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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

VISUAL ART COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE:
CULTIVATING SUPPORT FOR BEGINNING VISUAL ART TEACHERS

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership, Administration and Policy

by

kristin vanderlip taylor

May, 2018

Martine Jago, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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VITA

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ABSTRACT

Visual art teachers, from beginning to veteran, often report experiencing feelings of professional isolation and a desire for content-specific support and collaborative professional learning experiences. Mentoring and Induction Programs (IPs) offered by schools and districts continue to fall short of meeting the needs of beginning visual art teachers in particular. There are a large number of visual art teachers in the state of California, especially in Los Angeles County, yet there are no visual art specific support networks for beginning visual art teachers to help them navigate their first years teaching. Collaborative learning groups, such as communities of practice (CoP), may offer visual art teachers opportunities to learn together and support one another in shared learning, yet none have been formally documented in Los Angeles County as a means of supporting novice art educators.

The Exploratorium in San Francisco, CA has established a community of practice called the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) to support beginning science teachers with content-specific pedagogy during their first two years of teaching. Using the TIP as a framework, a visual art professional growth support community was outlined for this study based on the needs and concerns of visual art teachers reported throughout the literature. Beginning visual art teachers in Los Angeles County were interviewed to help the researcher better understand their existing and desired supports, as well as their individual needs and concerns as new teachers. The visual art CoP was proposed to them to elicit feedback about its anticipated values (immediate, potential, applied) based on their lived experiences as first or second year PK-12 public school visual art teachers in Los Angeles County.

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter Overview

Chapter I includes the background of this study, providing context for the research, the statement of the problem, and the purpose of the study. It affirms the importance of the study at this point in time and identifies those who might benefit from the study. The research questions are outlined, with an overview of the theoretical framework utilized in the study. The limitations, delimitations, and assumptions are identified as well, as is the researcher's positionality regarding the study.

Background of the Study

Support for beginning teachers is an ongoing concern in the field of education (American Institutes for Research, 2015; Barth, Dillon, Hull, & Holland Higgins, 2016; Bullough Jr., 2012; Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011; Cuddapah, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Davis & Higdon, 2008; Freedberg & Rice, 2014; Fulton, Yoon, & Lee, 2005; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Goldrick, 2016; Gray & Taie, 2015; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2014; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Koehler & Kim, 2012; Moir, 2009; Nahal, 2010; Nielsen, Lundmark Barry, & Brickey Addison, 2007; Shore & Stokes, 2006; Wong, 2003, 2004). How to attract, support, and retain new teachers has been an essential question, particularly when studies have shown varying reports of reasons for and rates of teacher turnover (Ingersoll et al., 2014; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). In one of the most recent studies reported by Gray and Taie (2015), the National Center for Education Statistics longitudinally followed public school teachers who began teaching in the United States in 2007-2008 to document percentages of those who remained in or left the profession over the course of five years. While the data shows that approximately 17% of teachers leave within the first five years, it was noted that

teachers who are assigned mentors in their first year are more likely to remain in the field (Gray & Taie, 2015). Effective mentoring - being paired with an experienced teacher in the same content area - is vital in the initial years of teaching and can positively impact teacher retention. (American Institutes for Research, 2015; Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2015a; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Gray & Taie, 2015; Hanawalt, 2016; Hudson, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Nahal, 2010; Paris, 2013).

While there are many forms of mentoring, one of the most common found in the support of beginning teachers nationwide is often streamlined through Induction Programs (IPs) (American Institutes for Research, 2015; Bullough Jr., 2012; Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2015b; Cuddapah, 2002; Davis & Higdon, 2008; Goldrick, 2016; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Koppich & Humphrey, 2013; Meyer, 2002; Moir, 2009; Nielsen et al., 2007). Intended to provide new teacher support in the first two years of teaching, IPs in California also assist novice educators in clearing their preliminary credential, which is a requirement to continue teaching beyond five years (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2015b, 2017; Koppich & Humphrey, 2013). However, it is reported that both IPs and mentoring programs vary greatly in levels of support and the matching of mentors to mentees based on subject and/or grade levels taught (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2015b; Cuddapah, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Freedberg & Rice, 2014; Goldrick, 2016; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Koppich, & Humphrey, 2013). Because of this, beginning visual art teachers (VATs) in particular often do not receive the content-specific support they desire based on self-reported competency needs and concerns (Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016).

Research shows that collaborative networks and learning communities are critical components of effective support programs for beginning teachers (American Institutes for Research, 2015; Fulton et al., 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Koehler & Kim, 2012; Wong, 2003, 2004). A supportive community of colleagues is essential and should include both veteran and novice educators to provide multiple perspectives and support at various levels (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Meyer, 2002; Milbrandt, 2006; Moir, 2009; Morell, 2003; Nahal, 2010; Shore & Stokes, 2006; Wenger, 1998). While many schools have implemented variations of professional learning communities (PLCs) or collaborative learning networks (CLNs) on site, they do not always meet the needs of all teachers, especially when there are teachers of specific subjects, like the arts, who may not have other colleagues at school to collaborate with (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Berwager, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Freedman, 2007; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Hochtritt, Thulson, Delaney, Dornbush, & Shay, 2014; Milbrandt, 2006). This is especially problematic today, as Wong (2004) states, “The era of isolated teaching is over. Good teaching thrives in a collaborative learning environment created by teachers and school leaders working together to improve learning in strong professional learning communities” (p. 51). If schools are not able to address the specific professional learning needs of teachers who are the sole on site instructor of a particular subject (like visual art), researchers have suggested looking outward to other organizations such as universities, museums, or professional organizations for building partnerships focused on collaborative learning and support (Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Kim, 2010; Paris, 2013; Shore & Stokes, 2006), especially for beginning VATs.

While access to arts education is not regulated as strictly as other content areas, the arts are considered part of a “well-rounded education,” according to the Every Student Succeeds Act

(ESSA), the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA, 2015). To meet the requirements for providing all students with a well-rounded education, many schools and districts have continued to provide students with instruction in visual art and/or music. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education, has conducted three studies over the past twenty-three years to better understand the arts educators providing instruction and to measure students' access to arts education (including music, visual art, dance, and theatre) from elementary through high school (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012; Sparks, Zhang, & Bahr, 2015). Findings in the 2009-2010 study demonstrate relatively high percentages of both elementary (83%) and secondary (89%) schools providing instruction by full time visual art teachers during the school day, with 84% of elementary instructors and 94% of secondary instructors identified as arts specialists employed specifically to teach visual art.

For the 2014-15 school year, the California Arts Education Data Project (create/CA, 2017) reported that there were 7,373 art teachers for grades 6-12 in California schools, including both charter and traditional public schools, with 1,833 in Los Angeles County alone - one fourth of the total number for the entire state (see Figure 1).

Interactive Dashboard

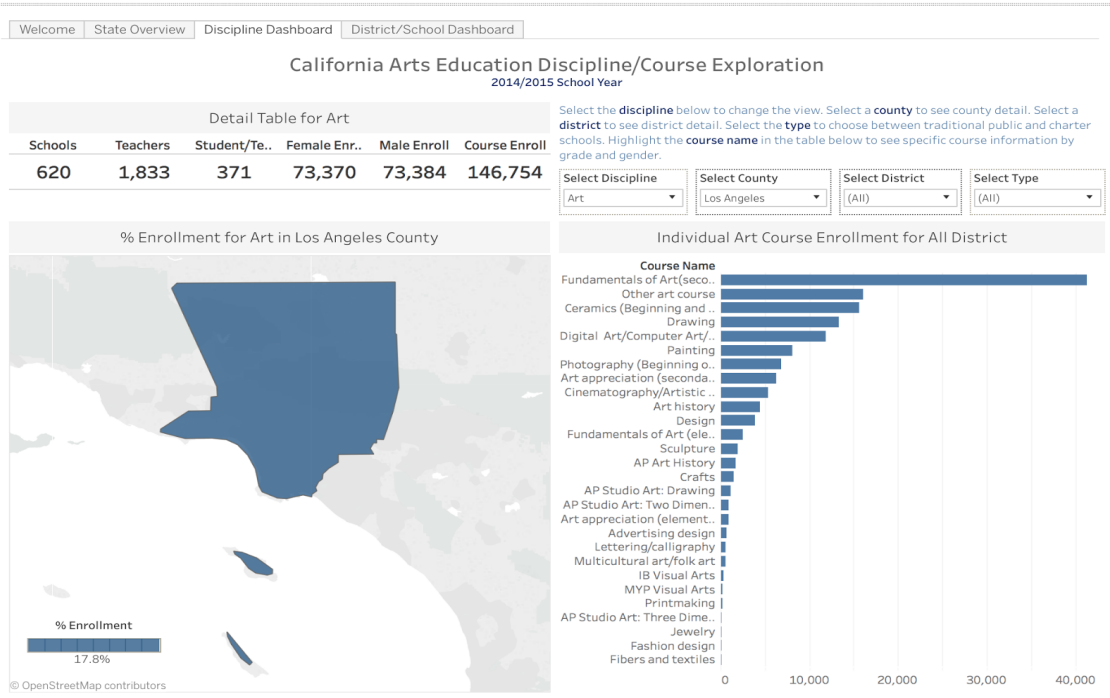


Figure 1. Number of visual art teachers in Los Angeles County schools, grades 6-12, in 2014-15. Adapted from create/CA. (2017). The California Arts Education Data Project: Interactive Dashboard - California Arts Education Discipline/Course Exploration, 2014/2015 School Year. Retrieved from <http://www.createca.dreamhosters.com/interactive-dashboard/>

No data was reported in this study for art teachers in primary or elementary schools unless they were part of an elementary-high school combination (Arts Education Data Project, 2016), yet it is known that there were forty-three elementary VATs in the Los Angeles Unified School District alone in the 2016-17 school year (Los Angeles Unified School District [LAUSD], n.d.-a). In the 2014-15 school year, California issued 278 new single subject credentials in art, and an additional 350 were issued in 2015-16, with a high concentration coming from universities located in Los Angeles and Orange counties (Teaching and Services Credentials: Search by Subject Area, 2017). While there are many professional development and learning opportunities in visual art available for teachers in these geographic regions, there are no specific communities or programs designed to support and mentor beginning VATs in their initial years teaching. This

lack of visual art support has been widely documented and is not relegated to VATs in Los Angeles (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Paris, 2013).

Problem Statement

Visual art teachers worldwide, from beginner to veteran, have reported experiencing feelings of professional isolation (Bain, Newton, Kuster, & Milbrandt, 2010; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Nahal, 2010; Paris, 2013). Often the only art instructor at their school, there are limited opportunities for arts teachers to engage in on-site collaborative professional learning, and the professional development (PD) that is provided at school sites often does not meet their content-specific needs (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Berwager, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Freedman, 2007; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Hochtritt et al., 2014; Milbrandt, 2006). Beginning VATs especially desire ongoing support and guidance, yet many do not receive it in their first years on the job beyond what may be provided by school, district, or state IPs or mentor mandates. Such programs and mentorships are not always aligned with VAT's subject-specific competency needs and concerns, which include: support in bridging theory with practice (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Cera, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gude, 2000, 2004, 2013; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Kim, 2010; Nahal, 2010; Zimmerman, 1994), navigating school cultures (Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Cera, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Efland, 1976; Hanawalt, 2016; Kuster, Bain, Newton, & Milbrandt, 2010), overcoming feelings of professional isolation (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Berwager, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gates, 2010; Hanes & Schiller, 1994), and learning how to become advocates for the arts or agents of change in their new environments (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Cera, 2013; Freedman, 2007; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Kuster et al., 2010). While collaborative learning groups, both in and outside of schools, are recommended as

part of a robust professional development support network for novice teachers, they are often not available to those teaching the arts (Battersby & Verdi, 2015). Rather than struggling to conquer these barriers alone, many beginning VATs choose to leave the profession instead (Cohen-Evron, 2002).

There is a lack of empirical literature regarding effective implementations nationwide of supports specifically designed to address the issues that many beginning VATs experience. Because of the large numbers of VATs in California, and more specifically in Los Angeles County, a problem exists, as there is no existing formal support network for beginning VATs that is content-specific, collaborative, ongoing, and addresses their competency needs and concerns as novice art educators while alleviating feelings of professional isolation. Therefore, this study aims to propose a professional support community for credentialed beginning VATs in Pre-Kindergarten (PK)-12 public schools in Los Angeles County to address their concerns and meet their needs as first and second year art educators.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to propose a professional support community to beginning credentialed visual art teachers in PK-12 public schools in Los Angeles County. The model will be presented to 5-10 beginning VATs who are in their first or second years of teaching art to elicit feedback about the anticipated value the support community may offer in addressing their competency needs and concerns.

Importance of the Study

This study is important and timely due to the recent increase in art credentials issued in California (Teaching and Services Credentials: Search by Subject Area, 2017), as well as the large numbers of VATs working in Los Angeles County schools (create/CA, 2017).

Additionally, Hanawalt's (2015, 2016) recent studies on support for beginning VATs recommend that alternative support networks be developed to address the competency needs and concerns of beginning VATs, rather than attempting to redesign existing models such as Induction Programs that are state or district sponsored and not tailored to meet the reported needs of beginning VATs.

This study may be of importance first and foremost to beginning VATs, as it proposes a professional support community designed specifically to address their concerns and competency needs. The community model proposal will be revised and refined explicitly based on the feedback provided by the beginning VATs interviewed. It may also be valuable to schools and districts that struggle to match visual art mentors to beginning VATs in the same schools due to various constraints (lack of available or willing mentors, distance) by providing an alternative means of support and hopefully increasing teacher retention beyond the initial years. This study will provide art museums/institutions, universities, and state professional arts organizations with a professional support community model specifically for beginning VATs, which they may choose to implement to help bridge the gaps in support between school systems and visual art pedagogy and praxis.

Definition of Terms

Visual Art Teachers (VATs): single subject credentialed art teachers.

Beginning VATs: a term used by the researcher to indicate first or second year credentialed art teachers in a public school (traditional or charter) visual art teaching position.

Induction Programs (IP):

Individuals holding a Preliminary General Education (Multiple or Single Subject) teaching credential are required by Education Code §44259(c)(2) to complete a

Commission-approved Induction program to earn the Clear Teaching Credential...An induction program is designed to support and guide the new teacher in his or her teaching assignment by incorporating local school and district goals under the guidance and assistance of a support provider who has deep knowledge of the local school, district and community as well as of new teacher development. (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2014)

Beginning teacher supports: a term used by the researcher which may include (but is not limited to): mentoring (general or same subject), Induction Programs, opportunities for observation, peer coaching, collaboration, critical friends, or learning communities/networks.

Communities of practice (CoP): “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4).

Professional support community/CoP: a term used by the researcher to indicate the outline or model to be presented to beginning VATs to elicit feedback about the anticipated benefits of participating in the proposed community, based on their lived experiences.

Contemporary art education/curriculum: art education/instruction that focuses on using big ideas and essential questions to frame investigations, providing options and choice for students, moving beyond traditional skills-based instruction, conceptualizing ideas, and exploring process over product (Contemporary Approaches to Teaching, 2017).

Preservice art educators/students: art education students or student teachers in a university art education program, prior to receiving a teaching credential.

Theoretical Framework

This study is rooted in situated learning theory and communities of practice and, as such, employs a constructivist paradigm. Constructivism is based in experiential learning, which proposes that one learns by doing (Quay, 2003). Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist approach to learning includes the social aspect of learning from and with others, rather than learning as an individualized action. His belief in the *zone of proximal development* (the space between learning independently and needing assistance) connects to Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning, in which learners actively participate socially and culturally in the various learning communities to which they belong. This study utilizes a qualitative, phenomenological approach to collect data based on participants' lived experiences as first and second year VATs in Los Angeles County. This research design was selected to elicit feedback about the anticipated values the proposed VAT CoP might create. Because learning from and with one another is a critical component of CoP and situated learning, constructivism is the most appropriate paradigm for framing this research. The conceptual framework in Chapter II provides a detailed background for how this paradigm connects to the empirical literature reviewed, while the research design is explored further in Chapter III.

Research Questions

The primary research question guiding this study is:

How might a professional support community be designed specifically to meet the needs of beginning visual art teachers in Los Angeles County?

Embedded within this overarching question are two secondary questions that are intended to help guide the research within the study:

1. What are some of the existing supports currently being used by beginning VATs in PK-12 public schools within Los Angeles County?
2. How might the lived experiences of beginning VATs in Los Angeles County impact the values (immediate, potential, and applied) that they anticipate gaining from participating in the proposed VAT CoP, based on the Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2017a) value-creation framework for social learning (see Appendix A).

Limitations

The limitations included in this study are: possible non- (or limited) response to request for participation in the study, time (as beginning teachers are often overwhelmed with responsibilities), data will be collected only from beginning VATs in Los Angeles County and may not represent the needs of beginning VATs state- or nationwide. There is also potential for researcher bias as a Los Angeles County veteran VAT, which is addressed later in this chapter.

Delimitations

The researcher selected Los Angeles County as a delimitation for this study for multiple reasons: (a) it is where she is employed as a visual art educator in both a Transitional Kindergarten (TK) - eighth grade public school and at a public university, creating greater access to participants; (b) even though there are many art programs for teachers in Los Angeles County, there are no communities or programs specifically focused on supporting beginning VATs; and (c) there are over eighty school districts in Los Angeles County with a wide range of visual art programs that employ high numbers of VATs. The sample population will include between five and ten beginning credentialed VATs in their first or second years teaching in a variety of Los Angeles County public schools and/or districts.

Assumptions

Two assumptions are included in this study. Participants will understand and answer all questions honestly with thick, rich descriptions, providing feedback about their anticipated values of the proposed professional support community based on their own lived experiences as beginning VATs. Additionally, it is assumed that VATs in Los Angeles County currently experience feelings of professional isolation and want to be part of a CoP.

Positionality

I have been teaching visual art to students in Transitional Kindergarten-8th grade public schools in Los Angeles since 2003. In 2014, I also began teaching at a Los Angeles public university, first in the child development department, then transitioning to the art education department in the fall of 2015. When I began teaching in public schools, I had to enroll in an IP in order to clear my preliminary teaching credential. During my first year teaching art, I was enrolled in a Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA) through the university where I received my credential. However, due to changes in California credential requirements in 2004, I was required to transition to my district's IP for the second year. The program I taught in was an itinerant arts program, one in which support from a visual art mentor would have been greatly welcomed. While I did have mentors in both the university and district program, neither taught visual art, nor were either of them familiar with the experience of being an itinerant teacher at eight schools in one year. The culmination of my IP was relegated to the completion of paperwork, and I sought advice and support from my veteran art colleagues outside of the IP whenever possible.

Now that I am teaching university students who may go on to teach art themselves, I have a vested interest in making sure that they will be supported through their initial years teaching in

schools. Everything that the literature points to in terms of why many teachers - especially art teachers - leave the profession is present in the conversations I hear from field observations and student teachers. There is indeed a disconnect between the critical thinking and theory explored in the university setting and the traditional paradigms about school art. The feelings of professional isolation are not limited to the novice art educators I know, either; many of my veteran public school colleagues report the same experiences and seek out opportunities beyond school limits to overcome them. For years, I observed veteran VATs new to the itinerant system struggle to navigate the isolation of moving from school to school, one day a week for only a semester, often not returning to the same school in following years. Many of them received little support beyond monthly 90 minute professional development meetings, which were generally reserved for district related business.

My interest in communities of practice stems from a participatory action research project I developed in conjunction with the associate education director of school and teacher programs at a local art museum. Knowing that visual art teachers often do not receive the kinds of professional learning opportunities they desire, we formed a CoP centered on designing and facilitating visual art professional learning opportunities for ourselves and others. This CoP has grown over three years to include a rotating group of members who share a desire for continued learning in visual art pedagogy and artistic practices, with an opportunity to support other members in their own inquiry. In my searches for information on beginning VAT CoP and content-specific IPs and mentorships, I discovered the Exploratorium's Teacher Induction Program (TIP) for beginning science teachers. Referred to as a CoP, the model utilized seems to combine what has developed with our own visual art CoP and the mentoring support I seek for beginning VATs in Los Angeles. This marriage of ideas led me to wonder: (a) why such a

community or program doesn't already exist for beginning VATs in one of the largest arts-concentrated regions in the United States; (b) what it might look like for VATs, particularly the mentoring aspect; and (c) how such a CoP might address the competency needs and concerns of VATs (both veteran and novice), including helping them overcome feelings of professional isolation.

The combination of these paths has resulted in the catalyst for this study. The Exploratorium model, active since 1998, is well funded through both public and private grants and donations. Each year it serves 50 beginning science teachers, in addition to the numerous mentors and coaches who partner with the beginning teachers for two years. All of these participants receive a stipend. While I hope to further develop and grow the professional support community for beginning VATs proposed in this study, both time and expense are factors to be considered in its implementation. Therefore, the focus of this study is centered not on the effectiveness of the model *implementation* but rather the anticipated values (immediate, potential, and applied) of the professional support community by some of the beginning VATs it aims to support. My bias as the researcher will be addressed through reflexivity and bracketing during the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Organization of the Study

This research study is presented in five chapters. Chapter I includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and nature of the study, importance of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, limitations, delimitations, and assumptions of the study. It also explains the researcher's positionality regarding the study. Chapter II presents a review of the literature, which includes the historical background and context of the study, situated learning and Communities of Practice as a theoretical framework, and themes from the

literature including existing supports for beginning teachers, competency needs and concerns of beginning VATs, and support networks for beginning VATs. It also includes an examination of the Exploratorium's TIP in San Francisco, California, a professional support community for beginning science teachers, as well as an outline of the VAT professional support community proposed by the researcher. Chapter III describes the research design and rationale, as well as the setting, population, sample, sampling procedures, and human subject considerations. It includes information about the instrumentation: data collection procedures, management, and analysis. Chapter IV presents the study's findings, and Chapter V provides a summary of the entire study, including implications, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter Summary

This chapter addressed the background of the study, providing a brief overview of the literature reviewed in Chapter II. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to propose a professional support community to beginning credentialed visual art teachers in PK-12 public schools in Los Angeles County with the intention of eliciting feedback about the anticipated value the support community may offer in addressing their competency needs and concerns (documented in the literature review in Chapter II). Because it is widely reported that VATs at all levels (from beginner to veteran) experience feelings of professional isolation (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Berwager, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Freedman, 2007; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Milbrandt, 2006), it is important for the researcher to know if and how the proposed CoP might create value for the participants, particularly in regard to reducing or eliminating such isolation from the profession. The research questions are supported by the theoretical framework utilized in the study, which employs a constructivist worldview and a qualitative, phenomenological approach to collect data based on participants'

lived experiences as beginning VATs. The limitations, delimitations, assumptions, and the researcher's positionality are all identified to provide clarity and ensure that the researcher will bracket any bias throughout the study.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Chapter Overview

Chapter II examines Lave and Wenger's (1991) theoretical framework of situated learning and CoP as they relate to support for both beginning and veteran VATs. Two previous studies of VAT communities are presented, which support the theory that CoP may address beginning VAT competency needs and concerns (Kim, 2010; Hanawalt, 2016). The historical background and context framing the study are also considered, including contemporary art education's coherence with national and state education policies and 21st century learning objectives and standards. It also addresses the practical need for content-specific support due to the growing number of beginning VATs in California (create/CA, 2017), and the overall extensive population of VATs in Los Angeles County (Teaching and Services Credentials: Search by Subject Area, 2017). Chapter II also includes a review of empirical literature pertaining to beginning teacher support, focusing specifically on support for beginning VATs, as well as a review of reported competency needs and concerns of beginning VATs, which include: (a) bridging theory with practice, (b) navigating school cultures, (c) experiencing feelings of professional isolation, and (d) being prepared to become agents of change. It also explores various models of support that have been recommended in the existing literature (networks and communities that align to the theoretical framework used in this study) including the Exploratorium TIP in San Francisco, California. Weaving together each of these themes, the researcher presents a rationale for and an outline of her proposed professional support community model for beginning and veteran VATs, which will be presented to a sample of beginning VATs in Los Angeles County to elicit their feedback for this study, based on their lived experiences from their first or second years teaching art. The methodology for the research

will be presented in Chapter III, along with the findings in Chapter IV and conclusions and recommendations in Chapter V.

