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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR VETERAN TEACHERS:

LET THEM SPEAK!

A Dissertation Submitted to Molloy University

The School of Education and Human Services

Ed.D. in Educational Leadership for Diverse Learning Environments

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

LIVIA MELISSA GAMA FAGUNDES

Tricia Kress, Dissertation Chairperson

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**MOLLOY
UNIVERSITY**

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES

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Abstract

Professional development is designed to enhance teachers' pedagogical knowledge and their professional growth. However, veteran teachers have divergent professional learning needs that must be addressed to positively impact the effectiveness of the professional development they attend. This research study emphasizes the importance of care practices and how veteran teachers want to be heard and included in the planning of the professional development they attend. This study also highlights the importance of positive relationships between school administrators and veteran teachers and how this leads to learning conditions that better serve the professional learning needs of veteran teachers. The purpose of this qualitative, grounded theory research study was to describe the veteran teachers' experiences and desires for professional development to develop a framework for professional development that meets their unique professional learning needs. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and two focus group meetings with 10 veteran teachers. The findings demonstrate that veteran teachers have different professional learning needs and that professional development will continue to be ineffective in aiding their pedagogical growth if their voices are not heard and their input is not considered. These findings add to the body of existing literature about professional development by proposing a framework for professional development specially designed for veteran teachers.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all of my coworkers who are the hardest working veteran teachers I know.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

“Why are you showing me the same stuff and things, and especially over 30 years, okay, been there, done that, still doing it.” (Powell & Bodur, 2019, p. 24)

Professional development (PD) is meant to enrich a teacher’s competence and pedagogical practices. If one mentions PD to a novice teacher, they may ask questions about the topic of the PD and the location of the session. If one mentions PD to a veteran teacher with five or more years of experience, they will probably roll their eyes and walk away.

Andrea, a veteran 2nd-grade teacher with more than 10 years of teaching experience stated, “If professional development will not directly help me in the classroom, then it’s a waste” (Bernhardt, 2015, p. 11). Andrea is not alone. Veteran teachers see themselves as experts in the field and sit through PD because it is in their job description, not necessarily because they are interested.

Teachers reinvent themselves based on the demands of the profession and the needs of their students. Veteran teachers thrive when they are given the opportunity to make decisions regarding their professional growth and work diligently to improve their pedagogy when they feel appreciated and recognized (Meister & Ahrens, 2011). Arti Madder, a 32-year veteran, stated that attending conferences keeps her abreast of new pedagogical practices in language arts. She added, “These are invaluable opportunities that stimulate my thinking” (Madder, 1996, p. 32). Insisting that veteran teachers attend a haphazardly created PD session is antithetical to their motivation since they want more autonomy in their classroom practices (Carrillo et al., 2018). Madder’s quote supports the idea that veteran teachers are not opposed to PD. They are resistant to PDs that do not meet their professional learning needs.

In addition, although there is literature supporting the notion that veteran teachers benefit when andragogical principles are applied to PD frameworks, that alone is not enough for PD sessions to be deemed effective by veteran teachers. This study highlights how veteran teachers also need to feel cared for and how positive relationships with school administrators can lead to optimum conditions for learning. This grounded theory research was designed to learn more about veteran teachers' experiences and desires for PD. The objective of this dissertation is to develop a framework for PD that meets the professional learning needs of veteran teachers. By interviewing and conducting focus groups with 10 veteran teachers and analyzing their experiences through the lenses of andragogy and care theory, it was evident that veteran teachers want to have trusting relationships with their administrators, be heard, and have the autonomy to choose their own learning. The next section explains a background of how the phenomenon of PD emerged, and in subsequent pages, a more detailed description of the study—including its theoretical framework, methodology and methods, limitations, and significance—is delineated.

Background

In 1989, President Bush and a coalition of state governors proposed *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (1994) as a solution to America's failing public schools. They recommended six education goals for the year 2000, and in 1994, with President Clinton's endorsement, Congress adopted them, while adding two more. With President Clinton's sanction in 1994, eight national educational goals were established to be successfully attained by the year 2000. Goals 2000 stated the following: (a) all children will start school ready to learn; (b) 90% of students will graduate from high school; (c) all students in grades 4, 8, and 12 will demonstrate competency in challenging subject matters in English, math, science, foreign languages, civics, economics, the arts, history, and geography; (d) the United States will be the first in the world in math and

science; (e) all adults will be literate; (f) no school will have drugs, violence, firearms, or alcohol; (g) teachers will have the needed skills to prepare American students; and (h) all schools will have parental involvement.

Goals 2000 was presented as a voluntary program, but significant federal funds were to be withheld from states that opted out. States were required to submit improvement plans to the U.S. Secretary of Education's approval and were penalized if they failed to abide by their own improvement plans. Goals 2000 revoked the control of education from local school officials and transferred it to the federal government. It also affected private and home education regulations. Although none of the Goals 2000 were met and the act was defunded, this legislation left its imprint on education, including PD for teachers.

One of the goals of Goals 2000 was to provide teachers with the skills to prepare American students, and teachers became responsible for student achievement more than ever. PD is an ongoing learning opportunity. Districts and individual schools spend thousands of dollars to provide teachers with the necessary skills to aid in their pedagogical growth. According to Noonan (2019), the money spent does not produce the intended outcome because PD does not always positively impact teachers' pedagogical practices. Although adult learning theories and the principles of andragogy should inform the structure of impactful PDs, they are overlooked and ignored (Infed.org, 2013). Veteran teachers also feel ignored because their professional learning needs are not being met. As a result, PDs have an ineffective impact on their pedagogical practices. Wilson and Bernie (1999) also reported that teachers are often disconnected from the content presented at PDs provided at a district level, and this is especially true for veteran teachers. Given this context, this study was designed to (a) address the need for PD to be rethought through the lenses of andragogy and practices of care, especially for veteran

teachers; (b) share the experiences of veteran teachers and their desires for PD; and (c) add to the research literature by developing a framework for andragogical and care-informed PD that meets the professional learning needs of veteran teachers.

Problem Statement

There is an abundant amount of research on PD, but much of it addresses the needs of novice teachers. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) stated that veteran teachers go about their day-to-day classroom responsibilities instinctively, unlike novice teachers who are more methodical about their decisions throughout their day. Veteran teachers have been part of the ever-changing education system and have had to constantly reinvent themselves to meet the needs of their students (Mader, 1996). However, there is a gap in current research that overlooks how to properly address the veteran teacher's professional needs. Although the importance of the implementation of andragogy principles has been noted in various research, that alone is not enough to address the learning needs of veteran teachers who need to be in charge of their own learning but also feel valued and respected for their pedagogical knowledge and experience. Therefore, practices of care, in conjunction with principles of andragogy as a framework for effective PD, needs further exploration. Carrillo et al. (2017) mentioned that some studies report veteran teachers as disengaged with diminishing levels of fulfillment in the teaching profession, while other studies have stated that teachers continue to be motivated throughout their entire teaching career. They also acknowledge that although years of experience do contribute to the development of a teacher's competence, more importantly, "more is needed than just years of experience in the teaching profession to become an expert or 'accomplished' teacher" (Carrillo et al., 2017, p. 640). Veteran teachers' self-perception as an expert in the field greatly influences their openness to apply the content of PD (Brody et al., 2015).

However, this study points out that having positive relationships with school administrators, listening to the veteran teachers' professional needs, and giving them the autonomy to seek their own learning will reduce this resistance. Nevertheless, a more comprehensive exploration of PD specifically designed to aid in the continuous evolution of a veteran teacher's pedagogical growth is necessary to fill the gaps that have been overlooked by previous research.

Theoretical/Conceptual Underpinnings for the Study

PDs are often poorly structured and may not aid in the pedagogical growth of a veteran teacher (Eros, 2013; Mohan, 2016). The principles of andragogy and care practices need to be interwoven in the framework for effective PDs designed for veteran teachers, but PDs are often developed without this in mind. Utilizing the principles of adult learning and theory of care in this study is appropriate because veteran teachers prefer to oversee their own learning and practices of care with school administrators is of utmost importance. According to Merriam (2018), it was not until the 20th century that andragogy was examined. These examinations led to different ideas regarding the way adults learn and are still utilized today as the foundation of PD. One of the theorists that further explored adult learning is Malcolm Knowles (1973). He differentiated between pedagogy and andragogy and believed that adults go through an inquiry cycle to develop their own learning, in which they take initiative, identify their needs, set objectives, identify resources needed, implement appropriate learning strategies, and evaluate the learning outcome (Knowles, 1975). When principles of andragogy are not considered in designing PDs for veteran teachers, veteran teachers do not feel cared for and are resistant to learn under those circumstances. Noddings (1984) developed care theory, which defines *care* as a relationship between the carer and the cared-for. She stated that an ethic of care is essential for

creating healthy learning environments and that a caring relationship requires a reciprocal engrossment, or attention, between both parties; in that moment, they are deeply committed and focused on the need of the other. She also mentioned that the caring is not complete until the cared-for accepts the caring and that dialogue maintains caring relationships. Continuous dialogue between administrators and veteran teachers is necessary for effective PDs. Care theory promotes the engrossment between veteran teachers and their administrators, which leads to a better understanding of the veteran teacher's professional needs. Together, care theory and andragogy support the design of the PDs that allows for utmost autonomy.

This study utilized the above theories as lenses through which to understand the veteran teachers' experiences with and desires for PD to inform a PD framework that meets the professional learning needs of veteran teachers. In addition, this study also aimed to describe how the experiences of veteran teachers shed light on the role of care in the professional learning of veteran teachers. This theoretical framework is more elaborately explained in Chapter 2.

Purpose of the Study

As noted earlier, various researchers have found that PD is often ineffective, and its ineffectiveness impacts veteran teachers the most. Researchers have recommended that Knowles' principles of adult learning be considered when developing PD for veteran teachers, but instead, its principles are ignored (Infed.org, 2013). One of andragogy's principles states that adult learning should have immediate value for the participants and be applicable to their work. However, teachers who have been in the teaching profession for five years or more have different pedagogical necessities than novice teachers, which speaks to a need for differentiated learning experiences. Moreover, practices of care are an important aspect for veteran teachers. They want to be heard and included in the planning of PDs, and trusting relationships with

administrators can help in acknowledging veteran teachers as valuable contributors to PDs and make them feel cared for. Therefore, the purpose of this grounded theory research study was to describe the veteran teachers' experiences as it relates to PD and discover what works for them to generate an andragogical and care-informed framework for PD that meets their professional learning needs.

Research Questions

Although PD has been evolving and acknowledging andragogical principles in recent years, there is more work to be done. Veteran teachers want to be in charge of their own learning. They also want to feel cared for by being heard and included in the development of PDs, but the way that most PDs are structured still does not provide the veteran teacher the opportunity to grow professionally because an andragogical and care-informed framework is missing. For that reason, more research is necessary to explore other kinds of PD that may be more responsive to their needs. This grounded theory research study described the veteran teacher's PD experiences, discovered what worked for them, and used andragogy and care theory to generate a framework for PD that meets their professional learning needs.

The following research questions guided this study:

- 1) How can veteran teachers' experiences with and desires for PD inform a PD framework that meets their professional learning needs?
 - a) What do they identify as important aspects of PD that support their professional learning needs?
 - b) What do they identify as unimportant aspects of PD for meeting their professional learning needs?
 - c) How do veteran teachers describe their desires for PD that meets their needs?

- 2) How, if at all, do the principles of adult learning play a role in veteran teachers' vision of PD that meets their professional learning needs?
- 3) How do the experiences of veteran teachers shed light on the role of care in the professional learning of veteran teachers?

Design and Methods

This research used a qualitative, grounded theory design. Snowball sampling was utilized to recruit participants, and the data were collected during August 2022. There were 10 individual interviews and 2 focus groups conducted. Mills and Gay (2016) defined *qualitative research* as the study, collection, analysis, and interpretation of visual and narrative data to gain insight into a particular phenomenon. Creswell and Creswell (2020) added that grounded theory is an inquiry design that the researcher utilizes to derive a theory, process, or action grounded in the views of the participants. Moreover, the method designs were fitting for this research study because the findings of the study aided in the development of a framework for effective PDs for veteran teachers. The collected data were analyzed by using the constant comparative method, a data-coding strategy used to categorize, compare, and analyze qualitative data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The methods delineated here are described in detail in Chapter 3.

Limitations

Limitations in this study include small sample size, the potential for focus group discussion to influence participants' perceptions, and researcher positionality. The 10 participants interviewed may have been speaking for a small sample and may not be reflective of veteran teachers' views on a larger scale. It is possible that participants' responses may have been guided by other participants during the focus group meetings. In addition, there is a potential for researcher bias since I, too, am a veteran teacher, which may have influenced my

analysis of the data collected. Acknowledging that this might have influenced my analysis of the data, I was keenly aware of my opinions on the research problem and put in place various methods to mitigate bias. Some ways I guarded against bias was by recording all interviews, focus groups, and rereading the transcripts immediately afterward to correct any errors that may have occurred. I also shared preliminary codes and themes that emerged during the individual interviews with participants during the focus groups. Nonetheless, the data supported the framework developed by the participants' experiences with PD.

Significance

As mentioned above, there is a large body of literature that exists on PD for novice teachers, but a dearth of research has been conducted about PD specifically for veteran teachers. Furthermore, although much is known about the principles of adult learning, these are not typically applied to the structure of PDs, and care practices are also omitted. Veteran teachers want to have a say in their PD and are interested in learning about topics that are important to them. In addition to being in control of their own learning, veteran teachers also want to feel cared for by being heard and included in the planning of PDs for veteran teachers. This study contributes to the necessary literature regarding PD specifically for veteran teachers so that their professional needs are properly addressed during successful PD sessions by (a) school administrators fostering a culture of care by listening to veteran teachers as they describe their desires for PD and (b) including veteran teachers and what they have identified as important aspects of PD in the planning and development of PDs that support their professional learning needs. It is my hope that the results influence administrators' decisions regarding not only the topic but also the way in which PD is designed. They may also inform future policies around PD for veteran teachers and future research about PD for veteran teachers.

