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5-2022

Reconsidering Professional Development nnd Its Impact on Teacher Learning : An Examination of Teacher Motivation in a Self-Directed Model of Teacher Professional Development

Douglas M. Walker

RECONSIDERING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON

TEACHER LEARNING: AN EXAMINATION OF TEACHER MOTIVATION IN A

SELF-DIRECTED MODEL OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of

Montclair State University in partial fulfillment

of the requirements

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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May 2022

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MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

We hereby approve the Dissertation

Reconsidering professional development and its impact on teacher learning: An

examination of teacher motivation in a self-directed model of teacher
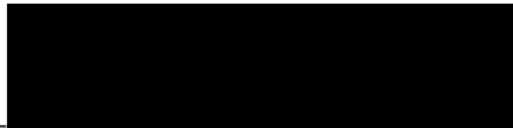
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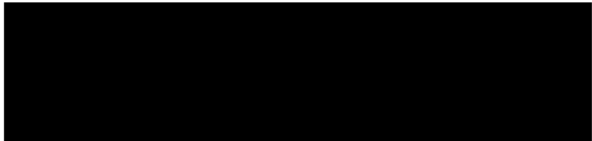Doctor of Philosophy

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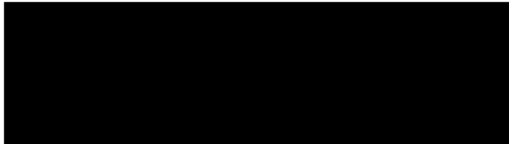
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand teacher perceptions of a self-directed professional learning model named Go Time. I examined the factors that influenced teacher learning and motivation to sustain learning in this model. This study contributes to the research on teacher professional development by examining a model that is self-directed and rooted in reflective practice. The study utilized a basic qualitative design in which 10 participants from a single school district participated in two rounds of semi-structured interviews. The purpose of the data collection was to understand teacher's prior perceptions of professional development and their more current perceptions of the self-directed professional development initiative they are taking part in called Go Time. Specifically, what factors did teachers report within the Go Time model that influenced their learning and motivation to learn? The theoretical frame that guides this study is Self-Determination Theory. This theory recognizes how the feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness contribute to an individual's motivation to engage in an activity. The findings from this study indicate that the factors that influenced teacher motivation to learn were: relevance, professional trust, opportunities for reflective practice, an environment supportive of learning, and relatedness through personal learning networks. The findings of this study suggest that the design of this self-directed model of professional development, which provides teachers with autonomy to select their learning goals and activities, positively influences motivation to engage in learning.

Keywords: teacher, professional development, self-directed professional development, teacher learning, teacher motivation, self-determination theory,

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing and defending a dissertation is a learning experience that I am forever grateful to have the opportunity to pursue. While the culmination of this journey is a personal recognition, it is also by far a collaborative experience. I am forever grateful for the support, guidance, and knowledge you showed me throughout this process.

Dr. Bulkley, I started this journey of doctoral studies in 2017 and was assigned to you as my advisor. Throughout these five years, you have provided me with advice, feedback, and thoughtful recommendations. Your specific feedback and insightful comments throughout the development of this dissertation helped me organize my thinking and produce a final paper that is reflective of my ability. However, I benefited equally from all of our conversations regarding not only my research topic, but also the current state of teaching and learning and my own personal experiences within it. You always made me feel competent and capable and you challenged me in a way that made me think beyond my assumptions. You approached your role with me not only as an expert, but also as a peer who shares a high level of interest in contributing to our field of study.

Dr. Barnes and Dr. Fives, thank you for your willingness to serve as my committee members. I consider myself lucky to have the opportunity to work with you and to benefit from your collective expertise. Your enthusiasm for not only my area of research, but also your confidence in me contributed significantly to my belief that I can do this. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with you on an independent study. You engaged me in the process as a peer. What I learned in working with you on this dissertation and that project will resonate with me throughout my professional career. You are inspiring researchers, but from my perspective, you are also amazing teachers.

DEDICATION

This dissertation work is dedicated to my family who without their support and encouragement I would not have been able to pursue what has been such an impactful learning journey. To my two boys Jack and Ryan, you watched your father pursue doctoral studies for five years. I hope I serve as an inspiration to you to never stop learning, pursue your interests, and demonstrate self-determination to follow your dreams. To my wife, Kim, thank you for all the sacrifices you had to endure to care for our family while I attended classes and countless hours writing. You inspired me to pursue my passion for continuing my education and for that, I am truly grateful. To my parents, you raised me to understand the value of hard work, dedication, and unconditional love and support. I am forever grateful for your influence on becoming who I am today.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Through the establishment of the Common Core Standards (CCSS; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2010), the Next Generation Standards (NGSS; Lead States, 2013), and local policies and assessment practices aligned to the above, the US educational system appears to be homogenizing the knowledge and skills that students must demonstrate in order to be college and career ready. These most recent iterations of standards of learning place a great deal of responsibility on teachers to focus on specific content and skills measured by student learning outcomes.

In addition, these standards and education policies (CSSS & NGSS) emphasize the need for students to develop skills in problem solving, effective communication, collaboration, and self-direction (Darling-Hammond, Hyer, & Gardner, 2017; Gulamhussein, 2013). Emerging from this expectation of student growth is the belief that the most significant factor influencing students' attainment of these skills and the construction of knowledge within the revised learning standards is teacher quality (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, Porter, Garet, 2002; Stecher, Holzman, Garet, Hamilton, Engberg, Steiner, Robyn, Baird, Gutierrez, Peet, Brodziak, Fronberg, Weinberger, Hunter & Chambers, 2018).

In order to meet the changing expectations of teaching and student learning, scholars and educators have proposed reforms designed to elevate the teacher as a professional and to define more clearly the nature of quality teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Dewey, 1938; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Sleeter, 2008; Stetcher et al., 2018; Zeichner, 1992). State and local policy reforms have also elevated the expectation that quality teaching leads to quantifiable student learning by integrating student learning outcomes into teacher evaluations (Hooks, 2015; Strong, 2013). This places a great deal of pressure on teachers

to develop and improve their practice in order to meet the demands required of these new expectations for students and teaching. Educators and policymakers have responded by identifying teacher professional development as an important strategy for supporting teacher learning (Darling-Hammond & Wei, 2009; Guskey, 2014; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Hawley & Valli, 1999).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001) required states to ensure high quality professional development for all teachers. However, it did not define what high quality professional development should look like or how it should be made available to teachers. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (2015), which replaced NCLB, expanded the requirements and expectation for teacher professional development by emphasizing that it be available for all educators including principals, support personnel, and paraprofessionals. It also expanded a limitation set forth in NCLB by increasing the professional development requirement beyond "core academic subjects" to include all subject areas. ESSA section 8101(42) defined professional development as activities that are "sustained (not stand-alone, one- day, or short term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data driven, and classroom-focused." In addition, the definition states that professional development be personalized to address educators' specific needs. The result of the policy requirements of NCLB and ESSA has been an increased focus on planning and financing professional development activities for teachers. The actual investment in professional development is difficult to quantify due to districts classifying those expenditures in various ways (Sawchuck, 2010). However, organizations such as Education Next and McKinsey and Company have estimated approximately $18 billion dollars a year of the U.S. education budget is allocated toward forms of teacher training and development (Horn & Goldstein, 2018).

Despite this increased focus on providing professional development, teachers have reported their displeasure regarding their experiences (Darling-Hammond & Wei, 2009; Desimone, 2011; Diamond, 2012; Hill, 2009; Loughran, 2014; Smith & Reynolds, 2014). In 2014, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation contracted with the Boston Consulting Group to research teachers' perceptions of professional learning activities (Smith & Reynolds, 2014). One thousand three hundred teachers participated in the study. Teachers reported that they did not believe professional development was helping them prepare for the changing nature of their jobs. They spoke about professional development being irrelevant, disconnected from their needs, and lacking in sustainability. A comparison of results from the *Schools and Staffing Surveys* administered in 2000, 2004, and 2008 found that while the focus of the content of professional developments' alignment to teachers' practice increased by 21.5%, the perceived usefulness of the same professional development decreased by approximately 1% (Wei et al., 2010).

The research and policies regarding professional development have influenced thinking regarding teacher professional development planning, pushing towards a more inclusive and cohesive process with a focus on teacher learning outcomes and less on the learning approach itself (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2017; Desimone, 2011; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). As such, professional development planning has shifted from planning for what everyone will do to what each individual teacher needs (Guskey, 2014; Louws et al., 2017; Malm, 2009; Picower, 2015). The foundation of this shift is the understanding that in order to elevate the quality of teaching with the knowledge and skills needed to meet the current student learning expectations, a coherent, individualized, and sustained teacher professional learning program is required (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2017; Desimone et al., 2002; Desimone, 2011; Elmore & Burney, 1999; Guskey, 2002; Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

For the purpose of this study, I define *professional development* as a single or multi-session event in which teachers engage in workshops, presentations, or other learning activities. I define *professional learning* as a culmination of activities that are personalized and contextualized and result in new learning for each individual (Katz & Dack, 2014; Wei et al., 2009). Wei and colleagues (2009) provided a broad definition of professional learning consistent with my approach:

> We conceptualize professional learning as a product of both externally provided and job embedded activities that increase teachers' knowledge and change their instructional practice in ways that support student learning. Thus, formal professional development represents a subset of the range of experiences that may result in professional learning. (p.1)

Wei and Colleagues (2009) use the term formal to define an organized professional development activity in which teachers engage in. They recognize these as the most common forms made available to teachers. In addition, Katz and Dack, 2014stated that professional learning is a result of making changes to thinking and practices. Katz and Dack (2014) and Wei et al. (2009) argued that professional learning is an outcome. Therefore, I refer to learning activities that an individual engages in as professional development. I refer to actual changes to thinking and practice as professional learning.

Guskey (2014) defined *traditional models of professional development* as workshops, conferences, seminars, study groups, and mentoring. Ball and Cohen (1999) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) described these types of professional development opportunities as superficial, irrelevant, non-coherent with their individual needs, and noncumulative . According to the findings of the authors, the prevalence of one-time workshops plagued with PowerPoint

presentations, handouts, and short-term discussion failed to result in prolonged teacher growth or sustained changes in practice.

Guskey (2014) argued that preparation for professional development often consists of administrators planning what teachers will do on upcoming professional development days or times. The focus is on the scheduling, locations, and specific training task. Planning for professional development by prioritizing logistics and what is convenient does not take into consideration the individual learning needs of the participants (Guskey, 2002). Planning for professional development programs in this way can result in individual teachers feeling a lack of a direct connection to specific content, active learning strategies, sustained learning, reflection on practice, and prior assessment of individual teacher needs; which are each necessary components for effective professional development (Garet et al., 2007; Wei et al., 2009; Yoon, Duncan, Wen-Yu Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007).

Research on professional development calls for a shift in thinking regarding teacher professional development with a focus on active learning embedded within a teacher's own work (Darling-Hammond, 2002; Darling-Hammond et al.,2017; Guskey, 2002, 2014; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Smith & Reynolds, 2014). This thinking shifts the focus from the planning of the logistical aspects of the professional development, to the needs of the individual learners. Planning in this way prioritizes individual teacher growth. It takes into consideration what teachers have identified as a learning goal (Wei et al., 2009). I identify this approach as *self-directed professional learning (SDPL)*, which focuses on self-reflection, differentiated professional learning opportunities, and recognizing teachers as professionals, with the aptitude and willingness to improve practice and student outcomes.

In response to the feedback regarding professional development by teachers is a call for professional development that aligned to adult learning theories (Calvert, 2016), designed using frameworks of effectiveness reported in research (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2011) and consideration of the role of teachers as individuals capable of critical reflection and self-directed learning (Bugg & Dewey, 1934; Schon, 1983). While the research seeks to identify effective components of professional development, the factors that influence teachers' motivation to engage in professional learning is not explicitly considered within these frames (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone et al., 2002; Desimone, 2011; Garet et al., 2007).

Teacher motivation is recognized in education research as an important consideration when seeking to implement change or improve practice (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque, & Legault, 2002; Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, & Kaplan, 2007; Slemp, Kern, Patrick, & Ryan, 2018). Therefore, consideration of how the structure and learning opportunities provided to teachers motivates their willingness to engage in that process may be beneficial to understanding effective professional learning. In this study, I seek to understand teacher perceptions of SDPL and how it shapes their motivation to learn.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In an attempt to improve teachers' professional learning, researchers have identified specific characteristics of effective teacher professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2011). Such characteristics include professional development that has a content focus, involves active learning, collaboration, use of models, coaching and expert support, opportunities for feedback and reflection, and is sustained in duration. While these components describe the characteristics of effective professional development, they do not consider the context in which an individual teacher practices. Specifically, they do not address how the varied

learning needs of the students they teach, or the prior knowledge the teacher already has,

contributed to their engagement in professional learning. What value do they actually assign to

the planned learning activities? As Guskey (2002) argued,

> [T]he context-specific nature of this work complicates matters further. Even if we agree
>
> on the student learning outcomes what we want to achieve, what works best in one
>
> context with a particular community of educators and a particular group of students might
>
> not work as well in another context with different educators and different students. (p. 11)

This complexity makes generalized assumptions regarding characteristics of effective

professional development difficult to achieve. Thus, a challenge facing professional development

design is considerations for the needs, experiences, and motivation of the individual teacher and

the students they teach.

In contrast to traditional professional development, reform approaches attempt to

improve upon the traditional model of professional development. Garet et al. (2001) described

activities such as teacher study groups, internships, and receiving mentoring or coaching as

examples of reform oriented professional development approaches. Guskey (2014) identified

new approaches such as face-to-face or online professional learning communities, teacher

exchanges, bug-in-the-ear coaching, data teams, individualized improvement plans, and

unconferences. These approaches seek to improve upon traditional professional development in

terms of their ability to allow teachers to more easily learn from others (professional learning

communities), connect learning to practice (bug in-the-ear coaching) and promote reflective

practice (data teams). These activities align to the research on effective professional development

(Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). However, the research on what actually motivates teachers to

engage in this learning and benefit from it is minimal A few studies have looked at factors and

components of teacher professional development that influence teacher motivation to engage in learning (Jansen in de Wal et al., 2014; Van Eekelen et al., 2006; Power & Goodnough, 2018). These studies looked at individual teacher's propensity to learn and factors that influenced their overall desire to learn. However, the studies have not focused on a holistic design of self-directed professional development in which a school or district prioritized this type of professional development for all teachers. In other words, what has not been explored is what influence a district's commitment to this type of learning and investment in support for this model has on teacher motivation to learn. In addition, the professional development referenced in the literature does not consider a self-directed model in which the learning goals and learning activities are self-selected. Therefore, I seek to understand how teachers perceive their experience in a model of professional development that is offered to all teachers in a school district in which the selection of learning goals and learning activities are self-directed. This study contributes to the knowledge base regarding the attributes that influence teachers' motivation to engage in self-directed professional development models of this type.

Go Time Professional Development Model

Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, the School District of the Chathams (SDOC) initiated a new model of professional development for teachers. They named this initiative Go Time. This model of professional learning provided all teachers the opportunity to self-select and self-direct their professional learning goals and activities. The initiative called for teacher critical reflection on their practice and the needs of their students in order to identify their individual areas in need of growth and development. An observer or supervisor would then facilitate the process of reflection during an annual summative evaluation and through the teacher's annual

self-reflection. Teachers have *autonomy* or freedom to self-select their learning goal and learning activities.

In order to provide support for this initiative, the School District of the Chathams provided time and space for this learning. Specifically, the district allocated one hour a month on Mondays and a series of delayed opening and early dismissal days with a two-hour block of teacher professional development time. They termed/named these time slots Go Time. In addition to the allocated time, the School District of the Chathams created "space" in the schedule by purposefully purging top-down professional learning directives not mandated by the New Jersey State Department of Education. This allowed teachers to avoid managing multiple learning goals, but more importantly, removed extrinsic learning goals for teachers, allowing for self-selection of goals. For example, the district avoided mandating workshop attendance in specific pedagogical practices in favor of topics that teachers chose.

In addition to the allocated time for teachers to engage in their Go Time learning goals, the SDOC has also established learning labs. *Learning labs* are collaborative learning teams made up of teachers who elect to participate. District administrators provide teachers with an interest survey in order to identify topics for learning labs. This provides an opportunity for teachers to share topics that they would like to take part in. District administrators review and group the topics in order to offer labs based on the most requested topics. The learning labs provide teachers with a collaborative environment to share experiences and learn together. In some instances, the learning labs act as learning communities which are sustained in duration. Examples of learning lab topics included lesson studies, social emotional learning, or the integration of instructional strategies such as the Universal Design for Learning Framework (Meyer et al., 2014; Scott et al., 2017). There is not a requirement that teachers attend learning

labs connected to their learning goal. Teachers may supplement their Go Time goal by also taking part in learning labs on additional topics of interest or identified need. In some instances, the learning labs are designed based on a commonality with the Go Time learning goals of multiple teachers. District supervisors and teachers, with knowledge of the topic, design and facilitate the learning labs.

Theoretical Frame

Understanding what motivates teachers to engage in and produce new learning through professional development is essential to planning for and delivering such programs. In order to evaluate the potential of professional development to both motivate and activate new learning, I apply the theoretical frames of adult learning theory and theories of motivation.

Adult Learning Theories

Adult learning theories suggest that adult learning is successful when learners experience a high degree of motivation, are active participants in the learning process, and engage with relevant and practical content (Knowles, 1975; Lindeman, 1926). Knowles (1975) argued that when opportunities exist that allow teachers to self-identify their learning needs, they self-motivate and are more likely to engage in that new learning. Knowles' Theory of Andragogy prioritizes adult learning through experiences with the opportunity for immediate application. He contended that adult learners are self-directed and utilize life experiences to guide their learning. In addition, he argued that when adults see an immediate application of learning a more internal versus external need to learn is evident (Knowles, 1980).

Self-Determination Theory

In addition to the framework for structuring adult learning activities stated by Knowles (1975), Deci and Ryan (2000) offered a theory that looked specifically at the factors that

influence an individual's intrinsic motivation or, as Knowles (1980) stated, an internal versus external need to learn. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a framework for considering the factors that influence motivation and self-determination.

Learning is dependent upon an individual's motivation to learn or improve. Motivation can come from sources extrinsic or intrinsic to the learner. Extrinsic motivators exist through directives, initiatives, supervision, evaluation, and coaching (Deci, Olafsen, & Ryan, 2017). Intrinsic motivation for learning may be a result of interest, care, curiosity, and values (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). Self-Determination Theory looks at the intersection of these motivators. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), how an individual experiences motivation is dependent upon the three psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When conditions exist that support these needs, motivation is nurtured and positively influences engagement, mastery, and synthesis (Power & Goodnough, 2018).

Autonomy. *Autonomy* is a perception of being in control of one's own behavior. Deci and Ryan (2002) stated that individuals internalize autonomy when they feel they have choices and the context in which they operate allows for *self-determination* (how one manages choices and aspects of their life) and a sense of ownership over choices (Deci & Ryan, 2020).

Competence. The psychological need for *competence* is the need for an individual to feel effective or that they are increasing their capacity to be effective (Deci & Ryan 2020). Competence is not just the attainment of skills, but a reflection of confidence as a result of learning (Power & Goodnough, 2018; Roth et al., 2007).

Relatedness. *Relatedness* is the need to feel connected to others; to have a sense of belonging. When individuals feel that they are included, valued, and respected, their sense of relatedness is enhanced (Power & Goodnough, 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The work of Knowles and Deci & Ryan provided a frame to examine the design and factors that influence teacher professional learning in Go Time. Knowles (1975) contended that individuals are naturally self-directed and place value on learning that is as a result of experience. Knowles's Theory of Andragogy recognized the intrinsic motivation individuals' associate with opportunities to self-identify their learning needs. The author argued that when such opportunities exist, individuals are self-motivated to engage in new learning. Deci and Ryan (2000) expanded upon Knowles's theory by citing specific feelings that individuals associate with their propensity for intrinsic motivation. Their theory explored how it is not just the application of learning and the self-directed nature of it, but also the feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness that are associated with the activity. In this study, I applied these frames in an attempt to identify and understand the factors that influenced teacher motivation to learn when engaging in a self-directed model of professional development.

Purpose of the Study & Research Questions

As described above, the School District of the Chathams implemented a new model of teacher professional learning named Go Time. In this model, self-selection of professional learning goals and activities defined the professional learning agenda. I seek to understand teacher perceptions regarding this professional development model in order to comprehend how it may influence their learning and motivation to engage in learning.

In this study, I answer the research questions:

1)   How do teachers describe their experiences with professional development prior to taking part in Go Time?

   a)   How do teachers describe factors that influenced their learning?

b)   What do teachers identify as important attributes of effective professional

development by reflecting on their experiences prior to Go Time?

2)   What are the experiences of teachers who engage in the Go Time self-directed learning

model of professional development?

a)   How do teachers describe attributes of the Go Time model that influenced their

learning?

b)   How do teachers describe factors that influenced their motivation to learn by

citing the basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness?

Methods

Research Design

The purpose of this study is to understand teacher experiences participating in the Go

Time self-directed professional development model. The study uses a basic qualitative research

design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A basic qualitative research design is best for this type of

research as I am interested in examining the experiences and perceptions of the teachers

participating in the Go Time model of self-directed professional development. Merriam and

Tisdell (2016) stated that a qualitative researcher who is interested in how individuals interpret

their experience, construct their world, and attribute meaning to their experiences might utilize a

basic qualitative research design. A central purpose of a basic qualitative design is to understand

how individuals make sense of their lives and experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I seek to

understand the meaning and influence that teachers attribute to self-directed professional

development.

Context

The study takes place at the School District of the Chathams, which is located in Chatham Borough and Chatham Township, New Jersey. Chatham Borough and Chatham Township are located approximately 25 miles west of Manhattan in Morris County, New Jersey. The school district enrolls approximately 4,200 students in six school buildings, providing educational programming for students in grades pre-K through 12. Three of its six schools have been recognized as No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools, and the district's schools and students consistently garner national, state, and regional recognition for academics, the arts, and athletics.

Participants

The study included ten tenured participants teaching within grades K-8. I selected the participants utilizing a purposeful sample in which the sample was derived from a pool of twenty-two recommendations from district supervisors. Each supervisor was asked to nominate two teachers to be considered for participation in this study. The criteria provided to the supervisors to inform the nomination process relied upon their opinion of the participant's ability to articulate their experience taking part in the Go Time model of professional development. From the 22 nominations, I selected 10 participants for the study based on their variation in years of experience and grade levels taught. I sought to have diversity in both experience and grade levels in order to enrich the results of this study.

Data Collection

This qualitative study consisted of an initial questionnaire in which participants provided consent to participate. The questionnaire also included some general questions regarding their experience with Go Time. Lastly, I collected demographic information deemed necessary for this

study. The purpose of this questionnaire, beyond receiving consent and demographic information, was to utilize their responses to inform the semi-structured interviews that followed.

Each participant took part in two semi-structured interviews. The first interview asked participants to reflect on and discuss their experiences with professional development prior to Go Time and their experiences taking part in Go Time. At the conclusion of the first interview, I constructed case summaries that summarized their responses to the interview questions. Prior to the second interview, I shared these summaries with each participant. During the second interviews, I asked the participants to comment on the summaries and identify any areas of misunderstanding or further explanation they wished to provide. I then shared the coding categories that I had derived after analysis of all the interviews in the first round. I shared each category and asked the participants to discuss how they resonate with their experience taking part in Go Time.

Data Analysis

I recorded and transcribed all of the interviews and then uploaded the transcriptions into Dedoose qualitative software. After an initial read through of the interviews, I read them a second time, coding each interview using the deductive codes derived from the theoretical frame and review of the literature on effective professional development. In my third review of the transcripts, I identified the inductive codes that arose within the responses. I read the interviews two more times, coding them inductively. I then analyzed the codes and categorized them by collapsing codes that were similar and relatable. I analyzed these categories and established themes, which I derived from the data and presented in the findings. The themes are:

a) *Prior Professional Development Experiences: Teachers sought professional development aligned to their individual learning needs*

b) *Prior Professional Development Experiences: Teachers sought actionable learning and inspiration*

c) *Self-Directed Professional Development: Autonomy fostered a feeling of professional trust*

d) *Self-Directed Professional Development: Reflective practice as a catalyst for teacher reflection and developing competence*

e) *Self-Directed Professional Development: Autonomous support cultivated self-determination for learning*

f) *Self-Directed Professional Development: Learning networks without borders.*

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the research on self-directed professional development. I designed this study to examine teacher experiences taking part in a self-directed professional development model called Go Time. The theoretical frames that guide this study consider the factors that influence intrinsic motivation to learn and sustain learning. Therefore, this study contributes specifically to understanding how self-directed professional development influences motivation of teachers to learn and sustain learning.

Limitations of the Study

This qualitative study consisted of 10 participants who all work within the same public school system. While the qualitative design allowed for a deep analysis of the meaning teachers associate with their experience, the results are not generalizable due to the small sample size. In addition, I selected participants using a purposeful sampling method. The purpose of using this method was to engage participants who could articulate their experience in the model in order to provide this study with relevant and useful data to conduct an analysis. Limiting the study to ten

participants allowed the study to be manageable and timely though still considered valid for a

qualitative study. The site of this study is a school district that serves predominantly Caucasian

children of highly educated parents, and is recognized for its academic achievement. This

uniqueness of this school district in comparison to the entire population of U.S. schools positions

it as a minority institution. Therefore, the results of studies from this district must consider its

placement as a high achieving institution.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is 3:00 p.m. on a Thursday afternoon in November. Teachers in a high school English department gather in a classroom, taking part in a required hour of professional development. The topic for this week's session is using technology to provide multiple means of student assessment in English class. The supervisor has asked a member of the department who has been successful with utilizing tic-tac-toe assessment boards to share her experiences. The members of the English department are passive participants for sixty minutes as the teacher presents slides containing examples, tips, and tricks for developing tic-tac-toe assessment boards using technology.

This example of professional development focuses on an alternative assessment strategy to provide students multiple means to represent their understanding. Teacher attendance is mandatory regardless of their prior experience or relevance to their current needs. The assumption is that for some, the information is useful and applicable. These individuals find the topic relevant to their needs. For others, the lack of connection to their needs and relevance to their current practice results in forced engagement, due to the need to be compliant with the requirement, or disengagement due to the lack of autonomy and perceived benefit.

What may be lacking in this type of compliance model of professional development are hallmarks of effective professional development such as a direct connection to specific content, active learning strategies, duration, reflection on practice, and prior assessment of individual teacher needs (Garet et al., 2007; Wei et al., 2009; Yoon et al., 2007). Instead, the need to embed learning within a teacher's own work could begin with an assessment of needs and provide teachers a voice in determining their learning needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Guskey, 2002; Smith & Reynolds, 2014). In contrast to this model is a professional development

model embedded in teacher practice, which requires reflection on practice, and offers teachers the ability to self-direct their learning. This model of professional development can be identified as self-directed professional development (SDPD) (Louws et al., 2017). SDPD recognizes the individual differences, needs, and experiences of each learner and provides them with the opportunity to self-select their learning goal and process. This is a learning process that aligns to best practices identified within prominent adult learning theory (Knowles, 1975) as well as research on establishing intrinsic motivation to learn (Deci & Ryan, 2000) in that it provides adults independence, values their experiences, and allows for learning that is embedded in their practice (Knowles, 1980).

In this review, I discuss the research on teacher professional development by first examining relevant theories of adult learning. I then discuss Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) as a theory of intrinsic motivation. These theories frame my research as I seek to understand the influence of self-directed professional development on teachers' motivation to learn. I continue the review by discussing the literature on effective professional development in an attempt to understand the components and structures found to influence teacher learning. I then discuss the research on different models of professional development including their alignment to the research on effective professional development. In understanding the professional development landscape, I conclude this review by discussing the research on self-directed professional development. I argue that self-directed professional development differs from other models of professional development by prioritizing the individual. This model aligns with adult learning theories and avoids the pitfalls of other models of professional development as cited in the literature. While I share that the literature supports the effectiveness of self-directed professional development, further research is required regarding teacher perceptions of

this model of learning. In particular, I am interested in how they describe factors that influence their motivation to engage in this learning.

