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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

EXAMINING SECONDARY LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: MOTIVATIONS, VALUES, BARRIERS, NEEDS, AND
ASPIRATIONS

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

by

Ivy Ewell-Eldridge

May, 2018

Molly McCabe, Ed.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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DEDICATION

This dissertation is for my best friend, my biggest fan, my cheerleader, my prayer warrior, my confidant, my teacher, my model, super hero, and the one who sacrificed most for my education. Mom, this dissertation is for you.

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There are many who have supported me on this journey, but none like Christ. He was with me the moment I had the inclination to return to Pepperdine to complete this degree. He was with me each time I traveled to Los Angeles to complete my coursework. He was also with me during those 3AM sessions while writing this manuscript, each time my mind went blank and my body forced me to take a break. I will always thank the Lord for carrying me through this journey, and will tell anyone who will listen that Christ has given me the strength to do all things through Him. I am unsure which road I am to travel next, but believe that “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:5-6).

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Last but not least, ELAP cohort C13, God couldn’t have chosen a better group of people for me to learn alongside. I wish you all the best!!!

ABSTRACT

Research reveals that for American secondary teachers, mere participation, or the desire to participate, in professional development is not a matter of concern, as many in the educational community have assumed. Yet, there is a void in the literature regarding American, lower secondary educators of literacy and their overall perceptions of professional learning. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions of lower secondary English language arts (ELA)/literacy teachers, specifically in regard to what motivates these educators to participate in professional development, what they value in professional learning opportunities, the challenges that keep them from participating, and their overall professional development needs.

This qualitative study draws on two theoretical frameworks, constructivism and adult learning theory, as there are varied philosophies that contribute to the understanding of teacher's perception of professional learning. A non-experimental, phenomenological methodology was chosen, aiming to better understand participant's individual experiences through their comprehensive, self-reported descriptions. The population of this study consisted of experienced, lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers employed in southern California public schools. Purposive, criterion sampling was used for this research, collecting data from a total of 13 semi-structured interviews of participants from two school districts.

The findings from this study resulted in five thematic categories that present the essential drivers and impediments to the participants' involvement in professional learning opportunities: (a) teachers desire to improve their professional practice, (b) professional learning should be immediately applicable to professional practice, (c) teachers prefer to learn from other experienced teachers, (d) the culture of the school district and or site influences teacher learning,

and (e) a teacher's learning is influenced by their perception of themselves and previous experiences. Six conclusions were drawn from the thematic findings of this study. They rely upon the literature and findings to argue how teachers' motivation, personal values, and aspirations for participation in professional learning opportunities is centered on personal and organizational factors along with the historical and current culture of American K-12 public schools.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of Study

An era of accountability. In the winter of 2002, President George W. Bush signed an Act that would steer the reins of America's public education systems into uncharted waters. This law, known as No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) of 2001, was put into place to support a wave of educational reform ushered in through the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA, 1994) of 1994 (Jorgensen & Hoffmann, 2003). It demanded that each state institute its own set of academic success criteria through high instructional standards, as well as standardized assessments to gauge students' progress in reaching them (Jorgensen & Hoffmann, 2003; Ravitch, 2010). For many educators across America, NCLB shifted the focus of American public school education from student learning to that of exhibiting success in high-stakes testing and other accountability measures, though that was not its primary intention. Many districts, and in some instances entire states, even chose to provide increased pay for teachers and administrators based upon their performance and productivity, so evidenced through various factors ranging from evaluations and portfolios to progress shown in student data (Podgursky & Springer, 2007). Less energy was placed on building teachers' capacity to implement reform. Instead, classroom teachers were highly encouraged, if not mandated, to follow scripted curricula and programs, under the belief it would decrease variances in quality instruction from classroom to classroom (Massell, Kirst, & Hoppe, 1997). In doing so, the professional development provided for teachers often solely reflected instruction on and support in how to use a particular program. "[School] districts ...entrusted the curriculum to teachers or indirectly to textbook publishers, and they did little to develop or provide instructional guidance" (Wixson, Dutro, & Athan, 2003, p. 69). Budget cuts and decreased state aid also impeded opportunities for teachers

to receive the support needed to truly implement instruction to buttress reform, resulting in superficial workshops and trainings instead of sustained professional learning to increase teacher knowledge (Cobb, 2005).

21st century learning for college and career. Though this era of high accountability was an effort to close learning gaps among students who were economically disadvantaged, racially diverse, and missing basic skills, it missed the mark of truly sparking reform, providing access, and ensuring equity across the nation's K-12 public schools (Ravitch, 2010).

Unexpectedly and publically, it amplified the disparities of public education across cultural groups and revealed the hidden crisis of high school graduates being underprepared for college and career. Consequently, by 2009 educational organizations and policy makers across America no longer wanted to merely discuss the benefits of creating and adopting a set of common standards and learning goals for America's youth (Wixson et al., 2003). The timing was opportune to finally embrace national expectations for student achievement and clearly define common standards for preparing students for college, career, and life (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017; Wixson et al., 2003). A study conducted for The United States Department of Education (n.d.) deduced that "America's students need to be prepared to compete in a world that demands more than just basic skills" (para. 3) and supported the convening of renown educators and researchers who came together to draft a set of shared academic expectations for students of the 21st century. When the final draft of this document, known as Common Core State Standards (CCSS), was completed in June of 2010, California became one of the original 46 states and territories to voluntarily adopt them. The Common Core State Standards Initiative reported that as of 2015, California was one of the 42 states and

territories who still continue implementing CCSS in their public school systems (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2017).

Teachers of CCSS ELA/literacy. Teachers need support more now than ever in redefining their professional practices and meeting the new demands of instruction. Particularly in the realm of instruction in English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects (ELA), the academic expectations of CCSS challenge students to acquire a depth of knowledge in the concepts they are studying, and suggest that teachers implement styles of literacy instruction that many in the state of California may not be previously familiar with (Frey & Fisher, 2013). With the definition of literacy no longer being confined to the ability of reading fluently and effectively communicating through writing, secondary educators, teachers in high school, carry a large portion of the responsibility to ensure students exhibit the capacities of literate individuals before entering the fields of college and career. Lower secondary teachers, educators in intermediate and middle school, face even more challenges as they support students in their mental and physical growth and transitioning from elementary school to high school. The California Department of Education (CDE) promotes what the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 2010) detail in their portrait of a literate student upon graduation from high school. A college and career ready student should have: (a) the capacity to demonstrate independence; (b) the capacity to build strong content knowledge; (c) the capacity to respond to varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline; (d) the capacity to comprehend as well as critique; (e) the capacity to value evidence; (f) the capacity to use technology and digital media strategically and capably; and (g) the capacity to understand other perspectives and cultures. Table 1 highlights the depth and extent of each of these capacities.

Table 1

Capacities of Literate Individuals

Capacity	Description
They demonstrate independence.	Students can, without significant scaffolding, comprehend and evaluate complex texts across a range of types and disciplines, and they can construct effective arguments and convey intricate or multifaceted information. Likewise, students are independently able to discern a speaker's key points, request clarification, and ask relevant questions. They build on others' ideas, articulate their own ideas, and confirm they have been understood. Without prompting, they demonstrate command of standard English and acquire and use a wide-ranging vocabulary. More broadly, they become self-directed learners, effectively seeking out and using resources to assist them, including teachers, peers, and print and digital reference materials.
They build strong content knowledge.	Students establish a base of knowledge across a wide range of subject matter by engaging with works of quality and substance. They become proficient in new areas through research and study. They read purposefully and listen attentively to gain both general knowledge and discipline-specific expertise. They refine and share their knowledge through writing and speaking.
They respond to varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.	Students adapt their communication in relation to audience, task, purpose, and discipline. They set and adjust purpose for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use as warranted by the task. They appreciate nuances, such as how the composition of an audience should affect tone when speaking and how the connotations of words affect meaning. They also know that different disciplines call for different types of evidence (e.g., documentary evidence in history, experimental evidence in science).
They comprehend as well as critique.	Students are engaged and open-minded—but discerning—readers and listeners. They work diligently to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying, but they also question an author's or speaker's assumptions and premises and assess the veracity of claims and the soundness of reasoning.
They value evidence.	Students cite specific evidence when offering an oral or written interpretation of a text. They use relevant evidence when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener, and they constructively evaluate others' use of evidence.
They use technology and digital media strategically and capably.	Students employ technology thoughtfully to enhance their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use. They tailor their searches online to acquire useful information efficiently, and they integrate what they learn through technology with what they learn offline. They are familiar with the strengths and limitations of various technological tools and mediums and can select and use those best suited to their communication goals.
They come to understand others' perspectives and cultures.	Students appreciate that the 21st-century classroom and workplace are settings in which people from often widely divergent cultures and who represent diverse experiences and perspectives must learn and work together. Students actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures through reading and listening, and they are able to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. They evaluate other points of view critically and constructively. Through reading great classic and contemporary works of literature representative of a variety of periods, cultures, and worldviews, students can vicariously inhabit worlds and have experiences much different than their own.

Note. Adapted from *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects*, by the California Department of Education, 2013, Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education. Copyright 2013 by the author.

Additionally, when describing the breadth and depth of 21st literacy skills today's employers are expecting their future workers to have, Trilling and Fadel (2009) reveal that a traditional textbook curriculum alone will be insufficient.

A one-size-fits-all factory model and one-way broadcast approach to learning does not work well for these students. New ways to make learning interactive, personalized, collaborative, creative, and innovative are needed to engage and keep net geners [sic] actively learning in schools everywhere. (Chapter 2, Section 4, para. 9)

This vast concept highly contrasts the previous era of curriculum design and instruction that seemed to have a narrower, and conceptually tangible goal. Unlike the last wave of reform under NCLB, school districts and classroom instructors would be ill-advised to solely rely on publisher's textbooks to provide opportunities for authentic learning, innovative thinking, and social edification. A combination of these ideas posed a new frame of thought to textbook publishers as they prepared to create and market new curricula to serve as a set of resources, rather than an elaborate script.

In 2015 the CDE adopted a list of ELA and English Language Development (ELD) instructional materials for Local Education Agencies (LEA) to choose from (California Department of Education, 2015b). The California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), a consortium of county superintendents of schools from each of California's 58 counties, also prepared an adoption toolkit to guide school districts through the process of choosing curricula from this list, dependent upon what proved most suitable for their populations (Musso, Wan, Wilson, & Zuniga, 2015). But in the guiding documents of both the state's process of approving curricula and the county's process of assisting districts in their selection, there was minimal consideration placed on the gravity of support teachers would need

or specificity in how best to address the varied needs of educators through professional learning. School districts were left with the responsibility of meeting these needs and, dependent on their Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), began investigating effective professional learning opportunities that would support teachers in implementing the reformed instruction, and prepare them for supporting the needs of today's students.

Statement of the Problem

In a detailed report generated from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD; 2014), it was revealed that for American lower secondary teachers, mere participation, or the desire to participate, in professional development and learning opportunities was not a matter of concern as many in the educational community have assumed (Meister, 2010). There are studies that show elementary school teachers invariably “hold more positive attitudes about PD relative to secondary teachers” (Torff & Sessions, 2008, p. 128) but there was a gap in the literature that explains why this is so. Customarily conducted every few years, in 2013 OECD collected and analyzed data from 1,926 American, lower secondary educators across 122 schools. This report revealed that the greatest matter of concern was the American teacher's perception of professional development.

While U.S. teachers tend to participate in professional development at rates that are higher than their colleagues around the world, when asked about the impact that this development had on their teaching, U.S. teachers are less positive than their international colleagues. In fact, in every content category, fewer U.S. teachers on average report that the professional development in which they participated had a moderate or large positive impact on their teaching, when compared with the TALIS average. (OCED, 2014, p. 3)

Though this synopsis is congruent with multiple OECD reports from years prior, there was a void in the literature regarding American, lower secondary educators of literacy and their overall perceptions of professional learning. As well, it was unknown what motivated these educators to participate in professional development, what they valued in professional learning opportunities, or the challenges that kept them from participating. Therefore there was a need to examine secondary literacy teachers' perceptions of professional learning in regard to their motivations, values, barriers, needs, and aspirations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions of lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, in multiple southern California school districts, specifically in regard to (a) their motivation to participate in professional learning, (b) the value they have found when participating in professional learning, (c) barriers that exist to participating in professional learning, and (d) their needs and aspirations for professional learning.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides insight on how lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers' perceptions influence their learning as adults and behaviors regarding professional learning. Additionally, it identifies practices in organizations that are successfully meeting the needs of their community's educators and makes clear practices that are counterproductive to the goal of providing sustained, effective learning opportunities.

It is crucial the educational community become more informed of best practices for supporting secondary teachers with professional development. As these teachers have a pivotal role in bridging the educational growth between early adolescence and young adulthood, state policy makers and leaders of LEAs can benefit from this insight when financially accounting for,

creating, and encouraging participation in professional development. This information also adds to the growing body of research on andragogy in the workplace, specifically as it pertains to teachers in secondary K-12 education.

Operational Definition of Terms

Andragogy. A theory of learning based upon the principles that adults thrive when learning opportunities are based upon content that is personally relevant, connected to experience, guided through self-direction, and is culturally relevant (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2014).

Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Educational standards detail student learning objectives for each grade level. The CCSS are a set of standards in language arts and mathematics that many states in the U.S. have decided to share. Having the same standards means that all students across the nation will be working towards the same goals, regardless of movement to another state or school (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

English language arts/literacy (ELA). Grade specific instruction in the functions, forms, appreciation, and value of effective reading, writing, listening, speaking, and usage of language. This instruction is recommended to take place across a variety of content domains, instead of solely in the realm of traditional Language Arts or Literature coursework (California Department of Education, 2013).

English language development (ELD). Instruction that is specifically provided to English language learners to assist them in strengthening their skills and knowledge of the English language. In the state of California, this instruction is to be offered to students using an integrated approach throughout the school day and across all content areas. As well, a designated, protected time must be provided for students to receive focused instruction based

upon their individual development and proficiency levels (California Department of Education, 2015a).

High-stakes testing. High-stakes tests are assessments, usually standardized, whose results determine significant factors for students, teachers, school sites, and school districts. Negative results from these tests usually yield unfavorable consequences for the stakeholders involved. (Callet, 2008).

Local Control Accountability Plan. The Local Control Accountability Plan is an element of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), a system instituted by the California Department of Education that provides flexible funding to local educational agencies in order to improve student outcomes. Under LCFF, all local educational agencies are mandated to complete and update an LCAP, explaining their intentions for meeting annual goals that have been set for their student populations, as well as an explanation of how those activities will address both state and community priorities (California Department of Education, 2016).

Lower secondary teacher. A term designated by the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which roughly characterizes American teachers in school grades seven, eight, and nine (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2014). OECD produces a worldwide Education at a Glance that serves as an “authoritative source for accurate and relevant information on the state of education around the world. It provides data on the structure, finances, and performance of the education systems in the 34 OECD member countries, as well as a number of G20 and partner countries” (OECD, 2017, p. C4). For the purposes of this study, lower secondary teacher will specifically refer to intermediate or middle school teachers.

Middle school/intermediate school. In the United States, this term delineates a teacher with a single subject credential in a particular content area who teaches students in grades seven and eight. (California Department of Education, n.d.).

Professional learning opportunity. Professional learning opportunities are a part of a system of professional development as well as involve more engaging and active learning situations that may be more personalized to the participants' individual needs (Law & Glover, 1996). It can also be within the context of informal activities, such as conversations with peers in person or through social media, engagement in individual study, watching videos of teaching best practices, or listening to an educational podcast.

Professional development. “Any activity that is intended partly or primarily to prepare paid staff members for improved performance in present or future roles in school districts” (Little, 1987, p. 491). Research shows it should have the characteristics of: (a) strong content focus; (b) opportunities for active learning; (c) coherence in messaging and policy; (d) duration over an extended period of time; (e) opportunities for collaboration, and professional learning and support through coaching (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Desimone, 2009).

Secondary teacher. In the United States, this term delineates an educator who teaches students in high school, grades nine through 12 (California Department of Education, n.d.).

Research Questions

The following research question propels this study: How do lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, from multiple southern California school districts, describe

1. Their motivation, if any, to participate in professional learning?
2. What they value, if anything, when participating in professional learning?

3. Barriers, if any, that exist to participating in professional learning?
4. Their needs and aspirations, if any, as they pertain to professional learning?

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on two theoretical frameworks, as there are varied philosophies that contribute to the understanding of teacher's perception of professional learning and the variables that impact it. Constructivism and adult learning theory are the two concepts that are addressed in this study because of their application to teaching and learning.

Constructivism can be defined as “a learning or meaning making-making theory... [It] suggests that individuals create their own new understandings based upon the interaction of what they already know and believe, and the phenomena or ideas with which they come into contact” (Richardson, 1997, p. 3). The theory does not indicate specific content that should be taught, rather, constructivism informs the manner by which a student is taught (Carpenter, 2003). When thinking of student learning through this lens, an instructor's role is less direct and more facilitative; the learner has an indelible role in the actual process of learning and meaning-making. John Dewey and Jean Piaget (Piaget, 1952; Richardson, 1997; Vanderstraeten, 2002) provide some of the earliest conceptualizations on knowledge and intelligence as it applies to constructivist epistemology. Further, Raymond Wlodkowski (2011) ties the tenets of constructivism to adults' motivation through his argument that meaning making in the adult brain is directly linked to the social constructs of an individual's culture, and values.

This study was based upon the concept that adult learning is a personal experience guided by interests, thoughts, and goals. Additionally, it was built upon the actual theory of adult learning, most notably discussed by Malcolm Knowles and the earlier foundational works of Eduard Lindeman (Knowles, 1977; Lindeman, 1926). Lindeman considered the constructivist

John Dewey as an influential part of his philosophy of adult learning, theorizing that adults “seek to discover new knowledge through intuition and the analysis of experience” (Knowles et al., 2014, p. 19). Knowles’ theories also stem from constructivism in that his focus does not lay with any specific content goal or learning purpose, but in the way learning is developed (Holton, Swanson, & Nanquin, 2001; Knowles et al., 2014; Wlodkowski, 2011). The combination of their philosophies creates what we know currently as the six core principles of andragogy:

- Adults need to know why they need to learn something before learning it.
- The self-concept of adults is heavily dependent upon a move toward self-direction.
- Prior experiences of the learner provide a rich resource for learning.
- Adults typically become ready to learn when they experience a need to cope with a life situation or perform a task.
- Adults’ orientation to learning is life-centered, and they see education as a process of developing increased competency levels to achieve their full potential.
- The motivation for adult learners is internal rather than external. (Holton et al., 2001, p. 120).

Adult learning should be experiential, relevant, problem-centered, and self-directing.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are as follows:

- This study draws from samples of two southern California school districts of varied sizes, with diverse demographics among students and staff. The data collected may vary because of the cultures inherent in each school district’s populations.
- The researcher collected self-reported data, directly reflecting the diverse culture and values of the participants and focus solely on their lived experiences.

- Teachers in this study worked in one southern California county, amidst their district's first two years of implementing a new ELA curriculum. This period of transition may have directly affected their attitudes about professional learning as policy changes took place in their environment.
- Generalizability was limited, as the participants were a relative fraction of the lower secondary teachers in a single state.

Delimitations of the Study

The delimitations of this study include:

- Samples were drawn from teachers of the single content area of ELA/literacy. Secondary teachers from other content areas may have different lived experiences from that of those in ELA.
- All participants met the researcher's inclusion criteria that all subjects be currently teaching, or taught during the semester preceding, a minimum of one class period of ELA.
- Only the lived experiences of a limited number ELA teachers in public schools were examined. This study excluded the perspectives of lower secondary teachers who serve in private or charter schools.

Assumptions of the Study

The validity of this study may have been affected because of the researcher's assumptions. The first was that this researcher assumed there was a level of trust between the participant and the interviewer, and a belief that the researcher would not act as an evaluator. Secondly, this researcher assumed participants answered honestly, and to the best of their ability, to describe perceptions of their experiences. Third, there was an assumption that the collected

data accurately characterized lower secondary teachers' perceptions of professional learning in regard to their motivations, values, barriers, needs, and aspirations. A final assumption was that this researcher, regardless of a personal familiarity with the area of professional learning in education, was able to accurately interpret respondents' perceptions. To acknowledge personal experiences, and exclude them as much as possible when engaging with and interpreting participants' responses, the researcher bracketed herself out of this phenomenological study (Creswell, 2012).

Organization of the Study

This research study is organized in five chapters. The first chapter will relay a background of the study, statement of the problem, a purpose statement, significance of the study, operational definition of terms, research questions, theoretical framework, limitations and delimitations of the study, and assumptions. Chapter 2 details a review of the literature, which includes a history of professional learning, the theory of learning and andragogy, and the variables that influence professional learning-motivation, barriers, and perceived value. The third chapter outlines the methodology used in this study, as well as the processes used to select participants, ensure their protection, collect data, measure data, and analyze said data. Chapter 4 will provide an explanation of the measurement outcomes and findings. The fifth and final chapter will summarize the study and discuss the findings, offering conclusions and recommendations for additional research.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Introduction

America's unstable relationship with K-12 public education has been fraught with an era of federal, state, and local policies that prove to both undermine and support the scholarship of teachers and students across the nation. Additionally, public opinion and changes in societal values, as well as increased scientific and philosophical understandings of the differences between adolescent and adult cognition, have had varietal influences on the education of teachers both preservice, and in service. To have a fuller understanding of the perceptions of lower secondary teachers under study, the researcher found it pertinent to examine literature pertaining to: (a) the history of professional development and professional learning in America; (b) the frameworks of constructivism and adult learning theory; and (c) the research behind variables analyzed in this study—motivation for professional learning, barriers to professional learning, what constitutes valuable professional learning, and the needs and aspirations of teachers particular to professional learning. In this chapter the researcher shares an overview of what was found through the exploration of public policy, historical documents, and academic literature around these subjects.

Historical Background

Professional learning for American teachers. There is a longstanding, underlying narrative of America's relationship with public education and its feelings toward the teachers who serve in public schools. It colors the choices that are made policy-wise from the federal to local level, and amongst the inner and outer circles of academia. As the Handbook of Research on Teacher Education delineates,

The act of teaching is socially and politically negotiated. What teachers can and cannot do within their classrooms depends, in large part, on others in their surround—colleagues, pupils, administrators, parents, journalists, civic leaders, taxpayers, policymakers, textbook publishers, and so on. (Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre, & Demers, 2008, p. 144)

Within this context, and in surveying the growth and change in knowledge, technology, American culture, and global expectations for learning, it is understood that the responsibility of professional learning is far different for today's teachers than those a century ago. In the early to mid-1900's, there was little requirement for teachers to regularly update their skills and knowledge (Cochran-Smith et al., 2008). This led to the nation's opinion that professional learning, and developing teacher capacity, should be placed in the hands of colleges and institutions that prepared teachers before entering the classroom. But as demands for better prepared students and increased teacher quality grew, so too did the demands grow for ongoing education and professional development for teachers in the field. Alongside the eventual 21st century transformation of expectations for K-12 teachers and students, our country's academic community also shifted its appreciation and practices from that of staid keepers of static knowledge to that of continuous learners (Easton, 2008).

Post World War I. The history of public debate surrounding educational policy, and its influence on professional learning for in-service teachers, stems back as early as the conclusion of World War I in 1918. At this time, the revelation of vast amounts of illiterate American soldiers (Ginzberg & Bray, 1953) became the impetus for conversations about the quality of teaching taking place in public institutions, or what was then called common schools (Cochran-Smith et al., 2008; Harris, 2012). The Great Depression, between 1929 and 1939, further

exacerbated the state of public education when lack of funding forced schools to discontinue programs and fire qualified teachers. In Holcombe's (2006) historical account, "as tax revenues shrunk, schools had no money for materials or supplies, and teachers copied texts longhand so there would be enough for students to use" (para. 5). Even more, the closing of schools intensified the attack on public education and sabotaged efforts to improve the crisis at hand (Tyack, Lowe, & Hansot, 1984). Lack of education funding would be a major topic of concern for the remainder of America's existence, and become a root of conflict in the tapestry of barriers to quality professional learning for teachers in public education.

During this time, President Roosevelt was committed to the federal government's function in improving social welfare, but primarily within the realms of job creation and the labor market (Nelson, 1990). Elements of the president's New Deal centered American citizens' thoughts on health and economic security, which gave way to the realization that job training and a school education was directly linked to the success of both. Any funds states had available for public schools, though, were rarely budgeted for the professional learning of in-service teachers. So the bulk of this responsibility fell to independent teacher associations in various states and larger collectives like the National Education Association (NEA), established in 1857 as the National Teachers' Association (Holcombe, 2006). One of the most common forms of professional development and learning offered to teachers during this time were the summer schools organized by state teacher associations, with sanctions from their State Boards of Education, and occasional support from local state colleges (Fairclough, 2007; "Righteousness and its Tools," 1921; "Summer Schools of 1920," 1920). As incentive to attend, and because of the shortage in teachers, State Boards would even grant teachers various certifications after having participated for a specified number of years.

