Mason stated she would like departments to have the opportunity work together: “Like maybe we partner up in English and history, get together, and we hear from a few people in their PD and what they're doing. And that builds our culture, and we have other resources [teachers] to talk to.” She brought forward the idea of teachers learning from their peers, of building a collaborative culture, and through the PD, teachers are taking ownership of their professional learning. Learning from peers helps to establish a culture of learning for students as well as teachers.

In her interview, Ms. Anderson stated, “Ideally I love in person stuff because I'm much more socially motivated by people like a lot. So, I've realized that it's not always what I'm learning but who I'm learning it with. And so that's good.” She directly

identified the importance collaboration had on her professional growth through her PD choices. Ms. Anderson's thoughts were echoed by Ms. Winter in her interview. She attended the same content related conference each year because "I feel like that is a really effective way for me to not be an island and not feel like an island. It's a really great weekend to see how others do things." She also liked the conversations with others that occurred during the conference.

To determine the motivating factors of teachers to continue their professional growth through PD, surveys, interviews, and focus groups were utilized. While the results were not identical across the tools utilized to identify teacher motivation, many similarities and connections were uncovered. The survey ranked personal learning, content-related PD, and salary advancement as the top three motivators. The interviews and focus groups had differing motivators; choice, need, and collaboration were the top three identified and discussed. Choice and personal learning, the top two motivators, were closely related as personal learning happened through choice, whether that choice was PD offered through a school district or PD chosen by a teacher and not connected to their school district. Need could be monetary or determined from teachers reflecting on their practice and could influence how teachers determined which PD to take. While there are many types of motivation for teachers to continue their professional growth, choice in personal learning is the foundation of those motivators. Having the choice to create their own professional learning paths is greatly important to teachers.

Research Question Two

Q2 What type of PD inspires teachers to continue learning?

Teachers feel inspired by effective PD. The survey asked teachers to rank the effectiveness by comparing traditional PD (no choice) and personalized (teacher choice) PPD. Teachers overwhelmingly (98%) chose PPD (teacher choice) and were opposed (2%) to traditional (no choice) PD. These results were reflective of findings in a study completed by Kennedy (2016); “Attendance is mandatory, but learning is not” (p. 973) when discussing the effectiveness of traditional PD. One individual who was surveyed identified traditional PD as more effective than personalized PD. Not surprisingly, the idea of PPD being more effective was expressed in the interviews and the focus groups.

Effective professional development. In her interview, Ms. Winter stated, “PDs here have always been geared towards something the district wants, but it doesn't have anything to do with what I do.” Her observation directly supported the viewpoints of the teachers who were surveyed. The importance of choice was also reflected in her statement. When teachers were given the ability to choose the PD, they often chose based on need, creating effective PD. Of interest was teachers who placed personal learning as their main motivating factor when continuing their professional growth, which spoke to the importance of PPD to facilitate that learning.

Another teacher addressed the idea of effective PD by connecting choice and interest in the PD itself. Mr. Reid stated, “I had a lot of buy in to do it, so I would argue that was probably one of my most effective.” Mr. Reid’s observation reflected the findings of Wenzlaff and Wiesman (2004); their research determined effective PD should be connected to teachers’ needs and include authenticity. Ms. Cross echoed the idea that

teachers needed to be connected to the PD for the PD to be effective. She stated, “Like true professional development I haven’t felt like anything I’ve done in a huge group has been as pertinent as things that I have pursued on my own.” Once again, the theme of choice was seemingly an important component of effective PD as well as a top motivating factor for choosing PD.

When discussing effective PD, whether traditional or personalized, Mr. Wilson stated, “Personalized, as it really made me feel like I’m doing a better job at my job, and I feel like I could apply things right away.” Being able to apply the new learning sooner rather than later was echoed by others as an important aspect of effective PD. However, two of those interviewed enjoyed PD in the summer so they would have enough time to plan the implementation of the PD. Teachers again brought up the reflective piece of PD; some needed that time to not only reflect on what they needed from PD but also to reflect on how the PD would best be utilized for their students’ learning.

Included in the survey was a question asking teachers to identify the types of PD they had taken over the past two years. The type of PD teachers chose to take was reflective of the inspiration and ultimately the effectiveness they found in the PD taken. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Professional Development Opportunities

Types of PD Taken	%
Conferences	78.0
Book Study	68.4
Individual Learning	68.4
On-line Course	65.8
Face-to-face Course	57.9
Seminar	39.5
Advance Degree Program	31.6
Cohort Learning	21.1
Other	5.3

Many types of PD were available to teachers. By identifying the various types of PD teachers chose, a more complete picture of effective PD took shape. Three of the teachers in the focus groups expressed a level of confidence in the effectiveness of conferences they attended as personalized PD. Ms. Mason explained why she enjoyed conference style learning: “We get closed in to our world, and then we're not aware of what else is out there.” Attending conferences was one way to collaborate with peers from other districts and to hear and see what others were doing in their classrooms. She believed conferences were a chance for teachers to be inspired by new ideas and new people. Ms. Andrews echoed those thoughts; she attended the same content-related conference each year. Ms. Andrews especially appreciated a particular conference as a

new teacher: “I feel like it was all geared toward me as a young teacher.” She was also happy that the conference had grown in options: “We've kind of branched out a little bit, and they offer us a lot of other opportunities.” She was able to apply what she had learned to her classroom and teaching so she ranked conferences as her top choice for PD. Yet another teacher attended the same conference not only as an opportunity for her professional learning but because she felt energized and ready to tackle the remaining school year after attending. She also took new ideas for classroom activities back to her students and classroom.