Theoretical Framing

Adult Learning Theory – Theory of Andragogy

The question of how adults learn has been an area of exploration and research by scholars and practitioners since the establishment of adult education as a field of study and practice (Merriam, 2001). The historical evidence of this area of study dates back to the 1920s. During this period, the study of adult learning began by looking at if and how adults can learn. The approaches considered were rooted in behavioral psychology. The first publication that focused on the study of adult learning was published by Thorndike, Bergman, Tilton, & Woodyard (1928). The authors attempted to understand adult learning by reviewing the learning experiences of prisoners in the Sing Sing Prison system who was engaged in an academic program. The participants ranged in age from 18-45. The study focused on comparing adult learning responses to the learning responses of children. It is at this time that additional studies of adult learning such as intelligence testing began to emerge (Merriam, 2001).

Since the beginning stages of this research on adult learning, there remains a variety of theories and a broad knowledge base regarding how and why adults learn. For the purpose of this study, I reviewed adult learning theories that help researchers and practitioners develop, frame, and deliver adult and specifically, educator, professional development.

The adult learning theories that frame the research on teacher professional development have argued that autonomy, agency, and context allow individuals to engage in self-directed learning. Essential to this understanding is a focus on the individual learner and his or her ability to critically evaluate their learning needs. Engagement in the learning process is dependent upon

the individual's understanding of why they are engaging in such learning and how it will positively influence them. To understand these claims, I reviewed theories of adult learning and discuss how they frame the research on self-directed learning.

Adult learning theories persist in their call for learning experiences tied to interests and experiences and that are self-directed (Knowles, 1980; Knowles, 1975; Lindeman, 1926; Manning & Manning, 1985). Lindeman, (1926) offered five declarations of adult learning which I summarize below:

1. Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy.

2. Adults' orientation to learning is life centered.

3. Experience is the richest source for adults' learning.

4. Adults have a deep need to be self-directing.

5. Individual differences among people increase with age.

These declarations in Lindeman (1926) are foundational to this study as I sought to understand the factors that contributed to teacher's motivation to learn when engaging in a self-directed professional development model.

Malcolm Knowles (1975) continued to expand the research in the field of adult learning. His Theory of Andragogy identified important assumptions for adult learning. According to Knowles (1975), there are six assumptions that are important for adult learners. One such assumption argues that intrinsic motivation is the most potent form of motivation with regard to adult learning (Graham & Weiner, 2011; Roth et al., 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2000). He furthered this assumption by arguing that the "why" of learning is more significant than the "what" of learning. These two assumptions in particular are relevant to recognizing the significance of

teachers understanding the reason for engaging in new learning. When opportunities allow teachers to self-identify their learning needs according to Knowles's theory, they are more likely to be self-motivated and to engage in that new learning. Knowles' Theory of Andragogy prioritized adult learning through experiences with the opportunity for immediate application. He contended that adult learners are self-directed and utilize life experiences to guide their learning.

Knowles' work (1975) provided a rationale for prioritizing self-directed learning. He spoke of a continuum in which individuals evolve towards independence and self-direction. In that process, the individual accumulates experiences that are foundational for their learning. He contends that when individuals focus on problem-centered approaches to learning their motivation has a greater likelihood to be intrinsic. An application of Knowles' assumptions is providing teachers agency to select learning goals based on problems of practice they self-identify. This self-directed approach to teacher professional development personalizes the experience for teachers and offers a greater likelihood of understanding "why" they are engaging in a learning process or activity. According to Knowles (1975), adult learners who understand "why" they are engaging in learning are more likely to benefit from the learning experience.

Teacher agency is a central argument within the literature on adult learning and teacher motivation to learn (Calvert, 2016; Jansen in de Wal et al., 2014; Knowles, 1975; Lindeman, 1926; Manning & Manning, 1985; Meyer et al., 2004). I examine the concept of teacher agency in professional development, or "the capacity of teachers to act purposefully and constructively to direct their professional growth and contribute to the growth of their colleagues" (Calvert, 2016, p. 4). Knowles (1975) described agency in learning as a process. In this process, an individual diagnoses learning needs, establishes learning goals, selects resources, and evaluates progress and outcomes.

Knowles' work (1975) also provided a rationale for self-directed learning. He cited three considerations that justify consideration for self-directed learning:

1. Individuals, who take the initiative in learning, learn more things and learn better than do people who sit at the feet of teachers possibly waiting to be taught.

2. Self-directed learning is more in tune with our natural process of psychological development

3. Many of the new developments in education put a heavy responsibility on the learners to take a good deal of initiative in their own learning. (pp 14-15)

Additional literature on adult learning contains empirical evidence regarding the locus of control that an individual feels and their perceived internal or external control (Lefcourt, 1966; Pink, 2011; Rotter, 1966). The consensus in the literature is that when an individual feels a sense of control and the need to engage in a task, they are more internally motivated and more likely to take initiative.

The adult learning theories cited in this review propose that when individuals have autonomy with regard to their learning and agency in the process of learning they will more likely benefit from the learning activity. Included in the theories are a focus on autonomous support that is represented by a learning context that values individual differences, makes available resources for learning, and is empathetic to demands that the individual experiences. Essential to this understanding is a focus on the individual learner and his or her ability to evaluate their learning needs. Knowles (1975) shares that learning opportunities framed by these understandings are more likely to enact intrinsic motivation to engage in and produce new learning.

In this next section, I discuss an additional theory that frames this study and expands upon the theories of adult learning. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) looked specifically at an individual's motivation. In the context of this study, I position Self-Determination Theory as an additional theoretical frame to understand how self-directed professional development influences intrinsic motivation for teachers to learn and sustain learning.

Self-Determination Theory

Adult learning theories provide a frame for learning deemed necessary for engagement and the production of new learning. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) expands this view by considering the factors that influence motivation and self-determination. In considering teacher professional development, how motivation, and specifically motivation to learn, may influence teacher learning is what I seek to understand.

According to the theoretical frames that guide this study, an individual's motivation to learn or improve influences their learning. Knowles (1975) identified this as an individual's recognition of the "why" of learning. He spoke of the importance of individuals understanding why they are taking on a learning initiative. Specifically, he examined what is motivating their action. Motivation can be extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic motivators in learning may exist through directives, initiatives, supervision, evaluation, and coaching. In contrast to extrinsic motivators, intrinsic motivation for professional learning may be a result of interest, care, curiosity, and values (Ryan, 2009). Historical work centered on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was published by de Charms (1968), who suggested that individuals who perceive extrinsic motivation see their goals as external to themselves whereas individuals who perceive intrinsic motivation perceive their goals as internal. Deci & Ryan (2000) recognized intrinsic motivation

through observing specific behaviors that were rooted in self-interest and are not a result of external motivators or control. The authors' stated:

> Comparisons between people whose motivation is authentic (literally, self-authored or endorsed) and those who are merely externally controlled for an action typically reveal that the former, relative to the latter, have more interest, excitement, and confidence, which in turn is manifest both as enhanced performance, persistence, and creativity. p. 69

Deci & Ryan (2000) contributed to the research on motivation by proposing a theory of motivation that they named Self-Determination Theory. Their theory recognizes that individuals' have an innate sense of curiosity about their environment as well as an interest to learn (Ryan, 2009). Therefore, establishing a learning context that exploits this curiosity without inhibiting it has the potential to influence learning. Self-Determination Theory seeks to instill a growth orientation towards learning by identifying the factors that influence intrinsic motivation in individuals. According to the authors, how an individual experiences motivation is dependent upon the three psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When conditions exist that support these needs, it nurtures motivation and positively influences engagement, mastery, and synthesis (Power & Goodnough, 2018).

Autonomy. Autonomy is a perception of being in control of one's own behavior. Deci and Ryan (2002) stated that autonomy is internalized when individuals feel they have choices, and the context in which they operate allows for self-determination and a sense of ownership. In their qualitative case study of teachers' autonomous motivation, Power and Goodnough (2018) argued that, "Typically, when people experience choice, volition, and freedom from external demands, they are more likely to internalize and integrate the value of a behavior and experience a sense of autonomy" (p. 3).

Competence. The psychological need for *competence* is based on a desire to improve effectiveness or to increase one's capacity to be effective. Competence is not just the attainment of skills, but also a reflection of self-efficacy and confidence because of learning (Power & Goodnough, 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2000). When individuals feel a sense of competence, they are more willing and likely to engage in or complete a task (Power & Goodnough, 2018).

Relatedness. Relatedness is the need to feel connected to others and to have a sense of belonging. When individuals feel that they are included, valued, and respected, their sense of relatedness is enhanced (Power & Goodnough, 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Researchers have contending views regarding the psychological need, requirements, and significance of relatedness for intrinsic motivation of teachers (Durksen et al., 2017; Jansen in de Wal et al., 2014; Klassen et al., 2012). Klassen and colleagues (2012) discussed results from three studies that consistently emphasized the finding that for teachers, satisfaction of the need for relatedness with students leads to higher levels of engagement, positive emotions, and lower levels of negative emotions than does satisfaction of the need for relatedness with peers. Employing structural equation modeling with data from over 500 Dutch secondary school teachers, Jansen in de Wal et al. (2014) explored the influence of need satisfaction on teachers' autonomous motivation; however, "only autonomy satisfaction made a unique contribution" (p.31). These authors noted that the need satisfaction variables were highly correlated and the satisfaction of these needs may "mutually influence each other and overlap their effect on autonomous motivation" (p.32).

Durksen et al. (2017) examined teachers' needs satisfaction in the context of professional development and found that teachers' engagement with colleagues motivated their engagement in cooperative professional development. Thus, it may be that the need for relatedness is satisfied

differently depending on the learning context. In teaching, relationships with students appear to be most important. However, in the context of professional development, relatedness with colleagues may be more salient; the strength of that relationship is unclear.

Teacher Motivation to Learn

The research on teacher learning recognized motivation as an important consideration when seeking to implement change or improve practice (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Pelletier et al., 2002; Roth et al., 2007; Slemp et al., 2018). Several investigations have explored teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to engage in professional development (Durksen et al., 2017; Fives & Buehl, 2015; Fraser-Seeto et al., 2015; Gorozidis & Papaioannou, 2014; Pelletier et al., 2002; Shurr et al., 2014). Deci and Ryan (2000) recognized that in order to draw upon intrinsic motivation within an individual, supportive environmental conditions must be met. They rejected the need for extrinsic rewards stressing the negative influences that rewards, directives, or imposed goals have on intrinsic motivation. The authors claimed that these types of rewards are external to the individual and positioned as controlling or threatening.

Avidov-Ungar (2016) conducted research on teacher perceptions of professional development through interviews and qualitative analysis of 43 teachers from Israeli schools. She found that teachers' motivation to engage in professional development might be intrinsic or extrinsic and motivated by horizontal job growth or vertical job growth. The study revealed that intrinsic motivation to grow in their current position (horizontal growth) was the primary response of participants. In other words, teachers engaged in professional development to improve their practice and confidence in order to grow professionally.

Gorozidis and Papaioannou (2014) examined Greek teachers (n=217 time 1; n=71 time 2) responses to a professional development program. Through structural equation modeling, they

found that teachers' enjoyment and perceived value predicted their intention to participate in the

professional development activities and implement the content of those activities into practice. In

contrast, teachers reported that factors associated with controlled motivation, such as feelings of

guilt, job ramifications, and a lack of perceived value or purpose, did not explain their

willingness to participate in the activities. In addition, Beatty (2000) conducted a study of

teachers leading their own professional growth. The author found that engagement in self-

directed learning resulted in an increase in perceived locus of control (autonomy), intrinsic

motivation to learn, and a greater sense of self-efficacy (competence).

Autonomous Support

Self-Determination Theory states that establishing conditions that are supportive of an

individual's experience of autonomy, competence, and relatedness foster intrinsic motivation and

engagement for learning. Deci and Ryan (2000) recognized that in order to draw upon intrinsic

motivation, supportive environments, or conditions must be present. They defined this as

autonomous support. In describing supportive environments, the authors frown upon the need for

extrinsic rewards or pressures. They stressed the negative influence that rewards, directives, or

imposed goals have on intrinsic motivation. These types of rewards are external to the individual

and are deemed as controlling or threatening (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Deci, Koestner, and Ryan

(2001) published a meta-analysis that determined rewards that are dependent upon task

performance negatively influence intrinsic motivation. The researchers found, in contrast, that

supportive feedback and space for self-direction enhanced intrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan

(1987) stated that autonomy support is associated with greater interest, less pressure, more

creativity and better conceptual learning.

In terms of teacher professional development, the presence of rewards, directives, or imposed participation may result in compliance. When imposed on teachers, professional development is an act of compliance and can result in resistance towards engagement in the learning. In a study of teachers who were provided the autonomy to self-select and self-direct their professional development, Colbert, Brown, Choi, and Thomas (2008) found that teachers engaged in a self-directed professional development program saw an increase in passion for their practice and improved student learning outcomes. In contrast, the authors found that when prescribed professional development activities, teachers were reluctant to engage in the learning and adapt such learning to their practice. A sense of resistance to the imposed directive negatively influenced their motivation to engage. In addition, studies have shown that when teachers feel a sense of autonomy, they are more likely to have job satisfaction and avoid attrition (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; Warner-Griffin et al., 2018).

In addition to choice in learning, other studies have found that the workplace context influences intrinsic motivation. In a study of 37 teachers and 40 teacher assistants working in an early childhood program, Wegner and French (2010) found that teachers who were satisfied with the degree of choice in their work environment exhibited higher levels of intrinsic interest to engage in a professional development program. The authors argued that a feeling of autonomy and a school environment that nurtures autonomy influenced intrinsic motivation to learn.

The theories that frame this study argue for learning experiences that are self-directed and a learning environment that supports the individual needs of the learner. The research described above suggests that learning contexts that promote autonomy, increased competence, relatedness, and are empathetic to the experiences of the individual are effective at engaging in and producing learning. The theories presented in this review frame my research as I seek to

understand teacher perceptions of self-directed learning and its influence on their motivation to engage in and produce new learning. In terms of teacher learning, an understanding of how these theoretical frames are present or lacking in learning opportunities will assist in determining the most effective professional development designs.

In this next section, I continue with a review of the literature of teacher professional development by looking specifically at what the research has determined are effective components of professional development. I will review this research on effective professional development by also considering the theoretical frames that guide this study.

Teacher Professional Development

The shift of student learning outcomes represented within the Common Core and Next Generation Standards places an emphasis on teachers to shift from disseminating knowledge to developing student critical thinking skills. The 2012 MET study from the Gates Foundation of 7,419 lessons by 1,333 teachers concluded that teachers were not effectively teaching critical thinking (Gulamhussein, 2013).

In addition, the new standards and education policies have emphasized the need for students to develop skills in problem solving, effective communication, collaboration, and self-direction (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2017). Emerging from this expectation of student growth is the belief that the most significant factor influencing students' attainment of these skills and the challenging content within the revised learning standards is teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

In order to meet the expectations of teaching and student learning, researchers and practitioners have enacted reforms aimed at elevating the teacher as a professional and to define what is quality in teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Dewey, 1938; Sleeter, 2008; Zeichner,

1992). Policy reforms have elevated this expectation by integrating student learning outcomes in teacher evaluations, requiring student-learning growth to account for a percentage of teacher evaluation (NCLB, 2001). These extrinsic factors have placed a great deal of pressure on teachers to develop and improve their practice in order to meet the demands required of these new challenging expectations for students and teaching. Educators and policymakers have responded by identifying teacher professional development as an important strategy for supporting teachers to develop the skills students need to be prepared for a successful transition to the workforce or post-secondary learning.

Professional development and teacher learning has been a significant component of federal education reforms over the past two decades. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) education policy of 2001 required states to ensure the availability of high quality, professional development for all teachers. Similarly, the Every Study Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaced NCLB in 2015, expanded the requirements and expectation for teacher professional development. ESSA provided an expanded definition of professional development by emphasizing that it be available for all educators including principals, support personnel, and paraprofessionals. It also expanded a limitation set forth in NCLB by increasing the professional development requirement beyond "core academic subjects" to include all subject areas. ESSA section 8101(42) defined professional development as activities that are sustained (not stand-alone, one day, or short-term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data driven, and classroom-focused. In addition, the definition calls for personalized professional development to address the specific needs of educators. The result of the policy requirements of NCLB and ESSA has been an increased focus on planning and financing professional development activities for teachers which has led to increased spending on various forms of

teacher professional development in the United States (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Horn & Goldstein, 2018).

This new expectation of teaching and learning has affected our thinking regarding teacher professional development planning, calling for a more inclusive and cohesive process with a focus on teacher learning outcomes and less on the activity itself. As such, professional development planning has shifted its focus from planning for what everyone will do, to considering what each individual teacher needs in order to ensure students meet the learning goals established within the standards (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Guskey, 2002, 2014).

Researchers have argued that teachers have the most significant influence on student achievement (Archibald, Coggshall, & Goe, 2011; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Jaquith, 2010). Therefore, in order to move towards high quality teaching, a purposeful and sustained professional development program is essential. In that, teacher professional learning is dependent upon a coherent model of professional development that takes into consideration the context and learning needs of individual teachers (Desimone, 2011; Garet et al., 2007; Guskey, 2002; Hawley & Valli, 1999). Argued in the research is not a lack of professional development opportunities. Instead, there exists a demand for more effective professional development programs that intrinsically motivates teachers to engage in learning and apply the learning to their practice (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Garrison, 1997; Jansen in de Wal et al., 2014; Knowles, 1975).

In order to understand the influence of professional development on teacher learning I review the research on professional development. I begin this review by first looking at what the research argues are the essential components to effective professional development. I continue this review by reviewing a progression of models of professional development.

Effective Professional Development

In 2014, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation contracted with the Boston Consulting Group to research teachers' perceptions of professional development activities. One thousand three hundred teachers participated in the study. Teachers reported that they did not believe professional development was helping them prepare for the changing nature of their jobs. They spoke about professional development as being irrelevant, disconnected to their needs, and lacking in sustainability (Smith & Reynolds, 2014). Guskey (2002) argues that planning for professional development often consists of scripting what teachers will do on upcoming professional development days or times. The focus is on the schedule, locations, and specific training task. This focus on logistics and convenience does not prioritize the learning needs of the participants

What is lacking in these traditional professional development programs is a direct connection to specific content, active learning strategies, sustained learning, reflection on practice, and prior assessment of individual teacher needs, which are essential to teacher learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In order to transition from *professional development* to *professional learning*, professional development activities must focus on active learning embedded within a teacher's own work (Darling-Hammond, 2002; Guskey, 2002; Smith & Reynolds, 2014). This starts with an assessment of needs by providing teachers a voice in identifying areas for their own growth (Wei et al., 2009). Knowles (1980) argued that adult learners prefer independence and seek opportunities to draw upon their individual experiences in an attempt to grow and learn.

In response to the research and feedback regarding professional development, scholars advocated for reform-oriented professional development activities based on current research

(Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2011; Garet et al., 2007; Guskey, 2002; Hawley &

Valli, 1999). Examples of such reform included a focus on individual problems of practice, self-

directed learning, and opportunities for collaborative learning. Knowles (1980) stated,

> So it is no longer functional to define education as transmitting what is known; it now
>
> must be defined as a lifelong process of continuous inquiry. And so, the most important
>
> learning for both children and adults is learning how to learn, the skills of self-directed
>
> inquiry (p.41).

This new lens for professional development called for more engagement than what was

found in the traditional workshop model of professional development (Penuel et al., 2007). There

is consensus among researchers that new iterations of professional development that prioritize

individual teacher needs are more effective at engaging teachers in learning activities and

influencing their practice (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Wei, 2009; Hawley & Valli,

1999).

A significant amount of research has been conducted regarding teacher perceptions of

professional development (Bautista & Wong, 2019; Darling-Hammond & Wei, 2009; Desimone

et al., 2002; Garet et al., 2001; Martin & González, 2017; McKeown et al., 2019). The result of

this research has been a shift in thinking regarding what attributes are most influential to teacher

learning.

For example, Martin and Gonzalez (2017) conducted a qualitative study of five high

school teachers of mathematics in order to understand what they valued in professional

development. The aim of this study was to understand how engagement in lesson study

influenced their perceived value of professional development, specifically, the "why" of learning

(Knowles, 1975). The participants engaged in two iterations of a lesson study. Teachers met

monthly in study groups for three hours. During this process, the teachers watched and discussed animated cartoon depictions of several versions of geometry lessons, collaboratively planned and implemented a lesson on the same topic, and then watched and discussed videos of their own students participating in the lesson. They then revised the lesson and repeated the process. Analysis of the data uncovered that teachers found an explicit focus on content knowledge and instructional practices that were directly applicable to their practice to be most beneficial to their learning progress and motivation.

Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, and Gallagher (2007) conducted a study of 454 teachers who took part in a scaled professional development program on science instruction. The participants for this study were geographically diverse and the methods of instructional delivery were equally diverse. The findings revealed that teachers valued the learning opportunity when the content was aligned to their curriculum, standards, and learning goals. The focus on embedded context, (with immediate application to practice), as well as sustained duration were cited by the participants as contributing to their perceived value of the learning opportunity.

A study conducted by Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, and Shapely (2007) found that programs that provide 30+ hours of sustained activities were more likely to influence practice and increase student achievement. Findings across multiple studies concluded that professional development programs that are sustained and intensive provide more opportunities for practice and feedback (Archibald et al., 2011; Garet et al., 2001).

The research on perceptions of professional development points to a need for programs that draw upon the experiences of the individual participants and are directly applicable to their needs. In addition, a shift from isolated workshops to sustained, individualized, and personalized

professional development programs accentuate the individual's feelings of autonomy and the development of competence (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Frameworks of Effective Professional Development

As researchers continue to report on what teachers perceive as valuable and relevant with regard to professional development, a shift has occurred regarding frameworks for what constitutes effective professional development. Current policies, programs, and district-based professional development planning apply these new understandings. The No Child Left Behind Policy of 2001 provided an example of professional development reform. NCLB (2001) established five criteria for professional development programs considered to represent a reform model:

> 1) sustained, intensive, content focused, and having a lasting impact on classroom instruction and teacher performance; 2) is aligned to academic standards;

> 3) improves teachers' knowledge of subjects, 4) advances understanding of instructional strategies based on scientific research, 5) regularly evaluated (Yoon et al., 2007, p.1).

Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2017) published a review of 35 methodologically rigorous studies on the effect of teacher professional development. Within their review, the authors determined that effective professional development: is content focused; incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory; supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts; uses models and modeling of effective practice; provides coaching and expert support; offers opportunity for feedback and reflection; is sustained in duration.

Garet et al. (2001), supported the tenets of effective professional development, argued by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), in a seminal study on teacher professional development. This large-scale study of 1,027 teachers across 358 districts used regression modeling to understand

how structural components of professional development led to changes to teacher knowledge and

practice. This study found the specific attributes of such as job-embedded, active learning,

content focused, and sustained in duration influenced teacher engagement and learning.

In addition, Desimone et al. (2002) conducted a study of 207 teachers in 30 schools in

order to evaluate the effects of professional development on teachers' instruction. This three-year

longitudinal study argued that professional development focused on specific instructional

practices increases teachers' use of those practices in the classroom. The authors claimed that

specific features such as active learning opportunities increased the effect of the professional

development on teachers' instruction. They identified six key features of effective professional

development. The first being structural features: a) reform type, b) duration, and c) collective

participation. The remaining being core features: a) active learning, b) coherence, and c) content

focus.

Researchers have conducted qualitative studies to understand the components of

professional development that teachers perceive as valued and influential to their practice. In

addition, findings from these studies are supportive of the components of effective professional

development required within NCLB (2001) and the conceptual frame offered by Darling-

Hammond and Hyler (2017). For example, teachers across studies reported that professional

development that is embedded in their practice and focuses on relevant content are beneficial to

their learning and engagement in learning (Bautista & Wong, 2019; Martin & González, 2017;

Penuel et al., 2007).

Bautista and Wong (2019) conducted a study of primary school music teachers in order to

determine what features of professional development contributed the most too

improving practice. The study consisted of a survey of 98 practicing music teachers and

qualitative interviews of 12 in-service music education students. The researchers found a focus on content relevant to the teachers' practice (job-embedded), opportunities to collaborate with peers (collaboration and reflection), and professional development that is coherent (i.e., job-embedded) with the expectations of standards and curriculum goals. The participants also reported that the duration of the professional development was most beneficial to their growth and changes to practice. On-going professional development allowed the participants to dive deeper into their practice and to apply new learning to practice over time.

Furthermore, researchers have found that teachers value opportunities to collaborate with their peers while engaging in reflection and inquiry of practice (Alles et al., 2019; Coenders & Verhoef, 2019; Gore & Rickards, 2021). For example, opportunities to collaborate within multidisciplinary teams to develop lessons was highly valued among teachers (Coenders & Verhoef, 2019). Teachers spoke about the embedded context and the opportunity to engage in peer observation as contributing to their motivation to learn.

Gore and Richards (2020) conducted a study that sought to understand how quality-teaching rounds influenced mid and late stage teachers' motivation, commitment, and resilience for teaching and learning. In this study, the researchers interviewed 25 teachers who participated in this professional development model of peer observation and collaborative reflection. Teachers in this study reported that engagement in quality teaching rounds provided them an opportunity to take an inquiry stance (job-embedded) that was supported by working collaboratively, to rethink and re-author their practice (active learning, collaboration, reflection). Having the time and space to observe teaching and learning in other classrooms was seen as a novel experience that is not part of their typical professional development opportunities (modeling).

Our study demonstrates that temporary respite from the work of teaching to focus on

structured analysis of teaching refuels experienced teachers for the very work of teaching.

And key to this rejuvenation is a process and framework that supports them to ask critical

questions about the beliefs and assumptions underpinning their pedagogical practice.

(Gore & Rickards, 2021, p. 16)

The general theme among the participants was an affirmation of how professional development

that recognizes and builds upon teacher knowledge, skills, and experience positively influenced

their motivation to learn and changes to practice.

Alles, Seidel and Groschner (2019) conducted a qualitative study in order to understand

the factors that create a positive learning atmosphere and conversation culture in the context of a

video-based teacher learning community. The study consisted of six teachers and one facilitator

tasked with reviewing video lessons taught by group members and reflecting on the instructional

strategies and outcomes observed. These reflection workshops were held four times for a total of

480 minutes (duration). The findings from this study found that the opportunity to collaborate

and reflect on lessons with peers was beneficial (collaboration and reflection). Participants

shared that the integration of a facilitator played a significant role in their learning and

engagement by guiding the conversation, redirecting the discussion, and making explicit

references to observations found within the video lesson (coaching and expert support). The

teachers overall felt confident that showing videos of their lessons would provide learning

opportunities for themselves and their colleagues given that the atmosphere of the team was one

of productive discourse.

The components of effective professional development identified in the research align to

the theories of adult learning by encouraging embedded context for learning, and valuing the

individual experiences of the learner (Knowles, 1975). Active learning embedded in a teacher's classroom context paired with opportunities for collaboration and reflection allows teachers the time and space to try new things and reflect on the outcomes. This inquiry approach to their teaching and learning is autonomous in nature and can improve teaching competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The ability to reflect on practice and collaborate with peers, according to Deci and Ryan (2000), may influence perceived competence and relatedness through engagement with peers and relevant connection to practice.

Teacher-Centered and Teacher-Directed

Absent from the characteristics of effective professional development programs identified by Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2017), is recognition of the role of teachers' motivation to engage in professional development. The characteristics describe the content and process for effective professional development; however, simply having a good program does not necessarily make people motivated to participate and learn from it. Just as instruction in the classroom should be student-centered, instruction for teachers should be teacher-centered as opposed to supervisor or teacher-educator centered (Hobson, 1989). Specifically, individual teacher-learners position themselves as a source for identifying their learning goals. This starts with an assessment of needs by providing teachers a voice in identifying areas for their own growth (Wei et al., 2009).

When teachers determine their own areas of needed growth, they can also engage in self-directed learning to facilitate that growth. Importantly, teachers' professional learning occurs informally throughout their career as a process of tinkering or teacher research (Hargreaves, 1999). According to Hargreaves (1999), tinkering is a self-directed process that allows teachers to incorporate learning into their everyday activities. Specifically, the author claimed: "tinkering

is embedded in the process of professional knowledge creation, since this is a means of testing and modifying an initial 'good idea' into something worth subjecting to more systematic validation" (p. 131). The author argued that teacher learning through teacher research or tinkering is highly effective.