Inequities in education. The educational disparity was even more pronounced when weighing the differences in schools attended by African American students in comparison to their Caucasian counterparts (Carlton-LaNey & Chavis, 2011; Cochran-Smith et al., 2008; Kizer, 1970; Ravitch, 1983; Walker, 2001). These communities were not only affected by the Depression, but by the longstanding degradation and inequity caused by segregation, and slavery which had only ended roughly three generations prior. Unfortunately, the truth was that many southern, rural teachers were far undereducated, as evidenced through research conducted and scores from tests that were given to teachers for certification, revealing “an average score equivalent by National Standard to that of a seventh grade pupil” (J. Reeves, 1942, p. 29). African American teachers were directly affected by the detrimental, standard lack of quality education provided for students of color. Fultz (1995) argues that the average African American teacher was far less qualified because of a vicious cycle continuously perpetuated by the mere fact that teachers’ basic primary education was regularly substandard in its academics. Essentially, poorly trained teachers were passing along their deficiencies, only to have these deficiencies resurface again through students who might also become teachers. A classroom teacher could easily find themselves serving in the very same room where they completed their deficient education only months prior (Fultz, 1995; Polidore, Edmondson, & Slate, 2010). In the early 1930’s, Ambrose Caliver conducted a study for the then United States Office of Education, finding that out of the seventeen segregated states he studied “35.8% of African American teachers but only 4.5% of White teachers...had not gone beyond high school prior to teaching” (Fultz, 1995, p. 198). In *Negro Yearbook: A Review of Events Affecting Negro Life, 1941-1946*, Guzman (1947) analyzes statistical data to show the situation began to relatively improve over the years, though African American teachers still endured glaring “imbalances in training” (p.

61). during that time Fultz (1995) summarizes the data in Guzman's historical documents to show the depth and breadth of disparity.

Data from 13 states indicate...an average of 35.1% of African American teachers had completed four years or more of college in 1940, with proportions ranging from highs of 65.8% in Oklahoma and 60.1% in West Virginia to lows of 18.6% and 9.1% in Alabama and Mississippi, respectively. At the other end of the preservice spectrum, an average 26.2% of African American teachers had completed less than two years of college, ranging from 0.6% in Oklahoma and 3.0% in Texas to 48.7% in Georgia and 84.7% in Mississippi. (Fultz, 1995, p. 198)

Within the African American culture, the work of teaching was commonly seen as providing a service to help uplift the race, rather than a mere means to earn a living (Fairclough, 2007, Fultz 1995). Education equated opportunity, and African American teachers were willing to give what little they had, even if that little included a limited amount of academic skills. There was little hope that the state government would intercede, as history shows now what citizens knew then. It was socially and politically clear that the education of African American students was of no importance.

Although the average expenditures for African American children increased from \$21.54 per child in 1940 to \$115.08 per child by 1952, these numbers still compared poorly to the allocation of \$50.14 per White child in 1940 and the \$164.83 per White child in 1952. In fact, the inequality in distribution of funding persisted despite the fact that the African American school attendance increased twice as fast as the total African American population between 1940 and 1950, while White attendance only increased by 3.1% during the same era. (Walker, 2001, pp. 755-756)

Yet, during this time, African American educators in public schools were steadfast in their efforts to improve their knowledge and the knowledge base of their peers by setting standards of accountability, both socially and professionally, and creating teacher organizations to support and educate one another (Carlton-LaNey & Chavis, 2011; Cochran-Smith et al., 2008; Fairclough, 2007; Harris, 2012). During this time, very much like teacher associations created by and for Caucasian teachers, independent and state teacher associations were instrumental in providing professional development and learning to in-service teachers. The National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools (NATCS), founded by J. R. Lee, was one such organization that proved highly instrumental during this time. “By the end of the 1930s, at least half of the South’s black teachers belonged to state associations. In North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia, virtually all black teachers were members” (Fairclough, 2007, p. 323) with other members stretching from coast to coast across the nation. African American teachers were seen as pillars of the community, and as such, most were intrinsically motivated to further their commitment to knowledge and maintaining professionalism in every sense of the word, despite the surmounting obstacles they faced. Additionally, Northern philanthropists, particularly as in the case with endowments provided by the Jeanes Fund, Slater Fund, and the Phelps-Stokes Fund (Carlton-LaNey & Chavis, 2011; Harris, 2012; Jones, 1937; Polidore et al., 2010) notably worked through southern state boards of education to improve schools for African American students and support professional learning for its teachers. Though this financial support was seen by some African Americans as a means to further leash the race to the confines of Jim Crow (Fairclough, 2007) this outside funding was still quite welcome, as Caucasian citizens in southern states were vehemently against their taxes being used for the education of African Americans students and the betterment of their teachers (Harris, 2012).

Post World War II. By the conclusion of World War II in 1945, the federal government was ready to address the now long standing question of providing federal aid to all public schools in an effort to combat the varying, bleak disparities of American teachers of all races (Kizer, 1970). Not only was there a public call for improvements in teaching facilities, there was a clear necessity to improve teacher quality. Ravitch (1983) reported that “eleven thousand of Alabama’s twenty thousand teachers had left their jobs in the three years after Pearl Harbor...” (p. 4) and teachers’ customary low salaries only attracted those truly dedicated to the profession. Yet, thousands of unqualified replacements now served as teachers, since the mass exodus from the schoolhouse to the battlefield. Between the years of 1945 and 1963, under presidents Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy, instituting federal aid for education would be a subject mired in social policy and political controversy primarily based on race and religion. Multiple bills concerning school construction and teachers’ salaries were created, proposed and quashed by both Republican and Democratic members of Congress, as influenced by constituent groups such as the National Education Association (NEA), Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State (POAU), the Department of Education of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP; Ravitch, 1983). There was overwhelming fear, from each of these constituent and advocate groups, that federal subsidies would also bring federal oversight to community schools. Unfortunately, limited progress was made over the years as a result of consistent pushback from members of Congress and “alliances among groups whose common objectives and motives extended beyond interests in education” (Kizer, 1970, p. 97). This continued the delay in maintaining qualified teachers in public schools, as professional learning for in-service teachers remained a subject in the lower

rank of priorities. In 1947, the United States President's Committee for Civil Rights (1947), appointed by President Truman, published a report that detailed the depths of discrimination prevalent in the United States, as well as its effect on American society. In its fifth and final chapter of this report, recommendations were provided in section five on how to "strengthen the right to equality of opportunity" (United States President's Committee for Civil Rights, 1947, p. 166), including tenet number three which addressed education.

For Education: Enactment by the state legislature of fair educational practice laws for public and private educational institutions, prohibiting discrimination in the admission and treatment of students based on race, color, creed, or national origin. (United States President's Committee for Civil Rights, 1947, p. 168)

Bills created to work toward rectifying this situation were repeatedly compromised because of opponents' views against desegregation, the desire of southern states to distribute funds as they saw fit, and an ongoing struggle between the Catholic Church who felt that federal aid for education should not solely be provided for teachers and children in public schools. All the while, political and social dueling shifted the primary focus of providing professional learning for teachers, and improving the quality of instruction in schools, to the platform of whoever created the most vibrant political statement. Two years later, contention was highly publicized by a public, verbal feud between Cardinal Spellman of the Catholic Church and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt (Kizer, 1970; Ravitch, 1983), resulting in a political deadlock amongst congressional members that extended well into Eisenhower's presidency.

The 1954 Supreme Court's decision on *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) prompted demands for school desegregation and further intensified the fear of segregationist in the South and their concern over the federal government's threat to their way of life. Like his predecessor,

President Eisenhower attempted to influence legislation that would provide aid to education, and numerous, unsuccessful bills were presented in Congress (Kizer, 1970). But by the time President Kennedy became president in 1961, the United States was fully immersed in the era of the Civil Rights Movement and in the midst of finally beginning to address various issues of racial and economic inequalities across the nation that had now become a festering wound. In 1965, under the Kennedy-Johnson Administration, the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed as an effort to finally begin the work of rectifying a failing public education system for poor students and students of color (Cochran-Smith et al., 2008, Ravitch, 1983). ESEA was designed to provide grants to school districts who served students from low-income families and would provide textbooks, library books, student scholarships, and offer funding for centers of special education. Title V of the original ESEA of 1965 would also provide funding for teacher professional development and learning, as well as “improve the quality of teacher preparation” (Elementary and Secondary Schools Act, 1965, p. 49). In general, it would also “provide guidance to state and local school systems on professional development and structure programs that include funding for professional development” (Islas, 2010, p. 11).

In the following years of ESEA, states would see many changes and financial opportunities to address the needs of students and teachers. ESEA would go through eight reauthorizations over the subsequent fifty years, each time adding a different layer of accountability for LEA’s across the country, and making changes to the program to ensure equitable educational opportunities were being provided for all students in American public schools (Ravitch, 2010). Particular to the state of California, one of the largest, and most pivotal pieces of legislature that granted funds for teacher professional development was California

Assembly Bill 466, approved in 2001. This was part of a targeted process to improve academic achievement in state monitored schools through the guidance and accountability measures provided by a School Assistance and Intervention Team (SAIT). The extent of their role was based upon the results of an evaluation labeled the Academic Program Survey (APS; McCabe, 2010). Of the nine Essential Program Components (EPC) addressed in this survey, the fourth solely focused on addressing the instructional practices of credentialed teachers and their participation in intensive training on the usage of State Board Education (SBE) adopted materials (California Comprehensive Center and American Institutes for Research, 2006). Governor Gray Davis proudly acknowledged that this bill would “greatly assist efforts to increase academic performance in California schools by enabling 176,000 teachers and 22,000 instructional aides or paraprofessionals to participate in high-quality professional development activities over a four-year period” (California Department of Education & Davis, 2002, p. 1440). Yet, he cut one million dollars from the \$1.2 million dollars originally appropriated to the California Department of Education for this bill, expressing that he could not understand the “compelling need for this level of funding” (California Assembly Bill 466, 2001, para. 3)

Regardless of how policy swings in its support for teacher professional development, ESEA has still been pivotal in the progress it has afforded American teachers in the realm of learning opportunities. Through each of its iterations, the Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994 under president Bill Clinton, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 under president George Bush, and most recently the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 under President Barack Obama, ESEA has stood as the foundation for which all American teachers are not only afforded the opportunity to continue growth and learning, but required to continue showing they are qualified professionals.

Theoretical Framework

There are several theories that can be used to support the understanding and value of professional development and professional learning for K-12 educators. But first, it is equally important to understand the impact of both teacher development and learning in this context, as many times the terms are used interchangeably when speaking of teachers.

For teachers, learning occurs in many different aspects of practice, including their classrooms, their school communities, and professional development courses or workshops. It can occur in a brief hallway conversation with a colleague, or after school when counseling a troubled child. To understand teacher learning, we must study it within these multiple contexts, taking into account both the individual teacher-learners and the social systems in which they are participants. (Borko, 2004, p. 4)

Slight variances exist between the two terms in that development implies there is growth, change, advancement, progress or improvement being made (Easton, 2008). This generally involves a series of events and a system of support for this growth to be nurtured and sustained. By contrast, professional learning is an integral part of the system that is professional development. There can be no growth or change in knowledge, skills, and practices unless learning has actually taken place (Guskey, 2002a, 2002b). Therefore it is necessary to discuss the factors of how human beings learn, and more specifically how adults learn.

This study was conducted through the theoretical lens of constructivism and adult learning theory. Figure 1 shows how both advocate concepts of thought that are prevalent by nature and share similar fundamental ideas considering the process of how human beings learn. Constructivism and adult learning theory will be explored in the following sections.

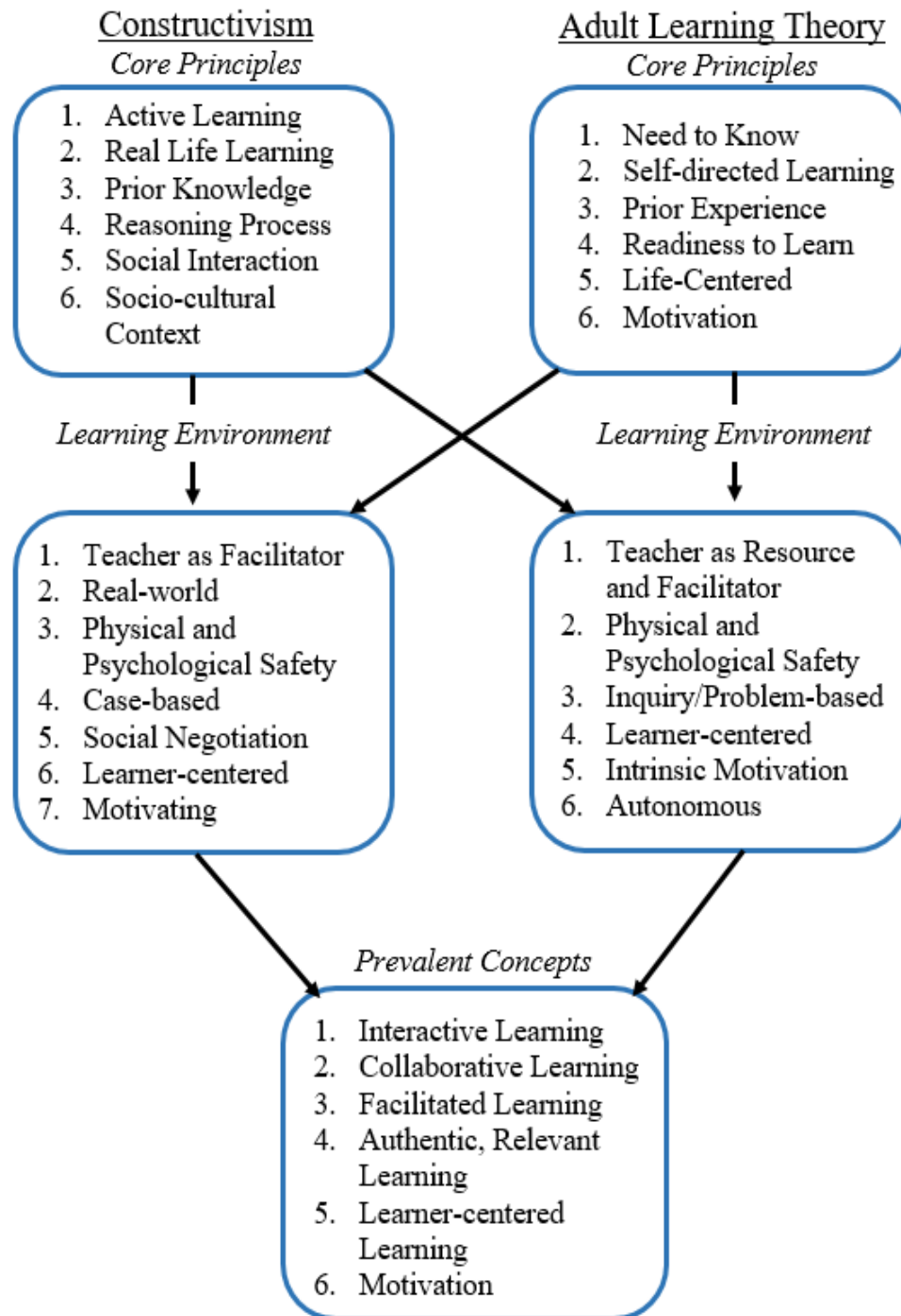


Figure 1. Prevalent concepts of constructivism and adult learning theory. Adapted from “Toward constructivism for adult learners in online learning environments,” by H. Huang, 2002, *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 33(1). Copyright of British Journal of Educational Technology. Adapted with permission.

Constructivism. Since the dawn of ESEA in 1965, education leaders have been more focused on improving the quality of teachers in American public schools by increasing their knowledge of pedagogy and fine-tuning their practice (Elementary and Secondary Schools Act, 1965). One major, yet common, aspect missing in many school districts' teacher professional development programs, is the fundamental understanding of the process by which human beings, particularly adults, obtain and retain new information. This study is based upon the concept that adult learning is a personal experience guided by interests, thoughts, and goals. Moreover, the theory of adult learning stems from that of constructivism.

Constructivism can be defined as “a learning or meaning-making theory...[It] suggests that individuals create their own new understandings based upon the interaction of what they already know and believe, and the phenomena or ideas with which they come into contact” (Richardson, 1997, p. 3). The theory does not indicate specific content that should be taught, rather, constructivism informs the manner by which a student is taught (Carpenter, 2003). When thinking of student learning through this lens, an instructor's role is less direct and more facilitative; the learner has an indelible role in the actual process of learning and meaning-making.

Rather than behaviors or skills as the goal of instruction, cognitive development and deep understanding are the foci; rather than stages being the result of maturation, they are understood as constructions of active learner reorganization. Rather than viewing learning as a linear process, it is understood to be complex and fundamentally non-linear in nature. (Fosnot, 2005, pp. 10-11)

This frame of mind runs parallel to that of effectively educating in-service teachers through a system of professional development because it encompasses helping teachers reflect upon their

behaviors to reexamine their ideas, beliefs, values, and practices in the classroom. It supports the idea that the role of an adult learner, specifically a teacher, is not finite, instead is ongoing and complex in nature (Richardson, 1997). The process of learning is “approximated through critical inquiry, testing, and revisability” (Harlow, Cummings, & Aberasturi, 2007, p. 42).

John Dewey and Jean Piaget (Piaget, 1952; Richardson, 1997; Vanderstraeten, 2002) provide some of the earliest conceptualizations on knowledge and intelligence as it applies to constructivist epistemology.

Dewey...considered that the main function of education was to improve the reasoning process. He also recommended adapting his problem-solving method to many subjects. A student who is not motivated will not really perceive a problem, so problems selected for study should be derived from learner interests.... Therefore, the methods of constructivism emphasize development of learners' ability in solving their real life problems. (Huang, 2002, p. 29)

As Dewey's idea of constructivism applies to teacher professional development, we gather that professional learning opportunities should not solely be based upon organizational goals, but should also be relevant and address the individual needs of teachers, offering support and facilitating activities to aid teachers in solving problems and meaning-making as it applies to what is needed in their classrooms in order to support students. Yet in the field of K-12 education, teachers must also be equipped with a sound and specific understanding of the concepts students are expected to learn. The concept of meaning-making is applied to the manner in which teachers are instructed or lead to acquire knowledge, not in how teachers are led to find their own relative truths within the subject matter.

Reading Dewey as a constructivist allows us to incorporate a key component of his epistemology, regarding the status of what [knowledge] is constructed... To remain silent on this issue is to invite one or other of the two extreme viewpoints typically associated with constructivist thinking: the social constructionist's wholehearted embrace of crude relativism, on the one hand; the foundationalist [sic] or objectivist insistence that validity and truth can only be given by those who already know, on the other. The challenge is to articulate the "middle ground" wherein knowledge and understanding may be viewed as both constructed and worth striving for. (Splitter, 2009, p. 144)

This balance in constructivist thought can also be found in the analysis of Piaget's work. A characteristic understanding of his philosophy yields the idea that constructivism is open and that new knowledge and learning is influenced by the individual's inability to accommodate it into his current schema. Piaget theorized primarily on the process of learning for children, who have a far more limited realm of experience and schema. Constructivism becomes more complex when considering the relatively more intricate details of an adult's values.

According to Piaget..., people-children in particular-construct knowledge out of their actions with the environment. These actions can be both physical (actually manipulating an object) and mental (enlarging and/or refining existing internal schema). The child learns first by encountering and then exploring an object or idea. Initially, the child tries to assimilate this new information into existing schema or thought structures. If the exploration of the object or idea does not match current schema, the child experiences cognitive disequilibrium and is motivated to mentally accommodate the new experience. (Harlow et al., 2007, p. 45)

Further, Raymond Wlodkowski (2011) ties the tenets of constructivism to adults' motivation through his argument that meaning-making in the adult brain is directly linked to the social constructs of an individual's culture, and values. This aspect of Wlodkowski's use of constructivism is particularly important to this study, because it addresses a mature, narrower idea of meaning-making and how it influences adult learning. Designing professional development through this lens might provide far greater impact on teacher growth because of its applicability to the participants and the individual context of their environment.

Human beings are curious and active, make meaning from experience, and desire to be effective at what they value...For example, what adults find relevant, that which interests them and matters most to their brains, is directly related to their individual values, which are social constructions. (Wlodkowski, 2011, Locations 1584-1587)

Adult learning theory. The theory of adult learning is most notably discussed by Malcolm Knowles and in the earlier foundational works of Eduard Lindeman (Lindeman, 1926; Knowles, 1977). Lindeman considered the constructivist John Dewey as an influential part of his philosophy of adult learning, theorizing that adults "seek to discover new knowledge through intuition and the analysis of experience" (Knowles et al., 2014, p. 19). Knowles' theories are rooted in constructivism as well, addressing the process of how learning occurs, instead of concepts of what should be learned (Holton et al., 2001; Knowles et al., 2014; Wlodkowski, 2011). Each of these theorists place more interest in understanding adults as learners, as opposed to defining a single theory that explicitly outlines the descriptors of adult education and its relationship to society. This is important to note, as there has been a substantial amount of criticism as to whether or not andragogy should be defined as a theory (Davenport & Davenport, 1985; Hagen & Park, 2016; Hartree, 1984; Knowles et al., 2014; Rachal, 2002). Nevertheless,

Knowles' and Lindeman's standpoint is that "andragogy presents core principles of adult learning that in turn enable those designing and conducting adult learning to build more effective learning processes for adults" (Knowles et al., 2014, p. 4). Knowles is very clear in his message that the core principles of andragogy provide the characteristics of the actual transaction of learning, not the overall goal or purpose of that transaction. Therefore, the core principles of andragogy are applicable to all learning where adults are involved and summarily suitable for professional learning where K-12 educators are participating (Forrest & Peterson, 2006; Holton et al., 2001; Knowles et al., 2014). Table 2 details these principles.

Table 2

Six Core Principles of Andragogy

Core Principle	Andragogical Approach to Learning
Need to Know	Learners need to know why it is necessary to learn something before engaging in process of learning.
Self-Concept; Self-Directedness	Learners are generally aware of their personal needs. The extent of this adult concept of self is heavily dependent upon their degree of self-direction.
Experience	Learners bring their prior experiences and knowledge to educational activities, thus provide a rich resource for learning.
Readiness to Learn	Learners typically become ready to learn based upon an internal experience and a need to cope with a life situation or perform a task.
Orientation	Learners' orientation to acquiring knowledge is life-centered, and they see education as a process of developing increased competency levels to achieve their full potential.
Motivation	Learners' motivation is internal choice but can be impacted by both internal and or external variables.

Note. Adapted from "It's Called Andragogy, by S. P. Forrest III & T. Peterson, 2006, *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 5(1), 113-122. Copyright 2006 by the authors. Adapted from "Toward Development of a Generalized Instrument to Measure Andragogy," by E. Holton, R. Swanson, & R. Bates, 2009, *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 20(2), 169-193. Copyright 2009 by the authors. Adapted from "Andragogy in Practice: Clarifying the Andragogical Model of Adult Learning," by E. Holton, R. Swanson, & S. Nanquin, 2001, *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 14(1), 118-143. Copyright 2001 by the authors.

It is in the combination of Knowles' and Lindeman's philosophies that the six core principles of andragogy establish their bearings.

Andragogy's six basic principles of adult learning differentiate what educators must do to successfully teach learners. These principles shift the focus of learning needs analysis, curriculum design, delivery, and assessment from being teacher-centered to learner-centered. (Holton, Swanson, & Bates, 2009, p. 170)

There is a second part of the theory of andragogy that Knowles refers to as the andragogical process design. This process design outlines exactly as its name explains, with a primary focus on equipping educators with a procedure and resources for creating learning experiences that are tailored for adults. The eight elements of this design are written such that they are not narrow or specific to an individual activity. Instead they describe the steps for instituting an atmosphere that is fertile enough to nurture the growth of well-designed adult learning opportunities. These procedures occur prior to, during, and following the learning experience.

The andragogical instructor (teacher, facilitator, consultant, change agent) prepares in advance a set of procedures for involving the learners and other relevant parties in a process involving these elements: (1) preparing the learner; (2) establishing a climate conducive to learning; (3) creating a mechanism for mutual planning; (4) diagnosing the needs for learning; (5) formulating program objectives (which is content) that will satisfy these needs; (6) designing a pattern of learning experiences; (7) conducting these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials; and (8) evaluating the learning outcomes and rediagnosing [sic] learning needs, (Knowles et al., 2014, p. 51)

The core principles of andragogy and the eight elements of design are applicable to teacher professional development because they shape how we view teachers as adult learners, and professionals, thus our practices and policies when providing support to teachers. In Ingersoll and Perda's (2008) evaluation of the widely-used criterion for professionalization as it pertains to

teaching, they find that teachers are among the field of American professionals that have “(1) credential and licensing requirements for entry, (2) induction and mentoring programs for entrants, (3) professional development support, opportunities and participation, (4) specialization, (5) authority over decision-making, (6) compensation levels, and (7) prestige and occupational social standing” (p. 108). Yet, in general, research shows that teachers are not valued comparably to those in professions such as science, engineering, medicine, or law (Ingersoll & Perda, 2008; OECD, 2014). Thus, policies and practices are not always designed through the perspective that teachers are adults in a professional field who continually learn to sharpen their craft. Instead we often find that learning opportunities for teachers are primarily designed in a fashion parallel to how instruction is designed for the young students they teach. When we combine each of the principles of andragogy, and follow the course of Knowles’ work over time, it is understood that adult learning should be experiential, relevant, problem-centered, and self-directing.

Regardless of critique on whether andragogy qualifies as a theory, when looking at its core principles and the steps for andragogical process design, some cognitive neuroscientists tell us that its fundamental values are what actually support the brain in the realm of cognition, memory, and neuroplasticity (Cozolino & Sprokay, 2006; Hagen & Park, 2016; Lövdén, Wenger, Mårtensson, Lindenberger, & Bäckman, 2013; Thomas & Baker, 2013). The tenets of andragogy encourage adult educators to foster a safe space for adults to learn, tap into the interests of their participant learners, and help connect what is being learned to further understandings of the world. Unlike traditional ideologies, his model is adaptable and should be used within the appropriate context of the situation. Knowles et al. (2014) offer us a model in Figure 2 to consider how andragogy core principles work in practice within varied subject

matter, situational differences, and individual learner differences all across multiple goals and domains of growth.