Book studies were popular for PD with teachers in this study and listed second for the type of PD taken in the past two years. As with most PD, varying reasons were offered by teachers for choosing book studies. Ms. Anderson needed to complete 10 credits by the end of the school year and chose to do book studies due to the flexibility. She stated, “So I did some book studies that I might not have ever read” and admitted some were thought-provoking and enjoyable and yet others were less so. Ms. Woods also chose to participate in book studies but not with much fulfillment because they were on-line instead of face-to-face:

I've done a lot of studies through the district where I got excited either about the topic or about the dialogue because you have to blog everything you know and share and comment. And I think there were some really valuable conversations that were happening, and I kept waiting foolishly for intervention from the district.

She concluded that support for the conversation was missing and was what she had expected; while she enjoyed the books and the readings, she felt they were not used to their full potential.

Rounding out the top three types of PD taken was individual learning. Individual learning referred to deciding, finding, and taking PD independent of required PD; often it was not PD typically offered through the district. While individual learning offered many different avenues for learning, the overall take-away was teacher choice. Teachers who chose the content of the PD and the mode of delivery supported the personal learning as the most motivating factor for teachers to continue their professional growth. Topic was cited as the most frequent reason for taking PD and individual learning supported this finding as well.

Ms. Mason discussed the idea of choice with regard to when she chose to take PD: “I don't do much PD during the year and can't handle anymore. I'm trying to be mom, wife, teacher. So, I can't.” She tended to choose PD she could work into her schedule and chose more PD during the summer months. Ms. Andrews tried to choose PD that was “inspirational, and then I go wow that's really cool, and it just kind of reignites you. So, I think we all have to grow professionally in order to just stay around and teaching.” She also addressed the need of teachers to continue their professional growth in order to stay in teaching and to maintain effective teaching practices, which in turn benefited students.

Ineffective professional development. While discussing inspiring or effective PD, the conversation also included teachers' thoughts or descriptions of ineffective PD. Focus groups and interviews had teachers who taught electives and those who taught core

content areas. Interestingly, it was the electives that brought up the idea that traditional PD often did not relate to them or they found it difficult to make the connection on their own. Thus, the discussion naturally turned to ineffective PD. Ms. Mason was the first to acknowledge the disparity of PD: “I have very vivid memories of the PD that would not apply to all teachers.” She explained her conclusion: “I felt like that was always a struggle, and I think my husband being a specials teacher like I would hear a lot of the frustration because a lot of the PD did not apply, and there was not a lot of choice and it was also a much smaller school district.” While her example was from outside the district of the study, her thoughts were valid and echoed by another teacher. Ms. Cross confirmed this: “I agree with you that when I was at the elementary level and I was not a grade level teacher but an interventionist the professional development very seldomly applied directly to me because it just wasn't what we were in the process of doing.” Clearly, the more traditional PD did not connect with all teachers and did not then contribute to their professional growth.

This lack of pertinent PD did not affect only electives teachers but often school counselors, librarians, interventionists, instructional coaches, special education teachers, and even core content teachers who taught an elective class within their content area. Another teacher touched on this very thought: “I was in a core content area that for a number of years. I taught an elective within the content area. Again, some of this stuff just didn't apply.” To be effective, PD must relate to the teacher taking the PD.

Research question two asked teachers to determine the type of PD they found to be inspiring. Replies were as varied as the various motivating factors for teachers to continue their professional growth. Actually, two were quite similar and relatable.

Teacher choice was both motivating and inspiring for teachers. As for effective PD, teachers again determined PD that was connected to their personal learning goals, to their needs, and to their personal learning styles was the most effective.

Research Question Three

Q3 How does PD inform secondary teachers' instruction?

The ultimate goal of any PD is the professional growth of teachers, leading to increased student learning. Teachers take a variety of PD offerings each year with the hope of improving their classroom instruction. Does PD actually find its way into the classroom or does it stay in notes taken, never to be seen again? With this thought in mind, teachers were asked to explain how their PD was reflected in their classroom. One of the survey questions specifically and pointedly asked this question. Teachers responded overwhelmingly that PD occasionally informed their classroom instruction or practice. The results are provided in Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency of Professional Development Informing Instruction

Frequency	%
Occasionally	57.9
Rarely	28.9
Frequently	12.2
Never	0

The results showed over 57% of the time teachers utilized PD learning in their classrooms; however, this also meant that 43% of the time learning did not carry over

into the classroom. These findings were supported by Kennedy (2016): “Programs that focused exclusively on content knowledge tended to have less effect on student learning” (p. 971). Windsor High School teachers also questioned the carry-over of PD to the classroom. When asked about the frequency of PD informing classroom practice, Ms. Mason stated, “I don't know. Sometimes we're spending money and time on PD, and then are we using it?” This study suggested the answer was not very often. Mr. Wilson related his thoughts on using PD in the classroom:

I sometimes go back to what's comfortable too. I feel like when I'm trying new things, I'm hyper aware of any time my kids don't like it. I'm less confident. I need to just keep doing it, and then I want to go back to the thing that might not be as good, but that I know it'll sort of work. So, it's just I'm not always brave enough to use the PD as much as I probably should.

Often support of teachers to risk new practices was lacking after the PD had taken place.

Ms. Mason also addressed the lack of support after PD with this thought: “I think that's one of the biggest challenges with PD- is we have these new learnings. And then how to incorporate it.” Her statement brought forth the idea that resonated with other teachers—the difficulty of implementing new learnings, activities, and practices without support or coaching as to the *how* of implementing the new learning. Another point of view questioned the connectedness of the PD to the teacher or the teacher’s need and what level of choice teachers had in taking the PD.