The components of effective professional development align to adult learning theories by their emphasis on prioritizing teacher self-selection and direction of their own learning. The insistence on self-reflection within their embedded context aids in teachers determining why they are engaging in the learning (Knowles, 1975). Learning opportunities that require self-reflection, inquiry, active learning and embedded context fulfill the deep rooted need of adults to be self-directing (Lindeman, 1926). The autonomy to identify problems of practice and apply and evaluate the impact of relevant knowledge and experiences to their practice may influence competence in their teaching (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Self-directed professional development opportunities that are coherent with these theories of adult learning and motivation are empathetic to the needs of the individual teacher. According to Self-Determination Theory, this may influence intrinsic motivation to engage in and produce new learning.

Models of Teacher Professional Development

In this next section, I discuss models of teacher professional development. I will review three models of professional development that demonstrate a continuum from top-down to self-directed professional development. I offer reviews of these models in order to situate a progression of professional development to demonstrate reforms in design and their alignment to what the research has shared regarding effective professional development and adult learning and motivation.

Workshop Model of Professional Development

Traditional professional development is delivered in the form of workshops or professional development days. This most common form of professional development is identified in the research as the "*workshop model*" (Garet et al., 2007). Such workshops are designed to help teachers meet the learning needs of students through the delivery of activities enacted outside of a teacher's classroom context (Borko et al., 2010). These traditional professional development opportunities are often superficial, irrelevant, non-coherent, and noncumulative (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Wei et al., 2009). Ball & Cohen (1999) argued there exists a disconnect between workshop models of professional development and deep issues of curriculum and learning. They pointed to a system that is a patchwork of opportunities with lack a coherent structure.

Research addresses the passive role that teachers assume in the workshop models of professional development (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Smith & Reynolds 2014, Guskey, 2001). In the workshop model teachers become consumers of knowledge produced outside of their instructional practice (Ball & Cohen, 1999). What motivates their engagement is a desire to be compliant with the requirement to attend professional development opportunities instead of anticipation of new and practical learning (Smith & Reynolds, 2014).

An area of focus among researchers is coherence between professional development activities and actual teacher practice. Cochran-Smith & Lytle, (1999) spoke to this disconnect by referring to professional development as obtaining knowledge for practice. Their Knowledge for Practice Model recognized "formal knowledge" or theories, research, and best practices that researchers group together and label as "the knowledge base." The authors argued that knowledge is contained and produced by researchers and scholars and is to be disseminated to teachers. Subject area knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, theories, and conceptual frames are at

the forefront of this knowledge base. However, the argument regarding teacher knowledge is evolving. Researchers have proposed various versions of knowledge including pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987), craft knowledge (Grimett & Mackinnon, 2018), culturally relevant knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1995), and local knowledge or knowledge in practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). The discrepancy with regard to the knowledge teachers need complicates the professional learning landscape. In addition, when professional development is outside of the context of a teacher's classroom, the decision regarding the knowledge attained lacks differentiation, and is extrinsic to the teacher-learner.

Traditional professional development that is top-down and directed may be effective in specific contexts. For example, a district that purchases a new gradebook application may elect to mandate training on this application for all teachers. In this context, the goal of the professional development is relevant to the teachers practice and it can be assumed that everyone can self-identify the "why" of learning (Knowles, 1975). A clear and evident need such as the above example satisfies the identified need of competence as required in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), by providing teachers with explicit instruction in a required tool that is not familiar. In such a case, a hybrid approach to professional development planning which combines self-directed and directed is optimal. Even in extrinsically motivated professional learning there exists opportunities to differentiate the instruction in order to meet the learning needs of the individual. Even top-down models of professional development can incorporate autonomy, self-selection, and the development of relatedness and competence by offering multiple forms of representation of content and choice by the teacher to select their method of instruction.

The traditional model of professional development assumes that what teachers' need is knowledge disseminated to them. It assumes that correcting this knowledge gap is what is necessary to improve practice (Gulamhussein, 2013). The prevailing research and the principles of effective professional development outlined in this review claim that the challenge of professional development is not the acquisition of knowledge. Instead, it is the ability to enact that knowledge in the classroom in order to improve teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Gulamhussein, 2013; Guskey, 2002). This results in a need for professional development that supports teachers during the implementation phase of working with new knowledge.

In this next section, I will discuss a shift in thinking regarding professional development from the traditional model to a revised approach to teacher learning that is collaborative and embedded in practice. I refer to this model as *Communities of Practice.*

Communities of Practice

The traditional forms of professional development offer learning opportunities that prioritize the content of the learning and lack in their consideration of the individual needs of the learner(s). The process of learning is outside of the individual teacher's classroom context and is limited in its opportunity for active learning, embedded context, and collaboration and reflection. The Community of Practice model of professional development offers a learning opportunity situated within teacher practice and collaborative in design. This model is an evolution from the traditional workshop model.

Communities of Practice are collaborations of individuals who have a shared interest and a shared commitment toward expanding their understanding of that interest (Wenger, 1998a). In this model, professional development is a social process in which members of the community

learn from each other. Communities of Practice engage individuals in mutual sense making and a commitment to engaging in a shared process of understanding (Eckert, 2006). In the context of teacher learning, a community of practice approach represents a shift from the traditional model of professional development that emphasizes dissemination of knowledge. In this model, learning is communal with knowledge shared, critiqued, and developed within the community of learners. Most notable in this model is the process of learning in which participants in the collective community provide a supporting system while they shift from receiving knowledge to implementing knowledge (Gulamhussein, 2013). This model provides teachers a safe and supporting environment to try ideas and receive feedback that is not threatening or judgmental. Feedback is part of the learning process that is accepted and expected within the norms of the learning community. Various scholars have published research explaining the influence of Communities of Practice on teacher learning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017a; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Wenger, 1998a).

The most common form of Communities of Practice found in schools is *Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)*. PLCs are communities of practitioners working together in a process of inquiry. PLCs typically consist of teachers of the same grade level or content area. During the process of learning, these teachers identify areas in need of growth, development, or improvement. They work to develop a knowledge base in these deficit areas and implement innovations in order to address needs. Key to this model is the opportunity to experiment with new learning and discuss the outcomes with their community of learners (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Gulamhussein, 2013; Owen, 2014). In comparison to traditional professional development models, this model situates itself within the day-to-day experiences of teachers and is dependent upon critical reflection of practice and student outcomes. The results of which are then shared

among peers resulting in shared learning and understanding (Vescio et al., 2008). Snow-Gerono (2005) found that teachers engaged in a PLC felt less isolated and were more comfortable with risk taking and took an inquiry stance to their learning. McLaughlin & Talbert, (1993) in their research regarding the implementation of PLCs argued,

> Strong professional community provides context for sustained learning and developing the profession. Effecting and enabling the teacher learning required by systemic reform cannot be accomplished through traditional staff development models – episodic, decontextualized injections of knowledge and technique. The path to change in the classroom core lies within and through teachers' professional communities. Learning communities, which generate knowledge, craft new norms of practice, and sustain participants in their efforts to reflect, examine, experiment, and change. (p. 19)

The authors discussed how Communities of Practice prioritizes students. They reported the benefits of focusing on students' needs in comparison to focusing solely on holistic learning goals established by national or local policy. Their research found that teachers who were able to adapt their instruction to student needs had one thing in common: each teacher belonged to an active professional learning community that supported and encouraged their changes in practice.

Teachers who collaborate in a process of inquiry report a sense of meaning to their work and satisfaction with the process (Cochran-Smith & Little, 1993). In addition, teachers who engage in learning communities that are in the format of study or discussion groups report a positive influence on their ability to reflect on their teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993).

DuFour and Eaker (1998) influenced this model of learning community by recognizing that effective learning communities are not a result of procedures and protocols, but are most

successful when providing individuals guiding questions that facilitate discussion and the sharing of ideas in order to determine the learning goal. This view of learning communities emphasizes collaboration and reflection in the design process and empowers teachers to self-direct their learning because of these actions.

Hodges and Cady (2013) conducted a qualitative study of middle school mathematics teachers to understand their experiences in an online community model of professional development focused on mathematics instruction. This qualitative study sought to understand the teachers' learning experience who took part in an online learning community designed in a course format. The study also revealed the influence of the learning community on their instructional practices. The teachers in this study reported that the community positively influenced their practice. The participants cited the ease of sharing ideas and the agency afforded to them to determine best practices positively influenced their engagement and instructional practices. A significant task of the learning community was a focus on selecting, developing, implementing, and reflecting on practices that would enhance students' mathematical thinking. This model embeds the content of the professional development in the teachers' context and allows for active learning. It promotes infusion of content into practice and the ability to reflect on outcomes with peers.

Beatty (2000) conducted a qualitative study in which seven secondary school teachers met over a five-month period in a community of practice. The meetings were focused on reflection, professional study, and collaboration. This study revealed that teachers engaging in this community of practice found the work meaningful and rewarding. This resulted in a feeling of competence and willingness to be creative. Feelings of increased competence and relatedness

among the participants motivated their learning progress, which confirmed their willingness to continue the community for a year after the conclusion of the study.

This model of professional development emphasizes an inquiry stance towards teaching. According to Knowles (1975), adults should be active contributors to their learning in order to find meaning in the endeavor. The community of practice model provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on and share their experiences. This shared knowledge guides their learning and allows for immediate integration within practice. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) positioned autonomy, relatedness, and competence as factors that influence motivation to engage in an activity. The communal exchange of ideas and personal experiences within learning communities offers a sense of relatedness among participants. The autonomous support afforded in this design is empathetic to the needs of teachers. The Community of Practice model aligns to the research on effective professional development by embedding the learning in context, providing active learning opportunities, sustaining in duration, and affording a forum for reflection and collaboration. The autonomy provided to the community to select their learning goals and activities aligns to the research on motivation as argued by Deci and Ryan (2000).

Communities of Practice models of professional development offer a shift in thinking from the teacher as a technician to the teacher as an intellectual (Gulamhussein, 2013). The emphasis on the context of teaching and the critical reflection of practice and outcomes moves control of the professional development to the teacher. However, this model is not without its challenges. For example, Professional Learning Communities are typically a collaboration of teachers of a similar content area or grade level. While formation of such a community may happen organically, PLCs may be a requirement by schools with individuals forced into participating. The group negotiates the focus of the learning goal and the area in need of further

growth. While the experience of implementation and reflection on practice is individual, the

participants compromise among the group in selecting an area of focus. Cox (2005) recognizes

the power struggle that may exist in such communities as they seek to negotiate their focus and

ensure equality in participation. The author argued that learning communities may be

representative of novices and apprentices that may experience a power struggle not only among

group members, but also within the context of the organization.

Environmental context may also influence the effectiveness of this model. Sustained

collaboration among participants requires an organizational structure that provides time, space,

and resources for such activities. Graham (2007) conducted a study of middle school PLCs that

found teachers identified common planning time, required teacher collaboration by

administration and organizational support for teacher team development as necessary

components.

Traditional professional development is a top-down model consisting of knowledge

dissemination and skill training. Communities of practice represent a shift in that approach to a

view of teachers as intellectuals who benefit from inquiry, collaboration, and sustained

opportunities to implement ideas and engage in critical reflection. This shift in professional

development moves beyond directives by allowing meaningful and relevant learning embedded

in practice. According to the theories of adult learning, professional development should provide

practical ideas that one may immediately apply to practice. It should value experiences and offer

a venue for sharing such in an environment that prioritizes individual teacher needs (Knowles,

1975; Lindeman, 1926). Motivation that is intrinsic according to Deci and Ryan (2000) develops

through autonomous support, a sense of belonging, and increased self-efficacy. The

Communities of Practice model offers a supportive context with a focus on collaboration. The

ability to share experiences and reflect on outcomes with peers who have common experiences offers participants an opportunity to experience relatedness as argued in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The research on Communities of Practice demonstrates that this model of professional development is a progressive step forward from the traditional workshop model through its increased congruence with theories of adult learning and motivation.

In this next section, I will discuss a further shift in professional development that expands upon the community of practice approach and provides teachers more autonomy with regard to the selection of their learning goals and learning process. I define this model as *Self-Directed Professional Development (SDPD)*.

Self-Directed Professional Development

Researchers concur that successful professional development opportunities are sustainable in duration, content based, embedded in classroom context, require active participation, and are personally relevant (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001) . The frames that guide the research on professional development are observable in many designs. Despite this consensus of what constitutes effective professional development design, there is a lack of consensus on what motivates an individual teacher's willingness to learn (Gorozidis & Papaioannou, 2014; Power & Goodnough, 2018; Shulman & Shulman, 2004; Van Eekelen, Vermunt, & Boshuizen, 2006). Self-directed professional development is a design that seeks to shift the focus of the learning to the individual needs of the teacher by providing the opportunity to self-select their learning goals and learning process. In this review, I discuss how professional development that is self-directed expands upon the idea of effectiveness by looking not just at the components, but also the influence on motivation to engage in learning.

Self-directed learning, according to learning theorists, is a process in which individuals navigate and direct their own learnings (Knowles, 1975). Knowles (1975) defined this learning as:

> [A] process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. (p.18)

Self-directed professional development incorporates the components of adult learning theory by providing teachers with autonomy or choice regarding the selection of their learning goals and learning activities by embedding this process in their practice through active learning activities (Fraser-Seeto, Howard, & Woodcock, 2015; Manning & Manning, 1985). Teacher's self-directed learning is not necessarily an individual or isolated practice. The decisions that a teacher makes regarding their learning is informed by a reflection of their problems of practice, school context and needs, recent learning experiences, analysis of student outcomes, and recent educational policies or curriculum requirements (Louws et al., 2017). The assessment of learning needs results from an infusion of these experiences. As Louws et al. (2017) claimed, it may influence their willingness to engage in that learning due to a direct connection to practice improvement or a sense of self-efficacy in relation to their practice.

Researchers have reported on the influence of self-directed learning on teachers' perceptions of learning activities and its influence on practice. Smith and Reynolds (2014) found that teachers viewed the model of single episode events or workshops imposed on them as an exercise in compliance, leaving them with limited or no choice in their professional development activities. This study of 1,300 teachers found that teachers who choose all or most of the

professional development opportunities were more than two times more satisfied with their

professional development than those with fewer options were. The authors found that teachers

who were provided autonomy concerning professional development reported feeling treated like

professionals. They expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the opportunities presented to

them. These findings suggest that the shift from compliance to active choice is a shift from

extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation to engage in professional development. Knowles

(1980) claimed that adults are driven by an internal as opposed to an external need to learn.

Power and Goodough (2018) conducted a qualitative case study of six elementary school

teachers tasked with self-directed professional development in the area of STEM integration. The

program provided participants the opportunity to self-select an action-research learning project

and direct the planning of such activities. In addition, the school district provided participants

with release days and access to resources to conduct their inquiry based learning. The study

revealed that the program was successful in accommodating the teachers' needs to feel

competent, related, and autonomous. By offering the teachers choice, encouragement, and

feedback, the teachers reported that the program supported their willingness to engage in the

learning. A significant theme within this qualitative study was the importance of time and

available resources. These factors contributed to a feeling of autonomous support and are

supportive of the tenants of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Researchers have published models to better understand the components of self-directed

learning that are beneficial to professional development (Brookfield, 1984; Candy, 1991;

Garrison, 1997; Grow, 1991). Candy (1991) proposed a model consisting of four dimensions:

autonomy, self-management, independent pursuit of learning, and learner-controlled instruction.

Grow (1991) proposes a staged model of self-directed learning in which individual's progress

through four stages of increasing self-direction: dependent, interested, involved, and self-directed. The author indicated, "The goal of educational process is to produce self-directed, lifelong learners" (p.127). Researchers have looked at the underlying factors that determine an individual's readiness to engage in self-directed learning (Brookfield, 1984; Candy, 1991; Garrison, 1997; Guglielmino, 1989). The factors determined to be essential included: an openness to learn; self-concept as an effective learner; initiative and independence; acceptance of the responsibility;, a love and caring for learning; and the presence of the skills necessary to study and problem solve (Grow, 1991).

When teachers are empowered to select their learning goal or decide their learning pathways, there is a sense of empowerment and a deep connection to their teaching (Jay & Johnson, 2002; Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009). Self-directed professional development is differentiated and responsive to the needs of the individual and runs in contrast to the one-size fits all approach of the workshop model, a staple in traditional professional development. This learner-centered approach provides autonomy, independence, and self-direction (Knowles, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

While the concept of self-directed professional development is not new, the structures and resources available to facilitate this type of learning have evolved. I continue this review by discussing the research on models of self-directed professional development in order to understand their influence on teacher learning.

Online Self-Directed Professional Development

Online professional development models consist of web-based courses that may include content such as readings, videos, and discussion forums. The design of these programs is asynchronous or synchronous. An asynchronous model of online professional development

allows teachers to work at their own pace and in some cases self-select from the resources available to them to guide their learning. This model is empathetic to the needs of the teacher by increasing accessibility of resources and allowing for on-demand learning. The ability to self-pace the professional development allows teachers the opportunity to implement new learning in practice and reflect upon outcomes before continuing with the course progression. This model is autonomous in nature by providing freedom to select a course of interest. It provides sustained engagement by personalizing the course pacing allowing for implementation of new learning and reflection on outcomes.

An example of asynchronous online professional development is Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). MOOCs are on-line courses that include learning activities, materials and an evaluation process (Koukis & Jimoyiannis, 2019). Although MOOCs have been growing in popularity their impact on teacher learning has not been thoroughly studied (Karlsson et al., 2014; Koukis & Jimoyiannis, 2019; Yıldırım, 2020). One study conducted by Yıldırım (2020) reported on the experiences of 295 teachers who enrolled in a MOOC focused on STEM Education. A significant finding in this study was the reported improvement in professional knowledge and professional skills shared by the participants. The findings concluded that MOOCs could help teachers develop professional competence. In this same study, the findings indicated a lack of motivation to sustain participation in the MOOCs. Participants shared that low teacher-student interaction, a lack of an open environment for discussion, and insufficient infrastructure reduced motivation.

Koukis and Jimoyiannisn (2017) reported on an MOOC designed to prepare teachers on the use of online tools in language instruction. The MOOC emphasized technical skill development in Web 2.0 tools, pedagogical knowledge, design skills, purposeful engagement,

the exchange of ideas and experiences and the collaborative design of educational materials. The participants in this study reported positive feedback regarding the direct connection of the content to their needs, the application of the content to their classrooms, and the organization of the course that promoted active engagement. The participants also reported the flexibility of the online course as a positive influence on their participation and integration of the knowledge in their practice.

A takeaway from these studies is the ability of online courses to curate high quality content and increase accessibility to that content. This avoids teachers having to invest time in searching and evaluating resources when engaging in self-directed learning. The research has found that online courses have the potential to influence teaching practice by providing self-pacing, ease of access to high-quality relevant resources, and the time to implement and reflect on new learning (Karlsson et al., 2014; Koukis & Jimoyiannis, 2019; Stevenson & Cain, 2013; Yıldırım, 2020). However, the same research reports a decrease in motivation related to loss of teacher-student interaction, a lack of open discussion, and challenges with technology.

Social Media and Online Learning Communities.

Online courses offer teachers the ability to self-pace their learning by utilizing curated content in a medium that offers flexibility and accessibility. However, this model directs teachers to either participate in the course or self-select enrollment in the course based on interest or need. This learning model is restricted by the course curriculum with limited options for expansion of learning outside of the course requirements. However, when online courses provide a medium for social interaction, it provides teachers an additional platform to expand the learning conversation by sharing knowledge and experiences with peers. Online learning communities or social networks are a form of online communities that socializes the learning experience:

Social media have emerged as a prominent element of digital technologies that can be

defined as global digital platforms. These platforms, which connect large numbers of

users producing and exchanging ideas and user generated content, seem able to offer

sustainable support for professionals' lifelong learning, thanks to ease with which users

are able to create and share content, the breaking down of space and time barriers, and the

flexibility and high customization that its contents and services allow. (Bruguera et al.,

2019, pp. 1–2)

Social media may include such online tools as blogs, Twitter, social network sites (such as

Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn), media sharing sites (such as YouTube, TeacherTube, and

SlideShare) as well as online discussion boards or exchanges. These tools provide ubiquitous

access to individuals seeking to connect, share, and learn from each other. These tools have been

reviewed as a source of both formal and informal learning opportunities (Bruguera et al., 2019;

Davis, 2015; Donelan, 2016; King, 2011; Wright, 2010).

In a review published by Bruguera et al. (2019), the authors identified five characteristics

of social media that would result in learning capabilities for individuals. The characteristics cited

by the authors were 1) open access, 2) variety of communication and sharing options, 3)

authentically situated in the professional field, 4) diversity of networks within fields 5) user

centered focus. In particular, the authors contended that these characteristics make social media

conducive to self-directed and informal learning.

A growing body of research has been published regarding the use of Twitter as a platform

for teacher learning and professional development (Chretien et al., 2015; Davis, 2015; Donelan,

2016; Wright, 2010). In a study conducted by Davis (2015), the researcher-examined teachers'

perceptions of engagement in professional learning within a Twitter-based personal learning

network. Participants in this study reported that access to a vast knowledge base, a supportive learning environment, and engagement in reflective thinking, were positive attributes of this learning medium.

In a review of 21 studies on microblogging, Gao, Luo, and Zhang (2012) identified a common theme regarding teachers' ability to determine "what to learn". The authors found that the use of microblogging sites like Twitter expand the content of learning by not limiting it to that provided by a professional development instructor or online course. Instead, everyone in the online community serves as an information provider and consumer. This type of medium can be a generator of learning goals and can help individuals determine areas of further exploration or solutions for problems of practice.

Self-directed professional development provides agency and autonomy regarding learning engagement. It offers the ability to select a learning topic, manage your own pace, engage in collaborative discussion in real time, connect with peers in a wide geographical range, and simply learn from each other within virtual learning communities. The learning presented in the research describes both formal and informal learning opportunities. What are lacking within the available research are studies that examine teacher self-directed professional development models that emphasize reflective practice as the primary influence on learning goals.

The theories of motivation and adult learning that frame this study align to the attributes of this proposed model of professional development. Specifically, teachers engage in critical reflection of practice in order to identify learning needs. Professional development of this type embeds itself in practice and is purposeful. It provides teachers a sense of autonomy to select their learning based on identified needs within their classroom context. As Deci and Ryan (2000)

claimed, the deep connection to practice along with the autonomy to self-select learning goals

positively influences intrinsic motivation to learn.

Go Time as a Self-Directed Professional Development Model.

The focus of this study is a professional development program named Go Time, which

provides teachers the opportunity to self-select and self-direct their learning goals. It is

dependent upon teachers to reflect critically on practice to determine their learning needs. While

informal in process, this program has a formalized conceptual frame that guides the learner

through a process that is cyclical in nature and ongoing. A visual representation of this process is

found in figure 2.1:

Figure 2.1

The Go Time Process of Self-Directed Professional Development
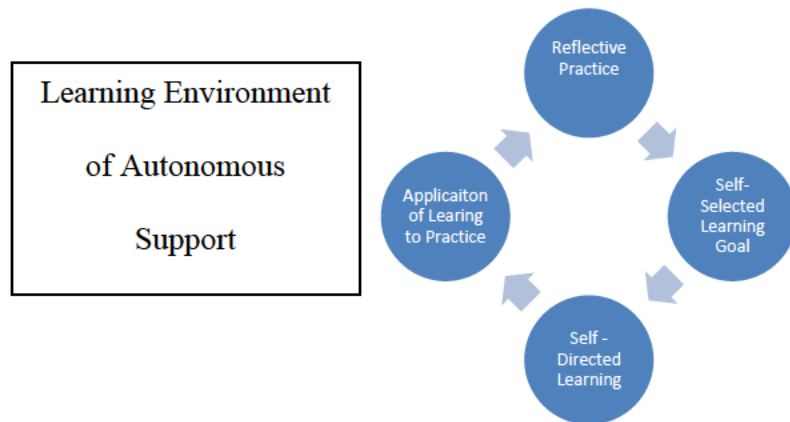
This type of self-directed professional development contrasts with traditional forms by

focusing on inquiry and self-assessment and is supported by an organization that values and

encourages this process (Fraser-Seeto et al., 2015; Minott, 2010). It represents a shift from a

deficit approach to professional development that focuses solely on content knowledge and

external experts to a focus on professionalism by empowering teachers to initiate, identify, and

act on their own needs (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009).

I conclude this review by reviewing the research regarding reflective practice. I position

reflective practice as the most significant distinctive attribute of the specific professional

development program that is the focus of this study named Go Time. Go Time builds upon the

available research on self-directed professional development by placing an emphasis on a

teacher's ability to reflect on practice in a continuous cycle of reflection, goal setting, learning,

and application of new learning. It is the continuation of this cycle which differentiates this

model from other forms of professional development.

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions to engage in a process of

continuous learning (Schon, 1983). In an attempt to understand the impact of reflective practice

on teacher learning and development, I will provide a review of the literature on reflective

practice.

Defining Reflective Practice: What is reflective practice?

John Dewey's book *How We Think* (1933) is the original publication that brought a lens

to reflection and reflective thinking. Dewey defined *reflection* as, "active, persistent, and careful

consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that

support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p. 9). Dewey argued that teacher

reflection is careful and persistent consideration of practice. He encouraged educators to embrace

imagination and train "thinkers" (Platt, 2014). He warned of being wary of routines in your

actions. Routine actions, according to Dewey (1933), are a result of traditions or external

authority (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). To summarize, Dewey (1933) argued that reflection is a

process in which one describes a situation, questions their initial understandings and assumptions, and persists with an attitude of open-mindedness, responsibility, and whole-heartedness. It is not something that neatly packaged as a set of techniques to follow. It involves emotion, passion, and intuition.

The work of Dewey provided a lens for teachers to view their practice outside of the microcosm of the classroom and to consider the broader context of education. Liu, (2015) argued that this awareness is not enough to impact teacher growth and development. She states that there is a need to follow this realization into the classroom in an attempt to identify its impact on instructional decisions and actions. Writings by Schon fifty years after the publications by Dewey provide a new lens for reflection that considers the application within a context.

Schon (1983) expanded upon the ideas of Dewey (1933) by reviewing the practice of reflection in varied professions. According to Schon, reflection is a required skill for educators. Teacher education programs have evolved to include the development of reflective practice within their curriculum (Liu, 2015). Schon (1983) described two types of reflection that are present at different timelines in practice. *Reflection on action*, as defined by Schon, is a process of reflecting on prior experiences in an attempt to learn and improve by questioning decisions and factors that influenced an outcome (Schon, 1983). This type of reflection aligns to the work of Dewey in that it is a review of the past. Schon (1983) expanded upon the practice of reflection by offering a varied lens of reflection that he terms reflection-in-action. *Reflection-in-action* recognizes that practitioners have what he defines as tacit knowledge. This knowledge is spontaneous and automatic. The author argued that tacit knowledge might be a result of routine and procedure. He referred to this as overlearning. Schon (1983) stated that reflection serves as a correction to over learning.

Through reflection, he can surface and criticize the tacit understandings that have grown

up around the repetitive experiences of a specialized practice, and can make new sense of

the situations of uncertainty or uniqueness, which he may allow himself to experience. (p.

61)

In the context of teaching, reflection-in-action is the ability to make immediate decisions

in a classroom that draws upon teachers' theoretical and practical experiences in order to meet

the needs of students (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Liu, 2015; Schon, 1983). In order to ensure

reflective teaching in action, practitioners must learn to articulate their tacit understandings in

order to ensure they are subject to critique (Schon, 1983; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Pivotal to

this process is the recognition that teachers have the position of knowledge producers. It allows

teachers to be critical of the knowledge produced by research and incorporate their practical

experiences as they implement classroom decisions (Liu, 2015).

Van Manen (1995) supported the understanding of reflective practice being critical of

theory and recognizing the value of practitioner knowledge. The author argued that inherent in

practice is the idea of pedagogical tact:

To act tactfully as an educator may mean in a particular situation to be able to see what

goes on with children, to understand the child's experience, to sense the pedagogical

significance of this situation, to know how and what to do, and to actually do something

right. (p.9)

Van Manen defined tact as intuition. The intuition he spoke of is a teacher's ability to understand

their students and the influence they will have on their practice. Van Manen (1995) recognizes

this as their sense of the classroom, their own efficacy as a teacher, knowledge of students,

pedagogical content knowledge, and knowledge of the culture of the classroom and the school.