Context

A problem exists, as there is no existing formal support community for beginning VATs in Los Angeles County that is content-specific, collaborative, ongoing, and addresses their competency needs and concerns as novice art educators while alleviating feelings of professional isolation. The primary research question guiding this study is:

How might a professional support community be designed specifically to meet the needs of beginning visual art teachers in Los Angeles County?

Embedded within this overarching question are two secondary questions that are intended to help guide the research within the study:

1. What are some of the existing supports currently being used by beginning VATs in PK-12 public schools within Los Angeles County?
2. How might the lived experiences of beginning VATs in Los Angeles County impact the values (immediate, potential, and applied) that they anticipate gaining from participating in the proposed VAT CoP, based on the Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2017a) value-creation framework for social learning (see Appendix A).

Conceptual Framework

Beginning VATs share many of the same competency needs and concerns in their initial years teaching. Many desire non-evaluative content-specific support, along with ongoing opportunities to collaborate and learn together from both veteran and novice colleagues who share contemporary 21st century pedagogical practices in visual art (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010;

Berwager, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Milbrandt, 2006). Situated learning, or learning with and from others in authentic social contexts of practice, may provide such spaces for beginning VATs to address these issues, especially if they are engaging with veteran VATs or “old-timers” who may help them navigate the landscape of being an art educator (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

Learning as a Social Endeavor. Social learning theory (Quay, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978) advocates that learning is not an individualized process, but is rather dependent on the context of the collaborative social and cultural groups to which one belongs. The *zone of proximal development* (Vygotsky, 1978) is a critical component of social learning theory and is defined as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). Building on Vygotsky’s (1978) theory that social interactions are integral to learning and development (social constructivism), Lave and Wenger (1991) describe learning as “an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world” (p. 35). Learning is situated in authentic practice and is inherently social; the social practices and construction/re-construction of identities are of more relevance than the actual physical space or context in which learning occurs (E. Wenger-Trayner, personal communication, September 4, 2017). Situated learning goes beyond a single lesson or activity or event; rather, it connects people to the multiple communities (landscapes of practice) in which they participate and is transformative in shaping their identities (Lave & Wenger; 1991; E. Wenger-Trayner, personal communication, July 25, 2017).

Communities of practice. Rooted in situated learning, CoP bring people together to learn collectively in a shared practice, engaging in inquiry, action, and reflection. CoP include

a unique combination of three fundamental elements: a domain of knowledge, which defines a set of issues; a community of people who care about this domain; and the shared practice that they are developing to be effective in their domain. (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 27)

In CoP, there is no leader or master instructor; the teaching and learning that takes place is shared among the participants. Competence in a CoP is negotiated by its members and includes three aspects: (a) “mutuality of engagement” - engaging with members to build relationships, (b) “accountability to the enterprise” - accepting responsibility for and contributing to the community, and (c) “negotiability of the repertoire” - participating enough in the community to understand and make use of its practices (Wenger, 1998, p. 137). This dynamic regime of competence allows for legitimate peripheral participation (LPP), or the ways in which a CoP engages new members. Old-timers must help newcomers earn legitimacy to become full members within the community, moving from simply observing to contributing to the collective learning of the CoP as active participants (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Wenger (2010) further explains:

When a newcomer is entering a community, it is mostly the competence that is pulling the experience along, until the learner’s experience reflects the competence of the community. Conversely, however, a new experience can also pull a community’s competence along as when a member brings in some new element into the practice and has to negotiate whether the community will embrace this contribution as a new element of competence—or reject it. (p. 2)

Morrell (2003) examines a summer research seminar connecting high school students, teacher fellows, university researchers, attorneys, and community activists in a CoP in Los Angeles who

engage in community research projects for urban youth. He explores the idea of LPP as professional development for the teacher fellows in this context, as they are new to the practice of critical research. They learn from and with the other teachers, as well as the veteran researchers and community leaders who are well versed in the practices of this particular community. Equality between old-timers and newcomers is not realistic, nor is it desired. Newcomers offer contestability in asking questions and providing fresh perspectives, while old-timers provide the history of the CoP (Wenger-Trayner, personal communication, July 25, 2017).

Milbrandt (2006) suggests a shift in mentoring practices between veteran and novice VATs that is aligned to the CoP framework for social learning described here. Veteran VATs might move away from a supervisory role to facilitate collaborative inquiry that supports learning for both their mentee (newcomer) and themselves (old-timers). The ongoing negotiation and transformation of identities through collaborative learning may reinvigorate veteran educators toward the practice of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Milbrandt, 2006; Shore & Stokes, 2006). A CoP that includes both veteran and beginning teachers may provide opportunities for all members to develop and strengthen leadership and advocacy skills, recognizing that both groups bring valuable insight into the community (Freedman, 2007; Koehler & Kim, 2012; Shore & Stokes, 2006; Wenger et al., 2002).

Because CoP consist of groups of people who come together regularly to explore a similar focus of inquiry and expand their understanding (Wenger et al., 2002), a visual art CoP may provide the support desired by beginning (and veteran) VATs to share in their ongoing examination of their own content-specific pedagogical knowledge, particularly in regard to navigating school cultures and teaching contemporary art education. A visual art CoP may facilitate beginning VATs' agency and advocacy through veteran art mentors' shared

experiences. Beginning VATs may bring new perspectives, fresh from university discourse, to revitalize veteran VATs' curriculum and instruction. The collaborative nature of CoP may support both beginning and veteran VATs in overcoming feelings of isolation through shared learning experiences and inquiry.

Previous CoP studies. Kim (2010) conducted an ethnographic study examining a VAT CoP in Florida, in which she applied Lave and Wenger's (1991) CoP framework to better understand the purposes, contents, and processes of this particular CoP. The VAT CoP in this study had been in existence for ten years and included 20-25 VATs ranging from beginner to veteran to mentors and leaders in the community. The VAT CoP partnered with the Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts for organizational support. The findings of the study showed that the relationships, encouragement, and support that the VATs provided for one another was an important feature of this CoP. The flexibility within the CoP for members to identify and pursue their own individual professional learning needs was another positive component. Membership in the community presented opportunities for the VATs to collaborate on large-scale community art projects and exhibitions outside of their schools. Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) was the shared art education philosophy among community members, which gave a "common identity to the art teachers of the CoP" (p. 202), while helping them reflect on their own individual pedagogy and instruction. Both the old-timers' and the newcomers' voices were welcomed and valued within the group, and a number of interviewees responded positively about the mentoring relationships between the generations. Addressing many of the same needs and concerns reported by VATs in other studies (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Hochtritt et al., 2014; Milbrandt, 2006), Kim (2010) concluded,

For prospective and beginning art teachers, the CoP studied served as a bridge from the art education theories they learned at the university to the critical inquiry required to understand and work with students – made possible by the mentor teachers with whom they could reflect on their practices. For the leading, seasoned art teachers, this CoP functioned as a source of support that promoted their learning over their entire professional lifespan. Such a transformation in the concept of teacher learning extends the existing periodic in-service staff development model, with its focus on training in the latest educational theory and artistic techniques, into a model that engenders constant learning among art teachers by evoking their aspirations to better teaching of art in the context of inter-professional learning of the CoP. (p. 220)

Existing outside of the confines of an individual school where VATs are limited in number, this CoP provided a successful model of professional learning for its members that met their content-specific pedagogical needs.

Concerned specifically with the support needs of beginning VATs, Hanawalt's (2016) qualitative study brought together six recent graduates from Center State University's program in art education who were in their first or second years teaching art. Focusing on *collage as critical practice*, Hanawalt "imagined that support for new art teachers should come from the university from which they had graduated, the same university that encouraged the teachers toward contemporary theories of art education" (p. 67). While she briefly explores professional learning communities (PLCs) and collaborative networks, Hanawalt does not specifically refer to the group of participants in her study as a PLC or a CoP. However, the nature of their collaboration includes the three components of CoP: a domain of knowledge (novice art educators from the same university credential program), a community of people who come together to learn (the

beginning VATs and Hanawalt), and a shared practice (collage as critical practice, reflecting on their initial year(s) teaching visual art) (Wenger et al., 2002). Using collage as critical practice, Hanawalt's aim was to reimagine beginning VAT support by helping novice art educators recognize the "forces at play" within their schools, while understanding how to better prepare preservice art educators in bridging theory with practice and becoming agents of change within the existing educational system (p. 285). The findings of the study suggest that university art education programs include a focus on equipping beginning VATs to examine the cultures, norms, and practices within their new school environments while cultivating them to be "creative agents" in shifting the paradigms that persist regarding art education in schools (p. 286). In a previous paper, Hanawalt (2015) suggests that support measures for beginning VATs should be developed outside of existing school programs (such as IPs), be non-evaluative, provide advocacy guidance and holistic mentoring, support concerns in bridging theory with practice, and encourage dialogue and collaboration between peers. She also recommends that such supports be sustained through university partnerships (as modeled in her 2016 study), museums, state arts organizations, or VAT learning communities.

Historical Background

Art education today, from PK to university preservice programs, must be aligned to contemporary educational practices centered on 21st century teaching and learning. Fullan and Quinn (2016) identify six Cs as integral components: character education, citizenship, communication, critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, and creativity and imagination. Beginning (and veteran) VATs must learn to utilize each of these components to create meaningful and relevant learning opportunities for students, helping them make meaning of their place in the world and greater global society (Gude, 2004, 2013). With relatively high

numbers of VATs employed in public schools throughout the United States (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012; Sparks et al., 2015), it is essential to ensure that beginning VATs today are equipped to implement 21st century learning skills through contemporary art pedagogy once they transition from university programs to actual classroom practice (Bae, 2014; Berwager, 2013; Cera, 2013; Gude, 2000; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Kim, 2010; Milbrandt, 2006).

21st century learning. Education in the 21st century is shifting from the routine standardization and production of the Industrial Age to more individualized, innovative critical thinking and creative problem solving of what is known as the Knowledge Age (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). While educational systems are traditionally slow to change overall, research suggests that shifting toward a more social, customized, authentic learning model that supports multiple intelligences and connects students personally to what they are learning may more effectively prepare the students in our schools today for the world in which they live (Collins & Halverson, 2009; Gardner, 2010; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). A framework, such as the one developed by the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (2003), is essential in helping schools make this transition to better serve students (see Figure 2).

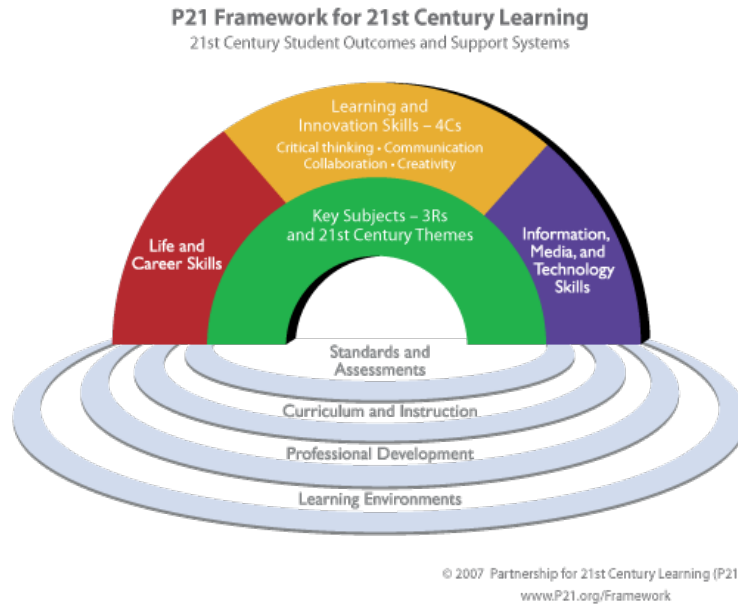


Figure 2: P21 Framework for 21st Century Learning. Reprinted from P21 Partnership for 21st Century Learning, <http://www.p21.org/our-work/p21-framework>. Copyright 2007 by P21 Partnership for 21st Century Learning. Reprinted with permission.

Education in the 21st century involves more than just teaching key subjects. Students must be knowledgeable about life and career skills, learning and innovation skills (the Partnership identifies four of the six highlighted by Fullan & Quinn, 2016), and information, media, and technology skills. To ensure that students are engaged in learning, content must be made accessible in meaningful and relevant ways. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2003) suggests connecting students with the world around them - engaging students with community, bringing real world learning into the classroom, and providing opportunities for students to collaborate with and learn from one another, their instructors, and other community leaders. Contemporary art education does all of these things by connecting investigative artistic practices, centered around big ideas and essential questions, to students' lives so that they may better understand themselves and the world around them (Cera, 2013; Contemporary Approaches to Teaching, 2017; Gude, 2000, 2004, 2013).

In an effort to provide states with guidelines for contemporary art education aligned to 21st century teaching and learning, in 2011 with support from the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education and a coalition of arts partners and arts education organizations the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) reviewed the existing voluntary National Standards for the Arts, which had been developed in 1994 as a result of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, as well as international standards in the arts (NCCAS, 2016). Taking into consideration contemporary shifts in education, including the creation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), as well as the need for a greater focus on generating ideas, problem solving, expressing, communicating, and responding (all components of 21st century learning skills), the NCCAS published new voluntary National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) in 2014, providing guidelines to states for aligning instruction in all five arts disciplines (dance, music, theatre, visual art, and media arts) with 21st century teaching and learning (NCCAS, 2016). As of January 2017, approximately one third of all states had adopted revised arts standards, with another third in the process of revision and others using the NCAS directly as created. Under state AB 2862, California must revise its visual and performing arts (VAPA) standards by 2019 (NCCAS, 2017).

When the 1994 National Standards for the Arts were originally developed, the arts were not considered core academic subjects under the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, even though they had been taught in schools throughout the United States since the 1800s. This Act, a reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), was again reauthorized in 2001 as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which did include the arts as part of the core curriculum. However, the focus of education during NCLB was on assessing students' progress in literacy, numeracy, and science at the expense of teaching the arts, social

studies, humanities, or foreign languages (Chapman, 2005). Due to this schism between statement and practice, the focus on declining arts education in schools became quite prevalent among arts organizations and local communities (Grey, 2009), which brought greater attention to the value of arts education as an integral part of teaching the whole child. Reauthorized again as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, the arts are now considered part of a “well-rounded education” to be determined by states or local educational agencies, with the language of “core curriculum” removed for all subjects (ESSA, 2015). This inclusion, which focuses more on the whole learner, paired with the revision of arts standards and the call for transforming teaching and learning to meet the needs of students in the 21st century, is supported by the contemporary pedagogy taught in university preservice art education programs.

Growing numbers of VATs. As previously noted, NCES reported that public schools throughout the United States employed 83% full time elementary and 89% full time secondary VATs in 2009-10 (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012; Sparks et al., 2015). More recently, in the 2014-15 school year, create/CA (2017) documented 7,373 visual art teachers throughout the state in the California Arts Ed Data Project, with 1,833 centered in Los Angeles County. The number of single subject credentials in art grew in California from 2014 to 2016, with 278 issued during the 2014-2015 school year and 350 issued in 2015-16. At least 54 of the 350 single subject credentials in art were issued to students who completed credential programs at universities within Los Angeles County and surrounding areas (see Figure 3).

Subject Area	Credential Area	Credential Name	Credential Type	Segment	Institution Name	Total Count of Subject Area				
Art	All	All	All	All		Fiscal Year				
						2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Art	Single Subject Teaching Credential	Initial Preliminary or Clear Credential	California State University	California State University	CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSI..	1	1			1
					CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, DOMINGUE..		1	3	1	1
					CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON	10	7	8	7	8
					CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEA..	23	23	15	18	19
					CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGEL..	1	3	4	6	10
					CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRID..	6	6	4	7	2
				Private/Independent Institution	CALIFORNIA LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY	1	2	1	5	1
					LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY			1	1	5
					UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE		2	1	1	3
					CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, DOMINGUE..					2
					CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON		1			
					CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEA..		1	1		1
			University Intern	California State University	CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEA..		1			1
					CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGEL..		1	1		
					CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRID..				2	
					LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY					1
				Private/Independent Institution	UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE				1	
Grand Total					42	48	39	49	54	

Figure 3. Single subject art credentials issued by Los Angeles County (and surrounding area) universities and colleges. Teaching and Services Credentials (2017).

It is not known whether these recently credentialed VATs are indeed teaching in Los Angeles County public schools, as the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) does not track employment (K. Sacramento, personal communication, March 21, 2017) and the California Department of Education (CDE) does not link the number of years teaching in specific districts with credentials and the schools from which they were issued (CDE, 2017). However, the significant numbers of VATs in California, coupled with the increase in newly credentialed VATs since 2014 raise concerns about the kinds of support available to and desired by beginning VATs, specifically for those employed in Los Angeles County, which contains the nation’s

second largest school district along with 79 other smaller districts (Public Schools Directory, 2017), and employs 25% of the state's VATs (create/CA, 2017). These large numbers and the reported needs and concerns of beginning VATs, including confirmed feelings of professional isolation and marginalization among VATs at all levels, suggests a need for the researcher's proposed VAT professional support community.

Existing Supports for Beginning Teachers

There are various types of support that novice educators may receive in the beginning of their careers. Some, such as IPs are designed on a formal basis and are mandated by schools, districts, or state requirements (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2015b, 2017; Goldrick, 2016; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Different forms of mentoring may be required or voluntary, depending on the beginning teacher's support plan, available funding, or stipulations provided by each state or district (American Institutes for Research, 2015; Barth et al., 2016; Bullough Jr., 2012; Cuddapah, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Goldrick, 2016; Gray & Taie, 2015; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Peterson & Williams, 1998). Peer collaboration is another common type of support, which may be pursued by beginning teachers more informally and tailored to meet their needs, or it may be required as part of a school's professional development system (American Institutes for Research, 2015; Barth et al., 2016; Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011; Fulton et al., 2005; Pennanen, Bristol, Wilkinson, & Heikkinen, 2015). There is often crossover among these three common forms of support for new teachers, depending on how they are designed and implemented, and each comes with its own set of distinct benefits and challenges.

Induction programs. The American Institutes for Research (2015) defines induction as: a program-level support that spans all of the roles and responsibilities teachers fulfill and can be used to improve their effectiveness in serving students. This professional development model orients and acclimates new teachers or those with little experience into the adult education profession and develops their skills through consistent direction from seasoned staff and through guided reflection. (p. 1)

IPs were implemented in education to support novice teachers in their transition from student teaching (in preservice university programs) into the profession in order to reduce new teacher attrition (Goldrick, 2016; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Reed, Rueben, & Barbour, 2006a, 2006b; Wong, 2003, 2004). With the most recent longitudinal statistics showing that 17% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Gray & Taie, 2015), education researchers continue to highlight the importance of comprehensive IPs that offer multiple forms of support to new teachers (Bullough Jr., 2012; Davis & Higdon, 2008; Goldrick, 2016; Wong, 2003, 2004). However, IPs may vary greatly in design, which indicates disparities in the kinds of support available to new teachers. Some programs focus solely on the mentoring aspect, while others include additional supports such as workshops, observations (by the mentor and of other teachers), subject-specific mentoring (mentoring from veteran teachers of the same content area and grade level), self-reflection, and collaborative planning time with colleagues (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Goldrick, 2016). Because of these variations in programming, Wong (2004) asserts that there has been much confusion between mentoring and induction, noting that all comprehensive IPs should include an effective mentoring component along with the following recommendations:

- Begin with an initial 4 or 5 days of induction before school starts

- Offer a continuum of professional development through systematic training over a period of 2 or 3 years
- Provide study groups in which new teachers can network and build support, commitment, and leadership in a learning community
- Incorporate a strong sense of administrative support
- Integrate a mentoring component into the induction process
- Present a structure for modeling effective teaching during inservices and mentoring
- Provide opportunities for inductees to visit demonstration classrooms (p. 48)

While IPs exist throughout the United States, the New Teacher Center Policy Report indicates:

Of the 29 states that now require some type of support for new teachers, barely half (15 states) require support in teachers' first and second years. In 2012, 27 states required some type of new teacher support. Most states emphasize support only in teachers' first year on the job—or require no support at all. (Goldrick, 2016, p. iv).

Novice educators require ongoing support, preferably extending beyond a single year, yet many are not receiving it due to inconsistent state policy and funding. Without comprehensive, effective, and meaningful IP policies in place, beginning teachers may not know how or where to seek support (Goldrick, 2016).

