CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative narrative study was to fill a gap in literature regarding different types of professional development for teachers, at varying levels of experience, to increase teachers' pedagogical skills and classroom practice in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. This study sought to close the gap by examining the perceptions of nine middle school teachers about the different types of professional development to which they have been exposed, including targeted professional development and traditional professional development relating to teacher classroom practice and the effect on student performance. The Every Student Succeeds Act and Show-Me-Success have created an urgency for education reform and a push for higher quality teaching. This study sought to understand if focused professional development would modify teacher cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, signed by President Obama, previously NCLB (No Child Left Behind), signed by President George W. Bush, all students should have an equal learning opportunity. There should be fewer disparities between schools and equitable access to high-quality, experienced teachers. Preservice programs that are well-designed improve the chances of teachers being highly qualified and slow the rate of attrition, especially when partnered with the mentorship of seasoned teachers (Cardichon et al., 2020). With this increase of accountability for teachers (Oddone, Hughes, & Lupton, 2019), schools should offer support for educators to ensure the greatest effectiveness and give students equitable access to excellent educators. A disconnect exists, however, between local and state initiatives and professional development which has a negative effect on practice, therefore, PD for new initiatives must be connected and aligned to be effective (Martin, Kragler, Quatroche, & Bauserman, 2019). Missouri addresses the different levels of teacher need through different models of teacher learning based on experience and targeted need.

The state of Missouri requires all teachers to receive a specific number of hours of professional development each year, based on years of experience. New teachers in their first two years of service are mandated to participate in a mentoring program, plus participate in professional development activities (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), 2013). New teachers should receive PD that is ongoing with a focus on what they need specifically as new teachers (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, & Mattos, 2016). Teachers in their first four years of service are required to

participate in 30 hours of professional development. After their fourth year, teachers are required to participate in professional development annually until they are exempt (DESE, 2013).

In 2010 DESE created an educator evaluation system to measure performance and increase educator effectiveness. The Missouri Educator Evaluation System model was based on the works of Hattie (2009), *Visible Learning,* which is also aligned to Missouri Quality Indicators; Marzano (2007), *The Art and Science of Teaching,* and Lemov (2010), *Teach Like a Champion*. Growth guide protocols were created to identify teachers as emerging, developing, proficient, or distinguished based on standards and quality indicators (Katnik, 2014).

In 2013, DESE adopted the *Missouri Professional Learning Guidelines for Student Success,* which defined a plan for Missouri educators in professional development. Missouri requires all teachers to clock professional development hours for their professional license to be renewed. The plan also requires districts to allocate monies each year to pay for professional development activities for staff and to assign a Professional Development Committee (PDC) that is chosen by the teachers to disburse the money as needed. The plan also outlines professional development to support the goals of the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CISP), which is ongoing, and job embedded (DESE, 2013).

According to *Missouri Professional Learning Guidelines for Student Success* (DESE, 2013), school leaders are responsible for creating a culture of high expectations and learning for students, staff, and themselves. In 2014, DESE created Missouri Leadership Development System (MLDS) to educate building leaders on effective

methods of instructional leadership. This includes developing the capacity of staff, as well as self-inquiry methods for school improvement (DESE, 2013).

Chapter One includes the theoretical basis and conceptual basis for the study, which uses transformational learning and an adult learning approach to shape professional development for teachers, to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. It also includes the problem statement, the purpose for the study, research questions, the significance of the study, and the definition of key terms used in the study. Limitations, delimitations, assumptions, and design control are also addressed in Chapter One.

Theoretical Framework

Effective professional development transforms teacher instructional beliefs and practice, which, in turn, increases student success (Martin et al., 2019). Teachers have beliefs and biases that are seen implicitly and explicitly in their practices. Middle school teachers, especially in specific contexts, must be reflective about their understanding of different concepts, such as student behavior, to modify their practice to support student success. Effective teacher reflections include racial and cultural biases and employ culturally responsive supports. Reflective teachers are more culturally responsive because they recognize their own beliefs and biases (Carter Andrews & Gutwein, 2020; Hammond, 2015). This belief aligns with the theoretical framework of Jack Mezirow's (1997) transformational learning theory. Mezirow described how the ideas, beliefs, values, and feelings of adult learners are transformed to make them more inclusive, discerning, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change. Exposure to certain things influences behavior and learning. Mezirow also identified three important ways, or

processes, in which we learn. First, we elaborate on existing points of view or biases and find ways to support any views or biases. Second, we establish new points of view. Third, we change our point of view. Autonomous and responsible thinking, which leads to change, is the goal. Mezirow believed learners should not just acquire knowledge but be able to understand and apply it to specific situations as self-directed learners. This builds on Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy, where self-directed learning is applied to adult learning situations.

Malcolm Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy, the central principle for adult learners in adult learning situations, was the conceptual framework for this study. There are six principles Knowles identified including the need of the learner to know; self-concept of the learner; prior experience of the learner; readiness to learn; orientation to learn; and motivation to learn (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2015). The goal of professional development is to create an adult learning experience (Sisselman-Borgia & Torino, 2017). Knowles' (1989) central principle of self-concept, and autonomous and self-directed learning, is supported by Mezirow's (1997) theory of transformational learning of autonomous and responsible thinking during the learning process.

Teachers determine the quality of instruction in their classrooms (Barnett et al., 2017; Damjanovic & Blank, 2018) but are not always determining the type and quality of their own professional development (Su, Feng, & Hsu, 2017; Utami & Prestridge, 2018). With ever-changing mandates and accountability to regulate the content that teachers are teaching (Hardy & Melville, 2019), professional development is changing the way teachers learn new information (Klein & Riordan, 2009; Mogashoa, 2018). Professional development, which is researched based, focused, student centered, active, and self-

directed is key (Campbell, Osmond-Johnson, Faubert, Zeichner, & Hobbs-Johnson, 2017; Hardy & Melville, 2019). Teachers who are enthusiastic about their own learning and growth tend to be more self-directed and self-motivated in their learning and tend to sustain learning on their own (Utami & Prestridge, 2018; Utami, Saukah, Cahyono, & Rachmajanti, 2017).

Problem Statement

Student populations are continually becoming more diverse, and there is a greater focus on adding pedagogical skills to address multicultural demographics (Kelly, 2020). A problem exists with students not achieving due to multicultural and language differences, which is intensified in middle school because of students changing developmentally (Harry & Klinger, 2006; Johnson, 2005, as cited in Cramer & Bennett, 2015). There is also a shortage of multicultural staff in America's schools (Childs, 2019) and a limited number of programs to prepare teachers, preservice and beyond, which are coherent, interrelated, and integrated for specific pedagogies (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). Professional development is important in ensuring teachers are prepared to provide high-quality instruction (Pharis, Wu, Sullivan, & Moore, 2019). Middle school teachers of varying experience levels need different types of professional development to be prepared. Middle school teachers feel that these specific needs should be considered when professional development is assigned, and consideration should be given to social, emotional, and academic needs. Consideration should also be given to the specific grade-level needs of the middle school teacher (Denson, 2016). Traditional, whole-group professional development is time-consuming (State, Simonsen, Hirn, & Wills, 2019) and may not be an effective way to develop teachers (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, &

Gardner, 2017). High-quality PD, however, is grounded in pedagogy and capacity, offering teachers a chance to practice; it is not a "one-shot and done" learning model as has been the case in the past (Klein & Riordan, 2009).

This study will add to the understanding of modifying pedagogical skills to address multicultural demographics due to increased diversity in student populations (Kelly, 2020). The more teachers know and understand about communicating with ethnically diverse students, the more they will improve academic success and close the achievement gap (G. Gay, 2018). Therefore, modification of pedagogical skills happens through high-quality professional development, which is more than a one-time learning experience (Klein & Riordan, 2009). Training and development of teachers' pedagogical skills are most effective when done systematically (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Systematic professional development considers how adults learn best and create learning experiences that encourage reflection and autonomous learning (Mezirow, 1997), prior experience of the learner, readiness and orientation to learn, and motivation to learn (Knowles, 1989). Chapter Two includes a more detailed discussion of the literature on professional development and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of three emerging teachers, three developing teachers, and three proficient or distinguished teachers relating to professional development, their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies, through personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks. Jack Mezirow's (1997) theory of transformational learning

was the theoretical basis, and Malcolm Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy was the conceptual basis for this study. As illustrated in the literature review, there is research on related topics, particularly different types of professional development, which promote pedagogical skills. The most effective methods to increase culturally responsive pedagogical skills, however, are less researched. Exploring teacher perceptions regarding focused professional development will add to the literature to inform professional development committees and administration regarding professional development programming particularly when addressing cultural responsiveness.