Ms. Woods spoke to the importance of choice in PD, which was to bring new learning into the classroom: “It's because I chose that and wanted to do it, not because somebody said do this and use it in your classroom. I think that's really hard.” In other

words, when she was able to choose the PD, she was much more likely to incorporate that new learning into her instruction. “I guess because I've been interested in it, and I've sorted out, and then I've applied it,” professed Ms. Woods who tried to express the importance of teachers being able to choose the PD they needed, was of interest to them, or would be beneficial in their classroom.

Another point of view of PD informing classroom practice came from Mr. Moore who spoke about how learning to take better care of himself connected directly to his classroom:

I even went to one PD because I was getting burned out from teaching like all a lot of us do. And so, I was always putting like all the students first. And it was causing a lot of stress in my life. And so finally I went to a PD that was you got to take care of yourself first before you take care of students, right. So, once I did that, it's been awesome for me.

Typically, PD is aimed at classroom pedagogy, best practice, or other topics related directly to the students. The PD Mr. Moore described and the effect it had on him and his classroom was an important one—the well-being of the teacher. While this particular PD was not in the traditional sense, it had a large and positive impact on Mr. Moore's teaching and his students.

Ms. Winter spoke of a yearly conference she attended, primarily to meet with other like-content teachers to “get re-charged” from the collaboration time at the conference. She believed she typically returned to school and her students better for the experience. Ms. Winter was also able to bring new ideas to the classroom to “freshen” the activities and project-based learning assignments for her students. She believed the

new energy she felt after the conference had a positive impact on her classes. Her experiences with this conference echoed Mr. Moore's experience of learning to take care of himself first. Ms. Winter was re-charged, returning from the conference not only with new ideas but a new energy level that had a positive effect on her students.

Mr. Reed participated in a cohort specific to his content area that lasted an entire year and through that participation, he was able to make positive changes to his classroom. He spoke about not just learning new content but how to increase student interest in the content by approaching the content in a new way. While Mr. Reed's initial interest was in the content of the PD, ultimately it had a positive effect on the classroom culture.

At the end of the interviews and the focus groups, a question was asked of the teachers to explain the importance for teachers to continue their professional growth. While having various reasons, the answers were essentially the same. Ms. Andrews began, "I think that's what keeps us here as teachers. Because if we just keep doing the same thing every day the same way I think we get burned out. And so, for me it's what keeps me going." Ms. Woods agreed, "I think it reinvigorated too and it helps you reinvent yourself. And face challenges better." She continued with this thought: "But I love learning new strategies and ideas and ways to mix things up or teach something better or teach it differently or whatever. I just feel like it keeps me from getting burnt out and...helps me love my job." This perception reiterated the idea of teachers as learners for life and it spoke to the importance of reflecting on one's teaching practices. Mr. Moore offered, "We got into this because we just loved to learn, right. And so, ...we should be lifelong learners, to use another little cliché."

Growing professionally entails reflecting on classroom instruction and practices.

Ms. Cross explained,

I think having a reflective teacher is what is very important because sometimes we do find things that work really well. And that's awesome. Sometimes they fail miserably, and we have to rehash. So, I think growing as a teacher comes from our ability to reflect on our ability to be flexible knowing that our students change each and every year, so we probably have to do some of that as well.”

For reflection to be effective, teachers need to be willing to change as needed. Ms. Mason concluded, “We like learning and trying new things and that's what makes us strong teachers.”

Although the survey results regarding the effect PD had on the classroom showed teachers did not believe PD often informed their instruction, the evidence from the interviews and focus groups showed PD could influence instruction in a variety of ways. Professional development does not have to be content-specific or nor does it have to be pedagogical in nature to have positive impact on a classroom, students, or the teacher. Considering the responses of how important teachers considered professional growth to be, just the fact that teachers were choosing their own specific PD, often after self-reflection and when able, supported the premise that PD impacted teachers’ classroom instruction and in a variety of ways.

Conclusion

This study was undertaken to determine the connection between PD and the professional growth of teachers. It was carried out at Windsor High School and involved 53 non-probationary teachers. Data gathering began with a survey via Google Form that

allowed results to be compiled immediately to Google Sheets, a spreadsheet that categorized and graphically represented the answers to the survey questions. The survey also asked for teacher volunteers to be interviewed or to be part of two focus groups. Specific survey questions were utilized as filters to facilitate a cross-section of teachers who were representative of WHS teachers and secondary teachers in general. Survey data were largely supported in the interviews and focus groups.

Individual interviews were held at WHS as were the two focus groups. Core content-area teachers and electives teachers participated and in order to obtain a more complete picture, teachers with a range of teaching experience were chosen. Interviews allowed for a unique personal reflection of PD and professional growth while the focus groups allowed for a variety of voices to produce a whole picture of teacher opinions of PD's connection to professional learning. There was little difference in opinion regarding PD amongst core content area teachers and electives teachers. Through their participation in this study, these teachers provided examples of reflective, self-motivated teachers and learners for life who make a difference in their classrooms.

When teachers are reflective of their practice and their needs, their PD choices are purposeful and will impact their classroom and students. These teachers portray teachers who are intrinsically motivated. They are learners for life who are always trying to improve their practice. Teachers in the study, those interviewed, and the members of the focus groups were representative of many teachers who grow “through both formal and informal means, and the choices that they made to help them become better teachers” (Rutter, 2017, p. 29) and sometimes despite the PD system available to them.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Determining the connection of PD to the professional growth of secondary teachers was the focus of this study. It identified teacher motivation for pursuing professional growth through PD, the type of PD that inspired teachers to continue learning, and it questioned the frequency of PD informing classroom instruction. Recommendations to re-vamp the traditional “top-down” PD based on the findings of this research are presented in this chapter. This study was small; as such, it had limitations, which are also discussed in this chapter.