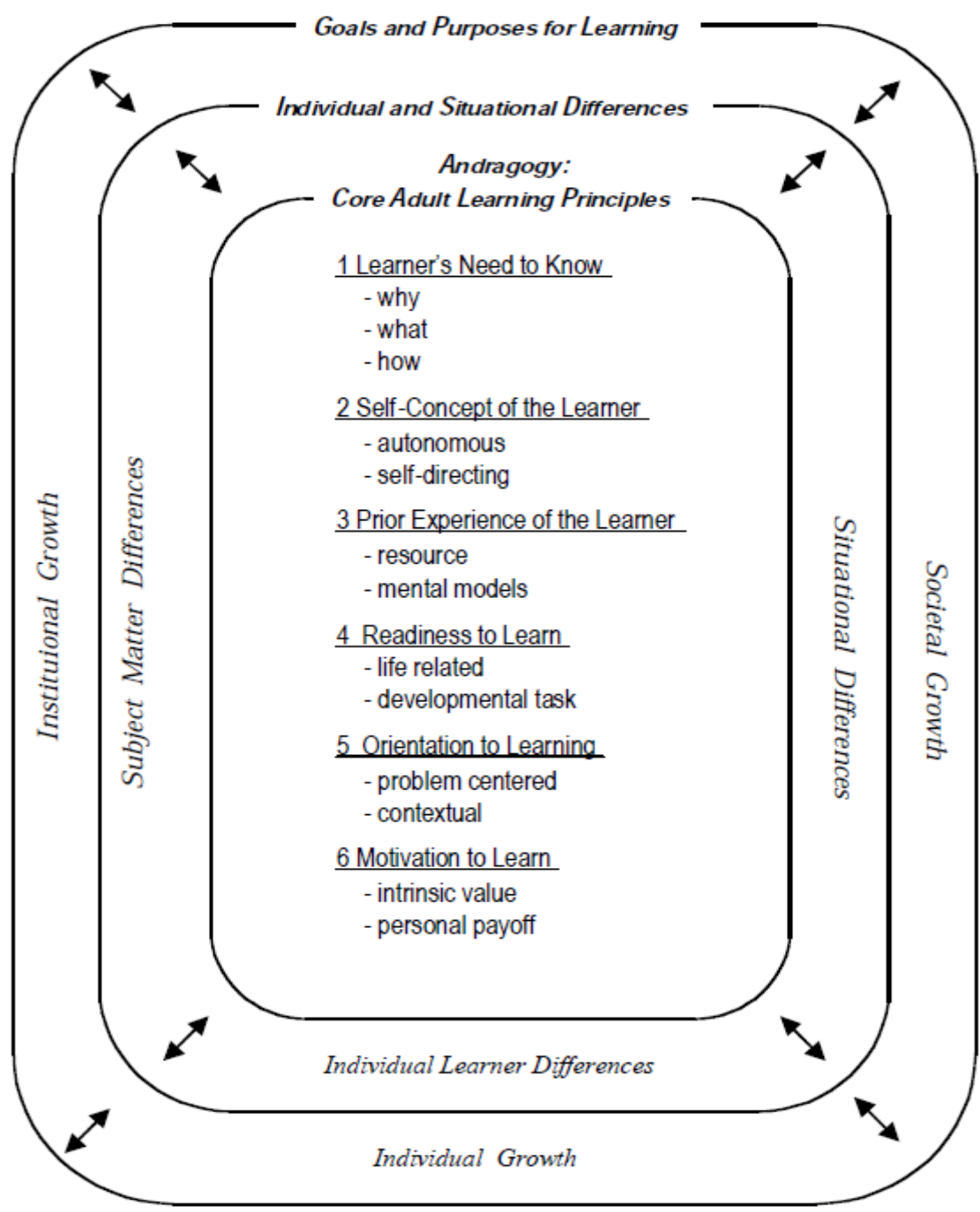


Figure 2. Andragogy in practice model. Reprinted from *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development* (p. 81), by M. S. Knowles, E. F. Holton III, R. A. Swanson, 2014, New York, NY: Taylor and Francis. Copyright 2015 by the authors. Reprinted with permission.

Goals and purposes for learning, the outer ring of the model, are portrayed as developmental outcomes...of adult learning [that] serve to shape and mold the learning experience...Individual and situational differences, the middle ring of the andragogy in practice model, are portrayed as variables...that impact adult learning and that act as filters that shape the practice of andragogy. (Knowles et al., 2014, p. 79-83)

Over the lifespan of Knowles' work, he specifically provided examples of various groups that foster adult education including, library educators, community development, human resource development, and higher education (Knowles et al., 2014). So it is worthwhile for educators of adults, and designers of professional development in K-12 public schools, to have a measurable understanding of the assumptions and practices that andragogy proposes.

Variables

Motivation for professional development and learning. Motivation is the process of a human brain and body making a conscious or unconscious choice to respond to a thought or circumstance (Klein, Raymond, & Wang, 2006; Wlodkowski, 2011). It is the basis of how we live and learn as well as the overall “natural human process for directing energy to accomplish a goal” (Wlodkowski, 2011, Location 221). However, there are various theoretical and conceptual frameworks on what prompts this psychological and physical process. Through social-cognitive theory, Bandura's belief is that “people must partly serve as agents of their own motivation and action” (Bandura & Schunk, 1981, p. 586). Within this understanding, motivation is affected by a student's perception of self-efficacy and his plan of setting and working towards specific, personal goals (Bandura, 1993; Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Cook & Artino, 2016; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). Gagné and Deci (2005) postulate the dynamics of self-determination theory, in that it encompasses both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. They

describe how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are actually both autonomous, intentional behaviors, yet differ in their degree of autonomy and are at two proverbial ends of a spectrum (Cook & Artino, 2016).

Intrinsically motivated behavior, which is propelled by people's interest in the activity itself, is prototypically autonomous. Activities that are not interesting...require extrinsic motivation, so their initial enactment depends upon the perception of a contingency between the behavior and a desired consequence such as implicit approval or tangible rewards. (Gagné & Deci, 2005, p. 334)

Either way, whether intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, through this theoretical lens it is the individual who determines the value and defines the reasons of the behavior he chooses (Cook & Artino, 2016; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Sørebo, Halvari, Gulli, & Kristiansen, 2009). Another, long-standing, theoretical view of motivation can be found through the lens of the Expectancy-Value theory, which asserts that "choice, persistence, and performance can be explained by [an individual's]... beliefs about how well they will do on the activity and the extent to which they value the activity" (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000, p. 68). Although this theory holds some of the tenets of other motivation theories, a particular difference is the concept that one's achievement in a task is contingent not only upon the level of competence he believes he has, but also the belief that it is even possible to learn it or accomplish it in the future. As well, this motivational theory addresses the extent to which a task holds personal value, in addition to how much an individual is willing to pay the cost to accomplish it (Cook & Artino, 2016; Flake, Barron, Hulleman, McCoach, & Welsh, 2015; Guo, Marsh, Parker, Morin, & Dick, 2017; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Finally, through Wlodkowski's (2011) motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching, he explains that motivation is affected by the cultural experiences of the

individual. To provide effective instruction, whether it is for children or adults, an educator sees a student's culture as an asset to learning. Additionally he, evaluates himself for whatever cultural biases or expectations he holds for his students, and seeks to set these presuppositions aside (Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2011). "We are the history of our lives, and our motivation is inseparable from our learning, which is inseparable from our cultural experience" (Wlodkowski, 2011, Chapter 1, Section 1, para. 5). Table 3 summarizes the unique variances and similarities between each of the motivational theories described.

Table 3

Summary of Variances and Similarities Between Motivational Theories and a Framework

	Social- Cognitive Theory (SCT)	Self Determination Theory (SDT)	Expectancy- Value Theory (EVT)	Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching (MFCRT)
Key Theoretical Concept	Human learning and performance result from reciprocal interactions among personal, behavioral and environmental factors. Self-efficacy beliefs are the primary drivers of motivated action.	Intrinsic motivation leads people to act purely to satisfy their curiosity or desire for mastery. All other actions are prompted by extrinsic motivation, which is driven by social values. Extrinsically motivated actions can become self-determined as values become integrated and internalized. Intrinsic and internalized motivations are promoted by feelings of competence, autonomy and relatedness.	Motivation is a function of the expectation of success and perceived value. Expectation of success is the degree to which individuals believe they will be successful if they try. Task value is the degree to which individuals perceived personal importance, value or intrinsic interest in doing the task.	The learner's perspective, language, values, and ways of knowing must be considered in order to foster adult motivation to learn When adults care about what they are learning and know they are becoming more effective at what they value by means of that learning, their intrinsic motivation surfaces.

(continued)

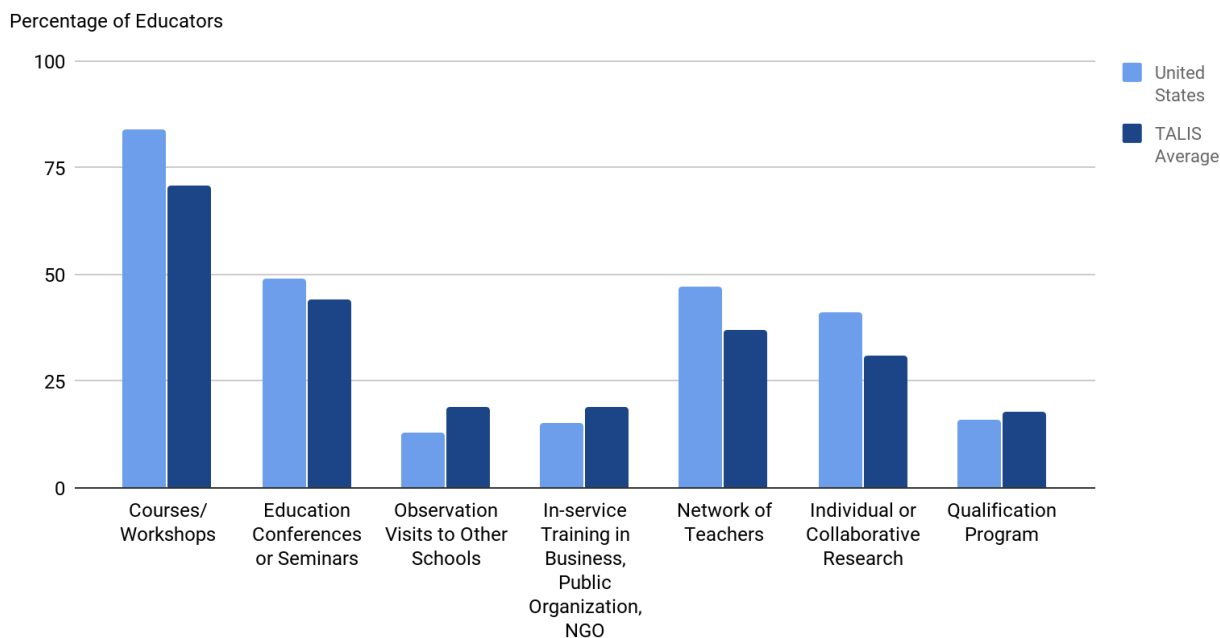
	Social-Cognitive Theory (SCT)	Self Determination Theory (SDT)	Expectancy- Value Theory (EVT)	Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching (MFCRT)
Comparison to Other Theories	Self-efficacy is similar to many constructs of expectancy of success, but is generally more task, context, and goal specific.	SDT places unique emphasis on autonomy, choice and human relationships. Other theories also address intrinsic and extrinsic factors.	Concepts of expectancy of success and value recur in many other theories.	Intrinsic motivation is based upon values and beliefs, like other theories of motivation and the theory of adult learning.
Research Cited	Bandura, 1993; Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Cook & Artino, 2016; Zimmerman et al., 1992	Cook & Artino, 2016; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Sørensen et al., 2009	Cook & Artino, 2016; Flake et al., 2015; Guo et al., 2017; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000	Robins et al., 2011; Wlodkowski, 1999, 2011; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995

Note. Adapted from “Motivation to Learn: An Overview of Contemporary Theories,” by D. A. Cook & A. R. Artino, 2016, *Medical Education*, 50(10), 997–1014. Copyright 2016 by the authors. Additional sources noted in table.

The researcher found common themes among the theories, specifically in the realm of willingness and the desire to act. It was revealed that motivation is strongly affected by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors and tied to human emotion, competence, values, social experiences, and relationships. Furthermore, when we consider the complexities of these factors and how they impact teacher learning and practice, there is far more insight on how to better design professional development. It is possible that teachers’ motivation to participate in professional development and professional learning is not necessarily aligned with their actual desire to learn. Assuming all educators want to continually hone their craft and sharpen their knowledge to meet the needs of 21st century students, it might be beneficial to examine what hampers motivation to actually participate. Noted educator Jim Knight (2000) looked at this very concept in his ethnographic research of secondary teachers’ perceptions of professional development, and found these overall sentiments among his study’s participants:

Specifically, teachers...carried with them (a) a history of interpersonal conflict with other teachers; (b) a historical belief that professional development is impractical; (c) a feeling of being overwhelmed by the tasks they need to complete as teachers; (d) resentment about the top-down decision-making in the district; and (e) anxiety about changes taking place in their schools. (p. 10)

Yet in a 2013 OECD (2014) study of nearly 2,000 American secondary teachers, it was found that teachers are indeed participating in professional learning opportunities far more than their international counterparts. Specifically, the problem was teachers felt these activities had minimal to no impact on their learning and 66% of them believed that the profession of teaching was not valued by American society. Figure 3 shows teachers' participation rates in varied types of professional development in comparison to the TALIS average of 106,000 responses from lower secondary teachers from 34 participating nations and subnational entities.



*Figure 3. Lower secondary educators' participation rates in varied professional development. Adapted from *Key Findings from TALIS 2013: United States of America*, by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2014 (<https://www.oecd.org/unitedstates/TALIS-2013-country-note-US.pdf>). Copyright 2014 by the author.*

Knight's (2000) synopsis, coupled with thick and rich data he shares, supports why the teachers under study lacked motivation to participate in professional learning opportunities. The TALIS report specifically reveals how secondary teachers' emotions equate to feeling less valued and ultimately contribute to motivation. As well, both examples coincide with what the literature dictates will impact motivation, according to the various theories. Wlodkowski (2011) mentions that the recipe for creating conditions of motivation are "establishing inclusion, developing a positive attitude, enhancing meaning, and engendering competence" (p. ix). Instead of encouraging the perception that teachers are not interested in learning, this researcher argues that motivation to participate in professional development and professional learning has been affected by intrinsic and extrinsic factors that serve as barriers to learning when motivational conditions are not established.

Value of professional development and learning. Throughout the literature, several recurrent ideas are prevalent when arguing what increases the value and effectiveness of professional development, thus increasing the rate of teacher implementation of concepts obtained through professional learning opportunities. Common themes found throughout the literature reveal that effective professional development is characterized and measured by the quality of these parameters: (a) content focus- enhancing knowledge and pedagogy; (b) implementation of PD through active learning; (c) implementation of PD over an adequate period of time with on-going, job embedded practice; (d) coherence-consistency and clarity in the messaging of policy at all levels; (e) opportunities for collaboration; and (f) professional learning and support through coaching.

Content focus: Enhancing knowledge and pedagogy. According to the literature, one of the most important aspects of professional development is the extent to which teachers

continuously acquire and sharpen their skills, hone essential learnings, and maintain best teaching practices. Borko (2004) insists that students cannot gain the depth of conceptual understanding needed, if teachers have not truly digested the subjects they are teaching. Professional development and learning should aid teachers in obtaining both a sound knowledge of the subject matter they are studying, as well as a firm understanding of how to teach the subject matter per the various learning styles of their students (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Desimone, 2009; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; D. Reeves, 2010). Fullan (1993) is a strong advocate for better teacher preparation in university training programs, as well as a societal approach to supporting and equipping classroom teachers with the training and tools needed to continually teach today's students in an ever changing world and classroom. "Teachers and teacher educators do not know enough about subject matter, they don't know enough about how to teach, and they don't know enough about how to understand and influence the conditions around them" (Fullan, 1993, p. 108). The literature collectively reveals that a sound professional development program has the potential to greatly impact the knowledge base of teachers, increase competence in instructional practices, and enhance the student outcomes that result from it (Darling-Hammond & Plank, 2015; Desimone, 2009; Guskey, 2002b).

Implementation of PD: Active learning. In the same way that students must be actively engaged in their learning, teachers too benefit from professional learning opportunities that provide engaging activities (Borko, 2004; Casteel, Ballantyne, & National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Desimone, 2009). Garet et al. (2001) and Borko (2004) provide clear examples of such activities, including, but not limited to,

(a) observing other teachers and allowing others to observe them, (b) collaboratively discussing videotaped or in-person observations in conjunction with highlighting teacher practices, (c) planning and implementing knowledge gained from professional development experiences, (d) collaborative sessions with other teachers to examine student work samples and comparative teaching strategies, and (e) opportunities to share their learning with others in their field through presentations and scholarly writing. Through their research, Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) have found that when a school and or district collaboratively uses approaches such as these, an organizational paradigm shift takes place in the direction of positive, sustained change and improved student learning.

In regard to professional learning for both preservice and in-service teachers around the pedagogy of equity, access, and culture, Cochran-Smith et al. (2008) make a case that it is particularly important to use active learning when engaging educators in these concepts, as “experienced instructors want to know how culture has shaped them and their students” (Robins et al., 2011, p. 43). The research of Cochran-Smith et al. (2008) shows that Caucasian preservice teachers enter teacher preparation programs with

(1) little awareness or understanding of discrimination, especially racism; (2) depressed expectations for the achievement of students of color buttressed by a taken-for-granted deficiency orientation; (3) ignorance and fear of communities of color, and of discussing race and racism; and (4) lack of awareness of themselves as cultural beings, and of communities and classrooms as cultural sites. (p. 566)

They offer a short list of active learning strategies that have been studied that support teachers in their understanding of self as a cultural being and bring forth an awareness of some of the life experiences people of different cultures may face. Table 4 presents active learning strategies that

researchers believe teachers can use for self-reflection and the examination of diverse viewpoints.

Table 4

Active Learning Strategies to Support Understanding Diverse Cultures

Active Learning Strategy	Authors
Reading, writing, and discussing autobiographies, including one's own autobiography	Clark & Medina, 2000 Dillard, 1996 Florio-Ruane, 1994 Rubin, 1995 Xu, 2000
Engaging teachers in a cross-cultural exchange through the mail or email	Fuller & Ahler, 1987 Lacina & Sowa, 2005 Schoorman, 2002
Reading and discussing ethnic children's literature	LaFramboise & Griffith, 1997 Nathenson-Mejia & Escamilla, 2003
Simulations or debates	Marshall, 1998
Involving teachers in direct discussions of racism and White privilege	Lawrence, 1997 Lawrence & Bunche, 1996 Marx & Pennington, 2003
Guided research projects	Brown, 2004 Sleeter, 1996
Shared journaling and reflection	Garmon, 1998 Milner, 2003 Pewewardy, 2005

Note. The data in this table are from *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts* (3rd. ed.), by M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D. J. McIntyre, & K. E. Demers, 2008, New York, NY: Taylor & Francis. Copyright 2008 by the authors.

In the same way adults' experiences and attitudes psychologically impact their learning, engaging in these strategies and reflecting on one's own beliefs may provide educators with a consciousness of how the life experiences of students, and congenial relationships with their teachers, impact the content they receive while in school.

Implementation of PD: Time/duration. Time is a valuable commodity to most everyone in the field of education. When we consider its importance in measuring the quality and impact

of professional development, it is clear that the duration of time a teacher is engaged in professional learning is just as pivotal to acquiring skills and pedagogy as is the length of time a teacher spends practicing what they have learned (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; D. Reeves, 2010). Additionally, both Guskey (2002b) and Fullan (1993) share that we must begin to see professional development as an ongoing process of continuous development, not simply as a singular event of change. “Learning to be proficient at something new and finding meaning in a new way of doing things requires both time and effort” (Guskey, 2002b, p. 386). Also, change that will impact teacher, and thusly student, knowledge and practice will require a lengthy span of time if we are looking for it to be sustained (D. Reeves, 2010). Research also suggests that professional development is most effective when it is ongoing and a part of a teacher’s ordinary life (Guskey, 2002b). Professional learning does not, and should not, be resigned to one-day workshops and seminars. It should be embedded in the regular course of work through reflection, student assessments, teacher planning, and other activities (D. Reeves, 2010). Teachers cannot be expected to successfully grow as professional learners and institute continuous improvements if they have been subjected to a single PD seminar in isolation and are missing the sustained support over time to perfect their skill.

Coherence. Coherence in professional development or professional learning for teachers indicates that the messaging of policy and mandates surrounding skills and content being acquired is consistent and clear at all levels, specifically in the realm of federal, state, and local education requirements. Additionally, if true coherent school reform is sought after, professional development must not (a) be an isolated event, (b) be disconnected from the aims of the larger organization, or (c) hinder the facilitation of ongoing professional collaboration and discussion

(Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Fullan, 2015; Garet et al., 2001). “Professional development should be aligned with state and district goals and standards for student learning, and should become an everyday part of the school schedule rather than be conducted as a set of ad hoc events” (Teaching Commission, 2004, p. 49). With this in mind, coherence in professional development means that all parts of an organization, specifically at the school level in regard to leadership, are a part of the professional learning taking place. Fullan (2015) calls on school administrators to become lead learners, setting the stage and facilitating an environment for authentic professional development, student learning, and school improvement. He argues that principals are a key piece in maximizing the impact of professional development.

The principal’s role becomes one of shaping the interactions and mechanisms while resourcing strategically those who propel collective learning...They build precision by concentrating on a few goals and then developing a clear plan for achieving them...they work on the instructional focus by orchestrating the work of coaches, teacher-leaders, and central office personnel to support student learning; focusing on the key elements; using data to diagnose learning needs; cultivating precision in instructional practices; and learning collectively. (Fullan, 2015, p. 56)

With this type of focus and systematic approach to sustained development and creating a culture of learning and intrinsic accountability, members of an educational organization increase their capacity and the work of improvement is no longer a solitary event.

Opportunities for collaboration. Teacher collaboration is one of the foremost forms of professional learning that has stood the test of time, as it facilitates a space for the proposition of new ideas and concepts and prompts learning from the experience of others. As well, in a

committed community of learners, or a professional learning community (PLC), its members use an action research approach to solving problems around student learning, develop their capacities as educators, and rethink organizational and/or classroom practices based upon student achievement data (Cochran-Smith et al., 2008; Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, & Many, 2010; Fullan, 2010; Garet et al., 2001). From his meta-analysis of over 1,200 studies, John Hattie (2015) reveals that a significant effect size above the average size of a year's growth ($d = 0.40$) can be attained through what he calls collaborative expertise. Table 5 shares this information.

Table 5

Effect Sizes Attributed to Teacher Collaborative Expertise

Teacher Action	Effect Size
Working together to evaluate their impact	0.93
Moving from what students know now towards explicit success criteria	0.77
Building trust and welcoming errors as opportunities to learn	0.72
Getting maximum feedback from others about their effect	0.72

Note. Adapted from *What Works Best in Education: The Politics of Collaborative Expertise*, by J. Hattie, 2015, London, UK: Pearson. Copyright 2015 by the author.

The practice of effective collaboration contributes to a system of continuous improvement as well as a learning culture that values using inquiry and evidence to enhance the lives of those they serve (Casteel et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Researchers in the field of education assert that professional development of value has opportunities for teacher collaboration because in this format educators exist both as teacher and student learner, and are encouraged to grapple with the complexities of both roles.

Teachers learn by doing, reading, and reflecting (just as students do); by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what

they see. This kind of learning enables teachers to make the leap from theory to accomplished practice. (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011, p. 83)

Professional development that specifically designates periods of collaboration also allows members of an organization to utilize the knowledge and resources that may already exist among colleagues, but may be overlooked due to time constraints and limited organized interactions. Fullan (2010) refers to this as harnessing collective capacity, believing that with this, organizations have significantly higher potential and nurture an atmosphere that cultivates innovation. “Collective capacity generates the emotional commitment and the technical expertise that no amount of individual capacity working alone can come close to matching” (Fullan, 2010, Loc. 147).

Professional learning through coaching. Instructional coaching has become increasingly popular over the past two decades as a method of school reform that provides support for ongoing teacher learning and professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Gallucci, DeVoogt, Yoon, & Boatright, 2010; Moran, 2007). Coaching differs in the more traditional approach to professional development in that it is not a single occurrence and in various forms can take place within the realm of pre, mid, and post classroom instruction. As well, effective instructional coaches assume the role of a partner (Knight, 2011), developing a relationship of professional peer with whom he is coaching. Knight (2004) states, “she or he is part coach and part anthropologist, advising teachers on how to contend with the challenges and opportunities they face while recognizing each school’s unique culture” (p. 33). While the unique role of an instructional coach may vary from school to school, and district to district, the literature shows that instructional coaches today generally have five unifying characteristics. Coaches: (a) serve as a mentor, model, and or expert in content, skills, and practices; (b)

routinely conduct meetings with individuals, departments, or teams to facilitate inquiry and reflection; (c) provide time for and respond to one-on-one teacher requests; (d) provide support that is directly embedded into the immediate needs of the teacher's classroom instruction; and (e) stay committed to aiding schools in improving instructional practice for student success (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Devine, Houssemand, & Meyers, 2013a, 2013b; Garet et al., 2001; Knight, 2004; Soisangwarn & Wongwanich, 2014).

Barriers to professional development and learning. Teachers in American K-12 public education experience a range of barriers to participating in professional development or professional learning when intrinsic and extrinsic motivational conditions are not in place. These barriers usually stem directly from the educational organizational where they serve, or are personal in nature, and impede professional learning opportunities that are “directly related to teachers’ instructional practice, intensive and sustained, integrated with school-reform efforts, and that actively engage teachers in collaborative professional communities” (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009, p. 39). Research shows that organizational barriers include (a) policies, (b) limited resources, (c) expectations for growth, (d) time constraints, (e) culture of the organization, (f) working conditions, and (g) incentives (Buczynski & Hansen, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; DiPaola & Hoy 2014; Duke, 1993; Firestone & Pinnell, 1993; Frost, Akmal, & Kingrey, 2010; National Research Council of the National Academies, 2007; Wei et al., 2009). As well, the primary factors causing personal barriers to participation in professional development and professional learning are as follows: (a) lack of awareness, (b) disillusionment, (c) distrust, (d) pessimism, (e) satisfaction with status quo, (f) engrossed in other activities, (g) stress, (h) fear of failure, and (i) issues with time (Buczynski & Hansen, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017;

DiPaola & Hoy 2014; Duke, 1993; Firestone & Pinnell, 1993; National Research Council of the National Academies, 2007).