The work of Dewey (1933), Schon (1983) and Van Manen (1995) provided an evolved perspective on reflective practice. There is a growth in perspective from a focus on reflection on prior practice to recognition of more immediate reflection in which the individual views their environment with a critical lens in order to make adjustments and challenge their theoretical training. Absent from these views on teacher reflective practice is consideration for the social conditions in which a teacher works (Jay & Johnson, 2002). Reflection should take into consideration the social, moral and political culture of the environment (Jay & Johnson, 2002; Liu, 2015; Van Manen, 1995; K. Zeichner & Liston, 1987).

There exists disparity regarding the agreement of what constitutes reflective practice in education. In my review of the literature, I have settled upon the definition provided by Jay and Johnson (1999):

> Reflection is a process, both individual and collaborative, involving experience, and uncertainty. It is comprised of identifying questions and key elements of a matter that has emerged as significant, then taking one's thoughts into dialogue with oneself and with others. One evaluates insights gained from the process with reference to: (1) additional perspectives, (2) one's own values, experiences, and beliefs, and (3) the larger context within which the questions are raised. Through reflection, one reaches new found clarity, on which one bases changes in action or disposition. (p.76)

The process of reflection is a personal quest for understanding the context of one's environment and the position the individual encompasses within that context. For teachers, the process allows for an understanding of the context of their classroom environment, and the influence of their practice on the environment. In this next section, I review the literature regarding critical

reflection. I will discuss how reflecting on practice through a critical lens benefits the teacher and influences teacher learning.

Critical Reflection

Jay and Johnson (1999) expanded upon this idea of reflection by developing a typology of reflection that included three dimensions: descriptive, comparative, and critical. In their typology, descriptive reflection involves defining the problem. Comparative reflection requires the practitioner to think about the problem from a number of perspectives. Finally, critical reflection involves making a judgment or a choice after considering multiple perspectives and using that new meaning to reframe the question (Jay & Johnson, 2002). The critical perspective requires the individual to understand the broader context of school. The authors identified this stage as becoming an agent of change. They argued that reflection at this level provides a practitioner with the ability to understand what should be rather than only understanding the semantics of a single situation.

Critical reflection is positioned as the precipice of reflective practice within the literature (Burbank et al., 2012; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Van Manen, 1977; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Proponents of this level of reflection recognize its potential to influence the equality of education. For example, the Social Reconstructionist tradition of reflection described by Zeichner and Hoeft (1996), requires reflective teachers to focus not only on practice, but also on the social conditions in which their practice is situated. The authors argued that the preparation of reflective teachers, in addition to fostering teacher growth and development, must also support equality in education. Critics of this position, according to Liu (2015), argued that focusing on social and political issues result in a lack of attention to teaching skills. The author presented four characteristics of critical reflection: the content and process of reflection; recognition of the

assumptions of self, schools, and society; analysis of such assumptions and implementation of changes; and the production of actions for student learning, and a more just society (Liu, 2015). In other words, the process of critical reflection requires the educator to question their long-held beliefs and assumptions.

Reflective Practice as a Means to Professional Learning

Soren Kierkegaard was noted as saying, "the irony of life is that it is lived forward but understood backward" (Loughran, 2002, p. 42). Engaging in reflective practice requires the practitioner to have an understanding of content, pedagogy, theory, and the context of the learning environment. Critical reflection requires the practitioner to question beliefs and assumptions embedded in practice. It is through this practice that effective change may be beneficial for both students and teachers.

Ball and Cohen (1999) argued for teachers to engage in the investigation of practice as a professional approach to learning. They highlighted an emphasis on questioning, investigation, analysis, and criticism. The authors called for consideration of ways to analyze and study their own teaching and learning outcomes. This process connects to the work of Dewey (1933) and Schon (1983) in that the reflective process allows teachers to think critically about their practice and student outcomes in order to identify areas for growth and development. The challenge that we face in education is to provide time, space, and the ability to facilitate this type of reflective practice and to motivate teachers to engage in the practice

Professional development that is self-directed and founded upon critical reflection requires the individual to have the capacity and motivation to engage in the process. The prioritizing of reflection as the starting point for self-directed professional development is the focal point of the Go Time professional development program. Perhaps, the insistence on

reflection of practice incorporated into a self-directed professional development process influences teacher motivation to not only engage in learning, but also integrate that new learning effectively in practice.

Conclusion

Just as students are individuals with varied experiences, needs, strengths and weaknesses, teachers are as well. Therefore, a differentiated approach to teacher professional development is essential in order to ensure a deep connection and engagement in the activity(s). Why and how teachers sustain engagement and motivation to learn is shaped by their feelings of autonomy, connection to their self-identified needs, ability to integrate learning in practice, and influence the instructional outcomes in their classrooms. The research on teacher professional development has demonstrated a progression of understanding regarding the components and models that influence effectiveness.

In this review, I have discussed three approaches to professional development that represent a shift from traditional top-down directive to individualized and self-directed. The research on teacher perceptions of each model points to the presence of attributes defined in adult learning theories and Self-Determination Theory of Motivation. I conclude the review by considering the model of self-directed professional development proposed in this study, "Go Time." This model prioritizes the act of choice of learning through reflective practice and calls for a continuous cycle of learning. I seek to understand how teachers describe their motivation to reflect on practice and engage in new learning when taking part in this self-directed model of professional development.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The purpose of this study is to understand teacher perceptions of a self-directed professional development initiative named Go Time. In this study I used a basic qualitative research design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A basic qualitative research design is best for this type of research as I am interested in examining the experiences and perceptions of the teachers participating in this study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that a qualitative researcher who is interested in how individuals interpret their experience, construct their world, and attribute meaning to their experiences might utilize a basic qualitative research design. A central purpose of a qualitative design is to understand how individuals make sense of their lives and experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In attempting to understand the meaning and influence that teachers attribute to self-directed professional development, I have used a qualitative design.

Context

The study was conducted at the School District of the Chathams, which is located in Chatham Borough and Chatham Township, NJ. Chatham Borough and Chatham Township are located approximately 25 miles west of Manhattan in Morris County, New Jersey. The communities share a post office, library, and unwavering support for an exemplary public school district. Both municipalities are featured in publications such as The New York Times and New Jersey Monthly as highly desirable places to live (La Gorce, 2015; NJ Monthly, 2016)

The school district enrolls approximately 4,200 students in six school buildings, providing educational programming for students in grades pre-K through 12 (SDOC, 2021)Three of its six schools are recognized as No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools, and the district's schools and students consistently garner national, state, and regional recognition in the academics, the arts, and athletics.

Chatham High School is accredited by the New Jersey Department of Education and is recognized locally and nationally as a premier education institution. *New Jersey Monthly* named Chatham High School the #1 high school in New Jersey in 2016 and 2014 (NJ Monthly, 2016). In 2016, Newsweek ranked Chatham High School 40th nationally and #1 in NJ. U.S. News and World Report has awarded Chatham High School a gold medal yearly. In each of the past five years, over 98% of its graduates have gone on to attend institutions of higher education, with over 95% of all graduates furthering their education at four-year colleges or universities.

The School District of the Chathams student demographic is 77.9% White, 5.5% Hispanic, 0.6% Black, and 11.5% Asian. 0.7% of the students enrolled in the district are English Language Learners. The School District of the Chathams employs 345 teachers. 95.4% of the teachers identify as White, 1.4% Hispanic, 0.9% Black or African American, and 2% Asian. The average years of teaching experience is 10.5 years compared to a state average of 12.1. The average years of experience within the district for teachers is 8.2 years, compared to the state average of 10.8 years. Overall, 67.5% of the teachers in the School District of the Chathams have 4 or more years of experience. 52% of the teachers in the district have a master's degree and 2% hold doctoral degrees. The district has a 91.4% one-year teacher retention rate.

The study was conducted during the fall and winter of the 2021-2022 school year. At the time, the district was still operating under restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. All classes were in-person. However, students who were under quarantine restrictions were excused from school and provided a virtual link to daily lessons. Teachers and students were required to wear masks to school each day. There were imposed limits on physical interactions and required distancing between individuals. Most faculty meetings and professional time was hosted virtually.

Positionality

As an insider in the School District of the Chathams, I believe it is important to clearly state my position within the district and expose any conflicts of interest or influences that my positionality may have on the validity of this study. I currently serve as the Assistant Principal of the high school in the School District of the Chathams. In my role, I directly supervise the school-counseling department, which consists of eight certified school counselors and two secretaries. In addition, I oversee various aspects of building leadership including scheduling, assessment, student intervention and referral services, technology support, student discipline, teacher observations and general building management.

My current position limits my exposure to educators outside of the high school with the exception of a few district-wide events. I am a member of the district Intervention and Referral Services Committee. In this role, I meet bi-monthly with the Intervention and Referral Services Chair in each school. These individuals are building-based counselors or administrators. It does not include any classroom teachers, which are the focus of this study. I have also led professional development courses that have included primarily high school and a select number of middle school teachers. Each year, I present to middle school students regarding the scheduling process. At these presentations, teachers of those grade eight students are present. At the elementary level, my exposure to teachers has been limited to district wide wellness events, participation in professional days, and full district welcome back meetings on the first day of school each year.

While I consider myself an insider within the School District of the Chathams given my employment at the high school, I am also aware that the teachers participating in the study may perceive me as an outsider. I have selected teachers in the grade levels of K-8, of which I have had very limited interaction with through the above-mentioned events. My assumption is that any

personal knowledge by these educators may be limited to only recognition of my name and position within the high school. Reputation and ancillary vignettes of experiences may be a factor. However, I have no reason to believe those would be anything but positive regarding my integrity, personality, and competence in my position.

My position as an administrator in the district may influence the participants. While I do not directly supervise the participants in this study, my position may influence the responses of the participants. For example, participants may have been reluctant to speak negatively about their experiences for fear of retribution. I attempted to mitigate this concern by confirming the confidentiality that I committed to uphold and the use of pseudonyms for participant's names. I also reviewed with each participant that I am functioning in the role of researcher. Therefore, I expect each participant to answer honestly without reservation. I confirmed that positive and negative feedback both contribute equally to this study.

In addition to my positionality as a district administrator, my positionality for this study is influenced by my 19 years of experience as an educator. I started as an alternate route elementary level technology teacher 19 years ago. Since that time, I have worked in four school districts and held positions of elementary technology teacher, middle school technology teacher, District Technology Coordinator, Supervisor of Instructional Technology K-12, and high school Assistant Principal. I have worked in both small K-8 districts and larger K-12 districts. The demographics that I have worked in have ranged from primarily English language learners with a significant free and reduced lunch population to very affluent. I also recognize that I am a Caucasian, upper-middle class male. My race and social class position may have influenced the responses of the participants. For example, my positionality as a Caucasian male may influence participant's responses to questions regarding student-learning needs. This may manifest itself by

not discussing perceived inequities based on race or class when identifying areas in need of

professional growth. This reaction may be a result of a participant being a representative of a

minority group of educators within the school in comparison to my race representing the

majority (Milner, 2007).

A consistent experience during my time as an educator has been the inconsistencies of

professional development opportunities. My own experience has been rife with lack of structure,

differentiation, cohesiveness, and effectiveness. It is through my own experiences that I have

developed the desire to expose teacher professional development understandings in an attempt to

reform and improve its implementation.

Participant Selection and Participants

In the School District of the Chathams, all teachers in the district take part in the Go Time

self-directed professional development initiative. This includes approximately 300 teachers in

grades K-8. The sampling method employed for this study was a non-random or purposeful

sampling method (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The population from which I selected my sample

consisted of tenured teachers who were teaching in grades K-8 in the 2021-2022 school year. I

limited the participants to teachers of these grade levels in an attempt to mitigate my influence as

an administrator in the high school (grades 9-12). To select participants that would provide the

data needed, I asked each of the content area supervisors in the district to nominate two teachers

to be considered for this study. I provided the supervisors a rubric to assist in their selections (see

Appendix A). I asked the supervisors to limit their nominations to tenured teachers. I selected

tenured teachers in order to limit my study to teachers who have progressed beyond the

introductory years of teaching in which curriculum and classroom management may be the

primary motivation of learning. In addition, I selected tenured teachers because they are

protected by job security. Therefore, I expected them to be more inclined to provide honest feedback without fear of sanctions or retribution. The supervisors submitted nominations using a Google Form (See Appendix A). I received 22 teacher nominations. Of the 22 nominations, the supervisors identified five teachers for whom they felt the Go Time model was not a good fit for them. The remaining 17 teachers were identified as having a positive experience with Go Time. I sent a questionnaire to all 22 nominees (see Appendix B). Included in this survey was a request for consent to participate in the study. Fifteen of the 22 teachers agreed to participate in the study and completed the survey. Only one of the teachers identified as not having a positive experience with Go Time consented. I selected 10 of the 15 teachers to participate in the study including the participant identified by the supervisor as one form whom the model was not a good fit. I used my personal judgment and prior experiences to determine participants that I believed would contribute to the study. I prioritized having a sample that represented participants at various grade levels and content areas in order to have diversity in experience.

The participants consisted of four teachers of grades prek-3, one teacher of grades 4-5, and five teachers of grades 6-8. One participant had less than 10 years of teaching experience, four participants had 10-20 years' of experience, and 5 participants have over 20 years of experience. All participants were tenured teachers in the district. Eight of the 10 participants were Anglo-American (Caucasian), one was African-American, and one was Hispanic American. Background information of the participants can be found in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Participant Demographics

Name	Grade Level	Years of Experience	Subjects Taught	Gender
Amanda	K-3	21	All Core Subjects	Female
Carol	6-8	17	Science	Female
Christine	K-3	30	Special Education	Female
Christopher	6-8	13	Social Studies	Male
Julie	6-8	25	Electives	Female
Kimberly	6-8	17	Social Studies	Female
Lori	K-3	25	All Core Subjects	Female
Robert	4-5	23	Math, Science, Social	Male
Sarah	K-3	15	All Core Subjects	Female
Susan	6-8	8	World Language	Female

Notes: Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants

Data Collection

The first method of data collection was an electronic questionnaire. I sent the

questionnaire to all participants who were nominated for the study. I received twenty-two

responses. The survey asked participants to provide general feedback regarding their experience

participating in the Go Time professional development model. It also included demographic

questions. The purpose of the questionnaire was to elicit consent and interest to participate in the

study and to collect specific demographic information. I designed the additional questions to

expose the potential participants to the types of questions that they would be asked to speak

about if they agreed to participate in the study.

Semi Structured Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with the participating teachers. A semi-structured interview is an interview format that utilizes a blend of structured and less structured questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The use of semi-structured interviews was a preferred interview protocol for this study as I sought to understand the individuals' meaning and experience. This format "allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 90). The semi-structured interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. I used Google Meet video conferencing software to administer remote interviews. I recorded each interview by using the embedded recording feature within Google Meet. In addition, I also recorded and transcribed each interview using Otter Voice transcription service. Otter Voice integrates with Google Meet allowing for the management of recordings within an active meeting. I downloaded each interview into Google Documents. I edited the documents by listening to the interview and modifying the text to ensure an accurate transcription. I stored all of the video, audio, and transcription files in a password protected Google Drive folder.

Interview 1

I began interview 1 by asking each participant to describe his or her professional development experiences prior to taking part in Go Time. I then asked the participants to describe a professional development experience that they found to be valuable (i.e., Can you describe a professional development experience that you had that was positive? Describe the experience. What factors contributed to the value that you perceived from taking part in it?). I continued the interview by asking participants to provide their own description of Go Time (e.g., If you were to describe Go Time to a friend or another teacher, how would you describe it?) The

remaining questions of the interview focused on various components of the Go Time model of professional development (e.g. What are the strengths of this model of professional development? What are the weaknesses?). Participants were also asked to reflect on and describe their experiences with regard to the establishment of learning goals, the selection of learning activities, the significance of collaboration, the role of accountability, engagement in reflective practice, and areas of concern regarding this model (see Appendix C). Each interview lasted between 45-60 minutes.

At the conclusion of each interview, I completed an interview case summary. This document summarized participant responses to the questions. I reviewed this document to determine any areas that I believed required additional follow-up with each participant during the second interview. I also used this document to inform my interviews by reflecting on the quality and the order of the questions (See a sample case summary in Appendix D).

Interview 2

I continued the data collection by conducting a second round of interviews. Prior to the second interview, I emailed the interview case summary to each participant. I asked each participant to review their summary to confirm I accurately represented their responses to the questions. At the beginning of the second interview, we discussed their feedback regarding the summary documents and confirmed I had an accurate understanding of their responses. I continued the interviews by discussing the coding categories I had uncovered after coding and analyzing the transcripts from the first round of interviews. I shared each of the categories and asked the participants to discuss how they are reflective of their experience taking part in Go Time. The interview concluded with a discussion regarding their Go Time Learning Goal for this

current school year. See Appendix E for the interview questions and Appendix F for codes and descriptions.

Data Analysis

I followed the six steps of data analysis defined by Cresswell (2009). Cresswell described an interactive process to analysis. The process is not to be linear, but is more of a recursive process. I first organized my data in order to prepare for analysis (Step 1). This included transcribing interviews and pairing those transcripts with the case summaries that I created for each. (2) I then read and reread each individual piece of data. (3) I began a detailed analysis of the data and initial coding of data. (4) I conducted a comparative review of the codes and reflections from each individual interview. (5) I analyzed the codes and collapsed them in order to determine categories that exist within the data set. (6) I collapsed the categories in order to determine themes that are present within the findings. I present these themes as findings in an attempt to answer the research questions.

Starting with Step 3, I first utilized a template approach to deductive coding as described by Crabtree and Millner (1999). This consisted of the establishment of deductive codes prior to engaging in the semi structured interviews.

The deductive codes that I employed included tenants of Self-Determination Theory: *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness*. I also included the components of effective professional development as described by Darling-Hammond (1997). These codes were *content focused*, *active learning*, *sustained in duration*, *the use of models and modeling*, *coaching and expert support*, *feedback and reflection* and *collaboration*. In addition, I used two codes as descriptors in order to segregate responses regarding prior professional development experiences and

experiences with Go Time. These codes were *prior professional development* and *Go Time experience*.

I used Dedoose qualitative analysis software for all coding. I uploaded each transcript to Dedoose. I then reviewed each transcript and coded them using the deductive codes. Next, I read and analyzed each transcript utilizing an inductive coding approach. During this process, I developed codes that described their experiences engaging in prior professional development as well as their experiences with Go Time.

After the first rounds of deductive and inductive coding, I began to categorize the codes in Dedoose. I accomplished this by grouping codes that have relatable meanings together. Dedoose defines this as "child codes". For example, under the deductive code "autonomy," I categorized the inductive codes of choice, trust, differentiated, and personalized as child codes. I continued the process of grouping by also using the analytic function within Dedoose to identify the presence of codes as well as the co-occurrence of additional codes. For example, when analyzing instances of the code "competence" I discovered that the co-occurrence codes are autonomy, content focused, job-embedded, motivation, pursue interests/interests, and relevance. Through the process of grouping and analyzing codes, I derived categories that emerged within the results (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

I continued this process with each of the second interviews. I first coded the second interviews using the deductive codes and then the inductive codes that I had assigned in the first interviews. Lastly, I assigned additional inductive codes that arouse in the data. After completion of all coding, I reviewed the additional codes and added them to the previously established code categories where applicable (see Appendix F). I reread all of the first round interviews, analyzing the text, codes, and categories that I uncovered to determine the themes that emerged across my

data sources. My intention was to report findings using the components of Self-Determination Theory as separate themes. However, through the process of analysis I determined that autonomy and competence were best integrated within two themes that I derived from the data. I collapsed autonomy within the theme *Self-Directed Professional Development: Autonomy fosters a feeling of professional trust.* I collapsed competence within the theme, *Self-Directed Professional Development as a catalyst for teacher reflection and competence.*

Trustworthiness

This is a qualitative research study in which the researcher is an insider within the organization; therefore, my positionality within the study requires specific actions in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that the researcher's role and his or her relationship to those studied should be made explicit in order to enhance validity. Validity is not only assumed by answering a question, but it also asks the consumer if the findings are sufficient and authentic (Lincoln & Guba, 2011). The authors stated that the consumers must associate trust they trust themselves to act upon the implications of the study. In addition, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that trustworthiness is a sense of security that is dependent upon the author clearly sharing their procedures and positionality. I took explicit steps, referenced in my section on positionality, in order to minimize how my positionality might affect the study's trustworthiness. I addressed my role and position within the organization by being transparent with the participants that their honesty is integral to the process and that I would protect their confidentiality. Further, I explained that this study design aims to examine this self-directed professional development initiative in order to determine its potential. In other words, there is nothing in particular that I wanted to hear except the truth about their experiences. I limited study participants to those who teach in grade levels PreK-8. These

individuals are working outside of my authority and are located in different buildings within the

district. I utilized pseudonyms for each participant in order to protect their identity. Each

participant signed a consent agreement that clarified the risks associated with participation in this

study. The Montclair University Institutional Review Board as well as the Superintendent and

Board of Education of the school district in which this study is situated approved the study.

To establish trustworthiness of the study, I maintained an audit trail of all recorded

interviews, transcripts, notes, and documents. I used Google Meet video conferencing software

to conduct interviews. I stored the recordings and transcriptions from these interviews in a

password protected Google Drive cloud-based folder. I uploaded transcriptions into Dedoose

Qualitative Analysis Software. This software was used code, analyze, and derive themes within

the data. I stored copies of case summaries, interview notes, and reflection documents within the

same Google Drive folder.

Conclusion

The School District of the Chathams implemented a new model of teacher professional

development named "Go Time." In this model, self-selection of learning goals and activities

define the learning agenda. I sought to understand this professional development program in

order to determine its influence on teacher motivation and learning. The purpose of this study

was to understand teacher perceptions of a self-directed professional development initiative

named "Go Time."

This study provided an analysis as to how self-directed professional development

influences teacher motivation to learn. There exists a gap in the literature on the influence of

self-directed professional developments' influence on teacher motivation to learn. This study

sought to expand on the research of teacher professional development by considering a model

that provides teachers professional development that is self-directed and directly embedded within practice. Specifically, this study examined how teachers reported its influence on motivation to reflect on practice and engage in new learning.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to understand teacher experiences in a self-directed model of professional development named Go Time. In this study I sought to understand how providing opportunities for teachers to self-select and self-direct their learning influences their motivation to learn and sustain learning. The research questions that guided this study were:

1) How do teachers describe their experiences with professional development prior to taking part in Go Time?

    a) How do teachers describe factors that influenced their learning?

    b) What do teachers identify as important attributes of effective professional development by reflecting on their experiences prior to Go Time?

2) What are the experiences of teachers who engage in the Go Time self-directed learning model of professional development?

    a) How do teachers describe attributes of the Go Time model that influenced their learning?

    b) How do teachers describe factors that influenced their motivation to learn by citing the basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness?

In this chapter, I present the findings from two cycles of semi-structured interviews conducted with 10 participants (as described in Chapter 3) during the fall of 2021 and winter of 2022. I position these findings by first discussing how the participants described their experiences with professional development prior to taking part in Go Time. These findings were significant to the study as they provided a context to understand how the participants perceived and explained their experiences taking part in professional development throughout their career. For example, I uncovered the specific attributes of professional development that the participants

found influential to their learning. I also identified the attributes that participants found

negatively influenced their opinion of the professional development. This data provided a

context that uncovers what the participants identified as important attributes of professional

development and the lens they use to evaluate professional development opportunities. I present

these findings by identifying themes that I derived from the data. The themes that I report related

to prior professional development experiences are: *Prior Professional Development Experience:*

Teachers sought professional development aligned to their individual learning needs, and *Prior*

Professional Development: Teachers sought actionable learning and inspiration.

I next discuss the findings from both interview cycles in which I asked participants to

discuss their experience with the Go Time professional development model. I organized the

findings into four themes. The first theme is *Self-Directed Professional Development: Autonomy*

fosters a feeling of professional trust. In this theme, I describe how autonomy provided within

self-directed professional development contributed to a feeling of professionalism. The

participants referenced feeling trusted, empowered, and capable to navigate their professional

development. The second theme is *Self-Directed Professional Development: Reflective practice*

as a catalyst for teacher reflection and developing competence. Here I explore how the Go Time

model results in teacher reflection of practice and self. The findings indicate that engagement in

self-directed professional development resulted in prioritizing reflection of the academic or

social-emotional needs of their students. The participants selected learning goals after reflecting

on the needs of their students and their own areas of growth necessary to meet these needs. In

addition, the process of reflection was evident throughout the learning activities. Participants

engaged in a constant cycle of reflection by integrating new learning into their practice and

adjusting their learning activities after reflecting on their outcomes in practice. The third theme is

Self-Directed Professional Development: Autonomous support cultivates self-determination for learning. The findings indicate that autonomy alone was not responsible for their motivation to engage in self-directed professional development. The participants shared the importance of a supportive learning environment in which facilitation, collaboration, time, and accountability contributed towards their engagement. The final theme is *Self-Directed Professional Development: Learning networks without borders.* The findings reveal how engagement in self-directed professional development encouraged and supported connections in which teachers sought opportunities for peer collaboration organically. An unanticipated finding was how some participants were intrinsically motivated to make connections outside of their schools and districts to expand their learning networks.

(RQ1) HOW DO TEACHERS DESCRIBE THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIOR TO TAKING PART IN GO TIME?

In this section, I report on the findings that examine the participants' prior experience with professional development. These are the experiences that teachers shared prior to taking part in the Go Time model of professional development. I organize these findings by reporting the two themes that I derived from the data collected during the first interview cycle. The first theme is *Prior Professional Development Experience: Teachers sought professional development aligned to their individual learning needs.* The second theme is *Prior Professional Development: Teachers sought actionable learning and inspiration.* I continue this section by reporting the findings for each theme. I begin by defining the theme and providing an explanation of the code analysis that resulted in the construction of each theme.

Prior Professional Development Experience: Teachers sought professional development aligned to their individual learning needs.

I constructed this theme by analyzing and collapsing the codes assigned to the participant responses regarding their prior experiences with professional development. The code *relevance* was applied 18 times within the data with at least one instance present within each participant's responses. In addition, I collapsed the codes *personalized (6 instances)*, *competence (6 instances)*, *job-embedded (12 instances)*, and *meaningful (7 instances)*. See Appendix F for definitions of all codes. The findings indicate that participants' prior experiences with professional development were often lacking in relevance to their individual learning needs. In addition, participants reported a lack of job-embedded learning opportunities, resulting in professional development that they perceived as less meaningful due to a lack of personalization and relevance of the content to their needs. I will support these claims with data from the findings within this section.

The research on teacher professional development supports the notion that the majority of teachers reported that their professional development experiences are disconnected from their needs, passive, and un-inspiring (Darling-Hammond & Wei, 2009; Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2010). In fact, teachers reported that participation in traditional models of professional development such as workshops and presentations seem like an act of compliance (Guskey, 2002; Guskey, 2014) where they perceived a need to attend based on extrinsic factors such as mandates and not a result of their own volition. The perception by teachers was that professional development organizers prioritize content, logistics, and convenience without appropriate consideration of individual teacher learning needs when designing and implementing professional development (Guskey, 2002; Porter et. al., 2007; Wei et al., 2009; Yoon, Duncan, Wen-Yu Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007).