Teacher satisfaction with IPs. While a number of teachers who have participated in some form of IPs throughout the United States have reported greater feelings of satisfaction and commitment to their jobs (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), there are many who have expressed criticisms of their IP experiences, such as: being mismatched with a mentor from a different content area, grade level, or school (Bullough Jr., 2012; Meyer, 2002; Shore & Stokes, 2006),

issues with time available for meetings and observations (Fulton et al., 2005; Meyer, 2002), inconsistencies in access to support, collaboration, and resources (Koehler & Kim, 2012), IP requirements are not always customizable to teachers' specific circumstances (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2015b), inexperienced mentors or a lack of training provided for mentors (Bullough Jr., 2012; Cuddapah, 2002; Meyer, 2002), IPs used as a formal assessment tool rather than a support system (Koehler & Kim, 2012), and IPs may include work that is repetitive of preliminary credential program requirements (Freedberg & Rice, 2014; Koppich & Humphrey, 2013). Many of these issues are directly connected to whether or not such IPs are truly comprehensive. Due to these concerns raised by beginning teachers, some states, like California, have been revising their IP standards and requirements to better meet the needs of the beginning teachers they support.

IPs in California. In 1992, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing developed BTSA as a result of the success of the California New Teacher Project, a pilot study that demonstrated better success and higher retention for new teachers who received effective mentoring and support (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2015a). Six years later, SB 2042 (Chap. 548, Stats. 1998) made IPs one path to clearing preliminary credentials in California. University clear credential programs were another option; however, these programs did not provide on-site mentoring, making supporting new teachers more challenging. In 2004, the options for receiving a clear credential became even more regulated with AB 2210, an emergency bill allowing “the completion of a Commission-approved Clear Credential program offered by an institution of higher education only when a teacher’s employer verifies that an Induction program is not available” (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2015a, p. 3). This alignment between credentialing and induction has been reinforced with the inclusion of

induction in program accreditations, and it is supported by the *2008 General Education Induction/Clear Credential Program Preconditions and Standards*, which were revised seven years later as the *2015 General Education Induction Program Preconditions and Standards*. The expectation was that IPs who wished to continue providing support to new teachers would transition to these preconditions and standards by September 1, 2017 (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2015b).

These new standards for IPs, called *Induction Program Design for Mentoring Clear Teaching Credential Candidates*, include six preconditions and standards organized around mentoring, a major focus of IPs in California: (a) Program Purpose; (b) Components of the Mentoring Design; (c) Designing and Implementing Individual Learning Plans within the Mentoring System; (d) Qualifications, Selection and Training of Mentors; (e) Determining Candidate Competence for the Clear Credential Recommendation; and (f) Program Responsibilities for Assuring Quality of Program Services (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2015b). The second proposed precondition provides the following criteria, which is critical to this study:

The Induction program must identify and assign a mentor to each participating teacher within the first 30 days of the participant's enrollment in the program, matching the mentor and participating teacher according to grade level and/or subject area, as appropriate to the participant's employment. (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2015b, Appendix A, No. 2)

While this precondition works toward better matching of mentors and mentees based on subjects taught, it still provides an and/or option for matching according to grade level instead, which will not necessarily provide the pedagogical and content support desired by beginning teachers.

Beginning VATs are one particular group who may be affected by this revision, yet the results remain to be seen as the revised standards are just beginning to be implemented by IPs in California.

Mentoring. Mentoring is a highly recommended and prevalent means of supporting beginning teachers worldwide. (American Institutes for Research, 2015; Bain, Young, & Kuster, 2017; Barth et al., 2016; California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2015a; Darling-Hammond, 2003; ESSA, 2015; Herrington, Herrington, Kervin, & Ferry, 2006; Hudson, 2004; Kuster et al., 2010; Moir, 2009; Nahal, 2010; Paris, 2013; Pennanen et al., 2015; Peterson & Williams, 1998; Richter, Kunter, Lüdtke, Klusmann, Anders, & Baumert, 2013). There are many different types of mentoring in education: one-to-one (Cuddapah, 2002; Fulton et al., 2005), mandatory versus voluntary (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), content-specific mentoring (Hudson, 2004), coaching (Milbrandt, 2006; Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Shore & Stokes, 2006), reciprocal mentoring and critical friends (Paris, 2013), and collaborative networks (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Bullough Jr., 2012; Cox, 2013; Fulton et al., 2005; Gates, 2010; Koehler & Kim, 2012; Milbrandt, 2006; Nahal, 2010; Nielsen et al., 2007). Research has shown that well-developed mentoring programs, in conjunction with other forms of support and collaboration (like IPs), may help to increase teacher retention (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Gray & Taie, 2015; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Odell & Ferraro, 1992). However, it is well noted that mentoring programs alone are not always effective or thoughtfully designed. Many beginning teachers are not matched with a mentor in their same content or grade level, the frequency of meetings between mentors and mentees varies greatly, and other essential supportive reinforcements (such as CLNs), common planning time, and opportunities to observe or conduct lesson studies) are inconsistent among mentor programs (Bullough Jr., 2012; Cuddapah, 2002; Ingersoll & Smith,

2004; Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Koppich & Humphrey, 2013; Meyer, 2002; Wong, 2003, 2004).

These issues may be even more prevalent for VATs if they are the only arts instructor at their school site. Because of this, beginning VATs are often assigned mentors who are not able to model art lessons or may only have an occasional opportunity to observe the novice teacher.

While mentors from other content areas may provide support in general approaches to teaching, they may not be able to meet the reported competency needs and concerns of beginning VATs such as assistance in bridging contemporary art education theory with instructional practice or navigating school cultures and paradigms of traditional skills-based art education.

Peer collaboration. Collaboration with colleagues is another type of widely recommended teacher support, including collaborative groups, which may take various forms, including PLCs, CLNs, or CoP (American Institutes for Research, 2015; Barth et al., 2016; Bullough Jr., 2012; Cera, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; DuFour, 2007; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Fulton et al., 2005; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Herrington et al., 2006; Hochtritt et al., 2014; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Kim, 2010; Koehler & Kim, 2012; Meyer, 2002; Milbrandt, 2006; Moir, 2009; Nahal, 2010; Nielsen et al., 2007; Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger, 1998; Wong, 2003, 2004). While peer collaboration may be one-on-one, numerous studies recommend forming collegial groups as a more effective means of learning from multiple perspectives. Cuddapah and Clayton (2011) examined a collaborative cohort of novice educators in a Beginning Teacher Program (BTP) through the lens of Wenger's CoP framework. Their findings indicate the effectiveness of belonging to such a community in the beginning years teaching, and they recommend that these types of collaborative communities be utilized to complement existing support models. Sharing common competency needs and concerns with colleagues who face similar challenges can be an

effective means of problem solving while helping both veteran and novice educators learn from one another, building teacher capacity (American Institutes for Research, 2015; Bullough Jr, 2012; Fulton et al., 2005; Meyer, 2002; Moir, 2009; Morrell, 2003; Wong, 2003, 2004).

Research suggests that IPs include specific opportunities for beginning teachers to collaborate with colleagues to help them feel connected to their school communities, to eliminate feelings of isolation as they begin teaching, and to increase teacher retention (Fulton et al., 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Wong, 2003, 2004). However, as IPs do not always include comprehensive methods of new teacher support, collaborative communities are often left up to the individual teacher to locate or develop on their own.

While beginning VATs may participate in IPs or receive some form of mentoring at their school sites (even if from a non-VAT), peer collaboration is not as accessible except if it exists outside of traditional school hours and spaces. Unless a school is large and employs a number of VATs whose instructional schedules align (for common planning time or professional development meetings), it is rare that arts teachers have colleagues on site to collaborate with and learn together (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Freedman, 2007; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Milbrandt, 2006). Many schools have developed PLCs on campus that VATs may be assigned to, but DuFour (2007) notes that the underlying framework of a PLC is not always in place and the term itself is often misconstrued regarding the types of teams or committees that are formed as a result. While such PLCs may be inclusive of VATs, the goals of the PLC may not be comprehensive of all members. Teachers within the same content area may be asked to align their curriculum; as a sole VAT, this would not be applicable. VATs may feel that they do not have as much to contribute to the PLC's goals or may receive more autonomy from administration (but less support for collaboration) as a result

of their obstacles to shared curriculum planning (Hanawalt, 2016). Peer collaboration, then, as a form of support for beginning VATs must often occur outside of what is provided on site at schools.

Online collaborative networks. Because beginning VATs are likely not the only novice educators who experience difficulties in finding opportunities on site to collaborate with peers during common planning time or PD sessions, researchers have recommended online networks as a means of overcoming these barriers (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Herrington et al., 2006; Koehler & Kim, 2012; Moir, 2009). Herrington et al. (2006) conducted a pilot study of an online community called *Beginning and Establishing Successful Teachers*, developed by the education faculty at the University of Wollongong in Australia for preservice teachers. Designed as a way for novice teachers to connect with more experienced educators in their content area, mentors were assigned to specific issues or needs identified from the literature reviewed prior to site implementation. The website requires novice educators to be proactive in participating asynchronously to ask questions and seek answers to their competency needs and concerns, as well as utilize the resources provided (curriculum, newsletters, classroom strategies, and blog feature). The researchers hoped that “the innovative use of online technologies to deliver collaborative support and professional development could help to remove the sense of professional isolation felt so acutely by many novice teachers” (p. 129). Battersby and Verdi (2015) recommend online PLCs (OPLCs) as a way to bring music educators together for professional learning and support. Identifying the difficulties that music teachers face regarding isolation within schools and a lack of opportunities for collaborative planning (similar to VATs), the researchers conclude that OPLCs may serve to connect music educators across schools and districts to provide them with collaborative learning that is relevant to their content and

pedagogical needs, while eradicating feelings of professional isolation. While these studies offer alternative solutions to obstacles inhibiting face-to-face peer collaboration, it is recommended that beginning teachers do not limit their support connections to online communities only. Doing so may perpetuate feelings of isolation, as it can be difficult to build relationships with mentors and colleagues if interactions are limited to posting concerns and reading resources, rather than connecting with one another in person (Koehler & Kim, 2012).

Competency Needs and Concerns of Beginning Visual Art Teachers

While there are numerous studies reporting competency needs and concerns of beginning teachers of other subjects, there are more limited reports of the specific competency needs and concerns of beginning VATs. However, studies that have been conducted within the past twenty years all share similar findings, which include four specific competency needs or areas of concern that overlap and influence one another: bridging the gaps between theory and practice (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Cera, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gude, 2000, 2004, 2013; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016), navigating school cultures (Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Cera, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Hanawalt, 2016; Kuster et al., 2010), experiencing feelings of professional isolation (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Berwager, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gates, 2010), and knowing how to be effective agents of change (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Cera, 2013; Freedman, 2007; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016).

Bridging the gaps between theory and practice. As preservice art educators leave university programs to begin teaching in schools, many find that there is a disconnect between their art education coursework and actually teaching art (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Cera, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gude, 2000, 2004, 2013; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Kim, 2010; Nahal, 2010; Zimmerman, 1994). Trained in contemporary art education pedagogy and

practice, novice VATs are often hired as first year art instructors in schools that continue to support traditional skills-based modernist art education paradigms. Freedman (2007) discusses the importance of shifting the perspectives of schools that do not yet support contemporary art education practices:

... the idea of what is basic in art education needs serious reconsideration. We have moved far beyond the idea that art education is only about line, shape, and color. Of course, these are important as they allow people to represent their ideas in visual form, but what is truly basic to art education has not just to do with questions of *how* people make art. What is basic to art education also has to do with questions of *why* people make art, how they *use* art, and how they *value* art. (p. 211)

In our globally and technologically connected society today, it is important for students to go beyond the formal properties of art to develop more meaningful practices in creating and reflecting that connect them to the world around them. Art educator Olivia Gude (2000) examines the debate between what is considered foundational now in art compared to that which has been historically taught but may not be as critically relevant today. Aligned with 21st century learning, she believes that investigation is essential, and that artmaking (and meaning-making) should include postmodern principles such as: appropriation, juxtaposition, recontextualization, layering, interaction of text and image, hybridity, gazing, and representin'. These contemporary artistic practices are offered as a way to re-think curriculum that creates opportunities for student choice while situating artmaking in practices that are culturally and socially relevant to the students themselves (Gude, 2004).

Even though many beginning VATs have had in-depth experiences developing art curriculum based on socially relevant, student-centered contemporary issues, they may tend to

fall back on more formal teacher-directed highly sequential approaches to instruction. This may be due to a number of reasons: the influence of a veteran VAT at the school with a modernist approach to art education, lack of ongoing support from VATs who share a similar philosophy of contemporary art education, classroom and student manageability issues, time constraints for curriculum planning, or expectations set forth by the school itself (a focus on students scholarships for skills-based studio production or portfolio preparation, the low status of art in schools, art viewed as decoration, or overall lack of administrative support) (Bain et al., 2010; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Kuster et al., 2010; Milbrandt, 2006). It is theorized that these obstacles may be more easily dealt with if beginning VATs had opportunities to connect, collaborate, and reflect with a community of other VATs, both veteran and novices, to receive ongoing support in developing meaningful contemporary art curriculum (Bain et al., 2010; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Milbrandt, 2006).

Navigating school cultures. A school's culture, as referred to in this study, is the professional culture of a school, which includes the beliefs, values, professional practices, and norms shared among teachers and administrators (Cherubini, 2009; Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, & Liu, 2001). Beginning VATs have reported challenges in navigating school cultures for some of the same reasons they have had difficulty bridging contemporary art education theory with classroom practice. School art is often not connected to many beginning VATs' own philosophies of art education, yet they may not feel equipped to try to change the status quo (Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Cera, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Efland, 1976; Hanawalt, 2016; Kuster et al., 2010). In fact, they are sometimes encouraged to "quickly... assimilate into the school culture and maintain the procedures and content that contributes to the

status quo” (Bain et al., 2010, p. 243). This may be further exacerbated if paired with a mentor VAT on site whose teaching philosophy is more aligned to traditional skills-based art education than post-industrialist contemporary practices (Kuster et al., 2010). Beginning VATs have also reported struggling with implementing strategies that are specific to art instruction that may be different than the needs of teachers of other subjects, yet may not be explicitly taught in university programs, such as: flexible classroom management in an art room environment, (Bae, 2014; Berwager, 2013; Kuster et al., 2010), balancing time and energy for developing meaningful art curriculum design and grading student work (Kuster et al., 2010), understanding how to navigate the social, cultural, and political issues within schools (Cera, 2013), or how to help administrators understand the critical role that contemporary art education plays in connecting students to the world around them, which deals with important yet sometimes sensitive issues (Cohen-Evron, 2002).

Art instruction in schools, often marginalized or viewed as less important than other subjects, also often comes with expectations beyond teaching duties - like decorating the school environment, designing sets for school plays, curating school art exhibitions, or creating holiday art projects, displays, or gifts for parents - which do not always align with contemporary art education pedagogy (Cohen-Evron, 2002; Efland, 1976; Kuster et al., 2010). This marginalization may also lead to instructional difficulties: larger class sizes, shorter instructional periods (for elementary art teachers), classroom management issues with little support from administration, limited time for planning or opportunities for collaboration, limited resources, or other less than desirable teaching conditions (Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Kuster et al., 2010). To better understand school cultures, researchers recommend that university art education programs include more opportunities for dialogue with preservice art

teachers about the various types of school cultures they may face as they begin their first jobs, as well as how to navigate issues that may arise (Berwager, 2013; Cera, 2013; Kuster et al., 2010; Milbrandt, 2006).

Experiencing feelings of professional isolation. Professional isolation is something that many novice teachers of all subjects have expressed feeling (Cuddapah, 2002; Fulton et al., 2005; Herrington et al., 2006; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Nielsen et al., 2007; Wong, 2003, 2004). In fact, it was reported as the number one grievance among new teachers in the United States (Wong, 2004). PLCs, networks, and time for collaboration have been recommended as a way to overcome isolation in schools (American Institutes for Research, 2015; Bullough Jr., 2015; Cox, 2013; Fulton et al., 2005; Meyer, 2002; Nahal, 2010; Nielsen et al., 2007; Wong, 2003, 2004). However, because VATs are often the only art teacher at their school site (as noted), there are limited (or sometimes non-existent) opportunities to connect professionally at school with teachers who share the same pedagogical experiences (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Berwager, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002, Freedman, 2007; Gates, 2010; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Hochtritt et al., 2014; Milbrandt, 2006). Professional development provided in schools is rarely designed for arts teachers, and mixed-content PLCs at school sites may not provide the resources or opportunities for collaboration with colleagues that arts teachers strongly desire (Bain et al., 2010; Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Freedman, 2007; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2016; Milbrandt, 2006). This sense of isolation may be exacerbated for novice art educators once they've left the supportive environment of university preservice courses and supervised student teaching, as they are often on their own in new environments (Bain, et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Milbrandt, 2006). Veteran VATs have also expressed experiencing feelings of isolation, as years in the profession don't necessarily help alleviate the solitude of being the sole art teacher

on campus (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Gates, 2010). Additionally, the recognized perception that the arts are often not viewed as important as other content adds to the sense of isolation that many VATs experience (Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gates, 2010; Hanes & Schiller, 1994).

Isolation can also present itself in physical form, with art studios and classrooms far removed from other instructional areas or administration, and subjects separated with little opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Berwager, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Freedman, 2007). This division between art and education exists even at the university level, with the art and education departments often separated in preservice credentialing programs (Berwager, 2013). Such disconnections may further promote the separateness of the arts in PK-12 schools, perpetuating the distinction between the arts and other subjects. Because of this physical separation and the isolation of often being the lone VAT at a school site, external professional communities (online or face-to-face) are generally recommended as a means of connecting with other VATs to overcome these isolating conditions (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Kim, 2010; Milbrandt, 2006).

Knowing how to be effective agents of change. Because beginning VATs are trying to find their place in their initial years teaching, advocating for change in schools with long-established cultural norms may be the least of their concerns. Cera (2013) points out,

Often, the novice art educator faces a school community that has grown used to traditional studio art experiences that diverge widely from the sort of critical theory-oriented practice now being encouraged in many college and university art education preparatory programs. Hence, beginning art educators find themselves in situations where they may desire to become agents of change in their own schools, but in which they are encouraged to take the path of least resistance. (p. 95)

Shifting paradigms from traditional skills-based formal art education to contemporary 21st century critical thinking requires preparing novice art educators to be active change agents, especially within their first year or two in a school so that they don't lose their own philosophies of contemporary art education (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Cera, 2013; Freedman, 2007; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Kuster et al., 2010). Art education programs may need to incorporate more leadership and advocacy training opportunities in university courses to provide preservice educators with the tools for understanding existing frames within schools - political, human resource, structural, and symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 2002, 2013; Cera, 2013; Freedman, 2007). This knowledge may help novice educators (VAT and others) understand the forces at play within educational systems, which might allow them to contribute to the collective conversation with non-arts colleagues and administrators, rather than feeling the sense of "otherness" that is often experienced by lone instructors at school sites (Cera, 2013).

Collaboration with colleagues in learning communities may also empower both beginning and veteran VATs to advocate for changes within their schools (Gates, 2010). Gude (2013) asserts that "Art teachers can contribute to the reinvention of schools and invent not only a new form of art education, but perhaps also a new collaborative art form" (p. 14). When professional capital (the combination of human, social, and decisional capital) can be cultivated within schools, it can be quite powerful in bringing about change (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). However, because of the isolating nature of the VAT profession, such shared learning and advocacy coaching must often occur outside of the very schools VATs wish to change.

Visual Art Teacher Support Networks Beyond Schools

As noted throughout Chapter II, there are recommendations for various supports for beginning VATs beyond schools, districts, and state mandated IPs, which include: university-

school partnerships, museum-sponsored initiatives, state art organizational partnerships, or professional VAT networks like CoP. These options may be teacher or institutionally initiated, and they include both benefits and challenges in participation and sustainability. University partnerships with PK-12 schools may be effective in reducing beginning teachers' feelings of professional isolation by bringing beginning teachers together from a variety of local schools for professional learning and support (Hanawalt, 2016; Meyer, 2002; Paris, 2013). This may be particularly helpful for beginning VATs who are the lone art instructor at their school site. It may also provide a shared pedagogical framework for professional growth if all the participants completed their preservice education at the sponsoring university (Hanawalt, 2016). However, Hanes and Schiller (1994) identify time constraints and commitment as potential areas of concern for effectively developing university-school partnerships. When membership in a professional group is voluntary and spread across geographical areas and a variety of districts, beginning teachers may feel pressured for time to commit to the group.

Museums and state professional organizations might also have an interest in developing beginning VAT supportive partnerships or networks. While there is documentation of both types of groups providing professional learning opportunities for VATs throughout the United States, nothing has been found in the literature specific to supporting beginning VATs in California or Los Angeles County, a delimitation of this study. Such a community may appeal to art museums as a way to further engage a specific demographic (beginning VATs) in the art education offerings the museum provides. Conversely, because many art museums already implement professional learning for teachers, developing a support community that focuses on meeting the competency needs and concerns of beginning VATs may be beyond their scope of interest. Professional arts organizations like the California Art Education Association (CAEA) or The

California Arts Project (TCAP) may also be optimal partners in supporting a VAT CoP, as such an endeavor may be mutually beneficial to both the teachers participating in the CoP and to the professional arts organizations in further advancing their respective missions: “The mission of CAEA is to provide a collaborative network to strengthen visual arts education in all educational levels through advocacy, leadership, professional development, and professional recognition” (CAEA: A Professional Art Education Community, 2011, para. 4), and “The California Arts Project (TCAP) is a collaborative, statewide network of classroom teachers and university scholars with the mission of improving teaching and learning in dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and in arts, media, and entertainment” (The California Arts Project, 2014, para. 1).

While Kim (2010) explored a VAT CoP in Florida, and many more likely exist throughout the United States, the researcher has not identified any others than have been formally documented as VAT CoP, and none specifically in California or Los Angeles County. However, there is a support network for beginning science teachers in San Francisco, called the TIP at the Exploratorium, which has been referred to as a CoP (Heredia & Yu, 2015; Shore & Stokes, 2006; T. Cook-Endres, personal communication, October 15, 2016). The researcher has explored this model in depth and has adapted it as a foundation for her proposed professional support community for VATs, as it is a comprehensive model that provides support for both beginning and veteran teachers through a collaborative CoP.