Organizational barriers. Organizational policies can sometimes be the most difficult to remedy because mandates from various stakeholders may exist, causing bureaucracy to negatively dictate what may not be in the best interest of teachers and students (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Policies also directly influence the amount of resources (National Research Council of the National Academies, 2007) that are available and initiatives taking place at the school site level. This can present a range of obstacles for teacher professional development and professional learning, varying from one end of the spectrum where there are too many resources and initiatives, causing fatigue, confusion and financial waste, to the opposite end of that very same spectrum, where there are such limited funds and initiatives that teachers can not properly do their job (Fullan, 1993, 2010; Fullan & Quinn, 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Expectations for growth also pose as a barrier to teacher professional development and learning when those expectations have not been made clear, are too lofty or in contrast insufficient, or disconnected from the overall vision, focus, and needs of the organization (DiPaola & Hoy 2014; Duke, 1993; Firestone & Pinnell, 1993; Fullan & Quinn, 2015). This is a direct reflection of the culture of that organization, and through its practices and regular behaviors of the individuals within, showing what is truly valued in the way of both teacher and student learning. Within the culture there also must be incentivization and time allotted for teachers to improve their craft and grow professionally (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). Finally, in the same way we speak of creating a safe space for students to learn, working conditions for teachers must also be safe, both physically and emotionally, to encourage participation in professional learning opportunities.

Personal barriers. Other factors that exist to participating in professional development or learning, are individual in nature and specific to perceptions teachers hold. Teachers must first possess an awareness that there is an actual need for growth before they have any motivation to seek it or take advantage of what is being offered (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This, in part, is dependent upon the educational organization's responsibility to make its expectations clear, support teachers in continually using data to gauge students' needs, and maintain systems where teachers create and work towards authentic learning goals in the interests of professionalism and best practices for students (Fullan & Quinn, 2015; Duke, 1993). Others, specifically senior teachers like the subjects of Knight's (2000) study, may be disillusioned because of their experience in seeing various initiatives come and go with no lasting effect on organizational practice, no data showing student improvement, or no support from their administrators (Buczynski & Hansen, 2010; National Research Council of the National Academies, 2007). This cynicism is not always reflective of teacher's feelings that students cannot learn, or that positive change cannot happen, but reflective of their faith in the merits and values of the organization and its practices (National Research Council of the National Academies, 2007). In another vein, teacher pessimism is far more of an internal issue, where a teacher may believe that he is not equipped, and may never be competent enough, to be an agent of change in his or her classroom (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). This belief is deeply rooted and long lasting in comparison to mere cynicism. Additionally, both cynicism and pessimism are relatives of distrust--in the organization as a whole, specific members of the organization, and or themselves (Wei et al., 2009). There are also many situations where teachers are simply more comfortable with status quo, than advocating for change. In Ackerman and Mackenzie's (2006) study of teacher leaders, they surmise,

As much of the literature about teacher leadership shows, teachers who step out of the acceptable pattern of quiet acquiescence with the status quo take big risks. When they advocate for what they believe is best for students, colleagues may see them as rude, disloyal, or worse. (para.19)

Teachers must have the willingness and courage to grow professionally, but unfortunately educational organizations do not always provide a safe space for adult vulnerability.

Teachers today are often engrossed in other activities both outside and inside of the workplace that demand more time than they have available to give to professional learning (National Research Council of the National Academies, 2007). Attempting to manage their personal lives, and pursue professional growth, whether outside or within the regular workday, can be a prominent source of stress. Another final concern teachers may face is their fear of failure (Buczynski & Hansen, 2010; Firestone & Pennell, 1993). Taking the risk to set new goals and participate in professional learning to help reach these goals, implies that there is always a possibility one might be unsuccessful. Duke (1993) shares, “the prospect of failure can be very threatening. Failure itself is less the source of this fear than the perceived consequences of failure” (p. 6). And if a teacher perceives the consequences are greater than the risks, motivation to participate in professional development is diminished (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). Research tells us that if there is to be any improvement in the state of motivation and learning for American teachers, “strategies to mitigate these [organizational and personal] barriers, in order to maximize the impact of professional development, need to be a priority in professional development reform” (Buczynski & Hansen, 2010, p. 599).

Needs and aspirations for professional development and learning. There is limited literature that reveals the needs of teachers, or their aspirations, in regard to professional

development and learning. This may be because both are particularly dependent on the individual and his or her environment. The nature of one's needs and aspirations also changes over time dependent upon multiple variables that are contingent upon both personal and organizational factors coupled with global and societal changes (Gemed, Fiorucci, & Catarci, 2014). Additionally, Torff and Sessions' (2008) study of teacher's attitudes about professional development showed that years of experience in the career of teaching is a major factor that dictates how they perceive their need for professional development.

Data analysis indicates that in the first two years of a teaching career (two years and one month, to be more precise), teachers became markedly more amenable to PD. A gradual but steady drop in attitudes about PD occurred in the second phase, from years three through nine of a teaching career. At the ten-year mark, teachers' attitudes had declined to a level comparable to that produced by newcomers to the profession (controlling for age and grade level). But this decline did not continue after the first decade in the classroom. In the third phase, teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience tended to have unchanging attitudes about PD. (Torff and Sessions, 2008, p. 130)

The literature is very clear, though, that designers of adult instruction "should emphasize what you want [adult] students to value, understand, or do with the information or skills being taught" (Northwest Center for Public Health Practice, 2012, p. 4). This concept is also directly aligned with the tenets of adult learning theory discussed earlier in this chapter. Essentially, the only way to understand the needs and aspirations of adult learners is through the process of conducting a needs assessment for the particular group of people who are to participate in professional learning. The design of effective instruction should be based upon this data. The first step involves understanding your audience, and their diverse needs, interests, and culture

(Forrest & Peterson, 2006; Gemedá et al., 2014; Wlodkowski, 2011; Knight, 2000; Northwest Center for Public Health Practice, 2012). Establishing learning objectives and developing instruction constitute the second and third steps, deciding if the content and pedagogy to be learned will address knowledge, skills or attitudes (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Darling-Hammond & Plank, 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009; Fullan, 1993; Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2002b; Northwest Center for Public Health Practice, 2012; D. Reeves, 2010). It is also during these two steps where success criteria are addressed and methods for evaluating if learning has taken place. The fourth step in this system involves the actual delivery of instruction, and considerations that should be addressed through addressing the needs of adult learners (Holton et al., 2001; Holton et al., 2009; Forrest & Peterson, 2006; Knowles et al., 2014; Northwest Center for Public Health Practice, 2012). Figure 4 shows a summary of what the literature recommends on understanding the learning needs and aspirations of an adult audience and developing instruction to meet those needs.

Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter presented a historical background on the history of professional development and professional learning for teachers in American public schools. It was followed by the theoretical frameworks of constructivism and adult learning theory as a lens through which to view this study. The chapter concludes with an examination of variables that influence professional learning-motivation, barriers, perceived value, and how to address teachers' needs and aspirations. Each of these concepts has been impacted by federal, state, and local policies and common practices that, in turn, affect the scholarship of in-service teachers. Coupled with public opinion, values over time, and increased research on how adults learn best,

there is sufficient impetus available for school districts to reevaluate their practices in how to provide support for teachers in K-12 education.

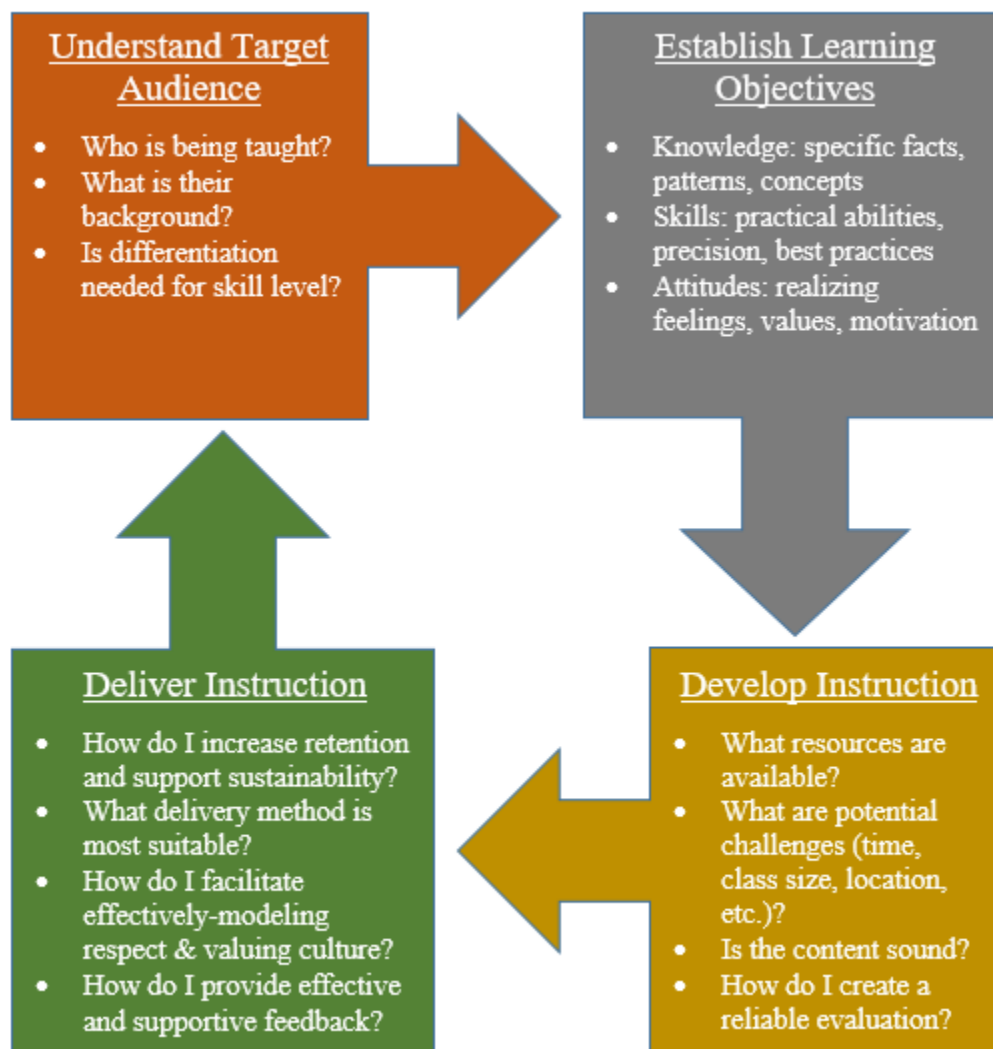


Figure 4. Developing instruction based upon adult needs.

Though at one time America could not collectively agree on the importance of education for the future of the country's society, most today are in agreement that preparing youth for post-secondary education, or the capacity to maintain a career, is vital to the stability of our nation. With the federal legislature's vote to make financial investments in equitable education across each state through ESEA of 1965 (Cochran-Smith et al., 2008; Ravitch, 1983), and the policies

enacted to make states accountable for providing such support, ESEA and each of its subsequent iterations have come a long way in reforming public schools (Ravitch, 2010). Though part of this journey of change necessitated creating opportunities for teachers to improve in their craft, there is still room for improvement when it comes to addressing educators in K-12 education as the adult learners they are.

This improvement in the area of addressing the needs of teachers and their learning can start in the realm of first understanding the process by which adults actually learn. Though there are many theories to explain this development, constructivism and adult learning theory provide an effective, research-based means to understand and support growth or change in the knowledge, skills, and practices of teachers. Both support parallel principles and advocate for instructors of adults to provide learning opportunities that are interactive, collaborative, facilitated, authentic, relevant, and motivating. With a focus on these characteristics, reform in teacher professional development might contribute to increased impact on teacher practice and their desire to participate in professional development. Additionally, it might work to overcome many teachers' negative feelings about their value and worth as a professional in the public school system and American society at large (Ingersoll & Perda, 2008; OECD, 2014).

Another important component of the literature study was understanding the variables that impact teachers' perception of professional development. The first of them, motivation, is a substantial factor of this perception, as the causative elements of motivation for adults are vastly different from that of children. This chapter explores three different theories and a framework around motivation to better analyze the motivation of participants of this study. Social-cognitive theory addresses how motivation is directly affected by an individual's perception of self-efficacy and their strategy of setting and working towards specific, personal goals (Cook &

Artino, 2016). Self-determination is the second theory, and explains the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in that they are both autonomous functions propelled by individual interest (Gagné & Deci, 2005). The third theory of motivation presented is expectancy value, which though similar to the others in some of its tenets, differs in how it also addresses one's capacity for self-efficacy in both the present and the future (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Finally, Wlodkowski's (2011) motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching contends that effective instruction only takes place when an instructor removes their cultural biases or expectations and the student's culture is considered an asset to learning.

The second variable under investigation through the range of the literature review was the complexity of factors that serve as barriers to professional development. These factors can be both organizational and personal in nature. Nevertheless, teachers must be willing and courageous enough to engage in professional growth. In addition, educational organizations must work to make sure their policies and work environment are actually conducive to teacher professional learning.

A remaining variable addressed in Chapter 2 was the value of professional development and learning. There were multiple recurrent ideas that surfaced within the literature to clarify what increases its worth. Professional development of high quality and value is distinguished by (a) strong content and pedagogy, (b) opportunities for active learning, (c) implementation of PD over an extended duration, (d) coherent messaging, (e) opportunities for collaboration, and (f) coaching and ongoing support.

Finally, this chapter concludes by connecting with the theoretical framework that guides this study, and discussing a system that incorporates the tenets of andragogy to address the needs and aspirations of adult learners, as they pertain to professional development.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter provides an overall summary of the purpose of this phenomenological study, its research questions, and the design and rationale of its interpretivist methodology. This will be followed by a description of the setting for this study and the characteristics of its participants, the sample, and the sampling procedures. There is a detailed explanation of human subjects considerations, data collection and procedures, and the instrumentation to be used. Finally, credibility, data analysis procedures, and positionality will be addressed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions of lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, in multiple southern California school districts, specifically in regard to (a) their motivation to participate in professional learning, (b) the value they have found when participating in professional learning, (c) barriers that exist to participating in professional learning, and (d) their needs and aspirations for professional learning.

Research Questions

The following research question propelled this study: How do lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, from multiple southern California school districts, describe

1. Their motivation, if any, to participate in professional learning?
2. What they value, if anything, when participating in professional learning?
3. Barriers, if any, that exist to participating in professional learning?
4. Their needs and aspirations, if any, as they pertain to professional learning?

Research Design and Rationale

This qualitative, non-experimental study uses a phenomenological methodology to explore how secondary ELA teachers perceive professional learning in regard to their

motivations, values, barriers, needs, and aspirations. This topic is being explored because understanding secondary teacher's perceptions of professional development in these areas may provide insight on how their lived experiences influence their learning as adults and behaviors regarding professional learning. Therefore, a qualitative approach was chosen, aiming to better understand participant's individual experiences through their comprehensive, self-reported descriptions, and further reveal a universal meaning underlying those experiences (Lin, 2013). Moustakas (1994) explains the phenomenological approach as "a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (p. 13). This researcher in turn derived a general or universal meaning from the essences of the participants' lived experience (Creswell, 2013) by using data from in-depth interviews and examining common themes of behavior among secondary teachers of ELA and literacy. The researcher conducted face-to-face and virtual, semi-structured interviews using open ended questions to collect participants' responses about their experiences.

Setting

Within this study, data was collected from lower secondary, public school, ELA and literacy teachers in one southern California county. In the 2016-2017 school year, the state of California reported a total of 1,348 middle and intermediate schools, with a collective enrollment of 1,021,469 students (California Department of Education, 2017). In the county under study that same year, the middle school and intermediate school student population accounted for 99,408 students, roughly 9.73%, of the statewide enrollment in the lower secondary grades. The lower secondary ELA teachers who participated in this study worked in two different school districts in this county, both of various sizes and diverse student demographics. As there are 24

school districts in this county, these two districts were chosen for this study because they served as a representative for all others in this same county that have similar sizes in student enrollment. Additionally there are similar characteristics in student demographics and geography of school district location. Relative to this county, District A is a small, rural school district with a total enrollment of 3,832 students during the 2016-2017 school year. The district is steadily experiencing growth and beginning to create more suburban housing and retail areas for its inhabitants. District B is a mid-sized, rural district adjacent to a large suburb. It had an enrollment of 19,194 students during the same year¹. Table 6 details the demographic information of the lower secondary students, grades seven and eight, in each of those districts for the 2016-2017 school year.

Table 6

Districts' Lower Secondary Enrollment by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	District A	District B
African American	45	57
American Indian	0	3
Asian	15	26
Filipino	13	9
Hispanic or Latino	568	2,575
Pacific Islander	4	11
White	166	246
Two or More Races	13	27

Participants, Sample, Sampling Procedures

To understand intermediate and middle school teachers' perceptions of professional development, the population of this study consisted of experienced, lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers employed in a southern California public school for the 2017- 2018 academic year. To provide in depth descriptions from participants in this qualitative study, a

¹ The sources for this information would break the confidentiality of the participating institutions. Therefore they have been omitted intentionally.

sampling technique was used to generate a sample that was relatively small-scale and nonrandom. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) explain that “purposive sampling involves selecting a sample based on the researcher’s experience or knowledge of the group to be sampled” (p. 175). The researcher had extensive experience working as a Teacher on Assignment in the department of Curriculum and Instruction, specializing in the area of ELA and literacy. Therefore, a purposive, criterion sampling (Patton, 1990) was used for this research, collecting data from a total of 13 interviews of lower secondary ELA teacher participants from District A ($n = 40$) and District B ($n = 44$).

The inclusion criteria for this research was that all subjects must have been currently teaching, or taught during the semester preceding, a minimum of one class period of ELA to public school students in lower secondary grades. Per the research on teachers’ attitudes about professional development and learning dependent on their years of experience in the occupation (Torff & Sessions, 2008), another inclusion criteria is that participants must have been in the teaching profession for a minimum of three years. After having received consent from both appropriate district office personnel and school site administrators to conduct a study, the researcher requested a master list of email addresses of teachers in their ELA/literacy department. To recruit participants, an electronic letter of recruitment (see Appendix C), and letter of consent (see Appendix D), was sent to members of the list to participate in this study. Anticipated initial response rate to the invitation to participate was between 60-70% considering the stress level and impacted schedule of the population under study during the time of data collection. This percentage was also expected due to the voluntary nature of participation. The sampling frame was created from the master schedules of each Intermediate and Middle school, within the three public school districts under study.

Human Subjects Considerations

All adherence to guidelines and procedures mandated through Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was ensured to secure physical and mental protections for those involved in this study. This researcher sought written approval (see Appendix A) for educational research from the appropriate district level office gatekeeper at each school district under study. As well, written approval was sought after requesting school site permission from each intermediate school principal of participants that were invited to be a part of this study. Informed consent (see Appendix D) was initially shared in advance through email prior to any data collection. It was shared again in person at site visits before the interview was conducted. For precaution, the names of all participants, and their place of employment, were altered to protect anonymity and participants were reminded of this during their initial phone call to confirm the receipt of their letter of consent, as well as immediately before and after the actual interview took place. Participants were offered remuneration in the form of a \$10 gift card of their choosing to Starbucks or Amazon, provided prior to the interview being conducted. They were reminded that they were under no obligation to complete the interview in whole or part and could stop the process of the interview at any time.

This researcher deemed the risks of participating in this study to be minimalistic, and in comparison, no more than what teachers may have encountered in their daily routines. Potential risks may have included anxiety and fatigue due to personal reflection during the interview. Yet, benefits of participating in this study may have included feelings of hope and gratitude, believing that personal concerns were documented to make improvements in their educational organization and general support provided for secondary teachers in public schools.

Data Collection and Procedures

The researcher collected data during the months of February and March of 2018. A letter to request permissions (see Appendix A) for research was sent to the appropriate gatekeepers of each of the two potential school districts under study. Follow-up calls were made to secure information on how best to secure permission to conduct a study using teacher participants from their school district. All appropriate request forms were completed and filed with the proper district office department. Following, school site principals were contacted via email (see Appendix B) to request permission to recruit teachers from their ELA/literacy department to participate in this study. Additionally, this researcher requested the names and email addresses of teachers in this department. These potential participants received an electronic letter of recruitment (see Appendix C) to participate in this study, as well as a letter of consent (see Appendix D). If there was any case of non-response from the district office, school site administrator, or potential participant, a follow up phone call was made.

Once letters of consent were signed and returned, the researcher conducted a phone call with the participant to review the letter of consent and provided an opportunity for questioning and clarification. The researcher began by reminding the participant that they were under no obligation to remain in this study and could withdraw at any time with no risks, as also stated on the letter of consent. Participants were insured of their anonymity and security, as all contact information and personal identities were kept confidential and secure on a password-protected computer. During this phone call, the researcher also made arrangements to conduct a phone or face-to face interview that was during a mutually convenient time for both the participant and the interviewer. It was anticipated that interviews would last no longer than an hour, but the researcher planned to allow as much time as participants need to express their lived experiences

and collect in-depth responses. The researcher planned to conduct follow-ups with further probing as needed.

As each interview began, participants were reminded of the information stated on the informed consent form, and provided a review of the purpose of this study and human subject protections. The researcher also reviewed the planned process of recording the interview, transcribing the interview, and conducting member checking. With the permission of the interviewee, all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed using the services of Rev.com, a confidential and secure transcription service. Both audio recordings, transcripts, and researcher notes were stored on a password protected computer at the researcher's personal residence for the duration of this study. When this study concluded, these electronic files were downloaded onto a flash drive and locked in a security cabinet. All data will be destroyed after five years. No later than three weeks after the interviews took place, participants were offered an electronic copy of their transcripts for accuracy to review.

Instrumentation

Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were used to collect data from this study's participants. Before data collection, though, the researcher sought the advice of an expert in this field and piloted the interview, looking for feedback on the content validity and any ambiguity in phraseology of the questions (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). Though it was unneeded, upon this feedback the interview questions would have been revised to reflect further clarity and appropriateness. Eight interview questions were asked, preceded by five demographic questions that ensured the participants met the inclusion criteria. The demographic questions were as follows:

1. What is your position at your current school site?

2. Collectively, how many years have you taught ELA/literacy in the intermediate or middle school?
3. What ELA/literacy classes are you currently teaching?
4. What ELA/literacy classes did you teach last semester or trimester?
5. What degrees and credentials do you currently hold?

The interview questions have been shaped to collect data based upon the variables in this study. These interview questions, and the corresponding literature that supports them can be seen in Table 7. Additionally, the researcher followed up with further probing as needed to solicit in-depth responses about their lived experiences.

Table 7

Relationship between Research Questions and Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Questions	Sources Cited
1. How do lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, from multiple southern California school districts, describe their motivation, if any, to participate in professional learning?	1. Describe what motivates you to participate in professional learning opportunities.	Klein et al., 2006; Wlodkowski, 2011; Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Cook & Artino, 2016; Zimmerman et al., 1992; Bandura, 1993; Gagné and Deci, 2005; Sørebo et al., 2009; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000; Guo et al., 2017; Flake et al., 2015; Robins et al., 2011; Wlodkowski, 1999; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995; Springer et al., 2012; Podgursky & Springer, 2007
2. How do lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, from multiple southern California school districts, describe what they value, if anything, when participating in professional learning?	2a. Please share some instances of when you participated in a professional learning opportunity and found it to be valuable? 2b. Why was it valuable?	Borko, 2004; Fullan, 1993; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001; D. Reeves, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Guskey, 2002b; Casteel et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Cochran-Smith et al., 2008; Robins et al., 2011; Clark & Medina, 2000; Dillard, 1996; Florio-Ruane, 1994; Rubin, 1995; Xu, 2000; Fuller & Ahler, 1987; Lacina & Sowa, 2005; Schoorman, 2002; LaFramboise & Griffith, 1997; Nathenson-Mejia & Escamilla, 2003; Marshall, 1998; Lawrence, 1997; Lawrence & Bunche, 1996; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Brown, 2004; Sleeter, 1996; Milner, 2003; Garmon, 1998; Pewewardy, 2005; Fullan, 2015; Teaching Commission, 2004; Hattie, 2015; Fullan, 2010; Gallucci et al., 2010; Moran, 2007; Knight, 2011; Knight, 2004; Devine et al., 2013a, 2013b; Soisangwarn & Wongwanich, 2014
	3. In your personal opinion, what do you feel makes a professional learning opportunity valuable?	

(continued)

Research Question	Interview Questions	Sources Cited
3. How do lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, from multiple southern California school districts, describe barriers, if any, that exist to participating in professional learning?	4. I'd like to know about your past experiences. Please describe any times when you encountered barriers to participating in professional development?	Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006; Buczynski & Hansen, 2010; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; DiPaola & Hoy 2014; Duke, 1993; Firestone & Pinnell, 1993; Frost et al., 2010; Fullan, 1993; Fullan, 2010; Fullan & Quinn, 2015; Knight, 2000; National Research Council of the National Academies, 2007; Wei et al., 2009
	5. What might be some barriers to you participating in professional learning opportunities in the future?	
4. How do lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, from multiple southern California school districts, describe their needs and aspirations, if any, as they pertain to professional learning?	6. How would you describe your current needs as it pertains to professional learning?	Cannon & Duncan, 2010; Gameda et al., 2014; Torff & Sessions, 2008; Northwest Center for Public Health Practice, 2012
	7. What professional learning do you feel you may need in the future?	
	8. Please share any professional learning opportunities you may hope for?	