When discussing prior experiences with professional development, participants spoke about the relevance of professional development to their practice and their individual needs. Participants' referenced feeling like attendance at professional development often felt like they were attending a training session. Meaning, they were there to learn how to use something or do something specific. For example, Carol shared that the majority of the professional development she attended were single events not typically aligned to her individual professional development plans (PDP). She stated,

> I feel like when I think of PD prior to Go Time, they were a lot like training sessions. We
>
> always had a predetermined topic that was the focus. For example, a workshop on a new
>
> textbook. These were not really connected to learning goals we had established for our
>
> practice, but they were usually a new tool or resources that we did have to learn about.
>
> (Interview 1)

While Carol recognized that single training sessions of this type are sometimes necessary, she felt that additional opportunities relevant to the professional development plan she developed each year were also important. Carol's response indicated that the planning for professional development of this type took a holistic approach by generalizing a learning need for everyone. For Carol, planning professional development based only on the content does not necessarily take into account the prior knowledge of each individual or the relevance of the content to their needs. In addition, Robert stated,

> Sometimes [the professional development] was not applicable to the grade level or the
>
> content that I taught. Therefore, I do not feel it was always beneficial. Sometimes, I just
>
> felt it was kind of checking off a box… to say you met a PD requirement. (Interview 1)

Robert articulated that training sessions were not always relevant. Sometimes, he was mandated to attend these types of workshops on topics that were not directly related to his grade level or content area. Robert did share that sometimes he did find these opportunities to be relevant. He stated, "Sometimes the topics were new or 'the next big thing' in our field. These workshops were interesting and relevant being that it was a trending topic in our field that I didn't know much about" (Interview 1). Robert continued to explain that these were hit or miss opportunities. Christopher stated, "Sometimes it would be like a checkbox, like you have to learn about Genesis [district student information system] and we're going to provide you the information and check off that we did it" (Interview 1). For Christopher, he articulated a concern about how relevant these mandated training sessions were to him. He stated,

> I always ask myself, am I really going to use this. In some instances, I would spend a lot of time on something and then realize this doesn't work for my grade level and I don't know if I will ever use it. (Interview 1)

Amanda shared a similar sentiment,

> I always hope that it is going to be valuable for me. I teach the youngest children and a lot of the time the PD can be amazing and has helped me to be a better teacher. Sometimes it can kind of hit [or] miss the mark because it's geared towards such a big age range that it might not be helpful for the population that I'm teaching. So often, we're kind of lumped in with other grade levels. Therefore, I have had some amazing experiences and then I have had some that I just feel like kind of miss my population. (Interview 1)

To summarize, participants reported that many of their prior experiences with professional development were situations in which they were required to attend and were not often relevant to

their needs. What I inferred from these responses is the desire to have opportunities more aligned to their self-identified learning needs. In addition, the participants' responses indicate the potential value of more thoughtful planning of professional development to ensure that opportunities are differentiated to meet the individual needs of the participants.

Prior Professional Development: Teachers sought actionable learning and inspiration

I constructed this theme by analyzing the findings from the first interview cycle. I collapsed the codes of *competence* (6 instances), *application* (4 instances), *deliverables or takeaways* (4 instances), *design elements* (4 instances), and *inspiring* (6 instances). The codes selected describe how participants valued professional development opportunities in which they left with something that they can use immediately within their practice. In particular, the participants spoke of specific design features of professional development that contributed to their ability to leave with learning immediately applicable to their practice. I applied the code *competence* to this theme as well as to the prior theme. There were 6 instances within the findings that support this theme in which the participants equated learning that they can immediately apply to their classroom as an opportunity to improve their teaching. They made associations to improving their competence as a teacher, which I will support with data within this section.

In general, the participants had mixed opinions regarding how often their prior experiences resulted in them leaving with learning that could be immediately utilized in their practice. As Knowles (1975) claimed, adult learning is accomplished through experiences in which individuals have an immediate opportunity to apply their learning. In addition, the findings suggest that teachers sought learning opportunities designed in a way that promotes active learning and transferability to their practice. Meaning, participants favored professional

development delivered in such a way that they left feeling inspired to apply the learning. These findings align with the literature on teacher professional development which finds that most professional development opportunities are episodic events lacking in opportunities for engagement in authentic application (Hawley & Valli, 1999; Webster-Wright, 2009).

When asked about prior professional development experiences that resulted in new learning that they applied to their practice, the participants spoke about leaving the workshop inspired to apply what they learned. Christine explained how when she leaves a professional development session with something she could use right away; she feels inspired to develop her competence as a teacher. Christine shared,

> I look for professional development to inspire me to be a better teacher. I definitely want to come away with something I could use the very next day. However, really, if I had to pick one word, I think it's that I want to be inspired. (Interview 1)

Christopher articulated his experience attending professional development sessions (prior to Go Time) that were led by his supervisor. He shared,

> I always feel going into his PD workshops, that there is going to be a takeaway and it's something that's going to be an application that I can implement within the classroom, or it just gives me a different lens, when I'm thinking about how to teach my students, how to get them excited, how to get them to be thinking about where the information is coming from. (Interview 1)

In addition, Sarah shared the importance of deliverables when attending professional development. She provided an example of a workshop she attended in which a presenter supplemented the workshop with videos and tutorials. She found that having access to the content in varied mediums provided her the opportunity to implement the new learning or

strategy with her students. In the videos, the presenter demonstrated implementation within a

classroom with students. Sarah reported,

> I've attended workshops on Wilson Foundations the last couple of years. If you were to
>
> ask me, if the manual is what helped me learn the program or the videos provided that I
>
> spent my time watching, I'll tell you 100% the videos. (Interview 1)

Sarah indicated that the design of the professional development, which included the use of

supplemental videos, provided a greater sense of confidence to implement the new learning or

strategy by having them as a resource to which she could return.

> Christine shared her preference for professional development that was application-based.

She spoke about a five-day workshop she attended on how to teach writing. During this

professional development, the participants learned a writing method by constructing their own

writing piece as if they were a student. She reported,

> What I remember so much was that piece of writing which I used for, I mean, honestly,
>
> like 10 years of my teaching. I had that piece of writing and then I could use it as I
>
> needed it with my kids. (Interview 1)

In Christine's example, the professional development was an active learning design. She left the

workshop with a resource that she was able to utilize immediately with her students. Christine

identified this workshop as valuable to her practice by providing a resource she could use and

saving her time during lesson planning due to the fact she already had a model to show her

students.

> In addition to leaving professional development sessions with actionable learning, the

participants also spoke of how sufficient follow-through or feedback from the presenter allowed

for the learning to be applied. They explained how having time to apply new learning and then

engage in ongoing follow up with the professional development provider contributed to their

learning. Amanda also discussed the importance of having time and support to apply new

learning. In describing her learning style and positive professional development experiences, she

spoke about learning new things and then being able to implement them in her classroom. The

value she perceived was to be able to reconvene to discuss outcomes. She reported,

> I can remember in my last district, we would always jump into these new initiatives and
>
> they would just kind of like throw stuff at you and it was kind of like, up to you to figure
>
> it out. Then they move on to something else. It was somewhat like, what's that saying? A
>
> mile wide and an inch deep? You know, I never like really applied it. You never had time
>
> to see how it really helped you as a teacher. (Interview 1)

Instead, Amanda has shared how she preferred to have opportunities for follow up or feedback

after being exposed to new learning and applying it. In her example, when she was exposed to

new learning and was expected to implement it on her own at the conclusion of the professional

development. She expressed how when professional development was delivered without

adequate support or follow up, she never ended up implementing the learning.

Robert shared his experience taking part in a series of professional development sessions

that were sustained over time. His experience learning the Collins Writing Program was

reflective of sustained professional development. The professional development was held over

multiple sessions allowing time for implementation, analysis, and discussion. However, Robert

shared that professional development based on the next new thing rarely sustains. Robert

reported,

> Years ago, we were trained on the Collins Writing Program. We spent a lot of workshop
>
> time on that writing program. It kind of went into the area of social studies and science,

and it was a big initiative in the language arts area. Then a different program came along,

and the ELA teachers went off in a different direction. The initiative just rather went

away. (Interview 1)

Robert articulated the value he found with professional development that sustained in duration

and included adequate follow up. However, he also expressed how frequently initiatives change

and new learning sometimes has a shelf life. This results in the focus of professional

development shifting. For Robert, this presents challenges to sustain the implementation of new

learning in his classroom as he reaches capacity as new initiatives are mandated and

compounded.

Summary

To conclude, I asked the participants to describe their experiences taking part in

professional development prior to Go Time. The purpose was to understand their prior

experiences with professional development, and how it shaped their beliefs and opinions

regarding professional development. In particular, I sought to understand what attributes of

professional development they identified as influential to their learning. The findings in this

section answer the research question RQ1) How do teachers describe their experiences with

professional development prior to taking part in Go Time? I believed it was important to

understand teacher perceptions and experiences with prior professional development in order to

apply that context to my second research question: (RQ2) What are the experiences of teachers

who engage in the Go Time self-directed learning model of professional development?

I constructed two themes from the findings: *Prior Professional Development*

Experience: Teachers sought professional development aligned to their individual learning

needs, and *Prior Professional Development: Teachers sought actionable learning and*

inspiration. What I found suggests that teachers sought opportunities for relevant learning experiences that were job-embedded. The findings revealed prior professional development experiences that appeared to be mainly mandated workshops in which the content delivered was not differentiated or personalized based on the needs of the individuals participating. The participants articulated concerns regarding the perceived relevance of the professional development they attended. The most common reason for a lack of perceived relevance stated was the lack of direct connection of the professional development to their practice or learning needs. However, the findings also indicated that not all professional development that is not differentiated to address individual learning needs is invaluable. In fact, what the findings revealed was that the perceived relevance of the professional development was dependent upon the individual. Specifically, their interest in the topic and its application to their teaching. In addition, the findings indicated that the participants valued professional development which was sustained in duration, and provided opportunities for application, follow-up and feedback.

In this next section, I report the findings that answer the second research question framing this study:

(RQ2) What are the experiences of teachers who engage in the Go Time self-directed learning model of professional development?

a) How do teachers describe attributes of the Go Time model that influenced their learning?

b) How do teachers describe factors that influenced their motivation to learn by citing the basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness?

(RQ 2) WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS WHO ENGAGE IN THE GO TIME SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING MODEL OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

Darling-Hammond (2009), Guskey (2002), and DeSimone (2009) argue for teacher professional development that is content-based, job-embedded, sustained over time, collaborative and relevant to the individual. They propose professional development that moves beyond the one-day or single session mandated model of professional development, calling for a sustained model of professional development that takes into consideration the personalized needs of the teachers in a format that allows for job-embedded relevance and application. The findings in this section examine teacher experiences within the self-directed model of professional development designed to meet the learning needs of individuals.

In this section, I report the findings that examine the participants' experiences taking part in the self-directed model of professional development named Go Time. These are the experiences regarding their participation in Go Time. I organize the findings by reporting the themes that I derived from the data. The data for these findings was collected during two semi-structured interview cycles. In each interview, I asked participants to answer a series of questions that included asking them to describe their experience taking part in Go Time. I analyzed and coded these interviews. I then collapsed codes in order to derive themes present among the data. The first theme is *Autonomy fosters a feeling of professional trust.* This theme describes aspects of self-directed professional development that contributed to teacher feelings of professionalism. The findings indicate that the autonomy provided within self-directed professional development contributes to a feeling of professionalism. The participants referenced feeling trusted, empowered, and capable to navigate their professional development. The second theme is *Reflective Practice: Self-Directed professional development as a catalyst for teacher reflection.*

Here I explore how participants describe Go Time as resulting in reflection on practice and themselves. The findings indicate that engagement in self-directed professional development resulted in prioritizing reflection of the academic or social-emotional needs of their students. The teachers identified learning goals after reflecting on the needs of their students and their own areas of growth needed to meet these needs. In addition, the process of reflection was evident throughout the learning activities. Participants engaged in a constant cycle of reflection by integrating new learning into their practice and adjusting their learning activities after reflecting on their outcomes in practice. The third theme is *Autonomous Support: Cultivating self-determination for learning.* The findings indicate that autonomy alone was not responsible for participants' motivation to engage in self-directed professional development. The participants shared the importance of a supportive learning environment in which facilitation, collaboration, time, and accountability contributed towards their engagement. The final theme is *Self-Directed Professional Development: Learning networks without borders.* The findings reveal how engagement in self-directed professional development encouraged and supported connections in which teachers sought opportunities for peer collaboration organically. An unanticipated finding was how some participants were intrinsically motivated through their work under Go Time to make connections outside of their schools and districts to expanded their learning networks

Self-Directed Professional Development: Autonomy fosters a feeling of professional trust

The concept of professionalism has a history of complexity when attempting to define what it means to identify teachers as professionals (Ball, Maljak, Bice, Valley, & Parry, 2019; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Swann, McIntyre, Pell, Hargreaves, & Cunningham, 2010). Central to the debates on teacher professionalism are efforts to assess the importance/level of content knowledge, autonomy, level of accountability, and overall management needs (Stevenson,

Carter, & Passy, 2007). Therefore, how the research defines teacher professionalism is varied. In this study, I derived the theme *Self-Directed Professional Development: Autonomy fosters a feeling of professional trust* by collapsing the following codes: *autonomy* (65 instances), *freedom* (12 instances), *choice* (18 instances), *personalized* (6 instances), *trust* (31 instances), and *pursuing interest* (16 instances) (see Appendix F). Therefore, I am identifying professionalism as a self-described feeling that the teachers articulated related to the autonomy and trust provided to them to pursue self-directed professional development. Each of the participants provided a description that included one or more of the codes that contributed to this theme. Most notable is the code autonomy, which I applied 65 times. Autonomy is a component of the theoretical frame for this study. I decided to present the findings that referenced autonomy within the theme of professional trust as the analysis of the findings indicated that the code of autonomy was applied to the same data in which the codes of freedom, choice, personalized, trust, and pursuing interests were also applied. Specifically, when the participants described their feeling of autonomy when self-selecting their professional development, they included references to feelings of freedom, choice, personalization, and excitement about pursuing topics of interest to them.

Autonomy: Teachers selecting their own learning needs supported by trust

Creating meaningful professional development calls for administrators to sufficiently trust teachers so that they grant them the autonomy to identify their own learning needs (Knowles, 1975; Power & Goodnough, 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Smith & Reynolds, 2014). The evidence I present in these findings argue that participants associated professionalism with the autonomy found in Go Time by providing them the opportunity to select their own learning goal and learning activities. They reported being in control of their learning. The study has found

that this autonomy has a positive influence on teacher's disposition toward professional learning.
I will support these claims by providing evidence from the data below.

When asked about having the autonomy to direct their learning Lori shared, "It feels
great that you are trusted that you are going to do something that is valuable for yourself, the
district and your students" (Interview 1). She expressed that this model allows you to select
learning that is relevant and interesting to you. Sarah shared a similar sentiment,

> Teachers feel like they're being treated like professionals in that they're given the
> autonomy to decide what it is that they think they need, that they want to improve on and
> that the school thinks they're capable of doing that." (Interview 1)

Susan provided an analogy to describe the personalization afforded with self-selecting your
learning. She stated, "Your Go Time selection is like the itch that you would like to scratch. It is
like the itch in your own practice that you need to scratch. It's very personalized." (Interview 1)
She explained that it differs from other professional development she has participated in because
it is so personalized. She is grateful to be entrusted to select something she is genuinely
interested and will improve her teaching.

The findings reveal that the autonomy provided in this model of self-directed professional
development contributed to a sense of professional trust. The participants in this model felt a
sense of empowerment brought upon by the autonomy to self-direct their learning. Christopher
expressed a great deal of trust when discussing his experience, "I feel empowered. You are not
going and learning about something that somebody else selected for you. You are kind of like
trusted as a professional to know what you need to pursue" (Interview 2). Robert provided an
explanation of trust that succinctly encapsulates the responses of the participants,

> I think it was a real leap of faith on their part to instill that trust in us. But I also feel as
>
> though I felt empowered by that and I felt that I valued the fact that they were putting
>
> their faith and trust in me to explore areas that I was interested in and to know that I
>
> would not take advantage of the situation. (Interview 1)

Robert's response reflects his feeling of empowerment and confidence that resulted from being provided this level of autonomy. He spoke of feeling valued and the recipient of professional respect.

> In addition, participants expressed feeling treated as professionals. Sarah stated,
>
> I'm feeling teachers feel like they're being treated like professionals in that they're given
>
> the autonomy to decide what it is that they think they need, that they want to improve on
>
> and that the school thinks they're capable of doing that. (Interview 1)

Lori shared, "Overall, I think our district trusts us, as teachers, as professionals, and allows us to do this, and I think that's a wonderful thing" (Interview 2). Carol saw this as the district having faith in teachers to recognize their own need for growth and development and enact it. She shared,

> I feel like it shows that the district believes in us as teachers and they know that we're
>
> capable with what we do and that gives us the chance to really grow and that's something
>
> I know that the district has worked hard on is giving us that space to further grow. The
>
> fact that they believe in that growth mindset and that we can do it certainly it gives you
>
> more belief in yourself that you can. (Interview 1)

Carol associated the autonomy provided to her as the district supporting a growth mindset with teachers. She felt entrusted to pursue learning that she finds important and this motivates her to believe that she is capable of doing it.

The findings indicate that when provided the opportunity to self-select and self-direct their professional development, there was an intersection of feelings of professional trust, autonomy, and interest in learning. In particular, the participants collectively felt that the district demonstrated confidence or trust in their ability to successfully navigate this professional development experience. In this next section, I will discuss findings that reveal limitations that some participants experienced with having autonomy.

Autonomy has limitations

Not all of the participants experienced autonomy in this model. In fact, two participants explained how the autonomy that was promised within this model had limitations or frustrations associated with it. Amanda shared that she did not have complete autonomy to select a learning goal. When she selected a goal that did not align to the curriculum of her department, she could not pursue that topic in the way she intended. She shared, "I understood why I can't select to implement a learning goal that is counter to our curriculum. I still pursued the learning as I wanted to learn it. However, I could not implement it with my students." (Interview 1) Amanda shared that she understood why she could not pursue a goal that deviates from their curriculum. She had selected to learn about a specific method of teaching phonics that was not the method being used by the other teachers of her grade level or prescribed by the district curriculum. She understands that consistency in curriculum and instruction is important and was okay with this decision. While Amanda had to adjust her plan to implement the new learning as intended, she was still permitted to engage in the learning. She adjusted how she would incorporate what she learned into her practice while still conforming to the mandated curriculum.

In addition, Christine shared that having full autonomy to select a learning goal and activities was not as beneficial to her as she expected. She explained that while she values the

freedom provided in this model, she feels that the district could do more to inspire her learning.

Christine shared,

> So it's more now you pick your own goal. So I do have to tell you that I do appreciate
>
> that, right. And, I do like that opportunity. But, honestly, right now, in my stage of life, I
>
> am not a fan of this program. Maybe just because it's hard, I don't know, but the biggest
>
> hurdle for me is that I get to pick what I want to work on I have defined my own
>
> professional development, right? I have to seek that out. And not for nothing, but there's
>
> lots of great administrators and supervisors in our district, that I sometimes get a little
>
> like, why aren't they doing more? Or, why can't I be inspired? (Interview 1)

Christine's response provided an additional lens when considering the extent of autonomy

provided in a self-directed model. She recognized the value of choice and the trust to identify a

learning goal. However, she believed that there exist opportunities for facilitation, such as

coaching or advice during the initial stage of goal development. Christine's sentiment towards

autonomy is reflective of the amount of work that is required to self-select and self-direct your

learning. Her response indicated that perhaps the autonomy provided is not enough to invoke

intrinsic motivation to pursue learning. In her explanation, full autonomy was perceived as a

hardship and a lack of effort by the district to invest resources in her professional development.

These findings offer a counter view of the autonomy provided in this model by

recognizing that there are in fact limitations to autonomy as well as differences in how much

autonomy individuals may want. Consistent with SDT, the findings also support the argument

that autonomy is not the only factor that may influence motivation to pursue learning. A closer

look at additional factors such as reflective practice, feelings of competence, autonomous

support, relatedness and the components of effective professional development may be equally influential(Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wei et al., 2010).

These findings suggest that when providing participants an opportunity to self-select learning goals and activities, they felt treated as a professional. They felt a sense of recognition by their schools and district as being deemed fully capable of selecting and regulating their professional learning.

Self-Directed Professional Development: Reflective Practice as a catalyst for teacher reflection and developing competence

Dewey (1933) defined reflection as a process in which an individual describes a situation, questions their understandings and assumptions, and persists with an attitude of open-mindedness. Teacher reflective practice furthers the work of Dewey by calling on teachers to reflect in action and reflect on action (Schon, 1983). This means that a reflective practitioner questions, investigates, and challenges their assumptions in the classroom. The findings of this study demonstrate how essential the act of reflective practice is to self-directed professional development. The selection of a learning goal is dependent upon a close examination of student needs and the teacher's ability to meet those needs. Where those two divert is the focal point of the learning goal.

I constructed this theme by collapsing the codes applied to the findings of interview questions in which the participants spoke about their experience identifying and selecting learning goals while taking part in Go Time. The codes I collapsed are *reflection* (36 instances), *competence* (30 instances) *feedback and reflection* (20 instances), *backward design* (4 instances) and *student outcomes* (9 instances). In order to understand the role of reflective practice among the participants, I asked questions during interview 1 that required participants to explain their

process of selecting a learning goal and learning activities (e.g. Talk about the process of

determining a learning goal. How did you decide on a goal? Who or what influenced that

decision? What role did reflection on practice play in this process?) Specifically, I sought to

understand how they determine what is important for them to improve upon or address with

either themselves or their students. In interview 2, I shared the category *reflective practice* that I

derived from the data across participants in interview 1. I asked participants to comment on the

role of reflective practice in their experience with Go Time. These questions sought to answer

the research question that examines how participants who engage in this self-directed model of

professional development experience feelings of competence. Additionally, I aspired to

understand if such decisions were of free will or if external influence contributed to their

decisions. These questions examine the presence of intrinsic or extrinsic motivating factors

experienced by participants when identifying learning needs.

The findings indicate that the focus of participants when selecting learning goals was

engagement in reflection on practice. The motivation for this action was to improve their

instructional competence and student learning. I will support these claims with evidence from the

findings.

Reflecting on Practice

Participants spoke about engaging in the process of reflection prior to selecting a learning

goal. Ball and Cohen (1999) argue that engagement in this type of reflection is a professional

approach to learning. In general, the participants' reflections centered on the needs of their

students, their own competence in addressing these needs, and best practices to meet those needs.

The teachers sought a sense of competence with their practice. All of the participants shared that

this process of reflection was continuous throughout the entire school year. I synthesize their

explanation as engaging in a continuous process of reflection, implementation, evaluation, and reflection.

Robert spoke about how valuable the process of reflective practice is for him. He believes it is essential for his practice. He stated, "Part of me feels that given how valuable it is to take the time to reflect upon your classroom practice and your pedagogy, I almost feel like it should be a requirement" (Interview2). However, he also shared that if it is forced or mandated it may not be as effective as it is when it is organic. He shared,

> I feel it's because I'm not being forced to do it. It really allows me to look and say, wow, this really went well. On the other hand, these are some things I like to change. So it's a valuable tool for me only not in the present but moving forward into the future.
>
> (Interview 2)

He furthered his explanation by sharing that having the time and space to work on something that he identifies might help his students inspires him.

> I think it motivates me. It's paid great dividends in my classroom, more than any other PD has before. The ultimate goal I set for myself is for students to benefit. I feel more connected to my profession than I did before if that makes any sense. I think it has really inspired me. (Interview 2)

Robert shared that he was motivated by the outcomes he saw from engaging in learning that was identified through reflection on the needs of his students. He has seen benefits among his students that resulted from the opportunity to work on a learning goal that was connected to his needs. This has made him feel inspired and motivated to persist in the process.

Carol shared how ubiquitous reflection is throughout the process. She explained that since she selected a learning goal that revolves around student needs she must continually reflect

and evaluate the progress toward meeting that need. "I think reflection is everywhere. I think it's necessary to reflect frequently in order to like have a sense of whether or not it's working." (Interview 1) She articulated how this process of reflection throughout her Go Time goal setting and activities inspired her. She shared,

> I am pretty inspired and motivated by this. I've grown a lot. I have tried new things and I have seen whether or not they worked. I have gotten better at meeting the needs of my students. It has definitely increased my confidence as an educator. (Interview 2)

Susan shared how she selected a learning goal based on the needs of her students. She selected that goal by analyzing and reflecting on student data to decide on an area to focus. She stated, "I try to identify ways in which my student's progress is lacking. So whether that's classroom management, literacy, writing, speaking, or target language usage. I use my student data as a guide." (Interview 1)

Lori also spoke about reflecting on student needs when selecting a learning goal. She shared, "You look at your students and say, ok, how can I help them improve" (Interview 1). She provided an example of identifying math fact fluency as a learning goal she identified. When explaining why she selected this goal, Lori shared the reflective questions she asked herself in order to settle in on her learning topic. She stated, "I came to the realization it is not just about knowing the fact, but how are they getting to the answer? Are they counting on fingers? Are they thinking in their head?" (Interview 1). Lori's response indicates the deep dive she takes in reflecting on student understanding and using that as a guide for selecting her learning goal and activity. She seeks to understand not just what students know and do not know, but how they construct their understanding before she decides how to approach her own learning to address areas of improvement.

Amanda shared an interesting perspective regarding her process of reflection. Through the reflective process, she identified a student need that she decided to address. When discussing the outcome Amanda stated,

What I focused my learning on this year completely turned how I was taught to teach kids how to read upside down. So not only are you reflecting to come to that conclusion, but you feel like you have done your kids a disservice before! I recognized I should have been doing this all along. So there is a lot of reflection and a little guilt. (Interview 2)

Amanda shared how this revelation caused her to share her learning with her peers. She immediately brought this new understanding to her teaching team.

Collaborative Reflection

The process of reflection was not always isolated or individual. Some participants found value in collaborating with individuals during the process of analyzing student needs and identifying areas in need of growth and development. The findings support the notion that collaborative reflection may provide necessary support and be a catalyst for professional growth and motivation. This type of experience supports teachers' intrinsic motivation by providing a sense of relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2020). Meaning, by working with others an individual feels a sense of connection and an increased feeling of competence to engage in an activity. In addition, it may also promote competence to take higher levels of risk by providing a sense of emotional support (Beatty, 2000).

Christopher spoke about identifying a learning need of students in collaboration with peers within his content area. He said that he enjoys looking at data and uncovering a need within his content area. He elected to work collaboratively with his peers to improve their overall

competence in that area and in turn improve student learning. When speaking about the reflective

process, he highlighted the uncertainty of where you will go or where you will end up. He stated,

> I personally think the spirit of Go Time is you start somewhere, and who knows where
>
> you will finish. It can uncover things that you did not expect to see. Then you can end up
>
> you know, improving things that you did not think you would work on. (Interview 1)

Christopher finds comfort in not knowing if he selected a learning goal that will have a positive

outcome by the fact that he selected the goal, activities and resources with his peers. He sees the

process as a learning opportunity even if the result is not as intended. He stated,

> So we had been talking about just graphic novels and including more texts outside the
>
> textbook and some standard articles or so. So, anyway, we started to look at this graphic
>
> novel. And basically, we want to incorporate it into the curriculum. Go Time gives us an
>
> opportunity to talk about our topic a little bit more and kind of discuss a text and analyze
>
> it just as professionals even if it doesn't have a significant impact on our students.
>
> (Interview 2)

For Christopher, the opportunity to discuss student needs and instructional additions with his

peers was a valuable learning opportunity. The Go Time model provided an opportunity to

engage in this process. The outcome may have been unforeseen, but the process still resulted in

professional growth and development.

Kimberly described her experience working with teachers of her content area to review

and select companion resources for their lessons. She shared how she prefers to work

collaboratively on her learning goal. She finds herself more motivated and enjoys the peer

learning and discussion that perseveres during their time together. She stated, "I work with a

department team. We work really well together…. I never felt forced to work with others. We

decided to on our own" (Interview 1). Kimberly highlighted the reflective process that her

learning team engaged in as they exposed a need to investigate source reliability and validity

with their students. Together they partook in an exploration of lateral reading. She shared, "we

focus our thinking on what the students need and we go from there. This past year our learning

goal ended up being a significant adaption to our curriculum" (Interview 2). Kimberly's

responses reflected a feeling of satisfaction with the ability to work through the reflective process

as part of a team. She stressed how well they worked together. There was a great sense of

accomplishment that came from her learning resulting in a curriculum addition.

The Convergence of Interests and Identified Needs During the Reflection Process

A notable sentiment among the participants is the balance of conducting a needs

assessment and pursuing an interest. All participants shared that they select a goal not only based

on a reflection of student needs or areas of personal growth, but also based on interest. They

engage in self-reflection to judge interest when selecting a goal. I did not find one participant

that selected a goal solely on interest. The goal that each selected is of interest and addresses an

identified need. However, they may select one over another based on their personal interest in

the topic. For Lori, selecting a learning goal based on a level of interest was important. She

stated, "You are taking the time to better your craft and learn about something you are interested

in" (Interview 1). She found it was interest that motivated her to invest the time. She shared,

> I reflect on something that I am interested in. Maybe that is something that is new that
>
> you see all those buzzwords are on whatever types of group you are in whether it is on
>
> Twitter or Facebook, you are like, oh, that sounds interesting. That's what I want to learn
>
> more about, but also you look at your students and okay, how can this help them?
>
> (Interview 1)

She shared that she will spend a significant amount of time outside of the allotted time working on her learning goal. She stated, "I find myself reading professional books on weekends in addition to working on my learning goal during allocated school time" (Interview 1). It is interest and the connection of her learning to her students that sustains her engagement.