Exploratorium teacher induction program (TIP). In 1998, veteran science educators from the Exploratorium Teacher Institute (TI) in the Bay Area developed the TIP in response to novice science teachers’ requests for new teacher support (Shore & Stokes, 2006). Developed both to support and retain novice science teachers in Bay Area schools and districts, the TIP has graduated more than 435 novice science teachers from its two-year program since its inception

and includes more than 3,000 members of the larger TI network (Heredia & Yu, 2015). This professional community of science educators includes both veteran and novice teachers (as well as Exploratorium scientists) who engage in science content and pedagogy workshops covering more than 200 hours of hands-on inquiry over the course of two years with an intensive, three-week summer institute between years one and two. Each year, a new cohort of up to 25 beginning science teachers are invited to participate in the TIP, with up to 50 total in the program who are in their first or second year teaching science. All of the beginning science teachers, mentors, and coaches receive a stipend for participating in the entire two-year program. Group meetings are led by mentor science teachers who have completed leadership training from the TI, have been observed teaching, and have been matched based on geography and content (i.e., biology, physics, etc.) with beginning science teachers. These weekend or after school meetings provide novice science teachers with resources and assistance with instructional needs through the lens of inquiry-based science instruction. Classroom science coaches are another component of the TIP; often, these are retired science teachers or teachers who are currently out of the classroom, as they are able to visit novice science teachers in the field to share pedagogical knowledge and observe or model lessons in a non-evaluative manner. This is critical to the TIP, as state and district sponsored IPs tend to be more evaluative in nature because they are often required for clearing the preliminary credential. The Exploratorium TIP therefore does not fulfill California IP credential requirements; it does not include the paperwork required as part of the state IP. Rather, the Exploratorium TIP supports teachers in content and pedagogy, which are two components generally reported as lacking from state and district IPs due to mismatched mentors (Bullough Jr., 2012; Meyer, 2002; Shore & Stokes, 2006) or inconsistent observations and meetings (Fulton et al., 2005; Meyer, 2002).

The effectiveness of the Exploratorium TIP on teacher retention was reported by Heredia and Yu (2015) in the *Exploratorium Teacher Induction Program: Results and Retention* study:

The majority of TIP graduates (73%) are still currently teaching in K–12 classrooms. The other TIP graduates work at the district or school administrative level (11%), are working in higher education (6%) and in informal education (2%). Three percent of respondents are not in any kind of educational position and 5% are currently on family leave or unemployed. Of the respondents that graduated from the program before 2010 (n = 103), 91% taught for at least five years in a formal K–12 setting. (p. 6)

The report also indicates that teachers felt that the TIP was a comprehensive program that provided content-specific support not offered elsewhere, in addition to collaboration within the community. These are vital components of IPs and mentoring programs that are widely recommended, yet they are still inconsistently implemented in IPs across the United States today (Fulton et al., 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Koehler & Kim, 2012; Meyer, 2002; Moir, 2009; Wong, 2003, 2004).

Informally referred to as a science teacher CoP, the Exploratorium TIP provides support for both beginning and veteran science teachers in myriad ways. “While novices are required to participate in workshops, summer institutes, and support group meetings, they are provided with an extensive menu of options so the program can be tailored to meet specific needs” (Shore & Stokes, 2006, p. 106). Veterans also continue to develop and deepen their own learning through the Leadership Institute and ongoing reflection about their own teaching and mentoring practices. This flexibility and opportunity to grow as educators makes it less prescriptive and more relevant to the lived experiences of the community members. TIP participants, both veteran

and novice, consider themselves part of the lifelong community beyond their two years as a mentor or mentee.

The individualized options provided within the Exploratorium TIP may not be possible for more standardized state or district IPs due to policy mandates and the complexity of large educational systems, even though this model is more closely aligned with 21st century individualized learning. However, Shore and Stokes (2006) noted,

The Exploratorium's Induction and Leadership programs may be unique, but they can be re-created or adapted in other contexts... the menu approach so critical to the

Exploratorium's success may only work in institutions like the Teacher Institute that exist outside (but in close relationship to) the formal system. (p. 106-107)

This hypothesis is aligned with Hanawalt's (2015) recommendation that support initiatives for novice VATs be designed to be non-evaluative and separate from (though complementary to) existing school, district, or state models. Both of these tenets comprise the foundation for the researcher's proposed professional support community for VATs.

Proposed professional support community for VATs. Wenger et al. (2002) assert, "You cannot cultivate communities of practice in the same way you develop traditional organizational structures. Design and development are more about eliciting and fostering participation than planning, directing, and organizing their activities" (p. 13). Knowing this, the following proposed professional support community for VATs is loosely outlined rather than prescriptively organized from the top-down, based on the empirical literature reviewed concerning VAT reported competency needs and concerns and the theoretical framework of CoP. Viewed as an armature for cultivating a VAT CoP, inclusive of both veterans and beginning VAT to promote a supportive network and reduce feelings of professional isolation,

this model uses the Exploratorium TIP for reference. The following were also considered to ensure that this VAT CoP would support beginning and veteran VATs in the areas designated as critical by state and national teacher education standards: California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP), National Core Arts Standards (NCAS), National Board Standards for Art (Early-Middle Childhood and Early Adolescent-Young Adult) (NBPTS), the California Visual and Performing Arts Standards (CA VAPA), and California Commission on Teacher Credentialing: Induction Program Standards (CTC:IPS). An outline of the reported competency needs and concerns, and strategies or topics to address for meeting these competency needs and concerns, are provided in Table 1, with a sample VAT CoP meeting schedule shown in Table 2. Both outlines were reviewed by VAT content experts and revised from the original drafts based on their contributions and recommendations.

Table 1

VAT Professional Support CoP Outline

Visual Art Teacher Professional Support CoP Outline	
Competency needs and concerns	Menu of strategies or topics to address for meeting competency needs and concerns
Bridging theory with practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and implementing contemporary art education/curriculum • Incorporating reflective practice • Facilitating inquiry-based learning • Securing time and sustaining energy for developing lessons/ planning together
Navigating school cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding social/political/cultural norms in schools • Developing and implementing strategies specific to art classrooms - dealing with real-time issues (art room environments, time and behavior management) • Sustaining student autonomy/choice/agency • Communicating with administrators about the value of contemporary art education • Building connections within the school - finding collaborators and critical friends

(continued)

Visual Art Teacher Professional Support CoP Outline (continued)	
Competency needs and concerns	Menu of strategies or topics to address for meeting competency needs and concerns
Overcoming feelings of isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting veteran and beginning VATs in mentoring partnerships - may be self-selected (from qualified mentors in the VAT community who have completed the leadership strand) to find a good fit based on individual needs • Participating in ongoing community meetings - whole group, mentor group, collaborative partnerships, summer institute • Engaging in optional weekend retreats
Fostering agency and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring strategies for arts advocacy • Understanding school, district, and community dynamics and decision-making • Accessing professional organizations for support

Table 2

Sample VAT CoP Meeting Schedule

Sample Visual Art Teacher Community Meeting Schedule	
Whole group CoP meetings	2x per semester
Mentor group meetings - one or two mentors with their mentees (2-3 beginning VATs per mentor)	2x per semester in person plus online support
Self-structured collaborative partnerships - 2 or 3 beginning VATs may meet in person or online	Meeting schedule to be determined
Summer Institute - ongoing collaboration and support during the summer to plan for year 2	One week institute between years 1 and 2

The CoP should be facilitated by community coordinators, based on the shared leadership model suggested by Wenger et al. (2002) so that structure of the CoP is not dependent on one person. Each meeting should include: (a) an experiential art exploration/activity rooted in 21st century teaching and learning that focuses on a big idea with embedded essential questions; (b) time for reflecting on the essential questions from the exploration/activity, including sharing extensions or other ideas for expanding the concepts into a curriculum unit; (c) peer/mentor inquiry and reflection about current issues they are facing; and (d) personal goal-setting and/or the sharing of

progress toward meeting these goals. Providing a “menu” of choices, as referenced in the Exploratorium TIP (Shore & Stokes, 2006), would provide VATs with autonomy to select their greatest areas of need with input from their mentors. This decision-making would be based on beginning VAT’s lived experiences, making the meetings more relevant and meaningful according to their needs. The work taking place in this CoP should be documented and accessible to the members of the community, both as a measure of accountability for contributing to the group and as a record of the curriculum, strategies, reflective practices, and pedagogical support that develops as a result of shared inquiry and practice (A. Uphoff, personal communication, October 1, 2017). The documentation might occur in multiple forms (digital, field notes, photography or video), to be determined by group members collectively through the shared leadership model for responsibility.

To be inclusive of all interested VATs in Los Angeles County, the opportunity to belong to the VAT CoP should be open to any VATs wanting to engage with other VATs in a supportive ongoing professional learning community. Veterans interested in mentoring would need to apply, participate in a leadership strand, and demonstrate proficiency in the following criteria: holds a single subject credential in art, has a minimum of five years teaching visual art in PK-12 schools, has knowledge of designing and implementing contemporary art education curriculum for a range of grade levels (elementary, middle school, or high school), and engages in reflective practices (K. Buchman, personal communication, October 1, 2017). The leadership strand would include professional support for mentors in the following areas: (a) developing and strengthening mentoring/coaching skills, including how to provide effective feedback non-evaluatively; (b) exploring and understanding CSTP, NCAS, CA VAPA Standards, and NBPTS in Art; (c) contemporary art education curriculum design - current research/best practices; and

(d) shared strategies for meeting competency needs and concerns. Mentors do not need to be National Board certified (NBC) teachers; however, the NBPTS are included because of their recognition as clear guidelines for what effective art teachers should know and be able to do (J. Tonkovich, personal communication, October 8, 2017). The leadership strand would need to be completed prior to the matching of mentors and mentees to ensure that all mentors are supported in their roles. Additionally, it has been recommended that opportunities be provided for mentors and mentees to get to know each other both personally and professionally to look for alignment in teaching philosophies and find an effective, supportive match (M. Blasi, personal communication, September 17, 2017).

The proposed VAT CoP was drafted using the Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2017a) value-creation framework, which assess the immediate, potential, applied, realized, transformative, strategic, and enabling values of learning interactions in CoP (see Figure 4).

A value-creation framework

Flow through value-creation cycles

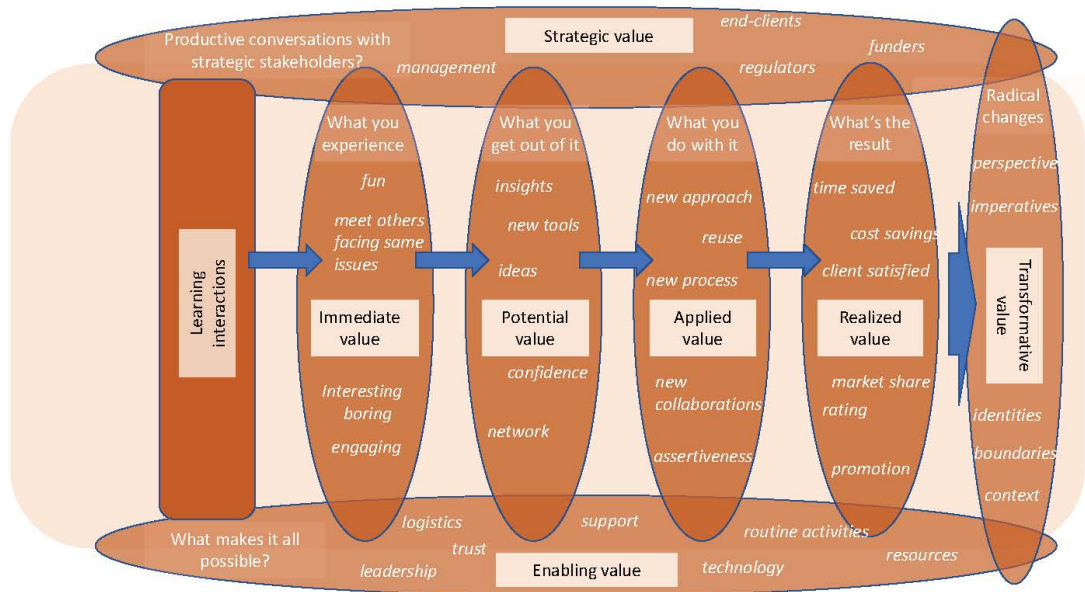


Figure 4: A conceptual framework designed to assess value creation in communities of practice. Reprinted from “Learning to make a difference: a value-creation framework for social learning,” in 17-07-26 ACA BEtreat day 2 framework.pptx. Copyright 2017 by Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner. Reprinted with permission.

Each of these indicates a different possible value as an outcome of participating in the CoP.

Immediate value examines the experiences one may have while belonging to a CoP. *Potential*

value addresses what participants may get out of the CoP - ideas, connections, or tools. *Applied*

value refers to what participants may do with what they’ve gained from membership in the CoP.

Realized value considers the results of belonging to the CoP - the benefits and measurable

outcomes. *Transformative value* looks at the bigger picture and evaluates the wide impact that these values have had on changing perspectives and paradigms in the greater community.

Strategic value involves stakeholders at all levels, understanding the value they contribute to the

CoP. Similarly, *enabling value* considers all the things that make the CoP possible - resources,

time, money, technology, support, leadership, and trust. Because this study focuses on the *anticipated* values of belonging to this VAT CoP, the primary values of concern to the researcher at this point in time are immediate value, potential value, and applied value. The questions to be addressed in the interviews will focus on the following: *What might make participating in this community meaningful or useful?* (immediate value), *What might participants take away?* (potential value), and *What might participants be able to do with what they gain from the CoP?* (applied value). When participants share their value creation stories, they provide specific context for others (including stakeholders) to understand the effectiveness of the CoP in creating value beyond just the enjoyment of belonging (Wenger, Trayner, & de Laat, 2011).

Chapter Summary

The literature reviewed, along with the context for 21st century learning and arts education, the historical background of visual art content standards development, and the place of the arts in a well-rounded education, demonstrate that there is clearly a need for redesigned support options for beginning VATs nationwide. Beginning VATs have reported competency needs and concerns that are not being addressed through current supports available or mandated through schools, districts, or by state requirements (Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Cera, 2013; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016). These issues, along with the high numbers of VATs in California - more specifically Los Angeles County (create/CA, 2017), and the increase in visual art single subject credentials throughout the state (Teaching and Services Credentials, 2017), indicates that beginning VATs need a collaborative community of peers who may provide ongoing support that is relevant, meaningful, and intentionally connected to the practice of teaching art. A CoP may facilitate the collaborative learning desired by VATs, as it may serve to alleviate feelings of professional isolation reported by both veteran and beginning VATs. Based on multiple studies,

it is recommended that such content-specific beginning teacher support networks be developed outside of schools and districts as a complement to existing support programs (Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Kim, 2010; Paris, 2013; Shore & Stokes, 2006). Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to propose a professional support community to beginning credentialed visual art teachers in PK-12 public schools in Los Angeles County. Chapter III describes the methodology for the study, in which the model will be presented to 5-10 beginning VATs who are in their first or second years of teaching art to elicit feedback about the anticipated value the support community may offer in addressing their competency needs and concerns.

Chapter III: Methodology

Chapter Overview

Chapter III explores the research design utilized for this study, along with a rationale to explain why it was selected and its validity to this area of research. The chapter also describes the setting for this study, as well as the population, sample, sampling procedures, and human subject considerations protecting the participants. The instrumentation selected for the study, semi-structured interviews, is explained in detail with questions that were minimally revised based on feedback after being piloted by content experts to support the instruments' validity. Data collection, management, and analysis are also addressed to clarify how the data will be collected, stored, and reviewed before the findings are presented in Chapter IV.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand how a visual art professional support community might meet the competency needs and concerns of beginning credentialed visual art teachers in PK-12 public schools within Los Angeles County, based on their lived experiences. It is designed to elicit detailed feedback about the proposed model from 5-10 VATs in their first or second years teaching art in order to refine the model according to their own professional needs and concerns in Los Angeles County public schools. This chapter presents the methodology used to explore the following research question, as well as the secondary questions embedded within:

How might a professional support community be designed specifically to meet the needs of beginning visual art teachers in Los Angeles County?

1. What are some of the existing supports currently being used by beginning VATs in PK-12 public schools within Los Angeles County?

2. How might the lived experiences of beginning VATs in Los Angeles County impact the values (immediate, potential, and applied) that they anticipate gaining from participating in the proposed VAT CoP, based on the Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2017a) value-creation framework for social learning (see Appendix A)?

Research Design

The methodology for this study is phenomenological, utilizing a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews to elicit thick, rich descriptions from participants. Creswell (2014) identifies a phenomenological study as one in which the “...researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants. This description culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon” (p. 14). Because the participants selected for this study are beginning VATs currently in their first or second years teaching art, their lived experiences may provide relevant and meaningful insight about the proposed professional support CoP based on the Wenger-Trayner (2017a) value-creation framework. A qualitative approach was selected to better understand the individual and collective competency needs and concerns of the participants selected for the study (Creswell, 2014). The study is rooted in situated learning and the framework of Communities of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger, 1998). Because it is reported that many VATs (beginning and veteran) experience feelings of isolation, CoP may serve to help both sets of teachers overcome these experiences while receiving and providing ongoing same-subject support for one another.

Design Validity

To ensure validity, this study utilizes California IP standards, California Standards for the Teaching Profession, National Core Art Standards, and National Board Standards for the Teaching Profession in Early/Middle Childhood Art and Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood, as well as content experts, in the design of the proposed professional support community. The value-creation framework is also used to examine anticipated values of the CoP for beginning VATs: immediate, potential, and applied. (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2017a). This framework guided the development of the semi-structured interview questions, which are designed to elicit feedback from participants based on their lived experiences as beginning VATs in Los Angeles County. Such comprehensive accounts are essential in gathering input from the participants in order to provide thick, rich descriptions to support the validity of the findings (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, these first-person value-creation stories bring authenticity and validity to the study, as they may provide detailed, specific data from personal experiences (Wenger et al., 2011). The data analysis included peer review by content experts to ensure accurate interpretation, and the researcher will present any “negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes” (Creswell, 2014, p.202). Additionally, in Chapter I the researcher has clarified any bias in her positionality toward the study.

Setting

This study took place in Los Angeles County, which includes 80 individual school districts (Public Schools Directory, 2017), including the second largest in the nation, Los Angeles Unified (Los Angeles Unified School District, n.d.-b). Twenty-five percent of California’s VATs are employed in Los Angeles County schools, teaching art to students in grades 6-12, with no specific data collected about VAT in grades PK-5 (create/CA, 2017). The

study includes VATs from any public school (traditional or charter) or district within the Los Angeles County borders, as teaching conditions and available supports for beginning VATs may vary greatly within this large demographic.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Procedures

Creswell (2014) recommends 3-10 participants in a phenomenological study. To ensure that enough data was collected and contained multiple voices, the target number of participants in this study included between 5-10 credentialed beginning visual art teachers in their first or second years teaching art in PK-12 public schools in Los Angeles County (inclusion criteria). Participants (all adult volunteers) were identified through purposive and snowball sampling. Bernard, Wutich, and Ryan (2017) explain that purposive sampling is used when the researcher decides the purpose for the study and looks for people who fit the criteria (often people who share similarities), such as beginning VATs in a particular geographic region. Snowball sampling is recommended for participants in difficult to find populations (Bernard et al., 2017). This type of sampling was applicable to this study, as some recruiting of beginning VATs occurred through colleagues, particularly those working with beginning VATs or university professors who had former students (now beginning VATs in Los Angeles County) whom they referred to participate. Approval from the state council of the CAEA was granted (see Appendix B) to email all CAEA southern area members with information about the study. After IRB approval, the recruitment request (see Appendix C) was sent via email by the CAEA secretary. The researcher also recruited through personal VAT contacts - colleagues who teach in public schools and university pre-service art education programs in Los Angeles County. Following initial contact, a Google Forms questionnaire (see Appendix D) was emailed to the beginning VATs who responded to the recruitment request to identify potential participants and ensure qualification for

the study. No costs were accrued in this study, as all contact occurred via email, online, telephone, or face to face within Los Angeles County.

Human Subject Considerations

Permission for the study was first granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Pepperdine University (see Appendix E). This was to ensure that participants would be protected throughout the research study. In alignment with Pepperdine's Graduate School of Education and Psychology (GSEP) IRB guidelines, the researcher completed the Human Subject Training online through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative Program (CITI). The researcher did not contact any potential participants or begin data collection until after receiving approval from GSEP IRB.

Because the study took place outside of any school or district, no permission needed to be sought from either. However, to protect the confidentiality of participants and their schools, all names were changed to pseudonyms. After GSEP IRB approval, a recruitment letter was emailed to solicit potential participants for the study (see Appendix C). Respondents to the recruitment letter were asked to complete an emailed questionnaire (see Appendix D) to identify whether or not they were a potential candidate and agreed to be interviewed to provide feedback (data) regarding the proposed professional support CoP for beginning VATs. For those who qualified and agreed to participate, a letter of informed consent was emailed (see Appendix H). Interview dates were scheduled after the informed consent letters were returned to the researcher. The professional support community proposal outline was emailed to participants at least a week prior to the scheduled interviews.

Participants may benefit from the study by providing feedback about a community designed to support them directly as beginning VATs. Their insight assisted the researcher in

revising the proposal with the intention of piloting it at a later date, beyond the scope of this study. Should the commencement of this VAT CoP occur at a later time, the participants in this study may benefit from joining the community to help address their competency needs and concerns, as well as alleviate feelings of professional isolation. There was minimal risk of participant disinterest in being interviewed after reading through the proposal for the professional support CoP. Risks were avoided or minimized through continued confidentiality with an option to discontinue participation in the study. Participants who wished to be removed from the study were. The researcher provided the findings of the study to participants upon request.

Instrumentation

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted about the proposed professional support community designed to foster collaboration and reciprocal learning between beginning VATs and mentors in their same content area. The VAT Professional Support CoP Outline and the Sample VAT CoP Meeting Schedule (see Appendix F) were shared with participants in the study at least a week prior to the interviews in order to allow for review time. The open-ended interview questions and prompts (Bernard et al., 2017) were designed to elicit individualized data about participants' lived experiences as beginning VATs in relation to the values they anticipated gaining from the proposed CoP, based on the Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2017a) value-creation framework for social learning (see Figure 5).

