

TENURED TEACHER MOTIVATION FOR SELF-DIRECTED PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT IN LITERACY

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ABSTRACT

TENURED TEACHER MOTIVATION FOR SELF-DIRECTED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN LITERACY

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After receiving tenure, experienced teachers may choose to not participate in professional development opportunities. In fact, tenured teachers may only complete the minimum professional development hours required by their school districts. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the factors that motivated tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) to participate in self-directed professional development (SD-PD) in literacy. This study consisted of six tenured teachers (grades 3-6) who were recruited from three different schools in a suburban elementary school district in Nassau County, New York. Data were collected through one-on-one online interviews, a collection of participants' written diaries reflecting on their experiences with SD-PD in literacy, and brief descriptions of lesson plans which integrated concepts learned in SD-PD.

The findings of this study concluded that tenured teachers in grades 3-6 were motivated to participate in SD-PD in literacy by feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. In terms of autonomy, tenured teachers appeared motivated the most by how they learned (technique), and with whom they learned (team). The results of this study also demonstrated that tenured teachers in grades 3-6 were motivated by four main factors: (1) collaborating with colleagues, (2) gaining control over time, (3) meeting their own needs and their students' needs, and (4) having choices. The participants also described themselves as reflective teachers. The types of SD-PD in literacy that tenured

teachers (grades 3-6) selected included that of literacy coaching and online learning. In addition, the participants applied concepts learned in SD-PD in literacy in four areas: (1) generating writing lesson plans, (2) conducting reading and writing conferences, (3) using digital sources, and (4) conducting small groups online. Implications and recommendations for future research were also discussed.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my first teacher and mother, Judith Brady. She instilled in me a passion for learning and teaching. To this day she encourages and guides me throughout my life, always leading me to do more and be more because she believes I can. She has given me a true love of reading; a gift that can be opened again and again. Thanks mom.

And to Jim DiDominica, my love. He gives me strength to believe in myself and stands by me. Thank you for always supporting my work and allowing me the enormous amount of time away from “us” that this research study monopolized. Love you more.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

With the stringent demands of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Standards established under the Obama Administration, today's elementary school teachers are faced with tremendous pressure for their students to produce significant learning gains across all content areas. Since school effectiveness now rests upon student growth on rigorous state assessments, school leaders are emphatic that student outcomes are dependent on the quality of instruction (Blank & de las Alas, 2010; Jones, 2012). New state standards and assessments in English Language Arts (ELA), in addition to legislation that focuses on education reform, have brought a renewed focus on research-based literacy instruction. With this bolstered emphasis on instruction, educational reformers have highlighted the need for improved teacher quality.

Research has shown that the impact of a qualified teacher can have greater advances on student achievement than any other in-school variable (Strong, 2007). Therefore, teachers' participation in professional development (PD) activities, particularly in the areas of reading and writing, has become a topic of increasing interest. In fact, PD is one of the primary strategies enacted that improves teacher quality (Koellner & Jacobs, 2015; Yoon, Duncan, & Lee et al., 2007). Educators, researchers, and educational policy makers alike, agree that teacher PD is "vitally important to educational reform" (Bredeson, 2000, p. 385).

Guskey (2002) defined PD programs as "systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning

outcomes of students” (p. 381). The push toward improved teacher effectiveness in some U.S. states combined with advancements in technology, has led to a greater variety of PD opportunities for teachers. While programs provided by school districts tend to target the expansion of teachers’ knowledge, they typically only include traditional training sessions, workshops, and conferences on particular topics related to district initiatives. In addition, PD research has yet to determine how PD programs and activities affect teacher change and student achievement. In terms of student achievement nationwide, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2015a) reported that only 29% of eighth grade male students and 39% of female eighth grade students scored at or above proficiency levels on the literacy portion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). As a result, there is an even greater need for improved teacher quality.

Even prior to the CCSS and the Next Generation Standards, an intensified focus on higher student test scores and improved teacher efficacy highlighted the importance of PD. With the enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (US Congress, 2001), states were required to “ensure the availability of ‘high-quality’ professional development for all teachers” (Borko, 2004, p. 3). Unfortunately, NCLB did not define what constituted high quality PD or how it should be made available to teachers. However, it did focus on the importance of literacy instruction, in particular, the teaching of reading. NCLB called for qualified teachers to deliver research-based reading instruction (Putnam et al., 2009). According to Scarparolo and Hammond (2018), a teacher’s readiness and knowledge of reading instruction had been cited as an extremely important factor in the improvement of children’s literacy levels.

As a result of NCLB, Title II allocated nearly \$3 billion USD annually to states and districts to improve teacher quality. The U.S. Department of Education reported that 39% of Title IIA spending in 2008–2009 was used for PD of teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators (Jaquith et al., 2010). A more recent U.S. report found that over \$18 billion USD is spent each year on teacher PD programs. In addition, the same report noted that teachers spent approximately 90 hours annually on PD activities (The Melinda Gates Foundation, 2015). Most states in the US have laws that require teachers to participate in PD to obtain continuing credits for their licenses and some states provide funds for local districts to provide PD programs. Nevertheless, there is still a wide range of availability and levels of participation in PD among educators across the country. Wei, Darling Hammond, et al. (2009) reported that 90% of teachers they surveyed in the U.S. participated in short-term sessions and conferences but did not have opportunities to work with coaches and in small groups, reflect on their practice, or engage in content-specific learning. In addition, researchers noted that teachers who had participated in PD often responded with “less than positive feedback” (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018, p. 5). However, research has illustrated specific characteristics of PD that are effective in terms of teacher improvement and student achievement.

Overall, research in the U.S. and abroad has indicated that high-quality PD has had a positive impact on teachers’ instructional practices and can indirectly lead to student learning gains (Borko, 2004; Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 2002). Yoon et al. (2007) found that significant student learning gains resulted when teachers engaged in substantial PD. Studies also found that the majority of teachers participating in longer term PD activities reported positive changes to one or more areas of their teaching

practice (Bayer, 2014; Boyle et al., 2004). In a meta-analysis of over 900 research studies, Hattie (2012) found 150 influences on student achievement. A meta-analysis involves identifying an outcome (such as achievement) and then pinpointing an influence on that outcome (for example, teacher PD), and then searching databases of research studies. For each study, Hattie then calculated the effect size for comparison. Hattie determined that the influences that have over .40 effect size offer more than a year's growth for a year's worth of input. Overall, PD was found to have an effect size of .51 (Hattie, 2012) which meant it had a significant impact on student achievement. Hattie stressed that PD was "most beneficial when it is ongoing, focuses on student learning, teachers' goals and the school community" (DeWitt et al., 2017, p. 7).

Until recently, PD research has utilized a cause-and-effect approach to aid in understanding PD's effects on teacher improvement and student achievement (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). This relationship implies that an effective PD program for teachers will subsequently improve teacher knowledge and practice, and will in turn bolster student achievement. Yet, there is still a lingering question identified in the research that focuses on what constitutes effective PD (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Koellner & Jacobs, 2015). While there are characteristics that seem to define effective PD throughout research, there is little consensus on PD that specifically improves teacher quality and boosts student achievement (Guskey 2003).

With questions regarding what constitutes effective PD, research has uncovered that teachers' self-report their dissatisfaction with current PD offerings (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Wei et al., 2010). It appears that now is an appropriate time for

researchers to explore what types of professional development teachers value. There is a small body of literature that demonstrates that teachers prefer to self-direct their own professional development. This is largely because it allows teachers the autonomy to meet their own professional growth needs (Colbert et al., 2008). Self-directed professional development (SD-PD) “is defined as the professional development arising from the teachers’ own initiative. I.e. the process is internally determined and initiated” (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009, p. 376). SD-PD is selected by the teacher rather than required by a school district, to meet the teacher’s specific instructional needs.

According to Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009), SD-PD could be an important factor in determining the success or failure of PD programs. Mushayikwa and Lubben suggested that researchers had largely overlooked SD-PD because it was most prominent in deprived environments and places where there was a lack of resources to provide formalized PD. As a result, researchers have focused on evaluating the impact of centrally-directed PD (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009). SD-PD does not mean teachers are working independently. Many self-directed activities can be completed collaboratively (Voltz, Brazil, & Scott, 2004).

There are many types of SD-PD that teachers may choose. These include attending traditional facilitated workshops, in-service courses, and participating in study groups. It also includes reform types of PD such as working with an instructional or literacy coach, online learning, utilizing social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, and participating in book clubs and reading professional literature. SD-PD allows for a more differentiated approach to meet individual learner’s needs, and research has demonstrated the need for more of this type of PD (Visser et al., 2014). Since SD-PD is a form of PD

that allows teacher choice in selecting activities to learn best educational practices, it occurs when and where a teacher chooses while appealing to individual interests. This flexibility and appeal to teacher interests and needs encourages autonomous motivation for this form of PD.

According to Ryan and Deci (2008), autonomous motivation helps people become their true selves, whereas controlled motivation is experienced more as a source of external pressure. Teachers who are motivated to pursue SD-PD may do so since they are attempting to meet their own professional needs rather than being forced to participate in mandated PD activities. Autonomous motivations include motivations that come from internal sources as well as the types of extrinsic motivation in which an individual identifies with an activity's value and how it aligns with their sense of self. On the other hand, controlled motivations consist of a type of external regulation; a type of motivation in which a person acts out of the desire for external rewards or a fear of punishment (Ryan & Deci, 2008).

Overall, research over the past 20 years points to improved student learning when teachers are active learners, engaged in ongoing, collaborative PD activities that are in alignment with district initiatives. Some other important features of effective PD include reflective practice, immediate classroom application, "safe environments" to attempt new practices, and a means to assess the impact of new practices on student learning (Putnam et al., 2009, p. 208). SD-PD can be an important option for those learners who are self-directed and prefer to have autonomy over their professional growth. "Self-directed learners are animated with an uncommon will to learn, but what distinguishes them from

highly motivated students in formal situations, is their preference for autonomous learning” (Bouchard, 1996, p. 14).

Statement of the Problem

With greater demands placed on classroom teachers for higher student achievement, there is a need for teachers to participate in effective PD activities to improve their practice. Teachers new to the profession often participate in mandatory district provided PD as well as SD-PD. However, teacher participation in PD opportunities seems to decline once teachers have a significant number of years in the classroom (Gumus, 2013). Often times, experienced tenured teachers who do not receive additional compensation or credit toward future salary increases choose not to participate any PD, including SD-PD. According to New York State, once a teacher receives tenure, they have the right to retain their position and may only be terminated if there is just cause (New York Education Law 3020a). If experienced tenured teachers choose not to participate in any form of PD, particularly in literacy, there is a risk that they will not be able to stay current in best instructional practices in order to propel student growth over time.

Research has shown that overall good teaching matters and “high quality reading instruction really matters” (Kinnucan-Welsch et al., 2006, p. 426). Elementary school teachers are on the front line in terms of educating students to read and write. Teachers’ knowledge of language and phonology is one of the most important considerations in children’s success in acquiring the basic skills for reading (Scarparolo & Hammond, p. 493). According to Connor et al. (2014), although there are many factors that impact a

student's ability to read, "how we teach students to read for understanding and what we teach them impacts their learning" (p. 380).

Kinnucan-Welsch et al. (2006) further stated that there was a need for educators and policymakers to ensure that teachers were engaged in PD that supported good teaching. This aligns with Desimone et al., (2002) and Penuel et al. (2007) who indicated there was a substantial benefit when teachers partook in reform types of PD. Reform types of PD are common selections of SD-PD and include working with an instructional or literacy coach, utilizing online learning and social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, participating in book clubs, instructional committees, and mentoring. Although some research has concluded that both traditional and reform PD activities can provide a constructive approach, reform activities typically have a longer duration, which allows them to offer increased active learning opportunities for teachers (Garet et al., 2001). Researchers have also found that PD was most effective when schools empowered teachers to collaborate and become engaged in their learning, rather than being passive recipients of information (Desimone et al., 2002).

Some research has suggested that the majority of PD programs have failed because they did not consider (1) what motivated teachers to engage in professional development, and (2) the process by which change in teachers typically occurred (Guskey, 2002). Guskey and Sparks (2002) proposed that the content characteristics (the *what*), the process of teaching (the *how*), and the context of the instruction (the traits of the individuals involved, the environment of the PD and the students they serve), all contributed to an effective PD model.

Although researchers have identified specific elements of PD that were most effective for improving instruction and indirectly bolstering student achievement, there is still a paucity of research dedicated to teacher motivation and participation in PD, specifically SD-PD in literacy. Future research should concentrate more on how PD programs motivate and intellectually engage teachers, and whether said programs are meaningful to teachers themselves (Kennedy, 2016, p. 30). This is particularly important in an era in which teachers receive frequent messages from administrators about what they should be working on in their classrooms. In light of this, this current case study specifically explored tenured teacher motivation for SD-PD in literacy for teachers of grades 3-6. It sought to uncover the types of SD-PD in literacy tenured teachers chose and how they applied the concepts learned in SD-PD in literacy. This study may hold promise for the future of SD-PD, PD as a whole, as its goal was to improve teacher quality and instruction, and indirectly impact student achievement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study sought to understand the perceptions of its participants through in-depth interviews to determine what was common among them. In this study, the researcher focused on individual tenured teachers in an elementary school district in Nassau County, NY to understand what motivated them to participate in SD-PD in literacy. “A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g. activity, event, process or individuals) based on extensive data collection” (Creswell, 2013, as cited in Creswell, 2015, p. 469). Specifically, this study explored tenured elementary school teacher (grades 3-6) motivation for literacy-related SD-PD. In addition, the this study sought to uncover the types of SD-PD in literacy tenured teachers

in grades 3-6 selected to grow their professional knowledge and how they applied the concepts learned during SD-PD in literacy.

According to Kennedy (2016) there was a need to “replace the existing conception of ‘good’ PD as comprising a collection of particular design features with a conception that is based on more nuanced understanding of what teachers do, what motivates them, and how they learn and grow” (p. 30). Kennedy asserted that there was also a need to consider teachers as people with their own specific motivations and interests. Putnam et al. (2009) stated that researchers had begun to study PD and its impact on teachers’ literacy instruction. Therefore, there was a gap in the research regarding tenured teacher participation in SD-PD in literacy. By exploring this topic, the researcher sought to understand tenured teacher motivation for participation in various types of literacy-related SD-PD. This current study could assist elementary school leaders in understanding what motivates tenured elementary school teachers to participate in SD-PD in literacy. This study could also provide school leaders with information regarding specific reform types of SD-PD in literacy which tenured teachers select.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Understanding what motivates tenured teachers in (grades 3-6) to participate in ongoing, engaging SD-PD activities in literacy is critical for elementary school leaders. This information can support such school leaders in their effort to supply teachers with valuable SD-PD opportunities in literacy in an effort to improve classroom instruction. In this current study, Deci and Ryan’s (1985) Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provided the basis for studying teacher motivation for SDPD. According to SDT, people not only have different levels of motivation, but they also have different kinds of motivation. SDT

distinguishes between different types of motivation based on reasons or goals that encourages a person to pursue an action. (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable. Alternatively, extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to a separate outcome.

Ryan and Deci (2000a) developed SDT as a meta-theory for framing motivational studies, and provides a description of the roles of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in cognitive and social development and in individual differences. SDT also focuses on how social and cultural factors facilitate or undermine people's sense of initiative, in addition to their well-being and the quality of their performance. Conditions supporting the individual's experience of *autonomy*, *relatedness* and *competence* are argued to foster high quality forms of motivation and engagement for activities, including enhanced performance, persistence, and creativity (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). In terms of educational settings, Ryan and Deci (2000a) established the idea that motivation takes place when individuals have a sense of autonomy, feel connected to their school, and have the competence required to be successful in a school site. This theory was therefore used to understand what motivated teachers to pursue SD-PD in literacy.

Daniel Pink's Theory of Motivation 3.0 (2009) was also used in this current study as a lens to determine the value of autonomy. Both SDT and Motivation 3.0 theories have emphasized autonomy as an important motivational factor. In his theory Motivation 3.0, Pink (2009) stressed that people need autonomy over their work tasks (what they do), technique (how they do it), in addition to time (when they do it), and team (who they work with). Pink's theory states that engagement can produce mastery which means people can improve at something over time. In work, mastery begins with experiences

that are challenging and are matched with peoples' abilities. According to Pink, smart employers supplement responsibilities with additional tasks that are not too hard and not too easy. Finally, Pink (2009) asserted that people by nature seek purpose; people want to make a contribution and be part of something that is greater than themselves (p. 223).

The work of Ryan and Deci (2018) and Pink (2009) stand on the shoulders of psychologist Frederick Herzberg (1959). Herzberg studied motivation in the work environment. Herzberg established that there were two key factors that determined how motivated people are at work. The first factor he called "hygiene" factors which included extrinsic rewards such as pay, good working conditions, and job security. Herzberg found that while the lack of these factors would cause dissatisfaction, their presence did not lead to job satisfaction. The second key factor was "motivators" which included enjoyment for the work, genuine achievement of the work itself, and personal growth. Herzberg (1959) argued that job satisfaction came from making the work challenging and meaningful.

Both SDT and Motivation 3.0 are valid theories that were used in this current research study. Both theories provided a lens to understand what motivated tenured elementary school teachers in grades 3-6 to participate in SD-PD in literacy. This type of PD allows teachers to choose the formats, topics, and times that best meet their own needs and their position in their school (i.e. grade or content area). When teachers have autonomy, they may pursue learning for themselves as well as for their betterment of their students. Understanding what motivates tenured teachers to participate in SD-PD is central to SDT as well as Motivation 3.0. In particular, SDT was used in current study to determine if teachers were motivated to participate in SD-PD due to the behavioral feelings of autonomy, relatedness, or competence. Using Motivation 3.0, tenured teacher

motivation was further studied in terms of the factors of autonomy consisting of tasks, technique, time, and team. Figure 1 depicts the factors that may impact tenured teachers' motivation for SD-PD. According to SDT, motivation is impacted by each individual's feelings of *autonomy*, *relatedness* and *competence*. According to Daniel Pink's Motivation 3.0, factors of autonomy such as the tasks, technique, time and team may motivate tenured teachers to participate in SD-PD in literacy. Understanding tenured teachers' motivation for SD-PD in literacy is best understood by applying both theories.

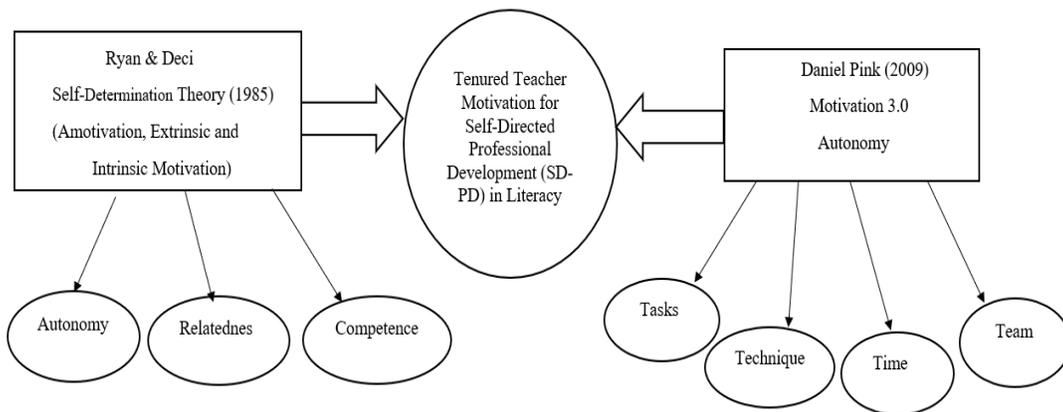


Figure 1. *Conceptual Framework*

There is a lack of literature specifically on what motivates tenured teachers (grades 3-6) to participate in SD-PD in literacy. Insight is required to determine the factors that affect their motivation for participating in SD-PD in literacy. According to SDT, forces that motivate people include *autonomy*, *relatedness*, and *competence*. When a teacher feels all three of these, they are more likely to be motivated to participate in SD-PD and work towards improving their practice. It is important to explore the feelings of teacher *autonomy*, *relatedness* and *competence* in terms of their motivation and

participation in SD-PD in literacy. These feelings will affect whether or not tenured teachers are highly motivated to participate in SD-PD in literacy.

In terms of Motivation 3.0, studying tenured teachers' motivation for SD-PD in literacy includes a closer look at their feelings of autonomy over their learning. The four tenets of autonomy are the tasks, technique, time and team. By determining which factors play a role in their participation, it may be possible for school districts to provide more SD-PD opportunities that specifically appeal to tenured teachers. Participation in SD-PD in literacy impacts teacher effectiveness and may indirectly impact student growth.

Significance/Importance of the Study

There was little research on what motivated teachers to participate in PD. According to Ng et al., (2010), "little is known about what factors motivate teachers to engage in professional learning" (p. 279). While there was significant research on PD, there was a lack of qualitative research that allowed tenured teachers to express their motivation for participating in SD-PD activities of their choice. This current study sought to address the current gap in qualitative research regarding tenured teacher (grades 3-6) participation in SD-PD in literacy. By participating in SD-PD in literacy, tenured teachers can select the learning opportunities in literacy that they feel best meet their needs and the needs of their students. Improving instruction may accelerate student growth in this vital curriculum area.

The results of this present research study provided an important reference for those seeking to understand tenured teacher motivation for SD-PD in literacy. Practical applications of the findings of the current study include deeper conversations around the importance of tenured teacher participation in SD-PD in literacy. It is important for

school leaders to understand what motivates elementary tenured teachers' to participate in SD-PD in literacy in order to create more effective learning opportunities in the future. The implications of this present study could also have an informative impact on how school leaders could support tenured teachers as they pursue SD-PD in literacy. Some policy implications may arise at the school and district levels in an attempt to create a positive school culture that encourages tenured teachers to continually improve their practice through SD-PD.

Research Questions

The purpose of this present was to explore tenured teachers' (grades 3-6) motivation for SD-PD specifically in the area of literacy. Therefore, the following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. What motivates tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) to participate in SD-PD in literacy?

RQ2. What types of SD-PD in literacy do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) select?

RQ3. How do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) apply the literacy concepts learned in SD-PD?

Methods

This study utilized a qualitative case study design. A case study is a type of research design where researchers focus on a program, event, or activity involving individuals as opposed to a group. "A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g. activity, event, process or individuals) based on extensive data collection" (Creswell, 2013, p. 469). This case study included a detailed description of a context and

its participants, and provided an analysis of the data for themes and patterns. The researcher sought to establish an in-depth understanding of the case by collecting multiple forms of data. Since the current study was an in-depth study, only a few cases were studied allowing the researcher to have sufficient time to devote to each case.