District Professional Development Developers and Building Administrators

Motivation of teachers to pursue professional learning was primarily intrinsic as evidenced by the many hours of summer courses and time spent planning the next school year. Oddly, monetary goals, while important to most teachers in the survey and interviews and focus groups, were not the most often cited reason for the continued professional growth of secondary teachers in this study. Motivation seemed to change as teaching positions changed and as life in general changed. For some teachers, changes such as moving horizontally on the salary scale or no longer being a single income allowed for a more content-focused approach rather than number of credits or cost when choosing PD. However, secondary teachers were most motivated when they were in

charge of their professional growth, i.e., when they were afforded the opportunity to choose the type of PD they took.

While teachers acknowledged some PD, such as the state-mandated yearly PDs offered in a one-size-fits-all format were successful, this did not hold true for all district or building level PD opportunities. According to the findings of this study, PD for authentic professional learning needs included teacher choice, teacher need for the PD, and time for the PD. This study encountered reflective teachers who determined what they needed for professional growth and chose PD based on that reflection. Keeping teachers' needs and interests in the forefront when determining PD based on choice could and should be addressed at the district and building levels to create effective PD that will then enhance student learning.

Creating Choice in Professional Development

Teachers in the study overwhelmingly chose PD based on teacher choice rather than PD decided upon by the district or building. One reason frequently given was the PD did not relate to their content or to their needs. Once teachers were given choice in PD, they did not want to return to PD without choice. In fact, when asked to describe ineffective PD, lack of choice was a common thread among teachers regardless of whether they taught a core content area or an elective.

Providing opportunities for choice in PD could be created in a variety of ways and could be as simple as book study offerings each semester. However, to be effective PD, opportunities for choice should be the norm rather than the exception. Teachers are motivated to find solutions to needs they identify in their teaching practice; being able to choose how to find those solutions increases motivation and a sense of accomplishment

(Knowles et al., 1973/1991). Choice is an important component for creating a culture of learning within a district or individual buildings. Allowing teachers to choose their PD enables them to take ownership of their professional growth (Wake & Mills, 2018). Students in the classroom have more buy-in to an assignment or project when they have been given a chance to choose how they complete the assignment or project. This same observation is true of teachers so providing choice in PD would create more meaningful professional growth for teachers and ultimately enhance students' learning in the classroom.

Many districts allow administrators or administration teams to create the PD for their individual needs. Unfortunately, even this does not typically embrace choice for the teachers. Often the PD is reflective of summer PD administrators have partaken in or a new focus determined by district office personnel. To create choice or even a needs-driven PD program, teachers should be included in the process. Including teachers at the foundation of a choice-based PD program provides buy-in for the staff and is a first step in creating a culture of learning at the building level. Forming PD committees comprised of teachers, instructional coaches, and administration representation is a way to begin and could be created in a variety of ways. This model is currently being undertaken at WHS with overall positive feedback regarding PD from the teaching staff. Teacher involvement in a PD committee allows them to “gain new knowledge and expertise as well as opportunities to deal with educational problems by forming groups, having collaboration with peers...or engaging in conversations” (Shabani, 2016, p. 5). One model would be to have an instructional coach as the chairperson who is responsible for scheduling the meetings, creating the agendas for each meeting, creating surveys and or

forms that would be utilized in obtaining staff feedback, compiling data, communicating with district instructional personnel as needed, and other duties that might arise in the managing of this committee.

Instructional coaches occupy a land between classroom teachers and administration, a liaison of sorts; having a coach manage the committee removes the “top-down” feeling that could occur if an administrator was the manager of the committee. If a building or district does not have an instructional coach, the teacher librarian would be another person who could manage the committee. Teacher librarians are much like coaches as they often are liaisons between classroom teachers and administration. Through the role of the teacher librarian, these individuals would collaborate with teachers, coach teachers, typically know the pulse of the building, and have flexible schedules, making them a logical choice as well to manage a PD committee.

Teachers are an intricate piece of the PD committee and should be chosen judiciously and in a variety of ways. One way to populate the committee would be to ask for volunteers, explaining the time commitment and other expectations of the committee work. Another option would be to ask specific teachers to join. Members chosen for the committee should exhibit leadership qualities, have an interest in PD for professional growth, be willing to affect change with their peers, and enjoy collaboration. Populating the committee with teachers allows their opinions and ideas for improved PD to be validated. Once the committee is chosen, the next step would be to determine how to design effective PD providing teachers with choice that relates to state teacher standards and district and building PD goals. To create quality teaching in classrooms, strong

effective PD must be designed, taken, and implemented (Sparks, 2002); this PD committee would accomplish this goal.

Choice is an intricate, if not the most important, aspect of professional learning for teachers and as such should be offered to teachers by school districts. Most states require and provide PD days throughout the school year, time when teachers are at school without students; the sole purpose of these days is to provide learning opportunities for teachers. Districts having PD committees at the building level are able to offer quality and purposeful PD while providing teachers choice in that PD, thereby contributing positively to the professional growth of their teachers.

Designing Effective Professional Development

This study showed teachers' preference was not for traditional PD; only 2% of teachers chose traditional PD when asked to choose between traditional PD (no teacher choice) and PD of choice. Ineffective PD is not connected to teachers' curricula, immediate needs, or learning goals (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos as cited in Robertson, Padesky, & Brock, 2020).

One of the tools available for determining PD to be offered would be to utilize questionnaires or surveys with the staff. The focus of either of these tools could be need-based or interest-based or any combination of the two. Effective PD for teachers would begin with teachers through self-reflection and identification of what they need to enhance their learning and therefore the learning of their students (Lucilio, 2009). Once the data are obtained and analyzed, the PD could be planned. Depending on the size of the district or the building, planning could be completed by a PD committee or designated staff members.