A value-creation framework

Flow through value-creation cycles

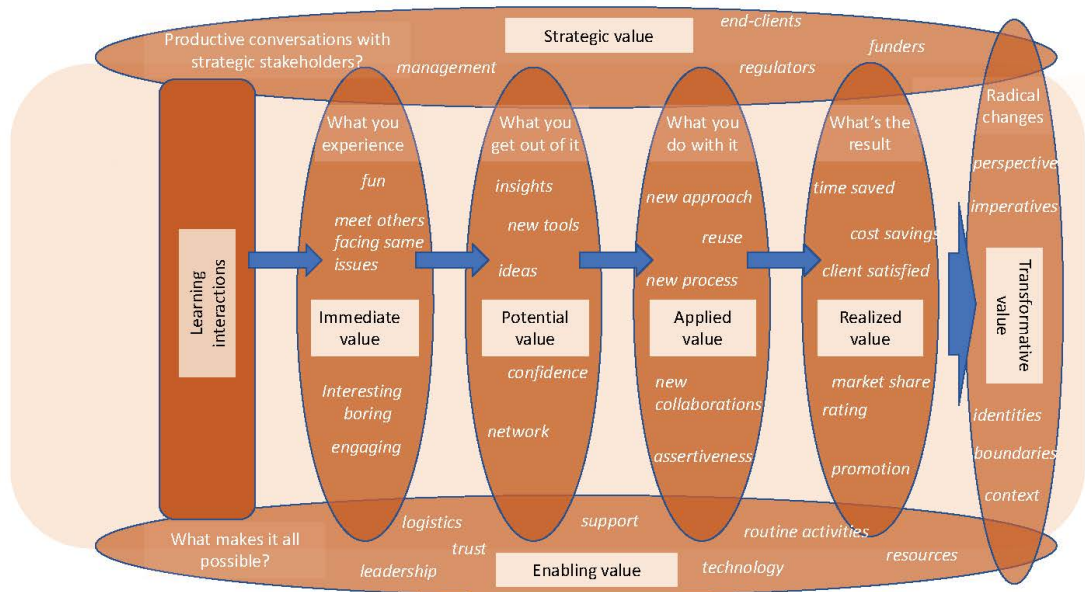


Figure 5: A conceptual framework designed to assess value creation in communities of practice. Reprinted from “Learning to make a difference: a value-creation framework for social learning,” in *17-07-26 ACA BEtreat day 2 framework.pptx*. Copyright 2017 by Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner. Reprinted with permission.

The interview questions were minimally revised (primarily in word choice - italicized emphasis indicates additions suggested) based on feedback from content experts (five veteran VATs) in a pilot to ensure question validity and clarity, with permission granted from Etienne Wenger-Trayner to adapt them from the original questions provided on the framework (personal communication, October 12, 2017). Six items are included in the interview protocol, with prompts to encourage participants to elaborate as needed. The questions (without prompts) are included in Appendix G.

- 1) Tell me about the kinds of supports you have as a beginning VAT.
(Prompts included: supports available in or outside of school, voluntary or mandatory, or participants' *awareness of or access to available (or desired)* supports designed specifically for beginning VATs).
- 2) Tell me about your top three or four most important concerns or needs as a (first or second year) art teacher.
- 3) Are there any questions you have about the proposed VAT CoP that I may clarify?
- 4) Thinking about the proposed VAT CoP,
 - a) what might make participating in this CoP meaningful *or useful*?
(immediate value)
 - b) what might you gain from participating as a community member?
(potential value)
 - c) what might you be able to do with what you might gain from the CoP?
(applied value)
- 5) Tell me about the value you might contribute to the CoP as a beginning VAT.
(Prompts included: *skills, ideas, knowledge, or perspectives participants might bring to the community*)
- 6) Is there any other information you would like to share?

Validity. Validity of the instrumentation is supported through the implementation of the Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2017b) value-creation framework template (see Figure 7), as well as alignment with the overarching research question and peer-review feedback by content experts.

Value-creation framework: template

1	Activity	Immediate value <i>What would make it meaningful?</i>	Potential value <i>What might you take away?</i>	Applied value <i>What might you do with it?</i>
Aspirations/ achievements	Cultivate a VAT CoP for beginning and veteran VATs in Los Angeles county to address reported competency needs and concerns while alleviating feelings of professional isolation			
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruit members - Space for meetings - Financial support – parking, location, food, resources (stipends?) - Commitment from members - Clear goals 			
Risks/ assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -VAT in Los Angeles County want to belong to a CoP -VAT have time to participate in a CoP 			
Mitigation/ plan B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interest survey first – recruiting for data collection - Partner with a museum or art institution/university for space to meet and resources/support - Grants for funding - Financial incentive for members? 			
Indicators/ data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People show up regularly – are committed to the CoP - Data shows members find the CoP meaningful and helpful in addressing competency needs/concerns and overcoming feelings of isolation 			
Loops/ branches	Unknown at this time.			

VCF template, June 12, 2017, KEDGE conference, Wenger-Trayner



Figure 6: A value-creation framework template designed for documenting and assessing the value creation in communities of practice. Reprinted from 17-07-12 VCF scratchpad and template.docx. Copyright 2017 by Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner. Reprinted with permission.

The template provides a matrix for identifying the learning interactions or activities, the values, achievements, conditions, risks or assumptions, mitigations, indicators or data, and loops or branches that might contribute to the success or challenges in cultivating CoP. Because this VAT CoP is in the proposal stage, the learning action or activity is the formation of the CoP itself. The researcher has completed the categories relevant to the initial planning of the VAT CoP from Page 1 of the template. Three of the values identified in both the value-creation framework and the value-creation framework template (immediate, potential, and applied) are incorporated into the interview questions, while the other values (from Page 2, Appendix I) are not applicable to

the study at this point in time. The framework and template are both aligned with the overarching research question in this study, “How might a professional support community be designed specifically to meet the needs of beginning visual art teachers in Los Angeles County?”, as they examine different levels of value that may be gained through participation in CoP, as well as the conditions, risks or assumptions, mitigations, indicators or data, and loops or branches that might support or detract from the proposed VAT CoP. Three of the interview questions for data collection are minimally modified versions of the questions provided in the value-creation framework template for the immediate, potential, and applied values (Table 3):

Table 3

Original and modified questions from the Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2017a, 2017b) value-creation framework.

Values	Value-creation framework template: original questions:	Interview Questions (modified for this study)
Immediate	What would make it meaningful?	What might make participating in this CoP meaningful or useful?
Potential	What might you take away?	What might you gain from participating as a community member?
Applied	What might you do with it?	What might you be able to do with what you might gain from the CoP?

They were adapted to be more relevant to this particular study, with permission granted via email (E. Wenger-Trayner, personal communication, October 12, 2017). The professional support community proposal and the interview questions were peer-reviewed by content experts to ensure validity in instrumentation. The data collected after IRB approval was also peer-reviewed by content experts to ensure validity in data analysis and interpretation.

Data Collection

The researcher interviewed beginning VATs who were currently in their first or second years teaching art in Los Angeles County public schools. The interviews were conducted in late December 2017 through January 2018, in person or virtually, at off-school sites of the interviewees' choice and were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in transcription. Based on Stokrocki's (1997) recommendation, field notes were also documented in case problems arose with the recording device. At least a week prior to each scheduled interview, participants were emailed the outline and sample schedule (see Appendix F) of the proposed professional support community designed to foster collaboration and reciprocal learning between beginning VATs and veteran mentors in their same content area, along with a letter of explanation. This period of time prior to the interview provided participants with an opportunity to review the proposal and to make note of any questions they may have about it. Interviews were semi-structured to allow participants to share relevant information that might not have been directly asked by the researcher. They all lasted less than one hour. Neutral probes were used as needed to encourage participants to elaborate on their responses (Bernard et al., 2017). The interview questions were designed to elicit feedback regarding the proposed CoP and to better understand if such a community might meet the competency needs and concerns of the beginning VATs interviewed, based on their lived experiences. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were asked if they had anything they wished to add or share that has not been asked to ensure that their individual contributions or perspectives were recognized.

Data Management

Data was stored on a password-protected computer and in a locked cabinet at the researcher's primary residence. Access to the data was only available to the researcher, content

experts for peer review, interrater, and dissertation chair. All data will be destroyed or deleted five years after completion of the study.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected from the interviews was transcribed for accuracy from the audio recordings and documented field notes using online software at www.Rev.com. It was first reviewed by the researcher to identify themes. Based on the overarching research question “How might a professional support community be designed specifically to meet the needs of beginning visual art teachers in Los Angeles County?” the researcher looked for words and ideas that described the existing supports available to beginning VATs, their areas of concern or needs, and indicators of the value that the proposed professional support community might provide. Once the themes were identified, the data was imported as a text file into HyperResearch, a qualitative data analysis software program. A codebook was generated in HyperResearch based on the initial themes. However, the researcher then recoded the data based on each individual interview question to ensure that the emerging themes were attributed to the correct question, rather than the interview as a whole. Participants’ responses were coded inductively, and an interrater was utilized to ensure accuracy regarding codes and themes (Bernard et al., 2017). Because this study is phenomenological in nature, a narrative analysis approach was used to interpret the data provided from the personal narrative responses of the participants. Quotes were selected from the data to provide a detailed account of the lived and anticipated experiences of the beginning VATs in this study (Bernard et al., 2017). Triangulation was not recommended for this study, as only one source of data was collected. Member checks were difficult to schedule based on beginning VATs’ availability beyond the interviews. However, data analysis was peer-reviewed by content experts to ensure validity in interpretation and understanding of participants’

responses. The findings are shared in Chapter IV through themes, visual depictions of coded data, and thick descriptions (quotes) to provide clear examples supporting the interpreted data.

Chapter Summary

Chapter III provides a detailed account of the research design and methodology for this study: a qualitative, phenomenological approach to better understand how the proposed professional support community might be designed specifically to meet the needs of beginning visual art teachers in Los Angeles County, based on their lived experiences as first or second year art educators. As the empirical research from Chapter II illustrates, beginning VATs have reported many shared competency needs and concerns worldwide (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Hochtritt et al., 2014; Kim, 2010; Kuster et al., 2010; Milbrandt, 2006; Paris, 2013). The narratives collected from participants in this study may add to the literature regarding available and utilized supports for beginning VATs, particularly in large metropolitan regions such as Los Angeles County. The population, sample, and sampling procedures are clearly outlined to provide detailed information about the potential participants in this study: beginning VATs in PK-12 public schools in Los Angeles County. Human subject considerations are outlined to ensure that all participants will be protected throughout the study and that there are minimal risks involved. The instrumentation (semi-structured interviews) and its validity (alignment with the Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner, 2017a, 2017b) value creation framework and template, plus peer-review through piloting of the questions) are clearly detailed. Chapter III also reviews data collection protocols, including how and when the interviews were conducted, how data was managed, and how the data was analyzed and presented in Chapter IV.

Chapter IV: Findings

Chapter Overview

Chapter IV includes the context for the research, including a brief review of the methodology employed, the research questions, and the data collection procedures. It includes the findings that resulted from the data collected, as well as a summary of the chapter with key findings to be explored further in Chapter V.

Context

This study utilized a qualitative, phenomenological approach to understand how a visual art professional support community might meet the competency needs and concerns of first and second year art teachers in PK-12 Los Angeles County public schools, based on their lived experiences. The primary research question and supporting (secondary) questions addressed are:

How might a professional support community be designed specifically to meet the needs of beginning visual art teachers in Los Angeles County?

1. What are some of the existing supports currently being used by beginning VATs in PK-12 public schools within Los Angeles County?
2. How might the lived experiences of beginning VATs in Los Angeles County impact the values (immediate, potential, and applied) that they anticipate gaining from participating in the proposed VAT CoP, based on the Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2017a) value-creation framework for social learning (see Appendix A)?

These research questions align closely with the interview questions themselves, as it was important to ascertain whether or not the beginning VATs interviewed reported the similar or different needs, concerns, and available supports identified throughout the literature by

beginning VATs worldwide. Additionally, because the study proposes a visual art professional support community rather than directly engaging beginning VATs in one, its purpose was to elicit detailed feedback from 5-10 beginning VATs about the value they anticipated they might receive from belonging to such a professional support community, in order to refine the proposed outline based on the needs, concerns, and benefits anticipated by the participants.

An initial recruitment email was sent to all southern area members of CAEA in November 2017. Additionally, the researcher shared the recruitment letter with art education colleagues, asking them to refer potential candidates. A total of eight beginning VATs responded to the invitation to participate; however, five completed the interview process. There were two respondents who discontinued contact prior to the scheduled interviews and one did not meet the qualifications. After completing a short survey to ensure qualification for the study, participants were emailed letters of informed consent, which were signed and returned prior to each interview. The proposed visual art support community outline (see Appendix F) was also emailed to participants at this time to allow them adequate time to review the proposal before being interviewed. Interviews were conducted in person face-to-face with three participants, and two were conducted through telephone interviews due to distance and participants' availability. All interviews lasted between 30-60 minutes and were completed between December 2017 and January 2018. The interviews were recorded and transcribed digitally through www.Rev.com and saved as Microsoft Word documents for coding and analysis.

The interviews were initially coded by hand, as the researcher identified key themes in participants' responses throughout the interviews. The text files were imported into HyperResearch, a qualitative analysis software tool in which the codes were sorted and refined based on each individual interview question, rather than themes emerging from each document.

This was necessary as participants often referred to a particular idea unrelated to the questions asked yet relevant to the overall conversation and important in the bigger picture. The questions were then reviewed for detailed accounts based on participants’ lived experiences as beginning VATs to provide supporting evidence for analysis. To ensure accuracy in interpretation, a visual art content expert and an inter-rater verified the themes, frequency, and participants’ statements.

Presentation of Findings

Participants were selected based on their qualifications for the study, documented in a Google Forms questionnaire (see Appendix D). The participants (referred to as P1-P5) all taught visual art in PK-12 public schools located within Los Angeles County. P2, P3, and P4 were in their first year as fully credentialed visual art teachers. P1 and P5 had been hired by their schools as interns while completing their credentials; at the time of the study, P1 was in her second year teaching, while P5 had completed one semester as an intern and was beginning her second semester as a credentialed VAT. Participants ranged in age from 23 to 60 and all identified as female. Table 4 illustrates the types of schools represented in the study and the grades each participant taught at the time of the interviews. Two of the five participants taught in the same school district.

Table 4

Participant Demographics

Type of School	Grades Taught	<i>n</i>
Charter Public High School	9-12	1
Traditional Public High Schools	9-12	1
Traditional Public Middle Schools	6-8	2
Traditional and Charter Public Elementary Schools	3-5	1

During the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked six open-ended questions (see Appendix G) related to the primary and secondary research questions. Because many of the themes overlapped often throughout the interviews, the researcher chose to re-code each question individually to focus specifically on the responses as they related to the information sought. For the final analysis, the responses were coded based on similar themes that emerged from the replies to each question. This made participants' responses more accurately aligned to the questions asked, rather than a general sharing of needs, concerns, or values. The alignment of the research questions to the interview questions can be seen in Table 5, along with significant themes that emerged from multiple respondents, and the frequency of responses associated with those themes:

Table 5

Research Question, Interview Questions, Themes, and Frequency (n)

Research Question	Interview Question	Themes	<i>n</i>
What are some of the existing supports currently being used by beginning VATs in PK-12 public schools within Los Angeles County?	1. Tell me about the kinds of supports you have as a beginning VAT.	Support from art teacher colleagues	5
		Support from professional organizations	4
		Lack of administrative support	3
		Teacher Induction support provider	3
	2. Tell me about your top three or four most important concerns or needs as a (first or second year) art teacher.	Lack of support (from school site and/or administration)	3
		Curriculum planning	3
		Collaboration/feedback	3
		Classroom management	2
		Student engagement	2

(continued)

Research Question	Interview Question	Themes	<i>n</i>
How might a professional support community be designed specifically to meet the needs of beginning visual art teachers in Los Angeles County?	3. Are there any questions you have about the proposed VAT CoP that I may clarify?	Varied for each participant - some asked questions, some commented on the proposed community components or timeline	
How might the lived experiences of beginning VATs in Los Angeles County impact the values (immediate, potential, and applied) that they anticipate gaining from participating in the proposed VAT CoP, based on the Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2017a) value-creation framework for social learning (Appendix A)?	4. Thinking about the proposed VAT CoP, <i>a) what might make participating in this CoP meaningful or useful? (immediate value)</i>	a) Collaboration with art colleagues	5
		Empathy/comfort from shared beginning VAT experiences	3
		Gaining other perspectives	2
	<i>b) what might you gain from participating as a community member? (potential value)</i>	b) Ongoing professional growth	3
		Networking	2
	<i>c) what might you be able to do with what you might gain from the CoP? (applied value)</i>	c) Making curriculum better/accessible to others	3
	5. Tell me about the value you might contribute to the CoP as a beginning VAT.	Sharing experiences/perspectives	5
		Contemporary art education ideas	4
		Extensive studio/critique experience	2
	6. Is there any other information you would like to share?	Varied for each participant - responses were based on personal experiences	

While some questions elicited similar responses from participants (thereby generating themes), there were also a number of individualized responses (outliers) that were equally important (significant) in the context of the questions, or in relationship to the themes presented in the

literature. Table 6 presents the codebook with all significant themes and descriptions identified in the responses, regardless of the number of participants who responded accordingly:

Table 6

Codebook Containing Questions, Themes, Descriptions, and Number of Responses (n)

Question	Themes	Descriptions	n
1	Support from art teacher colleagues	Assistance from veteran or other beginning VAT	5
1	Support from professional organizations	Museum programs or professional arts memberships (CAEA/NAEA)	4
1	Lack of administrative support	Noted a strong deficiency in support	3
1	Teacher Induction (TI) support provider (SP)	Meetings with TI support provider for clearing credentials; required by districts and state	3
1	Strong administrative support	Noted strong support from administration	1
2	Lack of support (from school site and/or administration)	Noted a strong deficiency in support from school site and/or administration - observations/feedback, discipline, budget/supplies, procedures, PD	3
2	Curriculum planning	Desires support in developing or implementing curriculum	3
2	Collaboration/feedback	Desires support from and/or collaboration with other art educators	3
2	Classroom management	Desires support in classroom management strategies	2
2	Student engagement	Desires support in engaging students more effectively	2
2	Assessment	Desires support in developing and implementing authentic assessments	1
2	Materials/space management	Desires support in utilizing art materials and classroom space more effectively - not specified by whom	1
2	Budget	Desires better support for budgetary concerns - for supplies or for own PD	1
4a	Collaboration with art colleagues	Anticipates gaining immediate value in collaborating with other art teachers	5
4a	Empathy/comfort from shared beginning VAT experiences	Anticipates gaining immediate value in knowing other VATs are experiencing/have experienced similar situations; value in sharing experiences with others	3
4a	Gaining other perspectives	Anticipates gaining immediate value in learning from others' perspectives/experiences	2
4b	Ongoing professional growth	Anticipates potential value in active, ongoing participation in own professional learning	3
4b	Networking	Anticipates potential value in meeting new people, connecting with others, alleviating isolation	2
4b	Bridging curriculum content	Anticipates potential value in being able to effectively bridge visual art with other content teachers at school site	1

(continued)

Question	Themes	Descriptions	<i>n</i>
4c	Making curriculum better/ accessible to others	Anticipates applied value in designing art curriculum that is easy for administrators and other art teachers to understand and/or implement	3
4c	Collaborative community projects	Anticipates applied value in working with other art teachers on large-scale collaborative community projects	1
4c	Future mentoring/ alleviating isolation	Anticipates applied value in being able to provide VAT mentorship to others in order to alleviate feelings of professional isolation	1
5	Sharing experiences/ perspectives	As a beginning VAT, might contribute shared experiences and new perspectives with other beginning and veteran VAT in the CoP	5
5	Contemporary art education ideas	As a beginning VAT, might contribute (to the CoP) art education pedagogy that is connected to 21st century teaching and learning, as well as new technologies that veteran peers may have less experience implementing	4
5	Extensive studio/ critique experience	As a beginning VAT, might contribute own experiences in studio and critique from undergraduate programs to the CoP	2
5	Excitement about teaching	As a beginning VAT, might contribute excitement and feelings of newness to teaching with the CoP (possibility of re-energizing veterans who may be less excited after many years teaching)	1

Interview question 1. All five participants identified receiving support from other VAT colleagues, either veteran mentors or other beginning VATs (friends or former credential program colleagues). P2 communicated the following about her experience:

... a student of mine's mother is an art teacher ... she was kind enough to email me before we'd ever met ... and told me about this professional development day that [the district] put on for arts teachers, which I did not know about ... no one at [school] told me about it. I didn't get any emails from the district, I don't believe. And so I went to a full-day professional development day with other art teachers, which was wonderful... it was great. And it was really inspiring to meet other teachers, and everyone was so warm and welcoming... (personal communication, December 14, 2017)

During the interviews, four participants mentioned attending or belonging to professional organizations; P1 specifically noted attending an art education program presented by a local

museum (personal communication, December 10, 2017), while P3, P4, and P5 specified belonging to either the National Art Education Association (NAEA) or CAEA and attending their conferences (P3, personal communication, January 5, 2018; P4, personal communication, January 24, 2018; P5, personal communication, January 27, 2018).

Even though Interview Question 1 asked participants about the supports they *do* have (focusing on the positive), three of the five interviewees commented on the lack of support they have experienced from administration (making the negative notably significant). P3 described feeling like her administrator didn't know how to help her and passed her off to another art teacher who might be able to support her instead. She said, "I think [the administrator] was just like, 'I don't know what this girl wants with me.'" She also said that after this happened she was thankful because "without that [the art teacher's help], I would have been really, really lost" (personal communication, January 5, 2018).