This study is significant because it adds to the literature by examining the perceptions of teachers about their participation in different types of professional development to understand and modify their practices in applying culturally responsive and other pedagogies in their classrooms. This study was conducted using semi-structured questions, including convergent closed-ended questions, to show a relationship between the answers and divergent open-ended questions to show differences in the answers. The study also used journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks, (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). A third-party transcription service was used to collect and analyze the data and prevent researcher bias.

Research Questions

This study explored the experiences of emerging, developing, and proficient and/or distinguished middle school teachers regarding the application of different types of professional development using narrative, qualitative research through personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks.

The central questions driving this study were:

RQ: How do different types of professional development motivate teachers to modify their instructional practice?

a. Based on teachers' readiness and orientation to learn, how is the focus of teacher professional development determined?

b. How do teachers use prior experiences to determine the best professional development to take responsibility for growing their culturally responsive pedagogical skills?

Significance of the Study

There is existing literature about the most effective types of professional development (Cardichon et al., 2020; Cosgun & Savas, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Trust, Krutka, & Carpenter, 2016) but there is a gap in the literature about the perceptions of middle school teachers and their participation in different types of professional development to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies in their classrooms. This study is significant because it adds to the literature by examining the perceptions of nine middle school teachers in suburban school districts in Missouri about their participation in different types of professional development to understand and modify their practices in applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies in their classrooms. Middle school teachers, in the context of effectively supporting the success of middle school students, show maturation, effective communication, and implementation of supportive behavioral practices (Carter Andrews & Gutwein, 2020).

This study encompassed nine middle school teachers, which included three

emerging, three developing, and three proficient or distinguished teachers, as defined by DESE, in core and practical arts. Three teachers of each level from three suburban school districts in the largest metropolitan cities in Missouri with similar demographics of size and student diversity were interviewed about their experiences with different types of professional development. These types include content focused, job-embedded, active, and sustainable, and included some whole group, to modify practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. Exploring teacher perceptions regarding focused professional development will inform professional development committees and administration regarding professional development programming in the school setting (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), especially in the modification of culturally responsive pedagogy at the middle school level. Middle school was chosen because students are not achieving due to multicultural and language differences, which is intensified in middle school because of students changing developmentally (Harry & Klinger, 2006; Johnson, 2005, as cited in Cramer & Bennett, 2015).

Definition of Key Terms

Andragogy. Autonomous learning in the context of specific learning situations (Note, De Backer, & Donder, 2021).

Certified Teacher. *An educator* meeting all state-required standards certifications, licenses, or endorsements (Cardichon et al., 2020).

Culture. The way people of different races and ethnicities view the world (Hammond, 2015).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. Using knowledge, experiences, and frames of reference of the culture of ethnic minority students, so learning becomes more relevant

and effective for them (Garcia & Chun, 2016).

Developing Teacher. Defined by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as a teacher with 3-5 years of teaching experience; the performance expected of a teacher early in their assignment regarding their teaching, content knowledge, and pedagogical skills continues to develop as they encounter new experiences and expectations in the classroom, school, and district (Katnik, 2014; Mezirow, 1997).

Emerging Teacher. Defined by DESE as a teacher with 0-2 years of teaching experience; the performance expected of an emerging teacher as they enter the profession in a new assignment. The base knowledge and skills are applied as they begin to teach and advance student growth and achievement in a classroom of their own (Katnik, 2014).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Legislation in 2015 signed into law by President Obama, which ensures all students an equal learning opportunity (Darrow, 2016) with an emphasis on continuing education for teachers.

Professional Development (PD). Structured professional learning resulting in changes to teacher knowledge and practices and improvements in student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Proficient and/or Distinguished Teacher. Defined by DESE as a teacher with 6 or more years of teaching experience; the performances that are expected from a career-professional teacher who continues to advance his/her knowledge and skills while consistently advancing student growth and achievement (Katnik, 2014).

Traditional Professional Development. Traditional professional development is characterized by seminars or workshops formally and externally structured (Stevenson,

Hedberg, O'Sullivan, & Howe, 2016).

Limitations

The limitations of the study outside of the control of the study that could have influenced the study were as follows (L. R. Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009):

- The research was limited to prior research about focused professional development around cultural responsiveness.
- The research was limited to the availability of middle school teachers of varying levels of experience.
- The research was limited to the availability of middle school teachers of regular education and practical arts classes.
- The research was limited to the availability of documentation.
- The research was limited to teachers responding honestly and without biased assumptions of what the study was trying to confirm.
- The research was limited by the interview research design.
- The research was limited by biases the researcher may have held.
- The research was limited by the experience of the interviewer in interviewing participants.
- The research was limited by teacher perceptions and/or teacher attitudes about professional development and the consistency with which the questions were answered by the participant.
- The research was limited by teachers' perceptions of the definitions of different types of professional development and the language of the questions when answering the questions.

- The research was limited to generalizing all professional development in the state based on a limited number of interviews.
- The research was limited by the consistency with which the data were analyzed.

Delimitations

Delimitations of the study were controlled as follows:

- The research was delimited to the theoretical framework of Jack Mezirow (1997) and the conceptual framework of Malcolm Knowles (1989).
- The research was delimited to nine Missouri interviewees.
- The research was delimited to interviewing teachers employed only in suburban Missouri public school districts.
- The research was delimited to three participants from each level of experience: emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished.
- The research was delimited to include participants from core education classrooms and practical arts classrooms.
- The research was delimited to interview participants consisting of teachers employed only in middle school Grades 6-8.
- The results of the interviews were anonymous, providing an opportunity for individuals participating in the interview to provide honest feedback.

Assumptions

The assumptions providing relevance to the study and assumed to be true but not verified were as follows (L. R. Gay et al., 2009):

- It was assumed teachers answered interview questions honestly.

- It was assumed teachers would finish the interview.
- It was assumed the teachers participated in focused types of professional development.

Design Control

This study was a narrative qualitative study designed to examine teachers' perceptions about their experiences with focused professional development, to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. The data were collected through a series of semi-structured interviews that included personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks. Otter.ai, a third-party transcription service, was used to collect and analyze the interviews and recordings to increase the accuracy of the data and prevent researcher bias.

The study was limited to prior research about focused professional development around cultural responsiveness. This was controlled by doing a thorough search for all pertinent literature around professional development and culturally responsive pedagogy. The research was limited to the availability of middle school teachers of varying levels of experience teaching in core education and practical arts classes. This was controlled by the purposeful selection of participants in Missouri middle schools (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). The research was limited to teachers responding honestly with the assurance of confidentiality and without biased assumptions of what the study was trying to confirm. The research was limited by teacher perceptions and/or teacher attitudes about professional development and how the questions were answered by the participant. The research was limited by teachers' perceptions of the definitions of different types of

professional development when answering the questions. An attempt to control for these limitations was done by being clear when asking questions and providing definitions for clarity. The research was limited to generalizing all professional development in the state based on a limited number of interviews.

The study was delimited to nine Missouri middle school teachers within the three different experience levels of emerging, developing, and proficient. The study was delimited to interviewing regular education teachers and practical arts teachers. The interviews were voluntary, and confidentiality was ensured to control for the assumption of honesty. A basic narrative qualitative study design was used to purposefully select participants and explore professional development in schools, including a cultural relevance component in their district mission and goals or strategic plan. A basic narrative research strategy was used to gather information through personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

It was assumed teachers answered interview questions honestly. To control for the assumption of teacher honesty, teachers chose the location of the interview which was in-person or through the Zoom platform form depending on the participant preference, and confidentiality was assured. It was assumed the teachers participated in focused types of professional development. To control for the assumption of focused types of professional development, teachers were chosen from schools that provided various types of focused professional development, as noted by professional development documents and website information if possible.