Summary

The purpose of PD is to aid a teacher's ability to provide impactful instruction that will meet the needs of their students. PD is not one-size-fits-all, and it is not appropriate to attempt to help teachers become better teachers by providing arbitrary and haphazardly designed PDs. It is important to offer teachers—specifically veteran teachers—appropriately designed PDs that afford them the opportunity to utilize their expertise and implement the content of their individualized PDs. Steeg et al. (2015) mentioned that PD should not be disconnected from teacher practice; rather, they promote a PD design that “require[s] that all teachers participate, regardless of content area or instructional focus” (p. 474). This was done with the intention of bringing teachers together. However, this practice has been proven to be ineffective, as mentioned by numerous veteran teachers (Powell & Bodur, 2019). Furthermore, when administrators encourage a culture of care, they add to the effectiveness of PDs for veteran teachers and promote a framework that benefits PDs for veteran teachers. The remainder of this dissertation describes the review of the literature, methodology, data analysis, results, and implications of the research study.

Definition of Key Terms

Andragogy: The art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1985).

Care theory: A theory of ethics and moral education that encourages the formation and implementation of ethical, caring relationships to improve students' moral thinking (Noddings 1984).

Novice teacher: A teacher who has less than five years of experience.

Pedagogical growth: To better one's teaching practice.

Pedagogy: The practice of teaching children.

Perceptions: The extent to how people view the world. In this study, perceptions reflect teachers' views of continuing PD (Liu et al., 2010).

Professional development: For this research, PD is defined as the development of pedagogical practices (Lieberman & Miller, 2014).

Professional development design: The way that PD is organized and structured.

Veteran teacher: For the purpose of this study, a veteran teacher is a teacher with five or more years of experience.

CHAPTER 2: Review of the Literature

“My needs are related to real classroom situations. That is why; when professional development activities are conducted based on real-life situations, we can talk about effective professional development activities.” (Bayar, 2014, p. 5)

The only way to improve the quality of teaching and learning is to improve the teacher’s pedagogy; therefore, PD is at the core of academic achievement for all students (Ladson-Billings & Gomez, 2001). PD practices are meant to cultivate teachers’ competence and on-the-job training is intended to help teachers stay up to date with their professional knowledge and application of that knowledge (Ladson-Billings & Gomez, 2001). With growing accountability for student success being the responsibility of teachers, teachers are expected to be highly effective and raise student achievement (Campell, McNamara, Gilroy, 2004). Providing quality instruction for students is imperative, and PD is intended to aid teacher practice and effectiveness. According to Noonan (2019), a study conducted by the teacher development organization titled TNTP Academy, formally known as The New Teacher Project (TNTP), reported, three U.S. urban districts spent \$18,000 per teacher per year on PD to improve teacher pedagogy, and despite the investment, the PD provided had little impact on teacher quality. TNTP (2015) described how approximately 10,000 teachers reported that the PD they are offered by schools is not aiding their growth nor is it useful for improving their practice.

According to Bayar (2014), active participation opportunities are of utmost importance during PD sessions. One teacher in his study complained about being forced to sit through PDs and listen to instructors. The teacher stated,

When I participate in any professional development activities, I just sit and listen to instructors like all other participants. To tell the truth, it is really boring, and I do not get

any benefits from these non-effective professional development activities. To me, it is just a waste of time. (Bayar, 2014, p. 6)

Liberman and Miller (2014) referred to PD as professional learning and growth in practice. They argued that professional learning is “steady intellectual work that promotes meaningful engagement,” collaborative inquiry, reflection, analysis, and critique of problems of practice (p. 9).

However, PD is frequently ineffective and produces inadequate outcomes (Sykes, 1996). Although adult learning theories inform the structure of PDs, this is still generally designed against its principles, since teachers are oftentimes passively seated in front of the presenter (Infed.org, 2013). The disconnect between how adults learn best and the typical structure of PD leads to teacher dissatisfaction (Nir & Bogler, 2008; Wilson & Bernie, 1999). According to Wilson and Bernie, teachers are subjected to PD by experts who provide decontextualized “irrelevant, sometimes amusing, often boring pre-packaged information” (Wilson & Bernie, 1999, p. 174). Bayar (2014) conducted a qualitative study to identify the components of effective PD activities from teachers’ points of view. In this study, participants openly complained that inadequately prepared PD presenters limits the overall effectiveness of PDs. Teachers reported that a high-quality instructor is at the heart of all effective PD and that teachers lose their “enthusiasm to participate in any more professional development activities” when the instructor is of low quality (Bayar, 2014, p. 6). According to Wilson and Bernie (1999), a teacher survey reported that district-provided PD is of little value and teachers testify that the classroom is the most important place for learning. This problem is even more evident when it comes to veteran teachers who use their experience to inform their pedagogical practices: “They wisely advise new teachers, plan courses, and advocate for students as a whole” (Norman, 2020, p. 3962).

Veteran teachers endure the ever-changing education system and successfully navigate top-down policies that often do not make sense. Because of their experience, veteran teachers need to have autonomy in their learning, and a successful PD must provide them with the opportunity to apply principles of andragogy (Bayar, 2014).

In addition, this dissertation research demonstrates that veteran teachers want to feel cared for. Veteran teachers wish to be heard when they express their needs and desires for PD. They want to be viewed as skilled professionals who are valued, respected, and trusted to be in charge of their own professional learning experiences. Positive relationships between administrators and veteran teachers, in which veteran teachers feel respected and heard, are akin to caring relationships that are conducive for veteran teachers' learning. This chapter highlights how the connection between principles of andragogy in conjunction with practices of care is missing from the literature about PD. Veteran teachers are learners when they attend PDs, and therefore, they also need to feel cared for. Positive relationships between teachers and their school administrators also play a role in the success of PDs for veteran teachers. School administrators are oftentimes in charge of designing PDs, but if the veteran teachers' needs for PD are not validated and heard, they do not feel cared for by their administrators and the PD no longer has any value for them. It is important for those developing PDs to also create a more humanizing environment, see veteran teachers as learners, care for them as people, and prioritize their unique professional learning needs as part of the foundation of the PDs. This chapter reviews the literature about PD and identifies gaps in the literature for further research in order to build on the understanding of the current body of research about PD for veteran teachers.

Theoretical Frameworks

Theory of Adult Learning and Care Theory

The theory of adult learning (Knowles, 1973) and care theory (Noddings, 1984) frame the research in this study. PD is often developed against the principles of andragogy, the practice of teaching adult learners, and is therefore scarcely effective (Bayar, 2014). Teachers are often unhappy with PD, and veteran teachers are less likely to participate or implement what they have learned (Bayar, 2014). Care theory, or practices of care, is another aspect of PD that is critically important to veteran teachers, though not adequately addressed in the literature. According to Noddings (1984), the heart of successful learning lies in caring relationships and learning will be better received if there is a trusting and caring relationship between the instructor and the learner. Caring relationships for any learner opens the opportunity to engage in dialogue and the opportunity to make discoveries about the learners' habits, interests, and needs (Noddings, 1984). Noddings (1984) applied the role of care to education and affirmed that authentically caring, mutually respectful, and trusting relationships between teachers and students combine empathy with purposeful action that promotes a learner's well-being. The role of care is important for any learner, but especially for adult learners who need to be involved in and able to make decisions regarding their learning (Knowles, 1973). School administrators play a valuable role in schools because they have the ability to implement practices of care by fostering positive relationships with veteran teachers. In addition, nurturing reciprocal trust between administrators and veteran teachers supports discourse and active listening. Not feeling cared for is the ramification of not feeling valued or heard. The subsequent sections explain this concept in relation to PD.

Schools are institutions where students and teachers have the opportunity to learn. Pedagogy is always evolving, and educators are learners of their practice. PD engages educators in learning while addressing various objectives. The theory of adult learning is intended to meet

the needs of adult learners. Adults feel the need to be in control of their learning, and PD is more successful when participants have input on the topics (Martin et al., 2019). Veteran teachers want to have the autonomy to assess their pedagogical practices and make decisions regarding their PD needs. It is also important for them to feel cared for. Veteran teachers want to apprise administrators of what their PD needs are, and they want to be heard. Being included as active participants simultaneously supports Knowles' theory of adult learning and Noddings' theory of care because veteran teachers are adult learners and respond positively to the principles of both andragogy and practices of care. Not integrating both concepts and weaving them into a framework for PDs for veteran teachers leads them to feel like they are not cared for, and in turn, the PD will risk being ineffective and not meeting their professional learning needs. Although the literature supports the notion that principles of andragogy benefit adult learners—veteran teachers included—there is a dearth of research that supports the idea that practices of care need to be embedded in the framework of effective PDs for teachers in general and veteran teachers in particular.

Theory of Adult Learning

The way adults learn was not scientifically examined until the 20 century (Merriam, 2018). These early inquiries led to diverse theories of adult learning that are still relevant today. Malcolm Knowles developed a theory to help adults learn by utilizing the concept of andragogy. He believed that adults who are active participants in their learning learn better than adults who are not (Knowles, 1973). Knowles (1973) stated that adult learning must be self-directed and experienced. He argued that adults need to know why they are learning what they are learning and added that adults are motivated when they see immediate value in the learning. According to

Knowles (1973), the way that the information is presented is more important than the content, and the presenter's role should be of a facilitator rather than an instructor.

Furthermore, according to Knowles' (1973) theory of adult learning, adults identify their learning needs, devise their objectives, and find people and material resources needed to achieve their goals. Adults select and apply suitable learning approaches and can assess their self-directed learning. In essence, adults go through an inquiry cycle to develop their own individualized professional needs and how to attain them. Teachers' input in the creation of PD sessions needs to be validated and welcomed for a PD to be successful and well received (Wilson & Bernie, 1999). Yet, adult learning theory does not consider the more humanistic and emotional dimensions of not feeling that one's needs are being met as an adult learner. Simultaneously applying adult learning theory and care theory to PD frameworks for veteran teachers helps to conceptualize the importance of adult learners feeling cared for, which is important when supporting their autonomy. The following section provides further explanation of how care theory aids in the development of a framework for effective PDs for veteran teachers.

Care Theory

Noddings (1984) developed care theory, focusing mainly on the value of relationships. She mentioned that "as human beings, we want to care and be cared for" (p. 7). Therefore, the foundation of care theory is the relationship between the carer and the cared-for. The four main concepts in care theory, supported by the foundation of receptive care, are modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. Noddings (2005) mentioned mutual exchange in caring relationships and utilized the words *attention* and *engrossment* simultaneously. She described engrossment as an empty soul ready to receive the other. In this instance, one is no longer concerned with their needs but is now wholeheartedly focused on the needs of the other and is ready to act in

response. However, the caring is not complete until the cared-for accepts and acknowledges the caring. Noddings (2005) explored caring relationships in education and explained that dialogue between people connects them and aids in the maintenance of caring relationships. She added that one can respond more effectively as carers when the need of the cared-for is understood. Consequently, continuous discourse brings to light an awareness of the other's needs and guides one's responses. Noddings (2005) explained that caring relationships between teacher and student is attentive and mentioned that a caring teacher listens to students and helps them acquire the knowledge needed to achieve their goals. She also stated that caring teachers make an effort to create and sustain a caring relationship that serves as a foundation for everything students and teachers do together.

Although teachers are not often looked at as students, in the context of PD, that is in fact what happens. Hence, they need, like all students need, to feel cared for in order to want to or be able to participate in the learning environment. Specifically, they are adult students, and what it means to care for them cannot be separated from what it means to recognize their unique needs as adults and professionals. These two theories are connected because of who these teachers are as learners in the context of PD. The following literature review provides an overview of the characteristics of PD and the reasons why PD is often ineffective for teachers. In addition, the literature review shows how veteran teachers have unique professional learning needs and how the principles of andragogy without care practices are insufficient in providing effective PD for veteran teachers.

A Review of the Literature

There are various models of PD, which include watching, listening, being observed, receiving feedback, researching, and reading information about different strategies, and having

discussions with colleagues about pedagogical practices (Timperley et al., 2007). However, although there are models of effective PD, the literature on PD does not merge Knowles's (1973) theory of adult learning and Noddings' (1984) care theory in the context of PD or PD, specifically for veteran teachers. PD is not one-size-fits-all; it needs to be strategically designed for the adult learner and differentiated based on the needs of teachers and the diverse population of students they serve. Ladson-Billings and Gomez (2001) added that a one-time PD, directed by "ex-pert consultants" will not effectively alter pedagogical methods that will yield positive results. Furthermore, according to Hochberg and Desimone (2010), PD developers need to consider teachers' background knowledge and what they bring to the table as educators. Moreover, the literature does not adequately address the specific needs of veteran teachers because it does not take into consideration the importance of adult learning and the role of care in effective PD for teachers.

Novice Versus Veteran Teachers and Professional Development

There is a clear distinction between a novice and a veteran teacher with five or more years of experience. There is an abundant amount of research focused on the needs of novice teachers (Gonzalez et al., 2019). According to Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986), a novice teacher has inadequate understanding and approaches tasks systematically, while a veteran teacher possesses a more authoritative, deep understanding, and deals with routine matters intuitively. To further elaborate upon the distinction and connect it to PD, research also indicates that a teacher's PD needs to change over the course of their career. While teachers in the early stages of their careers are concerned with classroom-management strategies, veteran teachers change their focus and vision in terms of their pedagogy and are more concerned with improving their content knowledge (Eros, 2013; Mohan, 2016).

Many studies also distinguish between novice and veteran teachers as it relates to their PD needs. TNTP (2015) conducted a study that collected information regarding teacher development and their pedagogical improvement indicated by a performance effectiveness rating. More than 20,000 teachers, serving about 400,000 students in geographically diverse school districts participated. The study disclosed that teachers with five years of experience or less who participated in PD rapidly improved their pedagogical practices while teachers in their tenth year or beyond had a growth rate scarcely at zero. According to Steffy (2001), teachers must grow and transform throughout their careers in order to remain effective, but the average 5th-year teacher's performance looked similar to the average teacher's performance after 10 or 15 years of experience. Although TNTP (2015) reported that teachers in their 10th year of teaching and beyond still need to improve their pedagogical practices in core instructional skills, Brody and Hadar (2015) stated that veteran teachers often see themselves as experts in their field and that self-perception influences their receptivity of PD and willingness to adapt to new practices. Modifying one's pedagogy can be an uncomfortable and arduous task because the transformation can require teachers to face weaknesses that may be highlighted in the process (TNTP, 2015). According to Jacobs et al. (2018), veteran teachers are reluctant to change because of their desire to maintain autonomy and the fear that change will challenge their expertise. Their resistance also stems from deeply rooted beliefs that are contradictory to the anticipated change. The shift in their instructional methodologies requires veteran teachers to re-evaluate their pedagogical practices and change the way they have always taught. Gruskey (2010) further remarked, "research demonstrates that experienced teachers seldom become committed to a new instructional approach or innovation until they have seen it work in their classrooms with their students" (p. 384). In addition, Vanblaere and Devos (2016) reported that

reflective dialogue regarding educational practices is crucially important as a motivation for changes in classroom practices, but the more experience teachers had, the less they reported engaging in reflection or changes in their classroom practice.