Of the five interviewees, three shared that they currently had VAT support providers (SP) assigned to them: P1 through a university TI program (as her charter school doesn't offer TI support), P4 as part of her TI program in her district, and P5 for support prior to starting the TI program, as she missed the deadline for applying. P1 shared that while her SP was supportive, the TI program itself was not helpful:

There was no one to pair me with [for reviewing lessons and planning instruction] in a related field. There's not even a music teacher! Everyone in the induction class was supposed to film themselves teaching and then find someone in that same subject area and reteach that lesson and keep sharing information and giving feedback... I was paired with a middle school history teacher and we were like 'We can't create a lesson together like this.' ... We talked to the professor ... and she said 'Don't worry about it. Just check

in with each other every so often... I actually requested to have a friend that was an art teacher in my class and they wouldn't put her in the same section as me... They were like 'Oh, we can't - the sections are full.' But they weren't full...it's not a big class. (personal communication, December 10, 2017)

Conversely, P5 indicated that her SP provided a lot of positive support through classroom observations and meetings (personal communication, January 27, 2018), while P4 simply confirmed having a SP (personal communication, January 24, 2018). P5 also asserted strong support from administration at school site and district levels, specifically regarding release time during the school day for her SP to conduct observations for feedback, while also providing opportunities for VATs at various schools in the district to meet as a team for content-specific professional development. Acting as an agent of change regarding existing professional development practices, P5 shared,

We're trying to get it to where other art teachers in our district meet up, cause there's such a small group of us... We tried to ask the district, instead of having PLC meetings where we're meeting with the robotics teacher and the band teacher, you know, essentially people who don't even teach the same curriculum ... instead of meeting with those people, can we meet ... with other art teachers in our district? And we got approved for that. (personal communication, January 27, 2018)

Interview question 2. This question received a wide range of responses, with several interviewees noting similar concerns, as well as needs unique to individual participants. This was to be expected, as each participant was asked to identify multiple concerns or needs as first or second year VATs. Similar to Interview Question 1, the lack of support from either administration, the school site, or both was noted by three of the five participants. P2 identified a

number of instances detailing her concerns regarding limited support from both: unclear procedures for ordering art supplies, missing information regarding budgets, difficulty managing large classes, and minimal feedback from administration regarding planning for her observation or other instructional feedback throughout her first semester teaching. She noted,

I find this job so challenging as a first year teacher. And to not have any support, I find myself just wasting so much time trying to figure things out by trial and error when so easily someone could have told me how to do something, and I would not have wasted so much time... There were so many things that could have easily been avoided if someone had just talked to me for like twenty minutes. (personal communication, December 14, 2017)

A need for help with curriculum planning was expressed by three participants, as well as a desire for collaboration with and feedback from other VAT colleagues. P1 and P5 both highlighted wanting help with identifying and addressing essential concepts in art curriculum, specifically noted in P5's response,

At the very start, you have taken all these visual art classes, and you know this and you know that. And then it's kind of like, 'Oh, now I'm building my own curriculum. What do I want the students to know? What do I think is important for them to leave with, out of my classroom at the end of the semester?' (personal communication, January 27, 2018)

P4 shared that she had taught a high school summer art class prior to her full time credentialed position, as well as "art on a cart" as an elementary art teacher without her own classroom. In the high school class, she "had a year's worth of curriculum in 3D art," and she was not required to have lesson plans for the elementary art instruction. She shared that she was struggling with

developing curriculum for her middle school students, saying, “I thought I could just adapt it [the high school curriculum] to middle school. However, I had zero experience with middle school, and I had been thrown a curveball” (personal communication, January 24, 2018). The desire for collaboration with and feedback from other VAT colleagues is evidenced by P1’s wish for “someone to review [her] structure” and “having someone to bounce ideas off of regularly.” She also noted that “it would help to sit down with someone that’s had a lot of experience and figure out ... what standards are really necessary, where are my gaps, what should I really work towards...” (personal communication, December 10, 2017).

P4 and P5 noted concerns about both classroom management and student engagement (P4, personal communication, January 24, 2018; P5, personal communication, January 27, 2018), which are often related and have been reported as concerns of many first year art teachers (Kuster et al., 2010). P4 shared,

I am the only art teacher here; I feel a little isolated. The principal has, um, recruited an English teacher to help me with, um, the management, the classroom management issues. I believe that is my biggest issue... and she has helped me. And, um, I’ve just been trying to come to terms with the idea that it was, it’s not going to be an art room like in high school where you hear this soft hum of voices while they’re working... and yeah, it’s just, I’m still adjusting. It’s a huge adjustment. (personal communication, January 24, 2018)

P5 also addressed her own struggles with classroom management and student engagement, noting that as a younger teacher, she has experienced mixed messages in relating to her students. She elaborated,

... for me, I'm like, 'How am I going to get these kids to really respect me, and listen to me, and listen to what I'm saying, and not just, you know, blow me off?' Because they're like, 'Oh well... you don't look like my other teachers. You're not older like my other teachers. Like, what do you know?' ... And I had a lot of people tell me, 'Oh well, you're teaching middle school, so, you know, don't smile at them until like December. And they're just going to walk all over you if you're nice to them.' But really... that's not my personality... I don't feel like I should have to be so stern with my students in order to get their attention or have them work in the way that I need them to work in this classroom. (personal communication, January 27, 2018)

She also commented on the often-held belief that students will naturally be engaged because it is art class, noting that "some students come in and it's just like any other class... they come in feeling defeated, like 'Oh well, I can't draw' or 'I don't know how to do this'," strengthening the connection between student engagement and classroom management (personal communication, January 27, 2018).

Though P1 was the only interviewee who identified a desire for help with creating authentic assessments (personal communication, December 10, 2017), it was noted as a significant theme due to the fact that many VATs struggle with assessing student work in meaningful ways (Andrade, Hefferen, & Palma, 2015; Gates, 2017), whether they are veteran or novice educators. Additionally, P5 was the only participant who specified concern with materials and space management, as well as budget concerns, yet both themes were noted as significant because they largely impact her daily instruction. In regard to materials and space management, she shared,

I am in a classroom that is not an art classroom, which makes it very difficult sometimes to deal with certain materials... our school was actually built as an elementary school, and then years later, they ended up switching it to a middle school, so my counter tops are maybe like two and a half feet tall. I have the tiniest little sink, and I only have one... I have very minimal storage space in my classroom for materials or anything else... I don't want to bring in any types of paint because then I'm going to have to grab plastic to put under the desks, or you know, the sink... gets clogged all the time... So at this point, I really base my curriculum around, okay, what is going to be good for the environment that I'm teaching in... I really want to open them up to different supplies and materials and mediums, and it's difficult to do that when I have little resources, and you know, the space is not very adequate for artmaking. (personal communication, January 27, 2018)

Interview question 3. Responses to this inquiry varied for each participant, as it asked them if they had any questions about the proposed visual art professional support CoP. Some asked specific questions, while others commented on the topics presented in the outline, particularly as they related to their own concerns and needs as first or second year VAT. One had no questions or comments specifically about the proposal. P1 inquired about the weeklong summer institute, wanting to know more about what it might look like (personal communication, December 10, 2017). The researcher responded with information about the model used at the Exploratorium, in which coaches, mentors, and beginning science teachers collaboratively plan units of instruction, building “teacher boxes” with necessary curriculum materials and supplies for teaching the unit (T. Cook-Endres, personal communication, June 20, 2017). The VAT summer institute would use this model as a general guideline, tailoring the collaborative planning to the needs of the participating VATs. P2 commented about the importance of bridging theory

with practice (from the proposal outline), describing her own experience in returning to her former credential program professor's classroom to share her first year teaching experiences with his new pre-credential art students:

... I just talked to them about my journey and my experience and answered all of their questions as a brand new teacher... and I think that's what we talked about the most, bridging what we learned in our credential program with actually being a teacher and what was reasonable, and what were the resources we had to use... (personal communication, December 14, 2017)

P4 recommended including audio recordings for VATs in the CoP to listen to, in addition to the face to face meetings or online sessions, as this is one of her preferred methods for professional learning. She stated,

I don't know if it's age related - I am closer to retirement than, um, starting a career... I find that I don't read like I used to ... but now I've taken to Audibles, to listening to books, and so I listen to books on my way to work, on my way home, while I'm setting up my classroom... (personal communication, January 24, 2018)

Recommendations and feedback such as this were desired by the researcher, in order to ensure that the proposed professional support CoP would meet the specific needs of the VATs who might participate.

Interview question 4. This question, based on the Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2017a) value-creation framework for social learning, contained three sub-questions related to the anticipated values interviewees might gain from participating in the proposed VAT CoP: immediate, potential, and applied. Participants responded to each question individually, though themes connected to collaboration and curriculum support emerged across the various

anticipated values participants believed they might gain. Other individual responses were noted as significant based on the literature reviewed and/or relevance to the interviewee's lived experiences.

Immediate value. All five participants anticipated immediate value in collaborating with other VATs as a result of participating in the CoP. P1 shared that “it would be a major stress reliever to be able to talk to people and generate ideas” (personal communication, December 10, 2017), with P3 echoing the sentiment, noting that “getting to meet up with people... to reflect, and to exchange ideas” in the CoP would be of immediate value to her (personal communication, January 5, 2018). P1, P2, and P3 anticipated immediate comfort in sharing experiences with other beginning VATs, knowing that they were not alone. P2 noted, “I think immediately, I would just feel comfort in knowing people that were going through the exact same thing as me, and just trying to problem solve these things together” (personal communication, December 14, 2017). Connecting back to the literature, in which beginning VATs reported experiencing feelings of professional isolation (Bain et al., 2010; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Nahal, 2010; Paris, 2013), P1, P2, and P3 felt that connecting with other VATs might immediately provide support and empathy for their first or second year teaching experiences. Gaining other perspectives was also reported as an anticipated immediate value by two participants. P5 talked about the value of “... having support... and learning stuff from teachers who have been teaching for so many years ...I think that's the kind of support that would be best brought on by this type of learning community” (personal communication, January 27, 2018). Similarly, P3 noted the immediate value she anticipated gaining in being able to look at her work objectively, “to get some perspective on it,” from participating in the proposed visual art CoP (personal communication, January 5, 2018).

Potential value. Ongoing professional growth was noted as an anticipated potential value by three interviewees. P1 felt that the proposed visual art professional support CoP might help newer VATs continue to improve their practice and wondered if participation in it might count towards fulfilling ongoing professional growth requirements (personal communication, December 10, 2017). P4 and P5 both noted potential value in learning new materials, methods, or strategies, also furthering their own professional learning (P4, personal communication, January 24, 2018; P5, personal communication, January 27, 2018). Illustrating this through her self-described love of teaching and learning, P5 explained,

I love learning stuff. And I feel as a teacher, you're constantly learning. And so going to conferences and stuff like that, or meeting with other people, just really allows you to get inspiration for better curriculum and better strategies that you can implement with your students. (personal communication, January 27, 2018)

P3 and P5 both anticipated networking with other VATs as a potential outcome of participating in the CoP (P3, personal communication, January 5, 2018; P5, personal communication, January 27, 2018), which was particularly important to P3, as she only recently moved to Los Angeles County and hoped to "... have a broader network of people, and even maybe get some more friends through sharing of experiences" (personal communication, January 5, 2018).

Applied value. Making curriculum better or more accessible to others was noted by three participants as an anticipated value that might be applied as a result of participating in the VAT CoP. All but one of the participants indicated that collaborating with other VATs to design instructional opportunities for students might help them become more effective teachers, applying what they learned from each other and members in the CoP to their teaching practice

(P1, personal communication, December 10, 2017; P2, personal communication, December 14, 2017; P3, personal communication, January 5, 2018; P4, personal communication, January 24, 2018). P1 also anticipated that she might be able to provide her administrators with clear evidence of curriculum planning, even though they may not completely understand the pedagogy of visual art. She explained,

I feel like if I were to give my lessons to them [administration], they would be like ‘Alright, what do I do with it?’ because they would be overwhelmed trying to figure out how to teach my curriculum. And I’d like my curriculum to be more accessible to someone else. (personal communication, December 10, 2017)

Similarly, P2 noted, “I just think that I would be a much better teacher to my students, quicker, if I had more support and I had the resources and didn’t have to figure everything out by myself,” which she felt would be a value she might apply as a result of participating in the VAT CoP (personal communication, December 14, 2017).

Other singular yet significant responses to this question included *collaborative community projects* and *future mentoring/alleviating isolation*. The first was noted for its significance because of its agency and outreach beyond the individual VAT or school site. P5 shared her experience in activating other middle school VATs in her district to collaboratively plan a student art exhibition. She noted,

I said something I would really like to do is have a district art show, and they were like, oh my gosh, we’ve never even had something like that before... And just by bringing one person into the mix with one idea, all of a sudden, now our entire middle school population for our school district is planning on putting together a larger community based project. (personal communication, January 27, 2018)

She further explained that having a VAT support CoP might allow for more opportunities like this to grow as a result of collaboration and shared ideas (personal communication, January 27, 2018). Regarding applied value, P1 referenced her own feelings of professional isolation from her previous year as a first year VAT. She noted that participating in the proposed CoP might help her one day become a mentor to other beginning VATs, applying her own experiences and knowledge to help alleviate similar feelings for other newcomers in the group (personal communication, December 10, 2017). This response was noted as significant because of its direct connection to the literature, in which many VATs have reported feelings of professional isolation for various reasons (Bain et al., 2010; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Nahal, 2010; Paris, 2013).

Interview question 5. In this question, participants were asked about the value they might contribute to the proposed visual art CoP as beginning VATs. All five interviewees expressed value in the sharing of their own experiences and/or perspectives. Four participants in particular noted that, as VATs recently certified from university art education credential programs, their ideas about 21st century contemporary art education may be valuable to veteran VATs who might benefit from learning current perspectives and new tools or strategies (P1, personal communication, December 10, 2017; P2, personal communication, December 14, 2017; P3, personal communication, January 5, 2018; P5, personal communication, January 27, 2018). P1 shared her perspectives on teaching art curriculum centered on social justice:

I really like the art ed approach of keeping things very socially conscious - I think that's a really important thing to include in curriculum. I feel like other art teachers just use prepackaged instruction - some of them may - so, because I'm doing everything and I'm making my life more difficult by creating my own curriculum, I feel like I could help

other teachers find a way to become more customized in their teaching, and make it more rigorous, bring in that socially conscious aspect. (personal communication, December 10, 2017)

P5 commented about contemporary instructional practice in regard to new technological implementations:

Right now, our school is going one to one with Chromebooks... we've been doing Google training ... and some of the teachers who have been teaching a long time are needing help ... and I said, 'I know how to do this' because this is something I had to learn through my credential program ... I think it kind of bridges the gap ... I know all about [this] because I just learned about it. (personal communication, January 27, 2018)

Earlier in her interview, P4 had shared that she came to the art teaching profession late and was now sixty years old, having gone back to school after raising her daughter. She reflected on the value of shared experiences in a slightly different manner:

I think that anytime you get a group of people together where some are experienced and some are just starting out, there's so many different life experiences and perspectives that there's the sharing of information; it's just interesting and valuable. Maybe I have some kind of experience in one area, or just a perspective and, uh, something that I can contribute. (personal communication, January 24, 2018)

P1 and P3 coincidentally both attended the same undergraduate art program out of state, which was heavily based in theory, studio practice, and critique. Because of this, both mentioned these ideas in their interviews as valuable practices they might contribute to the visual art CoP (P1, personal communication, December 10, 2017; P3, personal communication, January 5, 2018).

Loosely connected to the theme of shared experiences, one individual response to this interview question, noted by P2, was the contribution of her enthusiasm about teaching and her ability to connect with students:

I think that ... I can add a lot. I just went to college and this is all very fresh and new to me, and I'm still very excited to be teaching ... just being young, I can have a different relationship with my students. I have a lot of friends who are artists in the local area, and I've been trying to connect the local community to the school, which I think would be a really big support ... and help the students feel like they're supported, and people want to hear them. (personal communication, December 14, 2017)

This was noted as significant because of its contrast to the obstacles, concerns, and needs faced by all participants as reported in Interview Questions 1 - 4, and particularly those identified by P2 herself. Despite the challenges, P2's excitement about teaching was clear in her voice and in her desire to provide her students with relevant, real-world, contemporary art experiences that may connect them to their larger community; her eagerness to share this with other VATs clearly addressed the interview question.

Interview question 6. The last question was very open-ended in that it allowed participants to share anything else they wanted to talk about, regarding their lived experiences as beginning VATs. Each participant shared individual stories openly, some related to the interview questions asked, and others more focused on participants' personal journeys as new VATs.

P1 discussed her process of deciding to complete her credential while she was already enrolled in a master's degree program. She hadn't known that a credential would allow her to teach art in California public schools, whereas the master's degree would not. A professor

suggested she simultaneously complete both, which enabled her to begin teaching as an intern the year prior to this study (personal communication, December 10, 2017).

P2 further elaborated on her lack of school site support (a major ongoing concern for her), stating,

We don't ever get our floors swept or mopped ... One of my sinks (I have two big sinks) has been clogged for like a month now, and I said I was concerned for health reasons ... I waste so much time reminding people and filling out forms over and over again. I filled out a form to get a parking pass for our parking lot in August before school started and I haven't gotten it. They keep putting notes on my car saying that I'm gonna get towed and I'm gonna have to pay for it because I don't have a parking pass... I keep going to the office, telling them 'I filled this out... I'll fill it out again.' (personal communication, December 14, 2017)

Her frustration with bureaucratic procedures was evidenced throughout her interview, and even though these things may have impacted her daily school experiences, her love of teaching art and connecting with students was also quite apparent.

P3 asked questions about the flexibility within the proposed VAT CoP for members to self-select their own goals, research, or projects based on needs and interests. Concerned about the conditions of participating, she talked about a PLC that she was currently required to engage in as part of her job, which felt to her “like this is just kind of a way to keep us busy” and “is a little bit forced” (personal communication, January 5, 2018). The researcher explained that a CoP should be flexible and develop organically to meet the needs of its members, and therefore should not be programmatic with a one-size-fits-all approach to VAT support and professional growth (Wenger-Trayner, E. and Wenger-Trayner, B., personal communication, July 25, 2017;

Wenger et al., 2002). Because of this, the proposed CoP was initially outlined based on the major needs and concerns reported throughout the literature, yet it was designed to be tailored to participating teachers' needs, including revisions or additions based on the feedback provided from these interviews. Additionally, the CoP itself has the potential to adapt as membership changes or as individual members' goals and support needs change over time.

P4 shared a current experience collaborating with a VAT colleague, in which she experimented by giving her middle school students more open-ended choice in creating work for an art exhibition. While excited about letting her students each try something new, she shared her apprehension regarding materials management:

So, they have to map it out, they have to write their supplies, and they have to say, you know, what the meaning is and all this. And I thought it was a really good thing, and I just started it today. However, I'm starting to realize that getting the supplies out may be daunting. And everybody's going to want something else so I'm already strategizing.

(personal communication, January 24, 2018)

After listening to P4 share her limitations and possible solutions, the researcher shared some of her own experiences with similar projects and offered materials management options that had worked for her. P4 responded, "I think it would've been really valuable to have brainstormed with somebody else about it" prior to starting, to which the researcher commended her for taking on such an open-ended (yet valuable) project in her first year (personal communication, January 24, 2018).

P5 elaborated further on the need for content specific ongoing professional development that is supported by schools and districts. She noted,

Unfortunately, all the professional development that was ... provided from my school district is not based on my content area ... it's good information to have ... but to really have our school districts bring out some type of professional development that's specifically for art teachers ... I mean, I've gone to the CAEA conference and I'm going to be attending NAEA this semester ... I feel like those are such great opportunities. (P5, personal communication, January 27, 2018)

She also talked about the importance of content-specific PD being supported financially by administration, which is a potential solution for schools and districts that struggle to provide visual art professional learning opportunities for their teachers. She further explained, "... maybe if we had this type of learning community, and they could be advocating for the school district to create more opportunities for professional development for art teachers, it would be great for new and veteran art teachers" (P5, personal communication, January 27, 2018).

Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the findings from this qualitative, phenomenological study exploring the needs, concerns, and supports of the lived experiences of five beginning VATs in their first or second year teaching art in Los Angeles County public PK-12 schools. The study was conducted to elicit their feedback about the proposed visual art professional support community outlined to meet their needs and concerns, based on the needs and concerns of beginning VATs reported in the literature. The interviews included six open-ended questions, which were aligned to the primary and two secondary research questions guiding this study. From the data collected, three key findings emerged regarding the primary research question inquiring how the proposed VAT CoP might support their (participants') needs: support from and collaboration with other VATs, ongoing professional learning, and better advocacy and

support from administration. Additionally, three key findings emerged regarding the first secondary question, which elicited feedback about the types of supports utilized by the beginning VATs interviewed: support from art teacher colleagues, support from professional organizations, and a lack of administrative support. The key findings for secondary research question number two related directly back to the primary research question, as it asked participants about the anticipated values (immediate, potential, and applied) they might gain from participating in the proposed CoP: immediate value: *collaboration with other VATs and empathy/comfort from shared beginning VAT experiences*, potential value: *ongoing professional growth*, applied value: *making curriculum better/more accessible*. These findings are analyzed and further discussed in Chapter V, along with the researcher's conclusions, implications and recommendations for future research, including changes to the study and next steps. An evaluation and summary of the study in its entirety are also provided.

Chapter V: Discussion

Chapter Overview

Chapter V includes the context for the research, a discussion of the findings that resulted conclusions, implications, recommendations for future research, an evaluation of the study, and a summary of the study in its entirety.

Context

Many VATs (from beginner to veteran) have reported experiencing feelings of professional isolation as the lone art teacher on campus (Bain et al., 2010; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Nahal, 2010; Paris, 2013). While there has been a shift toward schools incorporating PLCs as a means of collaborative PD, such PLCs don't often meet the content-specific professional learning or collaborative planning needs of VATs if they are the only VAT teacher at their school site (Bain et al., 2010; Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Freedman, 2007; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2016; Milbrandt, 2006). "Professional development activities for all teachers have been largely geared toward the 'traditional' academic subject teachers, ignoring the different and sometimes unique needs of arts educators" (Conway, Hibbard, Albert, & Hourigan, 2005, p. 3). Because of the lack of opportunities for VAT collaboration during the school day, VATs must seek opportunities outside of their schools, often at their own expense and on their own time (Gates, 2010; Sabol, 2006). For beginning VATs especially, this type of collaborative professional support is essential, as school or district-based support programs and mentorships are not always aligned with beginning VAT's subject-specific competency needs and concerns, including: support in bridging theory with practice (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Cera, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gude, 2000, 2004, 2013; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Kim, 2010; Nahal, 2010;

Zimmerman, 1994), navigating school cultures (Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Cera, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Efland, 1976; Hanawalt, 2016; Kuster et al., 2010), overcoming feelings of professional isolation (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Berwager, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gates, 2010; Hanes & Schiller, 1994), and learning how to become advocates for the arts or agents of change in their new environments (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Cera, 2013; Freedman, 2007; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Kuster et al., 2010). Without such support for beginning VATs, many choose to leave the profession (Cohen-Evron, 2002). In California, there is a significant population of VATs, with 7,373 art teachers for grades 6-12 in California schools reported during the 2014-15 school year (including both charter and traditional public schools), and 1,833 VATs teaching in Los Angeles County alone - twenty-five percent of all VATs in the state (create/CA, 2017). Therefore, a problem exists, as there is no existing formal professional support network for beginning VATs in Los Angeles County that is content-specific, collaborative, ongoing, and addresses their competency needs and concerns as novice art educators while alleviating feelings of professional isolation.