In this present study, six teachers were interviewed via Zoom, the web-based video conferencing platform, regarding their motivation for SD-PD. No in-person interviews were conducted. The interviews also addressed the SD-PD activities the tenured teachers participated in most recently. In addition, each participant wrote a short diary with reflections on their experiences with SD-PD in literacy. Finally, the researcher collected three participants' lesson plans that related to concepts learned during SD-PD in literacy. The lesson plans described the lesson, topic, method, or strategy in which the teacher applied what they learned. The data was triangulated using participants' interview responses, their written diaries, and the lesson plans that related to concepts learned during SD-PD in literacy.

Research Design and Data Analysis

In-depth interviews were the primary method of data collection. Six tenured elementary teachers in grades 3-6 met with the researcher for a series of three online interviews (Schuman, 1982). The first interview included a focused life history that provided the context of the participants' experience of SD-PD in literacy in relationship to their teaching careers. The second interview included the details of the participants' motivation for and experiences with SD-PD in literacy. The second and third interviews addressed two of the research questions: What motivates tenured elementary education teachers in grades 3-6 to participate in SD-PD in literacy? What types of SD-PD in

literacy do tenured elementary education teachers (grades 3-6) select? The third interview also provided an opportunity for the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experience with SD-PD in literacy. The one-on-one interviews took between 60-90 minutes each via Zoom. The participants answered a consistent compliment of open-ended interview questions (see Appendix C).

The participants' responses were transcribed and analyzed via NVivo software. Initially the participants' interview responses were coded to determine similarities and to uncover themes or patterns in the data. The researcher then analyzed the participants' responses to determine the most common factors that impacted teachers' motivation for SD-PD in literacy. Participants responses were then examined to note the impact of autonomy, relatedness and competence. Furthermore, participants' responses were then used to determine the impact of motivational factors in terms of Daniel Pink's Motivation 3.0 (2009). These factors included tasks, technique, time, and team and are described in detail in Chapter 2.

After interviewing participants, the researcher collected and examined participants' written diaries which included reflections on activities related to SD-PD in literacy. These diaries were coded in NVivo according to the type of SD-PD. Categories such as literacy coaching, online learning, Inservice courses, and reading professional books, were determined as some of the types of SD-PD participants select. Online learning was sorted by online workshops and websites, and the use of social media such as blogs, Twitter, and Facebook. In addition, the researcher collected lesson plans from three participants which were related to SD-PD in literacy. These lesson plans in literacy were examined to answer the final research question: How do tenured elementary school

teachers (in grades 3-6) apply the literacy concepts learned in SD-PD? Each of the participants' lesson plans were coded in NVivo for ways the participants applied their learning. The data were triangulated using participants' interview responses, participants' written diaries and lesson plans that reflect concepts learned during SD-PD in literacy.

Sample

The type of sampling method employed in this current study was a non-random or purposive sampling, as only tenured elementary education teachers who taught students in grades 3-6 were selected. The sample only included tenured teachers who had participated in SD-PD in literacy during the past two years. In addition, participants each had at least 16 years of teaching experience in the elementary classroom. They had participated in SD-PD in literacy throughout their careers. This sample was selected specifically to determine what motivated tenured teachers to pursue SD-PD in literacy, what types of SD-PD activities they selected and how they applied the literacy concepts they learned in SD-PD in their instruction. Researchers who use purposive sampling "use their judgement to select a sample that they believe, based on prior information, will provide the data they need" (Fraenkel et al., 2012, p. 100).

Participants

The participants in this current qualitative case study were tenured elementary school teachers in one suburban elementary school district in Nassau County, New York. The participants in this study consisted of six tenured elementary school teachers who taught students in grades 3-6. One participant taught multiple subjects including literacy. Four other participants taught reading and writing only. One final participant taught reading and social studies. The term tenured was defined by New York State as the right

to retain a position and only be terminated if there is just cause (New York State Education Law 3020a). The participants included one male and five female tenured teachers with at least 16 years teaching experience each.

Instruments

The data collection instruments for this current study included individual responses from one-on-one online interviews of tenured elementary school teachers in grades 3-6. In addition, participants' each provided a diary of written reflections on SD-PD in literacy. Lesson plans which included activities that reflected concepts learned during SD-PD were also provided by three participants. The interview instrument consisted of a compliment of several questions developed by the researcher to determine tenured teachers' motivation for participation in SD-PD in literacy (see Appendix D). The researcher created the interview instrument as no other specific instrument regarding teacher motivation or SD-PD in literacy could be found. The interview instrument determined the specific SD-PD activities that the participants frequently selected.

For the purpose of this current research study, "professional development refers to learning opportunities that engage teachers' creative and reflective capacities to strengthen their practice" (Bredeson, 1999, p 4). SD-PD refers to PD activities that the teacher chose to support their own professional practice. This researcher explored SD-PD specifically in the area of literacy. According to researchers Ryan and Deci (2000b), to be motivated means "to be moved to do something (p. 54)." The interview instrument reflected questions regarding the participants feelings regarding literacy instruction and their motivation for SD-PD in literacy. The content of the interview questions was appropriate for all participants since they were tenured teachers who participated in SD-

PD in literacy. The data were collected electronically from tenured teachers in the school district in the Spring of 2020 by the researcher. The instruments met the guidelines for protecting human subjects.

Procedures

This researcher conducted three one-on-one interviews with six participants who taught at one suburban elementary school district using a consistent compliment of questions (see Appendix D). The interviews were conducted via the web-based video conferencing platform Zoom. The first interview took approximately 20 minutes for each participant. The second and third interviews each took approximately 60 minutes to complete and included clear directions. The data were collected and analyzed using NVivo software. The participants were not informed of the interview questions in advance. The interview instrument met the guidelines for protecting human subjects. The participants provided a written diary of reflections on their experiences with SD-PD in literacy which was coded and analyzed using NVivo software. In addition, three participants submitted descriptions of lesson plans related to concepts learned during SD-PD in literacy which were also collected and analyzed using NVivo software.

Definition of Terms

Several key concepts were invaluable for this study: adult learning, blogs, coding, motivation, NVivo, professional development, self-directed professional development, school culture, trust, and Zoom. Therefore, in this following section, the researcher provided definitions of these key terms.

Adult learning. Many theorists agree that learning represents change, change in the individual, due to the interaction of the individual and their environment, and the

change in behavior as a result of experience. Learning theorists Knowles et al., provided a concise definition: “Learning is the process of gaining knowledge and expertise” (2015, p. 17).

Blogs/blogging. Blogs are becoming a popular tool for teaching and learning. According to Yang (2009) blogs are online informational sites where individuals share regular journal-like updates on a topic. Readers can provide comments back to the authors and engage in longer conversations about the topic. The social networking opportunities blogging offers provides educators a way for teachers to participate in ongoing conversations about their work (Hall, 2018). Those that write blogs, called bloggers, are able to create communities of practice among teachers that allow them to give and receive feedback, and foster social interactions that support their professional development (Hanuscin et al., 2014).

Coding. Coding is one way to analyze qualitative data. For the purpose of this study, coding was a way of categorizing and analyzing the raw data to show emerging patterns.

Motivation. Although there are many definitions of motivation as well as disagreement over its precise nature, Schunk et al. (2004) provided a general definition: “Motivation is the process whereby goal-directed activities are instigated and sustained” (p. 5). Motivation is described as a process as opposed to a product. One cannot observe motivation directly but instead infer its presence from actions and verbalizations. According to researchers Ryan and Deci (2000b) “to be motivated means to be moved to do something” (p. 54). In terms of educational settings, Ryan and Deci, (2003) established the idea that motivation takes place when individuals have a sense of

autonomy, feel connected to their school and that they have the competence required to be successful in a school site.

NVivo. Qualitative analysis software created by QSR International that provided the means to organize and code the qualitative data and transcripts.

Professional development. Professional development (PD) can include any formal and informal activities in and out of school that support teachers' growth and improvement in practice (Guskey, 2000). In this current study, PD referred to traditional workshops, in-service courses, and collegial conversations, as well as online reform-like PD such as webinars and online workshops, and use of social media applications such as Twitter and Edmodo. It also included job-embedded PD provided by literacy coaches. PD referred "to learning opportunities that engage teachers' creative and reflective capacities to strengthen their practice" (Bredeson, 1999, p. 4). According to Diaz-Maggioli (2004), PD was an ongoing process rather than a one-time experience in which teachers reviewed their teaching practices and learned how to better respond to their student needs.

Self-directed Professional Development (SD-PD). Self-directed professional development (SD-PD) was defined as "the professional development arising from the teachers' own initiative, i.e. the process is internally determined and initiated" (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009, p. 376). Unlike PD which may be assigned or directed by the school building or district leader, the teacher determines the timeline and with whom they are participating in this form of PD. Knowles (1975) proposed that self-directed learning by teachers assumed that they do for themselves exactly what they did for their students. This included engaging in learning activities and evaluating learning outcomes.

Zoom. Zoom is a web-based video conferencing platform that allows people to meet with each other via video and audio on Windows, Mac, IOS, and Android

systems. Zoom also allows screen sharing of documents among all participants in attendance.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this current study was to explore tenured teacher (grades 3-6) motivation for self-directed professional development (SD-PD) in literacy. In addition, this present study sought to determine the types of SD-PD in literacy tenured teachers participated in and how the concepts they learned through this form of professional development (PD) were applied in their daily instruction. This chapter provides a review of the significant theories of motivation, as well as current research on PD including SD-PD. The purpose of the theoretical framework and the literature review is to comprehensively describe the research related to teacher motivation and SD-PD.

The first section in this chapter, the theoretical framework, is divided into Self-Determination Theory and Motivation 3.0. This literature review consists of sections on adult learning, self-directed learning, ongoing, active and collaborative professional development, self-directed professional development, reform types of professional development, literacy coaching, teacher-led professional development, online learning and social media, and other informal learning. As discussed in Chapter 1, despite the preponderance of research on professional development, there was a gap in the research on SD-PD, particularly in the area of elementary tenured teacher (grades 3-6) motivation for SD-PD in literacy.

Theoretical Framework

Self-Determination Theory

The research on motivation is important to consider in terms of teacher participation in any form of PD. The present study sought to understand what motivated

tenured teachers in grades 3-6 to participate in SD-PD in literacy. Teachers who are motivated to participate in SD-PD may value learning. As a result, they may seek ways to grow their knowledge and improve their professional practice. Researchers have found that people can be motivated by external factors such as salary increases, reward systems, scores, evaluations, or the opinions they fear others might have of them. In the field of education, both students and teachers can be motivated this way. However, it is just as common that people are motivated from within by their own interests, curiosity, and passions. These intrinsic motivations are not necessarily externally rewarded, but nonetheless it is believed that they can sustain passions, creativity, and effort (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). By studying tenured teacher motivation for SD-PD, the researcher sought to uncover if teachers were motivated by feelings of autonomy, competence, or relatedness.

Researchers Ryan and Deci developed the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) which is an approach to human motivation that is framed in terms of social and environmental factors that *facilitate* as opposed to *undermine* intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). According to Ryan and Deci (2000a) motivation is highly valued because it has consequences: motivation produces. “People can be motivated because they value an activity or because there is strong external coercion” (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 69). Even just a superficial reflection of motivation suggests that people are motivated to act by different factors, with varied experiences and consequences. SDT supplies a differentiated approach to motivation by exploring the kind of motivation that is being exhibited at any given time. The theory considers the forces that cause a person to act and therefore is able to identify several different types of motivation.

Cognitive Evaluation Theory

One sub theory of SDT, Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), was established by Ryan and Deci to specify the factors in social contexts that produced a variability in intrinsic motivation. CET emphasizes that interpersonal events and structures, such as rewards and feedback, that lead to feelings of competence (or self-efficacy), can enhance intrinsic motivation because they allow for the satisfaction of the basic psychologic need for competence. CET also states that feelings of competence will not enhance intrinsic motivation unless they go along with a sense of autonomy. Therefore, for a high level of intrinsic motivation, people must feel satisfaction of needs for both competence and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000b).

Conditions supporting the individual's experience of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are argued to foster high quality forms of motivation and engagement for activities, including enhanced performance, persistence, and creativity (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). While people have intrinsic motivational tendencies, research has demonstrated that the maintenance and growth of this propensity requires supportive conditions. Ryan and Deci's research (2000a) has revealed that tangible rewards, as well as threats, directives, pressured evaluations, and other imposed goals, diminish intrinsic motivation. This is because they generate from an external point of causality. Threats, deadlines, directives, and competition reduce intrinsic motivation because according to CET, people view each as a controller of their behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). In one meta-analysis (Deci, Koestner et al., 2001) found that almost every type of tangible reward dependent upon task performance undermined intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, "choice, acknowledgement of feelings, and opportunities for self-direction were found to enhance

intrinsic motivation because they allowed people a greater feeling of autonomy” (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 70).

Self-motivation rather than external motivation, “is at the heart of creativity, responsibility, healthy behavior, and lasting change” (Deci, 1995, p. 9). The researcher added that although external pressure could bring about compliance, compliance came with negative consequences, including the urge to resist. Teachers who are forced to participate in professional development activities may be more resistant due to these external pressures. In fact, Colbert et al. (2008) found that prescribed professional development programs may even negatively impact teachers taking steps to improve their instruction. They found that teachers in California actively sought authentic professional development activities to increase academic content knowledge. When teachers are empowered to develop a PD plan for themselves, the researchers stated, “their passion for teaching and improving the lives of their students is greatly enhanced” (Colbert et al., 2008, p. 146). According to Ryan & Deci (2000a), autonomous motivation enables people to realize their authentic self. In the current study, the researcher examined teachers’ feelings of autonomy when choosing SD-PD activities to improve their own instructional practices.

Roth et al., (2007) examined teachers’ autonomous motivation for teaching according to Ryan and Deci’s SDT. In a quantitative study, the researchers presented 132 female teachers with a questionnaire assessing autonomous motivation for teaching, feelings of exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and social desirability bias. In addition, 1,255 students in grades 3-6 were also included in the study. The students were provided with a questionnaire that assessed their teachers’ autonomy-supportive and competence-

supportive teaching behaviors and their own autonomous motivation for studying in that particular teacher's classroom (Roth et al., 2007, p. 764). The researchers found that teachers differentiated among four types of motivation that fell in a continuum of relative autonomy as shown in the SDT. The results concluded that autonomous motivation for teaching was positively associated with teachers' sense of personal accomplishment and negatively with teachers' feelings of exhaustion. In addition, "the association of autonomous teacher motivation with the provision of choice and relevance suggests that this type of motivation is indeed highly desirable and growth promoting" (Roth et al., p. 770). The results of the study emphasized the importance of the teachers' sense of autonomy and could lead to questions regarding policy and administration processes that may affect their sense of autonomy. Masuda et al., (2013), found that teachers were adamant that anything learned from PD needed a component that allowed for application and for this, teachers required autonomy.

Other studies determined that the work environment influenced teacher motivation for professional development. Wagner and French (2010) found that the work environment needed to facilitate interest in and motivation for professional growth. Their mixed-method study aligned with Ryan and Deci's SDT. The findings indicated that teachers' motivation for professional growth was influenced by the interactions between the individual teacher, the context of the professional development activity itself, and the teacher's work environment (p. 169). The study, which surveyed 54 early childhood teachers, found that professional development activities should encourage individuals to engage in tasks that are challenging, offer choices, and build a sense of community. According to the researchers, work environments need to be created that facilitate interest

in professional growth and “be supportive of teachers’ attempts to change” (Wagner & French 2010, p. 170). Furthermore, the researchers stated that designers of PD would benefit from structuring the work and the professional development contexts specifically in ways that empowered teachers (Wagner & French, 2010).

More recent studies confirmed that teachers motivation to learn and engage in professional development is dependent on “teachers’ competence, efficacy, fulfillment of basic professional needs, career advancement and collaborations and interpersonal relations” (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018, p. 25) In their qualitative study, Appova and Arbaugh interviewed 36 math teachers from two high schools, three junior high schools and three middle schools. The teachers’ experience level varied from novice to veteran teachers. The participants were asked specific questions regarding their experiences with professional development and they were also provided opportunities to describe themselves as learners. The findings of the study produced 147 teacher motivation to learn codes which were divided into seven motivation to learn categories:

to influence students and their learning, to learn with/from other teachers, to become a ‘better’ teacher, to fulfill PD requirements, to constantly seek and engage in learning as a ‘habit’, to gain knowledge about topics of teachers own interests and to pursue further learning if funds, time, and resources are available (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018, p. 10).

Appova and Arbaugh (2018) also found that teachers had a sense of responsibility for students’ learning which encouraged them to engage in professional development to become better teachers. They added that what teachers found rewarding for their professional learning was not at all what was considered rewarding by administrators.

According to the study, stipends and compensation were found to be critical for supporting teachers' opportunities for individual learning particularly outside their contract hours. However, it was discovered that administrators did not make these types of funds available to teachers but rather used these funds to sponsor in-contract administrator led meetings. These types of practices were actually seen to demotivate teachers and made them skeptical about a district's appreciation for teachers' learning (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018). This research tied to the lack of choice districts often give to classroom teachers in selecting learning opportunities that meet their needs.

Despite teachers' motivation to learn, teacher professional communities and collective learning opportunities need to be supported by the district, or they will decline over time (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018). Finally, their findings suggested that teachers' motivation to learn was strongly based on teacher's professional and learning needs, and readiness to learn, as well as opportunities that are available to them (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018). Understanding teachers' motivations and their ability to adapt their professional development can inform providers of PD on how to be more responsive to teacher needs (Van Duzor, 2010).

Motivation 3.0

Adding to the plethora of research on motivation by Ryan and Deci, Pink (2009) emphasized the importance of autonomy, mastery, and purpose in human motivation. This current study explored the factors that tenured teachers (grades 3-6) feel most motivated them to pursue SD-PD in literacy. Pink's theory, Motivation 3.0, also presumed that humans have a third drive, one that is to learn, to create, and to better the world. There were tenured teachers in the present study who considered themselves

lifelong learners who were motivated by the will to learn and create. This is in contrast to Motivation 2.0 or the idea that humans respond to rewards and punishments in their environment. It also deviates from Motivation 1.0 which assumed that humans are biological creatures, struggling for survival in the world (Pink, 2009, p. 225).

Autonomy

Pink's theory, Motivation 3.0, (2009) focuses on the belief that people need autonomy over their work in terms of their tasks (what they do), technique (how they do it), time (when they do it), and finally, team (who they work with). This current research study examined tenured teacher motivation for SD-PD in literacy in terms of the following four aspects of autonomy:

Tasks

Autonomy over tasks is one of the most important aspects of Motivation 3.0. Pink (2009) asserted that companies that allow employees autonomy over their tasks have grown through innovation and reform. Corporations such as Google Inc., have benefitted from the creativity that has blossomed from this autonomy. Google allows its employees to work on a side project one day a week, during which time they either can fix an existing project or create something entirely new. Good leaders understand the importance of letting workers have autonomy over their tasks (Pink, 2009).

Technique

Technique, according to Pink (2009), is *how* a worker accomplishes his job tasks. Instead of providing specific protocols, some employers allow workers to generate their own path to successfully meeting their goals. For example, scripts are not being provided to some online customer service representatives, rather just a directive to meet the

customers' needs. This trend has also opened up opportunities for those who seek to work from home or other locations outside the traditional workplace. Productivity and job satisfaction seem to be higher at home, rather than in conventional workplaces, largely because people are more comfortable and less monitored at home. Pink (2009) asserted that it also draws a wider range of employees- such as students, parents, retirees and those with disabilities - who want to work but “who need to do it their own way” (p 102).

Time

In the past, work was defined by the time or schedule that employees kept day to day. Employers would also focus on keeping track of time to keep workers on their toes. Today more employees have flexibility in their schedules, allowing them to adjust their days to best meet their work goals. Pink states that without control over time, it is almost impossible to have autonomy in life (2009).

Team

While people may seek out opportunities for employment that give them autonomy over their task, technique and time, having the ability to choose their team is much rarer. Today, only a few organizations understand the benefits of offering employees some freedom over those with whom they work. Research that shown that people working in teams they established themselves are more satisfied than those working in inherited teams (Parker & Wall et al., 1998). In addition, studies by Deci have shown that people who possess high intrinsic motivation make better coworkers overall (Gange & Deci, 2005).

Motivation 3.0 builds from the belief that people want to be accountable in their work – but that by giving them control of their tasks, technique, time and team is the

most effective way to get to that destination (Pink, 2009, p. 105). In addition to autonomy, Pink (2009) outlines the need for people to seek mastery in order for them to be highly motivated in their work.

Mastery

Another tenet of Motivation 3.0 is the importance of engagement as opposed to compliance. Engagement can lead to mastery which means people can become better at something over time. In work, mastery begins with experiences that are challenging and are matched with peoples' abilities. As a result, employers who are smart supplement responsibilities with additional tasks are not too hard or too easy. Mastery follows three essential rules: it is a mindset, it takes effort and deliberate practice, and finally, it is impossible to fully achieve, which makes it both frustrating and appealing (Pink, 2009).

Purpose

Equally important as pursuing mastery, Pink (2009) asserted that people, by nature, seek purpose. People want to make a contribution and be part of something that is greater than themselves. It is this feeling of purpose, or "purpose maximization" that will become as motivating as seeking higher profits or "profit maximization" (p. 223). It is because of the need for purpose, that employers should spend more time showing people why they are doing something rather than telling them how to do it.

The work of Ryan and Deci and Pink stand on the shoulders of psychologist Frederick Herzberg (1959). Herzberg studied motivation in the work environment. Herzberg established that there are two key factors that determine how motivated people are at work. The first factor he called "hygiene" factors which included extrinsic rewards such as pay, good working conditions and job security (Pink, 2009, p. 212). Herzberg

found that while the lack of these factors would cause dissatisfaction, their presence did not lead to job satisfaction. The second key factor is motivators which include enjoyment for the work, genuine achievement of the work itself, and personal growth. Herzberg argued that job satisfaction came from making the work challenging and meaningful (Pink, 2009).

Review of Related Literature

The following section details the literature related to this present research study on tenured teacher motivation for SD-PD in literacy. It includes sections on adult learning, self-directed learning, ongoing and active professional development, self-directed professional development, reform-types of professional development including literacy coaching, teacher-led professional development, online learning and social media and other informal learning.

Adult Learning

According to the New Oxford Dictionary (2010), the term learning is the “acquisition of knowledge or skills through experience, study or being taught.” There is a clear difference between learning and education. According to Knowles, Holton III et al. (2015), the term education focuses on the educator who provides the stimuli or reinforcement for learning and also plans activities to create change (p. 11). Knowles et al., (2015), provided a concise definition that learning “is the process of gaining knowledge and expertise” (p. 17).

Although the learning needs of adults are different than children, the demands placed on both teachers and students have grown tremendously in recent years. Teachers of the 21st century have been bombarded with educational reforms, changes in

curriculum, including more innovative activities and demanding assessments, along with preparing students for more rigorous state standards. Only teachers who are continually learning to improve their practice and learn new instructional strategies can help others learn (Trust, 2012).