Taking into consideration the topics of interest and the needs identified by teachers, decisions could be made as to which PD to offer. Professional development days are required by the state and the dates are often predetermined by district calendar committees, providing a framework when planning PD opportunities to be offered to an entire staff at the same time. Conference-type PD offerings would be one way to provide choice to teachers while honoring goals or focus areas of the district or building. EdCamps (conference-type PD) “appears to be a powerful and viable option for teacher PD” (Wake & Mills, 2018, p. 104). When designing a conference-style PD, presenters are arranged from within the district or building or from outside the district. Offerings would be based on data obtained from the teacher surveys. Teachers then would choose the sessions to attend. This would also provide an opportunity to offer new instructional tools to teachers, provide learning from their peers, and provide district and building collaboration. Research by Wake and Mills (2018) supported this: “teachers do desire active learning and participation opportunities where they have some control and where they can collaborate with others” (p. 103). It would be important to remember, however, that PD should not happen only on designated PD days. Rather, it should be an instrument used to create a culture of learning through continuous opportunities that are entrenched in the daily lives of teachers (Guskey, 2000). True professional growth for teachers does not happen quickly during a PD session; it is a process that is time-consuming, frequently with trials and errors (Shabani, 2016).

Another way to build a culture of learning within buildings would be to create learning cohorts. DuFour (2000) believed time for teachers to work together was the most powerful resource districts and buildings could provide to their staff. Cohort

members might not have the same learning goals but they would be learning together, possibly around the same theme or tool. Cohorts provide collaboration teachers enjoy and ask for as well as support for making changes to their teaching or classrooms. Professional development no longer needs to be passive; it should be consistent, provide support for teachers, and it should be active (Stewart, 2014) for it to be effective in eliciting change. Optimally, cohorts should be comprised of teachers from different content areas and/or grade level taught. High school teachers typically are very departmentalized so having an opportunity to work with someone outside of their department would provide new insights, new perspectives, and new relationships. Teachers in the study were appreciative when opportunities for professional conversation with colleagues not in their departments were provided during PD days. Time should be given on PD days for cohorts to meet, learn, and support others' learning. Cohorts would benefit from having common planning periods, if possible, to meet during school hours more regularly. Creating PD that was part of the daily lives of teachers that created collective learning would support risk taking by teachers and ultimately create classrooms steeped in learning and application of the learning—the ultimate goal of PD.

Time

Time was an issue that seeped into most discussions of PD regardless of teaching level or level of administration. It was mentioned frequently during the interviews and focus groups during this study. Typically, the sentiment was not having enough time to get everything done and still have time for professional growth. While daily school schedules have little room for change, there are ways to utilize time during the day to offer PD opportunities to teachers. The idea of teaching teams typically resides in

elementary and middle school levels; however, this concept is starting to be utilizing at the high school level. Teams could be customized to fit the needs of the teachers and within the current schedule. Grade-level teams are probably the most common and for schools implementing common assessments, this would make the most sense. Teachers in grade-level teams could collaborate on standards, assignments, grading philosophies, and common assessments. All these areas would be potential PPD opportunities that could be a part of team meetings.

To address teachers' concerns about time as it related to not having enough time to reflect and plan to implement PD in their classrooms, PD schedules could be rearranged. Professional development days typically find all the teachers sitting together for the same PD presentation but by offering PD choices and making the conference-style PD the norm, time could be scheduled that would allow teachers to reflect on PD and plan how to implement the PD in their classrooms. Allocating time for planning the implementation of PD would enhance the probability that PD informs classroom practice, which according to the study's survey only happens occasionally. Rearranging the way time is utilized on PD days could be the first step in creating a culture of learning for a school. Collaboration is an important aspect of teachers' professional learning and would happen naturally when teachers are provided time to meet with other teachers to reflect, plan, and continue their professional learning (Parker, Patton, & O'Sullivan, 2016; Sparks, 2002).

Limitations

The study undertaken was a small one, occurring at a local high school. Three teachers were interviewed and six teachers took part in two focus groups; however, the

viewpoints of these teachers were representative of other high schools. Specifically, high school teachers and their opinions were the focus of this research and not other teaching levels; thus, further research at other levels would be needed as a comparison to elementary and middle school teachers. This study focused on teachers' opinions of current and past PD within this district and their experiences with PD in general. Professional development taken outside of that provided by the district was not given consideration with regard to the idea of choice in PD opportunities but could be another area of related research. Further research focused on school district PD providers would provide yet another layer of research into the professional growth of teachers through PD. There are many different formats of PD; researching their popularity could provide relevant information to school district PD personnel as well. Overall, this study was a beginning in determining high school teachers' opinions of continuing their professional growth through PD.

Conclusion

This study examined teachers' perspectives on their professional growth primarily, but not exclusively, through PD offered through their school district. The following three research questions guided this study:

- Q1 What motivates secondary teacher to continue their professional growth?
- Q2 What type of PD inspires teachers to continue learning?
- Q3 How does PD inform secondary teachers' instruction?

Through this study, it was determined that teachers were typically intrinsically motivated. They appreciated choice above all when determining what PD to take to meet their needs. Teachers embraced collaborative learning opportunities and a variety of

formats when choosing PD. Time was a necessary component for teachers to learn, reflect, plan, and implement PD into their classrooms to enhance the learning of their students. Above all, teachers strove to be their best for their students and effective PD might support this goal.