This qualitative, phenomenological study considered how a visual art professional support community might meet the competency needs and concerns of first and second year art teachers in PK-12 Los Angeles County public schools, based on their lived experiences. The primary research question and supporting (secondary) questions addressed are:

How might a professional support community be designed specifically to meet the needs of beginning visual art teachers in Los Angeles County?

1. What are some of the existing supports currently being used by beginning VATs in PK-12 public schools within Los Angeles County?

2. How might the lived experiences of beginning VATs in Los Angeles County impact the values (immediate, potential, and applied) that they anticipate gaining from participating in the proposed VAT CoP, based on the Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2017a) value-creation framework for social learning (see Appendix A)?

A total of five participants were interviewed about their lived experiences as beginning VATs in their first or second year teaching art in Los Angeles County public schools. The key findings are reported in this chapter.

Discussion of Findings

The key findings are presented in this section for the primary research question and both secondary research questions. The findings reinforce what has been reported in the literature about the needs and concerns of beginning VATs as well as available systems of support.

Key findings for the primary research question. Utilizing evidence reported in the literature about beginning (and veteran) VATs' needs and concerns, the researcher initially constructed the outline for the VAT professional support CoP to address the primary overarching research question, *How might a professional support community be designed specifically to meet the needs of beginning visual art teachers in Los Angeles County?* The following key findings emerged regarding participants' wishes about the proposed VAT CoP:

1. Support from and collaboration with other VATs
2. Ongoing professional learning
3. Better advocacy and support from administration

No contradicting evidence to the literature was reported by participants. However, some outliers did exist in the coded themes and were generally related to specific areas of concern relevant to individual interviewees (as noted in Chapter IV). Based on the responses to the six open-ended interview questions, key findings, and the conclusions, the outline for the VAT professional support CoP will be adapted to include the needs and concerns reported by the interviewees, as well as suggestions they provided, as the purpose of this primary research question was to elicit their feedback based on their lived experiences as first or second year public school VATs in Los Angeles County.

Support from and collaboration with other VATs. Beginning VATs strongly desire support from and collaboration with other VATs, both veteran and beginners like themselves. This is indicated by participants' responses throughout the interviews, illustrating both existing support from other VAT colleagues or friends *and* desired support from a community of like-minded practitioners. All five participants noted (in Chapter IV) that they do already have another VAT to share ideas with, but they all also indicated that more collaboration and support would be highly beneficial, particularly for needs or concerns related to:

1. Collaborating on curriculum design = bridging theory with practice (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Cera, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gude, 2000, 2004, 2013; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016)
2. Sharing experiences and strategies for school or classroom-related issues = navigating school cultures (Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Cera, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Hanawalt, 2016; Kuster, et al., 2010)

3. Broadening their networks or creating larger community-based projects = overcoming feelings of isolation (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Berwager, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Gates, 2010)
4. Developing stronger support systems with administration and school sites = fostering agency and advocacy (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Cera, 2013; Freedman, 2007; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016)

The proposed visual art professional support community, as outlined, includes all the topics or areas of concern identified both in the literature and by participants in this study.

Ongoing professional learning. Ongoing professional learning is important to beginning VATs, as evidenced from participants' responses regarding the values they anticipated receiving as potential members of the proposed CoP, noted in Chapter IV, Interview Question 4. Sabol's (2006) study examining the needs and concerns of VATs regarding professional development also demonstrated that VATs value ongoing professional learning to satisfy their own desire for improvement in teaching, curriculum, skills, or techniques, or for informational purposes or self-challenge; less than a quarter of participants in his study indicated that they chose to participate in PD opportunities to fulfill requirements from their administration. This alignment supports the finding that beginning VATs desire opportunities to engage in ongoing content-specific professional learning, which, as the literature reports, is not always possible at the school site (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Berwager, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Freedman, 2007; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Hochtritt et al., 2014; Milbrandt, 2006).

Better advocacy and support from administration. There is a need for better advocacy and support for beginning VATs - from administration, the school site, or district-level PD requirements (Bain et al., 2010; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Hanawalt, 2016; Kuster et al., 2010; Sabol,

2006). Participants in this study indicated that the proposed visual art professional support community might help them navigate these concerns and help them advocate for their students, their art programs, or their professional learning needs, as noted in P5's reflection:

I would just wish that my district or my principal, that they would have money allocated for that [professional state or national arts conferences] ... So I think maybe if we had this type of learning community, they could really be advocating for the school district to create more opportunities for professional development for art teachers. It would be great for new and, you know, veteran art teachers. (personal communication, January 27, 2018)

Because administrators have myriad roles to fill and are often overloaded and unavailable (evidenced by responses from P1 and P2 regarding administrator support), it is not reasonable to expect that systemic change will easily happen in helping administrators understand and address the needs of VATs. Gates (2010) asserts that "... art educators who value the rich learning that takes place when they collaborate with others must work to initiate shared professional development experiences" (p. 14). For these reasons, it is essential for beginning and veteran VATs to work together in CoP to advocate (both individually and collectively) for support from administration and understand how best to be agents of change in shifting the traditional paradigms about art education in schools.

Key findings for secondary research question one. In response to the secondary research question, *What are some of the existing supports currently being used by beginning VATs in PK-12 public schools within Los Angeles County?* three key findings emerged:

1. Support from art teacher colleagues
2. Support from professional organizations
3. A lack of administrative support

While the first two themes identified positive supports reported by participants, a notable lack of administrative support was also reported from participants regarding this particular research question, rendering it a significant finding.

Support from art teacher colleagues. All five participants expressed having support from other art teacher colleagues or friends, either other beginning VATs, veteran VATs, or both. However, only one participant (P5) reported on-site support from a veteran VAT colleague, who “has been teaching art for a long time...and he’s gotten to the point where he’s very organized”. She elaborated,

He talks to me all the time... and he’s like ‘I don’t want you to think I’m some genius and all of a sudden I just came up with this brilliant idea. This is like years and years of, you know, knowing what’s worked and what hasn’t worked and just kind of perfecting how I do things... As you go through teaching, you learn, and you kind of come into this role of understanding what can be different, what can be better... and kind of just adjusting to that every year. (P5, personal communication, January 27, 2018)

While P2 did have an on-site veteran VAT colleague, she shared that he was not supportive or collaborative, noting:

At [school], the ceramics teacher is just a substitute teacher right now, and the other teacher has taught for eighteen years and he’s, like, not interested in being part of the school as community. He’s introverted and really great, but he’s not... looking to be someone’s mentor. (P2, personal communication, December 14, 2017)

P1, P3, and P4 were the lone art teachers at their schools, yet all five participants reported having someone outside of their daily work environment (another VAT) to share ideas with and get feedback from. As noted in the literature, many schools do not employ more than one art teacher,

making it difficult for VATs to collaborate with one another and provide on-site support (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Freedman, 2007; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2016; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Milbrandt, 2006). However, because VATs strongly desire opportunities to interact with other VAT colleagues, they often use their own time and resources to connect with VATs outside of schools and districts (Gates, 2010; Sabol, 2006). This off-site support and collaboration can be beneficial in helping VATs overcome feelings of professional isolation, confirming the need for ongoing support from a community of like-minded practitioners (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Kim, 2010; Milbrandt, 2006).

Support from professional organizations. Professional organizations were reported as a source of support for four participants, which included museums and other professional arts groups such as CAEA (the state arts association) and NAEA (the national arts association). P2 was the only participant who did not mention attending any professional organization/museum workshops or belonging to any professional arts organizations as a means of support, yet several weeks after her interview, she emailed the researcher to share that she had joined NAEA and CAEA (P2, personal communication, January 27, 2018). This finding is significant, as Sabol (2006) highlighted the importance that VATs placed upon belonging to professional arts organizations in his study:

Ultimately, they feel strongly that their state art education association and the NAEA are significant sources of professional development and they feel that professional development they receive from these sources is worthwhile and beneficial. They feel that their state art education associations and the NAEA must continue to provide exemplary professional development experiences and also that both associations should continue to develop and expand the frequency and types of professional development experiences

they provide. They feel strongly that these professional associations must provide local and regional professional development experiences that are inexpensive and of high quality. (p. 106)

Paired with the fact that four participants electively belong to both their state and national professional arts organizations (with three citing the organizations as specific sources of support at the time of the interviews), Sabol's (2006) analysis demonstrates alignment between local and national organizational supports available to and utilized by VATs. Bain et al. (2010) strongly recommend that professors who teach preservice art educators encourage their students to join such professional arts organizations to keep them connected as they move from university programs to teaching positions. Similarly, Hanawalt (2015) also asserts that professional organizations, in addition to university or museum partnerships, or VAT learning communities, may provide the type of ongoing support that beginning VATs seek.

A lack of administrative support. Noted as significant for its negative response regarding support, three participants clearly communicated the lack of support they received from their administrators. P1 explained that (in her prior first year teaching) the assistant director of her school was meant to visit her classroom weekly for observations and support,

“... but [it] was very difficult to get him in there because he's running the general operations; he functions as the principal, so he does many different jobs: admissions, disciplinary stuff, communicating with the teachers, you know, he does everything, so he wasn't really available too much. (P1, personal communication, December 10, 2017)

Expressing feelings of even less support, P2 shared,

Besides our orientation, I've received very little support from the administration. For example, not once has an administrator asked me how I was doing, or how my experience

has been at [school], which seems crazy that my employers that just hired me have never asked me how I'm doing... They've never visited my room. I've never been visited by another teacher or an administrator ever. (P2, personal communication, December 14, 2017)

This was a recurring universal concern for P2, as noted in Chapter IV, yet throughout the interview she did not let these issues overshadow her excitement about teaching. Cohen-Evron's (2002) study examining VAT attrition illuminated administrative lack of support for VATs or their instructional programs as one reason some VATs decided to leave the profession. Other beginning VATs have also reported a lack of support from administration, with limited authority over their own curriculum, schedules, class sizes, or disciplinary issues (Bain et al., 2010; Hanawalt, 2016; Kuster et al., 2010). Beginning VATs have also reported a lack of understanding among administrators about contemporary visual art pedagogy or assigning adjunct duties such as holiday projects or school decorations that do not support meaningful and relevant art education experiences for students (Cohen-Evron, 2002; Efland, 1976; Kuster et al., 2010). This leads the researcher to wonder what might be done to help administrators better understand the nature of contemporary visual art instructional programs and the needs or concerns of the VATs at their school sites, in order to bridge the gap that clearly exists between beginning VATs and support from administration.

Key findings for secondary research question two. Eliciting responses about the immediate, potential, and applied values that participants anticipated receiving from the proposed visual art support community led to the following key findings for each anticipated value, based on the Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2017a) value-creation framework for social learning (see Appendix A):

1. immediate value: *collaboration with other VATs and empathy/comfort from shared beginning VAT experiences*
2. potential value: *ongoing professional growth*
3. applied value: *making curriculum better/more accessible*

Immediate value. The most notable findings regarding the immediate value, or experiences, participants anticipated having from membership in the visual art CoP were *collaboration with other VATs and empathy/comfort from shared beginning VAT experiences*. P5 anticipated that she might immediately experience professional support from collaborating with other VATs in the CoP, "... knowing that you have somebody you can talk to that's going to be supportive in a professional way..." (P5, personal communication, January 27, 2018). P1 noted that in her first year teaching, she felt very isolated and did not receive specific feedback to support her instructional practice. Regarding the immediate value she anticipated gaining from the CoP, she said, "... having someone to empathize with you ... having a community of people that understand what you're going through would have probably alleviated some of the negative self-doubt and things like that" (P1, personal communication, December 10, 2017). Cohen-Evron (2002) reported a number of VATs in her study felt that they, too, did not have colleagues at school (art or otherwise) to talk to who could understand the specific needs and concerns they faced as VATs. Reported throughout the literature, many beginning VATs also struggle in their first few years transitioning from supportive, collegial university teaching programs to environments where they are essentially on their own as the sole art teacher on campus (Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Milbrandt, 2006). The immediate value of collaborating with other VATs who may empathize with one another through shared experience might help diminish these reported feelings of isolation. Because schools and districts are often not able to provide

the kind of collaborative professional learning and support that beginning (and veteran) VATs critically need, an external visual art professional support community such as the one proposed by the researcher - independent of schools and districts - may be the essential component to provide the kinds of collaboration and support strongly desired by VATs (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Kim, 2010; Milbrandt, 2006).

Potential value. *Ongoing professional growth* was noted as the major key finding regarding the potential value participants anticipated gaining from belonging to the proposed visual art CoP. Potential value refers to the ideas, tools, or connections one might acquire through participation. As reported by participants interviewed in this study, ongoing professional growth opportunities include support with curriculum design, interdisciplinary instruction, community projects, instructional strategies, art media/methods, and networking. Wanting support in developing a general curriculum structure based on critical concepts students should know, P1 anticipated that belonging to the proposed professional support community might provide potential value, noting that “having a group of people to support me in creating that general structure would be amazing” (P1, personal communication, December 10, 2017). Sabol (2006) reported “curriculum” as the topic most desired by VATs for professional development in his study examining their PD needs and concerns:

Curriculum (23%) was the topic most frequently identified. Art educators requested information about curriculum models, lesson planning, course development, International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, including national and state standards in curriculum, special needs and gifted and talented students’ curriculum, interdisciplinary curriculum, differentiated curriculum, and other curriculum related topics. (p. 77)

This data aligns with the potential value P1 anticipated gaining as part of ongoing professional growth from belonging to the proposed CoP.

While only one participant (P2) anticipated the potential value in being able to effectively bridge visual art with other content areas at her school site, it was noted by the researcher as significant for two reasons: (a) its connection to the potential value of ongoing professional growth in interdisciplinary curriculum design; and (b) because of its relevance to the desire to be an agent of change within her school, which has been reported in the literature as something that beginning VATs often don't feel empowered to do (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Cera, 2013; Freedman, 2007; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Kuster et al., 2010). P2 shared her experience of trying to participate in an interdisciplinary school grant writing opportunity, yet was told by committee members (teachers of other content areas) that they didn't see how art might fit in, even after she explained the many roles art might play (P2, personal communication, December 14, 2017).

Ongoing professional growth may also include "studio techniques/practices," which was noted as the third most reported topic of interest for PD in Sabol's (2006) study, which supports P4's interest in engaging with new media that might be incorporated into her instructional practices, noted by her description of the potential value of "learning new art forms." She expressed excitement about a recent workshop about Gelli printing, recalling, "It was incredibly fun, and it was something that I wanted to pursue, I wanted to keep doing and experimenting, and otherwise I don't think I would have even had the experience" (P4, personal communication, January 24, 2018). It has been reported in the literature that ongoing professional growth opportunities (covering a broad range of topics) is valuable to and sought by VATs (Gates, 2010; Sabol, 2010), validating the potential value that participants might receive as members of the proposed visual art CoP.

Applied value. Applied value encompasses what participants might do with what they gain from membership in the proposed visual art CoP. The key finding resulting from participants' responses to this question, *making curriculum better/more accessible*, looks to longer term planning and implementation of more effective instructional content. While all participants communicated a desire to share their own knowledge, experiences, and perspectives with other VATs, especially contemporary art education practices, technology tools, and interdisciplinary instructional strategies, three expressed the belief that belonging to the proposed CoP might help them develop more effective and accessible curriculum that could be applied long term in their classrooms (P1, personal communication, December 10, 2017; P3, personal communication, January 5, 2018; P4, personal communication, January 24, 2018). Anticipating the value of collaboration with other VATs in the proposed CoP to help guide her through long term instructional planning, P4 noted,

Long term, I can see, um, first it's the intrigue, then it's the engagement and going to a workshop or something like that. And then, bringing it into the classroom, and working it out, because a lot of it is collaborating, like 'How do you do this? How do you manage materials and supplies?' (P4, personal communication, January 24, 2018)

P1 discussed her experiences in her IP using a "lesson design study" curriculum planning format, which she used to plan and reflect on a lesson to be observed by her SP. She expressed difficulty with the process, as her SP is not at her school site and was unavailable to observe as part of this process, noting:

It's really difficult to do lesson design study when no one's available to come in and watch you. I like that idea of having multiple people observing different aspects of my teaching, but how can you practically make that happen, especially when you're the only

visual art teacher as your school? So maybe it [the professional support community] could help for something like that. (P1, personal communication, December 10, 2017)

Anticipating curriculum and observation support from others in the CoP as a value P1 might be able to apply, she hoped that such a community might be able to help alleviate the issues of not being able to get feedback about curriculum and instruction through the observation process (P1, personal communication, December 10, 2017). The researcher explained how the coaching component works in the Exploratorium TIP, with retired science teachers or science teachers on special assignment (TOSA) serving as coaches who are able to observe beginning science teachers to help them improve their curriculum and instruction (T. Cook-Endres, personal communication, June 20, 2017; Shore & Stokes, 2006). This model - or something similar - would be a desired component of the proposed visual art professional support community, both by the researcher and by participants, based on their feedback about the proposed CoP. The literature also reinforces beginning VATs desire for support in developing and implementing meaningful visual art curriculum (Bae, 2014; Bain et al, 2010; Hanes & Schiller, 1994; Sabol, 2006), which may be an applied value for members of the proposed CoP.

Conclusions

Based on the alignment between participants' responses and reports in the literature regarding beginning VATs needs and concerns, beginning VATs strongly desire support from and collaboration with other VATs (both veteran and beginners like themselves) in order to: alleviate isolation, provide feedback for one another, develop curriculum and assessments together, engage in ongoing professional learning, and generate new ideas. P1 encapsulated these needs in her reflection about the proposed CoP:

That sounds ideal... this year things feel better but last year, if I had had something like that it would've made all the difference. I probably wouldn't have been so stressed out, especially going into the classroom and not really knowing how to approach something - especially with my photography curriculum ... I want to teach it in a really specific way, and even to talk to other non-photography teachers would have been helpful because of all the big concepts and crossover ... but there are teachers teaching photography...

(personal communication, December 10, 2017)

Beginning and veteran VATs seek opportunities to engage with other VATs for support and professional learning, as evidenced in participants' responses and throughout the literature. Gates (2010) notes that "Because professional networks exist outside teachers' immediate contexts, they have the potential to offer more discipline-specific, collaborative opportunities" (p. 11). CoP, therefore, such as the proposed visual art professional support community in this study, have the potential to bring together beginning and veteran VATs to meet regularly, collaborate, share ideas, and learn together to improve their practice and alleviate feelings of professional isolation.

Beginning VATs desire increased support from administration, particularly regarding instructional feedback, professional learning needs, and school site procedures. P2 particularly expressed this need often throughout her interview, best summarized earlier in this chapter regarding the *Key Findings for Secondary Research Question One*, calling attention to the fact that no administrator had visited her classroom or inquired about her needs as a new teacher (personal communication, December 14, 2017). Because teachers often belong to multiple communities or networks as a natural part of their jobs - the larger school community, PLCs, grade level committees or other groups (and administration itself may be viewed as a separate

community within the school bounds) - Wenger (1998) describes how such communities may intersect or remain separate based on the boundaries between them. He notes that a “broker,” or someone who has memberships in multiple communities, might help members of various communities navigate the landscapes of practice to which they belong. In order to ensure that administrators understand the needs and concerns of beginning VATs, the proposed visual art professional support community might engage veteran members who may serve as brokers for beginning VATs to negotiate their own identities as advocates for themselves and their art programs. Hanawalt (2016) asserts, “if new art teachers were supported and encouraged as creative agents, then perhaps much needed changes within school spaces could be both imagined and possible” (p. 286). The proposed visual art professional support community might be able to address the desire for increased administrative support through brokering and agency, and as such, the researcher hopes to invite both beginning and veteran VATs to participate in the next steps.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Because schools and districts are not meeting the professional learning and support needs of VATs (from beginning to veteran), the proposed visual art professional support community may be a path to addressing the needs and concerns reported in the literature and by the participants interviewed in this study. Induction Programs (IPs) and mentoring are still not consistently implemented for beginning teachers (Goldrick, 2016). P2 and P3 did not have a mentor assigned to support them and neither were participating in an IP during their first year teaching. While P5 did have a support provider who she had also worked with in her first semester as an intern, she (like P2) was unable to enlist in the IP due to missing the deadline. Better methods of addressing beginning VATs needs must be implemented, yet it may not be

feasible (financially or otherwise) for all schools or districts to provide the kind of same-content, on site mentoring and support desired by VATs. As stated in Chapter II, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing has revised their standards for IPs, noting that programs must pair “the mentor and participating teacher according to grade level and/or subject area, as appropriate to the participant’s employment” (2015b, Appendix A, No. 2). However, this remains open-ended based on the “and/or” clause, still not guaranteeing that beginning VATs will receive the content-specific support they desire. While the proposed visual art professional support community may serve as a model for schools and districts to establish better support systems for beginning VATs, these findings indicate, as Hanawalt (2015, 2016) suggests, that alternative supports (independent of schools and districts) must *also* be available to beginning VATs so that their needs and concerns are addressed by educators who understand the complexities of teaching visual art in public schools today. The results of this study imply that the proposed visual art professional support community might help to resolve some of the issues reported by beginning VATs in Los Angeles County, as well as those reported throughout the literature, including inconsistent and mismatched mentoring (Bullough Jr., 2012; Meyer, 2002; Shore & Stokes, 2006), repetitiveness of IP requirements (Freedberg & Rice, 2014; Koppich & Humphrey, 2013), and lack of content-specific support (Bae, 2014; Bain et al., 2010; Berwager, 2013; Cohen-Evron, 2002; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016; Milbrandt, 2006). It is recommended by the researcher that the California Department of Education consider such alternative supports (like the VAT CoP) eligible for application toward helping beginning VATs earn a Professional Clear Credential, so as to alleviate any undue burden that beginning VATs may face if participating in both a district-mandated IP and the voluntary proposed visual art professional support community.

Recommendations for Future Research

Beginning VAT's needs and concerns have been clearly documented in the small number of studies that have addressed such topics, both throughout the literature and in this study. Recommendations have been made in prior studies to develop more effective, collaborative, non-evaluative supports for beginning VATs outside of schools and districts, perhaps through university, museum, or arts organization partnerships or VAT learning communities (Gates, 2010; Hanawalt, 2015, 2016). Future research may include presenting the proposed visual art professional support community outline to preservice art education programs at local universities in Los Angeles County, art museums, or to the southern area delegation of CAEA to elicit interest and/or support for establishing the CoP and inviting both beginning and veteran members to participate. Because of the strong connection between the literature and participants' responses regarding support from professional arts organizations, the researcher may seek assistance from CAEA as one pathway for implementing the proposed visual art professional support community, initially at the local level for VATs in Los Angeles County, with potential for multiple professional support communities throughout the state. As many other visual art support communities may exist yet not be formally documented, future research might also include investigating this possibility and examining the practices and experiences of members of such groups.