Simultaneously, researchers have agreed that teachers were often provided with PD opportunities that were not always engaging and sufficient to meet these demands. District provided PD, one-shot workshops, with expert facilitators and top down approaches do not always meet the needs of today's teachers. Patton et al. (2015) criticized traditional teacher workshops for failing to provide follow-through or sufficient support for teachers to make growth. Instead, some researchers have suggested that staff developers turned to adult learning theories to uncover how adults learn best (Gregson & Sturko, 2007).

Knowles et al. (2015) established several assumptions about the needs of adult learners. The first assumption was that adult learners learn what they need to know. Researchers Gregson and Sturko (2007), believed that teachers should be actively involved in planning their own PD, based on what they believe they need to be better teachers. PD planning should be a collaborative effort among all stakeholders, including teachers. Teachers should know how they impact students so they can take ownership and focus their own learning opportunities. Adults are responsible for their own learning (Knowles et al., 2015). Adults will resent learning situations in which they feel they are being told what to learn. This leads to the belief that self-directed learning is more aligned with an adults' sense of autonomy. Teachers should be active contributors in their PD experiences in order for them to be meaningful (Gregson & Sturko, 2007).

Another assumption by Knowles et al. (2015) is the role of the learners' experiences. Since adults are at different levels of experience, they have a wide range of diverse experiences to build upon. As a result, learning styles and activities that involve groups and collaboration should be included in the adult learning process. The fourth assumption is that adult learners must be ready to learn. Providers of PD should take into account the stages of the teachers' development so that the teacher is ready to learn concepts that will help him or her at that time.

Finally, motivation plays an important role in adult learning. According to Knowles et al., adults are motivated to learn if they believe that what they are learning will be immediately applicable to their own life or work experience. They learn new knowledge, skills and understandings most effectively when they are presented in real-life situations (Knowles et al. 2015). According to the research on adult learning, PD should include practical strategies and ideas that teachers can use immediately in their classrooms. In accordance with much of the research on motivation, Knowles et al. (2015), stated that while adults were responsive to external motivators (i.e. better jobs and higher salaries), the most powerful motivators were internal pressures (i.e. the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life etc.) However, at times, barriers such as time constraints, attitudes towards learning and programs that ignore adult learning principals will impact or block this motivation (Knowles et al. 2015).

Self-Directed Learning

The idea that adults can be self-directed learners has received much attention in adult learning research. Teachers are adult learners who look for ways to engage in learning that is relevant to their content knowledge and pedagogy. Therefore, they can be

considered self-directed learners. Self-directed learning (SDL), according to learning theorists is the process whereby individuals take the initiative over their own learning, with or without the help of others. In this form of learning, adults determine their own learning needs, create their own learning goals, identify learning materials, implement their own learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes (Knowles, 1975).

SDL is synonymous with self-teaching, which means that learners are capable of taking over teaching themselves a particular subject. SDL is derived out of personal autonomy. This autonomy means taking control of the purposes and goals of learning and having ownership of it. These two tenets of SDL are independent of one another, but they may overlap. (Knowles, 2015). Knowles (2015) stated that while an adult learner may not choose to be self-directed, it does not invalidate the core principal that adults have a self-concept of being independent. He believed that it was having the freedom to choose their learning strategy that was critical. The biggest problem occurs when adult learners want to have more independence in their learning but are not given the opportunity to do so (Knowles, 2015). Teachers seek more opportunities for their own learning paths rather than being tied to district initiatives that may not directly relate to their every day practices.

Self-directed teacher learning is said to bring about buy-in among teachers which can lead to greater teacher change. In their case study, Slavit and McDuffie (2013) determined that self-directed teacher learning was a means for teachers to explore questions about their practice. When the teacher community is involved in pursuing answers to these questions, buy-in occurs. This buy-in supports teachers' attitudes that improving practice should be a priority in their work, and this focuses their attention and

awareness on ways to change (Slavit & McDuffie, p. 104) . The researchers suggested that there was potential for teachers to reach beyond their own classrooms and impact state-wide educational policies.

Self-directed learning may work best when there is a framework (Slavit & McDuffie, 2103), one that teachers can follow for selecting, monitoring, and assessing progress toward a self-identified area for professional growth (Shurr & Hirth, 2014). In a study focused on teachers of students with moderate and severe disabilities, Shurr and Hirth employed a model of self-directed learning that included a step-by-step process for improving professional practice in the areas of the classroom (knowledge and skills for the teacher), the community (actions to improve community inclusion and support), and the field as a whole (social justice for students). The researchers found that such a model could help teachers improve what was motivating and most pressing in their own classrooms to increase knowledge, teaching effectiveness, and ultimately student outcomes.

Ongoing, Active and Collaborative Professional Development

research conducted over the span of 20 years has provided many definitions and descriptions of teacher PD. Day (1999) outlined a broad definition of professional development stating that it constitutes “all the natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school” which contribute to the quality of education in the classroom (p. 4). According to Day (1999) it is through professional development that teachers review, reflect, and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching. The view of the individual teacher as a key figure or change agent

in education is not new, yet many school districts still emphasize a general one-size fits all policy for PD. Guskey (2002) defined traditional PD programs as “systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students” (p. 381). However, just as schools and teachers vary greatly, so do professional development strategies, techniques, and activities. None of these works equally in all settings (Guskey, 2009).

Among the research on teacher professional development, there is a greater emphasis on professional development in the areas of math and science, rather than literacy. Only recently have researchers begun to study the impact of teacher professional development and its impact on literacy instruction and student growth (Putman et al., 2009). Nonetheless, as noted in the Nation’s Report Card in Reading, there were large amounts of students in the U.S. that continued to struggle in reading (Lee, Grigg et al., 2007). Researchers agreed that without intervention, these elementary students would continue to lag behind their peers in reading and in other content areas. Early intervention in literacy for these students is crucial. Ongoing PD for teachers in literacy is believed to be a key component to supporting student growth in reading and writing.

While researchers have uncovered specific elements that make PD effective, there are still questions as to what types of PD and which specific implementation methods work best for improving teacher effectiveness. In addition, there is an uncertainty in regards to the impact teacher PD has on student achievement. Research has suggested that majority of formal professional development programs fail because they do not consider: (1) what motivates teachers to engage in PD, and (2) the process by which change in teachers typically occurs (Guskey, 2002).

According to a recent report, researchers concluded that effective professional development was ongoing, content focused, and encouraged active learning, collaboration, feedback, and reflection. It also provided coaching and expert support over time (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Researchers also agreed that it was essential to consider the effectiveness of professional development in terms of student growth (Guskey, 2003; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Overall, researchers have agreed that effective PD time be “well organized, carefully structured, clearly focused and purposefully directed” (Guskey, 2009).

Professional development that goes beyond the traditional one-time workshops, training sessions, and conferences is more effective and impactful on classroom instruction (Bayer, 2014; Boyle et al., 2004; Thoonen, et al., 2011). Research has also shown that reflective, collaborative PD that deepens understanding and provides feedback to teachers, leads to a change in practices and has a greater impact on classroom instruction (Colbert et al., 2008; Darling–Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Desimone, et al., 2002; Guskey, 2002).

Researchers have found that teachers participate in and value some forms of PD, particularly long-term professional development, tied to their specific needs. (Bayer, 2014; Kwakman, 2003; Yurtseven, 2017) In a quantitative study, Gumus (2013) explored the various teacher and school level factors associated with teachers’ participation in professional development. Gumus (2013) found that teachers participated in fewer professional development activities as they became more experienced. He concluded that teachers who believed that they could make a difference (teacher self-efficacy) in student achievement actually participated in more PD activities. Teachers

new to the profession, may participate in professional development more frequently than their more senior colleagues. According to Gumus (2013), this is because newer teachers generally believed they could have a greater impact on student achievement.

Oftentimes traditional single-session professional development programs provided by school districts are planned “independently of teachers’ needs” and then become an extra burden rather than a support to the work of the classroom (Yurtseven, 2017, p. 120). Yurtseven interviewed 526 teachers to investigate their metaphoric perceptions about PD. The results of this qualitative study concluded that teachers regarded participation in PD as an important and even indispensable part of their profession. Teachers in the study showed willingness to participate in some forms of longer-term PD to improve their instructional practices (Yurtseven, 2017).

In another qualitative research study exploring teacher perceptions of professional development, Bayer (2014) sought to establish key components of effective professional development. Bayer found that teachers defined any professional development activity as effective if it was based on their needs and provided for an extended time. Bayer found that the majority of teachers (12 out of 16) complained when they had no input in the planning of the PD activities, and as a result they felt disconnected from the subject matter and found the topics unhelpful. According to the study, another key component that teachers regarded as important in effective PD was high quality instructors. Overall, research has shown that teachers participated in longer term PD when it allowed for choice, and it was related to their specific needs in the workplace (Bayer, 2014; Boyle et al., 2004; Yurtseven, 2017).

Kwakman (2003) found that although teachers placed a high value on PD, their actual participation in some activities was disappointing. In a qualitative study, Kwakman found that some reflective and collaborative professional learning activities were not very common in the schools. In addition, the researcher found that participation in professional learning activities depended upon the personal characteristics of the teachers themselves (Kwakman, 2003).

Overall research has shown that teachers' engagement in PD, particularly opportunities to experiment and reflect, is a powerful predictor for teaching practices (Kwakman, 2003; Thoonen, et al. 2011) Collaboration is considered an important opportunity for teachers to problem-solve and provide feedback to each other. Thoonen, et al. (2011) found that teachers' sense of self-efficacy appeared to be the most important motivational factor for explaining teacher learning and teaching practices. Instead of typical one-day workshops and training sessions, the researchers emphasized the importance of PD that was centered on teacher learning and engagement in a variety of activities which creates a community of learners (Thoonen et al., 2011).

Desimone et al. (2002) found that when teachers participated in professional development where they were not simply passive receivers of information, it increased the impact of the professional development activity on student learning. The findings aligned with existing research that suggested teachers needed opportunities to interact with their colleagues on a regular basis to discuss their work and their students' learning. According to Desimone et al. (2002), to develop meaningful professional development plans, districts need to create the foundation to plan and implement the types of activities that teachers need to improve student learning (p. 105).

As a result of the widespread focus on high stakes testing, teachers are often expected to attend professional development sessions and utilize new programs in literacy that supports gains in assessments. Researchers Boardman and Woodruff (2004) studied the implementation a new reading program provided to teachers through professional development. The findings of the study were consistent with research that demonstrated an increased use of new information learned during professional development sessions when there was alignment between the new practice and the daily activities of the classroom teacher. The researchers stated that the test provided a framework for teaching reading strategies that might otherwise have been ignored. The researchers concluded that an emphasis on testing provided a way for teachers to monitor student progress and plan for growth (Boardman & Woodruff, 2004).

Zaslow et al. (2010) reviewed 37 studies of effective professional development programs in emergent literacy and found several common themes. The researchers found that the most successful professional development programs provided teachers with researched-based practices, time for goal setting and reflection, as well as supporting teachers with useful, accessible materials. Another finding of this meta-analysis was the benefit of a community of learners in a PLC. More research is needed in the area of teacher professional development and its impact on student learning. In order to gain authentic evidence on the impact of professional development, there needs to be a greater focus on its ultimate goal which is improvements in student learning (Guskey, 2003). Indicators of student achievement such as performance assessments, portfolio evaluations and scores from standardized tests could be studied, in order to determine the impact of teacher professional development. Other behavioral outcomes could also be examined,

including student attendance, participation in school activities and drop-out rates (Guskey, 2003).

It is clear in the research that PD activities that fostered active learning and growth of knowledge in particular areas positively affected teaching practices (Boardman & Woodruff 2004; Buczynski & Hansen, 2010; Desimone, et al., 2002). Coburn (2004) determined that teachers were more likely to transfer their learning and implement new policy ideas that were consistent with their prior ideas of teaching, discussed over time and voluntary. Through professional development activities, teachers developed a better understanding of content material and thus there is a trend toward higher student achievement (Buczynski, & Hansen, 2010; Martin et al., 2018). In agreement with this, Borko (2014) stated that while there was evidence that PD could lead to improvements in instructional practices as well as student learning, researchers were only beginning to learn exactly what and how teachers learn from PD.

When teachers expressed negative feelings of PD in the research, it was largely a result of not having choice in the topics or the activities, or being part of the planning of the PD (Bayer, 2014; Martin, et al., 2018). According to Colbert, Brown et al., (2008), when teachers were forced to participate in PD activities by their administration, they were typically not enthusiastic and they often found that such programs did not align with what they did in their classrooms. Also, teachers found that PD had a negative impact on student learning when they had to leave their classrooms and receive PD that was not considered beneficial (Martin, et al., 2018).

Martin et al., (2018) also found that there was a clear gap between PD offered and what teachers felt that they actually needed to improve student achievement. This

confirmed the need for more research on teacher motivation for SD-PD. Teachers who are motivated to participate in professional development that is self-initiated are able to choose the opportunities that they feel best meet their instructional goals. The types of SD-PD activities that they select is important to determine so school leaders can make these options available to teachers.

Self-Directed Professional Development

This present study sought to examine tenured elementary school teachers' motivation for SD-PD opportunities in literacy. SD-PD allows all teachers the opportunity to choose the professional development that they feel best meets their professional needs. It is an alternative form of PD that allows teachers more control over their learning which may better meet their needs for accelerating student achievement. Self-directed professional development is defined as “the professional development arising from the teachers' own initiative, i.e. the process is internally determined and initiated” (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009, p. 376). Researchers have found SD-PD to be an effective approach to professional development focused on teaching practices (Lopes, 2017; Meng, 2014) and particularly for teachers working in deprived communities (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009). SD-PD helps teachers keep up with the expanding amount of information relative to their profession, addresses individual needs and encourages a high-level of professional performance (Minott, 2010).

Due to the rapidly growing amount of information available in the field, as well as the expertise needed in education today, initial PD training sessions are becoming insufficient to enable teachers to be effective on the job. As a result, researchers have suggested that teachers have an attitude of personal growth and life-long learning (Brown

et al., 2001). SD-PD allows teachers to opportunities to keep up to date with this expanding information. In addition, SD-PD can be used to address specific individual teacher needs. As opposed to formal trainings and workshops, SD-PD allows teachers to direct their own development, to improve their confidence and to reflect on one's own teaching (Grootenboer, 2009).

Although some researchers found disadvantages of SD-PD, Minott (2010) found that the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages. Minott identified several benefits of self-directed professional development and they include: (1) addressing individual needs, (2) empowering teachers, (3) allowing knowledge creativity to come from the teacher, and (4) promoting reflection. This reflective teaching goes hand-in-hand with SD-PD as it allows the teachers to take responsibility of their own professional learning.

Craig (1999) found that SD-PD could be disadvantageous when a teacher is not accustomed to being self-directed and setting personal objectives. Such teachers may prefer instruction provided by a facilitator in a more structured group setting, such as a workshop or a conference. However, Minott (2010) suggested that when an educational system supported SD-PD, and proper mentoring was provided, teachers could become more comfortable with it.

In a recent longitudinal single case study, Lopes (2017), found that SD-PD had an impact on teaching and student learning when it was centered specifically on teaching practices. The implications of their study included in order for SD-PD to be effective, teachers should be encouraged to improve their practices over time. Also, teachers would benefit from selecting a single focus of their teaching practice that they wish to improve. In their grounded theory research study, Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009) interviewed 55

science and mathematics teachers over a period of two years. The researchers concluded that SD-PD allowed teachers the control in order continue to build new understandings of teaching and learning (p. 381). In their analysis of the participants' responses Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009) found that teachers were led by seven main concerns when engaging in SD-PD. These included: (1) professional identity, (2) the need for career development, (3) gaining content knowledge, (4) practical knowledge and professional skills, (5) professional networking, (6) pedagogical content knowledge, and (7) benefits for teacher and student (i.e. to improve student performance and classroom participation). Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009) grouped the seven major concerns participants had regarding participation in SD-PD into two main themes:

1. An improvement in professional identity, career development and professional networking all depend on the professional efficacy of the teacher.
2. An improvement in practical knowledge and skills, subject content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge all point to classroom efficacy (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009, p. 380).

As a result, the researchers determined that teacher efficacy is underlying force that powers their participation in SD-PD (p. 382).

In a study on the professional lives of teachers entering the teaching profession over the past five decades, Tang and Choi (2009) concluded that teachers who participated in SD-PD were motivated by their moral commitment to teaching. In addition, the teacher's agency over integrating and applying their knowledge in the proper contexts was a feature of SD-PD across the decades (Tang & Choi, 2009).

Reform Types of Professional Development

Professional development for elementary school teachers can include a wide variety of formats. Several new formats and types of professional development and

activities have emerged over the last 10 years. According to Garet et al., (2001) reform types of professional development included being mentored or coached by a literacy or instructional coach, and participating in study groups or committees. Reform types of professional development also include participation in teacher-led workshops, online courses and webinars, and social media applications including blogs, Twitter, Facebook and Edmodo. These reform types of professional development are often attended by teachers who are motivated to learn and grow in their professional knowledge, in particular those seeking SD-PD.

Literacy Coaching

Literacy coaching is considered a beneficial form of non-traditional or reform PD in literacy (Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Joyce & Showers, 1988; Matsumura et al., 2012; Wei et. al., 2009). Overall, the research showed that teachers perceived PD in literacy to be most effective when it included coaching and demonstration lessons in the classroom (Mundy et al., 2014; Putnam, et al. 2009; and Scarparolo & Hammond, 2018).

Coaching, which is considered to be a job-embedded form of PD (JEPD), is meant to advance teachers' instructional practices with the intent of improving student learning (Darling-Hammond et al, 2017; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). The work by Joyce and Showers in the 1980s helped to establish the theory and practice of teacher coaching and provided some of the first empirical evidence of its promise (Joyce & Showers, 1982; Showers, 1984, 1985). It is also characterized by the transference of the teaching skills and strategies directly into classroom practice (Kraft & Blazar, 2017).

Unlike the more traditional PD provided by school districts, coaching is often individualized and tailored to teacher needs over time. As a result, the relationship between the teacher and the coach is a key to making this model of PD effective. Literacy coaches, who specifically focus on providing ongoing support in the areas of reading and writing, must be responsive to teachers' needs and goals in order to form strong coach-teacher relationships (Dozier, 2006).

Carlisle and Berebitsky (2010) compared the responses of first grade teachers in two different models of professional development; one that included a literacy coach and one that did not. The results suggested that there were benefits to having a school-based literacy coach to support teachers in their understanding and application of a high-quality reading program that teachers learned through seminars. The teachers who were coached frequently used small group instruction and relied less on whole group lessons. Also, their students made greater strides in basic word reading skills across the year. Coaches did not just assist teachers in improving learning, but also in providing at-risk students with effective practices (Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2010, p. 796).

In their meta-analysis of 60 causal studies on a variety of coaching programs, specifically for pre-kindergarten and elementary school teachers, Kraft and Blazer, found "large positive effects on instruction and smaller positive effects on achievement" (2017, p. 37). One important finding in the meta-analysis was that it was essential for teachers to be invested in the coaching process for it to impact their instructional practice. The largest study in their sample pointed to the challenges of making participation in coaching mandatory. They noted that Lockwood et al. (2010) evaluated a statewide program in Florida where 2,300 reading coaches worked with teachers across content

areas to enhance literacy instruction. Over the four years of the study, effects on reading achievement were statistically significant in only two studies, and effects on math achievement were statistically significant in only one (Kraft & Blazer, 2017).

Several researchers have specifically focused on emergent language and literacy skills when studying the impact of coaching on teacher practices and student growth. Powell et al. (2010) showed positive effects of a coaching model which was provided either onsite or remotely, on the structural features of the classroom literacy environment (e.g., how teachers organized writing centers), and positive effects of coaching on preschool children's knowledge of letters and print, blending skills, and writing.

Some studies have also examined programs that included coaching as an important feature of the professional development program. Putman et al., (2009) studied the implementation of the Intentional Teaching Model (ITM), a method of professional development established to enhance the practices of reading teachers. This model focused on reflective practice and allowed the teachers to be part of the planning process in the formation of school-wide and professional goals. An expert teacher or coach supported teachers in this model. Effective professional development in literacy should include classroom examples rather than just discussion of a concept or technique (Putnam et al., 2009) The researchers stated that teachers who were "committed to steady instructional improvements, and therefore showing intentionality, conscientiously used practices they had determined to be the most likely to help their students" (p. 215). The results of the study showed that both of the schools in the study had robust gains at the school level in the state tests measuring reading and language arts proficiency.

Looking at a few forms of professional development including professional learning communities (PLCs), demonstration lessons, in-service courses as well as graduate level courses in reading/literacy, Mundy et al., (2014) found that demonstration lessons had a significant effect on teachers' perceived values of PD. This was followed by in-service courses and professional learning communities (PLCs). However, the researchers found that taking graduate courses at universities provided the best value in preparing teachers as well as familiarizing them with strategies and using them frequently. Among district provided PD, demonstration lessons had the best perceived value and the best actual value. Demonstration lessons were most often delivered by instructional coaches or expert teachers who delivered the lessons to a whole class or small group. Like much of the research on professional development, Mundy et al. (2014) recommended longer term, weekly PD year-round. They also suggested that districts consider providing teachers with funds to attend university classes to learn the most current instructional practices in combination with providing demonstration lessons in their classrooms.

Scarparolo and Hammond (2018), investigated the effect of a professional development model on teachers' instructional practices in teaching early reading skills, in particular phonological awareness and phonics through *Let's Decode* (1993), a direct instruction-based tool. The researchers reported positive changes in the teachers' instructional practices in teaching phonemic awareness and phonics with the program. Participants also had positive attitudes towards professional development in reading instruction. Overall, participants responded that they liked the coach in the role of the demonstrator of the lessons, and felt overall that working with the coach was

encouraging. They valued the honesty of the feedback provided by the coach and appreciated receiving immediate feedback. The researchers recommended that careful consideration be given selecting coaches with regards to their level of expertise and understanding of effective coaching practices (Scarparolo & Hammond, 2018).

In another study focused on early language and literacy skills, Neuman and Cunningham (2009) found that course-work and coaching together led to participants who demonstrated higher quality instructional practices. While the study took place in center and home-based care centers, the results provided strong evidence that a practice-based model of PD improved the quality of the language and literacy environment for students.

One professional development model that spotlights the use of instructional coaches, the Early Diagnostic Reading Intervention Through Coaching (ENRICH), reported a high effect size of between 1.06 and 1.52 (Amendum, 2014). This intervention is aimed at primary grade teachers whose students struggle in reading. It provides teachers with job-embedded professional development and coaching and implements diagnostic strategies in order to bolster reading progress. The coaches went into the classroom on a weekly basis and provided immediate feedback after watching the teacher teach. In this mixed-method study, employing student data, a teacher questionnaire and teacher interviews, Amendum, (2014) concluded that first grade students who struggled in reading made sizable gains in four reading areas tested including word-letter identification, word attack skills, spelling of sounds and reading passage comprehension. The students also made greater gains across the year in three of the areas studied in relation to the comparison students. The study also found that the participants perceptions

of literacy teaching and learning changed over the course of the study. The teachers positively commented on the nature of the ongoing PD, the increase in content knowledge and the embedded nature of the program (Amendum, 2014).