Summary

Teachers have varying levels of experience and varying levels of professional learning needs (Denson, 2016). Creating an effective and targeted professional development plan (Klein & Riordan, 2009) for teachers requires teachers to be reflective about their practices and the degree in which they implement professional learning in their classroom, and then be open to modification of ineffective practices (Knowles, 1989; Mezirow, 1997). Teachers in middle school must also be open and reflective about their culturally responsive pedagogical skills (Hammond, 2015; Hollie, 2018; Mezirow, 1997). This study sought to add to literature about the perceptions of middle school teachers and their participation in different types of professional development to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies in their classrooms. The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of three emerging teachers, three developing teachers, and three proficient or distinguished teachers relating to professional development and cultural responsiveness, through personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks. The theoretical framework of Jack Mezirow's (1997) transformational learning and the conceptual framework of Malcolm Knowles' (1989) andragogy were used to tie pertinent literature to the research questions.

After an extensive review of literature, which is presented in Chapter Two, this study sought to add to the literature by examining the perceptions of Missouri middle school teachers. The study examined teachers in suburban Missouri school districts about their experiences with different types of professional development around cultural

responsiveness and other pedagogies and the degree to which they implemented the learning in their classroom. This study used a constructivist approach, with semi-structured interviews of suburban middle school teachers with varying levels of experience. Exploring teacher perceptions regarding focused professional development will inform professional development committees and administration regarding professional development programming in the school setting (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Jack Mezirow's (1997) theory of transformational learning was the theoretical basis for this study, and Malcolm Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy was the conceptual basis for this study.

An examination of existing literature was done. Chapter Two provides a thematic presentation of the existing literature based on Mezirow's (1997) transformational adult learning theory and Knowles' (1989) conceptual theory of andragogy. These are tied to the theoretical basis of constructivism, which assisted in the development of a deeper understanding of the importance of different types of professional development to increase the pedagogical skills of teachers, including cultural responsiveness. In chapter three the researcher will outline the qualitative methods used to determine nine teachers' perceptions of focused professional development on pedagogical skills and classroom practice, and to modify instructional practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. In Chapter Four the researcher will provide interview results from teachers' perceptions about focused professional development regarding increasing pedagogical skills and classroom practice, to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. In chapter five the researcher will present findings from the study, professional implications, and

application to academic practice of the use of focused professional development.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

There is a worldwide connection of people through culture, education, politics, economics, and technology. New pedagogical paradigms such as cultural responsiveness, social justice, and multicultural education have emerged and become a large part of the programs to educate teachers (Ukpokodu, 2020). With the coming globalization of education, 21st-century skills needed by students, including increased technological learning, and the need for cultural responsiveness, as well as the need for knowledge acquisition for teachers has increased to include inclusive pedagogies. To accommodate teachers' growth, more diverse professional development is needed. Developing a teacher's knowledge and skills is integral to success and higher performance levels (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; G. Gay, 2018; Ma, Xin, & Du, 2018; Ukpokodu, 2020). Professional development then contains certain attributes to be the most effective in modifying teachers' pedagogies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

According to Cardichon et al. (2020), teachers' experience levels matter in the success of students, especially when the least experience is concentrated in high-poverty areas. There are inequities in the access that students have to teachers who are certified and highly trained. A correlation also exists between schools with high enrollment numbers of students of color and a high ratio of less experienced, emerging teachers. Inequities in the access to highly qualified and culturally diverse teachers create a gap in the achievement of students, especially those of color (Cardichon et al., 2020; G. Gay, 2018), which makes a more diverse student-teacher ratio crucial (Childs, 2019). Students

of color struggle when it comes to standardized and competency testing. This is a number that keeps growing as federal mandates require evidence based on data (G. Gay, 2018). According to Cardichon et al. (2020), school-level data collected by the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) highlights these disparities among different schools. Every school, regardless of diversity, must be active in the promotion of equity and excellence for every student. It is the position of educators to teach students how to have better relationships with other students who are different from them. There is a better teaching and learning climate when teachers create better relationships with their students, thus creating a more productive knowledge base and better experiences (Rana & Culbreath, 2019). To accomplish this, teachers must become culturally responsive in their teaching practice (G. Gay, 2018). This requires them to be reflective about their own beliefs about diversity, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and social contexts before they can modify pedagogies (G. Gay, 2018; Mezirow, 1997).

Malcolm Knowles (1989) juxtaposed pedagogy and andragogy for a better understanding of the two. Knowles showed a parallel between six areas of pedagogical and andragogical assumptions of the learner. These six areas include the learner's need to know, the learner's self-concept, the role of the learner's experience, the learner's readiness to learn, the learner's orientation to learn, and the learner's motivation to learn. This study includes literature around adult learning theory of andragogy and literature about modifying teacher pedagogy for student success.

Chapter Two is a thematic presentation of literature based on Mezirow's (1997) transformational adult learning theory and Knowles' (1989) conceptual theory of andragogy. Chapter Two includes background information about andragogy, culturally

responsive pedagogy, and the adult learning approach. Other sections include preservice teacher programs, professional development, effective professional development, professional development for teacher practice, and the principal's role in supporting culturally responsive professional development. Information about preservice teacher programs and professional development is also included.

Background of Andragogy

Malcolm Knowles (1989) began using the term *andragogy* around 1968. Andragogy emphasizes collaboration between adult learners and adult teachers (Javed, 2017). Knowles (1989) has since revised and added to the assumptions of andragogy and paralleled the term andragogy with the term pedagogy to present a present-day theory for adult learners in adult learning situations. Andragogy is the assumption that learners will accept the fact they are dependent learners until they have a strong foundational knowledge of the content they are learning. This dependency ends pursuant to the learner's confidence in being able to assume responsibility for their own learning. Adults moving from pedagogical learning to andragogical learning are more eager to make the change in learning styles once they experience it (Note et al., 2021).

Knowles (1989) paralleled pedagogy and andragogy (Namaziandost, Sabzevari, & Rasooyar, 2018), including six assumptions for each. The first assumption of pedagogy regards the need of the learner to only learn what they must learn to pass, not necessarily applications in life situations. The second assumption of pedagogy regards the self-concept of the learner, which is dependency. The third assumption of pedagogy regards the experience of the learner. The learner's experience is disregarded as a context in learning; only the teacher's experiences are considered. There is truly little engagement

in this learning. The fourth assumption of pedagogy regards the learner's readiness for learning, usually only what is required. The fifth assumption of pedagogy regards the learner's orientation, which is based on subject matter content. The sixth and final assumption of pedagogy regards the learner's motivation, which is usually extrinsic motivations: grades, the pressure of others, such as teachers and parents, and confirmation.

Knowles (1989) also defined six assumptions of andragogy. The first assumption regards the adult learner's need to know. Adult learners want the "why" of learning before they attempt to learn something new. The second assumption regards the adult learner's concept of self, which is on their responsibility or their self-directed learning (Javed, 2017; Knowles, 1989; Namaziandost et al., 2018). There is a psychological need to be seen as an adult who is capable of being self-directed. The third assumption regards the adult learner's experience. The quantity and quality of learning for adults are different than that of a child. When in a group setting, there is a vast array of diversity, interests, motivation, styles of learning, and desires. This lends itself to differentiation in learning. The experiences that are brought to the learning are a resource themselves. This is also where the learning experience can be harder due to biases, existing mental models, and presumptions that make learners less open to new information (Javed, 2017; Knowles, 1989). The fourth assumption regards the adult learner's readiness to learn. Readiness is where life application and self-reflection occur. The fifth assumption regards the adult learner's orientation, which is life learning as opposed to pedagogical content learning. The last assumption regards the adult learner's motivation to learn. Motivation learning moves from solely a focus on extrinsic motivation, to include intrinsic motivation.