Julie added to the importance of interest by also explaining the process that she goes through in selecting a learning goal and activities. "I've always done it this way, backwards design. Here is where I want the kids to be, what are the steps that I am going to get-to-get them there? How will I know that they are being successful?" (Interview 1). She added, "I am not sure I would even consider it professional development. It just feels like good professional practice" (Interview 1). She explained the tremendous value that she associates with being provided the time and space to select something to pursue that can be immediately applicable to her classroom and evaluated.

Summary

The findings confirm the significant role that reflective practice plays in guiding self-directed professional development. The participants selected their learning goals and activities based on the results of critical reflection on student needs and their own knowledge base to meet those needs. What was uncovered in their responses is that they were motivated to select goals based on both interest and student needs. The outcome of this is improved practice and perceived competence. The sustained duration of this model allowed the process of reflection to be ongoing. They spoke about being able to experiment with new learning and evaluate the need to adjust their practice and their learning activities. The continuous process of reflection allowed the participants to move toward a sense of competence by focusing learning on self-identified

personal needs and the needs of their students. This was achieved by focusing their professional

development within the context of their teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Self-Directed Professional Development: Autonomous support cultivates self-determination

for learning

In order to draw upon intrinsic motivation, Deci and Ryan (2000) found that supportive

environments or conditions must be present. The types of support that foster intrinsic motivation

according to (Deci & Ryan, 2000) are not extrinsic in nature, but are supportive and nurturing.

Meaning, effective support should not be in the form of mandates, directives, or high levels of

accountability. Instead, they are supportive by providing mentoring, coaching, facilitation and an

environment that prioritizes the needs of individuals. I derived the theme of autonomous support

by collapsing the following codes: *feedback and reflection* (20 instances), *coaching and expert*

support (37 instances), *time allocation* (27 instances), *accountability* (27 instances),

environmental factors (6 instances), and *leadership* (18 instances). I collapsed these codes

because they all relate to various levels of support provided to teachers.

Participants in this study spoke about a learning environment that was supportive of their

learning and engagement in learning. These codes are reflective of environmental factors that

support or inhibit learning progress. Also considered within this theme is the role of coaching or

facilitation during the learning process. A frequently referenced code in the data is

accountability. How participants perceive and value levels of accountability was a common

consideration throughout the interviews. Examples of autonomy support within the literature

include acknowledgment of teacher perspectives, encouragement of self-initiation, providing

choice, supportive communication, and avoidance of rewards to motivate behavior (Baard et al.,

2004; Pink, 2011; Slemp et al., 2018).

Supportive conditions recognize learning is in the process and the outcome

In general, the participants collectively shared that they felt a high level of support to take risks and did not feel obligated that their learning must result in a positive outcome. The most explicit example indicated by all participants was the autonomy to select their learning goal. They felt comfortable exploring whatever learning topic they found important. In addition, they did not feel obligated to select a topic designed to meet an extrinsically supported outcome. These findings support the research on motivation in which autonomy is cited as a catalyst for creativity and innovation (Pink, 2011; Roth et al., 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2000) For example, Christopher shared a learning goal that involved sourcing and reviewing young adult novels that could be used as mentor or supporting texts in his content area. Unfortunately, the novels never ended up in his class curriculum. However, Christopher shared "I was able to select something that I saw as different from what I thought was expected. It did not work out, but I know that I found the process interesting and I learned something from it" (Interview 1). In his response, Christopher shared the learning from the process. Noted in his responses is how supportive his supervisor was with this learning process. When describing his interactions with his supervisor Christopher stated, "He makes you feel like you don't have to produce something that is the greatest Go Time project ever" (Interview 1). Christopher referenced a statement said to him, "Don't let perfect be the enemy of good" (Interview 1).

As is the case with Christopher, participants shared that the learning process was just as valuable as a measurable outcome with students. They felt supported by administration and the district to assume risks without concern that their actions will result in a predetermined outcome. Lori shared a comment that synthesizes the feedback of the participants regarding expectations of outcomes and accountability. She shared,

It feels great. They entrust in you that you are going to do something that is valuable for

yourself but also for the district and also for your classroom and the students in your

classroom. And it's, it's okay that if it doesn't work, at least you've tried it, and it's okay

that it didn't work because that's life and that's one thing we teach our students that it's

okay to make mistakes. (Interview 1)

Lori provided this response when asked questions about the support provided by the district to

select and pursue a learning goal. She spoke about the environment this model operated within

which invoked a feeling of self-confidence to take a chance or a risk. She stated, "You feel,

you're not afraid to take risks, it's okay if your outcomes aren't positive. It's about the learning

process and that this program kind of allows for that" (Interview 2). Julie shared how her

experience taking part in Go Time was supported by administration. She explained, "When I

speak with administrators about my learning goal there is a nice exchange and rapport. I can let

my guard down and I am not intimidated" (Interview 1). She feels she can openly discuss things

that are uncomfortable such as unexpected outcomes or questions that will guide her learning.

Carol spoke about the support she received from her supervisor and how it provided a

level of comfort to take risks and approach learning goals without fear. She stated, "My

supervisor always says to us that her goal is for us to try new things. If it doesn't work, scrap it

and try something else. So I feel there is room to make mistakes" (Interview 2). She continued

her response by connecting this process to student learning, "In order for me to grow there has to

be trial and error, and there has to be the support from administration in order to feel this way. I

feel like they have fostered that" (Interview 2). Carol's response indicates a leadership model

that invites this type of discourse.

The above findings indicate a learning environment for teachers in which they felt comfortable taking risks with regard to their learning goals without fear of extrinsic consequences. They saw an unanticipated outcome as a learning experience. This type of support enables teachers to present a disposition of inquiry (Ball & Cohen, 1999) and runs counter to extrinsic support of accountability and performance management (Stevenson et al., 2007).

Coaching, Expert-Support, & Facilitation

Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017) claimed that effective professional development provides opportunities for coaching and expert support with a focus on evidenced-based practices to support individual teachers' needs. In addition, findings within the literature on effective professional development indicated that people are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to pursue a task when they feel connected and supported by people they find important (Gagne, 2003; Slemp et al., 2018)

When asked more specific questions regarding the role of administrative support and oversight, the participants had varied responses. While the participants valued the support provided to have autonomy in setting their learning goals and learning activities, a few spoke about the value and importance of having someone check in and offer insight. Robert shared, "I feel every administrator or supervisor I've ever been in contact with has always been willing to help out with providing resources or providing ideas" (Interview 1). Robert expressed that the opportunities to collaborate with administrators fostered a better relationship between teachers and administrators.

Carol shared a similar sentiment as Robert regarding the value she perceived in having her supervisor a part of her process. She stated, "I know that my supervisor is always there for me. I feel like I can reach out to her for resources and she has always guided me in a direction

that's been helpful" (Interview 1). Christine discussed a meeting that she had with an administrator in January regarding her Go Time. She explained how valuable that conversation was to her progress. Unfortunately, she felt that this should have happened much sooner. Christine shared, "In my view, I would almost rather have those planned meetings prepared ahead of time, you know, like in September being told, the first Wednesday of every month you will meet to discuss your progress" (Interview 1). The findings indicate that having access to a content expert or facilitator contributes to their learning and fosters further engagement. Specifically, Christine's response indicated that there is value in developing a more defined structure in which the participants are aware in advance of scheduled check-ins. For Christine, there is value in providing some structure to these meetings by planning them early in the process and continuing them throughout the process.

In general, the participants felt that having access to an administrator or facilitator is important. They recognize that even when you can personalize the learning to your needs there is value in having someone to talk about your progress with. Informal check-ins or having access to administration to seek resources or bounce ideas was a common request among the participants. However, the quantity and scheduling of check-ins was not consistent. As the research contends, effective professional development provides opportunities for teachers to be intentional with their thinking and to receive input that facilitates reflection (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). The findings reveal that the availability of support in this model of professional development provides opportunities for teachers to receive necessary input and facilitation. The findings in this study suggest that a more purposeful approach to facilitation would be beneficial for participants who seek such support. This is important during the initial stages of goal development as well as occasionally throughout the process. The amount of support as reported

by the participants is not something that is standardized. It is dependent upon the individual and best served by constructing a design based on teacher preference instead of mandated scheduling.

Balancing Trust and Accountability

The findings of this study reveal that the participants feel a sense of trust because of the autonomy and support they receive within the Go Time model. As Deci and Ryan (2000) indicated, individuals who feel a sense of autonomy and support for their autonomy are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to pursue an interest. For the participants in this study, the trust that administrators placed on them influenced their feelings of autonomy. These findings support the research on motivation, which states that extrinsic factors such as accountability should be handled delicately and thoughtfully so as not to diminish the feeling of autonomy and motivation to pursue an activity. As Slemp et al. (2018) found, when employees see their organizational leaders as supportive of their autonomy, their job satisfaction, well-being and engagement increase.

The Go Time model requires participants to keep a log of their activity. The log consists of a short synopsis of the learning activities the teacher engaged in. Each of the participants felt that this level of accountability was not only appropriate, but also essential. Lori shared the importance of accountability by relating it to the accountability teachers place on students. "So I do believe that accountability is a huge part of it. We hold our students accountable. So we should be accountable for being able to do something on our own" (Interview 1). Lori explained that accountability reminds her that she is investing enough time on her learning goal. It helps her manage all of the competing demands on her time.

Christopher shared,

> Accountability at a macro level is helpful. I think it is important whether it is a Go Time journal, or a check-in conversation. I think what could derail Go Time is if there is micromanaging. This can make something I feel really good about become stressful. (Interview 1)

Christopher's response indicated a concern that detailed accountability may negatively influence his feelings regarding engagement in the learning process. In his example, if teachers are required to engage in meeting stringent accountability metrics, the process becomes more of a burden instead of something he enjoys engaging in.

Christine recognized that while there needs to be some accountability, she also feels that it can be counter to the autonomy provided in this model. She stated,

> I have a sense of trust from administration that they know I am working on my goal is important to me. I do believe in accountability, but trust me as a professional that I am going to do what I need to do. I am happy to share evidence of what I did when I decided to do it. (Interview 1)

For Christine, she believed it is important to report what you are doing. She recognizes that accountability of that type is important. However, she favors having autonomy with regard to most of the decisions she makes with respect to the process of learning she follows.

Amanda and Sarah both shared a perspective regarding accountability. In their opinion, accountability is not necessary for them. Both participants felt that because their learning goal is of great interest to them they would work on it no matter what accountability structures were present or not. They explained that there are always individuals who do not do what you are supposed to do. However, they felt that one should not design a professional development

program based on a few who will not engage. Instead, you should design something that favors

the majority and address the few that you need to directly. Sara stated,

> I think that depends on the teacher and what their motivation is like because I'm so into it.
>
> You could ask me to provide whatever you want because I am doing the work…. So I am
>
> sure there are teachers out there who are not using the time the way that they are
>
> supposed to be or do not care to use the time the way that they're supposed to be. I mean,
>
> this is just kind of what happens in every field, right? (Interview 1)

Amanda stated,

> I think accountability should depend on the person. I have a pretty strong work ethic. I
>
> am pretty structured with how I tackle stuff and set goals. Sometimes life does get in the
>
> way, but I end up doing what I need to do. (Interview 1)

Amanda and Sarah's responses toward accountability infer that a very structured method of

accountability may not be the right approach for everyone. Their feedback suggests designing

accountability based on the individual and their own level of self-determination to meet their

learning goal.

When responding to questions about accountability, the participants shared that

accountability is necessary. However, there is a limit to the amount of accountability. Some

participants expressed a concern regarding having too much accountability. However, what is not

clearly delineated in these findings is a sense of how to incorporate accountability. What the

study demonstrates is that how accountability is valued is dependent upon the individual and

their ability to self-regulate their learning. The participants who did not favor a great deal of

accountability perceived detailed reporting of progress as evaluative or punitive. This suggests

that it is important to collaborate with the individual to establish a level or process of

accountability that both parties view as productive and beneficial as to not impede motivation.

Providing Time

McClusky (1974) found that autonomous support must also recognize the load that

teachers carry and how that load might influence motivation. The load refers to the weight of

personal and professional responsibilities that teachers navigate each day. Recognition, empathy,

and purposeful planning for their needs can influence their motivation. The allocation of time

and the ability of teachers to direct the use of their time provides a locus of control that

influences their feelings of autonomy and motivation to pursue learning (Pink, 2011; Rotter,

1966). Autonomy is defined in the research as being in control and having agency to self-direct (

Deci & Ryan, 2008). The findings in this study indicate that autonomy over the use of time

contributes to teacher motivation to engage in self-directed learning by allowing them to

prioritize how they use their time. By decreasing the weight of "things they have to do,"

participants cited increased engagement when they did designate time for their learning goal. All

of the participants cited allocation of time provided by the district as a positive attribute of the

Go Time model. (The district provided designated professional development time to work on Go

Time learning goals and additionally made a conscious effort to eliminate or minimize other

mandated learning goals or mandated professional development.) Sarah shared,

> One of the things that we are most challenged with as educators is time, right. Time has
>
> always been one of the things that we just do not have enough of. Time for professional
>
> learning has come in different ways over the years whether we have certain Monday
>
> meetings or early dismissal days or however it is done. Go Time gives you some
>
> flexibility in how you use that time. (Interview 1)

Sarah continued her explanation by discussing how the district contributed to making time for this learning. She stated, "It's a gift that the district decided we are not going to have two grade level meetings a month. Instead we will use one of those meeting times as time for you to work on Go Time" (Interview 1). For Sarah, this allowed her to use that time to research her topic, read a book, and develop activities or whatever other learning activities she decided to do at the time.

Eight of the ten participants spoke about the flexibility of time being a positive attribute of this model. They explained how the allocated time was just that; it was allocated time that they could use to do what they needed to. It is not a requirement that they work on their Go Time during this time. Instead, they could work on whatever is pressing and then use other available time to work on their learning goal. The findings report flexibility as a significant support within the model. Julie shared, "There is flexibility to it. It is not a one size fits all. I like that you have a goal and you can get there when you can" (Interview 1). Kimberly shared,

> I didn't always only do my Go Time in the allocated time. If I had a prep and I wanted to work on it, I would do that and I would log it. If I was tutoring a kid after school at the library, I had my last prep period off I go over to the library, do it a little bit, you know, before I was tutoring, and I felt like I liked that design. (Interview 1)

The findings point to a need to reconsider the allocation of time for specific activities. Instead, considering more flexibility or autonomy over the use of time may be more influential in motivating teachers to pursue self-directed learning.

While the participants cited the flexibility regarding use of time as a positive support, a shift occurred during the 2021-2022 school year. Participants shared that in this school year the flexibility regarding the time scheduled for Go Time was restricted. Instead, participants were

required to remain on-site during the allocated times and were required to only work on their Go Time goals. All of the participants reported this as a concern. They perceived this lack of flexibility and confinement as a perceived lack of trust. They reported a negative influence on their learning, because of losing the autonomy to manage their workload with a degree of flexibility.

Sarah is a participant who is very inspired by her Go Time topic. She invests a significant amount of time outside of school hours engaging in learning activities. She finds that flexibility not only valuable, but also necessary. She is constantly managing her life and workload and finds flexibility in deciding when to lesson plan or to work on Go Time vital to her engagement. She shared, "I think it goes along with the professional trust. I think if you're asking me to do something, and I am looking to get the most out of it, like let me do it when I have the time to really put a lot into it to get the most out of it" (Interview 1). Julie shared a similar sentiment. She spoke about having her own process for engaging in Go Time. Having young kids at home and other professional responsibilities presents a challenge for time. She stated, "It would be great to meet the time requirement through what I do on the weekends or at night. I would like to be able to schedule my time based on what works best for me" (Interview 1). Julie finds it helpful to be able to use allocated time to prioritize what is pressing for her, allowing for more flexibility outside of those hours to engage in Go Time.

Christine shared that restricting Go Time to designated time after school is not ideal. She discussed that after teaching all day and dismissing your students it is difficult to transition directly to self-directed PD. She shared, "As a teacher, it is hard to let go of the things you experienced or need to do after a day of teaching" (Interview 1). Her preference is to have Go

Time be more flexible allowing for designated time after school for the work she needs to do to manage her classroom.

When participants were asked questions about how time was allocated, they identified allocation of time as an important factor. The participants stressed the importance of having dedicated time to work on their learning goal. However, what they found even more important is the autonomy to use the allocated time, as they desired. Each day they are managing a large amount of deadlines and responsibilities. They would like to be able to take the time that is afforded to them and decide how to use it. The findings suggest that the participants did not decrease the amount of time spent on their learning goal when provided flexibility. In fact, they exceeded the allocated time by utilizing time outside of the workday. The flexibility to use the designated Go Time slots for other more pressing tasks provided them a more focused and relaxed state of mind to work on their learning outside of the school hours.

The findings support the argument that supportive contextual features of a self-directed professional development model contribute to teacher motivation to engage in learning. The features described by the participants include support and facilitation, levels of accountability, and available time. Autonomy support of this type is deemed critical within the research to facilitate self-determined growth (Gagne, 2003).

Self-Directed Professional Development: Learning networks without borders

Self Determination Theory described relatedness as a feeling of connectedness to others. It is a sense of being part of a team and having support from that team (Deci & Ryan, 2008).When individuals feel a sense of connection and support from individuals they find important they are more likely to engage in an activity with those individuals (Gagne, 2003). As Deci and Ryan (2008) indicated, besides feelings of autonomy and competence, when

individuals feel a sense of relatedness they are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to pursue an activity. In general, a feeling of relatedness provides an individual with a sense of purpose and belonging.

Within the findings, I use the term "Personal Learning Network" to describe individuals that a person seeks out to connect with, with the intention of enhancing their learning. It is a way to take charge of your own professional development by seeking collaboration. I derived this as a theme by also collapsing the codes of *relatedness* (43 instances), *collaboration* (36 instances), *learning network* (9 instances), *learning labs* (10 instances), *relationship building* (2 instances), *sharing* (5 instances), and *discussion* (15 instances). These codes had a substantial presence across all of the data (see Appendix F for code definitions). Each of these codes intersects by identifying participants' responses that incorporated opportunities to work with others. In addition, the codes describe the collaborative activities that the individuals engaged in. The application of these codes provides an indication regarding a feeling of connection or relatedness participants revealed in their experience with Go Time.

The Go Time model is by design an autonomous model of professional development. Participants are empowered to self-select their learning goals and their learning activities. The expectation is that individuals may work independently or collaboratively through all phases of this process with only the requirement of maintaining a log of activities. It was their choice as to that decision. The participants were asked questions regarding their experience with collaboration or fostering connections. The goal of these questions was to understand how important and accessible opportunities for collaboration are in the Go Time model. What I found is that individuals did find opportunities to collaborate through a variety of means. In fact, they

were able to seek out connections that were beyond what they reported when discussing their

traditional professional development experiences.

Peer Collaboration

Four of the 10 participants selected a learning goal in collaboration with one or more

individuals. Three collaborated with individuals within their school and one collaborated with a

teacher in another school within the district. These participants shared the value they found in the

opportunity to pair up with individuals who self-identified the same or similar learning goal.

These participants valued the ability to work collaboratively to engage in learning activities,

share, discuss the results, and collaborate on changes of direction regarding their goal and

learning. The need to compromise and the restrictions on time required to engage in

collaboration were not discussed as a concern. Instead, each participant shared examples of how

the collaboration benefited him or her.

Robert spoke about being excited to take what he learned and share it with his peers. He

explained how having things to share with his peers that are connected to their practice enabled a

feeling of connectedness with such peers. He shared,

> If I'm able to choose something that is of interest to me, and for instance, if it's fifth grade
>
> mathematics, I feel like if I find something new I can then go and share that with the
>
> other teachers. Therefore, it fosters that connectedness. I feel I am much more connected
>
> with my colleagues over the past several years doing this than I probably had been
>
> before. (Interview 1)

He furthered his explanation by also sharing that he thinks the district should be more proactive

in fostering this collaboration. He gave an example of conducting a staff survey identifying

learning goals and introducing individuals with a common need or interest.

Christine shared how she found value in reaching out to colleagues at the beginning of a new Go Time year to see what they are considering and if it aligned to the needs that she uncovered for herself. She shared, "That's going to help me feel more confident, that's going to make this more enjoyable, or I'm going to get more out of this by just having somebody else involved with it"(Interview 1). Christine and Robert's experience demonstrate how the Go Time model fostered a sense of relatedness for them. They were able to make connections with peers, which clearly provided them not only support, but also a sense of belonging and purpose. They saw their learning as an opportunity to share what they learned in order to contribute to the organization.

As Ball and Cohen (1999) stated, there is a benefit to teachers engaging in investigation of practice. The authors highlight the emphasis on questioning, investigating, and analyzing. In addition, the findings from Beatty (2000) indicate that opportunities for teachers to reflect collaboratively may provide important emotional support and be a catalyst for professional growth. The findings of this study support the research by Ball and Cohen (1999) and Beatty (2000) by identifying the value teachers associated with opportunities to collaborate with peers in order to discuss their learning topics, progress, and outcomes.

For example, Carol's Go Time goal was a collaborative undertaking by the entire team of science educators in her school. They focused on a new instructional methodology for science in which all participants had no prior experience. She explained the benefit of reflection and discussion when working on a goal collaboratively. She shared, "I talk to my direct counterparts, and we talk about what's working and what's not and different experiences of what we're trying in our classrooms" (Interview 1). Sarah shared a comparison of working independently one year and collaboratively another year. She explained that when working alone she had a lot more

uncertainty regarding her progress and the steps she should be taking. When she worked

collaboratively on a learning goal, she had a lot more confidence in her progress and had a better

sense of direction with regard to analyzing progress and deciding learning activities. She stated,

"This year my colleagues and I have the same learning topic. I am finding where as in the past, I

would occasionally discuss my learning with colleagues, this year there is much more

discussion" (Interview 1). For Carol, having the choice to work independently or collaboratively

is a benefit of the Go Time model.

Learning Outside Your Walled Garden

Participants who elected to work independently on their learning goals also shared their

experiences connecting with and relying upon support of others. These participants shared how

they made connections with individuals outside of their schools. They spoke about seeking out

individuals with a shared interest or a level of expertise through electronic means such as social

networks and video conferencing. The findings of current research has found that social

networks are a source of both formal and informal learning (Bruguera et al., 2019; Davis, 2015;

Donelan, 2016; King, 2011; Wright, 2010). The research by Bruguera et al. (2019) found that

social media can be authentically situated in a professional field and create a learning

environment centered on the user. The findings in this study support the research on social media

as a reliable source for learning.

Amanda teaches in a school in which she does not have a teaching team in her content

area. Her learning goal focused on literacy instruction pertaining to her target population. While

she selected her learning goal and activities independently, she took initiative to make a

connection with another teacher of her grade and content area in a different building. She

explained how the Covid-19 pandemic aided in this connection by creating a comfort with

remote collaboration through video conferencing. In addition, she has sought out connections through Facebook groups. Within these groups, she is learning and sharing practices for teaching related to her learning goal. She shared,

> You are learning along with other people, even if they are not close relationships as some you know. I do not know any of these women on these Facebook sites, but you do have this feeling that you are kind of learning right along with them and there is some bonding in my case. (Interview 1)

Sarah also taught a content area in which she was the sole teacher in her building. This year, her learning goal focuses on a specific aspect of literacy instruction relevant to only her curriculum. Sarah has found value in establishing a working relationship with a peer in another school. She credits Covid-19 with simplifying this process by establishing a comfort level with remote collaboration through technology. She shared,

> Since I established a connection with a teacher in the other school, like I feel our relationship has flourished. We bounce so many ideas off each other. We are constantly sending things back and forth. Working with her in this way has made me a better teacher. (Interview 1)

Sarah credits her motivation to pursue this collaboration with being able to select a learning goal that is relevant and of interest for her. She is self-motivated to seek out a collaborator and demonstrates excitement about sharing the learning experience.

The findings demonstrate the value the participants found in the autonomy to seek out connections. It was clear from their responses that these connections contributed to their feelings of relatedness. They were able to validate their understanding of new learning, share ideas, and

resources, and overall felt that this contributed to their growth. They felt inspired and motivated through these connections.

Summary of Overall Findings

To summarize, the qualitative data gathered in this study revealed that the participants had experiences with professional development prior to Go Time that is reflective of the current research. They identified a lack of relevancy, sustainability, and the authentic connection to practice as components that were not consistent with their experiences. In addition, they shared specific episodes or experiences in which the professional development was beneficial to their learning. These experiences aligned to the research on effective professional development and unfortunately, were far and few between.

In addition, the findings of this study provided an understanding of how teachers perceive their experience taking part in self-directed professional development. An emphasis on professional trust, autonomous support, the ability to make connections with others and reflecting on practice are the themes that were most prevalent in the data. In the next chapter, I will provide a more detailed discussion of the results.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY & DISCUSSION

Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand teachers' experiences taking part in a self-directed model of professional development named Go Time. Specifically, I sought to learn how teachers describe their experiences taking part in this learning model? The research questions that guided this study are: 1) How do teachers describe their experiences with professional development prior to taking part in Go Time? a) How do teachers describe factors that influenced their learning? b) What do teachers identify as important attributes of effective professional development by reflecting on their experiences prior to Go Time? 2) What are the experiences of teachers who engage in the Go Time self-directed learning model of professional development? a) How do teachers describe attributes of the Go Time model that influenced their learning? b) How do teachers describe factors that influenced their motivation to learn by citing the basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness? The findings indicate that teachers who engaged in the Go Time model of self-directed professional development found this model resulted in feelings of professional trust & autonomy, engagement in reflective practice, autonomous support, and relatedness. The findings suggest that these factors influenced their motivation to learn. In this chapter, I will discuss these findings and its implications for future research and practice.

Participants

In order to attempt to answer the research questions, I conducted a qualitative study in which ten participants agreed to take part. The participants are all tenured teachers of grade K-8 employed by a single school district located in northern New Jersey. The participants selected for this study have average years of experience of 19.4 years with the shortest tenure being 8 years

and the longest tenure being 30 years. The participants were selected using a purposeful sampling method, which consisted of district supervisors recommending 22 teachers who they believed would be able to articulate their experience engaging in this professional development model. From the 22 possible participants, I selected a sample of 10. Four of the participants teach at the grade K-3 level, one-participant teachers at the grade 4-5 level, and five participants teach at the grades 6-8 level. One participant has 5-10 years of teaching experience, four have 11-19 years of teaching experience, and five have over 20 years of teaching experience. These participants were selected in order to provide a dispersed range of grade levels taught and years of experience. I believe that a disbursement of grade levels and years of experience contribute the most valid data for this study. Teachers of diversified grade levels are expected to identify variability in professional development needs. Having a sample of teachers whose tenure in the profession is well beyond the introductory years ensures they have had a significant exposure to professional development throughout their career. All participants are classroom teachers who took part in the district model of self-directed professional development named Go Time.

The school district selected for this study has afforded all teachers a model of professional development that is self-directed. The professional development model is named Go Time. All teachers throughout the district are provided the opportunity to self-select a learning goal and learning activities that will frame their allocated professional development time each school year. The district expects teachers to engage in reflective practice in order for them to identify a learning goal that is reflective of the identified needs of their students, as well as their own competence toward meeting that need. The district has allocated 20 hours of designated professional development time for all teachers each year to work on their Go Time learning goal. Teachers are provided the option to work independently or collaboratively and must log their

progress at the conclusion of each allocated professional development time on a shared document with their assigned administrator.

Theoretical Frame

The theoretical frames that guide this study are Knowles (1975) Theory of Andragogy and Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory. Knowles (1975) identifies intrinsic motivation as the most potent form of motivation for adult learning. Specifically, the author argued that when individuals are provided the opportunity to self-identify their learning needs they are more likely to engage in that new learning. Self-Determination Theory looked more specifically at the factors that influence an individual's intrinsic motivation or as Knowles (1980) stated an internal versus external need to learn. Deci and Ryan (2000) provided a framework for considering the factors that influence motivation and self-determination. The theory suggests that an individual's intrinsic motivation is influenced by the feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. For the purpose of this study, this theory serves a lens to determine the presence of these feelings with teachers who engage in this model of self-directed professional development.