As previously noted, Knowles's adult learning theory is included in published works about PDs. Although principles of andragogy are beneficial in frameworks for PD, more research is needed to support the notion that it is not enough to produce powerful PDs for veteran teachers unless practices of care are also included, and a more human-centered environment is formed. This gap in the literature is what this research addresses. Lowe et al. (2019) mentioned that some studies have identified a small group of veteran teachers who are still passionate after many years of teaching and shared those circumstances such as seeking PD opportunities, seeking and incorporating new teaching ideas, feeling valued, and being in leadership and mentoring roles were some characteristics associated with their positiveness. In addition, veteran teachers showed resilience by displaying a constant inclination to update their pedagogical practices as a response to the ever-changing demands of their careers. For the most part, according to Lowe et al. (2019), veteran teachers' positiveness may be supported by their commitment to the profession and their professionalism.

A veteran teacher's unique needs were illustrated by a recent study that examined their perceptions of the design and implementation of a job-embedded PD experience focused on improving teacher quality. Powell and Bodur (2019) reported that the teacher's perceptions focused on the design and implementation features of the PD would determine its success and effectiveness. One theme that emerged was *relevance*. Mrs. Miller, a 30+ year veteran teacher, reported that PD should be personalized to a certain extent because teachers are in different places in their careers. She stated, "the professional development that I may want is going to be

more content-specific” (Powell & Bodur, 2019, p. 24). Herranen et al. (2021) mentioned that teachers view PD from their current teaching position and their prospective teaching as the demands of the profession evolve. They indicated that a teacher’s effort and time spent during a PD course depended on the degree to which the content improved their interests. In addition, they highlighted that teachers would be encouraged to spend more time with the content being presented by making the content “personally interesting to them” (p. 9). The authors also mentioned that the more experience the teachers had with the content of a PD course, the more they considered it relevant and committed to implementing what they learned. Another theme that emerged was *authenticity*. Mr. Johnson, an 18-year veteran, noted disparities between his classroom realities and the examples utilized in the PD. He stated that the examples utilized were of “prima donna, prissy outfit of well-behaved kids,” while he serviced at-risk, inner-city students (Powell & Bodur, 2019, p. 24). *Interaction and collaboration* was a third theme that emerged. Mr. Williams, a 13-year veteran, suggested that PD should include collaboration with colleagues “to come up with a toolkit of ideas and lessons” (Powell & Bodur, 2019, p. 25). Liberman and Miller (2014) also suggested that collaboration among colleagues develops strong ties and promotes honest conversations that lead to a deeper understanding of teaching and learning. A study conducted by Gore et al. (2021) explained that veteran teachers were open to a more collaborative approach to PD and are happy to participate when the PD is collegial. The authors mentioned that there was a deep renewing effect for veteran teachers brought about by collaboration with other colleagues on topics of common interest. Desimone (2009) wrote about the importance of collaboration among teachers of the same department or grade level to share experiences. Gore et al. (2021) added that developing a common goal inspires teachers to improve their pedagogical practices.

Noonan (2019) conducted a study with the intention of better understanding the relationship between teachers' identities, their experiences of PD, and the implications for PD design. He interviewed 25 teachers from 5 different school districts in the northeastern part of the United States. The teaching experience within the sample ranged from 4 to 30 years and the grade level taught ranged from pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12. Noonan (2019) reported positive accounts by veteran teachers regarding various PDs. Alex, a 16-year veteran teacher, reported an enthusiastic description of the engaging structure of a five-day PD he attended: "The thing that stood out for me was just how great [it was] having a quality adult facilitator" (p. 531). He shared that his usual "hot air" characterization of PD did not apply to this particular PD because the content was directly relevant to his work, he felt a connection with the facilitator, and he was not bored. It has been reported that PD facilitators can encourage a climate of learning, where collaborative and productive discourse takes place, while also acknowledging the teachers' experiences (Onrubia et al., 2022). The objective of the facilitator is not only to provide information but also to promote a teacher's increasing professional autonomy by assisting and providing guidance throughout a PD. Having a better understanding of the needs of veteran teachers can promote their success by providing them with well-planned PDs. Research supports the idea that teachers who participate in a relevant, hands-on experience during PDs are more likely to fully understand the concept presented and feel empowered to apply it in their classrooms (Gunter et al., 2017). Gore et al. (2021) mentioned that teachers are eager to participate when PD is meaningful and experienced. In addition, hands-on experiences during PD sessions provide teachers the opportunity to be more confident in integrating the concept in their classrooms and enriching the students' learning experiences (Gunter et al., 2017). Although the literature alludes to some of the notions of andragogy and care—like the understanding of the

intricacies of adult learners and the exploration of caring relationships in education—it does not explicitly discuss these concepts in depth, the two concepts are not put into dialogue with each other, and they are not looked at together in relation to the PD needs and professional growth of veteran teachers.

Care Theory and School Administrators

It is important for administrators to foster and maintain caring relationships with veteran teachers by cultivating an attitude and environment of care. Noddings' ethic of care is widely recognized in education as a relational dynamic between teachers and students. However, Noddings' (1984) definition of a *caring relationship* spans far beyond the classroom. Noddings (2005) mentioned that care is basic in human life and that all people want to be cared for. In addition, the author also mentioned that caring relationships have a reciprocal and keenly attentive dimension between the carer and cared for. Therefore, the ethic of care in a broader sense can be applied not only to the relationship between teachers and students but also to relationships between someone with a need and another wanting to satisfy that need. Noddings (2005) stated that dialogue is paramount in the pursuit of mutual understanding of a need because it allows the actions between the carer and the cared for to be evaluated. Veteran teachers need to have a caring and supportive relationship with their administrators in order for PDs to move beyond the PD session and translate into beneficial classroom practices.

Noddings (2005) expressed that caring is a way of being, not a way of behaving, and Lumadi (2017) added that a good school administrator “always listens to people around him, knows who they are, and is sensitive to other people’s feeling” (p. 2) Edgeron et al. (2006) wrote about the importance of relationships in a school building and said that the most important component of a relationship is trust. The authors mentioned that it is essential for administrators

to build trusting relationships with teachers. They added that being communicative and supportive is the “overarching trust promoting behavior” (p. 3). In addition, Gore et al. (2017) added that advancement in education will not happen until teachers are respected and trusted. Hoppey et al. (2013) conducted a study examining the role of the principal in school change. Tom, the principal, expressed that he would not be an effective leader if he does not trust his teachers. Tom also supports and invests in his teachers by explicitly trusting and respecting them. Tom expressed the recognition of the reciprocal nature of trust and said that “if you want to get trust, you’ve got to give trust” (p. 249) A qualitative case study in a small secondary school was conducted to share the experience of another principal striving to promote a culture of continuous learning (Cherkowski, 2016). Robert, the principal, reported that in order to build a culture of learning, teachers needed to feel valued, included, and engaged in their own learning. Noddings (2012) added that individual needs can be better addressed when a climate for caring relationships is created and fostered: “Leaders must recognize teachers as professionals and encourage them to see themselves as professionals” (Beerens, 2000, p. 24). Edgeron et al. (2006) added that positive relationships between principals and teachers are critically important and shared that “as teachers begin to feel better about themselves and what their collective missions are as a result of significant interactions with their principals, they become more effective in the classroom” (p. 3). Veteran teachers see themselves as an asset to their school community. They distance themselves from the narrative that they are reluctant to participate in PDs and represent themselves as “learners who are open, engaged, and curious” (Gore et al., 2021, p. 341). Gore et al. (2021) shared that a 24+-year veteran expressed always looking for PD opportunities and wanting to be the best teacher she can be. Therefore, school administrators must seek to develop PDs that are meaningful, valuable, applicable, and validate teachers by

making a commitment to being supportive throughout a teacher's professional growth. Lowe et al. (2019) stated that veteran teachers thrive in the recognition of their expertise and input in the implementation of initiatives in schools. They also value being mentors and role models for new teachers, receiving encouragement and trust from their school administrators, and autonomy to pursue their own professional learning. Hoppey et al. (2013) also showed how the principal in his study exhibited a caring relationship with his teachers by trusting them to choose PD that suited their individual needs and backed it up with action by funding the teachers' endeavors. The authors added that the principal "views professional development as a vehicle for promoting individual and collective growth among teachers around topics that are important to his staff" (p. 252). Veteran teachers' experience and pedagogical expertise were also valued by placing them in leadership roles by serving as mentors for novice teachers. According to Lumadi (2017), effective school administrators care for their teachers, encourage them to be creative and critical thinkers, and consider their desires and needs. Caring relationships between veteran teachers and their administrators fosters an environment that is conducive for veteran teachers to feel cared for and heard.

Positive Relationships Between Administrators and Veteran Teachers

To develop effective PDs for veteran teachers, administrators must show that they care by listening attentively and addressing their needs. Noddings (2012) stated that listening is emotionally and intellectually important in a caring relationship. According to Bayar (2014), teachers' voices are of utmost importance when planning a PD because they are participating in the PD and are also tasked with effectively implementing the knowledge learned in their classroom. Administrators can build positive relationships by making listening to veteran teachers a fundamental component of their relationship. In a study about leaders and emotional

intelligence, Bower et al. (2018) identified the role of care in making veteran teachers feel heard and valued. Social skills are a component of emotional intelligence, which is the ability to manage relationships with others (Goleman, 1998). All participants in this study were veteran teachers and they stated that a principal who builds good relationships with teachers creates a strong bond between them, thereby building reciprocal support among teachers and principals. Participants also mentioned that they were heard and felt cared for due to this positive relationship. Administrators must foster a relationship of reciprocal care by listening and responding with action. Noddings (2012) noted that listening is at the center of caring relationships, and it is also a way of learning. She added, “Receptive listening is a powerful intellectual tool. But, from the perspective of care theory, it is more than that; it is the basic attitude that characterizes relations of care and trust” (Noddings, 2012, p. 780). Merritt (2021) added that active listening is a prerequisite to trust, positive relationship building, and successful discourse. Bower et al. (2018) shared that an administrator who acknowledges weaknesses within themselves also builds trust with staff. Mary Peters, a 20-year veteran, stated that her favorite principal is aware of her weaknesses because she acknowledges when she is wrong, and Peters appreciates that. She stated, “it demonstrates that she knows that her actions affect others” (p. 119). Active listening and positive relationships between teachers and administrators can have a positive impact on PDs for veteran teachers because the teachers will feel heard and cared for. An administrator who listens to their teacher’s professional learning needs will acknowledge that autonomy is a crucial factor in meeting a teacher’s professional needs as well as in the application and sustainability of their own learning (Ragland, 2017). Autonomy is an important principle of andragogy because adults need to feel like they are in control of their own learning.

Self-directed PD helps educators stay up-to-date with new pedagogical practices, has a positive impact on teacher quality, and fulfills their professional learning needs (Lan, 2022).

Motivation is also an element of emotional intelligence, and it speaks to school leaders being passionate about their work (Goleman, 1998), thereby building confidence among veteran teachers and making them feel good by celebrating their work (Bower et al., 2018). Bower et al. (2018) stated that all 12 veteran teachers who participated in their study acknowledged that praising and encouraging teachers for their good work were indispensable attributes of a great school leader. According to Lan (2022), self-direction and autonomy are identical. The author added that maintaining autonomy in PDs heightens the educator's motivation to take control of their learning and seek PD opportunities that meet their needs. Trusting and caring relationships among administrators and teachers can help address the professional learning needs of veteran teachers by facilitating opportunities for their participation in strategically designed PD. Hoppey et al. (2013) stated that one way an administrator can show care for their teachers is by implementing an open-door policy and listening to their ideas regarding their professional learning needs. As mentioned by Hoppey et al. (2013), relationships among veteran teachers and their administrators have an impact on opportunities for PD and the teachers' pedagogical growth. However, there is more research to be done in this area. Gaps in the literature and how this study fills in those gaps will be explained further in the next section of this study.

Gaps in the Literature

Extensive research has been conducted on the topic of PD (Desimone et al., 2002), and most studies focus on the PD needs of novice teachers (Gonzalez et al., 2019). Although studies mention that a critical component of PD is the consideration of the teacher as an adult learner, most recognize the absence of andragogy in the development of PDs. According to various

studies, another critical component of PD is the need for differentiation based on the teacher's needs. Much of the literature reviewed reinforced the need for PD for all teachers, but few mentioned how veteran teachers also benefit from PDs. In addition, there is abundant research regarding the phenomenon of care practices in education related to the relationship between teachers and students and how that impacts learning, but more research is needed to address the phenomenon of care practices and positive relationships between veteran teachers and their administrators to address how it impacts the experiences of veteran teachers with PDs. This study contributes to filling in that gap by describing the veteran teachers' experiences as it relates to PD, discovering what works for them, and generating an andragogical and care-informed framework for PD that meets their professional learning needs.

Conclusion

The principles of andragogy are valuable and necessary in the context of PD (Infed.org, 2013). However, principles of andragogy alone are incomplete in a framework for effective PD for veteran teachers, because veteran teachers also need to feel cared for and valued for PDs to be effective. PD has long been a practice utilized by educators to enhance their pedagogy and competence so that optimum learning occurs in the classroom. Research states that considering the veteran teachers' distinct needs, PD must be differentiated, target their professional needs, and be directly applicable in their classrooms (Powell & Bodur, 2019). However, it is also important for veteran teachers to develop and maintain positive relationships with their administrators because they want to express what their professional needs are, and they want to be heard by seeing the implementation of their requests put in place. Gore et al. (2021) stated that PD that engages the veteran teachers' hearts and minds aids in the change of their views of PD. The authors also mentioned that PDs can be transformative if their framework is trusting and

respectful of veteran teachers' experiences. Last, PD is still thought of as a very technical and pragmatic way of learning and it neglects to acknowledge that veteran teachers are not only learning a new skill but are also learners themselves and need to be respected, feel valued, and feel like their learning matters. Chapter 3 will delineate the methods and design of this study, as it explores what happens when veteran teachers are given the opportunity to express their desires for PD that meets their needs.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

“I really do not understand why we are not invited in the process of conducting professional development activities” (Bayar, 2014, p. 5)

In this chapter, the methods utilized to describe veteran teachers’ experiences with and desires for PD and how it informed a PD framework is delineated. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this grounded theory research study is guided by the theory of adult learning (Knowles, 1973) and care theory (Noddings, 2002). The two theories simultaneously play an important role in the success of PDs for veteran teachers.