Background of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

With populations continually becoming more diverse, there is a greater focus on adding important pedagogical skills to meet the needs of multicultural school groups (Kelly, 2020). For culturally and linguistically diverse students, there are educational inequities that create gaps in their learning capacities (Hammond, 2015), leading to middle school students not achieving due to multicultural and language differences and developmental changes (Harry & Klinger, 2006; Johnson, 2005, as cited in Cramer & Bennett, 2015). Culturally responsive teaching is how educators can close the achievement gap for middle school students by moving students from dependent to independent learners. Teachers working with African American, Latino, and Middle Eastern students must understand how the brain in these students works, as well as understand their cultures, and their mental model (Hammond, 2015).

Transformative learners assess and refine their viewpoints and understanding of diverse cultural contexts (G. Gay, 2018; Mezirow, 1997). To be culturally responsive and include culturally responsive pedagogies (CRP) in classroom practice, teachers must not only understand what it means but also refine that understanding (Hollie, 2018; Mezirow, 1997). According to Bell (2005, as cited in Murff, 2020), Black male students across the United States consistently do not perform as well as other students. This makes it important to determine how to implement CRP in the classroom.

Another effective way to offer cultural understanding in the classroom has been to provide Black teachers as role models in the classroom. Unfortunately, at least 38,000 African American educators in more than 17 states were demoted or laid off (Hudson & Holmes as cited in Murff, 2020). As a result, this created the problem of Black students

not having as many Black teachers and black administrators who understood their cultural differences (Murff, 2020), causing a lack of diversity in their learning environment (Hudson & Holmes, 1994, as cited in Murff, 2020). Ware (2006, as cited in Murff, 2020) concluded that the 21st century has continued to preclude students of color from exposure to teachers of color during their entire K-12 journey (Ware, 2006, as cited in Murff, 2020).

According to Hammond (2015) when understanding culturally responsive teaching, there must be an understanding of how the brain works in relation to culture. The brain maximizes social connections and minimizes social threats. Students need to feel safe, happy, and valued by their classmates and teachers. When a threat is perceived, the brain no longer seeks social connection. Students may not be able to articulate threats and, therefore, present micro-aggressive behaviors. Teachers must be aware of the classroom dynamic and how dependent learners respond to situations. Students who are marginalized need affirmation, so teachers must ensure an environment that promotes inclusion. To keep the threat detections low, teachers can cultivate positive relationships, giving students an opportunity to focus on cognitive growth. Different cultures use different learning methods such as storytelling and music to solidify concepts. Students learn what they pay attention to, and they interpret what they pay attention to through their cultural lens. Students move from dependent to independent learners when they become aware and pay attention to what they are learning. Learners must make a connection of new information to existing information, real-world connections. Learning can then be scaffolded to include cultural constructs (Hammond, 2015; Mezirow, 1997). Students need more rigorous content to grow the capacity of their brains, but

marginalized students often get content that does not elicit higher order thinking. For dependent learners to become independent learners, students must be challenged cognitively and move out of their comfort zone of learning (Hammond, 2015).

Teachers who are culturally responsive modify their teaching practices to create independent learners. They must support dependent learners who feel marginalized due to race or language. They must also understand how the brains of culturally diverse students work to engage them effectively. Teachers do this through a supportive and safe classroom environment that is focused on learning (Hammond, 2015; Hollie, 2018).

Before teachers can be culturally responsive teachers, there must be some self-reflection about where they are in their journey to cultural responsiveness. Self-reflective teachers in relation to cultural responsiveness provide a path for student academic success and cultural identity (Hammond, 2015; Hollie, 2018; Mezirow, 1997). Andragogically, teachers should be met where they are in relation to cultural responsiveness so they can pedagogically do the same with their students (Hollie, 2018; Knowles, 1989). Culturally responsive pedagogy is using the knowledge of culture, previous experiences, frames of reference, and how students perform to make learning experiences more relevant, thus more effectual. Professional development for all educators may require a change in personal beliefs and teaching toolbox (G. Gay, 2018; Mezirow, 1997). Self-efficacy and teacher beliefs are important influencers of professional development and tools for staff and administration to push changes in the personal beliefs and reserve systems (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Hwang, 2021; Martin et al., 2019; Mezirow, 1997). Self-efficacy through professional development and autonomy in teaching plays an important part in teachers being fulfilled in their assignments and is even more important in hiring

high quality teachers and reducing teacher attrition (Berry & Farris-Berg, 2016; Easton, 2015; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). Teachers who believe in self-efficacy have a significant effect on their own learning and student-centered classroom practice. Professional development is instrumental in providing teachers with the experiences needed for a high level of self-efficacy and mindful learning and teaching (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Hwang, 2021).

Adult Learning Approach to Professional Development

Knowles (1989) posited that adult learning is significantly different than children, therefore, need an adult approach to learning (Mezirow, 1997; Sato, Haegele, & Foot, 2017). While pedagogy is the teacher-centered method of learning for children, andragogy is the adult method of learning. Andragogy is the method of making adults active participants in their own learning (Mezirow, 1997; Sato et al., 2017). Adult learners have foundational knowledge as tenets that, when built upon, create learners that think more critically (Mezirow, 1997). Adults are more independent and self-directed and can be valuable in decision making regarding the planning of professional development regarding what and how the objectives are being learned (Knowles, 1989; Sato et al., 2017).

For transformative learning to happen, teachers must first have an awareness of their personal assumptions and the assumptions that others have. Since learning can be seen as socially constructed, discourse is a necessary process for validation and understanding one's own beliefs. New learning must be added to existing frames of reference with the learner reflecting on feelings, thoughts, and biases for meaningful and full understanding to occur (Mezirow, 1997). With self-concept in mind, adult learners

need to have readiness and orientation to learn and accept responsibility for choosing learning goals that foster critical learning (Knowles, 1989; Mezirow, 1997). Effective PD happens when used in conjunction with adult learning theories (Tuli, 2017).

Preservice Teacher Programs

Residency or preservice programs for teachers that are well-designed minimize less qualified teachers and teacher attrition. These programs place talented teachers in the area they need to be with the assurance of mentorship from a master teacher. When designed properly, the teacher will receive the proper training and credentialling in exchange for a 3-to-5-year commitment to the district that sponsored them (Cardichon et al., 2020). Professional development around English language learning is not one that has previously been prevalent (Rotermund, DeRoche, & Ottem, 2017). There has been recent recognition by policymakers and teacher preservice programs to create learning opportunities for preservice teachers and beyond for culturally responsive teaching of English language learners (ELL). There is, however, a gap between preservice teacher preparation programs and professional development, which is coherent, connected, and integrated. Even with the recent shift to include ELL training, a gap still exists. Teachers must learn these responsive skills on their own, even as emerging and developing teachers (Lucas & Villegas, 2013). There is a difference in teacher growth of those exposed to multicultural learning as opposed to those who are not. Even if exposed, teachers may not know how to increase their pedagogical skills on their own. There are disparities between the perceptions of teachers about culturally diverse students and how they engage in content and experiences. Simply put, preservice teachers need to be active and autonomous in their own culturally responsive learning (Kelly, 2020; Knowles, 1989;

Mezirow, 1997) but also need to be supported along the way, regardless of the subject they teach (Kelly, 2020).

The research of Danielson (2007) is a constructivist view in which learners construct their own knowledge based on experiences and reflection on their experiences (Harasim, 2017; Mezirow, 1997). This research has been used for teacher preparation programs in universities inside and outside of the United States, contributing to teacher preparation in several areas. Danielson's framework is used for teacher evaluation using a standards-based approach, is used to provide feedback, and to increase instructional leadership at schools (Hernon, 2019). Teachers of different subjects use pedagogy differently and specifically for what they teach. The framework is based on students becoming independent thinkers and workers and defines effective teaching by laying out clear standards (Danielson, 2007). Effective teachers are motivated and have structures that define their success in the classroom (Knowles, 1989; Mezirow, 1997; Wong & Wong, 2018). Danielson's framework consists of four domains: Domain One, Planning and Preparation; Domain Two, The Classroom Environment; Domain Three, Instruction; Domain Four, Professional Responsibilities. Domain Four in particular, is based on the premise of teachers being committed to student performance and teachers being responsible not only for what happens in the classroom but also the professional roles they encompass outside of the classroom (Danielson, 2007; Knowles, 1989; Mezirow, 1997). Domain four also encompasses teachers growing and developing professionally in content knowledge and pedagogical skills and covers professionalism and advocacy. A powerful part of the framework is based on reflection and self-assessment to improve teaching (Danielson, 2007). Danielson's framework ties to Mezirow's (1997) theory in

which teachers learn from their experiences. Professional development is an approach school's use to increase teacher awareness of their experiences, beliefs, and views and what they have learned from those experiences, beliefs, and views (Mette, Nieuwenhuizen, & Hvidston, 2016).