A closer look at the research on coaching provides evidence that this form of professional development is most beneficial when it is done through a Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1993). The Gradual Release of Responsibility Model is a coaching model that encourages teachers to increase their responsibility over the course of their learning. It is characterized by interdependence and collaboration. Collet (2014) studied a model similar to gradual release model and the impact of coaching on teachers' instructional practices. She found that by modeling, providing feedback and recommendations, asking probing questions, and supporting appropriate decisions, coaches could provide supports that move teachers towards independence.

In a recent systematic review of professional development and literacy instruction, Basma and Savage (2017) sought to answer the question: "What is the effect of teacher professional development on reading measures among elementary school students?" (p, 470). According to their meta-analysis, the reported effect size was 0.225. Basma and Savage found that high quality teacher PD studies of shorter length provided evidence of an impact on students' reading achievement. The finding also showed that the quality of the professional development was more of an influence than the length of the professional development itself. The authors agreed that a more rigorous approach be taken with the quality of studies that are to be conducted in terms of the design, length, type and content of PD going forward. A key finding was that studies on the non-

traditional or reform types of PD, including coaching studies produced better results (Basma & Savage, 2017).

Teacher-Led Professional Development

A recent trend in PD is a rise of teacher-led activities and workshops. This “bottom-up approach to PD” has been implemented by school districts, private organizations and non-profit groups (Macias, 2017, p. 76). A bottom-up approach has classroom teachers making decisions, choosing topics and designing workshops outside of administrative pressures. According to Patton et al. (2015), for quality teacher-led PD to be effective it must meet certain criteria. Among the criteria: it must be based on teacher needs, acknowledge learning as a social process, include cooperative activities, treat teachers as active learners, and focus on learning outcomes for students.

Some organizations, including *Ed Camp*, *Time to Teach*, and *Whole Brain Teaching*, have been successful in providing workshops and training sessions offered by classroom teachers (Macias, 2017). This has become a choice of SD-PD for many teachers who chose to learn at conferences outside of the school day. Macias (2017) conducted a qualitative study at California State University, which utilized teacher evaluation surveys given to 100 participants at multiple professional development conference events. These free, optional conferences consisted of 45-minute workshops on a variety of topics located at a university rather than on school grounds. In addition, an online questionnaire was provided to the presenters of the PD. The responses from both teacher evaluations and presenter questionnaires were then coded to generate common themes. Both groups of data were analyzed to determine participants’ perspectives about the conference days to determine the benefits of a bottom-up structure. The results of the

study indicated that the teacher participants valued a neutral environment, practical topics that directly related to their work and diverse presenters (Macias, 2017). The workshops on implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and using technology were mentioned as the most valuable workshops for teachers. The researchers proposed that this tied to the lack of PD included in the implementation of the CCSS. The findings suggested that the bottom-up structure could be an effective means of providing choice and relevance in professional development (Macias, 2017).

Online Learning and Social Media

Compared to traditional PD programs, the emergence of online learning is widely believed to be a bright spot in teacher development. It is beneficial because it transcends geography and time limitations (Kabilan, 2005; McNaught, 2002). The Internet, which is the vehicle for online professional development (OPD), offers a variety of tools that promote self-directed learning, encouraging learners to be independent while still being supportive. Teachers can be involved in both structured and organized PD online or self-directed OPD (Kabilan, 2005).

In a review of the literature on OPD, Kabilan (2005), sought to uncover how teachers' participation and experiences in OPD contribute to their overall competencies. Kabilan discovered that OPD contributed to five aspects of teacher competencies: (1) motivation; (2) skills, knowledge, and ideas; (3) self-directed learning; (4) interactive competence; and (5) computer technology awareness and skills. The implications of the study showed that future OPD programs could be planned and implemented with one or two of these particular competencies in mind.

In their descriptive analysis study, Collins and Liang (2015) examined the quality of a structured teacher OPD program. A survey was used to gather teacher perceptions of the Formative Instructional Practices (FIP) professional development program. The participants in the study included 895 teachers. It attempted to answer the research question that focused on what features of high quality online professional development were noted by participating educators in a statewide online professional development program (Collins & Liang, 2015, p. 18). The results of the research by Collins and Liang (2015) showed that there were inconsistencies between the high quality OPD that theorists recommended and what was actually designed and implemented. Sixty-one percent of the teachers indicated that online learning fit their schedule better than meeting face-to-face and 68% found the online modules easy to navigate. However, only 42% of the participants reported that the modules described application activities that could be easily implemented in the classroom. In addition, only 42% of the participants said the online modules answered their professional questions and concerns. Collins and Liang (2015) found that there were aspects of this specific online professional development program that could inform future large-scale online PD initiatives.

Many teachers are now participating in social networks called “Personal Learning Networks”. A Personal Learning Network (PLN) is “a system of interpersonal connections and resources that can be used for informal learning and exchanging of knowledge and ideas” (Trust, 2012, p. 133). These networks are created largely online and include education related blogs, wikis and podcasts as well as social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and Edmodo (Visser et al., 2014). These have emerged as a popular

alternative to conventional professional development programs and have become sources of SD-PD.

As previously mentioned, the traditional forms of professional development, including one-time workshops in school districts are often disconnected from teachers' practice. In contrast, online PLNs, are informal classroom-based PD connected to teacher needs. Since these PLNs exist online, the professional development is always accessible and becomes part of the teacher's daily routine. Although teachers may not know each other personally, interpersonal relationships are built and which result in organic collaboration in which educators share knowledge, strategies and experiences (Visser et al., 2014).

Blogs / Blogging

With the booming number of people now on the Internet, social media platforms, such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook and Edmodo, have opened up new pathways of learning for educators. Blogs consist of online informational sites where individuals can share journal-style entries on various topics (Yang, 2009). Blog readers can give comments back to the writers and engage in further conversations about different topics. This allows teachers to have ongoing conversations about their work (Hall, 2017).

Although they are online, researchers have found that blogs have the potential to create communities among teachers that give and receive feedback, and foster social interactions that support their PD (Hanuscin et al., 2014) Even so, the overall success of the community or any individual within it would be contingent upon what the community creates, how they participate and the level of support from colleagues or instructors (Caudle, 2013). Blogs create a kind of learner-centered environment that allows

followers to learn at their own pace (Yang, 2009, p. 14) However, on the downside, if the information presented in the blog is not accurate, then the reader is misinformed.

In a year-long formative experiment, Hall (2017) studied how blogging supported K-12 literacy teachers in their PD. The participants were 26 classroom teachers enrolled in a literacy master's program at a university in the southeastern United States. Hall (2018) uncovered that overall teachers used blogs as a platform for sharing and discussing problems of practice. In the first part of the study, only limited self-reflection took place on their blogs. Initially, comments often affirmed or reinforced what the author had said. The study concluded that when problems of practice were shared, teachers did not push or challenge each other to consider a variety of ideas when leaving comments (Hall, 2017, p. 31). Only after a critical reflection framework was introduced, teachers began to question and challenge their instructional beliefs and traditional models of teaching in school. In summary, Hall stated that in order for blogging to be an effective tool for PD, teacher educators will need to help teachers understand "how to write and respond to each other in ways that move beyond describing how they taught and agreeing with each other" (p. 39).

Twitter, Facebook and Edmodo

Twitter, which had over one billion registered accounts in 2017 (Rosell-Aguilar, 2018), can provide PD for teachers in various ways. Through the use of chats and tweeting, educators share and gather resources by tweeting links to education-related articles, blogs, and other websites (Carpenter & Krutka, 2014). Due to its recent arrival on the PD scene, the research on the use of Twitter, also called microblogging, is relatively thin. Furthermore, most of the research is focused on higher education rather

than at the K-12 level. According to Twitter.com, the application offers an information network that connects individuals to the most recent stories, ideas, opinions, and news about what they find interesting (Visser et al., 2014). Some research has shown that the social media site can be used by educators for communication, sharing of class activities, as well as for PD opportunities (Carpenter & Krutka, 2014). Twitter differs from other traditional approaches to PD because it is instant, personalized, and less restricted by time and place (Carpenter & Krutka, p. 419).

A handful of studies have suggested that Twitter can function as a PD tool for teachers through networking. Carpenter and Krutka (2014) reported that 96 respondents, or 13% of their total sample, specifically remarked on how Twitter facilitated their learning through their connections to other educators. Teachers in their study noted that Twitter extended the faculty room and created a much larger circle of professional contacts beyond what they could make in a face-to-face setting (p. 424). Risser (2013) reported on one new high school mathematics teacher's use of Twitter to successfully establish an informal mentoring network composed of teachers from various backgrounds to support their early career development. Risser described Twitter as the launch of a community of practice that supported significant teacher learning (p. 305).

Adding to the small body of research on the use of Twitter for PD, Visser et al. (2014) conducted a mixed method study to explore how K-12 teachers used Twitter. They developed both a closed-ended quantitative survey to determine the characteristics of teachers using Twitter as well as an open-ended qualitative survey for teachers to describe the benefits of using the application. The total number of teachers in grades K-12 was 324. Visser et al. (2014) found that teachers used Twitter primarily for PD and to

improve their classroom practice. Other findings included that teachers perceived Twitter as a welcoming community; one that fosters collaboration and supports the development of meaningful relationships. In terms of PD in literacy, participants in the study reported that through Twitter they learned about the latest research and pedagogical strategies, and discovered lesson plans and innovative ideas about literacy instruction. Overall, the results of the study indicated that teachers highly valued Twitter as a form of SD-PD. Contributing to the shared intelligence of the education-based Twitter community seemed to yield both professional and personal benefits (Visser, et al., 2014). On the downside, research on Twitter has shown that teachers may lapse in remembering the importance of privacy in terms of sharing opinions in an appropriate and professional manner. Another criticism of Twitter is the possibility that debates among teachers become negative when two groups of teachers join together to condemn other teachers causing embarrassment (Hardy, 2014).

Facebook, another popular social media outlet, has been found to benefit teacher trainees. Specific benefits included receiving prompt feedback; communicating with their peers and superiors; sharing knowledge with their peers and improving their professional performance (Goktalay, 2015). Goktalay (2015) examined how web-based tools, particularly Facebook, supported a teaching practicum course at a large public university in terms of feedback and informal learning. The study determined that the most frequent reasons for utilizing Facebook were communicating with friends and sharing information. The findings showed that the majority of participants (93%, or 38 participants) agreed that they benefited from Facebook as it was a fast and easy way to communicate with

peers for prompt feedback and the sharing of knowledge. Teacher trainees also reported that Facebook is a convenient tool for enhancing discussion (Goktalay, 2015).

More than 6.5 million teachers and students are using Edmodo, another social networking tool for educators (Trust, 2012, p. 133). Edmodo has 12 social learning communities for teachers to interact and connect around a subject. Two popular communities are Classroom 2.0 and the Educators PLN. Not surprisingly, the number of teachers who are joining online communities, discussions and learning opportunities is expanding at a rapid pace. PLN's provide instant access to information as well as connect educators with others who have a variety of expertise in their field (Trust, 2012).

Other Informal Learning

Research defines informal learning as any activities initiated by professionals, including teachers, that result in the development of knowledge and skills in their profession (Lohman, 2006). This form of learning can be planned or unplanned and is often unstructured. In a survey research design study, Lohman (2006) examined factors that influenced public school teachers to participate in informal learning activities. In the study, 600 teachers were randomly selected from the Quality Education Data (QED) database. Two mailings of an informal learning survey resulted in 166 responses or a rate of 27.7%. The majority of the teacher participants (58.4%), worked in elementary schools while 41 percent worked in secondary schools. The research questions included:

1. What activities do public school teachers use to learn informally? What environmental factors inhibit public school teachers from engaging in informal learning activities?
2. What personal characteristics enhance public school teachers' motivation to engage in informal learning activities? (Lohman, 2006, p. 144).

The survey asked the participants to rate the frequency with which they used eight informal learning activities to learn something new. These activities were: talk with others, collaborate with others, observe others, share resources and materials, search the internet, read professional magazines and journals, trial and error, and reflect on your actions (Lohman, 2006). The results of the study indicated that teachers relied to a greater degree on interactive rather than independent informal activities. In addition, elementary school teachers were found to share resources and materials more than secondary teachers. The participants also reported that three environmental factors hindered them from engaging in informal activities: (1) lack of time; (2) a lack of proximity to colleagues' work areas; and (3) insufficient funds. Seven personal characteristics that enhance motivation to engage in informal learning were found to be: (1) initiative; (2) self-efficacy; (3) love of learning; (4) interest in the profession; (5) commitment to professional development; (6) a nurturing personality; and (7) an outgoing personality (Lohman, 2006).

While a limitation of this study was the survey's response rate of 27.7% , it uncovered some important implications that could foster more informal learning for teachers. First, school administrators can create work areas that are strategically designed so teachers are located near colleagues that share the same professional area or subject. Also, more unencumbered time, must be built into a teacher's work day to pursue more informal learning activities. This time must be provided with teacher discretion over how the time is used. Finally, the study revealed that teachers needed access to resources such as computer technology and professional resources to collaborate with others (Lohman, 2006).

Conclusion

Traditional professional development training sessions and one-shot workshops of the past are no longer considered effective in meeting the needs of today's teachers. A review of the literature showed that teachers' generally valued professional development, they sought longer term PD opportunities that are centered on their specific needs. In addition, the research demonstrated that successful PD, the kind that propels student achievement, utilized the tenants of adult learning theory, emphasized the importance of active learning and collaboration with literacy coaches and fellow teachers, and had a laser focus on student outcomes.

The goal of SD-PD in literacy is to provide teachers with opportunities of their choice, given over time and that allow for collaboration. Some newer reform types of PD including literacy coaching, teacher led workshops, on-line courses and the use of social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and Edmodo offer access to new self-directed learning opportunities. This PD may support self-directed learners, allow for more choice in content and time, and generate professional excitement for those that participate. However, more research is needed to determine the impact these reform types of SD-PD have on student growth.

This present study examined teachers' motivation for SD-PD opportunities in literacy that were available to them. The goal of all SD-PD is for teachers to develop best practices and put student achievement at the forefront. As Desimone (2009), Guskey (2002), and Kennedy (2016) suggested, researchers need to move the research agenda on professional development forward. Researchers need to continue to determine what motivates teachers to pursue SD-PD and examine a variety of SD-PD that can improve

instruction and ultimately student outcomes. Simply put, there is a need for more research on what motivates tenured teachers to engage PD, specifically in SD-PD in literacy, what types of SD-PD tenured teachers select and how they incorporate concepts learned in SD-PD in their instruction.

CHAPTER 3

Methods and Procedures

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore tenured teacher (grades 3-5) motivation for participation in self-directed professional development (SD-PD) in literacy. The researcher also examined what specific SD-PD activities in literacy tenured teachers in grades 3-6 select and how they applied the literacy concepts learned in SD-PD in their instruction. This current study aimed to understand what motivated tenured teachers to participate in SD-PD in literacy. This information could aid school leaders in an effort to make more SD-PD opportunities available to teachers and lead to improved instruction in reading and writing.

The previous chapter included an in-depth examination of the theoretical framework and a review of the literature which together served as the foundation of this study. In this chapter, the researcher provides a rationale for the approach taken in the study, details the research setting and sample, and describes the data collection procedures and analysis methods. This chapter also outlines the trustworthiness of the design and the researchers' assumptions and limitations.

Methods and Procedures

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. What motivates tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) to participate in SDPD in literacy?

RQ2. What types of SD-PD in literacy do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) select?

RQ3. How do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) apply the literacy concepts learned in SD-PD?

Setting

The setting of the current research study was a suburban elementary school district in Nassau County, New York. The district consisted of three elementary schools with grades K-6. The researcher was currently employed at the school district as a literacy coach working with tenured and untenured teachers who taught grades K-2. The researcher specifically selected a small school district in which tenured teachers participated in various forms of SD-PD. The researcher did not work with teachers who taught grades 3-6; therefore, the bias between researcher and participant in this study was limited.

Participants

The type of sampling method employed in this study was a non-random or purposive sampling method, as only tenured teachers were included in the study. By using purposive sampling, the researcher used her own judgement to choose a sample that she believed, based on prior knowledge, would provide the data that she needed (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2019). The participants in this present qualitative case study included six tenured elementary school teachers in one suburban elementary school district in Nassau County, New York. The participants were tenured teachers who taught students in grades 3-6. One participant taught all subjects including reading and writing. Four other participants taught only reading and writing. One final participant taught reading and social studies. Table 1 describes the demographic characteristics of the participants in the present study.

Table 1

Summary of Participant Characteristics

Participant	Gender	Level of Education	Years of Experience	Current Teaching Position
Teacher A	Female	Masters Plus 60	21	Grade 6
Teacher B	Female	Masters Plus 60	20	Grade 6
Teacher C	Female	Masters Plus 60	17	Grade 5
Teacher D	Male	Masters Plus 75	32	Grade 3
Teacher E	Female	Masters Plus 75	25	Grade 5
Teacher F	Female	Masters Plus 60	16	Grade 5

The district employed a total of 140 tenured elementary education teachers. The term “tenured” was defined by New York State as the right to retain a position and only be terminated if there is “just cause” (New York State Education Law 3020a). The participants included male and female tenured teachers teaching in grades 3-6 with at least 16 years of teaching experience. Each prospective participant was contacted by email to request their participation (see Appendix B). Of the seven teachers contacted, six teachers consented to participate in the study.

Data Collection Procedures

The first method of data collection was the interview. The one-on-one interview was a data collection process in which the researcher asked questions and recorded answers from one participant at a time (Creswell, 2015 p. 217). The researcher selected interviews as a method for data collection because “it is a powerful way to gain insight into educational and other important social issues through understanding the experience of the individuals whose lives reflect those issues” (Seidman, 2019, p. 13).

The researcher conducted three one-on-one interviews with six participants of one elementary school district using a consistent compliment of questions (See Appendix A).

The six participants met individually with the researcher via Zoom, a web-based video conferencing platform, for a series of three interviews. According to Seidman (2019) implementing the three-interview series “allows both the interviewer and participant to explore the participant’s experience, place it in context, and reflect on its meaning” (p. 21). No in-person interviews were conducted at the time of the study as the country was faced with the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The first interview in the series was a focused life history that provided the context of the participants’ experience of PD and SD-PD in literacy in relation to their teaching careers. The second interview included the details of the participants motivation for and experiences with SD-PD in literacy. The purpose of the second interview was to concentrate on the details of the participants’ present lived experience in terms of the topic of study (Seidman, 2019, p. 22). The second interview addressed research question one. The third interview provided an opportunity for the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experience with SD-PD in literacy. The third interview addressed research questions two and three.

The first interview took approximately 20 minutes to complete and included clear directions. The second and third interviews took approximately 60 minutes each. The participants were not informed of the interview questions in advance. The complement of interview questions was appropriate for all participants since they were tenured teachers who participated in SD-PD in literacy. The interview instrument met the guidelines for protecting human subjects. As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, the researcher sought to uncover the factors that impacted participants’ motivation for SD-PD in literacy. The participants responses were examined in terms of Ryan and Deci’s Self-Determination

Theory (2018) feelings of competence, relatedness, and autonomy. The participants responses were then examined in terms of the specific features of autonomy, which according to Pink (2009) included the tasks, the time, the technique, and the team.

In addition to three one-on-one interviews, the participants were asked to keep a short, written diary of notes related to their most recent experiences with SD-PD in literacy. Over a three-month period from April until June, each participant recorded their personal experiences in SD-PD literacy. The diary entries contained short descriptions of the SD-PD activity and a reaction to each experience (see Appendix E). The diaries were also analyzed to determine the types of SD-PD the teachers participate in as well as their feelings regarding this form of SD-PD.

Participants' descriptions of lesson plans related to SD-PD in literacy were also collected and examined. The lesson, topic, method, or strategy was included in the teachers' descriptions of the lesson plans (see Appendix E). The data collected from lesson plans showed how tenured teachers applied the concepts learned in SD-PD to their own instruction. The data collected from participants diaries and lesson plans answered research questions two and three.

The current study began in the fall of 2019 and continued through to completion in the fall of 2020. Drafts of Chapters 1 and 2 were sent to the dissertation mentor and committee members in the fall of 2019. Drafts of chapter three were sent to committee members in April 2020. After the research was completed, drafts of Chapters 4 and 5 were submitted to committee members by July 2020.

Trustworthiness of the Design

In order to strengthen the trustworthiness of the design, this current study

employed in-depth interviews, diaries of teacher reflections, and an examination of participants' lesson plans. The data were triangulated by using the three data sources: interviews, diaries of teacher reflections, and lesson plans collected from the participants in the study. "The use of the three-interview structure incorporates features that enhance the accomplishment of validity" (Seidman, 2019, p. 29). This structure of interview places the participants' comments in context and allowed the researcher time to check the internal consistency of what they said. In addition, by interviewing a number of participants, the researcher checked the comments of one participant against those of others. The researcher also used member checking to further validate the accuracy of the findings. "Member checking is the process in which the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account" (Creswell, 2015, p. 259).

Research Ethics

In order to collect the data from the six participants, the researcher had to gain access to the research site. The researcher requested permission to interview seven tenured teachers from the superintendent of the school district where the teachers were employed. (see Appendix A). Permission to interview seven tenured teachers was granted by the superintendent. Only six teachers chose to participate in the study.

Access to the research site was granted in March 2020 pending the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Approval of the IRB was granted on April 8th, 2020 (see Appendix C). Tenured teachers were selected and invited to participate via email on March 25th, 2020. The researcher began the interview process on April 11th, 2020. The interviews took place between mid-April and May 2020. Upon the completion of each interview, the videos collected via Zoom were transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

The participants were selected purposefully. They were invited to participate in the study by email (see Appendix B). The participants consent to participate in the current study was voluntary. By agreeing to participate in the study, the participants gave their consent to be interviewed via the web-based video conferencing platform, Zoom. The interview instrument met the guidelines for protecting human subjects. This current study did not include any identifying information of individual participants and it could not in any way link individual responses with participants' identities.

Data Analysis Approach

Qualitative research is considered to be 'interpretive' research, in which the researcher makes personal assessments as to a description that fits the situation of themes that convey the major categories of information (Creswell, 2015, p. 237). In the present study, the researcher developed themes or ideas for understanding the complexity of the case itself and not to be generalized beyond it. "Qualitative analysis is a relatively systematic process of coding, categorizing, and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 367). The data from all three interviews were collected, transcribed, and analyzed using NVivo software. The researcher employed both descriptive and In-Vivo coding methods to analyze the interview data provided by the participants. "In Vivo-Coding is appropriate for virtually all qualitative studies, but particularly for beginning qualitative researchers learning how to code data, and studies that prioritize and honor the participants voice" (Saldana, p.106). The interview data were initially coded using descriptive coding methods in order to find common patterns or themes in terms of participant motivation for SD-PD.