Credibility

Creswell (2012) states that a sound qualitative study should have a thorough methodological approach and a rigorous procedure for data collection and analysis. “Rigor means, too, that the researcher validates the accuracy of the account using one or more of the procedures for validation, such as member checking, triangulating sources of data, or using a peer or external auditor of the account” (Creswell, 2012, p. 54). To ensure the research techniques are valid and rigorous, Lunenburg and Irby (2008) and Brink’s (1993) recommendations were adhered to institute the processes for:

1. Establishing construct validity by instituting clearly identified procedures for operation.
2. Establishing internal validity by ensuring the findings from this research yielded an accurate representation of participants' lived experiences. Each interview transcript was sent to the corresponding participant for member checking and an expert inter-rater was used for coding.
3. Establishing external validity by recognizing the extent to which the findings of this study are generalizable.
4. Establishing reliability by ensuring that the procedures in this study were trustworthy and could be replicated with the same results.

The researcher also bracketed out her biases by the use of personal reflexivity, which Lunenburg and Irby (2008) explain as “reflecting upon the ways in which our own values, experiences, interests, beliefs, political commitments, wider aims in life, and social identities have shaped the research” (p. 104).

Analytic Techniques

Lin (2013) explains, “phenomenological analysis is informed by intuition and reflection based on intensive and repetitive reading of the collected narratives” (p. 473). This researcher used content analysis to study the participants' responses. Using an iPad, all interviews were recorded and uploaded to Rev.com, a secure transcribing service. Once interview transcripts were returned, they were read multiple times to acquire a general familiarity with the data, as thick and rich data, offer what Bernard and Ryan (2010) refer to as the “human experience-the way real people actually experience real events” (p. 266). An electronic data file was created to represent each of the interview questions. All data was disaggregated and organized into its

correspondingly numbered file, then uploaded into Hyperresearch to streamline the process, organize information, and triangulate data into “conceptual components” (Bernard & Ryan, 2010, p. 271).

Using open coding, each entry was thoroughly analyzed to pinpoint particular phrases and words that were applicable to the phenomena. “Open coding is the identification of concepts and categories by segmenting data (e.g., interview transcriptions) [sic] into smaller units and labeling and describing their conceptual properties” (Lin, 2013, p. 473). Inductive coding was first used to delineate the appearance of new themes found within the language of the participants and further offer insight from their lived experiences. Newly emerging themes were added to the code book. A priori, deductive coding was then used to thoroughly analyze participant responses for the appearance of themes originally identified in the literature. These themes were applied to the codebook. Afterwards, the codes collected under each variable were organized into broad-based themes. To maintain validity and reliability, the code book and its definitions was made available for an expert inter-rater to conduct a peer review and second coding, ensuring the themes and coding process is valid. In its entirety, this system provided further insight on teachers’ needs in addition to offering generalized information on how professional development and learning could be improved for lower secondary teachers in the future. Once this data was visualized and reviewed, it was then represented in the findings.

Positionality

Creswell (2012) speaks of the role of a researcher, explaining, “researchers need to consciously and systematically include their own roles or positions and assess how they impact their understandings” (p. 30). To acknowledge personal experiences, and exclude them as much as possible when engaging with and interpreting participants’ responses, this researcher

bracketed herself out of this phenomenological study. Within this epoche (Creswell, 2012, 2013; Lin, 2013; Moustakas, 1994) the routine and regular cognition and biases of the researcher was set aside so that the phenomenon could be examined with a fresh perspective and open mind. The researcher engaged in bracketing by (a) speaking with another colleague about her personal experiences and written responses to the interview questions, (b) journaling any possible biases that surfaced throughout this research process to be sure these biases were excluded from the process of data analysis, and (c) sharing these biases within this document so that readers were fully aware when reading the findings and analysis of those findings in this study (Tufford & Newman, 2010).

In this phenomenological study, it is necessary that this researcher do this, as she has served as an ELA teacher in K-12 Southern California public schools and is a current professional development provider for secondary ELA teachers. The researcher was reared in a home with two parents who placed significant value in education, as her mother was also a K-12 classroom educator. In addition to a California teaching credential, the researcher in this study has a Bachelor's degree in Liberal studies, with major emphasis in English, and a Master's degree in Education, Leadership and Administration. With over two decades of personal experience teaching in K-12 public schools, the past four of which were based at a school district central office of Curriculum and Instruction, the researcher has strong beliefs in the importance and value of professional development and professional learning for classroom teachers to better meet the needs of students in a global society.

Chapter 4: Presentation and Analysis of Data

The findings of this phenomenological study are exhibited in this chapter. It will begin by providing a restatement of the study's purpose, its research questions, and its design. This will be followed by demographic information about the participants in this study. Finally, the chapter will provide an examination of participants' reflections on professional development and professional learning, specific to their perceptions of motivation, value, barriers, needs and aspirations.

Re-Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions of lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, in multiple southern California school districts, specifically in regard to (a) their motivation to participate in professional learning, (b) the value they have found when participating in professional learning, (c) barriers that exist to participating in professional learning, and (d) their needs and aspirations for professional learning.

Research Questions

How do lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, from multiple southern California school districts, describe

1. Their motivation, if any, to participate in professional learning?
2. What they value, if anything, when participating in professional learning?
3. Barriers, if any, that exist to participating in professional learning?
4. Their needs and aspirations, if any, as they pertain to professional learning?

Research Design

This qualitative, non-experimental study used a phenomenological methodology to explore how secondary ELA teachers perceive professional learning in regard to their

motivations, values, barriers, needs, and aspirations. A qualitative approach was chosen to better understand participant's individual experiences through their comprehensive, self-reported descriptions. Purposive, criterion sampling was used, collecting data from a total of 13 lower secondary, public school, ELA and literacy teacher participants from school District A and school District B in one southern California county.

This researcher conducted face-to-face and virtual, semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions to capture participants' responses about their experiences. The length of each interview ranged from 22 to 43 minutes. The intentional design of the interview questions was to solicit in-depth responses for the examination of common themes of behavior among secondary teachers of ELA and literacy. To maintain validity and reliability, the researcher sought the advice of experts in the field of professional development, and piloted the interview for feedback on content validity and any ambiguity in phraseology of the interview questions. Additionally, the code book and its definitions were made available for an expert inter-rater to conduct a peer review and second coding, ensuring the themes and coding process was valid.

Participants' Demographic Information

Preceding the eight interview questions, five demographic questions were asked to ensure the participants met the inclusion criteria. The questions provided the researcher with brief information on participants' current teaching assignments, the history of their teaching careers, and their educational qualifications. A summary of this information can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8

Participants' Demographic Information

Participant/ Pseudonym	Years of Service	Teacher's Current Assignment	Assignment Semester or Trimester Prior	Degrees and Credentials
A1: Ana	5	7th Grade ELA; English Language Learners: Newcomers Class	Same as current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA in English • MA in English • CA SS-Cred in English
A2: Barbara	12	7th Grade Special Education ELA & History; Learning Center	Same as current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS in Human Development • MS in Special Education • CA Credential for Education Specialist Instruction-Mild/Moderate Disabilities
A3: Celia	14	6th, 7th, 8th Grade ELA	Seventh grade ELA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS in Human Development, emphasis on children • MS in Education • CA MS-Cred • CA SS-Cred in English
A4: Dana	10	8th Grade ELA; 8th Grade ELA Honors; 8th Grade Special Education ELA	Seventh Grade Eighth grade ELA Honors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS in Human Development, emphasis on children • MA in Education • MA in English • CA SS-Cred in English
A5: Eve	11	6th Grade Exploratory ELA; 7th Grade ELA	Same as current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS in Human Development, • MS in Education • CA SS-Cred in English
A6: Fran	4	7th Grade ELA; 8th Grade English Language Learners: Newcomers Class; 7th and 8th Grade ELA Intervention	Same as current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS in Psychology • BS in Sociology • CA MS-Cred • CA SS-Cred in English • CA SS-Cred in Science
A7: Gina	10	6th Grade Exploratory ELA; 7th Grade ELA Honors	Seventh grade ELA; Seventh grade ELA Honors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA in English • MS in Reading and Technology • CA SS-Cred in Math & English
B1: Holly	16	8th Grade ELA	Same as current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA in Liberal Studies • MS in Education • CA MS-Cred
B2: Ian	12	7th and 8th Grade ELA	Same as current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA in English • MS in Education • CA SS-Cred in English

(continued)

Participant/ Pseudonym	Years of Service	Teacher's Current Assignment	Assignment Semester or Trimester Prior	Degrees and Credentials
B3: Justina	3	7th and 8th Grade ELA 7th and 8th Grade Intervention	Same as current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS in Sociology • MS in Education • CA SS-Cred in English
B4: Karin	16	7th and 8th Grade ELA 7th Grade Honors	Same as current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA in English • MS in Education Leadership • CA SS-Cred in English
B5: Lila	10	7th and 8th Grade ELA 8th Grade Honors	Same as current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA in Communication • BS in Anthropology • MS in Secondary Education • CA SS-Cred in English
B6: Mary	15	7th and 8th Grade ELA 7th and 8th Grade Intervention	Same as current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA in Liberal Arts • MS in Education Administration • CA SS-Cred in English

The average number of years of experience among those who participated is 10 years and seven months. All participants in this study hold both a bachelor's and master's degree and are considered Highly Qualified under California's implementation plan of ESEA Title II (California Department of Education, 2016). Four of the 13 participants hold a California credential to teach multiple subjects in grades kindergarten through eight. Eleven of the participants hold a California single subject credential to teach English and three hold additional California single subject credentials for subjects other than English. All participants serve students that speak English as a second language and students that receive special education services. Of the 13 participants interviewed, 12 were female and one was male.

Review of Research Questions and Findings

Because this is a phenomenological study, textural and structural descriptions (Creswell, 2012; Moustakas, 1994) of participant's responses are provided to convey "the meanings and essences" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34) of their experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Initially, this researcher conducted multiple reads of the participants' narratives to acquire a general familiarity

with the data. Through open coding the data was organized into conceptual components and within a second a priori coding the original themes found in the literature were applied to the codebook as they emerged from participants' responses. Afterwards, the codes amassed under each variable were organized into five broad-based themes. These five overarching themes surfaced during the qualitative analysis of the variables in the research question: (a) teachers desire to improve their professional practice, (b) professional learning should be immediately applicable to professional practice, (c) teachers prefer to learn from other experienced teachers, (d) the culture of the school district and or site impacts teacher learning, and (e) a teacher's learning is impacted by their perception of themselves and previous experiences. The themes provide insight on lower secondary ELA teachers' perception of professional development and learning, specific to personal motivation, values, barriers, needs, and aspirations.

The following section is organized according to the four variables in the research question. A frequency count of those codes is provided, along with narrative descriptions of the codes as portrayed through each participant's lived experience. Finally, a summary of the overarching themes is presented with sample quotes from the participants.

Motivation

Research Question: How do lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, from multiple southern California school districts, describe their motivation, if any, to participate in professional learning?

The first interview question asked participants to describe their motivation to participate in professional learning opportunities. Table 9 provides a summary of the codes present in participants' responses, and the frequency at which they were mentioned across the entire interview.

Table 9

Summary of Codes Regarding Motivation to Participate in Professional Learning

Interview Question(s)	Codes	Frequency
1. Describe what motivates you to participate in professional learning opportunities.	Knowledge for immediate implementation	12
	Relevant use in the class	11
	Further study/deeper understanding	8
	Grow as a professional	7
	Enjoy learning	4
	Feelings of obligation	3
	Compensation or incentive	2
	Opportunities to collaborate	1

Knowledge for immediate implementation. Under the code rating first in frequency, participants were clear that their motivation to attend professional learning opportunities was directly influenced by the probability of them acquiring information that could be implemented immediately in their classroom. Participant A1 (Pseudonym: Ana) shared,

What motivates me to participate in professional learning opportunities is the opportunity to take that knowledge and transfer it to my classroom or to my work environment. I prefer hands on information that I can use and easily transfer.

Some participants were even more specific, sharing that they wanted new strategies to implement in classroom. Participant A5 (Pseudonym: Eve) explained, “Well, to be better at your job and to stay abreast of any new systems that are coming up, new strategies. And just the amount of information that’s out there to specialize in is huge.” Yet others spoke of the desire to make connections with their students and increase engagement. Ian went on to state, “It’s been a year and a half of just crunching, learning new things and incorporating them in to my classroom.

Like I said, it's just so that the kids are more engaged. I'm meeting where they're at, you know."

Participant B3 (Pseudonym: Justina) shared, "What motivates me, is, honestly, whatever's gonna make my students engaged. So, finding anything to, you know, bring in something new or something fresh to the classroom. That's really what kinda motivates me."

Relevant use in the class. This code did not speak to the timeliness of the possibility to implement learned concepts in the classroom, but of whether the concepts acquired were of any particular use to the educator. Participant B1 (Pseudonym: Holly) stated, that information was useful "if I feel like it's going to help me in my classroom, in my teaching, in my lessons."

Participant B4 (Pseudonym: Karen) went on to echo,

I think for me especially when it's something tangible I'll be able to use in class, and with my students, I feel like that motivates me as far as professional learning goes. I think that's the biggest thing, if it's something that I feel is gonna be useful for what I'm teaching and I can actually use it, [and] I can see the research behind. It then it motivates me.

Participant A3 (Pseudonym: Celia) added, "When it's applicable to my classroom is when I find it interesting. When I can see it benefiting my students."

Further study for deeper understanding. Participants shared that they are motivated to participate in professional learning opportunities that will provide them with a deeper study or understanding of concepts and strategies. Participant A5 (Pseudonym: Eve) said that she was motivated to participate

Anytime [she] can get an opportunity to focus on maybe just the writing aspect or just any other kind of smaller piece that you can really delve into, like going to the AVID conference and focusing on those strategies that have proven very successful in that arena

and bringing them into the general population to increase and improve your outcomes for your students.

Participant A7 (Pseudonym: Gina) explained,

What draws me is something that is meaningful and I'm like, "Wow, I can learn from that." Something that is meaningful and not just a regurgitated chapter from a book that everyone has read. Like, okay, we already did that. We're adults. Can we use this time more wisely and actually get down into the nitty-gritty, you know?

Grow as a professional. Like many of the other codes, the desire to grow as a professional was a common thread woven throughout each interview. This importance of professionalism can be seen in these comments. Participant B6 (Pseudonym: Mary) remarked,

I think we change stuff up every year and I've never wanted to be the teacher that keeps things the same. So it's like looking for new ideas and new ways to do things. That's always good. That's what a good teacher does.

Participant A4 (Pseudonym: Dana) added,

When it's something that you want to do and you know you're going to get a lot out of it to be better at what you do, then you're much more willing to be engaged and to pay attention and stuff like that.

Enjoy learning. For some teachers, they are simply motivated to participate in professional learning opportunities merely because they truly enjoy learning. A few were very direct in stating their appreciation for learning new skills and concepts. Participant B5 (Pseudonym: Lila) reported that she was motivated to learn about

Anything that I can use in class. And I just like learning to learn. I love reading about anything that's gonna help my students be successful in class. It's gonna help me help my kids, plus I'm just a big nerd. I know, I buy books more than I have time to read them.

Participant B3 (Pseudonym: Justina) repeated, "I'm just a learner, I just like learning new things. So, I'm motivated and it makes me feel good. I feel happy when I'm reading and learning, and always moving forward, I guess." Ian says, "Overall just in general, I love knowing things. You know, I love to learn about anything and everything."

Feelings of obligation. Participants were also motivated by organizational compliance to contractual agreements or organizational learning expectations. Participant A2 (Pseudonym: Barbara) stated,

Well, through the school, it's mandated so we go to our Wednesday PLCs. But my personal professional development, it's whatever I could do to help kids learn to read. Since I'm a Special Ed teacher, that's kind of my driving force and I feel like sixth [grade] is a breaking point of. So, any literature I can to read to get these kids to read. Podcasts, reading, a little bit of everything, videos. I do a lot of reading.

Ian spoke to this issue further when he shared,

I think my current motivation is also based on what the district would like us to do. Whatever they would like us to do, especially if they give me the training or the resources to meet those ... you know, certain expectations.

Compensation or incentive. Another conception of motivation that surfaced from participant responses was the potential of compensation or incentives. Participant A6 (Pseudonym: Fran) directly stated,

Okay, so when it's provided by the school district, I'm usually looking to see if there's some kind of monetary incentive to compensate for my time... and I want to see if it's relevant to what I'm using, or what I need, actually. So last year they offered compensation if we became a Google certified educator, and I was all about that because we use Google Suite here at school, and so it was very relevant, and it felt very timely, and so I did that, and I was very happy with that PD.

Dana shared her experience.

I went to the Avid Summer Institute ... They did things constantly that forced you to stay on top of things the entire time. They'd give breaks and then they had equity cards so they would pull names to make sure you were back in on time. If you were then you would get to pick a prize. It was really stupid but you would go to the bathroom and you would be back in your seat on time! You didn't want your name to get called and you to not be there.

Opportunities to collaborate. The final code that was revealed through participants' responses was their motivation to engage in collaborative opportunities. Participant A7 (Pseudonym: Gina) reported,

I think our last Wednesday's PD was about chapter whatever of a book. "How do we have deeper meanings and go deeper?" And I'm thinking, information in, information out. [This is] just a waste of time...we should be collaborating with each other and sharing these ideas one-on-one. That would be a great PD right there.

Values

Research Question: How do lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, from multiple southern California school districts, describe what they value, if anything, when participating in professional learning?

Interview questions 2 and 3 delved into participants' personal feelings about the value of professional learning and their opinions of what constituted a valuable professional development experience. Additionally, they were asked to share some instances of when they participated in professional development and found it to be valuable. Table 10 summarizes the codes present in participants' responses, and the frequency with which they were mentioned during the interview.

Table 10

Summary of Codes Regarding Value of Professional Learning and Development

Interview Question(s)	Codes	Frequency
2a. Please share some instances of when you participated in a professional learning opportunity and found it to be valuable?	Relevant use in the class	17
	Knowledge for immediate implementation	15
	Facilitator is experienced teacher	11
2b. Why was it valuable?	Effective use of resources	8
3. In your personal opinion, what do you feel makes a professional learning opportunity valuable?	Coherent systems	9
	Grew as a professional	6
	Instructional coaching and support	6
	Opportunities to collaborate	6
	Further study/deeper understanding	3
	Engaging Experience	3
	Feeling valued as an adult or professional	3
	Time for professional practice	3
	Leadership	2

Relevant use in the class. When measuring the value of professional learning opportunities, the participants in this study believed that relevance was a characteristic of most importance. Celia shared,

I loved when we did the Step Up to Writing. I loved that. I implemented that for years. Then later no one else did and no one else was trained so that went by the wayside..... We had John Antonetti, I don't know if you know who he is, but he's amazing and it was what we needed. We had him come to our district and they paid him lots of money. I love him. All of it. Everything he did, [my partner] and I, it was a moment and we set there and we're like, this is it ... We developed an entire curriculum right then and there with him.

Ian defined relevance as skills and tools that can be easily managed by both him and his students. Additionally, he said something qualifies as relevant if:

It excites me, I can use it immediately, and the students can easily, you know, get with it and start using it. If they can understand it easily then yeah, that's another factor. If it works with what we have, the programs that we have. I've tried to use things that I thought I could put into our... [learning management system], like put a link or something and it doesn't quite work. That's been frustrating, cause I know it's something that can work but if it doesn't jive with our... [learning management system], I don't really want to use it because then I would have to present it in another format or another place. Just too many steps for me and the students.

Knowledge for immediate implementation. Participants were not only motivated by knowledge gained for immediate implementation, but they spoke of it as one of their top values. Eve explained,

You give me some PD that I'm not going to use till spring yet you give it to me in summer. It doesn't stay with you. You have to go back and use it right away or be able to incorporate it right away.

Barbara echoed Eve's sentiments when she shared her experience.

I know that I went to a conference and I did a session on Read Naturally. And I really got a lot from that... It's just that everything that you need is kind of in one spot. I could do this now and it was just easy to access. I was like, "Okay, this could work. I don't have to pull a bunch of different things. I'm ready."...It was kind of all everything I would need.

Facilitator is experienced teacher. Another theme we see interwoven throughout participant narratives is their amenability to professional learning facilitators that have genuine experience in the classroom and can share practical knowledgeable about the content they are presenting. Mary summed up a past experience.

A writing training I went to years and years ago, I still use it every single day. And having that teacher, somebody who's there in the trenches and knows what it's like; it's a completely different perspective than when you're hearing someone who has never done it just talking theory. So that's always important.

Celia commented on a similar instance.

The training, I can't remember the name of it, it was the Cal State, San Marcos writing at RCOE, do you know what I'm talking about? [ERWC] I did that a few years ago and then I did a refresher last year, because I needed a little extra. The first time I did it, it was good. The second time the teachers who led it were even better. They loved what they did. I don't remember their names, [but the] two ladies...taught together.

Effective use of resources. Teachers also mentioned the value of training that helps effectively manage resources. This might come in the way of managing human resources like teacher's aids, peer coaches, and class volunteers. But this also shows itself through the use of technological systems that help with classroom management and instruction. When Ian spoke of his value of a training he attended on the new learning management system for his school district, he exclaimed,

That has probably been the most impactful training I've had in the last couple years! It had an immediate and long-standing impact on my class and it changed so much in my teaching just the way I approach things. It's a time saver because the things that I would be spending time on, you know handing out papers, making copies, that's all been eliminated for the most part unless I choose to do it. That's probably been the most impactful, having that training on the use of the PowerSchool Learning. Because like I said, if I'm here we can use it. If I'm not here, I can use it. I did this just a couple weeks ago, I was ill... I told the substitute this is what you do...They had everything they needed. Saving paper, absentee students who are out ill or on vacation, it often happens. They'll ask me, "Oh, do you have any work for me." I go, "You have your Chromebook with you?" "Oh yeah, I'll have it with me." "Check daily." They can keep up, you know, virtually with the class.

Coherent systems. There are four components that make up Fullan and Quinn's (2015) coherence framework. Two of these components, in particular, were found multiple times in participants' responses. Here Eve and Ana speak on "Focusing Direction: Clarity of Strategy" and "Deepening Learning: Clarity of Learning Goals, Shift Practices Through Capacity Building" (p. 12). Eve shared,

As far as for writing...that was probably one the most valuable ones I've been to in the last couple of years that actually gave us a unified way to teach writing across our grade level. It really would have been nice to go across all three grade levels so that everyone would be on the same page because it came down from what the high school was using. And so, the kids would start it here and be able to carry it through high school as far as the writing process because... kids struggle with writing. I don't even know if the kids are ready for it in elementary school....That's overwhelming.

Ana spoke of her value of professional development in regard to building capacity.

The whole goal of professional development is that everyone is on board. Your leadership staff, they're always gonna be on board. They're the experts. You need to find out where you can tap untapped resources. How do you bring that knowledge down to everyone?

Grew as a professional. Teachers also value the opportunity to improve their professional practice. Dana remarked,

Like I said, the Avid Summer Institute I think was valuable. Any of the ones that I've been to that have been valuable were ones that really made me think. If I come out and during ... I know this sounds really bad but some of those really good professional developments, you're sitting there and you kind of feel like a crappy teacher because you're like, 'I'm not doing this, this, and this. I could be doing these things.' The whole time you're thinking about it and you're kind of engaged and you know that there's stuff you can take in your classroom. Ones that really make you reflect on your practice.

Fran agreed,

I value the professional learning if it's something that I'm personally struggling with. I already talked about why I did my master's program, because I saw that I had some gaps in my knowledge about how to best help ELLs. If it's something that is going to help me overcome, or to help me better myself in some way as far as what I have deemed as a personal struggle, then it has value for me.

Instructional coaching and support. Denton and Hasbrouck (2009) describe various types of instructional coaching that are popular with teachers in elementary and secondary schools. The participants in this study made reference to their value of instructional coaching, specifically using the activities of “modeling effective teaching techniques and strategies” and “advising and supporting teachers to improve lesson design and implementation” (p. 155). Ana stated in detail that she finds value when an experienced teacher says,

We are going to do this together. And then this is the skill that you need to know in order to bring it to your own classroom.” Oftentimes, those are the least expensive professional developments. Oftentimes, that expert teacher is someone that is down the hall from you or on the other side of the campus, but if you're in the microcosm of your own classroom, [you] do not have the opportunity to watch that expert teacher in action. I really do think that administrators need to give more time for planning purposes, for those expert teachers to work in PLC environments with novice teachers or with teachers that are still developing their craft.

Opportunities to collaborate. Mary's comment was an accurate representation of what other participants spoke of in regard to their value of time to work with colleagues to refine professional practice.

Well being able to bring something back and use it but I think for me it's always valuable when I'm with my people and we get a little bit of time to digest because I'm sure we're the annoying people at these things where we're trying to have these little sidebar conversations and it's not because we're trying to be rude it's because we're trying to digest and figure out how we're going to apply it. Having a little bit of time to work with our people and discuss and digest and I think that makes it even more valuable at least for me.

Further study for deeper understanding. Within this coding, participants discussed the depth of value found in opportunities for continued study and learning. Gina shared her thoughts on simplicity and focus.

Maybe [if] they only taught you one thing. Just one thing. They didn't teach you 80 million. One thing, we spend half an hour, 45 minutes on one thing, and you practice the one thing, and the one thing, now, is going back into your classroom and you're gonna do it because it was just one thing but you're now able to do it. It wasn't shoving 20 million things that you've already heard 80 million times, and then you go back and you didn't get anything. Sometimes I think it's just to be simple is great.

Fran gave an example of one such training that helped her garner a deeper understanding.