PD is widely utilized in schools to provide support for teachers often determined necessary by the school building leaders. Although it is intended to positively impact teachers’ pedagogy, it is often unsuccessful in doing so, especially for veteran teachers. Veteran teachers often see themselves as experts in their field, want to be in control of their own learning, and that influences their receptivity to PD and willingness to participate and adapt to new practices. The literature shows that veteran teachers are interested in developing their content knowledge and are more willing to engage in PD if it is relevant to their needs and applicable in their classrooms. However, PD is often designed in contrast to adult-learning theories, and its development seldom considers the unique needs of veteran teachers. As a result, they are often disengaged during PD sessions and rarely committed to the application of the content presented during PDs. In addition, veteran teachers need to feel cared for by their administrators. The literature indicates that listening and showing reciprocal trust is a caring relationship and it is also essential as it relates to PD for veteran teachers. Veteran teachers want their requests for PD to be heard and they want to be involved in the planning of the PDs they attend.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this grounded theory research study was to describe veteran teachers' experience as it relates to PD and discover what works for them to generate a framework for PD that meets their professional learning needs. In this study, PD was defined as on-the-job training intended to help teachers stay up-to-date with their professional knowledge and application of that knowledge. Veteran teachers were recruited and asked to share their experiences with PD. It was important to develop this study as a grounded theory research study because veteran teachers want control of their learning, and their input provided great insight into what a framework for an effective PD for veteran teachers should look like. The analysis of interviews and focus groups collected in this grounded theory study served as invaluable data to aid in the development of an effective PD framework for veteran teachers.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research:

- 1) How can veteran teachers' experiences with and desires for PD inform a PD framework that meets the professional learning needs of veteran teachers?
 - a) What do they identify as important aspects of PD that support their professional learning needs?
 - b) What do they identify as unimportant aspects of PD for meeting their professional learning needs?
 - c) How do veteran teachers describe their desires for PD that meets their needs?
- 2) How, if at all, do the principles of adult learning play a role in veteran teachers' vision of PD that meets their professional learning needs?

- 3) How do the experiences of veteran teachers shed light on the role of care in the professional learning of veteran teachers?

Research Design

As mentioned in the purpose statement, this was a grounded theory research study. The goal of this study was to describe veteran teachers' experience with PD and discover what works for them to generate a framework for PD that meets their professional learning needs. This research was guided by the constructivist worldview and "the goal of the research [was] to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied" as they construct meaning while they engage with the world they are interpreting (Creswell & Creswell, 2020, p. 27). The constructivist worldview supports a grounded theory qualitative research design because it acknowledges the researcher's background and experiences and depends on the participants' viewpoint to inductively develop a theory. According to Knowles (1973), adults go through an inquiry cycle to develop their own individualized professional learning needs and how to attain them. Therefore, it is appropriate to utilize a ground theory research study, guided by the constructivist worldview, to develop a framework from emerging data for PD based on the veteran teachers' experiences and desires with PD that meets their professional learning needs.

Qualitative Methods Design

Grounded theory was an appropriate method for this research because a framework for effective PD that meets the veteran teachers' professional learning needs was developed based on their description of their experiences with and desires for PD. Mills and Gay (2016) defined *qualitative research* as the study, collection, analysis, and interpretation of visual and narrative data to gain insight into a particular phenomenon. Creswell and Creswell (2020) added that grounded theory is an inquiry design that the researcher utilizes to derive a theory, process, or

action grounded in the views of the participants. In addition, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967), many researchers were primarily concerned with verifying theories. As a response to this conflict, the authors argued that generating theories from data systematically collected and analyzed was just as valuable. They added, “theory based on data can usually not be completely refuted by more data or replaced by another theory. Since it is too intimately linked to data, it is destined to last despite its inevitable modification and reformulation” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 4). The methods design was fitting for this research study because the andragogical and care-informed framework developed for effective PDs for veteran teachers was informed by the veteran teachers’ experiences as it relates to PD.

Positionality and Researcher Role

According to Creswell and Creswell (2020) qualitative research is interpretive and the researcher is involved in the experience with the participants. Therefore, the researcher’s viewpoint on the topic must be explicitly disclosed for the reader’s understanding of how the study’s interpretations were informed. I have a deep interest in the phenomenon of this study because I have been an educator for 22 years, and I have sat through countless PDs. I found PDs useful at the beginning of my career, but as a veteran teacher, there have been few PDs that I have found valuable. I work in an elementary school where all of the teachers have 10 or more years of experience and they, too, have expressed that most of the PDs we sit through are useless. We are rarely provided with PD choices and never asked what our individual professional learning needs are. My colleagues and I find ourselves sitting through useless PDs since they are often irrelevant to our needs. Although I am aware that my experience with the research problem may influence my interpretations, I am committed to being acutely cognizant of my biases and personal opinions of the research problem. To lessen subjectivity, I asked the participants

questions listed on my interview protocol and did not share any of my experiences as a veteran teacher during the interviews and the focus groups; I maintained a neutral position. In addition, to address my own biases and establish trustworthiness in the research design, I provided a detailed descriptive data in a way that others can draw their own conclusions (Fleming, 2018). Furthermore, although I have great familiarity with the phenomenon being studied, I prepared for the interviews and was aware to probe the participants to provide more details with their responses by explain and defining terms and experiences they mentioned that may be unfamiliar to others not in the teaching profession. As the researcher, my role was to interview individual participants about their experiences with and desires for PD and facilitate two focus groups. The insider positionality was beneficial because I introduced myself to the participants as a veteran teacher. Doing so made it easy to develop trust and rapport with them. Another way that the insider positionality was beneficial was during data analysis. As a veteran teacher, I am familiar with the jargon used by the participants, making it less likely for their responses to be misunderstood.

Participant Recruitment

In total, I interviewed 10 veteran teachers who worked in the New York City metropolitan area. They consisted of 4 elementary school teachers, 3 middle school teachers, and 3 high school teachers. Of those participants mentioned, 3 teach special education classes, 1 is an English as a new language (ENL) teacher, 1 teaches a gifted and talented class, and 5 are general education teachers. This research used a snowball sampling methodology that began with the recommendation of middle school teacher participants by my professional acquaintances. I asked participants to recommend other veteran teachers after each individual interview, and most provided me with contact information of prospective participants.

I reached out to four participants by phone in the last week of July 2022, and we scheduled their interviews for the first week in August. We conducted our interviews on Zoom, and at the completion of each interview, they recommended other veteran teachers who might be interested in participating in my study. I then reached out to those teachers by phone. I interviewed all 10 participants between the 3rd and the 19th of August. I scheduled two focus group meetings, one on August 29th, and one on August 30th. Each participant was asked to participate in one of the two focus group meetings. All data were collected by August 30th, 2022.

Data Collection and Analysis

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I moved forward and began collecting data by starting with individual interviews. The goal of the data collection was to describe the veteran teachers' experiences with PD and discover what works for them in order to generate a framework for PD that meets the professional learning needs of veteran teachers.

Data analysis began while I conducted the interviews and continued throughout the data-collection process. An interview protocol was developed, and as each interview was conducted, I took notes on the interview protocol next to the corresponding question. I analyzed each protocol and noted recurring responses from the interviews. These recurring responses helped me create the preliminary codes. The first phase of coding used was holistic coding. According to Saldana (2013), holistic coding aims to seize basic themes by analyzing the data as a whole rather than analyzing line by line. According to Saldana, holistic coding is "preparatory groundwork for more detailed coding of the data" (p. 141). I then added these codes into the qualitative analysis software called Dedoose (see Chapter 4). I analyzed the data a second time by using focused

coding. According to Saldana (2013), focused coding is appropriate for grounded theory methodology and the development of major themes because it prompts the researcher to make decisions regarding which initial codes are most prevalent and which furthers the data analysis the most. Following this, I developed questions for the focus groups. After each focus group meeting concluded, I transcribed and coded the data. I then utilized axial coding to bring together the data from the individual interviews and the data from the focus groups.

A more comprehensive analysis of the data is illustrated in Chapter 4.

Trustworthiness

Creswell and Creswell (2020) stated that the researcher's approach to verifying the truthfulness of a study is one that ensures consistency with other studies and varied researchers. All data were coded and analyzed by using the constant comparative method, an inductive data-coding process utilized to compare, categorize, and analyze qualitative data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this study, I used the following methods to ensure the trustworthiness of my research: systematic data collection, reflexivity, member checking, triangulation. I utilized the same protocol for all of my individual interviews and the same protocol during both focus groups to ensure the integrity of the data-collection process. I used a systematic data collection by coordinating and gathering data sources from individual interviews and two different focus groups. As I gathered and analyzed the data being collected, I was keenly aware of my prior experiences as a veteran teacher, and I was cognizant not to allow my biases to influence the research process. Triangulation of the data involved looking for evidence provided by all participants across multiple transcripts. The triangulation of the data justifies the emerging themes of the study. Other qualitative reliability methods such as double-checking transcripts for mistakes, comparing data with codes, and recording contributed to the trustworthiness of the

study (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). To further build the trustworthiness of this study, I also shared codes and major themes that emerged from the individual interviews with all participants during the focus groups. In the following chapter, I discuss my data analysis. Included in the analysis of data is an explanation of codes, thematic analysis, and excerpts from participants to support the themes that developed.

Ethical Considerations

Each participant signed a consent form that included the identification of the researcher, the purpose of the study, and an explanation of the benefits of their participation. The participants were assured in writing that their confidentiality and anonymity would be a priority for the researcher. They were made aware they were not obligated to participate and were free to withdraw from the study at any time. To ensure confidentiality, each participant was assigned a pseudonym to replace their real names throughout the research process. All data were stored on a secure password-protected computer.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. Since there were 4 elementary, 3 middle, and 3 high school veteran teacher participants interviewed, they represent a very small sample and may not be an accurate representation of the views of veteran teachers on a larger scale. Another limitation is the potential of bias since I, too, am a veteran teacher. Being a veteran teacher may have influenced my analysis of the data collected, but I was fully cognizant of this possibility and potential bias. As a result, I did not share my experiences as a veteran teacher, and I maintained a neutral stance during the interviews and focus groups. Additionally, it is possible that participants' responses may have been influenced by other participants during the focus

group conversations. Nonetheless, the data support the framework developed by the participants' experiences with PD.

Conclusion

In summary, the research design and methodology that was used in this study has been delineated throughout this chapter. As mentioned above, this qualitative grounded theory study aimed to generate a framework for PD that meets the professional learning needs of veteran teachers. I collected data by conducting individual interviews with 10 veteran teachers and facilitating 2 focus groups in August 2022. I analyzed, coded the data, and noted themes that emerged. Utilizing a grounded theory design provided me with the ability to develop an effective framework to inform PD for veteran teachers. Chapter 4 presents a detailed analysis of the data. Chapter 5 provides an overview of the dissertation; answers the research questions; and offers implications for future research, policy reform, and practice.

CHAPTER 4: Findings

“In order to improve PD for veteran teachers, you want collaboration. You want the administration to trust veteran teachers. You want them to use the veteran teachers’ knowledge. You want them to respect you. You want respect for your pedagogical knowledge.” (Participant Mel)

Many researchers have found that PD is often ineffective, and its ineffectiveness impacts veteran teachers the most (Norman, 2020). The purpose of this study was to describe the veteran teacher’s experience as it relates to PD and discover what works for them to generate a framework for PD that meets their professional learning needs. As outlined in previous chapters, veteran teachers have pedagogical needs that are unique and differ from the needs of novice teachers. Researchers have recommended that Knowles’ (1975) principles of adult learning are considered when developing PD for veteran teachers, but instead, its principles are often disregarded. I utilized snowball sampling to recruit veteran teachers with 5 or more years of experience. The K-12 veteran teachers recruited were from various New York City and Long Island schools. They were eager to participate and describe their experiences and desires for PD that meets their needs.

The following questions guided my research:

- 1) How can veteran teachers’ experiences with and desires for PD inform a PD framework that meets the professional learning needs of veteran teachers?
 - a) What do they identify as important aspects of PD that support their professional learning needs?
 - b) What do they identify as unimportant aspects of PD for meeting their professional learning needs?
 - c) How do veteran teachers describe their desires for PD that meets their needs?

- 2) How, if at all, do the principles of adult learning play a role in veteran teachers' vision of PD that meets their professional learning needs?
- 3) How do the experiences of veteran teachers shed light on the role of care in the professional learning of veteran teachers?

The subsequent sections delineate how the data analysis was consistent with the grounded theory research method utilized in this study and how the analysis connects to the research questions. I describe the process utilized to analyze the transcripts from 10 individual interviews with participants, 2 focus group interviews, and how patterns in the codes emerged and themes were generated. There were three levels of analysis: (a) holistic coding, (b) focused coding, and (c) axial coding. Constant comparison was used at each level of analysis until themes emerged. Included in this chapter are excerpts from the interviews, which support themes that emerged based on the analysis of the data.

I interviewed 10 participants in total: 4 elementary, 3 middle school, and 3 high school veteran teachers. Their years of teaching experience ranged from 5 to 26 years, and they teach on different grade levels and in different certification areas (see Table 1).

Table 1

Overview of Participants

Participant	Years of Experience	Grade Level	Area of Certification
Shay	26	Elementary	General Education/ Special Education
Angelina	25	High School	English as a New Language (ENL)
Mel	24	Elementary	General Education/ Gifted and Talented

Ami	23	High School	General Education
Jo	10	Junior High	General Education
Kelly	8	Junior High	General Education
Rae	8	Elementary	Special Education
Jez	6	Junior High	General Education
Kay	5	Elementary	General Education
Jenny	5	High School	Special Education

Note. Pseudonyms are used to protect participants' identities.

Table 2 shows preliminary codes that were persistently present during the individual interviews.