To answer the first research question that focused on what motivates tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) to participate in SDPD in literacy, the researcher analyzed and coded the interview responses using NVivo software to determine general themes or patterns among the participants responses. Subsequently the interview responses were deductively coded in terms of Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (SDT) which emphasized the importance of feelings of competence, relatedness and autonomy in understanding motivation. Next, the data were coded in terms of Pink's Motivation 3.0 theory to determine the impact of motivational factors of autonomy. The data were analyzed and deductively coded in terms of the features of autonomy which Pink (2009) defined as the tasks, the time, the technique, and the team. Furthermore, data collected from the interviews were also inductively coded to establish the specific types of SD-PD in literacy that tenured teachers select most often.

To answer the two additional research questions that focused on what types of SD-PD in literacy do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) select, and how do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) apply the literacy concepts learned in SD-PD, participants prepared written diaries to reflect on their experiences with SD-PD and provided lesson plans that reflect concepts learned in SD-PD. The diaries were analyzed and inductively coded via NVivo software to find themes or patterns among participants regarding their specific experiences with SD-PD in literacy. Three participants lesson plans were also collected in relation to SD-PD activities in literacy. The lesson plans were coded and analyzed to uncover how participants incorporated the concepts learned through SD-PD in literacy into their instruction. The data were tri-

angulated using the one-on-one interviews, the participants' written diaries, and lesson plans related to concepts learned in SD-PD in literacy.

Researcher Role

The researcher explored tenured teacher motivation (grades 3-6) for participation in SD-PD opportunities in literacy. The researcher has worked as a literacy staff developer for the same elementary school district for over 11 years. The researcher currently provided professional development in literacy for tenured and untenured elementary education teachers in grades K-2. To eliminate the bias, the researcher specifically selected participants who are tenured teachers who teach grades 3-6.

Having witnessed teachers participate in both self-directed and mandatory PD over 11 years, this researcher assumed that experienced tenured teachers prefer SD-PD in literacy, rather than more formal and traditional PD provided by district leadership. This assumption was based on the decline in tenured teacher enrollment in district provided in-service courses as well as a negative response to recent mandates for teacher participation in district-wide PD activities.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter offered a detailed description of the methodology of the present research study. A qualitative case study methodology was used to illustrate the factors that motivated tenured teachers to participate in SD-PD in literacy.

Simultaneously, the types of SD-PD tenured teachers who taught grades 3-6 select and how they integrated concepts learned through SD-PD in literacy were also studied. The participant sample was made up of six purposefully selected tenured teachers from one elementary school district. Three data collection methods were employed, including

individual one-on-one interviews, written diaries, and participant's lesson plans related to concepts learned in SD-PD in literacy. The data were triangulated and examined against literature and emergent themes. All data were kept confidential and anonymous. The researcher validated the findings by using a three-interview structure as well as member checking. The researcher also limited bias by selecting participants with whom she does not work in the research setting.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, provides the findings from the data analysis conducted in the current study. It also includes a summary of the narrative data related to the research questions and direct quotes from participants to illustrate the themes uncovered from the three data sources collected and analyzed. Tables are used to illustrate the themes represented in the data and will support the conclusions made in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The purpose of this present study was to explore tenured elementary school teacher (grades 3-6) motivation for SD-PD in literacy. In addition, this study sought to uncover the types of SD-PD in literacy tenured teachers in grades 3-6 select to grow their professional knowledge. Finally, the study aimed to understand how tenured teachers apply literacy concepts learned in SD-PD.

This chapter contains the key findings from the three data points that were collected in the study: in-depth interviews of six tenured teachers in grades 3-6, as well as teacher diaries and descriptions of lesson plans that relate to concepts learned in SD-PD in literacy. This chapter is organized by sections that include participant characteristics, findings for each research question and a chapter summary. In the first section, the researcher included an analysis of participants motivational feelings for SD-PD in literacy according to Ryan and Deci's Self Determination Theory. SDT focuses on feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The researcher also analyzed the participants' feelings according to Pink's four tenets of autonomy: tasks, technique, time and team.

Further data analysis is provided to answer the research question number one. The evidence supporting the findings for the research questions are presented using themes. In addition to the themes, verbatim quotes relevant to each particular research question are included. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings and a preview of the material that will be presented in Chapter Five.

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. What motivates tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) to participate in SDPD in literacy?

RQ2. What types of SD-PD in literacy do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) select?

RQ3. How do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) apply the literacy concepts learned in SD-PD?

Participant Characteristics

The participants in the present qualitative case study included six tenured elementary school teachers in one suburban elementary school district in Nassau County, New York. The participants included five tenured teachers teaching in grades 3-6 with at least 16 years teaching experience. The participants consisted of five females and one male. One participant taught all subjects including reading and writing. Four participants taught only reading and writing. One participant taught reading and social studies.

All the participants in the study had a master's degree. Four participants had additional 60 credits of coursework beyond their master's degree and two participants had an additional 75 in-service credits. One participant held a Juris Doctorate in Law and one participant held administrative certificates in School Building and School District Supervision.

Participant A had been teaching for a total of 21 years. She had taught fifth and sixth grades and currently taught reading and writing in sixth grade. She spent two summers at Teachers College Summer Institutes in Reading and Writing. She had voluntarily worked with a literacy coach in her classroom for 11 years. Participant A was passionate about helping students find a love of reading in sixth grade because she felt

once they were in middle school it was too late. She felt that teachers in middle school are focused more on teaching skills rather than on fostering a love of reading.

Participant B had been teaching for 20 years. She had taught various grade levels in her career including third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. She currently taught reading and social studies in sixth grade. She volunteered to work with a literacy coach as often as possible and had worked with one in various grades over the past 10 years. Participant B had completed additional coursework beyond her master's degree, but had not focused on literacy.

Participant C had been teaching for 17 years. She had taught fourth and fifth grade and currently taught fifth grade reading and writing. Prior to teaching, participant C considered a career in law and received her Juris Doctorate. Over the past six years she had been teaching only reading and writing. She loved inspiring students to be passionate readers and writers. Participant C was very active in the district. She taught in-service courses in literacy, diversity, and community building. She shared her favorite new picture books with her colleagues often creating an excitement for reading.

The only male participant in the current case study was participant D. He had been teaching for 32 years. His teaching experience was largely in third and fourth grades. He currently taught third grade. However, he previously taught APEX, a program for gifted students, for one year. Participant D spent two summers at Teacher's College Reading and Writing Institutes early in his career. At one point in his career, participant D considered becoming a school building administrator. He held an Administrative Degree and Certifications for school building leader as well as school district leader.

Participant E had been teaching for 25 years. She had taught various grades including kindergarten, first grade, a kindergarten and first grade blended class, fifth grade and sixth grade. She currently taught reading and writing for fifth grade. When teaching literacy, she preferred to have flexibility in the curriculum rather than being forced to follow a lock-step program. Participant E emphasized the social emotional growth of the students in her classroom and took time to really know each of her learners' strengths and needs.

Participant F had been teaching for 16 years. She began her career as a teaching assistant. She had taught kindergarten, second grade and third grade. She currently taught reading and writing to fifth grade students. Participant F loved teaching literacy. Nevertheless, she found it challenging to fit every aspect of literacy into each school day.

Results/ Findings

Interviews. The participant interviews were recorded and transcribed using Zoom, the web-based video conferencing platform. The interview data was organized into individual files for each participant. Each question was reviewed for repeated phrases or ideas. Using NVivo software, the researcher analyzed the interview transcript data. The initial round of coding resulted in a broad list of repeated phrases that were common among the participants. This first round generated a list of 72 categories. Overall, the researcher identified six main themes: (1) collaborating with colleagues; (2) literacy coaching; (3) online learning; (4) being a reflective teacher; (5) meeting teacher and student needs; (6) time, and choice. The categories were then sorted in response to the research questions for analysis. Table 2 details the number of references coded for each of the participants' interviews.

Table 2

Number of References Coded For Participants' Interviews

Participating Tenured Teacher	Number of References Coded for Each Participant
Teacher A	88
Teacher B	110
Teacher C	126
Teacher D	101
Teacher E	94
Teacher F	73

During the second round of data analysis the participants interviews were coded according to Ryan and Deci's Self- Determination Theory. The analysis determined that all the participants had feelings of competence, autonomy and relatedness in terms of their motivation for SD-PD in literacy. There were 61 references related to feelings of competence, 52 references for autonomy and 41 references connected to relatedness.

In the third round of coding, the participant interview data were coded and analyzed using Pink's Motivation 3.0 (2009). Participant interview data were coded and analyzed according to the four factors of autonomy: tasks, technique, time and team. The total number of references for all four factors was 203. The most references were made regarding technique (66) followed by team (60). There were 51 references related to tasks and 27 references related to time.

Participant Written Diaries. The participant diaries were also coded using NVivo software. The researcher used the descriptive coding method and categorized the references that the participants made in their written reflections in relation to SD-PD in literacy. There was a large variation in the amount of references in the teacher written diaries. The two most referenced type of SD-PD in literacy were online learning and

literacy coaching. Other types of SD-PD discussed by the participants were: reading blogs, collaborating with colleagues, reading professional books, and attending in-service courses. Table 3 summarizes the number of references coded from the participant diaries.

Table 3

Number of References Coded for Participants' Written Diaries

Type of SD-PD in Literacy	ALL
Online Learning	22
Literacy Coaching	20
Reading Blogs	7
Collaborating with Colleagues	4
Reading Professional Books	2
Inservice Courses	1

Participant Lesson Plans. Three participants submitted descriptions of lesson plans that reflected the concepts learned during SD-PD in literacy. These described the lesson, topic, method or strategy learned in SD-PD in literacy. Three participants did not submit such descriptions of lesson plans during the study. The researcher found four main themes in the lesson plan descriptions: implementing writing lessons, conducting reading and writing conferences, using digital sources and teaching small groups online. Table 4 details the number of references coded from the three participants' who provided lesson plan descriptions to the researcher.

Table 4

Number of References Coded for Participant Lesson Plans

Themes	ALL
Implementing Writing Lessons	5
Teaching Small Groups	5
Conducting Reading and Writing Conferences	4
Using Digital Sources in the Classroom	4

RQ1: What motivates tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) to participate in SDPD in literacy?

Finding 1: Interview Data Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory.

According to Ryan and Deci (2000b), for high levels of intrinsic motivation, people must feel satisfaction of needs for both competence and autonomy. Some research also suggests the satisfaction of the need for relatedness may also be important for intrinsic motivation. However, people are only intrinsically motivated for activities that have meaning for them (i.e. activities that are novel, challenging or hold aesthetic value) (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

Analysis of the teacher interviews revealed that all of the participants discussed feelings of autonomy, relatedness and competence in terms of SD-PD in literacy. Overall participants expressed the importance of feeling competent in their work and therefore they are motivated to pursue SD-PD in literacy. Along with competence, participants referred to autonomy in aspects of collaborating with colleagues, control over the time they are learning, meeting their own needs as well as their students' needs and having choice. Table 5 summarizes the participants references regarding their individual motivational feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

Table 5

Summary of References Coded for Participant Interviews According to SDT

Feelings Related to SDT	PA	PB	PC	PD	PE	PF	ALL
Competence	5	14	13	13	9	7	61
Autonomy	10	5	13	8	11	5	52
Relatedness	5	9	10	12	4	1	41

Competence. Overall, the participants felt that SD-PD in literacy helped them to be more successful as an educator. Participant A said, “I don’t think I am on the extensive side of doing self-directed PD. I think I do a little bit, here and there, but I think it has definitely improved my teaching.”

Participant B noted college did not prepare her for teaching reading:

They taught you the basics, how to make a minilesson, what’s an objective, a lot of theory, but not how to get to know kids as readers. So, I was always yearning to be better at that...I just felt like I was failing them, that they were not really learning how to be readers (Participant B).

Participant C commented:

I want to be at the top of my game. I want to be the best teacher I want to be seen as excellent. I feel that that has just always been part of who I want to be in life. I want be at the top and I don’t think you can be at the top unless you are constantly on the lookout for what’s best practice, what’s new, and how to do it better (Participant C).

Similarly, Participant B shared that she gets involved in SD-PD in literacy for herself as well as for the students. “It’s to be a better teacher... to take pride in what I do. I just want to feel good about what I do ...I want to walk away and say I did everything I could for those kids.”

Noting that he wanted to be as proficient as possible in his role as a literacy teacher, Participant D felt he needed to be proficient because administrators and other teachers visit the classrooms and expect teachers to be aware of the latest trends. He also

felt that he was competitive. “When you have 32 years’ experience, you still want to make sure the person coming in doesn’t have nearly as much as you do.”

Participant E stated: “I take my job very seriously and we have 180 days to work with children and not just in literacy, but as people and I don’t like to waste any of those days.” Participant F commented that she too has always been a hard worker and takes her job as an educator very seriously.

Autonomy. All participants referred to being motivated by a sense of autonomy when participating in SD-PD in literacy. This autonomy was demonstrated in terms of topic choice, time and place. For example, participant A said she valued the flexibility of SD-PD because she can be anywhere and join the online sessions, “I was away on vacation and able to take a course on the phone... I could still take the class on vacation ... it didn’t interrupt my life.” She added, “I think then it’s also that you are choosing topics, things that you want to learn about rather than just being forced upon you.”

Participant C commented: “For me I think teaching wouldn’t be enjoyable if I wasn’t always looking for something different, a new way to go, a new idea just something different to try with kids, and to bring to them and it just keeps me fresh and excited about what I do.”

Participant A stated:

It’s like one out of ten that mandated PD was a hit. And the other times it’s just forced, it feels forced and when it feels forced, I feel like I don’t go in with an open mind. So, walls are up already and I am not as receptive to the information... maybe some of the information is great but again... it’s taking my

personal time; either I am being pulled away of my classroom to do it or its after school.

Relatedness. According to SDT relatedness is a feeling of “belongingness and connectedness to the persons, group or culture disseminating a goal.” (Ryan & Deci, 2000b, p. 64) There were specific examples of PD that teachers noted that made them motivated to pursue learning with others. Participant B cited PD that is provided during the school day that allows teachers from all three schools to come together to share ideas.

Participant D commented: “Last year, when we had those meetings in rooms and one teacher was teaching and everyone watched. I was like, ‘Let me teach’ and then I got feedback and that was very powerful.”

Literacy coaching was discussed as a form of SD-PD which enabled participants to connect with each other. Participant C stated: “I think part of it is connection. I will use the example of literacy coaching, I almost never turn down an opportunity whether it is a think tank, or just sharing an article”

Looking ahead, Participant E noted that she would like to get a group of teachers together who have a shared interest in a specific topic. She feels that there is talent among the teachers in the district and collectively they have a lot of valuable information to share.

Finding 2. Daniel Pink’s Motivation 3.0 According to Daniel Pink’s Motivation 3.0, the interview data were coded according to the four factors of autonomy that support motivation: the tasks, technique, time and team. Technique (how they learn) and team (with whom they learn) were the factors of autonomy that motivate the participants the

most. Table 6 summarizes the references coded regarding these four motivational factors of autonomy.

Table 6

Summary of References Coded for Participant Interviews According to Motivation 3.0

Motivating Factor	PA	PB	PC	PD	PE	PF	ALL
Technique	14	10	8	12	13	9	66
Team	4	13	13	13	7	10	60
Tasks	8	6	8	7	11	11	51
Time	12	4	4	1	3	3	27

Technique. The participants commented that they were motivated when they could control how they learned and how they taught. All participants commented that having the flexibility to choose how they learn motivates them to participate in SD-PD in literacy. Many of the mandated PD sessions provide information that is not relevant in a way that teachers do not feel is useful for their future in the classroom. Participant A stated: “So when it’s a whole faculty kind of PD it’s not something that always pertains to me... They have tried to make it better but there are plenty of times where I have sat there and said, ‘Ok great I am not even doing this.’”

Participant B agreed:

I guess I just feel like when it’s something brought to us, it’s more their agenda, for whatever reason and it’s not really taking into consideration what’s best for teachers and kids. Sometimes they choose things that you don’t even feel makes sense or you don’t agree with unfortunately. Then you are kind of stuck. You feel uncomfortable doing it because it doesn’t make sense to you.

Team. All participants referred to the importance of team, group of people with whom they want to work. Team was considered to be a motivating factor for participating in SD-PD in literacy. A total of 60 references were made regarding team.

My closest colleague is my 5th grade colleague. We usually do a similar unit and we discuss everything we do. Then, once we are in our rooms, we do our own thing. Each lesson... we do our own thing and what we think our kids need and each lesson is different. We have a really nice relationship of mutual respect and helping each other out in that way (PC).

Sharing ideas with colleagues was considered an important part of SD-PD in literacy according to the participants. Participant F commented: "Talking with my colleagues always is helpful, It doesn't even have to be my own partner or other grade level colleagues. It's nice/ helpful to talk to upper and lower grade colleagues to see where my kids are going and where they are coming from."

Participant B agreed and said that she is a "people person" who enjoys talking things out, and getting ideas, which helps her ideas grow. She added that talking with colleagues is a big part of professional development for her.

Participant C noted: "You know I am the only grown up I am with most of the day so.... part of it I think is wanting to connect with other adults that have ideas to share." She continued that finding her own mentors motivates her to continue to pursue SD-PD in literacy. She looks for people close to her in addition to mentors who are out in the world (PC).

Although she has some colleagues in the district that she learns from, Participant C commented that she was looking for more teachers who were interested in learning

more and collaborating around literacy instruction in her own school. “I would love to find a community in my building, with my colleagues, some new teachers maybe ... It’s been a challenge finding a community of learners where I live.”

Tasks. The participants made 51 references to tasks. They noted that by controlling the tasks of learning, they are more open, have more fun, stay more current, and are able to bring energy to the classroom. Participant A stated: “When I do to SD-PD, I can let some of that rigidity and control go and be open to saying, ‘I will try that!’ I am definitely type A and controlling about the classroom.”

Participant F agreed: “When it’s something I enjoy doing, I am more willing to give it my all ... as opposed to being told to do something that maybe I don’t find as valuable.” She added that participating in SD-PD in literacy is fun for her. It also allows her to bring fun into the classroom. Since she spends more waking time with her fifth-grade students than with her own children, she wants to have fun together and she believes that SD-PD in literacy allows her to do that.

Teacher A noted that she is always looking to find new ideas to bring into her classroom. She commented:

Personally, I like to keep things fresh. So, I don’t like to get stale. I get bored ...that’s just my personality. Some things can stay the same that I absolutely love but other things I like to try new things see what direction that literacy is going in and to try out some new techniques, strategies, ideas and thinking.

Time. In comparison to the other motivational factors that Pink (2009) described, *time* had 27 references among the six participants. All participants valued having

flexibility over when they participated in PD. SD-PD in literacy allowed them to participate when they felt the time best fit their schedule.

Participant A said she prefers to take courses at night... rather than right after school . “You work your life around it, it’s much more flexible.” She continued, “So, when you chose to do it on your own time, I think you are getting more out of it.”

In terms of time and mandated PD, participant F commented that hour-long faculty meetings with the entire staff often feel like a waste of time; time that could be better spent on something more productive.

Also referring to mandated PD, participant B stated that it’s not only the time of day that matters but also the time of year that makes a difference. Administrators sometimes pull teachers together for PD in June, when the information learned is not going to be put into practice until months later. “I mean I get that in September they don’t want to pull us out a lot... but the third week in June, I mean it’s gone, I am going to forget about it.”

Finding 3: Interview Data. Looking deeper into what motivated tenured elementary school teachers to participate in SD-PD in literacy, the participants referred to four specific motivating factors which were: (1) collaborating with colleagues; (2) control over time; (3) meeting teacher and student needs; (4) and choice. All participants referred to collaborating with colleagues, control over time and meeting their own needs and the needs of their students. Five participants stated that choice was an important motivational factor. They referenced choice in terms of both selection of the topic and the format of SD-PD in literacy. Most participants also referred to themselves as reflective teachers. This was a personal quality that they felt motivated them to participate in SD-PD in

literacy. Table 7 provides a summary of the references coded for participants' motivational factors.

Table 7

Summary of References Coded for Participants' Motivational Factors

Motivating Factors	PA	PB	PC	PD	PE	PF	ALL
Collaborate with Colleagues	4	11	8	4	4	2	33
Control over Time	8	4	3	1	4	3	23
Reflective Teacher	0	2	3	7	4	2	18
Meeting Teacher / Student Needs	1	2	1	1	6	1	12
Choice	1	3	3	1	2	0	10

Collaborating with Colleagues. All participants commented that collaborating with others was a motivating factor for participating in SD-PD in literacy. There was a total of 33 references regarding collaborating with colleagues. Participant B stated, “I think I enjoy collaborating with people, working with people and learning from people but also sharing and being in a classroom. So, I guess that’s a motivation. The comradery of it, working with other people, the talking and sharing.”

Noting that collaborating with grade level colleagues is a meaningful aspect of SD-PD in literacy, Participant A commented that it has allowed her to talk out new ideas and concepts with other people that she would not have done without it.

Regarding a recent online districtwide open literacy forum on Zoom, Participant E mentioned, “I feel like there is a lot of talent in our own district . This forum discussing ideas with other people...was like a pot of gold.” She added that for her, talking with colleagues is a big part of professional development.

After participating in another online course that examined a young adult novel for 6th graders, participant B noted that she is a social person who enjoys learning with

others. She stated that she liked this particular class because it was an eager group of teachers who were asking thoughtful questions and who want to learn the answers together.

Participant A attended a similar online course through Zoom. “I wanted to bounce off ideas with other people and see what was going on with other people. It was a great kind of course to hear the ideas from other people, not just the instructor, and to have that professional exchange.”

Going forward, Participant D shared that he would like to continue SD-PD in literacy by working with colleagues on different grade levels. He added that he would like to track their reading and writing conferences. Also, he would like to do some work on establishing student reading goals with his colleagues. This would include visiting other teachers’ classrooms to see how they plan and teach small groups based on literacy goals.

Participant B noted that she wants to do more SD-PD in literacy that involves working with different people, “I want to get myself out more ... face to face stuff... like Ed Camp. Get on a more personal level with people.”

Control over Time. Again, time was considered an important motivator for all the participants. In general, the participants noted that the ability to select a time that worked best for them to learn and grow professionally was a motivator for them.

All participants discussed time with a total of 23 references. As Participant A stated: “Yes... my own timeline. Whether that’s choosing the class what I want at that time because it fits my needs or the actual physical time that is not being taken away from my class time or taken from my personal life.”