The Google training was valuable because I got to learn all these little things about Google, the Google Suite, that I didn't know about before. And I was able to use that immediately, like the next day in my classroom. And start implementing some of the things and it's made a lot of my planning, and my teaching, and grading so much easier and faster.

Engaging experience. Participants reported that professional opportunities that were value were ones that were highly engaging. Gina summed up,

If a person comes in and they're engaging and have a little bit of sense of humor, that kind of thing really goes a long way for me. I am one of those people who wants to sit there and encourage you to keep going, and so as long as you give me something that shows that you reciprocate some kind of connection with me, I'm going to be there with you following along. But I have to feel that connection that you care about what you're doing.

Holly's preferences echoed Gina's values. She explained, "I prefer a presenter. Obviously it's nice if they...crack jokes or anything to make it more engaging, more fun, but I prefer a live person compared to a webinar or things like that. And a physical book as well."

Feeling valued as an adult or professional. Evidence of this code was found through the charged words of participants. Dana explains that she feels professional development is valuable when she is actually treated as a professional.

They sometimes forget to take into account the fact that you're dealing with people that have been teaching sometimes over 20 years, that have advanced degrees. We've been doing this a long time and have really diverse experiences. When you go into professional development and you feel like a professional versus a kid. Like you can handle the information. Some of us could go get our doctorate. We're very educated people and we're not always treated that way.

Lila further added, "They [should] know that we're middle school teachers and...know that they're not gonna present anything that's too elementary or too advanced for us. Meeting us where our needs are I guess you could say. And treating us like adults."

Time for professional practice. Participants in this study also expressed their importance on time. Specifically, Justina expressed her appreciation of

...time not wasted. Sometimes we go to these things and it's a lot of, I hate to say it, kind of like elementary, let's meet everybody, and we do that for like an hour. And I get it, but I really want to, let's set our goals and let's execute, and figure out what we're here for, and let's make it to where we can make it valuable for our classroom. So I feel like ... sometimes when we go to, not just to professional development, but even when we're trying to, maybe, work with other teachers, or some people aren't as focused...we kinda just bird walk a lot of the time, and for me, I'm like, okay, we're all going to be together, let's make it happen. If not, I'd rather just have this time for myself then, to do my own professional learning. You know?

Holly speaks of the amount of time required to manage new learning and skills provided through professional development. She shared, "I've been attending ones that I'm required to do it. In addition to that there's a lot ... of extra work that I have to do on my part and I do feel a lot of pressure on time to learn and implement it." In contrast, Karen comments on the issue of time speak to the lack of appropriate space for thorough planning and implementation of new concepts.

I mean how many times you come back from PD and you have all this great information, I have all these handouts, but if you don't do anything with them right away it just kind of goes away. So given the time to actually plan with it and see how that's gonna fit into your curriculum.

Leadership. In these two instances, the participants actually speak of the lack of supportive leadership when requesting access to materials or training that they deem would be valuable to their professional practice. Fran describes her experience.

Well, actually, one of the PDs that I found exceptionally valuable was when I was working at the charter school. And it's when I got to participate in a training on how to use the CAASPP Interim Assessments. It was incredibly valuable and I was able to go back to my classroom then and start implementing the Interim Assessments in my classroom, coaching the kids on how to do them, that kind of thing. I've been a little frustrated here because getting access to the system so that I can administer the Interim Assessments has been difficult ... I have not gotten access to it. I've asked for it repeatedly, haven't gotten access, and I don't know what admin is doing.

Eve described another instance.

So, we kind of did one where one of the teachers had pretty extensive training in that area in the past, and so she shared it with us... We tried to put that with admin and say, "Well, let's get someone from that [program]... get a real trainer to come and give us that." But they wanted to use Six Traits so we got Six Traits training even though we weren't using Six Traits. And that's what we got.

Barriers

Research Question: How do lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, from multiple southern California school districts, describe barriers, if any, that exist to participating in professional learning?

Interview questions four and five inquired about participants' past experiences in encountering barriers to participating in professional development. They were asked to describe

any of those times, as well as provide their perceptions of what might become barriers in the future. Table 11 provides a summary of the codes present in participants' responses, and the frequency at which they were mentioned across the entire interview.

Table 11

Summary of Codes Regarding Barriers to Professional Learning and Development

Interview Question(s)	Codes	Frequency
4. I'd like to know about your past experiences. Please describe any times when you encountered barriers to participating in professional development.	Poor planning and implementation	11
	Meeting my needs	10
	Insufficient time- professional	9
	Insufficient time- personal	8
5. What might be some barriers to you participating in professional learning opportunities in the future?	Not engaging- no active learning	8
	Feelings of obligation	7
	Lack of continued support	7
	Lack of coherent systems	7
	School or district funding	6
	Leadership	6
	Not feeling valued as an adult or professional	5
	Resistance to change	2

Poor planning and implementation. When discussing how planning and implementation can serve as a barrier to participation in professional development, Ana's narrative best exemplifies most of the participants' responses.

I would love to properly implement [what I learn in professional development]... but when it comes in as a top-down approach as one PD, and then, "Hey by the way, we're gonna disrupt all of your classes one Thursday a month. You're gonna do these

[activities],” but we haven’t had the proper training and it hasn’t started from the ground up, and you haven’t sent all of us there to experience the magnitude of that training, you’re just saying, “Hey, we’re gonna switch the bell schedule and you’re gonna put your kids in a circle and have them talk.” It doesn’t make a difference.

When asked about possible barriers in the future, Ana went on to say:

I think you’ve just got to slow down, and you really have to pick and choose, and exercise discernment and wisdom in what professional development you really want to institute from the ground up. Everybody gets thorough training and we’re all gonna be invested in this one thing. And then once we have that one thing and we have data that drives the fact that that one thing is working, and it’s properly implemented, I don’t care if it takes a whole year to implement that one thing. At the end of the year, if you guys all have it, and you’re all fully invested, you all understand the magnitude of that one thing, it can completely change the community of the entire school. And then maybe it’s a good time to think, “Well now that we know this one thing, how does that now alter where we want to go?”

Meeting my needs. Another major barrier participants expressed was that professional development often times did not meet their needs. Dana is honest and vulnerable in her reporting of the matter. “Sometimes it’s my attitude. When I approach something and then I feel like it’s not really applicable then I have a hard time engaging in doing what I’m supposed to be doing.” Fran expresses her desire to comply, but her difficulty in doing so.

Okay. So... I will admit I’m a nerd. I’m always one of those people who, if you’re going to ask me to do it, I’m going to try do it to the best of my ability. And that goes for the PDs that they offer here at school as well. Sometimes they’re definitely a lot more

difficult to be mentally checked into if I don't feel like it's relevant to what I need in my classroom. Or, even if the person who is delivering the PD isn't ... I don't feel a connection to them in some way or they're not interesting to me. So that's, I guess, one obstacle, is if it's relevant to me and then if the person isn't engaging.

Insufficient time: Personal and professional. Every teacher in this study mentions that time was a definite barrier to participating in professional development. Eve was the most outspoken about this issue, describing both personal and professional barriers.

Well, time is always a factor. It's hard to go during the year, it's hard to be out of the classroom, especially, we have a new curriculum and it's really tough to kind of write up sub plan for that. If I'm out, that usually ends up being some kind of busy work. And I'm always under the pressure of not getting enough done, and not moving fast enough, and not balancing what admin wants done to what the kids are telling me they need. How much time they need to spend on a section and having to move on whether they've gotten it or not, which I think is kind of counterproductive.

And then, so that leaves what? Weekends, summer. And I've done a couple summer, but then that requires then going out of town and staying somewhere, and then I've got issues at home that these complicated arrangements need to be put in place because I have responsibilities that have to be taken care of there, that kind of require me to be there and not staying somewhere else. So, I would say, yeah, that's a hassle for me. Traveling, hotels, yeah, that's a barrier.

Justina, the youngest to the profession among those who were interviewed, concurred with similar comments.

What comes to mind immediately is just time. I know that, I would love to go sit in my prep and go talk another teacher and collaborate, or I would love to sit here and research different things I would like to do or learn. But when it comes to your next question, which is, what my, oh sorry we're still on that question. It's depending on what's my priority, so it's do I have lessons already in place, do I make them more engage and better, and get, learning more, I guess? Or, do I take care of emailing parents? Or, grading papers? Or, taking care of the daily tasks that I already have. So, to me, it's kind of hard to make it a priority, if that makes sense. Also right now I'm planning a wedding, and I'm just really into fitness, so I like to leave at a certain time every day and go and work out. And that's good for mind, body, soul for me. So, again, prioritizing what's important to me, and not to say that's the least important, but everything else I'm doing is my survival. It's always time.

In Barbara's statements, she reiterated,

We just don't have enough time. Enough time personally or professionally...

[Organizationally,] I feel like there's so many other things that we're kind of forced to do that instruction doesn't seem like it's a priority. Professional development is not based on instruction. Recently, it seems a lot of more social or cultural things that we're focusing on, I think. And technology is a big one.

Not engaging-no active learning. As mentioned under the previous variables, professional development that lacks engaging activities proves to be a hindrance to the desire to participate. Celia shared,

Engagement is a barrier. A lot of times they want to fill the time. We have the same person do the same type of training again and again and again....And we've heard 45

billion times about essential questions and putting them on the board. That's all great and fine but I don't need to hear that for five years. I need you to address my students that are in the classroom, not putting a question on the board for my kids that don't read or don't speak English. So just listening to [us], because I think we get frustrated when we feel like it's the same exact thing every time we go.

Dana reflected on her feelings about disengagement,

The thing is what's difficult with some of these trainings that you go to is that teachers in general tend to be very ...our personalities are such that we have to be all over the place. We're not people that sit at desks. We're used to dealing with a class ... I'll have a classroom full of ... Last year I had 38, 39 kids in a class. My honors class was huge. I'm not sitting at my desk. I'm up and I'm moving around the entire time. Then our professional development we're sitting down at a desk the entire time expecting to listen to somebody to talk to us. The only bonus of that is that it helps us to be able to understand what our students are feeling like. When I'm sitting through professional development opportunities that are boring me out of my skull I feel like, "This is what I do to my kids" sometimes. I try to think of it that way. You're taking this population of people that are used to being active and then making us be essentially passive.

Feelings of obligation. Another code that surfaced from participants discussions about barriers, was the concept of duty or feelings of obligation. When asked about barriers, Ana responded,

I really haven't had that many opportunities where I've experienced barriers to professional development. I think just some of the hindrances that people encounter are just disinterest. I feel like sometimes we're doing it out of obligation. Like, 'Oh, now that

you've, air quotes, learned this, fill out this Google Doc of what you've learned.' And it's a futile effort. It's futile on the part of administration that they're just jumping through a loophole, and then we're just jumping through the loophole, but nothing's really gained because we don't stay with it long enough to make it worthwhile.

Holly remarked,

I haven't asked for it recently, but if I were to ask for a particular conference it may be questioned whereas if it's a conference that my district or my principal is pushing it's like, "Oh, yeah. Everything is paid for and all the subs are there." There's no question ... I don't even think they ask you. You're just kind of voluntold you're going.

In Mary's case, her sense of obligation was not necessarily to administration, but to the students in her classroom. Mary revealed,

I also have some, and I don't know if it's just elementary school baggage, but I have the guilt of being out of my classroom because the kids don't understand that you're not ... that you're here but not here so they just assume that you're like, "Oh, where have you been? I've told my mom you haven't been here in three days." And so that kind of a thing too, just being out of the room too much it's a balancing act for sure. So it has to really be worthwhile to go.

Lack of continued support. Participants revealed that they were also hesitant to participate in professional development for fear they would have no support in sustaining newly learned skills or concepts. These fears were based upon past experiences. Holly described one of hers.

Within the past maybe 5 to 8 years you go to a workshop and literally they're summarizing a book for you. You're expected to synthesize all that information right then

and there because after that there is no follow-up time, no processing time, any further support. I'm just on my toes and I have to catch up and just be there. After the fact, if I have questions or anything then I have to do it all on my own personal time. Doing that, trying to figure things out, because everything was done in such a rushed time.

Celia offered a detailed account concerning frustration with the lack of support, coupled with initiative fatigue.

There's no support and too many things implemented at once. It's like you're giving us all of these things, we have 47 minutes, 4 days a week, we have 35 minutes 1 day a week. You want to see all of these things in the classroom but there's no time for all of those things. Getting into a deeper understanding of where you're going with it and then when you have the deeper understanding letting us refine that before you're going to do 12 different things you want to see in the classroom that week. I feel like some of it's for show. We do this and we do this and we do this, but do the kids really get it? Do we really get it?

Lack of coherent systems. Again, with reference to a component from Fullan and Quinn's (2015) Coherence Framework, Mary and Ana describe issues of "Focusing Direction: Clarity of Strategy" and "Deepening Learning: Clarity of Learning Goals" (p. 12). Mary stated,

I think if the district doesn't clarify their procedures and the actual number of days that we can be out I think we're gonna keep running into this problem cause there's a lot of confusion on how much time we actually get.

When speaking of future barriers, Ana mentioned initiative fatigue as a part of the barrier of incoherence and provided a satirical dialogue about her past experiences.

What I prognosticate will continue, is just flippant professional learnings that come out of nowhere. And also when a district moves too quickly from one truth, capital T, like this is gonna save us, to the next truth without properly implementing any of them...Maybe this week it's all about social justice. "Oh, we're gonna do the community circles. We're gonna do Boys' Town. We're gonna give you one 30 minute professional training, and we're gonna change the bell schedule once every month for you to do it."

And then all of a sudden it's like, "You know what, we decided social justice doesn't work. It doesn't work. We're not gonna do this. Instead, yeah, now PBIS is the way." And you're like, "Wait. Didn't you say PBIS was the way 2 months ago?" "No, we're doing it differently this time. So we have a new 30 minute training and now this is what we're gonna do."

School or district funding. Over the past few years, California budget cuts to education have left an impact on teacher's desire to participate, or even request to participate, in professional development. Ian commented, "I've been in districts that I don't know if it was due to financial or administrative level, but it just wasn't available. They would let you know that it was more of a financial reason, and it's not available." Karen added,

Also I think it's more of a budgeting thing this year, just worrying ... at some point they're gonna tell me I can't do anymore because I have too many and I haven't been able to get a straight answer so I'm not sure yet.

Lila went further, explaining her feelings.

I think it's the budgeting, being financially supported. There are times when I look at conferences and I like to go to conferences but I'm a little even hesitant to ask my admin because I just feel like I'm gonna be denied. I don't really think it's just our district. I

think in all of California all teachers feel the financial strain cause you keep hearing about the budget tightening, the budget tightening so I think regardless of any school district you teach in I think that budget is always an issue. Just that financial support.

Leadership. Per participants' perceptions, administrators' support, and the choices they make in steering the direction of the school, has a direct impact on the professional development that takes place. Celia summed up,

It all depends on your principle really. Because he or she is the one who sets the tone for how the meeting is going to go. What kind of professional development you're going to get. Right now, I can go to him and say, I want this and if there were something that were on paper, there were concrete plans and I had a place to go for it, he would probably say do it. If it were something that he had to search out and try and find and bring, it probably wouldn't happen. It depends on who's in charge. With this [principal] I've been asking for the same trainings since I got here and he has yet to address any of those.

Not feeling valued as adult or professional. Feeling undervalued also proved to be an issue that participants state serves as a barrier to professional development. Karen shared,

I think as an educator ... I would rather have someone tell me about the strategy rather than make me practice it as if I was a child. Snowballing was one of those [activities] where if this was any other profession, and we're all educated adults they would not be having us do these types of activities. Also, the throwing the fish PD!

Resistance to change. The final code that proved prevalent in some participants' response to questions about professional learning barriers was simple resistance to change. Dana stated,

I'll be honest. When I went to that [training] there was one teacher there that didn't want to be there. That attitude does rub off on you when that teacher is complaining the entire time. I find that can be very frustrating. Also, it's [frustrating] when you're "voluntold" to do something and you're doing it because you're not tenured and so you're trying to get the approval of the administration or to look the best that you possibly can in front of admin.

Needs and Aspirations

Research Question: How do lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, from multiple southern California school districts, describe their needs and aspirations, if any, as they pertain to professional learning?

The final three questions, six, seven, and eight, probed participants' perceptions of their professional needs and aspirations. Each was also asked to divulge any learning opportunities they would be interested in if all present and potential barriers were eliminated. Table 12 provides a summary of the codes present in participants' responses, and the frequency with which they were mentioned across the entire interview.

Table 12

Summary of Codes Regarding Professional Learning Needs and Aspirations

Interview Question(s)	Codes	Frequency
6. How would you describe your current needs as it pertains to professional learning?	Student mental and physical health	8
	Visitations to other classes or school sites	7
7. What professional learning do you feel you may need in the future?	Support with technology	5

(continued)

Interview Question(s)	Codes	Frequency
8. Please share any professional learning opportunities you may hope for?	Time for professional practice	5
	Access and Equity	5
	Support in teaching students that receive special services	4
	Support in teaching students that speak limited English	4
	Support in writing instruction	4
	Varied options for choice	3

PL on student mental and physical health/behaviors. When participants spoke of their needs and desires around professional development, one of the most profound codes that surfaced was the interest in receiving training on how to best support students' health. Celia shared,

What I have asked for again and again and again, and still have not had training on, what I think would benefit most. I feel like we do more counseling in our school. We have a high of children who are in poverty or who are homeless or in foster care situations. We have a great amount of kids who are cutting and we've become familiar with it over the years just by having the kids. We've asked for people to come in and talk to us about what do you do when you see kids tagging things in their books? What do you do when you see the signs of cutting? Whereas the kids want to talk to us because they've developed a bond but I have them for 47 minutes so if I pull one child out into the hallway, then I have 40 other kids in the classroom who need something else.

Karen commented on a specific population she is having difficulty with.

I don't know, it's just my eighth grade boys, I could use some strategies on engaging positive behaviors and diffusing negative behaviors. I don't know if that's the right way of saying it. I'm seeing, especially with my eighth grade boys, some behaviors that I could use some strategies to combat.

Ian reflected on recent violent occurrences in American public schools and his experience over the years as a middle school teacher.

Well, I think there's a lot of things to say. I know an immediate thing coming up in the news is just you know, being able to be cognizant of students who have mental health issues. I'm pretty aware, but I cannot ... I know when a student has issues. I obviously am not a professional so I cannot determine those issues fully, but I wish I had more ability to do so, because I see a lot of students coming through here and a lot of them are emotionally fragile. They're hostile, they're angry, and I think a lot of teachers struggle with this because we grew up ... I imagine most teachers ... as good students. You know, we may have not been straight As, but we were good in school. We didn't get in trouble, we wanted to do well and obviously we went on. We have the mentality of well we can do it, they can do it, but that's not always true. We have to you know, see things from a different perspective. I think with the specific students who have mental health issues, that is a big thing that I see something needs to be done in education ... not just teachers, but everyone in education... whether it's dealing with them or identifying them, I think there needs to be more done on that level. I've thought that for many, many years.

Visitation to other classes and school sites. Teachers also shared some of what they perceived as ideal professional learning opportunities, if no barriers existed. Participants expressed their desire to visit model schools and classrooms. Barbara shared,

You know what I would love for true? I would love to be able to go and see things in action! Something that really works and that there's proof, not just somebody who puts on a good show, but kids are engaged, and they're learning, and the proof is in the outcome... and the test scores are showing [it]. I want to see that and I want to see how that works. And I think that's the best because that's how I learn and that's how kids learn. I want to see it in action...by watching other teachers teach. Not telling me what to do, but I want to see it in action! And then, maybe, they come into my classroom and do it. So, that's what I would love. If that can happen, that would be great.

Lila commented on her ideal professional learning opportunity.

I would like to go into other middle schools and see what they're doing at successful schools. You know, like ideally Ron Clark Academy, you can YouTube that all the time and look at stuff but I don't feel like that's necessarily our population, nor do we have the funds. And I don't know if that's me. It's cool to watch but I'd like to go into other schools who have realistic populations that we have, something that's very similar, and see what's working for them and have to time to then talk about how we could use some of those strategies at our own school site.

Support with technology. Receiving support in technology was also a pressing topic expressed in participant interviews. Dana discussed her concerns here.

My current needs would be that I feel like the students that I'm getting now are very different than when I first started teaching 15 years ago. I've been teaching 10 years but I took a break to have my kids. These kids that are coming in, the expectation is that we're moving with the times. The amount of technology that we are supposed to manage...I'm just not as good at managing it.

When speaking of the future, Holly explained,

Currently the technology has just ... Every year, 6 months, its newer technology and we have trainings offered but I can see that as being a future need as well. It's just keeping up with more technology. As teachers, we're expected to know all this new technology and all these websites and all these apps but we have some trainings offered but the other is kind of a given that you're supposed to know it. There are some trainings offered currently but in the future I just see that as an ongoing situation.

Time for professional practice. Once again, participants were clear that time was a commodity. They needed and desired more time to effectively engage in professional learning. Holly reiterated a previous statement.

I think we go back to the issue of time. It's one of those, "Okay, I need more time. Do I ask for time off? That's going to impact my classroom." Where does this time that I need come from? Where do I make it up?

Justina further shared her desires,

I feel like my needs are met, but it would be great to have, just time to explore. Like I was saying...we have our prep, which is great. We can get here as early as we want, which is great. We can stay as late as we want. But we all have lives, so it's not realistic to expect us to stay way past our contract time, which most days I do anyways, I don't really mind. But it would be great to maybe have a time set. Or, hey this is a time to get your professional learning. Not grade papers, not call parents, not email staff, this is, it's designated. And I think having it designated and making sure that you're going to that would be great.

Karen reflected similar sentiments.

I would say more time, even just the work that we were doing you know really looking through the standards. I wish we had some more time to go through those but almost really doing some work with CFAs and really just getting those things in place so that we have this framework and I guess that's just time, that's not, I don't know if that's professional learning or not.

PL on access and equity. Some participants reflected their desires to improve their knowledge on how to address issues of access and equity, and better serve their diverse student populations. Dana was specific about her concern.

This year they did something with the LGBT community. That needs to be addressed. Gender equality needs to be addressed. Just the needs of our kids. My seventh grade honors [class] has a girl that identifies as a boy and one that's openly gay.... I don't think that's [society] going to change. I don't think it's going to get any better or different. It's going to stay the same. I don't know. I just want to continue giving my kids what they need. I don't think that giving them what they need is the same as when I first started teaching.

Eve spoke of her difficulty in meeting the vast range of learning abilities in her classroom.

I've got just this huge range of abilities in one classroom, where I have kids that are reading first and second grade level, and up to kids that are at grade level or maybe even a little higher. And so, this constant trying to pace a classroom that suits everyone, which just leaves you just kind of feeling like you always come up short. The kid that's really high is done and the kids that are really low still don't know what to do. And so, I guess, probably just trying to integrate all those needs. And then get it into 47 minutes. Yeah, I'd like that.

Ana expressed the desire to address the unspoken social norms of her educational organization and change inequitable practices.

We have students that are failing all their core classes. They get clustered together oftentimes, so you have a tracking situation taking place, where you don't have as many high students in your class for the other students to benefit from. And there's also a crab pot effect. These students, they're not supposed to be tracked, but they [are]... But because that's the reality of the conditions that I work under, and that a lot of teachers work under, we need to figure it out... where suspending students is no longer considered a favorable action and where so many incidents can occur without progressive discipline taking place.

Support in teaching students receiving special services. Participants also spoke of their need to be better equipped to teach students who receive special education services. Lila reported,

The biggest thing that I feel I currently need is [support] working with different populations. This is the first year that I've worked with RSP and I feel like that's completely changed the way I teach that class and I need a lot of support knowing how to work with these kids who have different learning disabilities they're kind of just thrown in my class and I get paperwork on them but I don't know the best strategies to help them. I don't even know enough about why they're having trouble. So I need support with that.

Mary remarked on similar struggles.

I have RSP this year and it's been several years since I've had them and it's a different ball game with them and just the mix of the kids in there and just trying to make sure that

you're meeting their needs but you're not slowing down the class for everyone else.

That's a little bit of a struggle.

Support in teaching students speaking limited English. In the two school districts involving teachers in this study, there are high percentages of students who are English language learners. Participants spoke of needing more practical professional learning to support their ELL students. Fran explained,

I honestly still feel like I'm struggling with my ELL stuff, but it's mostly because there's so many strategies to use. And... I need to chop away the ones that don't really work the best for my students and find the ones that really do. And so it's more like my planning time for my ELLs, because it takes me forever right now to sit there and think about which strategy [is] going to work, really, the best and how am I best going to help the kids. And then I get so overwhelmed with planning that it's ... Maybe it's planning for my ELLs is my challenge right now. And I don't know if they offer any professional learning on that, but that would be good for me.

Lila added her experience and shared her feelings.

I think that because I've been working with English learners so long I know what works but I don't know ... we have a different group of English learners [every year]. I don't know how to say this, I just feel like I need updates on supporting my English learners and supporting RSP kids and student engagement. Something, cause I feel like I do the same stuff, the same activities and I know every year we get a new group of kids but sometimes these kids have ... they've seen the same engagement strategies.

Support in writing instruction. Support in writing instruction proved to be another concept of importance to the teachers who participated in this study. Participants spoke on this topic as if it were a common need. Ana stated,

Well, I teach English language arts, so I'm always interested in anything that has to do with writing development, and the craft of how to teach writing, and to dispel the fears that come along with writing. That interests me.

Barbara was specific in stating the type of writing professional development she preferred and needed.

So, we're doing some writing and they've brought in somebody to teach. It's more just teaching the rubric. But, Step Up to Writing was good. I want something like that to teach kids the fundamentals of writing because I feel like that's an area of weakness for me to really get them to formulate good sentences, getting their thoughts down, combining those sentences to meaningful paragraphs.

Mary reflected on her practice and was interested in making her writing more palatable.