Changes to the study. The study was designed to collect feedback from 5-10 beginning VATs in Los Angeles County public schools. While the minimum requirement was met, the researcher would have liked to have interviewed more participants, including a more diverse group of beginning VATs. The five interviewees ranged in age from 23 to 60 (with all but one under 30), and all were female. One male beginning VAT expressed interest in participating, yet

did not continue contact after agreeing to be interviewed. Many needs and concerns were similar across all interviews, yet P4 did note coming into teaching later in life, identifying a couple concerns she felt might be age-related (P4, personal communication, January 24, 2018). Because of this, the researcher is interested in knowing whether age, gender, other individual experiences might elicit different responses based on lived experiences as beginning VATs in Los Angeles County.

Next steps. Because this study was based on feedback about the proposed visual art professional support community from beginning VATs in Los Angeles County public schools, it was intended as a preliminary measure to incorporate the needs and concerns of the participants that the CoP might support in the future. Knowing that such a support community is indeed desired by and relevant to the beginning VATs interviewed, the researcher applied for a research grant from the National Art Education Foundation (NAEF) to conduct a year-long pilot study during the 2018-19 academic year. The pilot study is designed to recruit four beginning and four veteran VATs to collaborate and support each other throughout the year. It concludes after the week-long summer institute, intended to take place in early July 2019, with interviews and data analysis following immediately after. While the implementation of the CoP is not necessarily reliant on funding from the NAEF grant, it would alleviate concerns about securing space for meeting face to face and any other incidental costs. It would also allow for moderated analysis during the first year, as the CoP would initially be limited to the eight participants. Ideally, the researcher would like to partner with a local arts organization, such as a museum or the CAEA southern area regional group (as noted previously), to eventually open up the proposed visual art professional support community to all beginning and veteran VATs in Los Angeles County who are interested in participating. This CoP should be a resource to all VATs who might benefit

from the support from and collaboration with other VATs, while continuing to engage in ongoing professional learning that meets their needs.

Evaluation of the Study

Adams (2009) points out that “Change begins with the person who wants the change” (p. 58), and even though I am no longer a beginning VAT myself, the urgency to bring VATs together in support of one another is what inspires me to initiate such a change in my profession. This study served as a reminder of my own experiences as a beginning VAT fifteen years ago, newly credentialed, in an itinerant travelling teaching position, with a mentor who did not understand my content pedagogy beyond surface-level engagement, and administration that focused primarily on bureaucratic issues rather than the needs of teachers. To confirm that little has changed regarding support for beginning VATs is disappointing, yet it validates the critical necessity for visual art professional support communities to address the needs and concerns of beginning VATs today. While I wish it were possible to create such a support system on site at schools for VATs, the nature of budgets, space, and scheduling continue to serve as obstacles to making this a systemic solution. However, hearing about the shared experiences in getting district support to bring VATs together from various schools for professional learning was encouraging - first, in knowing that some districts do hear the need, and secondly, knowing that some beginning VATs are willing to ask, to challenge the status quo of how things have been regarding professional development. As a result of conducting this study, my hopes are: (a) to pilot, then grow, the proposed visual art CoP; (b) that the CoP will indeed address the needs and concerns of VATs; and (c) that the CoP might serve as a model for schools, districts, or even the state Department of Education to use for providing beginning VATs with meaningful same-content and grade level support from veteran mentors. The study has also impacted my

instruction at the university level in working with preservice art students, as it has encouraged me to consider more profoundly the issues they may face, and to address the concerns reported throughout the study to better advise them as they prepare to become VATs themselves.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the key findings that emerged from this study were discussed, resulting in two overarching conclusions: beginning VATs strongly desire support from and collaboration with other VATs, and beginning VATs desire increased support from administration. The beginning VATs interviewed in this study want to improve their instructional practice through collaboration, feedback, and ongoing professional learning covering a range of topics. However, opportunities to do so have been limited for various reasons, including: being the lone art teacher at school, no visual art specific school site PD, or a lack of financial support from administration for attending professional arts conferences. While these obstacles have directly impacted the beginning VATs teaching in Los Angeles County who participated in the study, they are a result of school (or district) administrative practices. The implications are, then, that something should be done to address beginning VATs' needs and concerns. As noted by Gates (2010) and Hanawalt (2015, 2016), opportunities outside of the school context, such as networks or learning communities, may provide VATs with the content-specific professional learning support they seek while allowing for autonomy and collaboration. Communities of practice are an excellent example of this, providing a space (both literal and figurative) for members to come together in shared practice, supporting one another through individual and collective learning (Wenger et al., 2011).

As I reflect upon the experiences of the beginning VATs interviewed for this study and their desire for support and collaboration, the parallels between my own adventures as a

beginning VAT and theirs are illuminated. This alignment (though years apart) emphasizes the ongoing critical value of having a community of practitioners who understand what it is like to be new to teaching, as well as those who may share their knowledge from years of experience. Without such support, I struggled to bring everything I had learned about art education and pedagogy to my own instructional practice in my initial years as an itinerant art teacher. Not knowing how to navigate effectively the many school cultures I encountered caused me uncertainty about how to best demonstrate the value of art education to the administrators at each school site, knowing art was likely not one of their most pressing concerns. I did not have a community of art teachers to learn from beyond the colleagues I saw once a month for district meetings, and even though I was a member of CAEA/NAEA and attended museum art education workshops, there were no local groups that specifically focused on supporting new art teachers. These experiences have stayed with me, and knowing that other beginning VATs continue to have similar encounters demonstrates a vital need for a visual art professional support community in Los Angeles County. This research has caused me to reflect further upon the positive impact that the proposed VAT CoP might have in providing support and collaboration for beginning VATs, including my own preservice students and others enrolled in pre-credential and credential programs throughout Los Angeles County. From my professional experience, the literature reviewed, and the data collected in this study, I believe it is my academic responsibility to use the outcomes to help beginning VATs bridge the gap that exists and to continue to be a resource as they transition from student to teacher.

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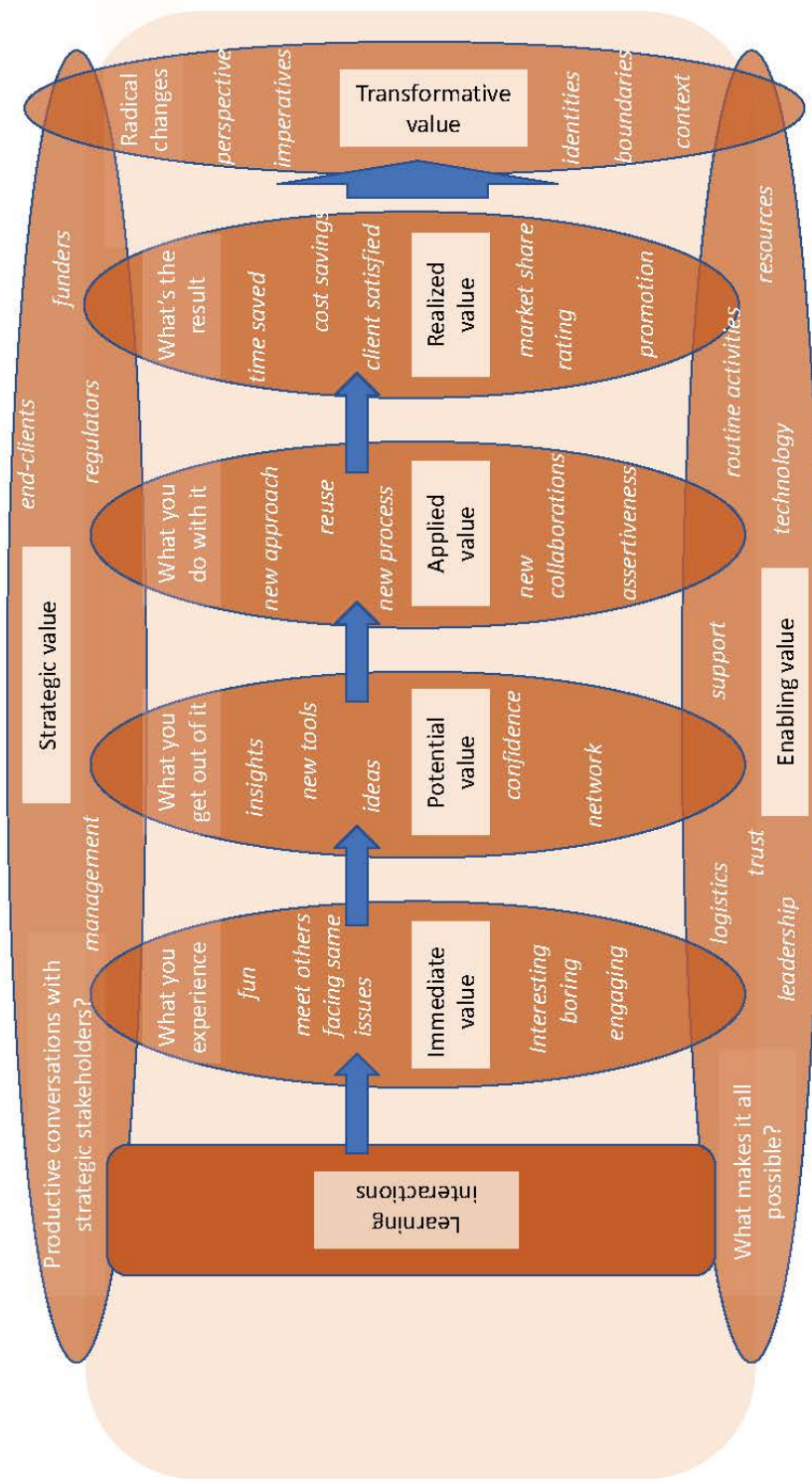
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APPENDIX A

A value-creation framework (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2017a)

A value-creation framework

Flow through value-creation cycles



APPENDIX B

Email from CAEA Granting Permission to Recruit

Gmail - question re: recruiting for my dissertation

10/10/17, 3:52 PM



Kristin Taylor <kvanderliptaylor@gmail.com>

question re: recruiting for my dissertation

3 messages

Kristin Taylor <kvanderliptaylor@gmail.com>
To: Armalyn De La O <adkaba93@gmail.com>

Fri, Sep 29, 2017 at 4:23 PM

Hi Armalyn,

I was wondering if it would be ok to recruit through CAEA southern members for my dissertation? I'm not ready yet - setting dates for my prelims now, so it would likely be in late November or early December after IRB clearance.

I need to find 5-10 beginning visual art teachers (in their first or second year) teaching in LA county schools - not LAUSD necessarily but in any schools within LA county borders. I'm working on my recruitment letter and semi-structured interview questions this weekend, but I wanted to get your permission first to email through CAEA. I will also do word of mouth, but figured this is a better start initially.

As always, thank you for your help!

Best,
kristin

--

kristin v. taylor, NBCT, M.A.
Visual Art Educator

Armalyn De La O <adkaba93@gmail.com>
To: Kristin Taylor <kvanderliptaylor@gmail.com>

Fri, Sep 29, 2017 at 4:29 PM

Of course.

Sent from my iPhone please excuse any typos.

> On Sep 29, 2017, at 4:23 PM, Kristin Taylor <kvanderliptaylor@gmail.com> wrote:

>

> Hi Armalyn,

>

> I was wondering if it would be ok to recruit through CAEA southern members for my dissertation? I'm not ready yet - setting dates for my prelims now, so it would likely be in late November or early December after IRB clearance.

>

> I need to find 5-10 beginning visual art teachers (in their first or second year) teaching in LA county schools - not LAUSD necessarily but in any schools within LA county borders. I'm working on my recruitment letter and semi-structured interview questions this weekend, but I wanted to get your permission first to email through CAEA. I will also do word of mouth, but figured this is a better start initially.

>

> As always, thank you for your help!

>

> Best,
> kristin

>

> --

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Letter

Dear CAEA Southern Area Member,

My name is kristin v. taylor and I am a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a research study examining and developing supports for **beginning visual art teachers in Los Angeles County**. The study is designed to elicit feedback about a proposed professional support community.

If you are in your first or second year teaching visual art in a PK-12 public (including charter) school in Los Angeles County, you are invited to participate in the study. If you agree, you are invited to participate in an interview.

If you are a veteran visual art teacher who works with or knows a beginning visual art teacher in Los Angeles County who might be interested in participating, please forward this letter to them.

The interview is anticipated to take no more than one hour and will be audio-taped in order to ensure accuracy.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your identity as a participant will remain confidential during and after the study. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your personal identity and any other identifiable information (school, district, or university names).

If you have questions or would like to participate, please contact me at kristin.taylor@pepperdine.edu.

Thank you for your participation,

kristin v. taylor
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy
Doctoral Student

APPENDIX D

Study Qualification Questionnaire - Google Forms

Study Qualification - Beginning Visual Art Teachers (1st or 2nd year)

To qualify for this study, you must be a beginning (first or second year) visual art teacher in Los Angeles County. This study does not include art teachers who previously taught other subjects prior to teaching visual art.

*** Required**

Email address *

Your email

What is your name?

Your answer

Do you teach visual art classes?

Yes

No

Other:

When did you receive your credential to teach visual art?

Your answer

Are you in your first or second year of teaching art?

This is my first year

This is my second year

Other:

Where do you teach (name and location)? (All names will be kept confidential).

Your answer

What kind of school do you teach in?

Public

Charter (affiliated or independent)

Private

Other:

What grade(s) do you teach?

Your answer

Send me a copy of my responses.

SUBMIT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

APPENDIX E

Pepperdine University IRB Approval

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Seaver College Institutional Review Board

November 22, 2017

Protocol #: 17-11-657

Project Title: VISUAL ART COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: CULTIVATING SUPPORT FOR BEGINNING VISUAL ART TEACHERS

Dear Kristin:

Thank you for submitting your application, *VISUAL ART COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: CULTIVATING SUPPORT FOR BEGINNING VISUAL ART TEACHERS* for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials which was a study original submitted and approved by the IRB. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html>) that govern the protections of human subjects. It is Pepperdine University's IRB belief because there is little to no risk to the subjects and children are not being recruited to participate, therefore, this study qualifies under section **45 CFR 46.101(b)(2)** which states:

(b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

In addition, your application to waive documentation of informed consent has been **approved**.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from **45 CFR 46.101** and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the Institutional Review Board.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at <http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/>).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval.

24255 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, California 90263 ■ 310-506-4000

On behalf of the IRB, we wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Pepperdine University

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives
Mr. Brett Leach, Regulatory Affairs Specialist
Dr. Judy Ho, Graduate School of Education and Psychology IRB Chair

APPENDIX F

Email to Participants Regarding the VAT Professional Support CoP Outline and
Sample VAT CoP Meeting Schedule (to be emailed to participants prior to interview)

Dear _____,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study about support for beginning visual art teachers in Los Angeles County. The purpose of the study is to propose a professional support community to beginning credentialed visual art teachers in Pre-Kindergarten-12th grade public schools in Los Angeles County to elicit feedback about the anticipated value the support community may offer in addressing their competency needs and concerns.

Attached you will find an outline of the community, or community of practice (CoP) I am proposing as a way to support both beginning and veteran visual art teachers (VATs) through mentoring and group meetings. I am interested in getting your feedback, as a beginning VAT, about this proposed professional support community. The “competency needs and concerns” listed have been reported in the literature by beginning VATs worldwide and are a general guideline for the topics that might be addressed through this support community. However, your feedback may provide additional needs or concerns that might also be addressed through this professional support community.

Please read through the VAT Professional Support CoP Outline and Sample VAT CoP Meeting Schedule prior to our interview meeting, calendared for _____
at (location) _____.

You will have an opportunity to ask questions about the study and the proposed professional support community at the interview.

Thank you again for agreeing to participate. Your feedback is very much appreciated!

Sincerely,

kristin v. taylor
kristin.taylor@pepperdine.edu
Pepperdine University - Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy
Doctoral Student

VAT Professional Support CoP Outline and Sample VAT CoP Meeting Schedule

(to be emailed to participants prior to interview)

Visual Art Teacher (VAT) Professional Support Community Outline	
Competency needs and concerns	Menu of strategies or topics to address for meeting competency needs and concerns
Bridging theory with practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and implementing contemporary art education/curriculum • Incorporating reflective practice • Facilitating inquiry-based learning • Securing time and sustaining energy for developing lessons/planning together
Navigating school cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding social/political/cultural norms in schools • Developing and implementing strategies specific to art classrooms - dealing with real-time issues (art room environments, time and behavior management) • Sustaining student autonomy/choice/agency • Communicating with administrators about the value of contemporary art education • Building connections within the school - finding collaborators and critical friends
Overcoming feelings of isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting veteran and beginning VATs in mentoring partnerships - may be self-selected (from qualified mentors in the VAT community who have completed the leadership strand) to find a good fit based on individual needs • Participating in ongoing community meetings - whole group, mentor group, collaborative partnerships, summer institute • Engaging in optional weekend retreats
Fostering agency and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring strategies for arts advocacy • Understanding school, district, and community dynamics and decision-making • Accessing professional organizations for support

Sample Visual Art Teacher Community Meeting Schedule	
Whole group community meetings	2x per semester
Mentor group meetings - one or two mentors with their mentees (2-3 beginning VATs per mentor)	2x per semester in person plus online support
Self-structured collaborative partnerships - 2 or 3 beginning VATs may meet in person or online	Meeting schedule to be determined
Summer Institute - ongoing collaboration and support during the summer to plan for year 2	One week institute between years 1 and 2

APPENDIX G

Interview Questions

- 1) Tell me about the kinds of supports you have as a beginning visual art teacher.

- 2) Tell me about your top three or four most important concerns or needs as a (first or second year) art teacher.

- 3) Are there any questions you have about the proposed visual art community of practice that I may clarify?

- 4) Thinking about the proposed visual art community,
 - a) what might make participating in this CoP meaningful *or useful*? (immediate value)
 - b) what might you gain from participating as a community member? (potential value)
 - c) what might you be able to do with what you might gain from the CoP? (applied value)

- 5) Tell me about the value you might contribute to the CoP as a beginning VAT.

- 6) Is there any other information you would like to share?

APPENDIX H

Informed Consent

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ART COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: CULTIVATING SUPPORT FOR BEGINNING VISUAL ART TEACHERS

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by **kristin taylor, NBCT, M.A. under the direction of her dissertation committee chair, Dr. Martine Jago** at Pepperdine University, because you are **a beginning visual art teacher in a PK-12 Los Angeles County school in their first or second year teaching art**. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. You will also be given a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to propose a professional support community to beginning credentialed visual art teachers in PK-12 public schools in Los Angeles County to elicit feedback about the anticipated value the support community may offer in addressing their competency needs and concerns.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to review the proposed professional support community and answer questions in an interview that should last no longer than one hour. The questions are about:

- the kinds of known, available, or desired supports for you as a beginning visual art teacher
- your most important concerns or needs as a beginning visual art teacher
- the values you might anticipate gaining from participating in the proposed professional support community
- the value you might also bring to the proposed professional support community

The interviews will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy in the transcription of your answers. You may still choose to participate if you don't want to be audio recorded. However, your assistance in checking transcribed responses for accuracy would be needed.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study include: boredom or a lack of interest or time to be interviewed about the proposed professional support community. There are no anticipated psychological, social, legal, or financial risks to you as a participant.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

While there are no direct benefits to the study participants, there are several anticipated benefits to society which include: potential future participation in the proposed professional support community, which may provide an opportunity to connect with other visual art teachers and address reported competency needs and concerns as beginning visual art teachers. The greater benefit to schools and districts might include support for beginning visual art teachers that they are unable to provide.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I will keep your records for this study confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if I am required to do so by law, I may be required to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you tell me about instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The data will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigators place of residence. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years. The data collected will be coded and transcribed by the researcher, and it will be peer-reviewed for accuracy in the analysis and interpretation of the data. Any audio recordings will be kept private and will only be used for transcribing your responses to the interview questions. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Your responses will be coded with a pseudonym and transcript data will be maintained separately. The audio recordings will be destroyed once they have been transcribed.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION

The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or completing only the items which you feel comfortable.

EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

If you are injured as a direct result of research procedures you will receive medical treatment; however, you or your insurance will be responsible for the cost. Pepperdine University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact **Dr. Martine Jago at Pepperdine University** martine.jago@pepperdine.edu if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500 Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I have read the information provided above. I have been given a chance to ask questions. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

AUDIO RECORDING

- I agree to be audio-recorded*
- I do not want to be audio-recorded*

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I have explained the research to the participants and answered all of his/her questions. In my judgment the participants are knowingly, willingly and intelligently agreeing to participate in this study. They have the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study and all of the various components. They also have been informed participation is voluntarily and that they may discontinue their participation in the study at any time, for any reason.

kristin v. taylor
Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

APPENDIX I

Value-creation framework: template (Wenger-Trayner, E. & Wenger-Trayner, B., 2017b)

Value-creation framework: template

	Activity	Immediate value <i>What would make it meaningful?</i>	Potential value <i>What might you take away?</i>	Applied value <i>What might you do with it?</i>
1	Aspirations/achievements	Cultivate a VAT CoP for beginning and veteran VATs in Los Angeles county to address reported competency needs and concerns while alleviating feelings of professional isolation		
	Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruit members - Space for meetings - Financial support – parking, location, food, resources (stipends?) - Commitment from members - Clear goals 		
	Risks/assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -VAT in Los Angeles County want to belong to a CoP -VAT have time to participate in a CoP 		
	Mitigation/plan B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interest survey first – recruiting for data collection - Partner with a museum or art institution/university for space to meet and resources/support - Grants for funding - Financial incentive for members? 		
	Indicators/data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People show up regularly – are committed to the CoP - Data shows members find the CoP meaningful and helpful in addressing competency needs/concerns and overcoming feelings of isolation 		
	Loops/branches	Unknown at this time.		



Value-creation framework: template

2	Realized value <i>So what?</i>	Strategic value <i>Involving stakeholder?</i>	Enabling value <i>What made it possible?</i>	Transformative value <i>Broader effect?</i>
Aspirations/ achievements				
Conditions				
Risks/ assumptions				
Mitigation/ plan B				
Indicators/ data				
Loops/ branches				