Table 2

Preliminary Codes

Category	Subcategory
Importance of PD	In person Hands on Collaboration Relevant
PD Presenter	Passionate Knowledgeable Engaging
Important Aspects of PD	Choice Differentiated
Positive experiences with PD	
Negative Experiences with PD	Waste of Time

Table 3 shows a code application table created by Dedoose, the software used to code the transcribed interviews, indicating the number of each participant's response to the codes listed above (Table 2). Each participant in Table 3, listed on the left side of the table, was labeled by

their pseudonym and the codes were listed across the top row. For example, Mel spoke about collaboration 3 times, hands-on PD 1 time, in-person PD 0 times, relevant PD 5 times, the importance of PD 1 time, the important aspects of PD 2 times, having choice during a PD 2 times, negative experience with PD 3 times, PD that is a waste of time 4 times, engaging presenter 1 time, knowledgeable presenter 1 time, passionate presenter 1 time, positive experiences with PD 0 times, and differentiated PD 2 times. The total excerpts coded for Mel was 28.

Table 3 Code Applications

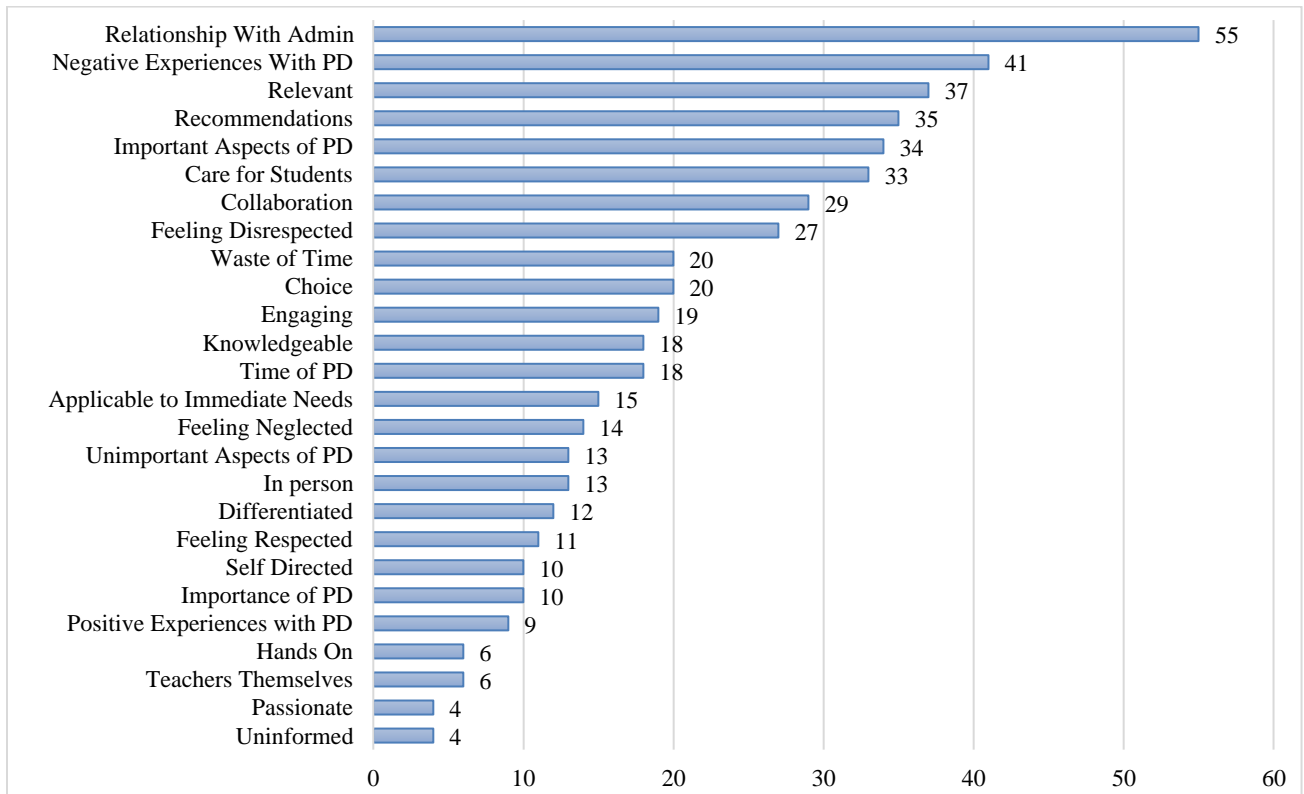
	Collaboration	Hands On	In person	Relevant	Importance of PD	Important Aspects of PD	Choice	Negative Experiences With PL	Waste of Time	Engaging	Knowledgeable	Passionate	Positive Experiences with PD	Differentiated	Totals
Shay	3	0	0	4	1	3	0	4	0	1	4	0	2	2	24
Rae	3	0	1	6	1	6	4	7	2	1	2	0	2	1	36
Mel	3	1	0	5	1	2	2	3	4	1	1	1	0	2	26
Kelly	5	0	1	5	1	6	3	4	3	1	0	0	2	2	33
Kay	4	1	2	5	1	2	3	1	3	3	2	0	0	0	27
Angelina	1	3	2	2	1	0	1	8	0	2	1	0	1	0	22
Jez	2	0	1	4	1	3	0	3	0	2	1	2	0	1	20
Jenny	0	0	1	3	1	2	1	6	4	3	5	1	0	4	31
Jo	2	1	5	1	1	6	3	3	2	4	1	0	0	0	29
Ami	6	0	0	2	1	4	3	2	2	1	1	0	2	0	24
Totals	29	6	13	37	10	34	20	41	20	19	18	4	9	12	

I noticed that participants mentioned important aspects of PD 34 times, negative experiences with PD 41 times, and positive aspects of PD only 9 times. This discrepancy captured my interest to find out why that was the case. I reread the transcripts more carefully and analyzed what the participants said to be the important aspects of PD and why there were so many excerpts regarding negative experiences with PD. Additional codes emerged upon closer

examination. Participants mentioned *caring for students, feeling respected, disrespected, and neglected*. They mentioned that the *time of the PD* was important. They want a presenter who is *a teacher themselves*, not someone who is *uninformed*, and a PD that was *applicable to their needs*. Other codes that emerged were *self-directed, unimportant aspects of PD*, participants' *relationship with their administrators* (principals and assistant principals), and *recommendations*.

Table 4

Participant's Responses



Once all of the codes were depicted in one single table (Table 4), it was easy to see the range from the least to the most important aspect of PD as reported by the participants.

According to Table 4, the participants' relationships with their administrators were mentioned 55 times, while a presenter being passionate or uninformed was mentioned 6 times. Based on the information in Table 4, participants' relationships with their administrators had a significant impact on their experiences with PDs.

Holistic Coding

Holistic coding was first utilized to generate preliminary codes, since I already had a general idea of what to investigate in the data based on a first look and notes taken during each participant's interview. As mentioned in Chapter 3, utilizing holistic coding enabled me to derive basic themes by analyzing the data as a whole. As outlined in Chapter 2, the literature highlights the ineffectiveness of PDs for veteran teachers, and participants validated that notion by expressing they had negative experiences with PD 41 times. The theory of adult learning and the concept of andragogy is one framework utilized in this study to explore veteran teachers' experiences with PD. According to Knowles (1973), adults are motivated to learn when the content has immediate value and it is applicable to their needs. The concept of andragogy was rarely applied to the development of the PDs most participants attended. For example, participants mentioned that relevance is an essential aspect of PD 37 times, and that PD was often a waste of their time 20 times. In addition, Noddings (2005) asserted that caring relationships are of vital importance in educational settings and participants mentioned how their relationships with administrators influenced their experiences with PD 55 times.

Focused Coding

After analyzing the data by using a holistic coding lens, I examined the data a second time and utilized a focused coding method. Saldana (2013) stated, "Focused Coding is appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies, but particularly for studies employing grounded

theory methodology, and the development of major categories or themes from the data” (p. 213). As depicted in Table 3, additional codes emerged after closer analysis of the initial codes, and the relationships with the participants’ administration were the predominant factor impacting their dissatisfaction with the PDs they attended. Participants mentioned feeling disrespected 27 times.

Consistent with the grounded theory approach of qualitative research, the notion of care emerged after multiple and careful analyses of the data collected. Noddings (1992, 2003) recognized reciprocity in caring relationships as a vital condition for learning and positive change in educational settings. Subsequently, I developed two focus groups to further explore how the participants’ relationships with their administrators and the role of care practices contribute to the PD needs of veteran teachers. After all participants’ individual interviews, I invited each participant to attend one of two strategically developed focus group meetings. All 10 participants were divided into two equal-sized focus groups, and there was at least one teacher with 23 or more years of experience and at least one teacher with 5 or more years of experience present in each focus group. We met on Zoom, and I began the meeting by sharing the data collected from their individual interviews. I explained how I based the focus group questions on the analysis of the data. I shared Tables 1-4 (listed above) with participants and allotted time for questions. None of the participants had any questions and were not surprised that many of their answers from the individual interviews were the same.

Table 5

Participants' Relationship with Their Administrators

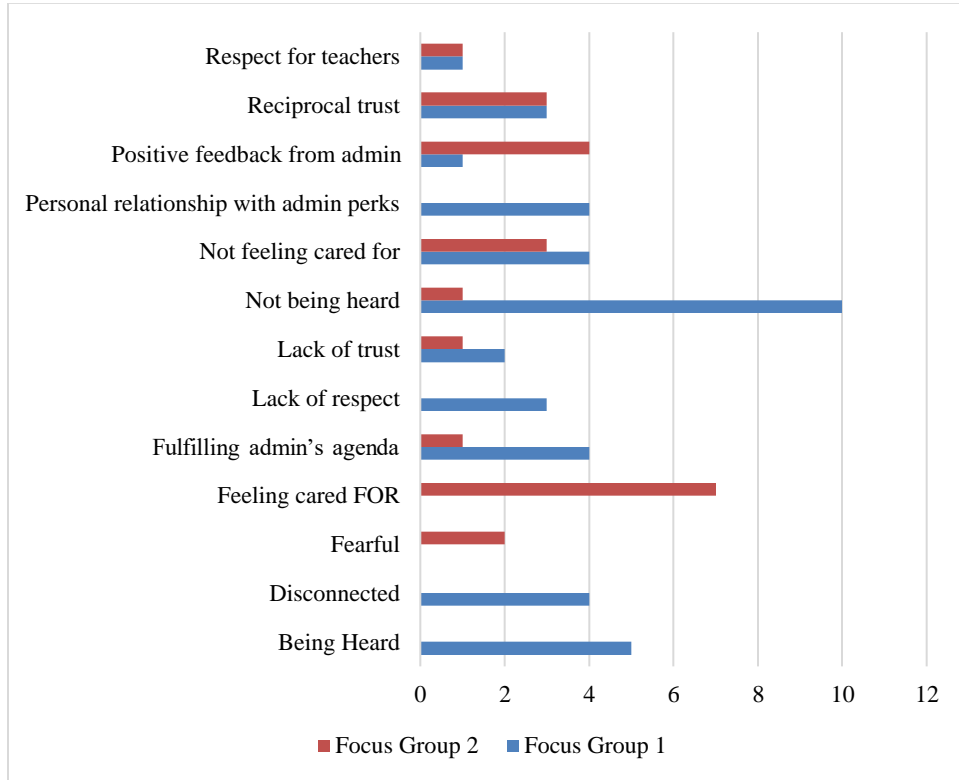


Table 5 shows the codes that emerged from the focus group data regarding the relationship between the participants and their administrators and how that relationship had or did not have an impact on their PD experiences. Throughout the focus group, participants talked about *being heard* 5 times, *disconnect* 4 times, *fearful* 2 times, *feeling cared for* 7 times, *fulfilling admin agenda* 5 times, *lack of respect* 3 times, *lack of trust* 3 times, *not being heard* 14 times, *not feeling cared for* 7 times, *personal relationships with admins (perks)* 4 times, *positive feedback from admin* 5 times, *reciprocal trust* 6 times, and *respect for teachers* 2 times.

Participants said that most administrators showed *respect for teachers* by having an open-door policy. However, some shared being *fearful* of approaching their administrators to have conversations about PDs, while others were hopeful that they would *be heard*. Participants stated

that there was a *disconnect* because administrators would ask for feedback or ideas regarding PDs, but most of the time, none of the ideas would be implemented, unless a teacher had a *personal relationship with administrators*. That led participants feeling like they were *not cared for* because administrators had a *lack of trust* and a *lack of respect* for them. Many participants mentioned that some of the PDs that administrators had them attend were irrelevant and they were there to *fulfil the administrator's agenda*, and not necessarily to become a better educator. Some participants shared that they would feel *cared for* when they felt *reciprocal trust* between themselves and their administrators and also when they received *positive feedback* from their administrators. However, the most prevalent discussion that occurred between participants was regarding not being heard by their administrators. Participants mentioned not being heard 14 times.

Axial Coding

According to Saldana (2013), axial coding is appropriate for studies utilizing a grounded theory methodology and it “extends the analytic work from Initial Coding and, to some extent, Focused Coding” (p. 218). The purpose of axial coding is to intentionally reconvene the data that were separated during the initial coding and determine which codes were the most prevalent and others that were of minor significance. After analyzing the data depicted in Table 5, I utilized the axial coding method, which led me to two major categories. For instance, the disconnect code was merged with the larger theme of not feeling cared for because participants mentioned feeling a disconnect between what they were asking for regarding their PD needs and their administrators’ response. Another example was grouping respect for teachers, reciprocal trust, and positive feedback from administration with the broader code of feeling cared for. I reread all the participants’ excerpts, and it was evident that there were two parallel ideas that led to a larger

theme of being cared for and not being cared for. Participants felt cared for when they were heard, and they felt as if the administration did not care for them when they were not heard, and their PD needs were not met as a result. In Table 6, I merged all of the codes into two categories: feeling cared for and not feeling cared for. In Focus Group 1, 15 excerpts were combined under the category of *feeling cared for* and 8 merged under the category of *not feeling cared for*. Focus Group 2 mentioned feeling cared for 12 times and not feeling cared for 18 times. Within the *feeling cared for* category, participants mentioned feeling cared for in a number of ways. They mentioned wanting differentiated PD 1 time, having an expert presenter 1 time, being able to choose their own PDs 4 times, being celebrated by their administration 5 times, being trusted 6 times, and being heard 10 times. Participants mentioned 15 times that not being heard was the main factor for not feeling cared for. In addition, they also mentioned haphazardly developed PD 5 times, irrelevant PD 3 times, and favoritism 3 times as contributing to the negative feeling of not feeling cared for.