Data Collection and Analysis

This qualitative study had two data collection periods. Each consisted of semi-structured interviews that averaged 45 minutes in length. During the first interview, the participants were asked a series of questions asking them to describe their experiences with prior professional development. They were then asked a series of questions asking them to describe their experience participating in the Go Time model of professional development. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. At the conclusion of the first interview, I wrote a case summary summarizing their responses to the questions asked. I coded the transcriptions of each interview

using both a deductive and inductive coding process. The assigned codes were analyzed and categorized to derive themes.

Prior to the second interview, participants received their case summary. I asked them to review the summary to ensure I accurately depicted their responses to the questions we discussed. At the start of the second interview, we discussed any misunderstandings. During the remainder of the second interview, I presented each participant with the themes that I had derived from the first round of interviews. I asked each participant to comment on each theme citing how these themes were aligned or misaligned to their experiences. The second round of interviews were coded and analyzed. The additional codes applied during the second interview did not contribute to changes or additions to the themes previously established. They did provide additional support for such themes.

The themes that were derived from the data and reported in the findings are: a) *Prior Professional Development Experience: Teachers sought professional development aligned to their individual learning needs*; b) *Prior Professional Development: Teachers sought actionable learning and inspiration; c) Self-Directed Professional Development: Autonomy fosters a feeling of professional trust; d) Self-Directed Professional Development: Reflective practice as a catalyst for teacher reflection and developing competence; e) Self-Directed Professional Development: Autonomous support cultivates self-determination for learning;* and f) *Self-Directed Professional Development: Learning networks without borders.*

Discussion of Findings

This study was designed to examine teacher's experience with self-directed professional development. Specifically, it sought to identify what factors contribute to a teacher's motivation to learn and sustain learning. In order to establish a contextual understanding of how the

participants perceive professional development, the semi-structured interviews asked the

participants to describe their prior experiences with professional development. The findings from

this data are reflective of the research on effective professional development (Desimone, 2011;

Garet et al., 2007; Guskey, 2002; Wei et al., 2010; Yoon et al., 2007). To be specific, the

participants shared that their prior experiences were not always relevant, lacking in

sustainability, and primarily episodic events that lacked authentic opportunities to connect the

learning to practice. These findings align to further research on teacher professional development

that identifies a ubiquitous landscape of teacher professional development that lacks

sustainability, coherence, and job-embedded approaches to professional development (Cochran-

Smith & Lytle, 1999; Wei et al., 2009).

Prior Professional Development

When discussing their prior experiences with professional development, the most

common theme among the participants was relevance. When asked about attending professional

development sessions or programs a recurring concern was the relevance of the proposed

learning to their needs. The conversations centered on relevance of the content, how connected

the learning was to their current practice and whether it was differentiated enough to account for

their own learning needs and the needs of their students.

Participants spoke about a need for professional development organizers to use a

backward design approach when planning activities. Professional development should prioritize

identifying the learning needs of the individual participants (Guskey, 2014). Mandating

attendance at professional development in which the content was predetermined without

consideration for the learning needs of the individuals resulted in a negative perception by the

participants. As Guskey (2002) argued, planning for teacher professional development focuses

on the location, participants, and the presenter and less about the needs of the participants. The teachers in this study shared experiences that support this argument.

A notable finding is how important it was to the participants that they had the ability to choose what professional development they could take part in. This finding indicates that perhaps more important than the design and the delivery of professional development is the participants' intrinsic desire to pursue the topic. As Jay and Johnson (2002) indicated, it is when teachers have a choice in selecting their learning goals or activities that they feel a sense of empowerment and a deep connection to their teaching. Therefore, purposeful consideration for the learning needs and interests of the individual learners offers the most promising potential to engage teachers in new learning.

When the participants in this study discussed their professional development experiences prior to Go Time, they spoke about attending one-off, mandated workshops that were often not relevant to their learning needs. When the topic was relevant, the format of the experience or the experiences of the participants did not always result in collaborative engagement or a heightened sense of relatedness by the participants. For example, participants in this study reported that attending a one-off workshop on use of a gradebook program or new textbook was beneficial. At times, these workshops were well-planned and offered opportunities for teachers to engage in discussion and collaboration. However, the participants in these workshops did not necessarily elect to participate in the workshop and the peers with whom they collaborated with were not self-selected. The extrinsic collaboration afforded, resulted in the active learning and collaboration losing sustainability. The teachers struggled to maintain the connections, leaving them feeling abandoned to continue the learning and implementation on their own.

In addition, the findings of this study highlight the consequences of using extrinsic factors to engage teachers in professional development. According to the participants, when presented with a mandated training and a lack of choice or selection of what to participate in, the motivation to learn felt extrinsic. Their ability to make a deep connection to the learning was not organic and instead felt more like an extrinsic pressure. The research on motivation to learn argues for teachers to feel a sense of autonomy when electing to participate in professional development and a sense of internal versus external need to learn (Knowles, 1980; Ryan & Deci, 2020). In addition, when teachers find the professional development opportunity interesting, of personal value, and important to their goals, they are motivated to pursue the learning (Power & Goodnough, 2018).

Learning over time allows for authentic connections to practice

Much of what the participants described were "one-off" (single session) professional development events that were perceived to be more like training sessions. These events were predetermined and allocated a single session of time. The consensus among the participants was that professional development of this type leaves them feeling dissatisfied and under prepared. This resulted in teachers feeling isolated from the learning without the ability to implement, reflect on, and evaluate their implementation of the learning. Lacking in their experience was a coherent professional development program that was designed to support a learning process (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone et al., 2002; Elmore & Burney, 1999; Guskey, 2002; Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

The motivation to learn and sustain learning is clearly challenging for teachers without a sustained model of professional development. The findings suggest that professional development planning includes opportunities for learning that incorporates the ability to apply

that learning to their practice over time. The lack of consideration for teacher learning needs, perceived relevance of the content and short durations, resulted in a perceived lack of value and a lack of competence to implement the new learning.

Teachers Valued Professional Development Based on Design and Content

The participants deemed that not all prior professional development experiences were ineffective. Examples of positive experiences consisted of content or topics identified through needs analysis or pre-observations of teacher needs. Experts who the participants felt had a significant knowledge base on the topic in which they believed they learned a great deal from led these experiences. Most notable was that participants perceived interactive and active learning experiences as valuable and engaging. The participants identified professional development that consisted of collaboration, discussion, current problems of practice, case studies, and teachers as the student most effective and engaging. Professional development delivered in this format provided teachers with a greater level of competence. When provided with specific takeaways that they can use immediately in their practice, there was a shared sense of excitement and competence resulting from the new learning. A few participants reported that they still used what they learned years after the experience

The feedback provided by the participants regarding their prior experiences with professional development creates an important context to this study. How teachers perceive professional development is dependent upon such prior experiences as this frames their expectations, understandings, and what they find to be of value. The findings demonstrate that the components of effective professional development as cited in the research: content focused, active learning, collaboration, job-embedded, use of models and modeling, coaching and expert-support, feedback and reflection and sustained in duration are relevant among these participants

(Desimone, 2011; Ii, 2001; Wei et al., 2010). The research on teacher professional development argued that it is when these components are present, the professional development is most effective (Darling-Hammond et al.,2017; Darling-Hammond & Wei, 2009; Desimone, 2011; Guskey, 2014; Hawley & Valli, 1999).

In summary, the participants cited that the majority of their professional development opportunities were mandated sessions that were short term in duration. These types of professional development events were rarely planned based on individual teachers' needs resulting in a concern over relevance, application of the learning to their practice, and a valuable use of their time. When participants engaged in professional development aligned to their needs and designed in a way that allowed for them to implement new learning or resources in their classroom, they reported a greater level of satisfaction and perceived value. These attributes motivated their learning and influenced their practice.

Self-Directed Professional Development (Go Time)

Darling-Hammond (2017), Guskey (2002), Desimone (2009) argued for teacher professional development that is content-based, job-embedded, sustained over time, collaborative and relevant to the individual. They argued for professional development that moves beyond the one-day or single session mandated model of professional development. Instead, they called for a sustained model of professional development that takes into consideration the personalized needs of the teachers in a format that allows for job-embedded relevance. The findings of this study demonstrate that teachers who participated in the Go Time self-directed professional development perceive this model as a more relevant and effective model than what they expressed when discussing their prior experiences. In this section, I will provide a discussion of the findings.

How Professional Trust Can Influence Learning & Growth

Creating meaningful professional development calls for teachers to have the autonomy to identify their own learning needs (Knowles, 1975; Power & Goodnough, 2018; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Smith & Reynolds, 2014). Providing teachers with the autonomy to select their professional development needs results in teachers situating their learning to address problems of practice (Ball & Cohen, 1999). The participants in this study felt a sense of professionalism and professional trust when given the autonomy to select their learning goals based on the needs of their students or their own perceived competencies. This sense of ownership resulted in autonomous motivation to pursue the learning (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Individuals who are provided ownership of their learning are more likely to not only pursue such learning, but also more inclined to address specific problems of practice that in turn influence student learning (Louws et al., 2017; Power & Goodnough, 2018).

It is evident in the findings that all teachers found value in this professional development model in part due to the feeling of autonomy that the program provided. In their descriptions, they spoke about professional development being meaningful and relevant to them. It was the freedom to select their learning plan and activities that was in stark contrast to their prior experiences The autonomy provided resonated with the participants by establishing a sense of being trusted as professionals with the capacity and skills to direct their own learning. Professional development, which favors teacher autonomy, takes a growth mindset to teacher learning, by empowering teachers to identify and facilitate their learning needs. In addition, as Bandura (1993) contended, individuals who feel a sense of trust and autonomy are most likely to feel a sense of competence when engaging in an activity.

Autonomy provides individual ownership and choice and empowers such individuals to pursue interests (Deci & Ryan 2008). Knowles (1975) supported this notion of autonomy in learning by proposing the influence of self-selection of learning and its positive influence on new learning. The feeling of autonomy by teachers was found in the literature to have a direct connection to job satisfaction (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; Warner-Griffin et al., 2018). Beyond the structural considerations of providing autonomy for teachers, the feeling of professionalism is a significant influence on teachers' motivation to learn. Across the participants, the sense of treatment as a capable professional combined with the ability to pursue a self-identified need and interest motivated their engagement in the professional development.

Ball & Cohen (1999) reported that providing opportunities for teachers to focus their learning on job-embedded topics and practices created what they referred to as a disposition of inquiry. All of the participants in this study selected a learning goal based on identified needs of their students and their own competencies to meet that need. The learning goals selected in this model required an inquiry disposition with the motivation to improve their instructional competence. When provided with the opportunity to self-select a learning goal the teachers in this study demonstrated an intrinsic motivation to pursue learning. As Knowles (1980) argued, adults are more driven by an internal as opposed to an external need to learn. In addition, participants cite this autonomy as a significant shift from the pedagogical model of professional development in which a top-down approach to professional development is prevalent (Steinke, 2012). Instead of approaching professional development as a deficit approach to teacher learning, it allows for teachers to engage in a process of reflection and inquiry in order to enact instructional change and personal growth (Knowles, 1975).

As organizers of professional development, we must consider the individual needs of teachers in the same way we ask teachers to consider such for their students. A differentiated and more universally designed model of professional development can offer teachers a locus of control and a sense of competence as they seek to address their areas in need of growth and development. This mindset requires a shift away from problematic conceptions of professionalism that consists of performance management, high levels of accountability, and value added approaches to evaluation (Stevenson et al., 2007). Instead, it requires a managerial shift to that of support, trust, and recognition of teachers as professionals who have an innate desire to help students and improve their competence and practice.

Creating a Learning Environment and Culture

My findings suggest that self-directed learning is not just dependent upon individuals having autonomy with regard to selecting their learning goals and activities. In addition, the creation of an environment that supports an individual's autonomy is essential (Pink, 2011; Roth et al., 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Power & Goodnough (2018) argued that teachers are more willing and motivated to engage in learning when the environment that they work in is supportive of teacher competence and autonomy.

Among the participants, there was a shared sense of comfort with taking risks. They cited the environment of their schools and the district that supported this disposition. The findings indicated a sense of trust, allocation of time, access to support, and a commitment to autonomous learning were contributing factors to participants' motivation to pursue learning goals. As a result, the participants see the Go Time model of professional development as an exercise in inquiry, growth, and learning. While they selected a learning goal based on perceived student needs, they clearly do not feel a sense of responsibility that their learning actions are required to

meet that need. Instead, they see it as an exploration of learning designed to further their knowledge, skills, and strategies in order to measure its effectiveness in their practice. Therefore, the autonomous support is evidence of support of what Ball and Cohen (1999) argued is a disposition of inquiry. The author's stated, "…they would have to learn to combine intellectual aggressiveness and a willingness to take risks with humility about the incompleteness and uncertainty of their own ideas" (p. 13).

These findings hint at a preferred leadership style in which autonomous support is a focus. A school administrator who leads in this fashion recognizes the plight of the teacher, encourages self-initiation, provides choice and input and avoids rewards or sanctions as a method of motivation (Deci, Olafsen, & Ryan, 2017; Slemp et al., 2018). When the participants spoke about their interactions with administrators they spoke about informal check-ins, conversations around progress, facilitation of learning, and a sense of peer-to-peer learning. As Deci and Ryan (2008) describe, autonomous support that provides an individual with a sense of self-regulation of their own actions and allows for a sense of connectedness and relatedness fosters internal motivation rather than external.

While teachers reported prior professional development as being mostly mandated, top-down workshops, those same teachers were self-selecting the learning activities they engage in for the Go time model. Rather than being held to a scheduled time, the Go Time model is fluid. Participants reported a great deal of flexibility provided with regard to when they engage in the learning activities. In this model, the district allocated specific days and times that were set aside for Go Time activities. However, participants reported that the use of those particular times have for the most part been at their discretion. This allows teachers to prioritize available time for what is most pressing to them. In turn, they can focus on Go Time learning when they feel most

prepared and energized to do so. For example, participants spoke about using allocated

professional development time during the school day to work on pressing classroom or grading

needs. This allowed time and space to listen to a new podcast on Saturday or read a book aligned

to their learning goal in the evening and weekends. Autonomous support of this nature

recognizes the load that teachers carry and its influence on their motivation. McClusky (1974)

recognized how individuals seek to balance power and load as a factor contributing to adult

learning. He argued that when an individual feels a sense of power in managing the load placed

upon them they will be more likely to engage in new learning and activities.

In addition, the participants acknowledged that having choice over how they use

allocated time contributed to their learning by providing a "flow" to their work and a more

internal locus of control (Lefcourt, 1966; Pink, 2011; Rotter, 1966). The ability to manage the

use of their time caused the participants to feel like the Go Time model was internally controlled

(Rotter, 1966). In contrast, when the allocated time was restricted the control was perceived as

more externally motivated. In that, they were felt less in control and more confined to

completing a mandated task. To them the autonomous learning started to feel like an act of

compliance. The findings in this study indicate that the allocation of time is beneficial when

provided autonomy with regard to the use of that time.

The design of self-directed professional development must place consider the allocation

of time and the duration of the opportunity. The findings demonstrate that the time allocated in

this model contributed to the teacher's growth and motivation in several ways. The time that this

model provided *allowed* teachers to engage in research in an attempt to develop competence with

their practice. It provided time to collaborate and develop deep relationships that contributed to

their learning. Lastly, the time afforded allowed for a sustained learning initiative with space for trying new ideas and reflecting on their outcomes.

Collaboration can be organic and not prescribed

Self Determination Theory stated that individuals are more willing to grow and change when they feel a sense of relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The authors described relatedness as a sense of belonging and connection to others, to be part of a group and to develop intimate relationships (Deci & Ryan, 2020). When individuals feel that their actions are developing a feeling of relatedness, they are more intrinsically motivated to engage in that activity, to learn, and to grow (Jansen in de Wal et al., 2014a; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Van den Broeck et al., 2010). Klassen, Perry & Frenzel (2012) cited empirical research stating when teachers experience feelings of relatedness they were more engaged and less physically exhausted. In addition, the research on effective professional development is consistent in arguing that opportunities for collaboration contribute to learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2011; Garet et al., 2007; Yoon et al., 2007). The findings validate the positive impact of collaboration, and how it resonates with participants' feelings of connectedness or relatedness.

The findings suggest that the Go Time model of self-directed professional development affords participants opportunities to foster a sense of connection to others and their professional field. Participants reported that having the choice to select your learning goal and activity allows for the choice to work independently or in collaboration with others. The collaboration reported by the participants ranged from collaborative goal setting, sharing of learning outcomes and general discussion with peers, expansion of their personal learning network, and relationship-building with their administrators.

All participants in this study reported a feeling of connection fostered because of this learning process. Those connections were both internal and external to the schools that they currently work in. The types of collaboration that was described moves beyond conventional talk about content or classroom experiences. The types of interactions pointed to a focus on inquiry. When teachers seek out individuals to discuss their learning and its impact on their practice they report a heightened sense of meaning to their work (Cochrain-Smith & Little, 1993, Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993).

A notable finding is how participants aspired to expand their personal learning network by seeking out connections to individuals that are not present in their schools or a part of their daily interactions. Participants in this study exercised their sense of autonomy and interest in their learning by making connections with teachers of relevant content areas in other district schools or within the professional teaching community. The literature has reported that when teachers are afforded the opportunity to work together to plan, design and evaluate instructional materials they inevitably work together at becoming better teachers (Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Wei, 2009; Gulamhussein, 2013; Marshall, 2012; Owen, 2014; Wenger, 1998b).

The Go Time model of professional development offers participants an opportunity to seek out individuals with a shared interest and needs. As they reported, this resulted in sustained collaboration, motivation to learn, and the deepening of relationships. Teachers who engage in a sustained community of learning are more likely to engage in a process of inquiry, experiment with new learning, and discuss the outcomes with their community of learners (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Gulamhussein, 2013; Owen, 2014).

Participants in this study valued the opportunity to make connections with individuals to foster their learning and engagement. They also spoke about the desire to collaborate at the beginning stages of goal planning. It is at this stage where collaboration with peers can inspire the identification of learning goals. Perhaps a more purposeful approach to sharing at this stage of the professional development program would contribute to an increase in motivation by fostering connections between teachers.

What is evident from the findings is that providing teachers with autonomy to pursue a self-identified learning goal in an environment with autonomous support does not result in isolation. Instead, teachers demonstrate a motivation to seek out connections and engage in collaborative inquiry.

Reflective Practice & Competence

The findings of this study indicate autonomy, competence, relatedness, and autonomous support are significant factors that influence participant motivation to learn. In addition to these factors, the findings demonstrate that when tasked with the self-directed Go Time initiative, the participants focus their learning on developing their own competence in an identified area of student and personal need. The participants engaged in reflective practice in order to determine their learning goals and when deciding on adaptations to make to their learning activities. This allowed for their professional development to be relevant, job-embedded, and sustained over time (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2011; Jaquith et al., 2010; Wei et al., 2009). Dewey (1938) argued that teacher reflection is careful and persistent consideration of practice. He explained reflection as an exercise in imagination and training individuals to think creatively (Platt, 2014). Schon (1983) claimed that reflection is a required skill for educators. The practice of critically evaluating the learning needs and outcomes of their students is what should drive a

teacher's pursuit of new learning and professional growth. Therefore, teacher reflection is cited in the research on professional development as an essential component to teacher learning (Bugg & Dewey, 1934a; Cornish & Jenkins, 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2011; Garet et al., 2007; Jones & Jones, 2013; Liu, 2015; Schon, 1983).

The participants engaged in a reflective cycle. This began with individual, and in some cases, collaborative reflection of student learning needs and their own perceived competencies. The cycle described by all participants extends beyond reflection of learning needs and continues through a process of active application of the learning and reflection of outcome. The process they described is sustained and fluid. The process of reflection is complex and dependent upon the individual taking a critical lens to their practice and their self (Dewey, 1938; Mathew et al., 2017; Schon, 1983; Steinke, 2012). Mathew et al. (2017) stated,

> A person who reflects throughout his or her practice is not just looking back on past actions and events, but is taking a conscious look at emotions, experiences, actions, and responses, and using that information to add to his or her existing knowledge base and reach a higher level of understanding. (p.127)

The findings in this study revealed teacher learning goals focused on specific problems of practice or self-identified areas of teacher need for growth. Whether it was a need to address a lack of collaboration skills among students because of remote learning, a new approach to address below grade level reading skills, or integrating multisensory activities to engage students in learning, the learning goals focused on students and were a result of reflection. In contrast to mandated, top-down professional development, self-directed professional development establishes a "why" of learning leading to a heightened motivation to persevere and sustain learning (Bugg & Dewey, 1934; Schon, 1983; Van Eekelen et al., 2006).

Participants reported that engagement in this self-directed model of professional development allowed them to focus their learning on efforts to improve their practice to meet the needs of their students. This resulted in a sense of competence and contributed to their motivation to persist in learning. As Power & Goodnough (2018) stated, competence is not just attainment of a specific skill, but is instead a sense of competence. When individuals feel a sense of competence, they are more willing and likely to engage in or complete a task (Collie, 2017; Deci & Ryan, 2001; Jansen in de Wal et al., 2014b; Pink, 2011; Power & Goodnough, 2018). It can be argued that when the genesis of professional development is founded in reflective practice, a viable outcome is a teacher who is an autonomous and self-directed professional (Jasper, 2003).

Contributing to the literature on self-directed professional development

The findings contribute to the research on self-directed professional development by identifying an approach that was constructed as a district initiative. A segment of the literature on self-directed professional development focuses on specific activities that can be self-directed and its influence on teacher learning. Examples include: online learning modules; participant action research; and learning through social media (Kabilan, 2004; Karlsson et al., 2014; Koukis & Jimoyiannis, 2019; Morales, 2016; Visser et al., 2014; Yıldırım, 2020). In addition, literature regarding the rationale for self-directed professional development is also prevalent (Brown et al., 2001; Jansen in de Wal et al., 2014a; Louws et al., 2017b; Steinke, 2012). This study expands upon this existing knowledge by examining the influence of a self-directed model that was mandated for all teachers within a district and is rooted in reflective practice. In addition, the findings also articulate specific attributes of the environment that contributed to teacher learning.

Contribution to the literature on adult learning and self-determination for learning

The findings of my study are supportive of Self-Determination Theory and its focus on intrinsic motivation. The participants cited feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as contributing to their motivation to learn. In addition, this study expands upon the research of this theory by examining the significant role of autonomy support and reflective practice. These two attributes of the Go Time model are cited throughout the findings as contributing to participants' satisfaction and motivation. In addition, the findings point to an overall sense of purpose when engaging in this model. These findings align to contemporary research on intrinsic motivation including the work of Pink (2011). Lastly, the prevailing research on Self-Determination Theory argued that while feelings of autonomy and competence are important for intrinsic motivation, a sense of relatedness is not consistently called for. The research is mixed regarding how significant relatedness is to motivation compared to the latter. This study provides an example of relatedness being a significant contributor to teacher motivation to engage in self-directed learning.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

An autonomous learning approach to teacher professional development offers a differentiated style to teacher professional development that recognizes teachers as individuals capable of self-regulating their own learning. The findings in this study demonstrate that participants afforded this opportunity engage in the process of reflective practice and select learning goals that are directly connected to student learning needs. The findings have also demonstrated that self-directed professional development requires a commitment to ensuring an environment of autonomous support. In that, how does the organization in which the teacher practices provide a sense of comfort, encouragement, and motivation to engage in self-directed

learning? The findings have indicated a diversified appreciation for collaboration, accountability, allocation of time, managing teacher perceived load, and self-directed vs. expert led professional development. Embarking on an exploration of this type of professional development model requires a great deal of reflection on a school's community, culture, resources, policies, and leadership.

Foundational to this model is a teacher's ability to engage in reflective practice. How teachers critically evaluate the needs of their students and their own competencies in relation to those needs is what drives the establishment of a meaningful learning goal. If left alone to engage in this process, there can be an inherent risk. In particular, are all teachers aware of any bias that exists in their thinking? How might that bias influence their assessment of student needs when selecting a learning goal? Perhaps, autonomous learning would benefit from external facilitation in order to challenge teachers' thinking and offer insight into their students, their practice, and their preconceived understanding of such. For example, if a teacher has an implicit or explicit bias that students of color by nature achieve at a lower standard, they may not prioritize these students' learning during the reflective process. When designing a professional development program of this type, planning to support teachers during the reflective process may aid in mitigating any bias and result in a more inclusive learning goal. This type of support would begin in the prior year and could be an outcome of administrative observations of practice, review of student data, and discussions around problems of practice.

Consideration of the school climate and culture is an additional implication for practice. Creating a learning environment that is loyal to autonomous learning requires a commitment to supporting such learning. An audit of how the school or district approaches selecting and prioritizing professional development, the allocation of time, and the overall confidence they

demonstrate in teachers will influence the perception of this type of model. The findings in this study and the research that supports it have shown a restrictive approach to managing teachers' time and choice in professional development function as extrinsic motivators to learning. These types of motivators inhibit teachers' motivation to engage in meaningful learning.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to teacher professional development. Whether it is a mandated workshop, Community of Practice or self-directed professional development, this study has argued that teachers have varied preferences for each. Schools are environments with individuals who bring with them diversity in years of experience, knowledge, and learning needs. The value they place on professional development is equally diverse. However, what remains consistent is that the professional development they participate in is meaningful and relevant. This study has argued the value of teacher autonomy towards professional development. However, the findings also demonstrate that expert-led and one-off workshops can be necessary and valued by teachers. Therefore, when planning a professional development program, consideration for such differences is important. Perhaps, a program that conducts a needs assessment of teachers can supplement self-directed professional development with a menu of expert-led professional development opportunities that teachers may elect to participate in if they deem them relevant and meaningful.

Self-directed professional development is an important consideration for teacher education. When preparing aspiring teachers, a program that includes theory and application regarding reflection and reflective practice is relevant. Specifically, by exposing teacher education students to critical reflection of self and of practice, we can enable a mindset capable of self-directing learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

This study contributes to the research on self-directed professional development by examining the Go Time model of professional development that is specific to the School District of the Chathams. This is a high achieving district located in a wealthy suburb of New Jersey. Students in this district consistently exceed national and international standards of student achievement and the district itself is recognized nationally as a high performing public school district. It can be generalized that students in this district are motivated learners, which may in turn motivate and elevate teachers' desire to continue pursuit of their academic success. I recommend a continuation of this research in more varied contexts in order to examine teacher perception within more academically diversified school districts.

In addition, this qualitative study examined teachers' perceptions of a self-directed professional development model utilizing 10 participants. While the results of this study provide a meaningful examination of their perceptions, the sample is purposeful. Additional research based on quantitative measures identifying the influence of this model on teacher motivation to learn may allow for a more generalizable understanding of its effectiveness and limitations.

Lastly, the theoretical frames that guide this study are the adult learning theory of Andragogy (Knowles, 1975) and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Knowles argued for learning opportunities that are self-directed and experiential to an individual. According to Knowles, it is when these conditions are met that learning becomes intrinsic. Deci and Ryan (2008) expanded upon this understanding of intrinsic motivation by citing the feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as drivers of intrinsic motivation. In this study, I applied the theories to participation in a self-directed model of professional development. According to Deci and Ryan (2008), an individual's predisposition toward self-regulation is an

additional factor that influences their intrinsic motivation. While the focus of this study was not to determine each participant's disposition towards self-regulation prior to engaging in this study, recognition of such may have an influence on the results. An individual who has a predisposition to self-regulation may find self-directed professional development as a more inviting and positive experience. Whereas, individuals who do not have a disposition toward self-regulation may not have that experience. Therefore, additional research on this model may benefit from selecting a sample of individuals who have had their disposition towards self-regulation measured using a research-based scale. Examining individual teachers' perceptions of self-directed learning may offer additional contributions to the research when considering their prior disposition towards self-regulation.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Teacher professional development is complex and a compelling area of focus in academia and in practice. Elevating teachers as professionals in order to meet the varied needs of students, changes in policies and learning expectations and a changing society is not a prescriptive process. It requires a fundamental understanding of not only academic research, but also an appreciation for the individuals who embark on this journey of preparing students to be productive contributors to society. This study contributes to the knowledge base of teacher professional development by presenting a self-directed model that recognizes teachers as professionals who are capable of reflective practice and self-regulated learning. Teachers spend each day making countless decisions regarding their lessons, communication with students, and enacting learning activities. Whether purposefully or subconsciously, teaching requires reflecting in practice and on practice. Teachers approach each lesson and each school day with variations of knowledge and experiences in relation to their peers. Therefore, learning needs are not

universal and instead must be individualized and personalized. The factors that influence teacher motivation to persist in ensuring their own learning and student learning are equally varied as the life experiences they bring with them are not generalizable but are personal. These life experiences influence their learning needs and their perceptions.