I feel like sometimes I hear my own voice and I'm like, "God I'm boring." You know? How do you make writing an essay sound fun? But I need to figure out different ways to do it because they're bored but the voice in my head is telling that this is what they have to do on SBAC. You gotta get them ready but I know that they're not enjoying themselves. Do you know what I mean? Like they're not really taking it in, they're just doing it.

Varied options for choice. The final code found in participants' responses was their desire to have professional development that offered a variety of choice. Gina offered some examples in her narrative.

If we can't have a live human being, because obviously you can't, like, have these really cool people at every single PD ... I think we [should] subscribe to Kite Learning, or any kind of online thing. Kite Learning is really cool. And I was gonna do like a screencast and whatever but I just don't know enough about it... These online little tutorials that are maybe half an hour, 45 minutes max, maybe even less. We can go through that at our own pace and on our own time, and you actually learn ... Like, you took a half an hour to learn one thing and now you know it, and you take that back to the classroom.

Thematic Findings

When viewing the collective of amassed codes under each variable, they can be grouped into five thematic categories that explain how lower secondary teachers of ELA describe their motivation, values, barriers, needs and aspirations as they pertain to professional development and learning. The five themes can be viewed in Figure 5. They cut across each part of the research question to present the essential drivers and impediments to the participants' involvement in professional learning opportunities.

Teachers' desire to improve their professional practice. Overall, it was revealed that the participants in this study have the desire to become better practitioners. Each teacher that volunteered their time to share their experiences expressed how professional development was integral to the work they were committed to, despite the obstacles they sometimes encounter. The data show that this desire to improve professional practice can be attributed to both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Ian recognized both as a factor when he shared,

It's kind of both. It's both professional and intrinsic because how I perform in class ... you know, you become proud of how you are as a teacher, as an educator. The more you can bring, the better you become and that's kind of what drives me. I want to be good at

what I do, and I want to do it well. I think, you know, what drives my learning now is that primarily.... I think it's a balance of professional and personal motivation. I think because I know it will enhance my class, it makes it personal for me. I enjoy it, you know.

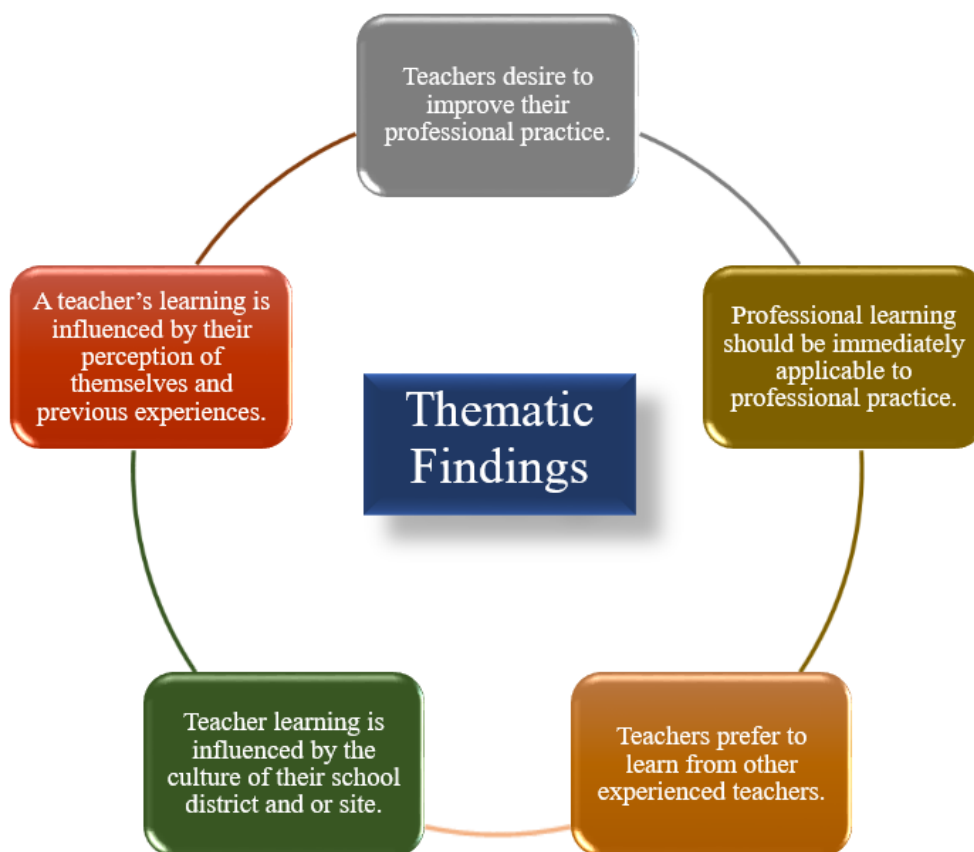


Figure 5. Thematic findings.

Other participants, like Mary and Holly, also spoke of how professional learning is tied to their desire to improve as a professional, having “new ideas,” avoiding sedentariness, and “keeping up with technology.” Most of the participants also commented that they wanted to make sure they were keeping up with the social times, and able to connect with students by understanding their interests. Their belief was that this was necessary when working with today’s adolescents.

Personal learning should be immediately applicable to professional practice.

Another theme that transpired from the collective of codes was the concept of immediacy and applicability to the needs of teachers and their students. It was expressed that professional learning needed not only to be relevant, but something that could be used with the students that were currently in their classrooms, not necessarily the students that they may or may not have in the future. In fact, the majority of the codes from participants' responses are derived from the idea of professional development being useful only when it addresses specific needs. This could be seen in Eve's interview when she explained,

As a whole, it has to be something that has real world value to me in the classroom right now. That's what makes it valuable to me. That's what makes me want to spend my time on it...I need to be able to take it and use it right away or it's gone.

Teachers prefer to learn from other experienced teachers. As in many professional fields, master practitioners command the respect of those who come behind them, and often have valuable insight to share. This theme that emerged is based upon the same premise, and through analysis of the codes it is clear that the teachers in this study truly value learning from other expert teachers. Dana shared her experience.

I went to ... [a training] this summer and it was a 3-day thing. I admit at first I was not really looking forward to it but they were so good and everything that they were doing I could see myself doing in my classroom. It helped me stay engaged. The teachers were teachers and you're in this room full of teachers.

Ana is more explicit when describing her appreciation of experienced teachers as guides. She states,

The professional learning that I find most valuable is almost always headed by a teacher. It's someone who is an expert teacher in their field, and who can say, "This is what has helped me. I have data to support it, and I'm going to give it to you."

Celia speaks of working with other expert teachers as an opportunity to be inspired by those who are in the same circumstances as you. They are more credible because they know your experiences and can provide you practical, alternative ways of thinking about the instruction you provide for your students. Celia reflected on her most recent professional learning that was led by two experienced partner teachers. She remarked,

They loved what they did and you could tell. It made you go, "Okay this is something I can do." They made it seem like it was an approachable way to do it with the students. I felt inspired!

Teacher learning is influenced by the culture of the school district/site. All participants in this study have an educational background in some form of science of understanding human beings and their nature. For this reason, among others, the teachers' learning, or desire to participate in professional learning, was directly influenced by their experiences with the cultural beliefs and practices of their school site and district. Relationships with their department members and other employees played a major role, as well, especially when there were negative feelings about those who may be providing professional learning opportunities. Dana mentioned that she is more open to learning "when [she's] being treated like a professional. I understand that when we're in professional development we are students but there's people sitting in the room that are very educated." Lila stated further, "In addition to [providing] time for us, also being treated as a professional...so that whoever's presenting the information knows enough about us, where we're coming in as or coming from."

In many of the interviews, participants also spoke of what they believed was the importance of professional learning being the product of a well thought out plan of implementation that supports specific goals and school foci. They had strong feelings about all members of a school community committing themselves to supporting learning amongst students, and learning as adults. Karen argued that professional development could not be something that was pushed upon teachers solely as a policy mandate. Celia mentioned how professional development at her site was simply a “time filler” at staff meetings. The consensus was that when professional development and learning is not a genuine reflection of the beliefs and practices of the organization, it impacts teachers’ desire to participate. Ana said,

Everybody has to be fully invested. And in order to be fully invested, the administration needs to ante up, so that we all receive thorough, proper training [and know] how the data’s supporting it, and have a proper system in place to implement it.

A teacher’s learning is influenced by his/her perception of himself/herself and previous experiences. The final overarching theme within the findings is based upon how each participant views himself/herself as a learner, which is directly tied to individual experience, both past and present. This theme also takes into account the participant’s belief that they will be supported with professional learning based upon their needs. Eve is an example of how her past experiences are impacting her learning. She shared she would be open to whatever support was available when it came to meeting the diverse needs of her students and had a clear picture of what her learning needs were, stating, “If there’s something out there that could help with that, that would really be of some value to me...That’s been probably my biggest struggle in language arts.” Yet when speaking of the future and possibilities, her past experiences made her the most reluctant to believe that her learning something new might alter her current situation, or that she

would even be given the support she needed if she asked. She said, “I don’t see anything changing. And so, I feel like whatever barriers are now [will remain]... I don’t know if it will change or not. I don’t know. I don’t see anything changing but anything could happen.”

No two participants in this study have had the exact same experiences, even though they may hail from similar backgrounds and have similar years of service in teaching. Therefore, their perceptions of themselves as learners, specific to how, why, and what needs they have around professional learning, may have common threads but are quite diverse. Among the 13 participants in this study, there were consistent mentions of the desire for support in teaching writing, enhancing student engagement, concerns over school and district budgeting, and the desire for support in reaching students with a wide range of abilities-such as English Language Learners, students receiving special services, and students that are low performing. Yet, each mention of these concerns was unique in how the participant defined what type of support would suit them best.

Summary

This qualitative phenomenological study examined the perceptions of 13 lower secondary ELA teachers from two school districts in one Southern California county. Their average number of years of teaching experience was 10 years and 7 months, many having taught multiple grade levels over their career span. At the time of the interview, and the semester or trimester prior, each participant taught seventh and or eighth grade ELA. Two individuals also taught sixth grade. Through face-to-face and virtual, semi-structured interviews, eight open-ended interview questions were asked to ascertain descriptions of participants’ lived experiences of professional development, particular to four different variables: motivations, values, barriers, needs and aspirations. The interview questions were linked to this research question: How do

lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, from multiple southern California school districts, describe (a) their motivation, if any, to participate in professional learning; (b) what they value, if anything, when participating in professional learning; (c) barriers, if any, that exist to participating in professional learning; and (d) their needs and aspirations, if any, as they pertain to professional learning?

The first interview question was related to the first variable, asking participants to describe their motivation to participate in professional learning opportunities. Interviewees were interested in obtaining a deeper understanding of relevant knowledge that could be used immediately. They enjoyed learning, collaborating with others, and growing as professionals, but also expressed feelings of obligation. Participants were also motivated by compensation and incentives to participate.

Interview questions two and three were connected to the second variable and investigated participants' personal feelings about the value of professional learning and their opinions of what elements composed a valuable professional learning experience. The participants related their overwhelming value of professional development when it was engaging, offered relevant knowledge that was immediately applicable to their needs, and was presented by a relatable facilitator that had experience as a teacher. They valued when resources were used effectively, and supported by leadership through a coherent system of professional development that supported their growth as a professional. Opportunities for collaboration, instructional coaching, and additional time for professional practice were also of importance.

The following interview questions revolved around the third variable. Numbers four and five probed participants' past experiences in encountering barriers to participating in professional development and their perceptions on what might serve as future barriers. They expressed

barriers to professional development as ones that were not engaging, did not meet their needs, and were poorly planned and implemented because of incoherence in their organization. Issues that also continued to serve as barriers were their feelings of obligation to participate, concerns about insufficient personal and professional time, and past experiences of continued lack of support for new learnings and initiatives. Participants also relayed that they were sometimes simply resistant to change. These feelings were amplified if they perceived they were not being valued as an adult or professional.

The last variable was represented by the concluding three questions. Questions six, seven, and eight invited participants to share perceptions of their professional needs and aspirations. Participants reported their desire for options and choice. Specifically they made mention of their interest of support in addressing students' mental and physical health, students that receive special services in instruction, and students that speak limited English. They also described their aspirations to observe successful classrooms and school sites, have additional professional time for practice, and instructional support in writing and the use of technology. The final professional learning opportunities they mentioned were ones that involved addressing issues of student access and equity.

There were five comprehensive themes that emerged from the analysis of the variables in the research question: (a) teachers desire to improve their professional practice, (b) professional learning should be immediately applicable to professional practice, (c) teachers prefer to learn from other experienced teachers, (d) the culture of the school district and or site impacts teacher learning, and (e) a teacher's learning is impacted by their perception of themselves and previous experiences. In Chapter 5, these findings will be discussed and interpreted in the context of

constructivism, adult learning theory, and the literature around the variables in the research question.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings of this phenomenological study about lower secondary ELA teachers' perceptions of professional development and professional learning. It will begin by providing a restatement of the study's purpose, its research questions, and its design. This will be followed by a deeper examination of the thematic key findings and the conclusions that were drawn from them. Finally, the chapter will speak to this study's implications for practice and policy, and provide recommendations for future investigations.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions of lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, in multiple southern California school districts, specifically in regard to (a) their motivation to participate in professional learning, (b) the value they have found when participating in professional learning, (c) barriers that exist to participating in professional learning, and (d) their needs and aspirations for professional learning.

Research Questions

How do lower secondary ELA/literacy teachers, from multiple southern California school districts, describe

1. Their motivation, if any, to participate in professional learning?
2. What they value, if anything, when participating in professional learning?
3. Barriers, if any, that exist to participating in professional learning?
4. Their needs and aspirations, if any, as they pertain to professional learning?

Research Design

This qualitative, non-experimental study used a phenomenological methodology to explore how secondary ELA teachers perceive professional learning in regard to their

motivations, values, barriers, needs, and aspirations. Purposive, criterion sampling was used, collecting data from a total of 13 lower secondary, public school, ELA and literacy teacher participants from school District A and school District B in one southern California county.

Face-to-face and virtual, semi-structured interviews were conducted using eight open ended questions to capture participants' responses about their experiences. The design of the interview questions was to solicit in-depth responses for the examination of common themes of behavior among secondary teachers of ELA and literacy. To maintain validity and reliability, the researcher sought the advice of experts in the field of professional development, and piloted the interview for feedback on content validity and any ambiguity in phraseology of the interview questions. Additionally, the code book and its definitions were made available for an expert inter-rater to conduct a peer review and second coding, ensuring the themes and coding process was valid.

Discussion of Key Findings

Analysis of the data collected from 13 teachers' semi-structured interviews showed that lower secondary teachers of ELA have similar perceptions of professional development and learning, and that these perceptions are impacted by the individual cultures of their school district and school site. The findings also indicate that their perceptions of professional learning are linked to their past experiences, and how they view themselves as learners. Nevertheless, these concepts were not indicative of the participants desire to improve their professional practice, as this was a result of their genuine commitment to help students learn and grow. Through their personal narratives, professionalism was evident through the personal pride that was taken in a job well done. Because of participant's limited personal and professional time, though, high value was placed on professional development that is immediately applicable to

practice. Even more, an overall appreciation was placed on the opportunity to learn from expert teachers that were willing to share their insights and experiences. These findings, as seen in Figure 4.1, run parallel to what the literature says regarding the theories addressed in this study: constructivism and adult learning theory. The findings also align with what the literature conveys about the variables in this study: motivation, value, barriers, needs, and aspirations. The following section discusses the meanings behind the thematic key findings, how they may have come to fruition, and how they relate to the literature.

Teachers' desire to improve their professional practice. The first thematic finding under discussion is in line with previous research that states that teachers essentially want to become better at what they do (Darling-Hammond & Plank, 2015; Fullan, 1993; Guskey, 2002a, 2002b;). Guskey (2002b) asserted,

Although teachers are generally required to take part in professional development by certification or contractual agreements, most report that they engage in these activities because they want to become better teachers. They see professional development programs as among the most promising and most readily available routes to growth on the job, not only as a way to combat boredom and alienation, but also as a pathway to increased competence and greater professional satisfaction. (p. 382)

For adults, in this case the ones involved in this study, there is comfort and pride in knowing you've done a job well. This anticipation of satisfaction with a job well-done is a component of self-motivation or self-directedness (Bandura, 1993; Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Cook & Artino, 2016; Zimmerman et al., 1992); the orientation and self-concept core principles of the Andragogical approach to learning (Forrest & Peterson, 2006; Holton et al., 2001; Knowles et al., 2014); and a reflection of Bandura's social-cognitive theory of motivation discussed in the

literature review (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). Participants expressed that they had personal expectations of themselves and their ability to meet the needs of their students. There was frustration and a lack of fulfillment when they were unable to do so. We see this professional pride and desire for continuous improvement in the narratives participants provide during interviews, like when Dana commented, “Some of us could go get our doctorate. We’re very educated people.” We also see it when we look at the educational background of each person and recognize that all are considered highly qualified by California law. Additionally, they are professionals according to the professionalization criterion Ingersoll and Perda (2008) provide. To reiterate, they have obtained or have participated in,

- (1) credential and licensing requirements for entry, (2) induction and mentoring programs for entrants, (3) professional development support, [and] opportunities, (4) specialization, (5) authority over decision-making, (6) compensation levels, and (7) prestige and occupational social standing. (Ingersoll and Perda, 2008, p. 108)

Each person did not take the responsibility of being a teacher lightly, and was adamant about their desire to be better at their craft. They genuinely cared about the progress of their students and were concerned with how best to meet the expectations of 21st century teaching and student learning. This is not to imply that their frustrations about professional development were not apparent. All but one participant was desirous of the stage to plead their cause with someone who would listen. But it is important to note that frustration with the current professional learning opportunities being offered, or the system of which they are a part of, is not synonymous with an individual’s lack of desire to learn, or participate in professional development.

Professional learning should be immediately applicable to professional practice.

The participants in this study were overwhelmingly not in favor of pedagogy for pedagogy's sake. They wanted knowledge or strategies that could be used immediately and be applicable to the students they currently had sitting in their seats. If they deemed a professional development as highly relevant to their needs, they were far more likely to consider participating in the event or attending a mandated event with a positive attitude. This type of behavior can be considered both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated, very much in line with the self-determination theory of motivation where the individual defines the worth of his possible actions and behaves accordingly (Cook & Artino, 2016; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Sørensen et al., 2009). The participants in this study had various definitions of what was immediately applicable to their individual practice. This exhibits how designing professional development that meets the needs of all the adult learners of a particular staff might prove to be a complex task. On one such campus where multiple people were a part of this study, individuals had vastly opposing views about a training they had recently attended, and its meaningfulness in the context of their classroom, ELA department, and overall school site.

Guskey (2002b) emphasizes the importance of meaningful, sound, content knowledge when examining the value of professional development. Splitter (2009) explains meaningfulness through the lens of constructivism, demonstrating how applicability and relevance are components of how one makes meaning. As a practical example, Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) speak of a national survey of teachers that revealed, "Hands-on work that enhanced teachers' knowledge of the content and how to teach it produced a sense of efficacy—especially when that content was aligned with local curriculum and policies" (p. 46).

The authors share research that demonstrates how active learning with relevant content heightened teachers effectiveness. Unfortunately, this revelation does not always mesh with the various policies and practices we see today in professional development for teachers. Through the narratives of the participants alone, we find that most have encountered professional learning opportunities that are more focused on cultivating teachers who are primarily sound in pedagogy and theory. Contrastingly, the teachers believed they would be better served by a diet that balanced pedagogy with the cultivation of skills that aided them with the ability to adapt their practices to the ever changing needs of today's students who require analytical skills and higher order thinking. This researcher asserts that teacher professional development of this type is what the teachers of 21st century students need most (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

Teachers prefer to learn from other experienced teachers. It is not an abstract concept that participants in this study preferred to learn from other experienced teachers. This was revealed in their personal narratives when describing the type of PD facilitator they responded best to, when speaking of their desire to visit model classrooms and school sites, by discussing their value of collaborating with peers, and through sharing experiences of when they had received model lessons from expert teachers in the past. The cause of this preference, though, is rooted in the idea of credibility and authenticity. When Mary spoke of her appreciation for an experienced teacher that led a writing training, she likened it to someone who was with you “there in the trenches and knows what it’s like; it’s a completely different perspective than when you’re hearing someone who has never done it just talking theory.” Credibility and authenticity are two elements that factor into trust, which is directly connected to the theory of adult learning. This approach to teaching adults involves establishing a climate that is “relaxed, trusting, and mutually respectful” (Holton et al., 2001, p. 124). In each of the

instances listed above, teachers were given the opportunity of having a safe space to be vulnerable and learn from someone they believe had shared similar obstacles in the past. In Galbraith and Jones' (2008) article on becoming a teacher of adults, they explain,

Credibility is paved in believability and trustworthiness. Credible teachers [of adult learners] have the ability to present themselves as people with something to offer students ...Once you have credibility with your students, they will view you as having the knowledge, skill, experience, expertise, and insight that exceeds theirs. You will be accepted as someone who can help them understand some of the ebbs and flows in their intellectual journey. (p. 8)

Additionally, the teachers in this study were more in favor of experienced teachers because of their value of practical knowledge and the prospects of engaging in active learning. The importance of strong content knowledge and engaging in active learning is discussed in the literature regarding the value of professional development. Research also shows that teachers benefit from professional development that includes those design components (Borko, 2004; Casteel et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Desimone, 2009). Finally, the participants' desire to learn from other expert teachers is connected to the core principles of the Andragogical approach to learning. Specifically, it is reflective of the core principles of (a) readiness to learn, which describes how learners are activated by internal experiences and the necessity of effectively dealing with a task or life situation; and (b) orientation, a learner's innate inclination towards the acquisition of knowledge that is life-centered and helps increase competency.

Teacher learning is influenced by the culture of the school district/site. Educator Michael Fullan (2010) is known for his work in mobilizing educational institutions to improve

their organizational culture, and impact student success, through the development of disciplined collaboration among all stakeholders. He explains disciplined collaboration through a phrase called collective capacity and says it, “generates the emotional commitment and the technical expertise that no amount of individual capacity working alone can come close to matching” (Fullan, 2010, location 147). It involves working together to enact school reform by first changing the organizational culture. The participants in this study spoke of this desire for collective capacity, coherent systems, and a culture of learning, even though they did not use those exact terms. When Ana commented, “The whole goal of professional development is that everyone is on board...How do you bring that knowledge down to everyone” she was lamenting over the issue of quality professional learning only being provided to certain individuals, though everyone was held to the same expectations of implementing the reform. Celia spoke of how she did not truly believe that professional learning provided by her administrators was truly a part of their desire to inspire learning or a reflection of the true culture of their school, but instead an activity to fill time. She continued to speak of how she would prefer professional learning to have “maybe a little bit more authenticity, number one. And it not being just a line item or a checklist.” Organizational culture is not the professed values and mission statements an organization publicizes, but the actual policies, practices, and behaviors that reflect the organization’s true beliefs (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009). The relationship between organizational culture and andragogy is also discussed by Knowles et al. (2014) in the realm of Human Resource Development. They argue that “the principles and practices of adult learning...play an important role as employees develop and learn new norms” (Knowles et al., 2014, p. 152). Fosnot (2005) also discusses the acquisition of knowledge through a constructivist view and how it is related to culture. “The important question to be asked is not

whether the cognizing individual or the culture should be given priority in an analysis of learning, but ‘what is the interplay between them’ (p. 28)? “If we ask a question about the affect [sic] of culture on cognition we get a cultural answer; if we ask about the individual’s cognizing we [also] get an answer that reflects that component” (p. 33).

Ultimately, this researcher attests that the culture of the district and or school site indeed influences teacher learning. Tang and Choi (2009) offer advice on a sound approach to addressing school reform through teacher support and a positive organizational culture.

The approach stresses the importance of creating organizational conditions that make the working environment as a learning environment for teachers. Such organizational conditions include resources, time and structural conditions that facilitate teachers to have space and energy to devote to their professional development, as well as [a] culture and ethos of the school that genuinely supports teacher professional development. (p. 2)

A teacher’s learning is influenced by his/her perception of himself/herself and previous experiences. This final theme addresses participants’ perceptions of themselves and how these views and their past experiences influence them as learners. We cannot overlook the idea that teachers’ motivation, value, barriers, needs, and aspirations of professional development are in many ways correlated to their own individual natures and the perceptions they have of themselves. Again, this is best represented by the theory of constructivism and the theory of adult learning. Meaning-making is contingent upon what an individual knows and believes (Carpenter, 2003; Fosnot, 2005; Richardson, 1997) and in general, the adult learner is aware of their personal learning needs, dependent upon their level of self-direction (Forrest & Peterson, 2006; Holton et al., 2001; Knowles et al., 2014).

Each participant in this study had a different view of themselves and what their needs were. As well, their past professional experiences and relationships with others made them either optimistic or pessimistic about the future of effective professional development, the availability of professional learning opportunities, and how either could support their needs. In line with the literature, the perceptions some participants cultivated were personal barriers of disillusionment, distrust, and pessimism (Buczynski & Hansen, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; DiPaola & Hoy 2014; Duke, 1993; Firestone & Pinnell, 1993; National Research Council of the National Academies, 2007). Some classroom teachers were not even aware, or believed, that they needed professional learning at all. Lack of awareness is also a personal barrier to professional development. Duke (1993) says, “In order to grow professionally, it helps for teachers first to be aware of the importance of professional growth and to see a specific need for growth” (p. 5). The reality of the situation is that teachers’ needs and experiences vary, in the same way that young students’ needs and experiences vary. Individual learning cannot truly take place without addressing the individual needs and experiences, both past and present, of the learner.