Participant B commented:

Anytime its after school I have to be honest if it's a Wednesday meeting, it's just so hard to put your heart and soul into it when you are so exhausted and you don't want to be there to begin with. Anything online is so much better it's definitely a motivator because you feel like it's on your time, most of the time, especially when you have someone who is so flexible and says when can everybody meet? What day is good? What time is good?

Participant C said, "Making the most of your time! Rather than sitting through hours and hours [of PD] to get one tiny nugget, to be able to really get what you need. I can get 8 blogs and sift through the ones I really need."

Participant E noted that she prefers doing her SD-PD in literacy early in the morning, rather than after school. She stated that her own SD-PD happens between the hours of 4:30 and 6:30 in the morning, so that flexibility in time is beneficial for her.

Participant F also responded that being able to do SD-PD according to her own schedule is ideal and added that she prefers not doing PD after school at 3 o'clock when she is tired and ready to go home.

Meeting Needs. There were 12 references related to meeting needs. All participants stressed that SD-PD in literacy helps them to meet their own needs professionally as well as the needs of their students. The participants also noted that they believe SD-PD in literacy benefits their students:

I definitely think it's more powerful if it's what I think I need and what I need for my kids. I also think that the PD is mandated doesn't really speak to the needs

that I have or that my children have so I umm... I take it super seriously. So, I need to find another way to get what I need to do for the kids. (PE)

Referring to SD-PD as differentiation for teachers, Participant F commented: "It's almost like differentiation of instruction. Instead of you telling me what I need or what you think I need... I think I know better what I need so it benefits me and my students more." Participant B agreed that the teacher that knows his/her students' needs better than anyone else. Participant F mentioned, "When I bring it back to the classroom, the kids get excited about it too, so it's almost like the enthusiasm is contagious."

The Reflective Teacher. Most participants mentioned that they consider themselves to be self-reflective, leading them to choose SD-PD in literacy for their own professional growth. Five participants made 18 references regarding being reflective. Participants cited being reflective as a motivating factor for participating in SD-PD in literacy.

Participant D stated that he has always been reflective and he has always tried to find opportunities to learn. "The self-directed PD has more power because it's something that I want to pursue and not something that somebody else wants me to pursue." He added that it is also powerful because he is trying to find what it is he needs help with in his instruction to make learning easier for his students.

Participants noted that being reflective can push you to be better at your job. Participant C said that she thinks she is very reflective. She is always looking to fix things that she thinks I can do a little bit better. She believes that part of the reflection is a desire to be better at her job.

Participant B noted that reflection sometimes leads her to be hard on herself

professionally. She summarized:

I mean... on the positive end, I am very reflective person so I think that's a part of it. I mean anytime I am observed, the minute I am done I want to go and talk to the person immediately because I can name five things I loved and five things that I hated. I am very reflective that way. So, I guess that's a good thing but sometimes it's to the point that I am really hard on myself.

Regarding the importance of participating in SD-PD in literacy, Participant E noted that her self-reflection triggers her to see what's new in literacy and other content areas. She added, "It goes back to your reflection ...reflecting on what you need at the time."

While not all participants noted that they have colleagues similar to themselves, Participant F said that she is a reflective teacher who has found colleagues who are equally reflective which has made collaboration much easier.

Choice. Most participants also responded that having choice motivates them to pursue SD-PD in literacy. There were 10 references made regarding choice. Having a choice over not only when, but where and how they pursue SD-PD in literacy were considered to be motivating to the participants. " I *much* prefer something that I'm going to choose. I mean my heart is in it. It's something I'm yearning to learn. I'm ready. My mind's there." (PB)

Participant C commented that she gives students choice in the classroom and that teachers need choice too. "So, I think we as teachers need choice because it has to feel relevant... It has to be relevant. It has to be what you are ready for at that moment; so, it is something that you actually want to use."

Participant D shared that self-directed PD has more power because it's "something that I want to pursue and not something that somebody else wants me to pursue." Participant A agreed. She added that she likes not being "told" that she has to attend specific workshops.

Hoping that district administrators would offer more choices in PD, participant E said: "I wouldn't be opposed with being presented a menu of PD opportunities to take as you would like and pick what interests you. It's about choice. Instead I am finding things and searching for things." Participant C added that the benefit of SD-PD is choosing it yourself and knowing it connects to what you are doing with kids.

Participant B agreed adding, "When its forced... a lot of times, I feel like it's not purposeful, what they are choosing, it's not well done. ...I would say maybe 40 percent of the time, I am getting something from it and I am enjoying it, maybe that much, but when it's not my choice, usually it's just torture."

RQ2: What types of SD-PD in literacy do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) select?

Finding 1: Interview Data. The data from the interview transcripts showed that literacy coaching was the preferred choice of SD-PD in literacy among the participants. The teachers in the current study preferred when literacy coaching was voluntary and fit their schedule. They valued the time planning and preparing for student lessons as well as time spent in the classrooms directly working with students.

Other types of SD-PD in literacy that were selected by the participants were: online learning, using social media and reading professional books. Five participants discussed online learning, which included online workshops and online in-service classes,

both through Zoom. In addition, four participants discussed reading professional articles on popular websites. Three participants referred to reading blogs online as a choice for SD-PD in literacy. Two participants referenced social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Five participants referred to reading professional books. Table 8 summarizes the references coded from participants' interview transcripts in relation to the type of SD-PD in literacy that they select.

Table 8

Summary of References Coded from Participants' Interviews on Preferred Types of SD-PD in Literacy

Type of SD-PD in Literacy	PA	PB	PC	PD	PE	PF	All
Literacy Coaching	5	10	7	4	2	8	36
Online Learning	4	5	0	1	5	3	18
Reading Blogs	1	0	11	0	3	0	15
Reading Professional Books	3	1	1	2	1	2	10
Other Professional Websites	2	0	3	1	2	0	8
Twitter	0	0	0	2	0	5	7
Facebook	0	0	0	5	0	1	6

Literacy Coaching. According to the interview transcripts, there were 36 references to literacy coaching as a chosen type of SD-PD in literacy. All participants worked with the same literacy coach in either reading or writing for their own professional growth and to support the literacy needs of their students. The role of the literacy coach in the school district is to provide job-embedded PD in the classroom in the areas of reading and writing. In addition, the coach works in all three school buildings and provides training and resources as dictated by district administration.

Participant A noted that she has worked with a literacy coach for 11 years, largely as a form of SD-PD. Participant B has worked with a literacy coach for many years as well. Thinking about the teacher education programs she attended, she expressed that she

never learned how to teach reading until they offered coaching. “That’s was the PD I needed... hands-on, someone working in the classroom with you.”

Regarding her experience working with her literacy coach, Participant C has found that she can learn from her coach because his beliefs on the way children should be treated and what learning should look like, match her own.

Participant B also values her literacy coach, and commented, “I *love* having someone in the classroom with me. I almost feel like they are a co-teacher when they come in ... I enjoy that! So, I guess that’s a motivation too!”

Participant F summarized her experiences with the literacy coach, “One more thing about coaching... I feel like it boosts my confidence. For a while I was afraid; I wasn’t going to do it right or that it wasn’t going to come out the best way... But now I feel more confident of my abilities.”

Reflecting upon all the SD-PD in literacy she has participated in, Teacher B concluded, “I’ve gained the most from coaching. I have to say there is nothing like it because being able to observe someone right there in your classroom with your kids, and helping you get to know your kids... that’s been key.” Participant C summed it up as well, “What have I learned the most from? I would say probably my work with my literacy coach.”

Participant D finds that he looks up to his literacy coach. He particularly likes his coach to come into his classroom to support him with literacy instruction as well as class management. He feels his students look forward to their time with the literacy coach and that they notice the positive impact he has on their reading and writing.

Online Learning. Overall, participants named online learning as an important type of SD-PD in literacy. There was a total of 21 references made about online learning. “I go online to read things and it’s my own time,” said Participant A, adding that she is “100 percent sold on Zooming and taking online classes ...that’s the wave ...that’s the way to go.”

After two online courses with her literacy coach, Participant A noted, “It was so much more relaxed, I got so much more out of it because I wasn’t thinking about all the other ten thousand things I had to do. I think the online thing definitely is the way to go at this point for self-directed PD. I think it opens up so many more opportunities.”

Also referring to the convenience of online courses, Participant B said that as an experienced teacher she feels that doing anything online is so much better. “It’s definitely a motivator.” She added, “It’s in your home... I can sit there with my cup of coffee in comfort.”

Participant E stated that she spends a lot of time surfing the internet for professional resources and new ideas in literacy. “Actually, it’s like a past time just to see where things take me. Even if I pick up one tiny thing, or get one point of validation, I feel like I am doing something right.”

Participant C provided examples of websites she visits often including Good Reads, as well as Mock Caldecott and Newberry Groups. She enjoys being a member of a community of people discussing new books and getting feedback on them.

Social Media: Facebook, Twitter and Blogs. Participant D belongs to several Facebook groups. “I am constantly looking at them because they have tremendous ideas.” He added that since the Covid-19 pandemic many resources were shared on how to teach

reading and writing remotely. When it came to distance learning, he noted that people posted videos of themselves or discussed different programs or rubrics that they thought were effective.

Participant E mentioned that she follows several professional groups on Facebook including Notice and Note for Educators, and Teaching Through the Pandemic. Teacher D commented that on Facebook you can pose a question and then people across the country or even around the world will help you find the answer.

Participant F commented, “Well, with Twitter and all social media, it’s just easy because sometimes you can just be sitting on your couch and you can scroll through your phone and come up with a creative idea that way.” She specifically loves using Twitter because it is “a quick and easy way to get some fun ideas ... whether it’s for a bulletin board, a picture book, a lesson.” Participant F added that she follows Kate and Maggie Roberts on Twitter and always finds great ideas for teaching literacy. She found many literacy videos during the pandemic that she found very useful. While Participant D previously found Twitter informative, he now feels that he turns to Facebook more than Twitter because the social media site has now become more political than informative.

There were 15 references related to blogs among 3 participants. Participant C noted that she loves the ease of learning from blogs. “The convenience of blogs to me is amazing...because it doesn’t matter where I am or what I am doing ... I am reading an article. I wake up in the morning and I read; and then late at night, I read an article here and there.” Three other participants, A, C and E also follow blogs of specific authors on teaching literacy including Pernille Ripp.

Participant F also reads blogs and searches the internet often. She follows and enjoys the blog: *Crawling Out of the Classroom* at Wordpress.com. She added, “I have the flexibility to follow people I want.” She frequently uses *The Two Writing Teachers Blog*.

Reading Professional Books. Five participants said that they enjoy reading professional books on literacy topics independently and in book clubs with others. There were 9 references among the five participants. Participant C said, “I read of a ton of books to then share that information. I read a lot of professional books, definitely on my night table. I purchase several on my own and read those.” Participant A said, “I read some professional books on my own.” She listed *The Reading Strategies Book* and *The Writing Strategies Book*, both by Jennifer Serravallo in addition to Serravallo’s latest book called *A Teacher’s Guide to Reading Conferences*. She also read *The Book Whisperer* by Donalyn Miller.

Participant D also mentioned that he reads professional books. He said he just purchased *Words Their Way* by Donald R. Bear, “because I have a student who is struggling with phonics and someone had suggested it.” He also read *Notice and Note: Strategies for Close Reading* by Kyleen Beers and Robert E. Probst because he had class that was high performing in reading and writing.

DIY Literacy Teaching Tools for Differentiation, Rigor and Independence by Kate Roberts and Maggie Beattie Roberts has been on participant F’s reading list in for some time. She would like to read this professional text to improve her conferences and small groups in writing.

Participant B admitted that she doesn't enjoy reading professional books on literacy. "I aspire to read more PD books... it has never really been my thing... I lose interest very easily...I need the interaction...I would just rather talk to somebody."

Finding 2. Participants Written Diaries Data was collected from each participant in the form of a written diary. The data was entered into NVivo and coded by type of SD-PD. After coding the data from the participants diaries, two types of SD-PD were referenced by all participants were literacy coaching and online learning. In terms of online learning, all participants discussed learning through Zoom workshops provided by the literacy coach. Four participants reported recently reading blogs as a form of SD-PD. Two participants wrote specifically about collaborating with colleagues. Table 9 summarizes the coding references related to the types of SD-PD mentioned in participants diaries.

Table 9

Summary of References Coded For Participants' Written Diaries on Preferred Types of SD-PD in Literacy

Type of SD-PD in Literacy	PA	PB	PC	PD	PE	PF	All
Online Learning	10	5	1	3	1	2	22
Literacy Coaching	4	5	2	2	2	5	20
Blogs	3	0	0	1	1	2	7
Collaborating with Colleagues	0	0	0	2	2	0	4
Professional Books	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
In-service Courses	0	2	0	0	0	0	1

Literacy Coaching. Participant F wrote that prior to the pandemic, her literacy coach helped her create an easy system to keep track of writing conferences. He suggested creating a large, dry erase calendar as an organizational tool in the front of the classroom.

The idea was that you would conference with a child, set a goal together with the child and then have them put their name under a date on the calendar when you would check back in with them. I made the calendar that day after my coach left class and immediately started using it the next day. The size and location of the calendar made it easy to keep track of who I was supposed to meet with and when. Also, the kids were great at reminding me if it was their turn to meet with them. (PF)

Participant E attended SD-PD via zoom was delivered by her literacy coach. She wrote that the agenda for the hour session was both non-threatening and teacher friendly. She stated that the coach's approach was well-planned and broken down in a way that was accessible to teachers at various levels of comfort. She added, "There were personalized opportunities to work with my coach after the sessions and that brought me the most comfort. PD that stands alone with little or no follow-up is the least effective form of PD in my opinion."

Summarizing the past few months of online SD-PD, Participant E stated in her diary: "The PD I have attended in these last few months has been so good because it is what I need right now. Having a choice makes the time and effort I put into it very much worth my while." Participant E concluded, "In this unusual time in teaching and in the world, I am finding much comfort and learning a lot from my literacy coach and my ELA partner."

In April, Participant B attended an online zoom workshop with her literacy coach, called "Leading a Virtual Reading Workshop with Power and Grace." She wrote that this voluntary one-hour zoom workshop was focused on helping teachers with

literacy instruction through Zoom meetings with students. According to her diary, she found this to be “extremely helpful PD.”

Teaching virtually is a completely new way of teaching for me and I was struggling with how to keep students involved and motivated to learn. It addressed many of the questions I had about reading instruction over zoom meetings. It was short, but perfect for the time and what we were experiencing. It also included some helpful hints like using the chat for students to share or ask questions. (PB)

According to his diary, Participant D attended a voluntary one-hour workshop called “Nonfiction Video-Alouds, Research and Digital Notetaking” on Zoom. He commented that the instructor was flexible and allowed students to come and go. He was excited by the topic since it directly connected to their current reading and writing research units. “ It was easy to see how you could include this in the current units (even the next day). I was so pumped up by the course that my colleagues had to remind me there were only eleven days of teaching left.” (PD)

In Participant A’s diary, she wrote about another one-hour workshop on Zoom, called “Poetry and Passion Projects”. In the workshop, the literacy coach focused on how to incorporate projects that offer choice in terms of topic and product. It focused on creating something you love using a topic that you are passionate about. Some great ideas that were included were blogs with videos, podcasts, and ways to use the YouTube Channel. She wrote, “I love that these projects highlight the fact that teachers should not start these projects with a lot of rules! Keep it simple and help students explore their passions and creativity.”

Online Learning. In the fall, Participant B attended a Virtual Think Tank called “Maintaining & Deepening Your Workshops & Community Across the Year” The district provided this in-service course which took place online after school once a week for several weeks. In her diary Participant B wrote:

I found this type of PD helpful for several reasons. First, the format made it very convenient for me with my schedule. The sessions took place over Zoom and participants were able to discuss what the best time would be for the whole group. I found being comfortable at home after having the ability to take care of my personal life refreshing and motivating.

She added that the course was also helpful because it gave her the ability to share ideas with teachers across grade levels and buildings. “Many times, PD is offered by grades and you don’t often have the opportunity to talk to teachers from many grade levels.” (PB) She also wrote that she enjoyed the book club component that was an aspect of the course. “I found it so helpful as a reading teacher to actually go through the process of reading and jotting to prepare for conversation with the group each session.” (PB)

Participant A referred to a one-hour workshop on Zoom for teachers of grades 3-6 on how to teach reading remotely while revisiting skills and strategies previously taught in the curriculum. She wrote: “There were some basic reminders that were good for me to hear, such as: We should spend this time revisiting basics (i.e.: how the workshop works, our reading spots at home).” This workshop was taught by the literacy coach.

In April, Participant D attended “Passion Projects and Poetry”, a voluntary one-hour Professional Development session that was also delivered online via Zoom. He

noted that the online platform made it easy to access at home and that the instructor was flexible in allowing teachers time to join the session when they could.

Participant E wrote:

The [online] PD I have attended in these last few months has been so good because it is what I need right now. Having a choice makes the time and effort I put into it very much worth my while.

Participant B attended a one-hour zoom workshop that focused on virtual teaching of small groups in literacy, called “Scheduling, Feedback & Small Groups.” She took this class after teaching remotely at home due to the pandemic, but found that this workshop did not meet her needs.

She wrote:

I did not find this training helpful because I found it difficult to adapt the scheduling involved to my situation. I also think in all honesty the current situation was so stressful that I was not available for learning anything new at the time. I had found a comfortable schedule and the ideas presented were too much of a change for me.

Participant A also wrote about mining a website called Teachers Pay Teachers, where she uncovered an end-of-the-year unit which she used to create creative writing lessons.

Blogs. Participant C noted that she has been reading Pernille Ripp’s blog often.

She wrote:

I have used so many of her ideas, adapting them to fit my classes and needs. Her philosophy is a perfect match for mine, and I find her wise, brave and innovative. The biggest way she has affected me is through the Global Read Aloud. When I

first learned of this initiative, I was able to connect with classes around the world. Participants A and F also wrote about reading Pernille Ripp's blog for literacy strategies to use with their students. Participant F wrote that after reading a blog post by Pernille Ripp, she changed the way she has her students respond to their reading. She incorporated Ripp's idea of giving students a variety of response options and adjusted it to include all of the literacy skills that she taught during the year.

Collaborating with Colleagues. Two participants specifically referenced collaborating with colleagues on their diaries. Participant E wrote:

I have also done much collaboration with my ELA partner teacher recently. We plan weekly assignments together in a way that we had not done in the past. Working this closely with my colleague in this way has also been a source of PD for me. We share ideas, concerns, and even our educational philosophies. This is also relevant right now and most helpful in many ways. I imagine that our conversations and planning going forward will be different and surely more collaborative whatever our new normal looks like.

Participant C commented:

Recently my grade level colleague and I have been working more closely due to the pandemic and need for "being on the same page". This has been great in that we are sharing ideas more regularly and supporting each other with lesson ideas. We've realized that we never seem to have time during our usual workdays to meet and discuss philosophy, goals, reflect on lessons, etc. together. Now we are taking the time to do so on a weekly basis, and it has added a new, positive dimension to my professional development. Having a like-minded colleague, who

brings different ideas to the table than those I might ordinarily try, has expanded my repertoire during what has been a challenging time for teachers and students alike.

RQ3: How do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) apply the literacy concepts learned in SD-PD in literacy?

Finding 1: Lesson Plans. Three participants submitted lesson plans which represented how they apply literacy concepts learned in SD-PD in literacy. The areas of instruction that the participants referred to were included both content and methods of instruction. The three participants noted that they implemented specific writing lesson plans as a result of the SD-PD in literacy (6 references). The participants also noted that they changed the way they conduct reading and writing conferences with 4 references. Two participants the applied their learning in terms of methods of instruction using technology: using digital sources (4 references) and conducting small groups online (5 references). Table 10 summarizes the references made by three participants who submitted lesson plans.

Table 10

Summary of References Coded for Participants' Lesson Plans

Areas of Instruction	PA	PB	PC	ALL
Planning Writing Lessons	1	1	3	5
Teaching Small Groups	4	1	0	5
Conducting Reading and Writing Conferences	1	2	1	4
Using Digital Sources in the Classroom	3	1	0	4

Planning Writing Lessons. Participant B noted that she used assessments conducted with her literacy coach and then planned mini-lessons in writing. In her plans she wrote, “I did a quick assessment of student writing to form small groups and plan

mini lessons. A few examples of these mini-lessons are revising leads; organization in essay writing; adding dialogue to fiction writing.”

Using resources, she gathered from a teacher website, Participant A wrote about a lesson she had planned to improve students’ poetry writing: “The first lesson is a lesson on idioms. I will review what an idiom is, various forms of poetry (free verse, concrete and acrostic) and brainstorm how to incorporate figurative language into our end of the year poems.”

Participant C read the professional book *Joy Write* by Ralph Fletcher) in 2017 She used it in the Spring of 2018 and again in 2019 with her classes. “I agree with the overall philosophy and as with a lot of PD, it confirmed what I was already doing and suggested a few new ideas that I could try.” One new idea, she implemented with her students was the Wonder Journals. She bought inexpensive booklets for her students, so it would feel like a new beginning in their writing. “We started by reading some poetry together and then they used the booklets as a place to record their wonderings about the world. In both instances I found that the idea was great as a tool to inspire writing at a time of year when student interest typically wanes.”

In her lesson plans, Participant C also wrote about implementation of Independent Writing. She taught several lessons on different types of writing, including fiction and nonfiction, and then students choose one and developed it into a book independently. These lessons were introduced to her by her literacy coach over the course of a school year. “Since 2010, I have begun every year with a unit on Independent Writing. Those projects then continue throughout the year, even as we go in and out of other units of study. They are the glue that hold my workshop together and the inspiration for all of the

other writing work that my students do.”

Reading and Writing Conferences. Using what she learned from an online think tank with her literacy coach, Participant B noted that she learned different types of conferences and she tried them right away in her classroom. “It helped me feel more confident walking into conferences with students knowing I had prompts to help me through. I also realized that in the end even a compliment conference is a way to check in with students and let them know you care about their reading life.”

From an online workshop, Participant A learned to readjust her time with students to add in more reading and writing conferences. She added that to her plans right away. “I liked the idea of using my office hours to schedule individual conference times because I am missing that daily contact and feedback on my students’ writing pieces.”

Participant C implemented more reading conferences around selecting appropriate books for readers. She learned from Pernille Ripp’s blog that it is super important to make sure readers have great books in the hands. “I can think of no more important goal for me as a teacher of reading than to ensure that every student has something to read that they have chosen on their own (with guidance when necessary). I created a sign that I posted prominently in my classroom as a reminder to myself: ‘Find them a book.’”

Using Digital Sources. After an online workshop with her literacy coach, Teacher B stated, “One thing I took from this training and used in my lessons was the use of digital stories to teach lessons on theme and symbolism. We watched the shorts La Luna and Shoe for lessons on symbolism. Then we used some picture books to continue our work.”

Conducting Small Groups Online. The participants noted that since instruction

moved to Zoom during the pandemic, they now had to find new ways to teach small groups virtually. One way is the use of breakout rooms on Zoom. The teacher can assign students to a specific smaller group at any time in a larger Zoom meeting.