Professionals responsible for planning teacher PD must begin to understand their teachers to create meaningful opportunities that would then create schools that exhibited a culture of learning for all within the school. Teachers' professional growth does not happen quickly or in one day of PD. Rather, teachers need time to process new learning and to experiment with the new learning in order to elicit change in the classroom (Shabani, 2016). Changing teachers from passive participants to active participants in their own professional learning happens when teachers are given opportunities for choice, reflection, and support to effectively utilize new learning through PD.

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APPENDIX A
SURVEY

I am in the final stage of my Educational Studies doctorate through the University of Northern Colorado. My research area focuses on professional development. This survey is the first step in my research data collection. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. A report of the composite information will be provided to WHS and to the district. No participant names will be revealed at any time throughout the study. By completing this survey, you are agreeing to be a participant in the survey portion of the study. Thank you. I appreciate your time.

1. What do you currently teach?

2. What grade level(s) do you currently teach?

3. How long have you been teaching at Windsor High School?

4. Rank the effectiveness of PD at Windsor High School. 5 as the highest and 1 the lowest.

1 2 3 4 5

5. How often does PD inform your classroom instruction?

Always Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never

6. Which type of PD do you find to be more effective?

Traditional (district choice of topic) Personalized (teacher choice of topic)

7. What is your motivation for taking PD? Check all that apply.

Required Personal learning Content related Salary advancement
Re-licensure requirement New certification Job advancement Professional goals

8. How do you choose which PD to take? Check all that apply.

Delivery method Topic Recommended by colleague
Ease of scheduling Other

9. Rank the importance, to you, of the delivery method of PD. 5 as the highest and 1 the lowest.

1 2 3 4 5

10. Rank the importance of choice in PD. 5 being the highest, 1 the lowest.

1 2 3 4 5

11. Identify the types of PD that you have taken in the past two years.

Conference Seminar Book study Individual learning On-line course
Face-to-face course Cohort learning Advanced degree program Other

12. Would you be willing to be interviewed for 30 minutes to an hour, 1-4 times total regarding PD?
13. Would you be willing to be part of a focus group, meeting 30 minutes to an hour, 1-3 times total discussing PD?

APPENDIX B

**INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION
IN RESEARCH: SURVEY**

Informed Consent for Participation in Research

University of Northern Colorado

Research: The connection between professional development and teacher growth

Researcher: Melody Person, doctoral student, Department of Education

Email: pers3727@bears.unco.edu

Research Advisor: Jenni Harding, Ed.D.

Email: jenni.harding@unco.edu

I am conducting research to determine the connection between professional development and the professional growth of teachers at the secondary level, specifically the high school level. Research topics included are teacher motivation to partake in professional development opportunities, the type of professional development teachers find inspiring, and how professional development informs classroom practice. As a high school teacher your experience and perceptions will assist in answering the research questions.

As a participant in this study, you will participate in a face-to-face interview. Interview will be audio-recorded to ensure all information is accurate. The interview will be at your convenience. The interview/focus group should take approximately 60 minutes. A pseudonym will be used to ensure your confidentiality.

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. A report of the study's findings will be provided to WHS and the school district.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had a good opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe your most effective PD experience. Explain why you think it was effective.
2. Describe your least effective PD experience. Explain why you think it was ineffective.
3. How do you choose the PD that you take?
4. What is your decision based on?
5. How is the PD you take related to your content area?
6. How important is it, do you think, for teachers to continue their professional growth?
7. What motivates you to continue your professional growth?
8. How often does PD that you take inform your classroom practice? How do you know?
9. How important is it for teachers to have a “choice and voice” in the PD that they take?
10. How important is it for teachers to have a support system following PD?
11. What is your major concern when deciding which PD to take?
12. How would you define personalized PD?
13. How would you define traditional PD?
14. How would you describe a self-motivated learner?
15. How would the idea of self-motivation be connected to PD or professional growth

APPENDIX D
FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. How many years have each of you been teaching?
2. How has PD changed during your teaching career?
3. What motivates you take PD?
4. Have your motivations for taking PD changed? Why or why not?
5. Has your preference of the type of PD you take changed?
6. How has PD changed since you started teaching? Or has it?
7. How important is it for teachers to grow professionally?
8. What motivates teachers for their professional growth?
9. How would self-motivation be related to professional growth?
10. How does PD inform your classroom instruction? How is it manifested in the classroom?

APPENDIX E

**INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION
IN RESEARCH: FOCUS GROUP**

**Informed Consent for Participation
in Research: Focus Group**

University of Northern Colorado

Project Title: Professional Development at the Secondary level

Researcher: Melody Person, doctoral student, Department of Education

Email: pers3727@bears.unco.edu

Research Advisor: Jenni Harding, Ed. D.

Email: jenni.harding@unco.edu

I am conducting research to determine the connection between professional development and the professional growth of teachers at the secondary level, specifically the high school level. Research topics included are teacher motivation to partake in professional development opportunities, the type of professional development teachers find inspiring, and how professional development informs classroom practice. As a high school teacher your experience and perceptions will assist in answering the research questions.

As a participant in this study, you will participate in one focus group. The focus group will be audio and video-recorded to ensure all information is accurate. The focus group will meet at a time convenient for the entire group. The focus group meeting should take no more than 60 minutes. A pseudonym will be used to ensure the confidentiality of your participation in the study.