A self-directed model of professional development has the potential to mitigate the complexity of designing professional development of a diversified teaching staff. Shifting teacher learning from a top-down, deficit approach, and instead favoring autonomous learning can accomplish this. This type of disposition towards teacher professional development has the potential to increase competence, feelings of relatedness, and temperament of continuous reflection. This study argues that when these factors persist within an environment that supports it, teachers may be intrinsically motivated to learn, grow, and sustain learning.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Message to Supervisors

Dear ….

I am requesting your assistance regarding a study I am conducting through Montclair State University regarding effective professional development. This study seeks to better understand the experiences of teachers taking part in a self-directed model of professional development. The focus of this study will be the Go Time professional development model being implemented in the School District of the Chathams.

 In order to select an appropriate sample for this study I am asking each district supervisor to nominate two teachers in grades preK-8 to be considered for this study. One nomination should be a teacher that you believe the Go Time Self-Directed Professional Development Model was a good fit for. The second nomination should be a teacher who you believe the Go Time Self-Directed Professional Development Model was not a good fit for. I will select a sample of 7-12 teachers from your nominations to conduct this study. Participants selected for the study will remain confidential. You will not be informed who was selected for this study. I will provide some guidance below in order to help you determine the criteria for fit.

Consideration Criteria

- A teacher for whom you deem the Go Time Model a good fit may meet all or most of the following

  - The teacher was able to identify a relevant learning goal.

  - The teacher selected learning activities and resources that aligned to the goal.

- o The teacher utilized the reflective process by identifying a goal, engaging in activities to reach the learning goal, evaluating progress and making adjustments to their learning plan if/when needed.

- o The teacher shared positive feedback regarding the learning model, their progress towards meeting their learning goal, or specific learning activities.

- A teacher for whom you deem the Go Time Model to not be a good fit may meet all or most of the following:

  - o The teacher was not able to identify a valid learning goal.

  - o The teacher struggled to engage in activities to assist in meeting the goal.

  - o The teacher struggled to find relevant resources to assist in meeting his/her learning goal.

  - o The teacher was not able to connect the professional learning to the context of their practice or needs.

  - o The teacher expressed negative feedback regarding the learning model, their progress towards meeting their learning goal, or specific learning activities.

Please utilize this form to submit your nominations.

Thank you for your help in identifying potential participants for this study. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

Doug Walker

APPENDIX B

Participant Survey

Go Time Experience Survey

CONSENT FORM

Please read below with care. You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to

other people before you consent to be in this study.

Title: Reconsidering common professional development and its impact on teacher learning: An

examination of a self-directed model of teacher professional learning

Study Number : IRB-FY21-22-2297

Why is this study being done? The purpose of this study is to understand how a self-directed

professional learning initiative named GO Time influences teachers' learning, motivation, and

ability to reflect on practice. The study seeks to understand teacher perceptions of this model of

professional development. The findings of this study will contribute to the research on effective

models of professional development for teachers.

What will happen while you are in the study?

You will complete a background questionnaire that includes questions about you as well as open-

ended questions about your GO Time experience. In addition, you will be asked to participate in

two interviews that will take approximately one hour. The interviews can be in- person at the

location of your choosing, through telephone, Google Meet or Zoom video conference. You can

select your preferred medium for the interviews. In each interview you will be asked to discuss

your prior professional development experience, your past experience with Go Time, and your

current Go Time work.

Time: It should take no more than 20 minutes to complete the survey. You can stop the survey at

any time and restart by following the same link as long as you are using the same device and do

not click on "done." Each interview will take approximately one hour.

Risks: No study is without risks. The risks associated with this study are minimal and common to

those you experience as part of your professional practice. During this study you will be asked

questions regarding your professional development experience. This will include questions that

may have you provide thoughts or opinions about the school district, the school you work in, or

administrators who directly or indirectly supervise you or the professional learning program in

the district.

Doug Walker is currently an Assistant Principal at Chatham High School. Although he holds a

leadership position in the high school his interest in this study is for research regarding effective

professional development. This means that interactions with him will be confidential and viewed

as data for the research study and will not be associated in any way with your employment status

or evaluations. Your participation in this study will be kept confidential by the researcher.

Some of the data will be collected using the Internet. There are no guarantees on the security

of data sent on the Internet. Confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the

technology used. The Google Drive application used to administer the survey and store interview

content will be housed within the Google Drive account of the researcher associated with

Montclair State University. The data will be password protected.

Benefits: You will have an opportunity to reflect on your professional development experience

and motivation for continued professional learning. This may help you to better understand your

practice. You may feel a sense of personal pride by contributing to research in their professional

field. Findings from this study will inform the field of education, and teacher professional

development in particular by helping researchers and teacher educators understand how self-

directed professional learning functions and the motivational outcomes of this form of

professional learning. Such understandings can be used to guide policy decisions and

recommendations for professional practice.

Who will know that you are in this study? Only Doug Walker {Lead Researcher) will know that

you are in this study. You will not be linked to any presentations or publications. We will use

pseudonyms in place of your name in any presentations or publications of the research findings.

We will keep who you are confidential according to the law. The data will be securely stored in a

password protected digital format. We will make every effort to keep who you are confidential.

You should know that New Jersey requires that any person having reasonable cause to believe

that a child has been subjected to child abuse or acts of child abuse shall report the same

immediately to the Division of Youth and Family Services.

Do you have to be in the study? You do not have to be in this study. You are a volunteer! It is

okay if you want to stop at any time and not be included in the study. You do not have to answer

any questions you do not want to answer. Your employment will not be affected by your

participation or non-participation in this study. No one but the researcher will know that you

elected to participate or not participate in this study.

Do you have any questions about this study? Phone or email Douglas Walker,

walkerd3@montclair.edu, 973-722-6681, or faculty sponsor, Katrina Bulkley, at

bulkleyk@montclair.edu or 973-655-5167.

Do you have any questions about your rights as a research participant? Phone or email the IRB

Chair, Dr. Dana Levitt, at 973-655-2097 or reviewboard@montclair.edu .

This study has been approved by the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board,

IRB-FY19-20-1843

Thank you for your time. Sincerely,

Douglas Walker

Doctoral Candidate/ Montclair University Assistant Principal / Chatham High School

Phone: 973-722-6681 (mobile) dwalker@chatham-nj.org

Name:

Do you agree to participate in this study?

Mark only one oval.

o   yes

o   No

Experience with Go Time

Reflecting on the last time you took part in Go Time, how did you select your Go Time topic?

Mark only one oval.

o   I selected it on my own as a result of reflection on practice

o   I was directed to work on this topic by an administrator

o   I selected a topic that is a district initiative

o   I followed what my peers are doing

I was provided adequate time to focus on my Go Time topic.

Disagree………………………..Agree

1   2   3   4   5

The district minimized additional professional learning or mandated learning activities in order

to make time and space for my Go Time learning goal.

Disagree………………………..Agree

1   2   3   4   5

My Principal minimized additional professional learning or mandated learning activities in order to make time and space for my Go Time learning goal.

Disagree………………………..Agree

1   2   3   4   5

This model of teacher professional learning differs from other professional development in which I have participated in that:

Check all that apply.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
The learning was individualized and personalized					
It was connected to my practice					
It was sustained over time					
It resulted in changes to my practice					
I enjoyed professional learning					
It stimulated my					

learning interests					

Which Go Time Structures (s) did you participate in this year? Check all that apply.

o   Learning Labs

o   Independent Time

o   Collaborative Time

In which areas did your Go Time focus? Check all that apply.

o   Assessment

o   SEL

o   Reflective Practice

o   Discipline

o   Content Area

o   Instructional Practice

o   Lesson Design

Other:

Participating in Go Time Professional learning:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Motivated my learning					
Improved culture and climate in my					

school/department					
Fostered effective collaboration with peers					
Empowered me as a learner					
Fostered self-reflection					
Made me think of professional development in a more positive way					
Made me happy					

Would you recommend this professional learning model? Mark only one oval.

o   Yes

o   No

o   Other:

How does the Go time initiative differ from other professional development initiatives in which

you have been a participant? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this initiative?

What challenges have you found regarding this professional development initiative?

Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your experience with Go Time?

Demographic Information

Race/ethnicity: Please choose a category you feel most closely represents your race/ethnicity.

You may select more than one option or self-describe.

Check all that apply.

o   African American

o   Anglo-American (Caucasian)

o   Asian-American

o   Hispanic-American

o   Native American

Other:

Please describe your gender:

How old are you?

Education: Please indicate the highest level of education you have attained from the list below.

Mark only one oval.

o   Bachelor's Degree

o   Bachelor's Degree plus some graduate level courses

o   Master's Degree

o   Master's Degree plus some graduate level courses

o   Doctoral Degree

What school do you currently teach at? Check all that apply.

o   Chatham Middle School

o   Lafayette Avenue School

o   Milton Avenue School

o   Southern Blvd School

o   Washington Ave School

What grade level do you currently teach? Check all that apply.

o   Elementary (Pre-K-3)

o   Elementary (4-5)

o   Middle Level (6-8)

Other:

What content area(s) do you currently teach? Check all that apply.

o   All core subjects Art

o   English / Language Arts

o   World Language D Mathematics D Music

o   Physical Education

o   Science

o   Social Studies

o   Special Education

Other:

How many years have you been teaching?

How many years have you been teaching in the School District of the Chathams?

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

Interview 1 – In this interview we will discuss your general reflections on PD, and your experience with Go Time. You may skip questions and leave the interview at any time. The audio and/or video of this interview will be recorded.

1. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the term professional development?

2. Is there such a thing as a "typical" professional development experience? What makes it typical?

3. Describe a professional development experience that you have had that was positive? Describe the experience. What factors contributed to the value that you perceived from taking part in it?

4. Describe a professional development experience that you have had that was not positive? Describe the experience. What factors contributed to the value that you perceived from taking part in it?

5. If you could design your professional development experience for the year with unlimited resources, what would it consist of?

   a. How would it be structured?

6. Over the past "X" years you have participated in a self-directed model of professional development named Go Time. If you were to describe this model of professional development to a peer in another district, how would you describe it?

   a. How has this experience differed from prior professional development experiences?

    b.   What are the strengths of this model of professional development? What are the

         weaknesses of this model?

    c.   What factors contributed or inhibited your progress?

    d.   Did the district do anything that increased time to engage in this learning?

7. Talk about the process of determining a learning goal? How did you decide on a goal?

    a.   Who or what influenced that decision?

    b.   What role did reflection on practice play in this process?

8. How did you evaluate your progress or your outcome?

    a.   Did their learning goal shift? Why or why not?

9. Did you work collaboratively with anyone? Did you receive any modeling, coaching or

   facilitation?

10. What learning activities did you engage in? How often and when did you engage in this

   learning? Why and how did you select learning activities**?** Did anyone assist you with

   that decision?

    a.   What activities were most beneficial to your learning?

    b.   What activities were not beneficial?

11. Did you attend any learning labs? If yes, were they aligned to your learning goal or in

   addition to? How did participation in the learning labs contribute to your growth?

12. Do you feel that having the opportunity to collaborate with peers is important to learning?

13. Did anyone provide you feedback or direction along the way? Did you seek help in

   determining resources, activities, or reflecting on progress and outcomes? Was feedback

   important or lacking?

14. When you were introduced to Go Time, there was a lot of freedom to self-select a learning goal and learning activities. How did that make you feel? What excited you about this? What concerned you? Did your perception of this freedom change over time? How?

15. Is there anything in particular about this process that you think should be changed?

16. What influence, if any, has your learning experience had on your classroom practice and your overall competence as a teacher? Did you learn anything about yourself, your teaching or about learning?

17. Did you receive feedback along the way or any specific support that guided your learning?

18. How did you evaluate your progress and decide if adjustments needed to be made?

19. Did you work with or discuss your learning goals, activities or progress with anyone?

20. Were there any unplanned opportunities to discuss your learning? Explain.

21. How did that process assist or inhibit your learning?

22. What factors regarding the school environment do you feel were important to or inhibited your learning?

23. Do you have any recommendations for changes that could make the environment more conducive to learning?

APPENDIX D

Sample Case Summary for Participant Carol

<u>Prior Professional Development</u>

Carol explained that most of the professional development she attended in the past felt more like "training sessions". They were typically based on a defined topic or resource. For example, a new textbook or a new technology skill.

Many of the PD sessions were not sustained over time. They were single events. They were not connected to the professional development plans that she had. The PD plans were tailored to her classroom and classroom instruction. Instead, the PD she attended was mostly prescribed topics that everyone must participate. She shared that when she was an early career teacher, they were helpful. However, they are not as beneficial now because they are not personalized to the needs of her students or her practice to meet the needs of her students.

When she describes a positive PD experience, she described a series of workshops she attended over the summer that focused on science instruction. These sessions were extremely interactive. They were tasked with putting on their "student hats" and "teacher hats" The fact that it was active in this way made it engaging. The ability to view the learning through the lens of a student and teacher was very practical. This contributed to her competence as a teacher and got her excited to implement this learning in her classroom. This mode of PD was in contrast to her prior experience because she did not feel that she would leave most other PD sessions with so many deliverables.

<u>Go Time Described:</u>

Carol describes Go Time as "Self-directed". You get to choose what you want to focus on in your classroom. It is a reflective practice. It is time to focus on an area of instruction that you may not typically have time to focus on. You are provided time to research, discuss, implement and reflect.

She shared that this feels good. It is important to have a choice. We apply this with students and should also apply this with teachers. She shared that it is motivating for her. She says she is naturally motivated, but this gives her extra motivation. What she values is being provided the dedicated time to work on something she is passionate about. She sees it as time devoted to improving her competence as a teacher.

The process can be overwhelming. It requires a lot of good planning. She finds value in her supervisor's support. This includes being able to share resources. She thinks that when you start you have to develop a solid plan.

Collaboration/ relatedness is essential. She feels lucky that where she works there is a lot of support. She feels like she can lean on peers and supervisors to assist her through the process. In her opinion, this is essential to find success.

The reflective process is attributed to the fact that this model of PD is sustained over time. It allows you to constantly reflect on progress and outcomes. It differs from more traditional PD that is not sustained in this way.

Carol believes that accountability is important. It is important to have those check ins. As much as you are on your own, you don't have to be. You can choose to receive support along the way. She also believes that positive outcomes are not required. She believes this model allows you to make adjustments and not stress out about outcomes. It is okay for things to not work. She relates this to the messages we provide to students.

APPENDIX E

Interview 2 Questions

1. I shared with you an interview summary from our last interview. My goal with that summary was to encapsulate some of your responses to my questions. Do you believe that it captures your responses accurately? Is there anything you would like to add or discuss?

2. After reviewing the all of the first interviews of the participants in this study, I have identified a few categories or themes that emerged within the data. I would like to share each of these with you and ask if you could comment on them in relation to your own experience with Go Time.

   a. Participants report feeling professional trust.

   b. Participants report autonomous support is influential to their learning

      i. Autonomous support refers to environmental factors that support choice and the pursuit of interests, allocated time, resources, and other attributes that support the learning process.

   c. Participants report feeling intrinsically motivated to learn when taking part in Go Time.

   d. Participants report that reflective practice is an essential component of Go time and contributes to the development of their competence as a teacher.

   e. Autonomy

      i. How does autonomy influence your learning in Go Time?

   f. Competence

       i. Competence is defined as people's desire to gain mastery of tasks and learn different skills.

      ii. How does a feeling of competence relate to your experience with Go Time?

    g. Relatedness

       i. Relatedness is a sense of belonging or attachment.

      ii. What influence has your participation in Go Time had on your feeling of relatedness? What types of connections have your fostered?

3. What is your Go Time Goal this year?

4. How did you go about selecting this goal? Why is it important to you?

5. How do you expect to assess your progress or the outcome?

6. What activities are you engaging in to meet your goal?

APPENDIX F

Code Book

Note: * Deductive Code

Code	Definition	Example
Accountability	The act of ensuring an individual can meet expectations or justify actions.	I do believe accountability is a huge part of it. We hold our students accountable. So we should be accountable for being able to do something on our own.
Active Learning*	Active engagement with course materials. Ex: discussion, role play, or other methods	So people have more of a voice, they're more active where something can come from it instead of just okay now, sit down and listen, but then also as a follow up to actually see how if I were to be like a leader, to see how these concepts that we've discussed, are looking in the classrooms.
Adapt	To make something suitable for your own use	I personally think the spirit of Go Time is you start somewhere, and who knows where you'll finish.
Application	Integrating new learning into practice.	You get to live with it and try it and see what works and see what didn't.
Autonomy*	The ability to make your own decisions.	I get to choose whatever I want to focus on.

Choice	Selecting or making a decision.	I feel as though I was given the option to choose.
Differentiated	Designed to meet the individual needs of participants	There's a flexibility to it, so that it's not one size fits all, and that I do appreciate
Freedom	Having the right to act, think or speak you one wishes	I do like that piece that we kind of get to pick and choose what we want to learn about.
Personalized	Designed to meet an individual's requirements	It's like the itch that you would like to scratch? It's like the itch in your own practice, and it's very personalized and leaders can help us and that's the intention.
Trust	A belief of reliability or truth. Feeling as if someone believes in you to do something correctly or well.	It's nice to feel like you're just in terms of like that you're professional enough to do this. So I think it feels good that there is that level of trust that exists
Balance	An even distribution. Can be measured in weight, time, responsibilities etc.	….not to have so many like building goal, your PDP goal, your reflective practice your Go Time, you know, all of that type of thing to make it as streamlined as possible?
Change	Make something different	Something new comes in we jump on it. We learned so much about it since teachers kind of manipulated to work for them and

		then kind of let it go. And then something else rolls in and then you're like, Okay, well, I'm not going to do this as much. I'm going to learn the new thing
Coaching & Expert Support*	Providing mentoring, guidance, or knowledge to an individual.	I don't know that a coach is needed, although I appreciate coaching for sure
Collaborating with Colleagues	Working with peers. Discussing new learning.	I do feel that this year in particular I am there's a lot more discussion that I'm having with other teachers.
Competence*	A feeling of mastery or skill development	I've tried new things and I've seen whether or not they work and I met the needs of my students to be better. So I feel like it is definitely related to growing in confidence as an educator.
Content Focused*	Learning that is connected to specific instructional content	We started to explore some things on like lateral reading. And that's now become a big part of our curriculum this year.
Data Driven	Using data to inform learning	So it's kind of up to you to look at some of the data that you have, whether it's formative summative data, find areas of growth needs of growth, and try to think about what can you do to improve your

		practice to improve that area?
Deep Dive	Taking an in-depth look at a learning topic.	So this for me has been better where I've had time to, you know, pick and choose what I want to learn and do a little deeper dive into what we're doing and what I need to do.
Deliverables or Takeaways	Learning that can be applied to practice	Sometimes when you have a professional development session, we can't say you leave with too many new strategies like you know, you're excited if you leave with one.
Design Attributes	Components of the design of the professional development that influence learning	It was the delivery that made the relevance even more powerful, or at like with the magnitude of the relevance more obvious.
Directed or Mandated	Being directed or forced to attend a professional development	Sometimes there's PD and the rolling of the eyes start, like, Oh, we're gonna have to go to this workshop or this meeting
Discussion	The action or process of talking about something to reach a decision or exchange ideas.	I think whenever you can get a little bit of information and then you talk about it to other people, it is better than just being lectured to.
Feeling Empowered	Feeling in control and	I feel empowered, that you're not going and

	confident.	learning about something that somebody else selected for you, that you are kind of like trusted as professional to know what you need to pursue.
Environmental Factors	Attributes of the learning environment such as leadership, expectations, time allocation, and support.	I just find that that we have more time for Go Time is more helpful to me just to like learn about what I'm finding valuable to me. And then periodically meeting instead of that it was like having meetings all of the time
Facilitated Learning	Having someone guide and contribute to your active learning.	My supervisor specifically has always been super supportive, in whatever I've chosen to study, or chosen to work on for sure. She's more of my day to day person that I go to when I need something.
Feedback and Reflection*	Giving someone input and evaluation. Serious thought or consideration of actions.	It's helpful to have a conversation about what you're learning and what and how you're going to apply it. I mean, often I get a new idea just from talking to other colleagues.
Flexibility	Adjusting, reconfiguring, or changing in order to meet needs.	I think if the district were to say you know, Monday is a great time to do it, but if you want to do it Wednesday night at eight

		o'clock, go ahead. Just write it down.
Go Time Described*	Participants describing Go Time	I have the opportunity to pick my own professional development, I have the opportunity to focus on something that I'm interested in really narrowing my focus
Growth-Mindset	The belief that your intelligence can increase	I know that the district has worked hard on is giving us that space to further grow and because they believe in that growth mindset and that we can do it and you know, certainly it gives you more belief in yourself that you can.
Inspiring	Something that motivates you in a positive way.	I look for professional development to inspire me to be a better teacher
Job –Embedded*	Work and learning that is accomplished within your daily work.	…you can focus and use your professional development time on something you already are doing that, you know, you want to make better.
Lack of Depth	Shallow. Content that only scratches the surface in the context of teaching.	…but I feel like in districts and not just Chatham, lots of new things are dropped on. Right. And we're not really taught how to use it properly.
Leadership	Managing, directing, organizing, motivating and	We obviously have some meetings, especially in the Social Studies

	inspiring individuals.	Department, where we will, you know, Steve will go over something or supervisor will go over something. But it will be much more interactive, and it might be a half hour or an hour and very, very focused to what we do.
Learning Activities	The tasks that a person engages in to reach a learning goal.	So I'm always kind of happy when I'm learning something like deciding okay, you know, finding resources finding whether it is like reading materials or videos or workshops.
Learning Goals	A learning outcome that an individual seeks to meet.	I think for me, it's kind of a combination of like things that I see in my classroom that I want to like work on more
Learning Labs	Workshops that are optional to attend which have a focus on a predetermined topic	I definitely think they are important and I think that if they're presented appropriately, or successfully, then I'll feel really good about it and then it will motivate me to do more. I love when my coworkers offer to do them too, because they're usually talking through the lens of experience and students that I might know or know about. So it kind of rounds it for me it makes it more

		interesting
Learning Network	A collection of individuals who collaborate in an effort to learn and share with each other	I have joined a Facebook page that goes along with the Wilson program and they have great ideas there. So I have definitely reached out and kind of broaden my resources to get more ideas from people that I wouldn't normally have dealt with.
Less Flexible	Rigid. Not able to easily adapt to an individual's needs	Yes, it's go time, but we really would like you to sign up for one of these, like, you know groups that we're offering. And also, please make sure that you are here on campus so you can collaborate with your peers.
Limited Choice	Have a small number of options to select from	I wouldn't say like the professional development time as a group was dedicated towards those topics. So it was a lot of prescribed things that were like other important things that we had to do.
Load and Workload	The amount of responsibilities or tasks that a person must accomplish	But I don't know there's just still a part of it that I still get frustrated over and I think that's the biggest part that so much of it still falls on the teacher and there's a lot that a teacher has to do within the day

Managing Supervisor Expectations	Meeting the needs and requests of someone who has authority over you	… I started this year because you know, we're expected to sort of like collaborate with our colleagues.
Mandating Time	Requiring someone to spend a specific amount of time doing something	But this new part of like controlling where we do it can be a little frustrating.
Meaningful PD	Professional development that a teacher finds valuable	But year after year that we've now done this, and it seems to stick I think is its impact for people and keeps them engaged because they know it's meaningful.
Models & Modeling*	Demonstrating how to do something	It is a better way to see or learn how to do it and to watch her do it.
Not threatened to succeed	Not feeling required to meet a predetermined outcome	..it never hits a lesson, or it never hits the curriculum. I do think it's okay
Organization of PD	The structure and design of a professional development experience	The predictability, I think, is just really helpful. I mean, our classes are obviously super structured. So we are used to that structure, that's really helpful.
Passive	Accepting what happens without active response or resistance	There's a presenter and we're all sitting very presenter focused and there may be a group activity here or there, but the standard sit down and listen.
Past Experience*	Professional development	Over the summer I did three trainings. And

	that teachers engaged in prior to Go Time	they were all geared towards like different ways of teaching science and they just left me so excited about making changes in my classroom.
Predictability	Able to be known, seen or declared in advance	But the predictability, I think, is just really helpful. I mean, like, our classes are obviously super structured. So kind of used to that structure that's really helpful.
Pressure for Outcome	Feeling an expectation to accomplish a certain expectation	I think it's okay that if it doesn't work, at least you've tried it, and it's okay that it didn't work because that's, that's life and that's one thing we teach our students that it's okay to make mistakes, that you learn from them and you'd try to better yourself and find something else that's going to work.
Pursue Interests	Investigate something that intrigues you	I do like that piece that we kind of get to pick and choose what we want to learn about. It's a sort of that freedom, you know, to find something that's interesting to you
Reflection*	The profess of thinking about and analyzing	You get to live with it and try it and see what works and see what didn't. I'm always

	something you experienced	like, pretty brutally honest, in my reflective practice, about, you know, what worked, what didn't and what my next steps are
Relatedness*	A sense of belonging or connection	…even just in talking to my colleagues, it's more motivational to have a professional development that you are all interested in.
Relationship Building	Applying skills to connect with others	So like my connection with the teacher in the other school, like I feel like our relationship has flourished, because, you know, we just bounce so many ideas off each other.
Relevance	Important to the individual	It was the delivery that made the relevance even more powerful or the magnitude of the relevance more obvious. So I think it was definitely a combination of oh, it's really relevant to something I want to do. And also the delivery made it so like, it also made it feel feasible that I could do this
Research	Investigation or study of a topic	I always wonder about, we do retain kids sometimes in the primary grades. And I always wonder how many of those kids that we retain continue to have either

		learning challenges or ends up with an IEP? That is something I would like to study.
Restrictive	Limiting, not flexible	I think it's more like the timing of it, you know, if I could have released time, and I could go on for a whole day or a half day, I guess that would be ideal for me
Self-Motivated	Undertake or continue a task without another person prodding or supervising	I've always been incredibly motivated. You know, I always want to do my best and do my best as an educator.
Self-Regulation	Control or supervision from within instead of by external authority	I have a pretty strong work ethic. So I kind of pretty structured with how I tackle stuff and I kind of set my own goals of when I'm going to read and what I'm going to do.
Sharing	Give something to others	And then listening to peers, you know, sometimes somebody will tell me, Oh, they did something last year. And then I said, Oh, I could do something like that, or that would be interesting to me.
Streamlined Goals	Consolidating a large number of goals to a few	I don't know, once every five years, you came up maybe with a building goal, and then you would all work on that. And then, not to have so many like building goals,

		your PDP goal, your reflective practice your go time, you know, all of that type of thing to make it as streamlined as possible?
Structure	How something is arranged or organized.	Maybe more development in the beginning, like more of a guidance like if it's your first year doing it, like really guiding through it
Student Outcomes	The expected learning goals of students	The measurement would be my student learning. See how this time for me to use to develop professionally impacted my practice, which in turn helps their learning.
Sustained in Duration*	Something that happens over time	….it's really something you want to get better at. And then what I picked this year, I could spend a whole year on it.
Time Allocation	Designated time assigned to an activity or event(s)	I think having the designated time isn't a problem. What I do in that time, maybe I need to, I don't know within the marking period, there were teachers that probably would have been grading yesterday and doing their good time at home, or vice versa.
Perceived Value	How a person associates the importance or significance of something to them	I always hope that it's going to be really valuable for me

Workshop Model	Typically a single event in which new learning is shared	I remember, you know, going to workshops, we really don't go to workshops anymore, and I feel, you know, that's something important to you know, if there's something we want to learn about. We were always able to go to workshops.
Worth the Effort	Something an individual feels was worthwhile or of value to them	So by coming up with activity, it's a ton of work, but I'm doing what I want to do with it and I'm so super motivated.