Professional Development

According to Wong and Wong (2018), teachers and principals must be effective in three areas: student learning, growth, and achievement. Effective teachers also have a great impact on student achievement, even more so than smaller class sizes. Effective and efficient teachers have positive expectations for students, have great classroom management, and have knowledge in lesson design that extrapolates student mastery—these parallel Danielson's (2007) framework domains. With the current lack of preservice teacher training, a need for multilevel training for teachers has been identified. School-based professional development in areas such as cultural responsiveness is necessary due to the lack of preservice teacher training and varying levels of teacher experiences. Teacher professional development in the school setting may be hindered by work-related responsibilities, lack of knowledge for collaborative learning, or lack of willingness by teachers to be mentors or coaches (Alkhawaldeh, 2017).

Efficacious professional development, as defined by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), is structured and elicits a change in knowledge and pedagogical skills, which improves student learning outcomes (Mezirow, 1997; State et al., 2019). Several teachers who participated in a study about their opinions of professional development noted that teachers understand the need to improve their teaching to keep up with changes (Ekinci & Acar, 2019; Mezirow, 1997). Teachers who participate in professional development have

positive perceptions about its effects because students have shown increased success (Leung, 2018). Teachers generally view professional development as important in having a positive effect on their teaching practice, which in turn increases student performance (Hinsley, 2018), especially if it is something they are interested in or see value in for their classroom practice (Thacker, 2017).

Even with a need for more progressive types of professional development, traditional professional development is still prevalent. Sometimes, even when new techniques are introduced, they are overshadowed by traditional delivery methods and may not be effective (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Even though, as educators, there is an insistence on engagement, hands-on, inquiry, and active methods for student learning (DuFour et al., 2016), the sit-and-get, passive type of professional development prevails for teachers (Passmore & Hart, 2019). This type of PD has simply become a way to deliver information to teachers instead of engaging teachers in the learning process. Even though forward movement in professional development has been made, there is still room for a more innovative way of thinking about professional development (Passmore & Hart, 2019).

It is important that educators provide high-quality instruction in content areas, especially with the diverse nature of student populations (Clark, Schoepf, & Hatch, 2018). Professional development (PD) is a catalyst for increasing student performance by building on teachers' existing knowledge to improve their practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Knowles, 1989; Mezirow, 1997). There are different definitions of PD, but the intended outcome remains the same: teachers get needed training to become more effective in their practice (Sariyildiz, 2017). Participation in certain kinds of professional

development activities, however, can be merely a requirement instead of filling a specific need (Utami & Prestridge, 2018). Professional development, such as one-shot PD, can create a divide between clocking mandated PD hours for compliance and getting a truly authentic, needs-based PD experience (Su et al., 2017; Utami & Prestridge, 2018).

Studies show that there are several barriers to schools having effective professional development programs. These include cost, lack of time (Chuckry, 2019; Klein & Riordan, 2009; Koonce, 2018; State et al., 2019), lack of essential knowledge, scheduling conflicts (Easton, 2015), and the content being irrelevant or ineffective, which hampers effectiveness (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Sazegar & Motallebzadeh, 2018). With increasing personalization of professional development such as mentorship, adding other types of quality PD, and self-efficacy, professional development is changing for the better (Coldwell, 2017; Renbarger & Davis, 2019).

Teachers report that practice time after receiving professional development elicits positive changes in instructional practice. Success then lies in schools providing an adequate PD model so teachers can implement what they have learned (Klein & Riordan, 2009). Principals, as the building's instructional leader, have a role in determining professional development activities for teachers who meet state mandates toward higher student achievement (Thornton, Usinger, & Sanchez, 2019). Cavendish, Barrenechea, Young, Diaz, and Avalos (2020) found that teachers need to explore their own cultural identity more (Mezirow, 1997), especially in response to student interaction, before they can be culturally responsive in the classroom. Schools can provide PD to help teachers examine their views about poverty, race, and stereotyping, however, there are differing views between regular education teachers, practical arts, and special education teachers

about the effect of this type of PD and modification of pedagogy (Mette et al., 2016). These differences between regular, practical arts, and special education teachers, as well as, staff diversity is being acknowledged (Mette et al., 2016; Tanguay, Bhatnagar, Barker, & Many, 2018).

The diversity of staff is being acknowledged more readily as changes to programs focus on the needs of a more diverse staff (Tanguay et al., 2018). Teachers of color advocate for students, act as role models, and teach through a cultural lens, which creates a more desirable outcome on the student achievement of minority students (Childs, 2019). Therefore, a need for a more diverse type of professional development is created. According to Tanguay et al (2018), the program model of PD consists of awareness, action, and alignment. Awareness is the development of teacher self-awareness, becoming conscious of culture and sociolinguistic needs. Teachers should also recognize their own biases and attitudes while understanding policies for EL instruction. Awareness includes adding topics about culture, linguistics, and race. Action is when teachers are a model and agent of change for each other. Modeling is through differentiated pedagogy and scaffolding through background knowledge and experiences. Content area support and alignment of program goals for teachers, supervisors, and cooperating teachers is important.

Effective Professional Development

There are certain contexts in which professional development is most effective and improve a teacher's current pedagogy and their pedagogy in the future. PD is most effective when it is relevant to what teachers need in context to their specific teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009). Desimone (2009) identified five

features of effective professional development. It is focused on the specific content that the teacher is teaching, and the pedagogy being used. It is active learning (Knowles, 1989) with feedback and analysis of lessons, rather than learners passively listening. It is coherent, with the alignment of content, goals, and activities with the district curriculum and coherence to state and federal mandates. It is sustainable in duration with continuation after the initial contact. There is also collective participation of teachers vertically and horizontally in a professional learning community (PLC) fashion (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Li & Jones, 2019).

Two studies found similar results about professional development in the content specific areas (Garet et al., 2016; Naizer, Sinclair, & Szabo, 2017). The large study by Garet et al. (2016) of fourth grades of schools in five different states and six different districts, 94 schools in all, and another study (Naizer et al., 2017) about workshop type PD, studied the effect of math and science content-focused professional development. Both studies revealed a positive effect on teacher content knowledge in the schools receiving the treatment of professional development and using workshop PD that was more than a one-day event. There was also a positive impact on the teachers' instructional practices with the science teachers using the skills learned even 8 years after the learning occurred. Another study on the content knowledge of science teachers revealed content-focused PD increased their knowledge but was also dependent on prior content knowledge (Covay, Desimone, Lee, & Hochberg, 2016; Knowles, 1989). This is supported by Mezirow's (1997) theory of adult learning, in which what we have previously been exposed to shapes our behavior and learning later. The teachers with prior exposure to science knowledge implemented on a deeper level than those without.

Teachers without prior science knowledge gained a deeper understanding themselves, however. The teachers in the study shaped the PD based on their current needs for content knowledge and/or pedagogy (Covay et al., 2016). Glover et al. (2016) found that content-focused PD had an effect of increased perception of subject utility and knowledge acquisition and an increase in focus on the specific topic during instruction. They found that there was a negative prediction of content knowledge within the context of practice and feedback in a workshop setting.

Less formal professional development encourages self-directed learning in which teachers can express themselves, including their learning interests, and whatever is needed to be more effective in the classroom (Beach, 2017; Cosgun & Savas, 2019; Kyndt, Gijbels, Grosemans, & Donche, 2016). Mezirow (1997) posited the goal for adults is to be autonomous learners. Teachers are willing to be self-directed and self-initiating learners if given a chance. They also tend to have higher perceptions of professional development and the desire to direct their own PD successfully when the focus is on the teacher's needs (Svendsen, 2017; Zerey, 2018). Sustainable professional development acknowledges the andragogical principle of teachers needing professional development over several sessions rather than a one-shot PD session (Knowles et al., 2015; Pina, 2019). Sustainable PD has been one of the most notable areas for emerging teachers in high-quality teaching and learning (Zhukova, 2018). When teachers continually develop the skill necessary to be culturally responsive, they can implement CRP in a sustainable fashion as they begin to develop an understanding of the social constructs of diverse cultures (Moyer & Sinclair, 2020).