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. A report of the study's findings will be provided to WHS and the school district.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had a good opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Participant's Signature

Date

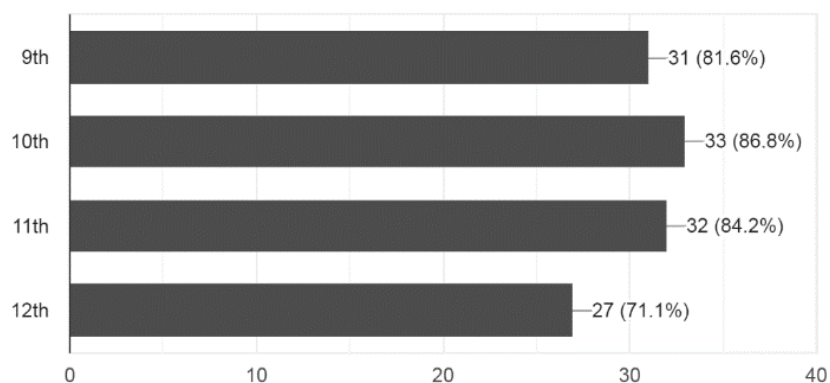
Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX F
SURVEY RESULTS

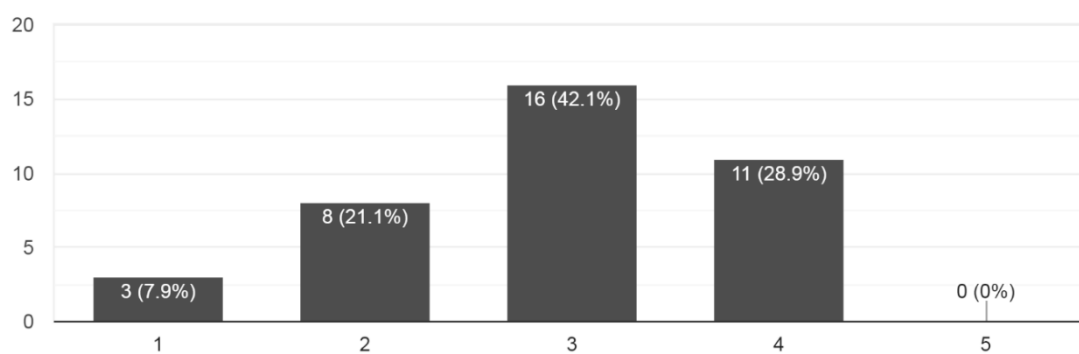
What grade level(s) do you currently teach?

38 responses



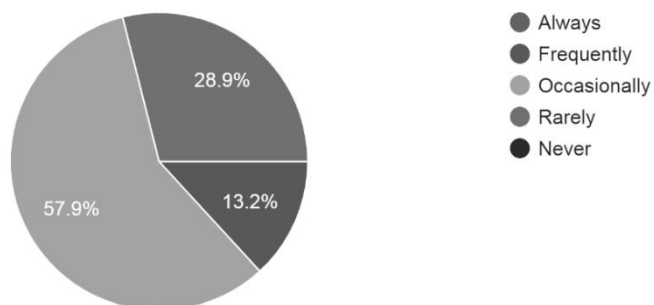
Rank the effectiveness of PD at Windsor High School. 5 as the highest, 1 as the lowest.

38 responses



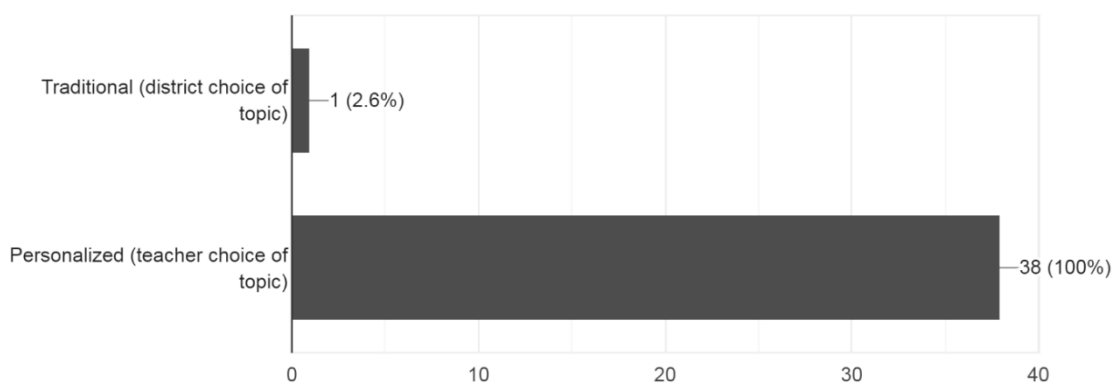
How often does PD inform your classroom instruction?

38 responses



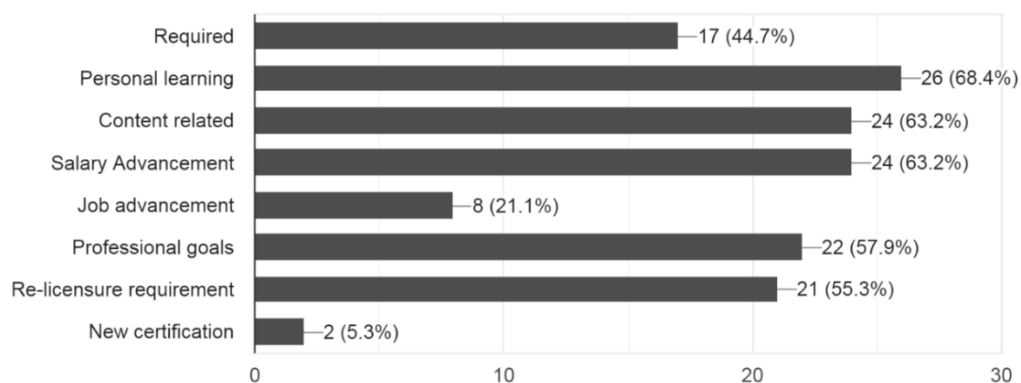
Which type of PD do you find to more effective?