The participants’ environment, whether at work or at home, is what directly impacted their experiences. When we consider Cozolino and Sprokay’s (2006) study of neuroscience and adult learning, it is understandable why the essences of participants’ responses revealed that their learning was also impacted by their environment. Through Cozolino and Sprokay’s research of the brain, they explain how “Neural plasticity reflects the ability of neurons to change their structure and relationships to one another in an experience-dependent manner according to environmental demands” (p. 12). They suggest that adults learn better when they have safety, trust, opportunities for self-reflection, and an atmosphere that helps them view themselves in a

positive light. This connects to andragogy through the explanation Knowles (1984) provides about teaching adults, which he terms “learner-centered.” Through learner-centered instruction for adults, we take account of the experience the learner brings with him and address his needs and desires (Forrest & Peterson, 2006). Through this study’s findings, we see this is exactly what the participants request. They want their experience and needs be considered in the planning and design of professional development that is created to support their instruction.

Conclusions

The five thematic findings answered each part of the research question. Teachers’ motivation, personal values, and aspirations for participation in professional learning opportunities are centered on these concepts. Six conclusions were drawn from the thematic findings of this study.

Conclusion one. When professional development is personally valuable and meets the needs of the individual, teachers feel they will be better prepared to address the specific demands of their students. They also believe it will improve their professional practice. Research shows that teachers are predisposed to viewing PD positively when it addresses “teachers’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions” (Torff & Sessions, 2008, p. 124). The participants in this study were interested in professional development that was specific to their immediate needs and offered solutions to the issues they were encountering, or anticipated in the near future. Dana described valuable professional developments as ones that “really made her think...ones that really make you reflect on your practice.” Sharing the sentiments of other participants, she went on to say, “It doesn’t always feel good, but it’s a good thing,” explaining that the growing pains of learning were worthwhile if she held the committed belief that it would enhance the services she provided for her students.

Conclusion two. Teachers feel they will receive better training and support from someone who is credible and has experience in the field. Research shows that where professional development and adult learning is concerned, the credibility of the facilitator weighs heavily on how learners will receive the information (Knight, 2000; Knowles, 1977). Both the participants in Knight's study, and this one, clearly express that they are more amenable to someone who has experienced teaching the same subjects and types of students that they have. They also value the expertise and ideas of teachers that can provide heuristic insight based upon experience, as long as that experience is a balance of pedagogy and practicality. Fran spoke of how she needed more than a book study, remarking, "I read the book, I don't need to talk about the book, I read it. I've got it. I don't need to have a two hour meeting about the book if I've already read it." Instead, like the participants in Knight's study, she was looking for someone who was aware of her needs and was ready to help address issues in her classroom in a practical and knowledgeable way.

Conclusion three. Teachers want to believe their organization will provide support for the new learning acquired through professional development and that their leaders are genuinely invested in their instructional needs. They want to be treated respectfully as professionals and adults. Intensive support is most often provided through the services of an instructional coach or PD support provider (Devine et al., 2013a, 2013b), but discrepancies in the effectiveness of instructional coaching and other forms of professional development exist when there are fissures in relationships of trust and communication between staff members, coaches, and administration. The physical and psychological divide widens when teachers are not consulted about their instructional needs (Knowles et al., 2014), but instead are mandated to participate in exercises they deem fruitless. During the interviews, Eve shared, "I guess I don't understand the

disconnect between admin and teachers.” Celia expressed her frustration as well, emotionally commenting, “Take in the needs of what it is we’re asking for...we don’t want busy work!” For teacher support structures to be most effective, administrators and teachers must work together to analyze various types of data and identify where deficiencies exist. Once this takes place, a plan of action can be formulated that outlines how all stakeholders at the school will engage in learning to support the reform that has been suggested.

Conclusion four. Teachers must trust they are in a safe environment that encourages and collectively embraces reflection, individual growth, and professional learning as well as provides sufficient opportunities to do so. Borko (2004) states that “professional development leaders must help teachers to establish trust, develop communication norms that enable critical dialogue, and maintain a balance between respecting individual community members and critically analyzing issues in their teaching” (p. 7). This researcher would add that the establishment of an environment such as this also includes ensuring the aforementioned practices are not only facilitated between teacher to teacher, but between administrator and teacher. Covey and Merrill (2006) speak of the importance of trust and how it is an integral part of leadership. He uses a quote by Mahatma Gandhi that accurately depicts how teachers respond when relationships with their administrators are unstable. “The moment there is suspicion about a person’s motives, everything he does becomes tainted” (p. 8). In developing a sound school culture that supports teacher learning, all must be engaged in the commitment of working together towards that goal.

Conclusion five. Barriers to professional learning are tied to both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Like many professions, teachers experience these barriers as a result of organizational circumstances and personal circumstances (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; DiPaola & Hoy 2014; Duke, 1993). Organizational barriers are policies, practices, and behaviors that influence

the structures of a school site or district and create a culture of learning for the purpose of accountability and obligation, as opposed to learning for personal growth and commitment to the betterment of students and the school community. Some of the participants in this study, like Barbara and Ian, spoke of instances where professional learning was contractually mandated or based upon “what the district would like us to do” (Ian). The participants in this study also exhibited personal barriers. Through examples like Fran’s mention of caring for a new baby, Eve’s commitment to personal responsibilities at home, Justina’s wedding preparations and dedication to health and daily exercise, we see how daily life can be an impediment to participating in professional development, especially when time has not been allotted for it during the regular course of work hours. Each of these activities require a measure of time and energy that compete for the limited supply each individual has. Some personal barriers, like Ana mentioned, are simple disinterest or lack of engagement in the learning opportunity being offered.

Conclusion six. The most unfortunate take-away from this study is that teachers’ perceptions of professional development are directly connected to American society’s value of public education. American teachers live their daily lives in a society that continues to whisper in their ear that they are the sole cause of student failure, and blatantly devalues their profession (Ingersoll & Perda, 2008). For many teachers, this has resulted in feelings of hopelessness, and the perpetual belief that professional development and learning is useless, especially when their work environment reflects this hopelessness (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). When we look at the brief history of American public education, as addressed in Chapter 2, there is a clear pattern of how politics and money are directly linked to the quality of support provided to community schools and its teachers. In the *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*, Cochran-Smith, et

al. (2008) summarize it well by stating that “The act of teaching is socially and politically negotiated” (p. 144). This country’s history is one that is rooted in the ideology of a capitalistic nation and the social acceptance, yet unspoken culture, of the haves and have nots. Ravitch (2010) expounds on the capitalistic culture that pervades public education, and how education reformers, now including the head of our national department of education, seek to draw distorted connections between business and education.

Instead of dealing with rancorous problems like how to teach reading or how to improve testing, one can redesign the management and structure of the school system and concentrate on incentives and sanctions. One need not know anything about children or education...They think they can fix education by applying the principles of business, organization, management, law, and marketing and by developing a good data-collection system that provides the information necessary to incentivize the workforce—principals, teachers, and students—with appropriate rewards and sanctions. (p. 11)

America’s system of public education still plays its role in perpetuating the caste system of social class and inequality, and is a direct reflection of this capitalistic ideology. This researcher does not conclude that capitalism is the basis upon which a teacher decides to participate in professional development or not. Instead, it is American culture that exists at the root of the ills of community schools and continued ineffective professional learning for teachers—a culture that still does not clearly profess through its actions and behaviors that the education of the nation’s future adults should be among top national priorities.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The intent of this study was to better understand teachers’ thoughts and beliefs about professional development and professional learning. Its findings can provide the educational

community with insight on how intermediate and middle school ELA/literacy teachers' beliefs influence their learning as adults, and their behaviors around PD. Additionally, it can lead to the identification of practices in organizations that are successfully meeting the needs of their community's educators, and in turn shared with others. Based upon the findings of this study, this researcher poses steps that school districts and policy makers should take.

1. School districts should conduct an internal audit of their professional development programs and take actions as necessary to improve and align their systems of support for secondary teachers. This should consist of, but not be limited to:
 - a. Creating and using a systematic and continuously improving process of identifying, understanding, and addressing teachers' wants and needs as it pertains to professional growth and sustainment.
 - b. Instituting and sustaining systems that build a collective capacity amongst teachers and teacher leaders, so that the collective knowledge base is a balance of pedagogy and practicum.
 - c. Providing opportunities for teachers to share and communicate best practices, as it is not uncommon for teachers at the same school site to unknowingly have the skill sets and knowledge that their colleagues are in search of.
 - d. Ensuring that all programs of teacher professional development are a reflection of, and directly support, the overarching goals of the district. These goals should be clearly based upon both qualitative and quantitative data on the needs of students and families, as well as student achievement data.
2. Particular to policy, the California Department of Education should require Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to provide increased detail about their district and school

reform efforts that focus on supporting classroom teachers. Currently, there is no requirement that school districts report how they are supporting in-service teachers after they have gained tenure, which is generally awarded by contract after a teacher's first two to three years of service. Subsidies should also be provided for school districts to rely on their county office of education for guidance and support in creating and implementing a district professional development plan for its teachers. Specifically, this plan should be an amendment to the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) of LEAs, likewise receiving an annual review and recommendations as needed. This PD plan should entail:

- a. The required outline of procedures and timelines for sustained teacher professional development and support that is directly aligned to the goals addressed in the LCAP.
 - b. A process for monitoring and measuring this plan's effectiveness, in order to continuously enhance services as necessary.
3. Administrators at every level who play a role in designing professional development for K-12 teachers should adhere to the tenets of adult learning theory, which dictate that learning opportunities for adults should be experiential, relevant, problem-centered, and self-directing.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study yielded four areas that the researcher believes would prove worthwhile for continued research.

Duplicate this study. This researcher would recommend that this study be duplicated in the same county, in additional school districts, to expand the amount of data collected from lower secondary ELA teacher participants. This would allow the opportunity for policy makers,

support providers, administrators, and practitioners to look at variances in teacher's experiences, if they do exist, and make further comparisons specific to the learning culture, and corresponding practices, of each school district. Ultimately, it is recommended that this study be duplicated with elementary and secondary teachers as well.

Differences between male and female teachers. As this study only took place in two school districts, and only included one male participant, generalizability is limited. As well, the single male participant had an overwhelmingly positive outlook on professional development in comparison to his colleagues, despite similar years of experience and working conditions. For this reason, this researcher would further suggest examining the ratio of male to female teachers of lower secondary ELA, as well as its correlations, if any, to teachers' positive and negative perceptions of professional development and learning in the context of adult learning theory's core principles of self-concept and self-directedness.

Lower secondary and secondary teachers in other fields. It is also recommended that a similar study be conducted of lower secondary and secondary teachers in other content areas to compare the perceptions of teachers with different expertise. Are professional development and learning opportunities available, or provided differently, for teachers of mathematics, science, history, and various electives? Together the data might present a broader understanding of all lower secondary and secondary teachers' perceptions of professional development and professional learning.

Trust factor. Unfortunately, amongst almost all participants in this study, there were overt and underlying tones in their responses that exhibited feelings of "us against them" and "them against us." At some sites there was an atmosphere of contention and teachers expressed distrust of their leadership. There is literature that supports the value of relationships and trust as

a component of effective leadership in school districts (Covey and Merrill, 2006; Fullan, 2010) but there is limited academic research on the impact of positive relationships and strong ties of trust across all levels of leadership in American K12 public school systems. This researcher believes it would be valuable to study relationships and practices that facilitate trust between district administrators, school administrators, and teachers to see the depth of impact on student academic achievement and the community of students and families they serve.

Final Thoughts

American K-12 public schools and districts are not completely void of effective professional development systems of support for lower secondary ELA teachers. But there is substantive research that reveals American teacher's perceptions of professional development are problematic and in varying degrees impacting the services they provide daily (OCED, 2014). An abundance of available literature exists to provide educators and policy makers with steps that should be taken to improve the quality of professional development provided in various districts across the nation, thus affect teachers' perceptions. But this information alone will not solve the issue. Overwhelmingly, it is clear that what must first exist is the willingness of all stakeholders, from policy makers to classroom teachers, to embrace and engage in reflective practices that reveal if we are opening doors or closing doors for the students and families we serve. The social culture of the nation, and the public education organizations within it, must shift its direction so that practices will reflect what is claimed to be of value.

Once educational organizations are prepared to enact true reform that encompasses learning for all, there are key considerations that must be made when designing professional learning. It is evident that the tenets of andragogy are pivotal when addressing the learning needs of adults. Professional development that includes the core principles of the Andragogical

learning process should be adhered to, as research supports that this process reinforces the sustainable acquisition of knowledge among adults. Additionally, the educational community must be made aware of what motivates teachers to learn, what serves as barriers to learning, what constitutes effective professional development, and what teachers' needs and aspirations are. Two of these concepts, barriers and needs, are indicative of the individual teacher and his or her environment. This means teachers must be treated as professionals and given consistent opportunities to communicate their needs in regard to what they perceive will aid their classroom instruction and student success. Organizations must also be committed to the practice of maintaining coherent systems that provide teachers with clarity on students' expectations for learning, teachers' expectations for instruction, and the systems of support that are available if and when they are needed.

One of the most salient truths to note from this study, is that ESEA of 1965 just recently had its fiftieth birthday. And as recognized in the literature review, there have been numerous education policy changes in our country since then, ending with the most recent iteration of ESEA in 2015. Taking this into consideration, our country has made strides in instituting policies and practices to support teachers and students. But there is still much road to be traveled and we must build upon our past, less than perfect, choices in order to make better ones when creating opportunities for teachers and students in our community schools. It can not be forgotten that as a country, we are relative novices at designing a national education system that effectively services society. We are not Finland, or any other country most commentators see fit to compare our educational systems to. Yet, there is opportunity in being a neophyte on this journey, in that there are many in our global society who have come before us and can provide experiences and models for us to learn from. Yes, there is still a longstanding, underlying

narrative of America's relationship with public education and its feelings toward the teachers who serve in public schools. This researcher is confident, though, that our nation, and the educational community within, will continue to make improvements as we collectively recognize our past educational defeats and use them as leverage for changing the future.

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APPENDIX A

Research Permission Letter to Superintendent or Designee

January ____, 2018

Dear _____,

My name is Ivy Ewell-Eldridge and I am a doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University in the Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy program. I work for a K-12 school district in this county, in the office of Curriculum and Instruction as a ToSA, and am committed to using data to consistently improve the support provided for all stakeholders in community schools. In partial fulfillment of my degree requirement, I will be completing a research study under the supervision of Dr. Molly McCabe.

I am interested in speaking with intermediate and middle school teachers in XXXX County about their personal experience with professional development and professional learning. The title of my study is *Examining Secondary Language Arts Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Learning: Motivations, Values, Barriers, Needs, and Aspirations*. The purpose of my qualitative study is to better understand teachers' perception of professional development and learning. The findings of this study may provide the educational community with insight on how lower secondary English Language Arts/Literacy teachers' perceptions influence their learning as adults, and their behaviors regarding professional development. Additionally, it may identify practices in organizations that are successfully meeting the needs of their community's educators.

Your school district was chosen for this study because it is representative of others in this county that have similar sizes in student enrollment, characteristics in student demographics, and geography of school district location. My goal is to add to the body of research about best practices for supporting secondary teachers with professional development, as these teachers have a pivotal role in bridging the educational growth between early adolescence and young adulthood. The findings from this study could help in the implementation of future reform in the field of adult learning for in-service K-12 teachers.

With your permission, I would like to interview three teachers from your intermediate or middle school English Language Arts/Literacy departments. This phenomenological study will consist of an initial email to ELA teachers, inviting them to participate. After a teacher has agreed to participate they will be emailed the consent form to sign and return. Once consent is given, I will contact them for a recorded face-to-face or phone interview. The interview questions will be emailed to the participants prior to the interview to allow time for reflection. The interviews will last from 30 to 60 minutes after their contracted work day and will be completed off site. All participants will be offered remuneration in the form of a \$10 gift card of

their choosing to Starbucks or Amazon.com. This will be provided prior to the interview being conducted, with no obligation to complete the interview in whole or part. If they choose to participate, they can withdraw at any time. Their personal privacy, and the privacy of their workplace, will be protected through the use of pseudonyms. They will also be ensured that choosing not to participate has no bearing on their current employment. All researcher notes, transcripts, correspondences, and digital recordings will be stored on a password protected computer, and interview transcripts will be sent to their owner to check for accuracy before any data is analyzed. The only risk to the volunteer participants might be anxiety and fatigue due to the degree of personal reflection required to complete the interview and the vulnerability involved when sharing personal information.

If you agree to consent to the participation of your intermediate and middle school teachers in this qualitative research study, please sign below and return by scanning and emailing this letter. Also, feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions concerning this request. I can be reached at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]. You may also contact my dissertation chair at [REDACTED].

I appreciate your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Ivy Ewell-Eldridge
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
6100 Center Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90045

I consent for English Language Arts/Literacy teachers within _____ Unified School District to participate in the study by meeting with the researcher through email or telephone for an initial conversation, and in-person or on the phone for an individual interview. I understand that all responses, schools, and the school district will remain confidential through the use of pseudonyms. I understand that the purpose of the study is to further the research of intermediate and middle school teachers' perceptions of professional development and learning.

Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent

Date

Person obtaining consent

Date

Note: The participant will receive a copy of this letter for his/her information and the researcher will keep a signed copy in her files. Please scan and email this completed form to [REDACTED].

APPENDIX B

Research Permission Letter to School Site Administrator

January __, 2018

Dear _____,

My name is Ivy Ewell-Eldridge and I am a doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University. In partial fulfillment of my degree requirement, I will be completing a research study in this county under the supervision of Dr. Molly McCabe. I have received permission from your Superintendent to conduct research in your district and am interested in speaking with intermediate and middle school teachers at your site about their personal experience with professional development and professional learning.

The title of my study is *Examining Secondary Language Arts Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Learning: Motivations, Values, Barriers, Needs, and Aspirations*. The purpose of my qualitative study is to better understand teachers' perception of professional development and learning. The findings of this study may provide the educational community with insight on how lower secondary English Language Arts/Literacy teachers' perceptions influence their learning as adults, and their behaviors regarding professional development. Additionally, it may identify practices in organizations that are successfully meeting the needs of their community's educators.

With your permission, I would like to interview three teachers from your English Language Arts/Literacy department. The interviews will last from 30 to 60 minutes after their contracted work day and will be completed off site. All participants will be offered remuneration in the form of a \$10 gift card of their choosing to Starbucks or Amazon.com. This will be provided prior to the interview being conducted, with no obligation to complete the interview in whole or part. Interview questions are attached to this document for you to view. Teachers' personal privacy, and the privacy of their workplace, will be protected through the use of pseudonyms.

If you agree to consent to this request to conduct research at your school, please sign below and return by scanning and emailing this letter. Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided in this letter, that you willingly agree for me to invite teachers at your school to participate in this study, and that you have received a copy of this letter.

Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions concerning this request. I can be reached at _____ or by email at _____. You may also contact my dissertation chair at _____.

I truly appreciate your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Ivy Ewell-Eldridge
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
6100 Center Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90045

I hereby consent to my school's participation in the research described above.

School Name

Principal or Designee Signature

Please Print Principal or Designee's Name

APPENDIX C

Participant Recruitment Letter

Dear _____,

My name is Ivy Ewell-Eldridge, and I am a doctoral student in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a research study examining intermediate and middle school teachers' perception of professional development and learning and you are invited to participate in the study. If you agree, I am interested in interviewing you about your personal experiences with professional development and professional learning.

The interview is anticipated to take no more than 30-60 minutes of your time and will be recorded and transcribed, with your permission. As a small token of gratitude, I will provide a \$10 gift card of your choosing to Starbucks or Amazon.com. Participation in this study is voluntary and your identity as a participant will remain confidential both during and after the study. Your personal privacy, and the privacy of your workplace, will be protected through the use of pseudonyms.

Please be ensured that choosing not to participate has no bearing on your current employment. If you have questions or would like to participate, please contact me at

_____.

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to speaking with you,

Sincerely,

Ivy Ewell-Eldridge
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX D

Letter of Informed Consent

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY*Graduate School of Education and Psychology***INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES****EXAMINING SECONDARY LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: MOTIVATIONS, VALUES, BARRIERS, NEEDS, AND ASPIRATIONS**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Ivy Ewell-Eldridge, Doctoral Candidate of Education in Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy with Dr. Molly McCabe at Pepperdine University, because you are an intermediate or middle school teacher of English Language Arts/Literacy. 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 better understand teachers' thoughts and beliefs about professional development and professional learning. The findings of this study may provide the educational community with insight on how intermediate and middle school English Language Arts/Literacy teachers' beliefs influence their learning as adults, and their behaviors regarding professional development. Additionally, it may identify practices in organizations that are successfully meeting the needs of their community's educators.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an anticipated 30-60 minute interview with Ivy Ewell-Eldridge. During your participation in this study, you will be asked eight interview questions that relate to your experiences about professional development, particular to (1) what motivates you to participate in professional development, (2) barriers to participating in professional development, (3) what you value in professional development, and (4) what you desire in professional development.

The interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed by an external transcriber. The transcriber will be asked to maintain confidentiality and the audio recording will be cleared of any identifying information before submission to transcriber. If you chose not to be recorded, the researcher will ask to take written notes.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study include anxiety and fatigue due to the degree of personal reflection required and the length of time needed to complete the interview.

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: (a) feelings of hope and gratitude that personal concerns have been documented to make improvements in the support provided for secondary teachers in public schools and (b) increased understanding of teachers' thoughts and beliefs about professional development and professional learning

PAYMENT/COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

For your time, you will receive \$10 gift card of your choosing to Starbucks or Amazon.com. You do not have to answer all of the questions in order to receive the card. The card will be given to you when you prior to the start of the interview.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I will keep your records for this study confidential as far as permitted by law. 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 de-identified by removing you name and coding it with a pseudonym. Then it will be transcribed using an external and confidential transcription service. You will have the opportunity to review transcripts for accuracy. The data will be stored on a password protected computer in the researcher's office for no less than three years after the study has been completed and then destroyed.

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. Your relationship with your employer will not be affected whether you participate or not in this study.

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

You understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the research herein described. You understand that you may contact Ivy Ewell- Eldridge (Researcher) at [REDACTED]; or Dr. Molly McCabe (Committee Chair) at [REDACTED] if you 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.

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.

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

APPENDIX E

Interview Protocol and Interview Questions

Interview Protocol Script

Thank you again for participating in this interview.

I am conducting a research study that examines intermediate and middle school teachers' perceptions of professional development and learning. You've been invited to participate in the study because you are an ELA Literacy teacher in those grade levels. The findings of this study will be published, as they may provide the educational community with further insight.

This interview should last no more than an hour. You will be asked five general questions about your background and eight interview questions that relate to your experiences about professional development. With your permission, I will be audio-recording the interview and submitting it to a secure external transcriber. The transcriber will be asked to maintain confidentiality and the audio recording will be cleared of any identifying information before submission to transcriber. Once transcripts have been returned to me, I will forward them to you so you can check them for accuracy.

As a reminder, your participation is completely 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.

Do you have any questions you'd like to ask before the interview begins?

Demographic Questions:

- a. What is your position at your current school site?
- b. Collectively, how many years have you taught English Language Arts/Literacy in the intermediate or middle school?
- c. What English Language Arts/Literacy classes are you currently teaching?
- d. What English Language Arts/Literacy classes did you teach last semester or trimester?
- e. What degrees and credentials do you currently hold?

Interview Questions:

1. Describe what motivates you to participate in professional learning opportunities.
- 2a. Please share some instances of when you participated in a professional learning opportunity and found it to be valuable?
- 2b. Why was it valuable?
3. In your personal opinion, what do you feel makes a professional learning opportunity valuable?
4. I'd like to know about your past experiences. Please describe any times when you encountered barriers to participating in professional development?
5. What might be some barriers to you participating in professional learning opportunities in the future?

6. How would you describe your current needs as it pertains to professional learning?
7. What professional learning do you feel you may need in the future?
8. Please share any professional learning opportunities you may hope for?

APPENDIX F

Request and Approval to Use Andragogy in Practice Model

From: Ivy Ewell-Eldridge <xxxx@xxxx.edu>

To: mpkbookspermissions@tandf.co.uk

Date: Saturday, December 2, 2017 at 12:07 PM

Subject: Permissions Request

Hello,

Attached you'll find a complete permissions request form to reprint a figure from "The Adult Learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development" for use in a doctoral dissertation.

Thank you for your time,

Ivy Ewell-Eldridge | Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education & Psychology, Doctoral Student

From: mpkbookspermissions@tandf.co.uk

To: Ivy Ewell-Eldridge <xxxx@xxxx.edu>

Date: Thursday, January 11, 2018 at 7:50 AM

Subject: RE: Permissions Request

Further to your email, permission is granted for use of the above material in your forthcoming dissertation, subject to the following conditions:

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APPENDIX G

Approval to Use Prevalent Concepts of Constructivism and Adult Learning Theory

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	Feb 16, 2018
<hr/>	
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License Number	4240901383114
License date	Dec 02, 2017
Licensed Content Publisher	John Wiley and Sons
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Licensed Content Title	Toward constructivism for adult learners in online learning environments
Licensed Content Author	Hsiu-Mei Huang
Licensed Content Date	Dec 16, 2002
Licensed Content Pages	11
Type of use	Dissertation/Thesis
Requestor type	University/Academic
Format	Print and electronic
Portion	Figure/table
Number of figures/tables	1
Original Wiley figure/table number(s)	Constructivism applied in adult learning Appendix A
Will you be translating?	No
Title of your thesis / dissertation	Examining Secondary Language Arts Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Learning: Motivations, Values, Barriers, Needs, and Aspirations
Expected completion date	Jul 2018
Expected size (number of pages)	250

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APPENDIX H

IRB Approval



Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: January 19, 2018

Protocol Investigator Name: Ivy Ewell-Eldridge

Protocol #: 18-01-702

Project Title: Examining Secondary Language Arts Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Learning: Motivations, Values, Barriers, Needs, and Aspirations

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Ivy Ewell-Eldridge:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

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 an amendment to the IRB. Since 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 IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the 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 written explanation of the event and your written 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 documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives

Mr. Brett Leach, Regulatory Affairs Specialist