Types of Professional Development

Several types of professional development have been identified. This includes conferences, workshops, in-service training, PLCs, online delivery, instructional coaching (State et al., 2019), self-management or self-guided professional development (State et al., 2019; Thacker, 2017), and action research (Sagor & Williams, 2017). Some types of professional development may help teachers increase knowledge but do not always evoke sustainable instructional change (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Valiandes & Neophytou, 2018). To be effective, professional development should be ongoing in nature to create life-long learning, have a focus, be rooted in the constructivist theory, and be embedded in classroom practice (Cosgun & Savas, 2019; Trust, Krutka, & Carpenter, 2016). Culturally responsive professional learning must be more than the one-shot workshop or conference to evoke conscious thinking and reflection (Mezirow, 1997) about cultural diversity. Teachers must look at their teaching as a cultural event. They need to deeply understand themselves and their own culture (Knowles, 1989; Mezirow, 1997), value others, and avoid privileged mindset (Cavendish et al., 2020; Howard & Rodriguez-Scheel, 2017).

Conferences and workshops are often short in length, one-shot events where information is disseminated to groups of educators (State et al., 2019). Teachers tend to have a negative view of this kind of top-down professional development (Tallman, 2019), especially when they are not involved in the planning process and choice of PD (Tuli, 2017). In contrast, PLC is a process of teachers choosing the skills and manner they will learn to collectively and collaboratively improve student performance by improving their own practice, including cultural responsiveness (DuFour et al., 2016; Hollie, 2018; Tuli,

2017). The Danielson framework for teaching increased the awareness of PLCs and the need for continuous learning and communication in a collaborative setting (Battersby, 2019; DuFour et al., 2016). Tallman (2019) found collaboration promotes professional and personal growth, and teachers find collaboration to be an important part of professional learning (Svendsen, 2017). This type of self-directed learning promotes an environment in which adults learn from and problem solve with each other and collaboratively reflect on classroom practice and pedagogy (Mezirow, 1997; Svendsen, 2017). It is a job-embedded way to increase teacher pedagogical skills while focusing on learning, collaborating, collective responsibility, and getting results during a regularly contracted day (DuFour et al., 2016). Professional learning communities work in all disciplines, including special classes such as music (Battersby, 2019) and in the special education process (Schechter & Feldman, 2019).

Evidence also supports collaboration being a remarkably effective method for teachers to learn from each other and then reflect on their learning (Alsaleh, Alabdulhadi, & Alrwaished, 2017; Papadopoulos, Lagkas, & Demetriadis, 2017). Jao and McDougall (2016) suggested school success is underpinned by the collaborative approach that has emerged recently. They also suggest several ways for successful collaboration. Collaborators should create team goals, plan with a purpose, look to others for collaboration, use other schools, use others in the district as a resource, and use technology. Teachers can enhance and change their classroom pedagogy by collaborating through a personal learning network (PLN; Oddone et al., 2019; Thacker, 2017). Professional learning networks make teachers connected learners and are gaining interest among educators as a viable method of self-directed and interest-based learning (Oddone

et al., 2019; Prestridge, 2017; Trust et al., 2016). They vary from teacher to teacher and are personal depending on their perceptions of themselves and their teaching, the purpose for the learning, and the teacher's own learning nature (Oddone et al., 2019).

Technology has enhanced professional learning and created a new way in which to receive the information being presented (Easton, 2015). Focused professional development is now available through differentiated methods, including digital methods. Technology gives more access to high-quality PD that is more efficient and provides a way for teachers to collaborate with other teachers who have the same interests (Easton, 2015). Online professional learning is now a more significant delivery method in the development of teachers and is showing promising results as a form of professional development (Jimenez & O'Shanahan, 2016; Ma et al., 2018; Watkins, 2019). The use of technology in the delivery of professional development in content areas such as literacy showed a more positive effect size when compared to on-site delivery of the same content (Basma & Savage, 2018). Online delivery methods of professional development are cheaper and less time-consuming since there is little or no travel. Teachers have become self-directed by using the internet to read educational articles as well as find materials to enhance their lessons and to collaborate with other educators. Teachers are then taking the information they are learning online and combining it with their own knowledge and skills to be even more effective in their delivery of lessons. When using technology as a professional learning tool, teachers can also keep up with new best practices, techniques, and methods (Cosgun & Savas, 2019; Mezirow, 1997). Technology as a delivery method is being embraced as a self-directed method of learning, especially when used through social networking platforms (Prestridge, 2016) and positively influences the professional

learning of teachers (Gynther, 2016; Ma et al., 2018; Mezirow, 1997). Action research is another form of professional development and starts with the idea of examining school data to increase student achievement (Sagor & Williams, 2017).

Action research starts with clear visions and targeted areas, a theoretical basis that is conveyed, moving into action and collecting data, and then using the data to create a plan of improvement (Sagor & Williams, 2017). Tuli (2017) and Giroux (2016) found that emerging and developing teachers do not always have the experience needed to conduct action research based on student-centered teaching. Teachers benefit from action research-based learning with specific components. Teachers appreciate specific and manageable projects and are more likely to stay the course when there is accountability. They also need to examine several types or sources of data. The action research is job embedded within the teacher's normal school day (Desimone, 2009; Netcoh, Olofson, Downes, & Bishop, 2017).

Effective PD also provides coaching and expert support. Teachers who receive coaching in a specific area, such as literacy, show a greater effect size in student results, even when the coaching is offered through video methods (Basma & Savage, 2018). Teachers must be able to apply what they have learned through professional development if there is to be sustained change (Freeman, Sugai, Simonsen, & Everett, 2017; Mezirow, 1997). Developing and proficient teachers can offer support to emerging teachers through mentorship. Using the Danielson (2007) framework, experienced teachers build relationships with emerging teachers and provide critical insight into the self-assessment component of teaching, which the emerging teacher may not have considered. Effective PD also offers opportunities for feedback and reflection which ties to Mezirow's (1997)

transformational learning theory encouraging change in pedagogy.

When an educator who is an expert in an area works with one or more educators to support and advise them in meeting a goal, they are coaching (Easton, 2015). Coaching is used in the development of teacher content knowledge and pedagogy within their classrooms (Brobst, Markworth, Tasker, & Ohana, 2017; Pearce, de la Fuente, Hartweg, & Weinburgh, 2019) using the convention of practicing what is learned and then receiving feedback or improved practice (Easton, 2015). Coaching fits the premise of effective researched-based professional development, specifically within the five important features of content, action, duration, participation, and coherence (Desimone & Pak, 2017). Teachers who may not know how to implement a strategy in their own classroom can learn from watching other, more experienced teachers implement different strategies in their classroom (Ralston, Smith, Naegele, & Waggoner, 2019). Peer coaching, which is a specific type of coaching, must be a positive experience relationally with good communication between the coach and teacher to be effective. Teachers and coaches must also have a positive attitude (Pearce et al., 2019). The strategy of peer coaching is used to effectively improve the pedagogy, practice, enthusiasm, and confidence of teachers (Alsaleh et al., 2017; Castañeda-Londoño, 2017; Ma et al., 2018). Peer coaching gives teachers a chance to work closely with another teacher who provides knowledge and models specific instructional strategies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), allowing them to learn from each other and be reflective (Mezirow, 1997) of their own work (Ma et al., 2018). Debriefing and peer feedback in a conversational way is important in the development of the teachers' pedagogy during the coaching process (Mezirow, 1997; Sisselman-Borgia & Torino, 2017; Wang, 2017). There also must be a

place for the teacher's voice to be heard, however. This is especially true so teachers can be reflective and identify their own areas of growth and facilitate change in their pedagogy (Mezirow, 1997; Wang, 2017). Coaches take on different roles when coaching, including the facilitator, collaborator, instructor, and empowerer. Each of these roles serves a different purpose in instructing and debriefing a teacher (Wang, 2017).