Participant A wrote:

The use of breakout rooms [on Zoom] continued to grow throughout the weeks and the students became better at using the time to deepen their thinking and come back to share in the big group. I found these rooms helped push the students to speak up, and it was a way that I could work with smaller groups on strengthening their skills.

Regarding breakout rooms, Teacher B wrote: I did not use it for small reading groups, but it has been helpful keeping students engaged and being able to check on them in a smaller group setting.”

Teacher A wrote: “I began incorporating Breakout Rooms in many discussions on literary elements.”

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the present qualitative case study regarding tenured teacher motivation for SD-PD in literacy. Findings related to the types of SD-PD in literacy tenured teachers select were also presented. Finally, findings on how tenured teachers apply concepts learned in SD-PD in literacy were presented. Findings were organized according to the three research questions. Data were collected from three sources: in-depth participant interviews, participant written diaries as well as participant lesson plans. Lesson plans were collected from 3 participants. The total number of participants was six tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) from one school

district in Nassau County, N.Y.

The data collected in the current study revealed factors related to the participants' motivation for SD-PD in literacy. The factors identified in the findings were supported by direct quotations from the participants in this particular qualitative case study.

The first finding of research question one was established according to Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory. All of the participants discussed feelings of autonomy, relatedness and competence in terms of SD-PD in literacy. Feelings of competence were most frequently referred to by the participants followed by autonomy and relatedness. Thus, the participants were highly intrinsically motivated to pursue SD-PD in literacy. According to Daniel Pink's Motivation 3.0, the second finding of research question one is that technique and team are the factors of autonomy that specifically motivate participants to pursue SD-PD in literacy. This finding was determined from the data collected from the participant interviews.

An analysis of the interview data also showed an additional finding of research question one. The third finding is that there are four main factors that motivate tenured elementary teachers to participate in SD-PD in literacy. These are: collaborating with colleagues, control over time, meeting needs (both teacher and student needs) and choice. In addition, being reflective was a personal quality that the participants felt motivated them to participate in SD-PD in literacy.

The main finding of research question two was that literacy coaching was the preferred choice of SD-PD in literacy among the participants. Online learning, using social media and reading professional books were also types of SD-PD in literacy

selected by the participants. This finding was determined from the data collected analyzed from participants interviews.

According to the data collected from the participants written diaries, literacy coaching and online learning were found to be the two main types of SD-PD in literacy that participants utilized for professional learning. In terms of online learning, all participants attended Zoom workshops provided by the literacy coach. Reading blogs was also found to be a common form of online SD-PD in literacy.

The main finding of research question three was that the participants applied the literacy concepts learned in SD-PD in literacy by implementing specific writing lessons and by changing the way they conduct reading and writing conferences. Participants also used digital sources and conducted small groups online. This finding was determined from the analysis of the data collected from the participant lesson plans. In the next chapter the researcher provides an analysis, interpretation and synthesis of the main findings and also present conclusions and recommendations for each finding and research question.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The purpose of the current qualitative case study was to explore tenured teacher (Grades 3-6) motivation for SD-PD in literacy. The study also sought to uncover the types of SD-PD in literacy tenured teachers choose and how they apply the concepts learned in SD-PD in literacy in their instruction.

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. What motivates tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) to participate in SD-PD in literacy?

RQ2. What types of SD-PD in literacy do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) select?

RQ3. How do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) apply the literacy concepts learned in SD-PD?

The previous chapter presented the findings of the present study by organizing the data according to three data sources provided by the participants: in-depth interviews, written diaries and descriptions of lesson plans. The findings were presented by research question to produce a narrative and included direct quotes from the participants of the study. The purpose of this final chapter is to provide interpretive insights to the findings of the study, link the findings to previous research and provide recommendations for future practice and research. Therefore, this chapter consists of two sections. In the first section of the chapter, the implications of the findings of the study according to the three research questions are presented. The findings are addressed in relationship to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory

and Daniel Pink's Motivation 3.0 found in Chapter 2. These findings are also analyzed and related to previous research on Adult Learning, Self-directed Learning, Ongoing and Active Professional Development, Self-directed Professional Development, Reform-types of Professional Development. Reform types of SD-PD include Literacy Coaching, Teacher-led Professional Development, Online Learning, Social Media and other Informal Learning. Finally, limitations of the study are presented in this section.

The second section of this chapter includes recommendations for future practice and for future research. It is the researcher's hope that the recommendations and suggestions included in this section will assist school administrators and leaders to support tenured teachers in the selection of SD-PD in literacy in the future.

Implications of Findings

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Research Question 1: What motivates tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) to participate in SD-PD in literacy?

The theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning the present research study are Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Motivation 3.0. The data compiled in this study confirmed and extended the research of Ryan and Deci (2000a, 2000b) and Daniel Pink (2009). Ryan and Deci developed SDT which is an approach to human motivation that is framed in terms of social and environmental factors that *facilitate* as opposed to *undermine* intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Although research has shown that people can be motivated by external rewards, Ryan and Deci (2000a) have found that it is just as common that people are motivated from within, by their own

interests, curiosity, and passions. These intrinsic motivations are believed to sustain passions, creativity, and effort (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET), a sub-theory of SDT, was established by Ryan and Deci to specify the factors in social contexts that produce a variability in intrinsic motivation. A key facet of CET states that feelings of competence will not enhance intrinsic motivation unless they go along with a sense of autonomy. So, for a high level of intrinsic motivation, people must feel satisfaction of needs for both competence and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000b).

Finding 1: Self-Determination Theory. The current research study found that tenured teachers in grades 3-6 are motivated by feelings of competence, autonomy and relatedness and these feelings propel them to participate in SD-PD in literacy. Analysis of the teacher interviews revealed that 100 % of the participants referenced their need for competence, autonomy, and relatedness in terms of their motivation for SD-PD in literacy. This confirmed the research by Ryan and Deci (2000b).

The current case study also confirmed that the participants are motivated from within to participate in SD-PD in literacy. They are driven by their self-reflection, and a desire to meet their own needs and the needs of their students. Several also mentioned that they considered themselves learners, who always seek to learn more, even though they have been teaching for many years. Therefore, the participants in this study had a high level of intrinsic motivation to pursue SD-PD in literacy.

Feelings of competence (or self-efficacy) were referred to the most, followed by autonomy and relatedness. The tenured teachers in the current study were motivated to pursue SD-PD in literacy because they are driven to be the best they can at their job.

They continue to work to improve their practice and meet the needs of their students. This confirms the recent research by Appova and Arbaugh (2018) and is evidenced by participant F who said,

I like to feel like I am doing my job well and when I do those types of professional development it helps me; I think it helps me do a better job. I also feel like I have a responsibility to all of these students and families to do my job well. So, I don't want to let them down also.

This also confirmed the research by Tang and Choi (2009) who concluded that teachers who participated in SD-PD were motivated by a moral commitment to teaching.

As previously mentioned, having choice and opportunities for self-direction are were found to enhance intrinsic motivation because they allow people a greater feeling of autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 70). The data collected and analyzed demonstrates that the participants were motivated by feelings of autonomy as well as competence. Since they were motivated by having choice in topic and activities to meet individual and student needs, it was clear that the participants craved autonomy over their PD. This autonomy could only be provided by self-directed PD, which was very different from mandated PD.

Finding 2: Daniel Pink's Motivation 3.0. Motivation 3.0 (2009) focuses on the belief that people need autonomy over their work in terms of their tasks (what they do), technique (how they do it), time (when they do it), and finally, team (who they work with). According to Pink, having autonomy over these factors motivates people to be more engaged in their work and even perform better.

The present study analyzed the participant interview data according to these four factors of autonomy. This deeper analysis determined that autonomy over technique, or how the participants learned, was the most referenced factor that motivated them to participate in SD-PD in literacy. The participants valued SD-PD in literacy because they wanted to select the PD that best meet their needs and the needs of their students. How they learned, whether it was in-person, online, through social media, or with a literacy coach, is also of the great value to them.

This was followed by team or having autonomy over the people with whom they work. This consistent with the finding that collaborating with colleagues was the most referenced motivating factor in the in-depth interviews. Tenured teachers seek opportunities to meet with their colleagues. Often they choose to meet with the people who are on the same grade level. Sometimes they seek colleagues who they know and respect, and who are willing to support them.

Although having flexibility over time was an important motivating factor for participating in SD-PD in literacy, it was not as important as technique and team. The researcher found this interesting and believes that how teachers learn and who they work with may be even more important than having flexibility over the time frame. Table 11 provides a summary of the four factors of autonomy established under Motivation 3.0.

Table 11

Summary of References Coded for Participant Interviews According to Motivation 3.0

Motivating Factor	PA	PB	PC	PD	PE	PF	ALL
Technique	14	10	8	12	13	9	66
Team	4	13	13	13	7	10	60
Tasks	8	6	8	7	11	11	51
Time	12	4	4	1	3	3	27

Pink also posited that humans have a third drive, one that includes the desire to learn, to and to create, even to better the world. Several participants commented that they considered themselves learners. One participant described herself as someone who has a passion for learning. Even though she did not always love going to school when she was growing up, Participant C now describes herself as someone who loves to learn. She stated, “The driving force is I love to learn.” The researcher had anticipated that more participants would refer to a personal love of learning but it was not evident in the data.

Relationship To Prior Research

Finding 3. Based on interview data, tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) in the current study are motivated to participate in SD-PD in literacy by four specific factors: collaborating with colleagues, control over time, meeting teacher and student needs and choice. All of these factors stem from tenured teachers having feelings of autonomy, competence and relatedness which motivate them to participate in SD-PD. It was also determined that all the participants in this study considered themselves to be reflective teachers. The consistent need to self-reflect was a personal quality that the tenured teachers felt motivated them to participate in SD-PD in literacy. Five participants considered themselves reflective about their work. This self-reflection often led these participants to pursue SD-PD to improve their literacy instruction. Table 12 summarizes the references coded for participants’ motivational factors.

Table 12

Summary of References Coded for Motivational Factors

Motivating Factors	PA	PB	PC	PD	PE	PF	ALL
Collaborate with Colleagues	4	11	8	4	4	2	33
Control over Time	8	4	3	1	4	3	23
Reflective Teacher	0	2	3	7	4	2	18
Meeting Teacher / Student Needs	1	2	1	1	6	1	12
Choice	1	3	3	1	2	0	10

Collaborating with Colleagues

According to adult learning theorists, since adults are at different levels of experience, they have a wide range of diverse experiences to build upon (Knowles et al., 2015). Therefore, research on PD and SD-PD has suggested that activities that involve groups and collaboration should be included in the adult learning process. For the participants in the current study, the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues was considered to be highly motivating. In fact, it propelled 100 percent of the tenured teachers in the study to participate in SD-PD in literacy.

The participants stated that meeting with colleagues on and across grade levels over time was a very effective way to learn and improve teaching practices. It was also evident in the current case study that the participants value the professional exchange of ideas with colleagues during SD-PD in literacy both online and in person. Participant A suggested that without collaboration through SD-PD in literacy, she would just be sticking to the “tried and true”.

The current study confirms a broad amount of research discussed in Chapter 2. According to the research, teachers seek the collaboration that SD-PD provides, whether it is in person or online. The existing research on PD emphasizes the benefit of teachers

actively engaged in activities which creates a community of learners (Thoonen et al., 2011; Zaslow et al., 2010). The teachers in the current case study value SD-PD in literacy and seek to participate with colleagues in this kind of community of learners. The participants in the present study commented that collaborating with others was a way to learn new concepts and ideas, to get answers to questions, and to have opportunities to see and understand how others teach literacy. As participant C stated, [It's the] connection to other adults that have ideas to share. It's a way to connect."

Researchers have found that teachers rely on interactive collaborative activities rather than independent activities (Lohman, 2006). Collaborating, talking to and observing others was often discussed among the participants as a benefit of SD-PD. Research also shows that collaborative PD, that provides feedback to teachers, leads to a change in practices and has a greater impact on classroom instruction (Colbert et al., 2008; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Desimone, et al., 2002; Guskey, 2002). Surprisingly, the teachers did not refer to feedback specifically. A reason for this could be that they have not had opportunities to give or receive specific feedback from their colleagues in what they consider to be a safe environment. They did feel that hearing from a different perspective was the valuable part of collaborating with colleagues.

Time spent working with a literacy coach offers occasions for collaborating and receiving feedback. All the participants felt working with the literacy coach benefitted them as teachers. Honest, immediate feedback from a literacy coach is considered very beneficial to teachers (Scarapolo & Hammond, 2018). As a result, tenured teachers who continue to work with a literacy coach and receive feedback may improve their instruction and have a more powerful impact on their students' growth.

Control Over Time

The interview data compiled from the current study showed that teacher control over when they can participate in PD is a strong motivator for participant participation in SD-PD in literacy. There may be a few reasons for this. One reason could be the increasing demands on all teachers as mentioned in Chapter 1. With more demanding curriculum and high stakes testing, teachers are seeking more opportunities to meet their specific needs and the needs of their students according to their own schedule.

Another reason that control over time is a motivator for tenured teachers to pursue SD-PD in literacy, is the rise of reform PD activities which make learning even more accessible. The flexibility of online PD and the use of social media supports teachers' autonomy and fits their lifestyle (Collins & Liang 2015; Kabilan, 2005; McNaught, 2002; Visser et al 2014). Today there are more online opportunities using video conferencing platforms, including Zoom, more teacher friendly websites as well as more information on social media. These are easy for teachers to access at home at a convenient time. This could mean that as more online opportunities arise, and the more tenured teachers see the flexibility of this form of SD-PD, the more they will pursue this type of SD-PD in literacy.

The Reflective Teacher

Participation in professional learning activities depends upon the personal characteristics of the teachers themselves (Kwakman, 2003; Lohman 2006). Teachers who believe they can make a difference in student growth, or have a sense of self-efficacy, participate in SD-PD. The data in the current study extends this research and found that not only is self-efficacy important (feelings of competence), but that reflection

is also a motivating factor for tenured teacher in participation in SD-PD in literacy. The participants in the present study noted that they were reflective about their teaching, therefore they seek out SD-PD in literacy. As participant E noted, “ It goes back to your reflection ...reflecting on what you need at the time.”

Although existing research determined that there are seven personal characteristics that enhance motivation to engage in informal learning: initiative, self-efficacy, love of learning, interest in the profession, commitment to professional development, a nurturing personality and an outgoing personality (Lohman, 2006), being self-reflective was not included on the list.

The current study found that reflection was an important personal quality for teachers who pursued SD-PD in literacy. As participant D stated, “I have always been reflective though but that’s just me. It’s not necessarily a teaching thing, but in life.” Therefore, being a reflective person and teacher, thinking about reading and writing instruction and student performance, is an important motivating factor for participating in SD-PD in literacy. This was noteworthy to the researcher. Teachers who are self-reflective about their daily instruction are able to look critically at themselves. When they are self-reflective, they can make changes and improve their performance. This connects to their feelings of competence or self-efficacy. They are acknowledging that they make a difference in the academic success of their students. Without reflecting on their own performance and on the needs of their students, some teachers may not seek opportunities for SD-PD in literacy.

Interestingly, existing research notes that SD-PD does provide time for teachers to reflect on their own practice unlike many formal trainings and workshops (Grootenboer,

(2009), Minott (2009) and Zaslow et al. (2010). In addition to meeting individual needs, and empowering teachers, this form of PD has been found to promote reflection (Minott, 2009). This means that those that provide PD should incorporate time for teachers to self-reflect during online workshops and other PD sessions. If it is not part of their nature to self-reflect, some teachers may need time set aside for self-reflection during SD-PD. By giving teachers opportunities to reflect, it makes sense that they become empowered and focused on improving their instructional practices.

When asked to reflect on the impact of SD-PD in literacy, the interview data confirmed that the participants believe that SD-PD in literacy has impacted their instruction.

For example, Participant B stated,

My literacy instruction was old fashioned in a way. It was not workshop model. It was not about individual children .. it was the whole teach the class thing but never really getting to know kids individually... teaching to their needs individually. It [SD-PD in literacy] has changed my whole style of teaching over the years.

And participant F stated,

I was going from lesson to lesson to lesson and it was overwhelming I wasn't really focused on the kids in my classroom and now with all of this PD I realize you have to balance it ... use what you have in the books but also take the time to think about the kids sitting in front of you. I didn't always do that!

Meeting Teacher and Student Needs

The findings of the current study confirmed existing research that teachers' preferred PD that specifically met their needs and the needs of their students (Bayer, 2014; Kwakman, 2003; Yurtseven, 2017). Minott (2009) found that meeting the individual needs of the teachers was a clear benefit of SD-PD. Interestingly, 100% of the participants discussed the importance of meeting teacher and student needs. By participating in SD-PD in literacy, tenured teachers said that they are able to apply what they learn directly into their own classrooms. They immediately integrate new content and strategies to benefit their own students.

The data from this case study also validates Knowles et al., theory on adult learning. Knowles et al. found that adults are motivated to learn if they believe that what they are learning will be immediately applicable to their own life or work experience (2015). SD-PD in literacy often offers teachers practical literacy strategies and ideas that teachers can use immediately in their classrooms. While mandated PD can be helpful to tenured teachers at time, often it does not meet the specific needs of their students. The tenured teachers in the current case study felt that they are able to determine what they need to learn, rather than administrators. They are resistant to mandated PD because they feel it is one-size fits all. As participant A commented: "If it's mandated, the walls are up. I am just going to remain rigid and say you know what, I don't need to hear this right now... this is not the thing I am interested in. It's just being forced... so I am shutting down immediately."

Choice

The data showed that the tenured teachers in this case study believe that choice is a powerful motivator for participating in SD-PD in literacy. Having choice is a way for

tenured teachers to meet their own professional needs and the needs of their students. This confirms existing research that found that by having choice, teachers feel more involved and engaged in their learning. When teachers expressed negative feelings about PD in the research, it was largely a result of not having choice in the topics or the activities. PD (Bayer, 2014; Martin, et al., 2018). This was confirmed in the present study. Participant E commented that she often prefers SD-PD over PD provided by the school district. She stated, “I don’t really like to be forced to do things.”

When teachers are forced to participate in PD activities by their district administrators, they are typically not enthusiastic. Some teachers are even resistant. They often find that such programs do not align with what they do in their classrooms (Colbert, Brown et al., 2008). This was confirmed with the findings of the current case study, and further underscores the participants need for choice in PD. Many teachers are resistant to forced or mandated PD (Knowles, et al., 2015). Participant B had particularly strong negative feelings regarding mandated PD. “When its forced... a lot of times, I feel like it’s not purposeful, what they are choosing, it’s not well done. ...I would say maybe 40 percent of the time, I am getting something from it and I am enjoying it, maybe that much, but when it’s not my choice, usually it’s just torture.”

Also, recent research noted that teacher-led PD, or the bottom-up approach, could be an effective means of providing choice and relevance in PD (Macias, 2017). This type of SD-PD includes Ed Camp style workshops where teachers gather together to learn from each other in small groups. However, only two participants in the current study mentioned involvement in this type of SD-PD. Perhaps this was not preferred type

of SD-PD due to the current pandemic which has discouraged or in many cases eliminated group activities for many professionals including educators.

Research Question 2. What types of SD-PD in literacy do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) select?

Finding 1: Interview Data

The research in the current case study found that working with a literacy coaching was the preferred choice of SD-PD in literacy. The data also showed that the tenured teachers choose any activities that allow them to collaborate with their colleagues. Other activities such as online learning, including the use of social media and reading professional books were also selected, but with less frequency. Overall, the data showed that the participants believe that reform activities to be the most beneficial for their professional growth. This is hopeful as researchers have indicated there is substantial benefit when teachers partake in reform types of PD (Desimone et al., 2002 & Penuel et al., 2007).

The participants in the present study have voluntarily chosen to work with their literacy coach in their own classrooms. This was not a surprise to the researcher and this confirms the existing research on literacy coaching. Research has found that the essential role of the literacy coach is to meet the individual needs of the teachers with whom they work (Dozier, 2006). The participants in this study were motivated to participate in SD-PD in literacy to meet their own needs and the needs of their students. Therefore, it is logical that they often choose to work with a literacy coach. The participants in the current study were all invested in the coaching process which research has found will impact their instructional practice (Kraft & Blazer, 2017).

Since literacy coaching activities often involve direct engagement and time in classrooms, it provides ongoing collaboration, also found to be a strong motivating factor for the participants in this study. The power of literacy coaching is in the demonstration of lessons provided in the teacher's classrooms (Scarparolo & Hammond 2018; Mundy et al., 2014) and this was supported by the data in the current study. As Participant B stated, "There is nothing like watching someone else teach a lesson and then you go "Oh wow that's how that goes?" Everybody should have a coach come into their room and teach a lesson from the units to see how it goes."

The current case study confirmed that there are two important benefits of literacy coaching that make this a valuable type of reform PD. First, the work of the literacy coaches is often found most useful when it is embedded in the school day (Amendum, 2014). Therefore, teachers who choose to work with a coach do *not* have to do so outside of their typical work day. The participants commented that they appreciate that coaching was part of their school day. Participant B said, "Like with literacy coaching... that's terrific because it's built into your day."

Secondly, the work that is done through collaboration with a literacy coach is also part of the teachers ongoing classroom practices. According to participant C, she can revisit methods of teaching as often as she wants with a coach in her classroom, "I am like 'Let's go back and talk about small groups again, let's work on conferring again.' I feel like I know my weakness and I am always just trying to fix that a little bit."

Literacy coaching has been found to be a beneficial form of PD, but there are challenges when it is made mandatory (Kraft & Blazer, 2017). The current study confirmed that having autonomy over their PD is far more motivating to the participants

than when their district mandates it. The relationship between the coach and the teacher, which includes feelings of trust, is extremely important (Dozier, 2006). Regarding feedback from her literacy coach, participant C stated, “It’s sincere and umm... I guess that’s what it comes down to... it’s sincerity. I don’t think it’s sincere from those people [administrators].”

Finally, the data in this study also confirmed the research on the teachers’ need to value the coach’s expertise and knowledge of literacy (Amendum, 2014). As participant F stated, “I feel like he knows everything about literacy... whatever the question is ... he has the answer for it. I like that he shows me how to do it and then I can try it on my own.” This participant clearly valued the literacy coach’s experience and knowledge base.

Finding 2: Teacher Written Diaries

After analyzing the participants written diaries, the researcher found that these diaries closely aligned with the findings determined from the interview data. Literacy coaching and online learning were the two types of SD-PD that the participants referred to during their interviews and also documented in their diaries. Collaborating with grade level colleagues was mentioned as an activity in two participant diaries, but it was noted that this was only done through Zoom due to the pandemic.