Table 6

Major Categories: NOT Feeling FOR and Feeling cared FOR

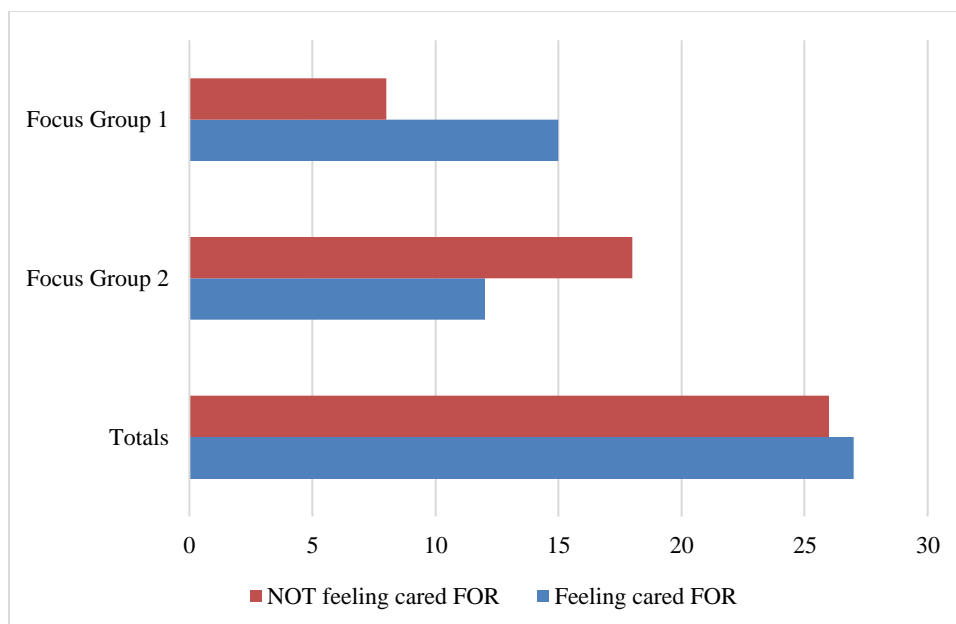


Table 7

Emerging Themes

Theme 1: The Application of the Principles of Adult Learning in the Development of PD	Relevance Autonomy Facilitator vs. instructor Collaboration Learning is experienced Ability to choose differentiated PD Irrelevant and haphazardly designed PD
Theme 2: The Veteran Teachers' Relationship with Administration and its Impact on PD	Being trusted Reciprocal trust Administrators having their own agenda Favoritism
Theme 3: The Role of Care Practices and Their PD	Feeling cared for Being heard Being celebrated by administrators Not feeling cared for Not being heard

Three themes emerged from the data: (1) the application of the principles of adult learning in the development of PDs, (2) the veteran teachers' relationship with administration and its impact on PD, and (3) the role of care practices and their impact on PD. These themes emerged from careful analysis of the data collected from individual interviews and two focus groups. The most prevalent ideas shared by the participants were attributed to the development of the themes mentioned above.

Theme 1: The Application of the Principles of Adult Learning in the Development of PD

The participants identified important aspects of PD, and the principles of adult learning played a significant role in their vision for PD that meets their professional learning needs. This section provides excerpts of the participants' experiences with PDs and the following adult

learning principles: relevance, autonomy, facilitator versus instructor, collaboration, and the way learning is experienced.

Relevance

All participants expressed that PDs must be relevant to their professional needs and applicable in their classrooms. Participant Kay said that relevance is extremely important and stated, “If you feel like something applies to you, you’re going to be more interested and engaged in it and, on the other hand, if you’re not, it’s a waste of your time.” In addition, she also mentioned that she wants to learn “strategies that are ready to use in [my] classroom the very next day. It doesn't have to be anything crazy, or fancy, or flashy—just real strategies that could be easily applied in a classroom.” Jenny agreed and said, “You show me how that can either impact my teaching or my students are able to acquire knowledge and that absolutely encourages me to try it in the classroom.” Participants specified that they want PD that is not only relevant but also content specific. Kelly stated, “content specific is beneficial just so I don’t have to hear things that aren’t relevant to my content.” Participant Angelina mentioned that PD is important if it is relevant: “Oftentimes, you’re not asked what kind of PD you need. It’s based on what the administrator is giving you.”

Participants mentioned that if the PD is irrelevant, they will be texting their friends and making a grocery list. Shay said,

I'll totally check out. Why are you showing me something if I don't have to use it? Show me what I have to use, what's really important, what's gonna help my kids learn and grow, and what will make me a better teacher.

Participants were adamant about PDs being relevant. They all mentioned that they want to attend PDs that will help them become better teachers but insisted that PDs had to be relevant to their needs.

Autonomy

Autonomy is another principle of adult learning that deeply impacts PD and the veteran teacher's receptivity of the content. Adults want to have control over their learning and participants shared that they are motivated to apply what they learned during a PD if they had the autonomy to choose what they want to learn. Participant Rae stated that she chose to participate in a PD that will benefit her during the 2022–2023 school year. She said, "This summer, I chose to attend a PD with an emphasis on adaptive technology. It was very specific, and it was exactly what I needed." Participant Kelly stated,

I would much rather be able to have more autonomy over what my PD experiences are, just like high school students get to pick the classes. I would like to pick my PDs 'cause I know what my weaknesses and strengths are. Of course, everybody has different ones and I think we're more likely to enjoy PD if everybody that's there chose to be there versus even if I'm enjoying it—maybe three people really aren't, and they could put a damper on the experience.

Participants also alluded to the notion that the lack of autonomy leads to disappointment and unhappiness. Jo spoke about her principal and said, "I think if he ever changed his mind and said no, we're taking away the autonomy; it's just what we dictate. I would be very upset. That would be rough." Angelina added that she does not have the autonomy to choose the PDs she attends, and it makes her very unhappy. She stated,

It saddens me that I don't have that authority to decide what I need at this point in my life. I think you should always be given the freedom to choose what it is that you want to develop, so the autonomy to be able to do that is important to me at this stage of my career.

Participants stated that having the autonomy to choose the PDs they attend is extremely important to them because it gives them a sense of ownership. They also mentioned that autonomy motivates them not only to attend PDs but also to be an active participant and apply what they learned in their classrooms.

Facilitator Versus Instructor

According to Knowles (1973), adults prefer to oversee their learning experience, and the role of the presenter should be of a facilitator rather than an instructor. The participants mentioned that PD facilitators needs to respect veteran teachers, acknowledge them as adults, and respect their pedagogical knowledge. Participants Rae and Angelina shared the same sentiments regarding PD presenters. Rae stated, "I don't like when they talk at me," and Angelina said, "Just sitting there and being lectured to is not a PD to me. I can pick up a book; I can read the book, and I'll be just as informed." Participants became visibly upset when talking about presenters who are unprepared during a PD session. They mentioned that presenters must not only have knowledge of the topic they are presenting but also be cognizant of their audience. Participant Shay said,

It's all about presentation and treating the staff like adults, not like children. I think that's been a big problem with bringing in PD from outside. These people that come in sometimes think that they know more than you know, but they don't know our kids, they

don't know our staff, they don't know the content, so there's no way that I'm personally gonna walk away having gained anything from that sort of professional development.

Jenny agreed with Shay and added a comment regarding a negative experience with a PD presenter: "I didn't feel offended. I just felt like you are wasting my time because you didn't do your research, you didn't do your due diligence to think about who you were speaking to." The participants expressed feeling very unhappy when PD presenters did not acknowledge them as a valuable contributor to a PD session. They were critical of presenters who were outsourced and who did not consider their audience or the population of students.

Collaboration

All participants valued the collaboration between themselves and their colleagues. They wanted to collaborate with colleagues who are on the same grade or teach the same subject. They also valued collaborating with teachers from other schools. Participant Ami stated, "It was always good when I was working with teachers in my own department or teachers that taught kids in the same grade. It's nice to share out with colleagues." Kay said, "I would like for seasoned teachers who have many years of experience to come to PDs and share their ideas and also a wide variety of teachers with different background experiences so we can all learn from each other." Kelly agreed and added, "It's important to work with teachers that aren't necessarily in your building or on your floor. I think it's really cool to work with teachers from other schools that have a variety of different backgrounds." Kelly also described what she thinks would be an amazing collaborative PD:

It could be like a collaborative effort 'cause none of us are experts in everything, so having teachers that come from content like social studies, ELA [English language arts],

ENL [English as a new language], and special Ed [special education]...I think that would actually create a really amazing PD.

All participants valued working collaboratively with their colleagues. Some participants said they would love to work with teachers who taught on their grade or subject, while others were open to collaborating with a more diverse group of colleagues.

The Way Learning is Experienced

Adult learning is enhanced by hands-on experience that involves adults in the learning process, and it is no different for veteran teachers. Participant Mel said, "I'm one of those hands-on learners, so for me, that would be ideal." All participants agreed with Mel. Kay added:

I'm definitely not like a lecture person, so anytime we work with the material, talk to other colleagues, get up and move around the room, and experience whatever the content is in a different way, that's like my ideal PD. For example, I think it was called a gallery walk, or something like that, where we all just got to walk around and read each other's ideas and we put a star next to ideas that we shared. I love any type of engaging opportunities in PDs rather than just sitting and listening.

Participants also wanted to leave the PD with resources that they can utilize. Ray mentioned that she wanted "something that [she] would be able to walk away with and use." She said, "I also like leaving with something that's concrete so I can use the exact thing tomorrow in class. I enjoy that as well." Participants said that hands-on activities are extremely valuable during a PD session. Most stated that they want to walk away from a PD session with resources that they can use immediately or duplicate to use with their students. Participants also appreciated being involved in the PD by sharing ideas with other PD attendees.

The Ability to Choose Differentiated PDs

During individual interviews, participants mentioned the necessity of having autonomy in their own learning. The notion of autonomy re-emerged during the focus groups, and participants reiterated the critical importance for administrators to provide opportunities that allow veteran teachers to choose their own PDs. One participant alluded to the relationship between administrators and veteran teachers and how it impacts the PD choices provided. She said that administrators “have to know the people that [they are] working with and what they’re interested in.” All participants expressed feeling pleased with their relationship with their administrator if they were provided with various PD opportunities to choose from. Mel stated, “I think it would be wonderful if we could have that comfort in saying: ‘This is what I need; this is what I like to learn more about.’” Another participant added that a PD “menu is important because if you have someone who’s teaching for 15 years, they may not need something that the two-year teacher needs.” Participants mentioned feeling free when administrators provide them with PD choices. Jez said, “We did that once in my school, where you had to sign up for something, and that was good; it did give you that freedom.” Another participant added that having a positive relationship with administrators and having the ability to choose their own PDs created a feeling of care about the veteran teachers’ learning needs. Jez stated, “We got to choose, so I could take a PD about mental wellness for teachers, then take a content-related PD, and I thought that was great because we all need different things.” She added,

I think that’s the same with our students. I mean, we want them to feel cared for as well.

That’s why we differentiate, and we scaffold, and we provide all these different things for

them. I think everyone wants to feel like their time isn't wasted and you're benefiting from what you're doing. That's kind of how I always look at PD.

Jenny suggested that administrators remember that in PDs "We are students ourselves." All participants stated that having autonomy with their own learning is crucial for veteran teachers. They expressed feeling pleased with the relationship with their administrators and ready to engage in PD opportunities if the PDs were self-selected.

Irrelevant and Haphazardly Designed PD

During individual interviews, all participants emphatically indicated that irrelevant PD was a waste of their time. During the focus groups, participants added that sometimes they sit in PDs presented by their administrators that are not only irrelevant but also haphazardly organized. One participant shared, "Professional development lacks when administrators are looking to fill time. [They] didn't prepare, so [they're] just gonna throw it out there." Some participants stated that at times, administrators want to provide their teachers with PD that they think is valuable, but she expressed,

They're focusing on everybody, and I get that, but in a large school setting, sometimes it can be hard to fulfill everybody's needs, to care for everybody. It's a similar situation where we're sitting through something that you just don't feel it's as relevant to what you need as a teacher.

Another participant agreed and shared, "There's definitely miscommunication between the teachers and administrators in terms of that and how that connects to our professional development because we don't have the same end goal necessarily." Jenny conveyed that her

administrators mostly provide thoughtless and haphazardly organized PDs at the end of the school year:

I feel like there has been a lot of times when May and June come and there's all this money that's left in their budget that they have to spend and they feel like, let me give my staff this professional development, but at that point, it's not productive. What you're gonna give your teachers in May and June is not necessarily going to stick with them in September, especially in September when it's so chaotic.

Participants expressed feeling like PDs are a waste of time when they are haphazardly organized and feeling unhappy sitting through a PD that was irrelevant to their professional growth.

Theme 2: The Veteran Teachers' Relationship with Administration and its Impact on PD

Participants acknowledged that the relationship with their administrators plays an important role in their PD. They mentioned that being trusted and having reciprocal trust can have a positive or a negative impact on PD.

Being Trusted

Participants repeatedly expressed that administrators need to trust veteran teachers by providing them with the autonomy to make decisions regarding their PD needs. An overwhelming majority of the participants mentioned having negative experiences with their administrators as related to trust and recommended that speaking with veteran teachers and welcoming their participation in the development of PDs would build trust. Participant Shay said administrators should "speak with the teachers and listen to what the teachers have to say." Mel added, "Talk to us; even if it's one-on-one." Ami suggested that administrators "ask the teachers what they want and definitely let them participate as much as they can in the planning of PDs,"

and Jez emphatically stated, “The most important thing is that our admin trusts us.” Mel did not feel optimistic about being trusted by her administrator and ended her individual interview by stating that “the idea of you being able to go ahead and choose your own professional development will never happen.” On the other hand, Kay expressed feeling “spoiled and privileged, because if there is a PD that the teachers want to attend, and it is doable, pretty much within that week or two weeks, it’s available.” Participants had a lot to say regarding their relationships with their school administrators. All participants stated that there needs to be a trusting relationship between themselves and their administrators. In addition to that, participants voiced the importance of being heard.

Reciprocal Trust

Reciprocal trust was another important aspect of the relationship between the participants and their administrators. Throughout the individual interviews and the focus group meetings, participants mentioned that they wanted to be trusted. However, participants also wanted to be able to trust their administrators. Shay added as she talked about reciprocal trust between herself and her administrators: “I don’t like criticism, but I love constructive criticism. Tell me what I’m doing right, tell me what I’m doing wrong, and tell me how to fix it.” Participant Kelly mentioned that she does not want her administrator to facilitate a PD because “When admin leads PDs, teachers aren’t honest at all and we just pretend everything is amazing when it’s not necessarily great.” She added, “Walls are thin and here in your own buildings sometimes, you just want to be more careful about what you’re saying.” Kelly wanted her administrators to

...just be open for feedback and actually use that feedback to further develop their PDs as they go on 'cause sometimes you get a survey at the end of the PD, but not everybody

really feels like they could honestly answer the survey, so just be a little more open. I understand that you don't wanna be criticized, but what works for one doesn't work for everybody.