According to a meta-analysis of 537 studies by Basma and Savage (2018), professional development has a high effect size on teacher practice. It is possible when providing professional development that targets specific domains of learning, for example, certain strands of curriculum content, there will be a positive effect on teacher practice. Studies also suggest teachers have positive perceptions of student outcomes when they participate in professional development activities (Basma & Savage, 2018; Hinsley, 2018; F. King, Bhroin, & Prunty, 2018). Emerging, developing, and proficient teachers agree, professional development, including self-initiated types, is important (Sariyildiz, 2017). Sustained and focused professional development can change a teacher's classroom pedagogy. Focused professional development itself changes teaching practice, which results in positive effects on students' success. Teachers are then motivated to continue developing quality instruction (Valiandes & Neophytou, 2018).

Professional Development and Teacher Practice

Teachers use what they have learned in individualized and traditional professional development activities and in formal and informal settings when it applies to adding pedagogical skills to their classroom practice (Thacker, 2017). Effective professional development requires teachers and administrators to examine, and at times, to change their personal belief systems and their teaching repertoires (Mezirow, 1997).

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) found several areas in which PD is most effective. Effective PD is content focused, meaning the focus is on teaching strategies tied to the specific classroom content. Emerging teachers tend to see their teaching content with siloed thinking rather than how their teaching is part of a whole system because they are in survival mode the first couple of years of teaching (Zhukova, 2018). When paired with a proficient coach or mentor, however, emerging teachers can learn about content and pedagogy being part of a whole system (Danielson, 2007; Zhukova, 2018). Mentors who share the same culture as the teacher and that have already worked on their cultural responsiveness can be an asset to teachers who are learning to be culturally responsive (Hammond, 2015). With the purpose of combatting teacher attrition, encouraging professional learning, and increasing student success, research is showing federal, state, and local governments must invest not only in teacher entrance programs but mentorships as well (Cardichon et al., 2020).

Effective PD incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory, which also ties to Mezirow's (1997) transformative learning theory, the basis of adult learning. Learning methods are the same for adults as for children in that learning is active and done by the learner (Danielson, 2015) but different due to adults having background experiences and knowledge that shapes their learning (Knowles, 1989). Teachers become autonomous learners and seek out the information they are looking for to forward their classroom practice (Mezirow, 1997; Thacker, 2017).

According to DuFour et al. (2016) effective PD supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts. Teachers learn more in job-embedded activities and when they can collaborate with other teachers because they can share their own values and

reasonings and reflect on each other's contributions to direct their continued learning (DuFour et al., 2016; Mezirow, 1997). Common planning times create an opportunity for teachers to collaborate for the purpose of defining educational goals (DuFour et al., 2016). Professional development must have meaning for the teacher with collaboration time with other teachers to be beneficial (Woodland, 2019).

Teachers have mentioned the best part of workshop-based professional development activity as being the chance to collaborate with other educators, even if the primary focus of the workshop was something different (Danielson, 2015). During breaks, when attending a professional development activity, teachers tend to collaborate and "pick the brains" of other educators. However, if the workshop is more than one session, follow-up is provided, and there are hands-on portions, teachers respond positively, which sometimes leads to teachers' modifying their pedagogy (Naizer et al., 2017; Ralston et al., 2019; Thacker, 2017). Teachers feel more competent in creating and administering lessons and curriculum in collaboration with other teachers, and they find value in collaborative and job-embedded professional development, especially when it transfers into their classroom practice (F. King et al., 2018).

Learning Forward has identified several effective, powerful learning designs for the professional development of teachers. They serve as guidelines for professional learning. The sequence for the model is the context of the learning, the actual learning, implementing the learning, and student outcomes, with the focus being the learning by the educator (Easton, 2015). Effective professional development models effective practice, which includes lesson and unit plans, student work samples, and videos. Mentorship and networking have a significantly strong positive effect on teaching

practice (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2009).

Effective PD is also sustainable. This is especially true in the context of school-based professional learning. Teachers need to continually develop skills necessary for success (Moyer & Sinclair, 2020. Professional development activities with regular sessions and in stable collaborative contexts, such as PLNs, are found to have a significantly stronger effect on teaching practices than one-shot events such as workshops or conferences (Grovogui, 2019; OECD, 2009).

Hattie (2012) stated that visible learning involves the teacher having the mind frame that their role is to be reflective about their effect on student performance and learn from their own practice (Mezirow, 1997). One of the 10 mind frames of Hattie and Zierer (2018) is that teachers are evaluators of their effect on student learning. There is more understanding when we reflect on an action or learn by doing. Then, we can move to make improvements from what we have learned (DuFour et al., 2016; Mezirow, 1997). Several studies agree on reflection of practice as an important factor in development in a professional capacity (Hauge, 2019; Philpott & Oates, 2017; Soini, Pietarinen, & Pyhältö, 2016). Even though reflection is a strategy used by teachers to be effective, it is not always enough to improve practice or sustain change (Hauge, 2019; Soini et al., 2016).

According to studies by Sariyildiz (2017) and Thacker (2017) teacher attitudes about professional development vary. Teachers do find professional development activities important, and they take part in professional development by sometimes creating their own professional development dependent on their preferences, beliefs, and perceived needs. When they choose PD based on their own needs and interests, there is a higher probability they will be committed to the professional development activities, and

changes are more likely to be sustained (Mezirow, 1997; Sariyildiz, 2017; Thacker, 2017). Studies show teachers are more motivated when they find the professional development relevant and useful for their specific classrooms (Pina, 2019; Watkins, 2019). Teachers feel empowered when they can choose their own professional development. They are choosing to do professional development without being forced, and they choose professional development activities that will benefit them specifically in their classroom practice (Watkins, 2019). When teachers are excited about and engaged in professional development activities, they are more likely to carry their learning into their classroom practice (Klein & Riordan, 2009).

Years of experience also affect teachers' attitudes and beliefs about professional development (OECD, 2009). What adult learners are exposed to affects their perceptions of the value of their learning (Mezirow, 1997). The purpose of professional development is to influence what teachers believe about instruction and to affect their teaching practice. The more professional development a teacher is exposed to, the more effect there is on their teaching practice. They tend to use what they learned more often. However, the type of PD activity in which teachers participate has a greater effect on teaching practice than the amount of time spent on a learning activity (OECD, 2009). There was still a positive correlation between PD time and content knowledge pedagogical practices (Glover et al., 2016).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Not all teachers know the why or how in using culturally responsive teaching to close achievement gaps, and not all teachers perceive CRP professional development positively to impact student learning (Hammond, 2015; Mette et al., 2016). Knowles

(1989) identified understanding the "why" as an important part of the adult learning process (Hammond, 2015). While not a new concept but important for the success of the diverse groups of students, educators must learn to be culturally responsive and inclusive. They must focus on and be respectful of the diverse set of cultures in schools (Rana & Culbreath, 2019). For teachers to be culturally responsive in their classroom practice, however, it is extremely important to understand what it means and why it is important (Hollie, 2018; Mezirow, 1997). There is not a specific set of CRP strategies that can be used with students; it is a change in the mindset of teachers (Hammond, 2015; Mezirow, 1997). Culturally responsive pedagogy encompasses educators' growth in the existing knowledge about students, their cultures, their perspectives, and what they value (Ndemanu & Jordan, 2018).

Culturally responsiveness is not simply a system to deal with behavior problems or increase students' motivation while neglecting the cognitive needs (Hammond, 2015). It is a method of teaching students to be independent learners through feedback and reflection. It is a change in the mindset of our students (Hammond, 2015). Effective teachers use professional learning to understand how to empower students to be engaged and grow their own knowledge of critical social issues and learn to develop a different mindset from dependent to academically independent (Giroux, 2016; Hammond, 2015). This begins by first challenging preconceived views and perspectives of teachers, even those who are teaching students as young as the early childhood age, as these teachers also have their own established pedagogies as well (Mezirow, 1997; Souto-Manning, 2017).