What was most interesting in the data from the participants’ written diaries was the fact that each tenured teacher voluntarily participated in specific online Zoom workshops provided by their literacy coach. The time frame of their participation was mostly during the global pandemic. Therefore, the participants sought to engage in online

SD-PD activities with the literacy coach to support their teaching during a very challenging time in education when all instruction was conducted virtually.

The present study confirmed existing research that online SD-PD goes beyond the limitations of traditional PD. It makes self-directed learning easier since it transcends time and place and encourages learners to be in control of their professional growth. (Collins & Liang, 2015; Kabilan, 2005; McNaught, 20002) Participants confirmed this research as their diaries illustrated that online learning is convenient in terms of time and location, and generally fits their busy lives. Existing research found that teachers can be involved in both structured and organized PD online or self-directed OPD (Kabilan, 2005), and this case study found that the tenured teachers participate in both.

Three participants reported recently reading blogs of one noted literacy expert, Pernille Ripp, who provides innovative ideas for teaching literacy, especially during the pandemic. However, according to the diaries, participants read the blog independently to validate a similar perspective and/or gain some new ideas. The diaries did not suggest that teachers engaged in any ongoing and critical dialogue with the author or other teachers on the blog, as the research suggests is beneficial (Hall, 2017). The research on blogging found that teachers often agree with the blog post but do not engage in any ongoing conversations (Hall, 2017). This was confirmed in the current study, in which the participants noted that they read the blogs but do not interact with the author or other readers. Often teachers gain information from people they consider “experts” and may feel intimidated to share their own opinions or experiences. Without a framework or some form of structure, as the research suggest, teachers may not feel comfortable

sharing their own ideas. The researcher found this to be the case among the participants in the study.

Research Question 3. How do tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) apply the literacy concepts learned in SD-PD in literacy?

While this study showed the participants were motivated by several factors to participate in SD-PD in literacy, only a limited analysis could be done to determine how they apply the literacy concepts learned during SD-PD. Only 50% or 3 participants chose to provide the researcher with lesson plans and therefore conclusions were limited to those tenured teachers. The lesson plans consisted of concepts and methods learned during SD-PD in literacy. The participants who submitted lesson plans specifically applied concepts and methods learned in SD-PD in literacy. One participant applied the concepts and methods learned in the classroom with the literacy coach over time. All three participants applied the concepts learned online during the pandemic.

Overall, there were four main themes found in the lesson plan data that were submitted to the researcher: (1) generating writing lesson plans; (2) conducting reading and writing conferences; (3) using digital sources; (4) and conducting small groups online. Using digital sources and conducting small groups online were the specific areas that the participants were implementing in their virtual classrooms during the pandemic. Again, these areas of instruction included content (writing lessons and digital sources) as well as methods (conducting reading and writing conferences and conducting small groups online). Clearly the new content and methods taught during SD-PD in literacy specifically addressed the teachers needs for their students who were now meeting in virtual classrooms.

By generating writing lesson plans and finding new techniques to conduct reading and writing conferences, the tenured teachers in the current study directly applied what they learned in their SD-PD in literacy into their instruction. In particular, they implemented the content and methods that they learned in online Zoom sessions with the district literacy coach. As a result of the pandemic, these teachers also needed to learn how and what to teach readers and writers in limited time frames online.

After reading professional texts, Participant C said she was able to generate new lessons in writing in order to bolster student engagement. One specific lesson was a writing lesson in which students created a “Gratitude Map” which would provide an emotional and creative outlet during a difficult time. Each student then wrote about the things they were grateful for rather than writing about an assigned topic. This informal SD-PD in literacy specifically met teacher needs in the virtual classroom and supports previous research (Dozier, 2006).

Participant B noted that she gained more confidence in conducting conferences when her literacy coach taught her new techniques. She noted that this would result in techniques she would use again and again. This supported research that PD boosted teacher confidence (Grootenboer, 2009). It also validated research that found that SD-PD had the greatest impact on instruction when it was narrowly centered on teaching practices (Lopes, 2017).

Research has also shown an increased use of new information learned during PD sessions when there is alignment between the new practice and the daily activities of the classroom teacher (Boardman & Woodruff, 2004). The findings of the current study were consistent with this research since tenured teachers immediately began using the

digital sources (digital books and videos) suggested by the literacy coach which were implemented in their virtual classrooms during the pandemic. By meeting with the literacy coach on Zoom, the participants also learned how to conduct small groups online, a skill in which they then were then able to transfer into their own virtual classrooms (Kraft & Blazar, 2017).

Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations to consider regarding the current research study. Most importantly, this study took place during the COVID-19 global pandemic which may have altered participants interview responses and written diaries, and for three participants, their ability to provide lesson plans. Additionally, the research sample for this study was small, consisting of data from only six tenured teachers in grades 3-6. The participants were female with the exception of one male participant. The participants in the present case study were all tenured teachers. This group was selected to understand what motivated this specific group of experienced tenured teachers as opposed to a mix of tenured and untenured teachers. This eliminated the ability to make comparisons between the two groups of teachers. Therefore, it is important to note that the findings of this study are applicable only to the lived experiences of the study sample. In addition, this case study consisted of only one small elementary school district in Nassau County, New York. Therefore, the results may not be applicable to other settings that may be different from elementary school districts and elementary schools outside of this particular area.

Another limitation of the present study was the lack of return of the participant lesson plans. Only 50% or 3 participants submitted a description of lesson plans to show

how they implemented concepts they learned in SD-PD into their literacy instruction. Therefore, it was not possible to analyze participants use of concepts learned in SD-PD in literacy beyond the three participants who submitted this information. Finally, in a qualitative study, there is the potential for researcher bias due to the researcher-as-instrument. The participants, while not directly under the researcher's coaching support and guidance, were tenured teachers who worked in schools where the researcher was currently serving as a literacy coach for teachers in grades K-2.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Based on the findings, analysis and conclusions of this case study the researcher makes the following recommendations related to future practice and policy:

1. SD-PD in literacy should be considered as a valuable source of PD for tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6).
2. Since tenured teachers are motivated by feelings of autonomy, competence and relatedness, any PD that encourages these feelings will be more successful than required district-wide programs that are not targeted to teacher needs.
3. School leaders should focus on the tenets of autonomy when creating opportunities for SD-PD in literacy. Technique (how they learn) and team (who they learn with) are essential to tenured teachers who choose to continue to grow professionally.
4. Administrators (Principals and Assistant Principals, as well as Assistant Superintendents and Superintendents) should encourage tenured teachers in grades 3-6 to reflect on their instruction and seek SD-PD to meet their own needs as well as the needs of their students.
5. School leaders in Nassau County, N.Y. should consider the factors uncovered in this study that motivate tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) when planning any PD in literacy: collaboration with colleagues, control over time, meeting teacher and student needs, and choice.
6. School leaders in Nassau County, N.Y. should also consider the important role of Literacy Coach in SD-PD in literacy. Voluntary literacy coaching should be made available for tenured teachers in grades 3-6.

7. Opportunities for SD-PD in literacy should be advertised to tenured teachers in grades 3-6 through district websites and email.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of the current case study represented six tenured elementary school teachers in a small suburban elementary school district in Nassau County, N.Y. These results may not generalize to different populations of teachers or teachers in larger elementary school districts. Future research would need to be conducted in order to determine if similar findings would result with similar tenured or untenured teachers in other districts, counties or states, or for teachers in secondary schools. In order to consider some of these other conditions, future research could involve:

1. Conduct a quantitative study which would include an in-depth survey of elementary school tenured teachers. This may uncover additional motivating factors for tenured teacher participation in SD-PD in literacy.
2. Conduct a similar qualitative study with a larger sample population including tenured teachers in another area or a broader area such as all of Long Island, New York or all of New York State.
3. Compare tenured vs. non-tenured teachers in a qualitative study with a larger sample size.
4. Conduct a study of tenured teachers who work at the secondary high school level.
5. Conduct a study examining teacher motivation for SD-PD in other content areas such as math, science or social studies

Conclusion

Literacy is the foundation of learning. The teaching of reading and writing is implicitly important in elementary school across content areas beyond the classroom. Like participant D stated, “It’s the most important thing we do during the day except for greeting the kids at the door.” The research shows that SD-PD in literacy is an effective way to support teachers in their efforts to enhance their literacy instruction. The current

research study sought to understand teacher motivation for SD-PD, explore the types of SD-PD in literacy that tenured teachers select as well as learn how tenured teachers apply what they have learned. Both Guskey (2002) and Kennedy (2016) have suggested that more research be done to discover what motivates teachers to pursue PD, and this study was an effective starting point.

The first major finding of this study is that tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) are motivated to participate in SD-PD in literacy when they have feelings of competence, autonomy and relatedness. The second finding was that when they have feelings of autonomy, tenured elementary school teachers in grades 3-6 feel most strongly about how they learn (technique) and with whom they learn (team). This is important information for school district leaders to know as they consider recommendations for SD-PD in literacy. School leaders and other stakeholders should be sure that tenured teachers are given opportunities that offer a choice in how they would like to learn (including online options and with a literacy coach) and also with whom they would like to work.

The third major finding was that tenured elementary school teachers (grades 3-6) were motivated to participate in SD-PD by four main factors: (1) collaborating with colleagues; (2) control over the time; (3) meeting their needs and needs of their students; and (4) having choice. They also saw themselves as reflective about their work and therefore they are motivated to learn more and improve their practice.

Finally, the researcher found that the types of SD-PD in literacy that the tenured teachers determined to be the most beneficial overall were literacy coaching and online learning, including social media. They also value any activities that allow them the

opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues. Tenured teachers (grades 3-6) in this study were highly intrinsically motivated to participate in SD-PD. While the researcher previously believed that the tenured teachers in the current study would be driven to participate in SD-PD in literacy by a love of learning, this was not a theme among this particular sample of participants. Rather, they were reflective teachers who sought to collaborate and work to meet their needs and the needs of their students. Ongoing use of effective literacy coaching models as well as online platforms to provide knowledge and connect teachers with literacy information and collaboration will be essential as we move forward in today's challenging educational environment.

APPENDIX A



March 24, 2020

Dominick Palma, Ph.D.

Superintendent
Merrick U.F.S.D.
21 Babylon Road
Merrick, New York 11566
(516) 992-7200

Dear Dr. Palma,

My name is Jennifer L. Brady and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Administrative and Instructional Leadership Department of the School of Education at St. John's University. I am conducting a qualitative case study for my dissertation. **My research study is designed to examine tenured teacher motivation for self-directed professional development in literacy.**

I am requesting your permission to conduct a series of three brief online interviews with seven tenured Merrick U.F.S.D. classroom teachers in my doctoral research study. I have selected to use three schools in the Merrick U.F.S.D including Birch Elementary School, Roland Chatterton School, and Norman J. Levy Lakeside School as part of my study. I am prepared to contact the teachers of those buildings in person and provide them with the necessary information required for data collection.

The information gathered from this study will help building and district level administrators determine tenured teacher motivation for pursuing self-directed professional development (SD-PD). It will also uncover what specific self-directed professional development activities tenured teachers select. Finally, this study will also provide recommendations for future research and practice.

Each participant will be asked to complete three brief interviews via the on-line platform called Zoom. No in-person interviews will be conducted. The initial online interview will consist of about 15 questions. Each interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes. In addition, I will be collecting a short diary of events and reflections that teachers recorded related to SD-PD in literacy. Documents, such as lesson plans related to SD-PD, will be collected from teachers as well.

Participation is voluntary. Participants may opt out at any time or choose not to answer specific questions. If they decide to participate, that will constitute informed

consent. There will be no financial incentive to participate in this study. All collected data will be for the sole purpose of educational research. All collected data will be stored on the researcher's personal computer. All collected data will be deleted and destroyed after the completion of the study. (Data collection is contingent on approval of IRB.)

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at jennifer.brady17@stjohns.edu or jlbteach@aol.com, or my doctoral chairperson, Dr. Barbara Cozza, cozzab@stjohns.edu, Department of Education at St. John's University. It is my hope that through participation in this study, your district can be pivotal in understanding teacher motivation for SD-PD and its impact on student growth. If you are interested in the results of my study, I would be happy to share them with you. Thank you for your time and assistance. Most of all, thank you for supporting my initiative.

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Brady

Doctoral Candidate
St. John's University
jennifer.brady17@stjohns.edu
jlbteach@aol.com

APPENDIX B



March 25, 2020

Dear Colleague,

My name is Jennifer L. Brady and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the Administrative and Instructional Leadership Department of the School of Education at St. John's University.

I am writing you to invite you to participate in my research study which designed to examine tenured teacher motivation for self-directed professional development (SD-PD) in literacy. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to explore tenure teacher motivation for participating in SD-PD. The study seeks to uncover what specific SD-PD activities in literacy tenured teachers choose to participate in to grow their professional knowledge.

Each participant will be asked to participate in three short interviews via the online platform called Zoom. No in-person interviews will be conducted. The initial interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes. The interviews will be recorded and the participant may review these recordings and request that all or any portion of the recordings be destroyed. In addition, each participant will be asked to keep a short diary of events and reflections related to SD-PD in literacy. I will also be collecting any lesson plans that were created based on SD-PD in literacy.

Participation is voluntary. You may opt out of the interviews or choose not to answer specific questions. If you decide to participate, that will constitute informed consent. There will be no financial incentive to participate in this study. All collected data will be destroyed after the completion of the study.

If you have any questions or concerns, , please feel free to contact me at jennifer.brady17@stjohns.edu or jlbt teach@aol.com, or my doctoral chairperson,

Dr. Barbara Cozza, cozzab@stjohns.edu, Department of Education at St. John's University.

I thank you for your consideration to participate in this study. Your participation will help to shape a better understanding of tenured teacher motivation for SD-PD in literacy and what specific SD-PD activities tenured teachers select to grow professionally.

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Brady

Doctoral Candidate, St. John's University

APPENDIX C

St. John's University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

PI: Jennifer Brady
CO-PI: Barbara Cozza, Katherine Aquino, Joan Birringer-Haig
Ed Admin & Instruc Leadership

Re: Expedited Review - Initial - **IRB-FY2020-292** *Tenured Teacher Motivation For Self-Directed Professional Development In Literacy*

Dear Jennifer Brady:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for *Tenured Teacher Motivation For Self-Directed Professional Development In Literacy*. The approval is effective from April 8, 2020 through April 7, 2021

Decision: Approved

PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data must be discarded.

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor of Psychology

Marie Nitopi, Ed.D.
IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In this interview the researcher will be asking questions regarding professional development (PD) as well as self-directed professional development (SDPD) specifically in the area of literacy. SDPD is PD that you choose to participate in to elevate your knowledge and professional practice. This is PD that is not mandated by your school or district. Examples include taking in-service courses (in person or online through a video conferencing platform), reading professional texts, attending conferences, Webinars, participating in an Ed Camp model, using Twitter or other social media application, book clubs, instructional coaching in the classroom and participating in professional discussions with colleagues.

Interview 1: Brief Personal History of Teaching Elementary Education /Literacy

1. How long (years) have you been teaching at the elementary level?
2. What is your level of education?
3. What grades have you taught? What grade do you currently teach?
4. Have you had any additional coursework in literacy? If so, what?
5. How would you describe your teaching experience of literacy at the elementary level?

Interview 2 and 3: Self-directed professional development in literacy:

1. Please tell me about your experiences with SDPD in literacy. What prompted you to become involved in SDPD in literacy?
2. What types of SDPD that you have participated in related to your own professional growth in literacy?
3. Why do you participate in SDPD in literacy? Please elaborate on some of the motivational factors that led to decide to participate in SDPD in literacy that you discussed thus far.
4. What are/were some of the best types of SDPD in literacy that you have participated in?
5. How would you compare mandated PD with self-directed PD?
6. Do you believe there are benefits of SDPD in literacy compared to traditional PD provided by your school district? If so, what are they?
7. Based on what you have shared about your participation in SDPD in literacy, what have you learned about yourself as a teacher?
8. Can you identify any personal qualities that you have that led you to be involved in self-directed PD in literacy?

9. How has your practice changed with SDPD? What was your practice like before your involvement with SDPD in literacy? What is it like now?

10. What specific types of SDPD in literacy would you like to participate in the future?

Why?

APPENDIX E

SD-PD Diary and Lesson Plan Examples

Participant A: Zoom: TC Writing April 14, 2020

This PD was offered to help support teachers in remotely teaching writing while trying to reflect upon all of the skills and strategies we have already worked on this past year through our TC units of study. There were some basic reminders that were good for me to hear, such as:

- Goals during Distance Learning
- connecting with kids
- keeping reading and writing lives going
- engagement through choice
- practice what they already know
- involve in projects that really matter and avoid busy work

I liked the idea of using my office hours to schedule individual conference times because I am missing that daily contact and feedback on my students' writing pieces. That has been one of my biggest challenges in writing. We discussed using journaling as an option to capture students' thoughts and feeling about what is going on now.

I decided to really focus on practicing what we already know (skills and strategies) and incorporating more engaging activities (with choice). My students really miss out on more creative writing opportunities since our curriculum is really based on essay writing all year. I am planning a unit around fractured fairy tales to explore incorporating reading skills (following a storyline/plot and changing elements to fracture it) and creative writing. I also want to explore the idea of creative writing through CHOICE by learning more about Passion Projects and maybe Virtual Trips (writing reviews, travel blogs/videos, brochures, etc..)

Lesson Plans: I developed a mini unit around fractured fairy tales. Since I am still not seeing all three classes daily for writing it was a challenge to make it simple to access and teach themselves. That discussion piece is missing and important to any writing workshop. I will be starting that unit in another week.

For some creative writing (to take a break between units) my students are working on an ADVICE MEME writing activity where they create memes for the incoming 6th grade students that offer advice (in a fun way) on how to be successful in their senior year.

I also gave students a PowerPoint with various writing prompts that they may choose from that allow them to get creative. Prompts range from persuasive to fantasy writing. Some use pictures to start a story. Others ask to write letters of thanks to someone important. Each of the tasks is thought provoking and asking students to use what they know about quality writing (working through the process) to create well developed pieces.

For the final weeks of the year, my colleagues and I have taken a Teachers Pay Teachers end of year unit and divided it up to create creative writing lessons around it while we rotate through the seeing all three classes for the last few weeks of the year.

The first lesson I will be do with all three classes is a lesson on IDIOMS (specifically those that deal with TIME) and POETRY. I will review what an idiom is, various forms of poetry (free verse, concrete and acrostic) and brainstorm how to incorporate figurative language into our end of the year poems.

Participant B: Literacy Coaching

Dates: 4th Grade 9/2018-6/2019 and 6th Grade 9/2019-3/2020

I have worked with a literacy coach for both reading and writing.

Writing: In fourth grade I worked with a coach to focus two things in writing. One was how to teach effective writing mini-lessons and the other was using student work to create lessons for small groups.

Reading: I also worked with a coach in 4th and 6th grade during reading. During both experiences we focused on whole class mini-lessons, small group lessons, goal setting and conferring.

I found the experience working with a coach very helpful. The part that made is so much more helpful than any other PD was the opportunity to observe the coach in the classroom setting. It is also helpful because they can observe you teach and give feedback. I also like the fact that they are working with your class specifically so the work benefits your current class and helps you with your teaching immediately.

Lesson Plans: I would do a quick assessment of student writing to form small groups and plan mini lessons. A few examples of these mini-lessons are revising leads; organization in essay writing; adding dialogue to fiction writing. In reading I started planning series of small group lessons with one group based on data collected from pre-assessment questions. I also worked on trying out different types of conferences and taking notes while conferring.

Participant B: Virtual Think Tank: Maintaining & Deepening Your Workshops & Community Across the Year

Dates: 10/2019-12/2019

This was an in-service course offered by my school district. It took place after school once a week over several weeks. I found this type of PD helpful for several reasons. First, the format made it very convenient for me with my schedule. Sessions took place over zoom and participants were able to discuss what the best time would be for the whole

group. I found being comfortable at home after having the ability to take care of my personal life refreshing and motivating. Another thing that was helpful was the ability to share ideas with teacher across grade levels and buildings. Many time PD is offered by grades and you don't often have the opportunity to talk to teachers from many grade levels. I also enjoyed the fact that this class also acted as a book club. I found it so helpful as a reading teacher to actually go through the process of reading and jotting to prepare for conversation with the group each session.

Lesson Plans: One thing that I learned in this class that I took back to my classroom was the different types of conferences. It helped me feel more confident walking into conferences with students knowing I had prompts to help me through. I also realized that in the end even a compliment conference is a way to check in with students and let them know you care about their reading life.

Participant C:

Heart Maps (Georgia Heard)- I read this book in 2018 and tried heart mapping with my 2018-19 class. In that instance, we created two heart maps, both of which I modeled for them with heart maps of my own. They then chose topics from those maps to write off of in their own notebooks.

Lesson Plans: This year I went back to the heart map book in the fall as a way to jumpstart our writing lives. We created two heart maps in the fall, and wrote off of them, similar to the way we did that the previous year. When the pandemic struck, I thought again of heart mapping. In April and May of 2020, I shared heart mapping lessons with my students via Zoom. They were already familiar with the concept from the work we did in the fall, but this time we tried different maps that connected to what we are going through right now. We created a "Home is Where the Heart is" map and wrote entries off of that in April. Then in May, we created "Gratitude" heart maps. We talked about the ways that showing gratitude can help us make sense of find calm as we are experiencing difficult moments in our lives. The students wrote about the feelings, people and things they shared in those maps as well.

Participant D: 4/21/20 Passion Projects

This was a voluntary one-hour Professional Development session that was delivered online via Zoom. That made it easy to access at home. The instructor was flexible in letting you come and go.

I knew that the Passion Projects were similar to work I had tried in the past, just renamed from "Genius Hour Projects". There wasn't a lot of support with the previous version of this idea, so I was eager to see what new thinking would be introduced.

The course met my expectations. There were ideas that could be used in my class the next day, so I did. The students that were ready for the choice of projects took off with the idea and only needed minimal direction, which is the type of project that I enjoy.

Participant E:

The PD I attended via Zoom was delivered by my literacy coach. My coach is a sympathetic and empathetic person in general and his PD reflected that right from the start. The agenda was non-threatening and teacher friendly. The approach was well planned and broken down in a way that was accessible to teachers at various levels of comfort.

That there were personalized opportunities to work with my coach after the sessions was what brought the most comfort for me. PD that stands alone with little or no follow-up is the least effective form of PD in my opinion. The PD I have attended in these last few months has been so good because it is what I need right now. Having a choice makes the time and effort I put into it very much worth my while.

Participant F: Literacy Coaching

Last spring, I worked with my literacy coach on managing reading and writing conferences and small groups. He suggested creating a large, dry erase calendar in the front of the classroom. The idea was that you would conference with a child, set a goal together with the child and then have them put their name under a date on the calendar when you would check back in with them.

I made the calendar that day after my coach left class and immediately started using it the next day. The size and location of the calendar made it easy to keep track of who I was supposed to meet with and when. Also, the kids were great at reminding me if it was my turn to meet with them

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