During both focus group meetings, participants acknowledged that sometimes administrators are not in control of the PD that is being offered to their teachers. Jez expressed,

I think it's also helpful when administrators are honest about that because I know there are some administrators that don't like to share things like that with the teachers. They don't wanna say that this is coming from the Superintendent, or this is coming from above the Superintendent, but if administrators were just honest about it, I feel like that would allow for a lot more trust between teachers and administrators and then maybe the teachers could give some suggestions for how they could make it work and that goes back to trusting us.

Jenny added, "If we all are on the same page, or at least on the same chapter, then I think it will be an easier situation all around because we can lean on each other." Participants emphasized the importance of reciprocal trust between their administrators and themselves several times during their interviews. Participants expressed that they want the freedom to speak with their administrators regarding their PD needs and confidently feel like they can trust their administrators to follow through.

Administrators Having Their Own Agenda

Many participants commented that administrators have their own agenda as it relates to PD. One participant added,

If you make a suggestion and it's something that's kind of like in their view—something that was already in their agenda, something they wanted to put in their agenda—then they definitely would be receptive to it. But if it's not, then it's pretty easy for them to listen, and you feel like you were heard but then nothing happens.

A different participant added that her administrators provide PDs that fulfill a mandate, and she asked, “What good is that gonna do me? That's gonna help you look good, but it doesn't necessarily help me or my kids.” Another participant added,

I know administrators feel that they have to put out some sort of professional development, but like someone said, they're not really thinking about what is needed, more so doing it to fulfill what they have to do.

Participants mentioned sitting through irrelevant PDs many times throughout their interviews and questioning why they were waiting their time attending a PD that was irrelevant to their needs. They stated that they were not benefiting from the PD but fulfilling their administrators' agenda.

Favoritism

Favoritism was another topic of discussion during the focus group meetings. During Focus Group 2, participants said that their ideas will most likely be taken into consideration if they are in the “in crowd.” Participant Shay expressed that favoritism “plays into some of the opportunities of professional development. If your admin likes you, you may have a better chance of getting out and going to a professional development.” Another participant added that there is also favoritism among administrators. She shared that teachers in her school have provided assistant principals with feedback after a PD, but it is rarely implemented. She added

that if an assistant principal “has an ‘in’ with the principal and gets along with him, they tend to be heard.” A different participant added that assistant principals are approaching the principal with comments regarding PD, but if they are not favored, they are “not being heard, and then our needs aren’t being heard and you feel like administration has nothing to contribute.” Some participants voiced that favoritism is a problem and can hinder opportunities for PD. They expressed feeling like they were not being heard when administrators showed favoritism toward some teachers but not others.

Theme 3: The Role of Care Practices and Their PD

The analysis of the participants’ responses, repeated codes, and most participants emphasizing the importance of being heard by their administrators suggested that the role of care has an impact on their relationships with their administrators and their experiences with PD. According to Noddings (2005), a caring relationship is a connection or encounter between two people. Noddings (2005) used the word *engrossment* to describe a truly caring relationship. She stated that when one cares, they “really hear, see or feel what the other tries to convey” (p. 16). The analysis of the data also suggested that the majority of the participants did not feel like their PD needs were being met because they were not being heard by their administrators. Therefore, the participants did not feel like there was a truly caring relationship between their administrators and themselves because of the lack of engrossment in their relationships.

Feeling Cared For

Being Heard

Participants expressed that being heard validates their expertise as veteran teachers. One participant said, “You have to feel that your opinion is being valued.” During both focus group

meetings, participants' dispositions changed as they spoke about being heard by their administrators. One participant smiled and said, "She's really trusting me with this. I'm saying that the staff needs to do this, the staff really needs to do that, and we need to have this, and lately, I feel like she's listening to me." All participants expressed positive feelings regarding being listened to. One participant shared an experience of when her feedback to her principal was well received. She mentioned, "I feel like whatever she's asking of me, whatever feedback I'm giving her, she's actually hearing it." In addition, another participant expressed that "in terms of listening to teachers, in my district, they will provide professional development [that teachers want] and it's really, really nice that they do that." Participants' demeanor changed when they spoke about a time when they were being heard by their administrators and equated it to feeling valued and trusted.

Being Celebrated by Administrators

Participants communicated that being celebrated by their administrators led to positive feelings regarding their relationship with their administrators. Participant Ami stated that her administrators celebrate students and also "celebrate things that teachers do. They do it a lot, without making like a huge deal, which I think is nice." Being celebrated by administrators also encouraged participants to implement practices learned from PD sessions. During one focus group meeting, another participant shared her response after being celebrated by her principal for implementing a practice learned during a PD session. After a classroom visit, her principal encouraged her to continue implementing the practice the following year. She said, "That was something that was positive. I took what he said, and I really tried to implement it. I did get positive feedback from that, which was nice." Being celebrated by administrators also boosts

morale. One participant exhibited excitement while sharing how she felt after being celebrated by her principal, “Boy did I feel appreciated. He was just amazing. He knew how to make you feel good about yourself and how you're teaching.” Participants stated that being celebrated by their administrators led to feeling appreciated and acknowledged for their dedication.

Not Feeling Cared For

Not Being Heard

The majority of the participants expressed that their PD needs are not being met because their administrators are not listening to them. Participant Mel shared her experience regarding her desire to speak with the administrator about PDs. She said, “The door is open, but are we really being heard is more of a problem. It’s hit or miss and depends on the day.” During the focus groups, most of the participants shared similar experiences. One participant said, “They’re not really listening to what you’re gonna say, so it almost feels like you don’t want to say anything.” Most participants added that some administrators ask for input or feedback from teachers regarding PDs. They mentioned that administrators “hear you but they don’t necessarily do anything with it.” Participant Kelly shared that in her school, administrators do ask for feedback after presenting a PD so they can implement the suggestions when developing subsequent PDs. She then added, “I don’t know if they always actually use it though.” Another participant added, “there is a disconnect between asking for the feedback and then implementing it.” Although some participants acknowledged that their administrators were somewhat receptive to their PD ideas, many of the participants stated that their voices were not being heard. Some participants mentioned that their administrators did have an open-door policy, but the administrators were not open to their suggestions for PDs.

Conclusion

The findings produced by the participants' responses supports other research findings expressing that andragogy and adult-learning theory should be embedded within all PD models offered. The participants of this study expressed wanting to be in control of their learning and having the autonomy to choose PDs relevant to their professional needs. For that reason, it is likely that PDs for veteran teachers are more effective when the principles of andragogy are considered because veteran teachers will connect with the PD experience and be motivated to apply what they have learned. In addition, participants' responses revealed that caring relationships between veteran teachers and their administrators can have a negative or a positive impact on PDs. Participants communicated that a positive relationship with administrators provided participants more autonomy over their learning because participants were heard and trusted to choose their own PDs. On the other hand, participants said that a negative relationship with their administrators leads to irrelevant and haphazardly organized PDs. The application of andragogical principles, veteran teachers' relationships with administrators and their impact on PD, and the role of care were major themes that emerged in this study. Veteran teachers have unique needs that go beyond the sole application of andragogical principles to PD. They also consider the role of care equally as important for PDs to be effective.

Chapter 5 includes a complete summary of the study showing how participants in this research study's desires for PD inform a framework that meets the professional learning needs of veteran teachers. Chapter 5 also discusses the research implications and recommendations for research and practice based on this study's findings.

CHAPTER 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

“I don't know why the people that create PDs are not listening to the teachers” (Participant Jez)

Successful learning depends on effective PD to enhance the teacher's pedagogical practices, and abundant research has been conducted on the topic explaining how it plays a vital role in student achievement (Ladson-Billings & Gomez, 2001). The literature shows that most PDs are developed to meet the needs of novice teachers while veteran teachers' needs are often ignored. As a result, veteran teachers lose their desire to participate in and implement the strategies being presented during PDs (Bayar, 2014). Veteran teachers are interested in PDs that are useful and that have a beneficial and effective impact on their pedagogical practices. They not only want to be in charge of their own learning, but they also want to be involved in the process. Furthermore, they want to maintain positive relationships with their administrators and feel cared for by being heard.

The implementation of adult-learning principles in conjunction with the role of care plays an important contribution to PDs for veteran teachers. As a result, this study focused on the experiences of veteran teachers with PD to discover the characteristics of an effective PD from their perspective and to generate a framework for PDs that meets their professional learning needs. In addition, this study aims to add to the literature about PD specifically for veteran teachers by helping to explain how the role of care in conjunction with adult-learning principles has potential for developing a positive framework for PDs for veteran teachers.

The theoretical frameworks used for this research study are the theory of adult learning and the ethic of care. Malcolm Knowles (1973) explained that adults identify their own

individualized professional learning needs and develop a plan to realize their goals. He stated that adults must be in control of their own learning and see immediate value in what they are learning. He added that the way the information is presented to adult learners is more important than the content itself. The ethic of care theory was applied to education by Noddings (1984) as a framework to aid the development of caring teacher–student relationships that support student achievement and well-being. She identified reciprocity in caring relationships in educational settings as the ultimate condition for learning and positive change. The principles of adult learning and the ethic of care were embedded in the interview and focus group protocols in this study to elicit the experiences of veteran teachers with PD and develop a framework for effective PD, specifically for veteran teachers. This study’s data were collected by conducting interviews and facilitating two focus groups with veteran teachers, which were scheduled one week after the completion of all individual interviews through the Zoom video-conferencing platform. The interviews and focus groups were conducted in August 2022 and lasted approximately 1.5 hours each. I interviewed 10 veteran teachers of 3rd through 12th grades, whose teaching experience ranged from 5 to 26 years. There were 4 elementary, 3 junior high, and 3 high school teachers. Data analysis began after the completion of each individual interview and continued throughout the data-collection process. An interview protocol was created for the individual interviews, and another was developed for the focus groups. Repeated responses were noted throughout each interview and were listed as my initial codes. The findings from this study aim to provide school administrators, districts, and other developers of PD with a framework for PD that meets the unique needs of veteran teachers. The subsequent pages of this chapter discuss the findings in

five parts: a summary of the study, a summary of findings, a summary of conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future research and practice.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe veteran teachers' desires for PD and discover what works for them to generate a framework for PD that meets their professional learning needs. In the following sections, I address how my data answered each of the research questions that guided this study. Then, I follow with a detailed description of the study's findings. The following questions guided the research:

RQ1: How can veteran teachers' experiences with and desires for professional development inform a professional development framework that meets the professional learning needs of veteran teachers?

Veteran teachers' experiences with and desires for PD informs a PD framework because veteran teachers have unique needs and perceive PDs differently than novice teachers. As mentioned in Chapter 2, multiple studies show that the effectiveness of PD plateaus when a teacher has 5 years of experience and continues with the same trajectory, whether the teacher has 5 years or 26 years of experience. PD will continue to be ineffective for veteran teachers unless the veteran teachers' experiences with and desires for PD inform the planning of PDs. Moreover, this study draws attention to the notion of care and how it relates to PD. Veteran teachers want to be in control of their learning. However, the learning that happens in schools is most often provided by the school's administrator and without the involvement of the veteran teacher. The participant's responses emphasized the need for trusting relationships between veteran teachers and their administrators. They want to feel like assets to their workplace and be celebrated for

their pedagogical knowledge. Having positive relationships with administrators leaves veteran teachers feeling cared for and with the desire to implement concepts learned in their classrooms.

RQ1a: What do veteran teachers identify as important aspects of PD that support their professional learning needs?

Participants' responses indicated that there are many important aspects of PD that contribute to the overall quality of a PD that is supportive of their professional learning needs. Participants repeatedly stated that they want an opportunity to work collaboratively with their colleagues. They mentioned that sharing best practices will enhance their PD and pedagogical practices. Participants mentioned that they want PDs to be differentiated, relevant to their practices, and directly respond to a need in their classroom. They also mentioned that a content-specific PD is crucial and attracts their attention and participation during a PD session. Powell and Bodur (2019) described that the design of a PD is important to a teacher and can influence the PD session's success. Veteran teachers supported Powell and Bodur (2019) and mentioned that PD has to be well planned and have the participant's desires at the core of the activities. They stated that although the content of the PD is important, the way it is delivered is equally as essential. Veteran teachers shared that the PD presenter must be personable, engaging, knowledgeable, and fun. They want to leave the PD session feeling like they learned something new. They also confirmed that relevance, collaboration among colleagues, specificity of content, and knowledgeable presenter are desirable factors of a successful PD. In addition, veteran teachers want to participate in the development of their PDs, and they want to be heard and respected for their contributions and pedagogical knowledge. Veteran teachers want to foster

positive relationships with their administrators and sustain reciprocal trust. They also want to be celebrated by their administrators for applying concepts learned during PD sessions.

RQ1b: What do veteran teachers identify as unimportant aspects of PD for meeting their professional learning needs?

Participants' responses indicate that a veteran teacher's interests during a PD session lie in the subject matter and the presentation of it. Most participants expressed that ice breakers and team-building activities do not add to their pedagogical knowledge and they prefer not to engage in such activities. Participants persistently mentioned that a repetitive PD is a waste of time and asserted that it is one of the most unimportant aspects of PD. Brody and Hadar (2015) expressed that veteran teachers perceive themselves to be skillful and to have authority in their field. Therefore, attending a PD that engages in activities they deem trivial, such as ice breakers, team building, and repetitive content not applicable in their classroom, negatively impacts their willingness to participate or implement strategies offered during a PD.

RQ1c: How do veteran teachers describe their desires for PD that meets their needs?

Veteran teachers repeatedly mentioned that sitting in a PD that does not pertain to their professional learning needs is a waste of time. They want to be involved in the planning of PDs and emphatically stated, numerous times, that their input needs to be respected and implemented. Participants added that they can assess their own learning needs and prefer to explore resources that enhance their pedagogical practices by having the autonomy to choose PDs that meet their individualized and self-generated goals. They described being excited about learning new practices that positively impact student outcomes. Therefore, they want to leave a PD session with resources that have immediate value, that are uncomplicated, and that they feel secure

implementing. In addition, participants said that the time the PD is offered matters. Some participants mentioned that sitting through a PD after a long workday is difficult, and for that reason, they prefer to have PDs that are engaging and exciting. Other participants prefer to have PDs in the morning because they are ready for the day and can still modify their lessons and try to implement what they learned during a PD on the same day. Veteran teachers said that they want to be afforded the time not only to implement what they learned during PDs but also to dive deeply into what they learned. Most participants are interested in PDs that are short and present the material during multiple sessions. They want to be guided in the implementation of the activity learned and be given feedback on how they can enhance their implementation of the activity.