38 responses



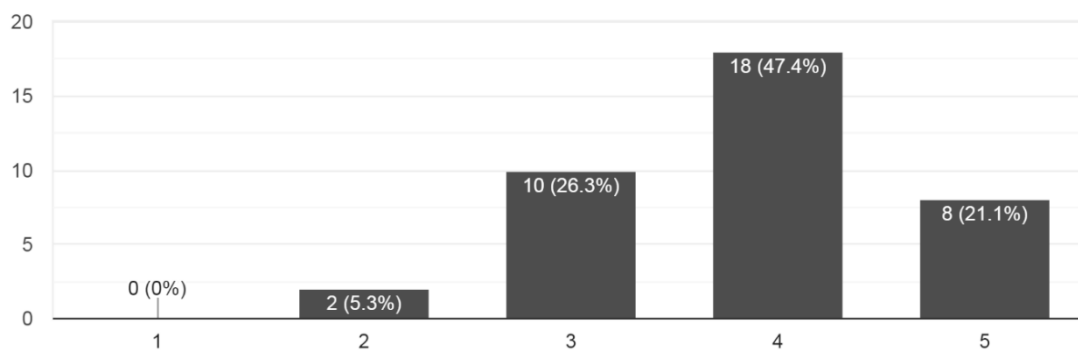
What is your motivation for taking PD? Check all that apply.

38 responses



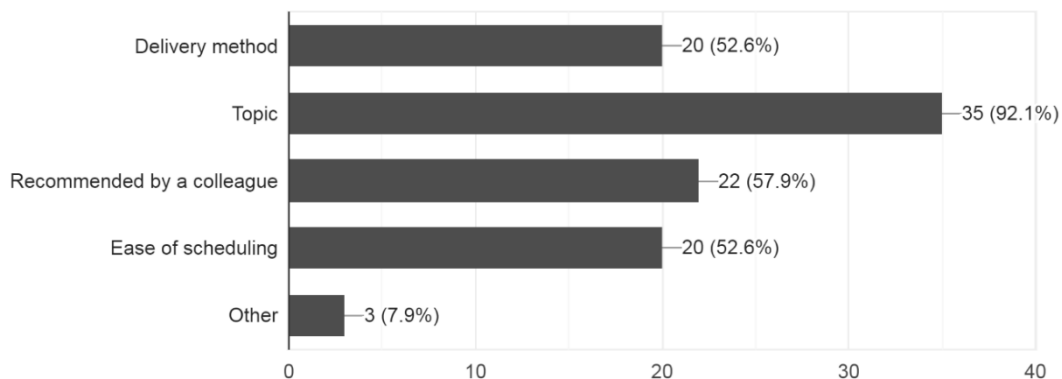
Rank the importance, to you, of the delivery method of PD. 5 as the highest, 1 the lowest.

38 responses



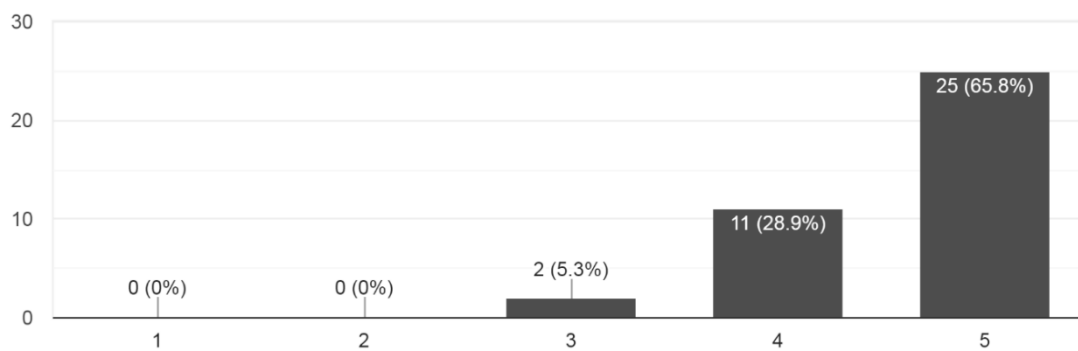
How do you choose which PD to take? Check all that apply.

38 responses



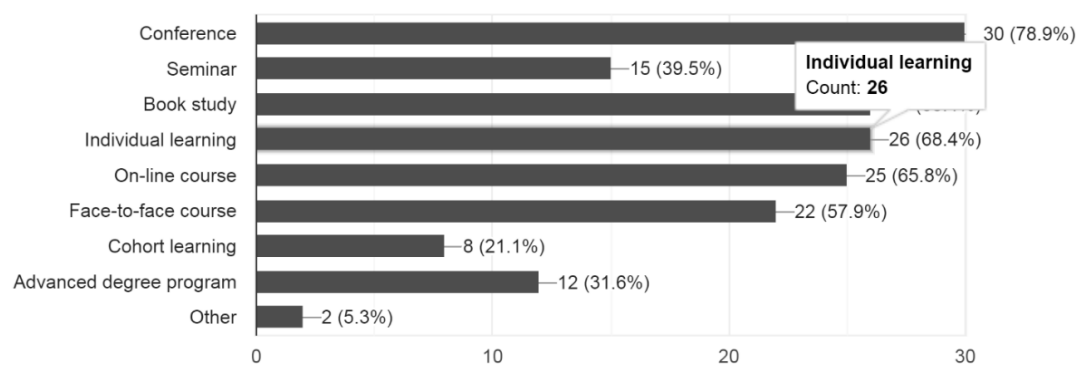
Rank the importance of choice in PD. 5 as the highest, 1 the lowest.

38 responses



Identify the types of PD that you have taken in the past two years.

38 responses



Would you be willing to be interviewed for 30-60 minutes regarding PD?

38 responses