RQ2: How, if at all, do the principles of adult learning play a role in veteran teachers' vision of PD that meets their professional learning needs?

Participants' responses were in concert with Knowles' (1973) adult learning theory, indicating that its principles play a vital role in the veteran teacher's vision of PD that meets their professional learning needs. The principles of adult learning identify characteristics within an adult learner that exemplify an optimum learning experience. All participants mentioned the desire to have the autonomy to choose their own PD. They stated that they find the most value in a PD that is about a topic that interests them, is relevant, and allows them to be active participants during PD sessions. They expressed that the PD presenters need to act as facilitators and engage the participants in collaborative activities during a PD. The presenters must also be personable and engaging. Participants expressed being motivated to apply what they learned during the PD when the content is applicable to their needs. In addition, during the individual

interviews, participants recommended that they be included in the planning of PDs. Solidifying this recommendation, Wilson and Bernie (1999) mentioned that the authentication of a teacher's input during the planning of a PD leads to a successful PD.

RQ3: How do the experiences of veteran teachers shed light on the role of care in the professional learning of veteran teachers?

Throughout the individual interviews, participants shared that fostering caring relationships with their students is paramount for students' well-being and academic success. They find it necessary to get to know their students as individual people. They seek the understanding of their students' families, communities, cultural identities, and serve as a support system for the student as a whole. One participant argued that utilizing data as the sole source to drive instruction is ineffective because students are not numbers—they are people—and their human needs need to be considered first. Another participant mentioned that if she shows that she cares about her students, they tend to care about their work. Freire (2005) added, "It is impossible to teach without a forged, intended, and a well-thought-out capacity to love" (p. 5). Likewise, participants stated that they, too, need caring relationships for their professional learning needs to be met. They want to share their PD needs and want to be heard by their school administrators. Participants also want to feel cared for and heard in order to have their professional learning needs addressed.

All participants mentioned that they are not interested in PD if it will not positively impact their pedagogy and their students' needs and that the same concept of care also applies to their relationship with their administrators. All participants mentioned that a reciprocal trusting relationship with their administrators has a beneficial effect on their experiences with PDs.

Additionally, all participants stated that their input regarding PDs being heard and implemented is unequivocally the most essential part of the development of a PD for veteran teachers. As mentioned in Chapter 4, veteran teachers equate being heard by their administrators with feeling cared for. Consequently, care practices have an enormous contribution to the learning needs of veteran teachers.

Implications

This study has several implications for practice, policy, and research. It must be acknowledged that a veteran teacher's professional learning needs are shaped by individual differences. Including principles of adult learning in the framework of PDs for veteran teachers can provide them with a sense of autonomy and control over their professional learning needs. Adult learning principles are indispensable in a framework for effective PD for veteran teachers. However, incorporating practices of care in conjunction with the principles of adult learning brings the veteran teachers' vision of a perfect PD to fruition. Freire (2005) wrote that there should not be a discrepancy between what is said and what is done between the educator and the learner. He added that children are keen observers and are very sensitive to what teachers are saying and what they are doing. He used the word *hypocrisy* to describe the contradiction that occurs. He stated that the same can be said about the relationship between the administrators of a school building and their relationship with their teachers.

More research is needed to explore how school leaders, leading with an ethic of care lens, maintain positive relationships with the school community while exhibiting those values in their actions (Conroy, 2021). In addition, research examining how the ethics of care is implemented in relationships between administrators and veteran teachers as it relates to PD is scarce.

Administrators must provide PD for all teachers, regardless of the stage in their careers. They must also empower teachers with high-quality PD and reject the false assumption that all veteran teachers are reluctant to change (Lowe, 2019).

In this study, veteran teachers expressed that their desires for PDs often fall on deaf ears and that there is a discrepancy between what administrators say and what they do in relation to PDs. This disregard for veteran teachers' professional learning needs leads veteran teachers to feel disrespected. Including practices of care, such as active listening, move administrators and veteran teachers toward having a more authentic and trusting relationship. Open discussions about what the professional learning needs of the veteran teachers are promote solutions of how that need can be met by the administrators. According to Noddings (2005), it is critically important to receive what others are conveying and “respond in a way that furthers the other’s purpose or project” in a caring relationship (p. 16). Veteran teachers want to be heard and cared for and practices of care in a PD framework will fulfill that need and promote reciprocal trust and mutual respect between veteran teachers and their administrators. As previously mentioned, an equal balance between adult learning principles and practices of care is critically important for the effectiveness of a framework for PDs that will meet the needs of veteran teachers. The omission of either concept will negatively impact the effectiveness of PDs for veteran teachers.

In addition, Conroy et al. (2021) discussed the importance for administrators to establish a sense of community in their organizations. Future research is needed to explore how the role of love and reciprocal caring relationships across multiple constituents—administrators included—plays an important role in the implementation of cultural changes in schools where care is valued and promoted.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

According to Freire (2005), “The evaluation of practice represents an important and indispensable factor in the preparation of educators,” and continuing to provide veteran teachers with inadequate PD experiences perpetuates negative trends that are antithetical to students’ success (p. 13). PD should be thought of as a way to meet the professional learning needs of teachers, but to meet the professional learning needs of veteran teachers, it is important to see them as vital contributors to their own learning.

The findings reveal that veteran teachers need to be valued for their experience in the field of education, and andragogical approaches need to be utilized when developing and presenting PDs. Furthermore, PDs can only be successful if practices of care are simultaneously used. Positive relationships with administrators are the first steps toward an effective PD for veteran teachers. Will (2019) stated that principals can build strong relationships with teachers by building trust and respecting teachers as professionals. The author then added that teachers feel valued when principals encourage open dialogue between teachers and administrators. To transform PDs into effective PDs for veteran teachers, I propose that it be referred to as professional “devel**love**ment” for veteran teachers and that the following framework be utilized by administrators and district leaders (see Figure 1). There must be a balance between the implementation of andragogy and practices of care in all PDs developed. Knowles (1973) established that andragogical practices are essential for adult learners, and this notion is supported by excerpts from participants listed in Chapter 4. According to participants, autonomy is crucial in PD opportunities. They need to have the freedom to utilize a self-assessment of their professional needs and make decisions regarding their own learning. An effective PD for veteran

teachers needs to be differentiated and relevant to their immediate needs. It is also important to consider that the presenter plays an important role in PDs and should act as a facilitator and not as a person talking *at* veteran teachers. Participants in this study recognized that administrators do have a broader view of the necessities of the school and understand that administrators have to comply with policies that sometimes do not make sense. Therefore, they are willing to participate in these top-down PDs if there is a collaborative effort between administrators and veteran teachers in the development of the PDs as indicated.



Figure 1

Effective Professional Devel~~op~~ment

In addition, practices of care are equally as important in the structure of an effective PD for veteran teachers. Positive relationships between administrators and veteran teachers are paramount for an effective PD experience for veteran teachers. More than anything else, participants mentioned that they felt cared for when their desires for PD were heard by their administrators. Developing reciprocal trust between administrators and veteran teachers is another important aspect of an effectively developed PD. Participants expressed that they want to

be trusted to make decisions about their professional learning needs and want to be provided with different choices of PDs. PD developers must be cognizant of the importance of having a facilitator rather than an instructor during PDs. Veteran teachers were adamant about PD presenters understanding their audience. They expressed being offended when outside PD presenters were invited to provide PDs and were uninformed about the population of teachers and students they were addressing. Finally, veteran teachers shared that they are excited to implement strategies learned during a PD when the learning helps them grow as educators. However, it is important to them that their administrators encourage and celebrate their efforts in doing so.

The conclusions from this study recommend policy changes at the district and school levels. The research suggests utilizing a more differentiated and caring approach in the development of in-house and district-provided PDs for veteran teachers. Veteran teachers have unique needs and PDs should reflect their diversity of needs by being differentiated. It is also recommended that statewide changes are implemented and that the framework developed by this grounded theory qualitative study is applied to the development of all PDs for veteran teachers.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings from this study add to the literature on PD by focusing on the needs of veteran teachers and bringing to light the necessity to include concepts of care in addition to the principles of adult learning in the framework of PDs. Future studies should focus on PDs for veteran teachers offered in their own school buildings and others offered by school districts. It would be beneficial to examine how practices of care are implemented on a larger scale, such as

in school districts, and how it impacts PD for veteran teachers. It may be beneficial to investigate urban and suburban districts based on the neighborhoods' diversity and socio-economic status to see how a district's budget impacts PDs for veteran teachers. In addition, investigating the structure of PDs for veteran teachers in charter and private schools may also be helpful. Finally, a mixed-methods study could be conducted to reach a larger number of participants and to determine how PDs are developed in other states.

Limitations

It is possible that the findings from this research study can strengthen the case for strategically structured PD, specifically for veteran teachers. However, there are also some limitations. Although participants represented elementary, middle, and high school levels, there were only 10 veteran teachers participating in this study and their accounts are not enough to be generalized and may only represent a limited population. Another limitation is that participants' responses may have been influenced by other participants during the focus group conversations. Nonetheless, the data support the framework developed by the participants' experiences with PD.

Conclusion

Findings from this research study indicate that incorporating adult learning principles into the framework of PDs is insufficient for the success of PDs for veteran teachers. In this study, participants expressed that in addition to adult-learning principles, practices of care are paramount for successful PDs. This study expands the body of existing literature about PD by proposing a framework for PDs specially developed for veteran teachers. The findings demonstrate that veteran teachers have different learning needs and that PDs offered without their input will continue to be ineffective in aiding their pedagogical practices. As a result of this

study, it is my hope that veteran teachers are viewed as valuable resources to their building administrators and school district leaders. I am also hopeful that veteran teachers are respected for their wealth of pedagogical knowledge and that building administrators and school district leaders trust them enough to take charge of their own learning and provide them with PDs that are valuable and meet their professional learning needs. According to Noddings (2012), “good teachers must be allowed to use their professional and moral judgment in responding to the needs of their students.” This study urges administrators to use their professional and moral judgment in responding to the needs of their teachers.

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APPENDIX A



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DATE:

TO: FROM:

PROJECT TITLE:

REFERENCE #: SUBMISSION TYPE:

ACTION: APPROVAL DATE: EXPIRATION DATE: REVIEW TYPE:

REVIEW CATEGORY:

May 16, 2022

Livia Gama Fagundes, Master of Science in Education Molloy College IRB

[1909113-1] Professional Development for Veteran Teachers: Let Them Speak!

New Project

APPROVED

May 16, 2022 May 15, 2023 Expedited Review

Expedited review category # 6

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Molloy College IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a MINIMAL RISK project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of May 15, 2023.

- 1 -

Generated on IRBNet

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Patricia Eckardt at 516-323-3711 or peckardt@molloy.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Patricia Eckardt, Ph.D., RN, FAAN
Chair, Molloy College Institutional Review Board

This letter has been issued in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Molloy College IRB's records.

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

Professional Development for Veteran Teachers: Let Them Choose!

For all participants: The project description will be read to the participant and their questions will be answered, if there are any. The participant will provide consent, agreeing to be part of the study. A dated and signed copy of the consent will be shared with the participant.

Brief Project Description: The purpose of this grounded theory research study is to describe the veteran teacher's experience as it relates to professional development and discover what works for them to generate a framework for professional development that meets their professional learning needs. Professional development is defined as on-the-job training intended to help teachers stay up to date with their professional knowledge and application of that knowledge.

Please state your name and where you work.

I. Introduction

1. How long have you been teaching?

Probe: Are you a classroom teacher?

Probe: What grade(s) do you teach?

2. Do you believe that professional development is important? Why?

Probe: What do you consider to be the most/least important aspects of a professional development session?

Probe: Why do you feel that way?

3. How would you describe your past experiences with professional development?

Probe: Explain how you felt about professional development in the beginning of your career versus how you feel now? Do you find PD more/less useful? Why? What has changed?

II. *Concept of Andragogy*

1. Have you ever had/do you have the autonomy to choose your own professional development in your workplace?

Probe: How do you feel about/navigate that?

2. How do you feel when/would you feel if you had the autonomy to choose the topic or approach of your own professional development?

Probe: Why do you think you feel/would feel that way?

3. Tell me about a time when you felt like you were respected for your pedagogical knowledge and teaching experience.

Probe: Do you feel like the professional development sessions you attend enhances the knowledge that you already have? How so/why not?

4. How does a professional development session motivate you to apply what you learned in your classroom?

5. How, if at all, do you think a self-directed, individualized, professional development would impact your professional needs?

Probe: How would you identify the priorities for your own learning and professional development? What would you exclude/include in your own professional development?

6. Tell me about a time when a professional development session solved a challenge you were experiencing in your classroom.

III. *Aspects of Professional Development*

1. How would you describe yourself as a learner?
2. Name 3 important characteristics that all PD should have.

Probe: Why did you choose those?

Probe: How do you think those characteristics would benefit a PD?

3. Describe the perfect PD for you.

Probe: What types of things would you do? What would the focus be? When, for how long and how many times would you be participating in PD? Who else would be involved? Who would lead the PD? What would the end result be? What would you walk away with?

4. Tell me about a time you attended a professional development you loved.
5. If you could give advice/recommendations to people in charge of PD for your school/district about how best to meet the professional learning needs of teachers like you, what would you say?
6. Is there anything else you think I should know about veteran teachers, professional learning and professional development that could help schools and districts improve PD for veteran teachers? Any last thoughts or wonderings?

Thank you for your participation

APPENDIX C

Focus Group Protocol

1. Can you tell me more about the relationship between you and your administrator and how it impacts your professional development needs?
2. Give me an example of when your administrator listened to you and showed you genuine respect for your professional development needs.
3. Tell me about a time when your administrator encouraged you to apply something you learned during a PD session and celebrated your effort in doing so.
4. Can you give me an example of when you felt like your administration cared for you and your professional development needs?
5. Can you give me an example of when you did not feel like your administration cared for you and your professional development needs?
6. Tell me about a time when there was reciprocal trust between your administration and you regarding your professional development needs.