The Equity Alliance at ASU (K. King, Artiles, & Kozleski, 2009) identified six

principles that prepare teachers for culturally responsive teaching. The focus of Principle One is on professional development and making learning more relevant by improving learning in diverse, multicultural communities and by grounding the context of urban areas in the outcomes, content, and activities of PD, which is supported by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) and G. Gay (2018). The focus of Principle Two is the engagement of the learner through conversation, inquiry, and practice. The premise is toward collaborative conversation being continuous between learners, which is supported by DuFour et al. (2016) and PLC work. The focus of Principle Three is based on the premise of professional learning that is job embedded, not compartmentalized (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This leads to continued discussion about students' learning and success. Principle Four focuses on the marginalization of student groups. Learning should be based on the diversity of cultures of the student groups and how student performance is affected (Hammond, 2015). Principle Five is focused on the curriculum and pedagogy of teachers for the success of all students. The focus of Principle Six is on the sustainability of educational communities for the continued success of all student populations (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; K. King et al., 2009).

Culturally responsive teaching takes practice by teachers with the synchronization of all the identified parts (Hammond, 2015). Along with the six principles identified by the Equity Alliance at ASU (K. King et al., 2009), Hammond (2015) identified four practice areas for culturally responsive teaching. According to Hammond to be effective, the four parts must be implemented synchronously. The first area, Awareness, is the teacher's awareness of the sociopolitical constructs and consciousness of their own impact on student groups. They are aware of the school's role in adding to or detracting

from the inequities of diverse student groups. The second area, Learning Partnerships, is creating partnerships with students through trust and social-emotional connections for deeper learning. Teachers are aware of the need for connection. Area 3 is a focus on Information Processing. Teachers must know how to build the capacity of students' intellect for deeper engagement. Teachers help students process information and build skills for deeper thinking. The fourth area, Community Building, is where teachers create an environment that has social and intellectual safety while students are learning to build their capacity as risk-takers.

According to Hammond (2015) developing culturally responsive pedagogical skills requires teachers to unpack their biases. Teachers must understand their feelings and biases and why they have certain feelings and biases before they can begin to change them. Learning to examine their own culture and beliefs, and frames of reference is how teachers establish a new or change their existing points of view around cultural responsiveness. Teachers must be intentional about changing their instructional practice (Hammond, 2015; Mezirow, 1997).

Leadership's Role in Supporting PD and Cultural Responsiveness

District leadership leads the charge of ensuring the student achievement gap is being closed for all students in the entire district. It is important for central office leaders, principals, and teachers to be committed to challenging stagnant thinking for marginalized students even when closing the achievement gap for marginalized students is not an easy task (Mette et al., 2016). However, leadership must adopt a sustainable program that is not top-down and passive but rather one that puts the learner in an autonomous, active, and reflective learning position and ensures teachers have the

resources to gain the knowledge needed (Knowles, 1989; Mezirow, 1997; Tuli, 2017).

Culturally responsive district leaders must first understand what cultural responsiveness is and promote reflective thinking about CRP (Hollie, 2018; Mezirow, 1997; Taliaferro, 2011). District leadership that promotes reflective thinking and views CRP positively will have teachers that reflect on their practices and view CRP positively (Mezirow, 1997; Tuli, 2017). Leadership must also promote involvement in the culturally responsive PD process as a collective, collaborative, and student-centered method that promotes adult learning theory (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; DuFour et al., 2016; Knowles, 1989; Tuli, 2017). Leadership can then create opportunities and promote learning networks in which there is trust, ultimately promoting professional development, especially around cultural responsiveness for teachers (DuFour et al., 2016; Taliaferro, 2011). Principals who lead their buildings to have a deep collaboration that is reflective in nature and create goals to increase student achievement are the most effective leaders. Collective efficacy and collaboration with principals are important in creating sustainable student achievement from year to year (Sharratt & Planche, 2016)

This includes developing the capacity of staff emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished alike to be reflective in the work they are doing (DuFour et al., 2016; Riggins & Knowles, 2020). This aligns with Knowles' (1989) and Mezirow's (1997) theories of adult learning. Strong leaders define what work is important and keep teachers accountable for application of once defined (Riggins & Knowles, 2020). Schools in which the principals focus on high expectations of learning that are challenging and that promote opportunity to learn from setbacks are a community of learners that view learning reflectively and within the same context (Donohoo, Hattie, & Eells, 2018;

Mezirow, 1997).

Teachers have reported some positive changes in instructional practice, such as merging techniques and using research, from the beginning to the end of the year after receiving professional development. The problem with professional development may be that teachers do not have input in the professional development in which they are assigned (Clark et al., 2018). Success then lies in schools providing an adequate PD model so teachers can implement what they have learned. When teachers are engaged in their learning, there is more excitement and positive implications that the teacher will modify their own classroom pedagogy (Klein & Riordan, 2009). Principals, as the building's instructional leader, have a role in determining professional development activities for teachers that meet state mandates toward higher student achievement (Thornton et al., 2019).

Principals play an important role in professional development acquisition in regular education as well as in the special education process and cultural responsiveness (G. Gay, 2018; Hauge, 2019; F. King, 2016; Schechter & Feldman, 2019). There must be an understanding of how to develop teachers in the organization to lead change effectively. Concrete factors and emotional factors, such as CRP, must be included to build the capacity of teachers to be responsive to change. Capacity building leads to systematic change aligned to goals, including CRP (Thornton et al., 2019).

Leadership should be involved, engaged, and build trust (Hauge, 2019; F. King, 2016). A study by Koonce (2018) showed principals in districts with organized PD played a role in developing the district's professional development. They created improvement plans with teacher input and saw feedback as an important part of the

process. By being aware of the learning environment of teachers, principals positively impact the collaborative learning environment (Hauge, 2019; Louws, Meirink, van Veen, & van Driel, 2017). Principals who show enthusiasm for the process also create a positive relationship of trust between themselves and the teachers (Hauge, 2019; Takahashi & McDougal, 2016) and motivation to learn (Knowles, 1989). Principals effectively using professional development have a purpose for the PD, which is focused on the teachers' needs and includes input from their teachers. While some professional development may have to be in the form of sit-and-get, such as a new initiative, seeking input from teachers when setting professional development goals is important (Ende, 2016).

Creating a Learning Community

Professional learning communities are teams of teachers working collectively toward a common goal, with the purpose of improving student learning through collaborative inquiry and action research (DuFour et al., 2016; Grovogui, 2019). Schools with a collaborative culture have deeper teacher collaboration and are superior to those that are built around only specific teaming times. It is building a culture in which members take a collective role of helping each other learn (DuFour et al., 2016; Grovogui, 2019). Benefits are seen with self-directed and codirected learning but can present a challenge during the construction and implementation of the learning. This is a process that happens gradually and takes a shift in thinking and practice (Cherkowski & Schnellert, 2018; Mezirow, 1997).

Professional learning communities, at the district and building level, must also develop a deep understanding of terminology, such as culturally responsiveness, to communicate collectively and effectively (DuFour et al., 2016; Garcia & Chun, 2016).

Teachers who do not understand or speak the same terminology feel disconnected from each other and are not able to collaborate effectively (Ralston et al., 2019). Professional learning communities focus on three main or "big" ideas. First, focusing efforts on learning the most important of the three, which is the commitment that all students learn at high levels (Wan, 2020). Second, there is a focus on creating a culture of collaboration. Educators are responsible for working collaboratively and collectively for student success (DuFour et al. 2016; Riggins & Knowles, 2020). Finally, they focus on student learning results. There must be a reflection on the results of student learning to make an informed decision about professional learning (DuFour et al., 2016; Ralston et al., 2019).

Groups having a shared belief or point of view (Mezirow, 1997) and who work together through a collective effort are more effective. Collective efficacy is a powerful predictor of student achievement, which can also be applied to adult learning situations (Donohoo et al., 2018; Knowles, 1989). Principals must also ensure that teachers know the "why" of an initiative and are focused on the right work (Donohoo et al., 2018; Knowles, 1989; Riggins & Knowles, 2020). When principals ensure understanding, they are promoting a more collaborative culture, which will then have a positive impact on student success (Donohoo et al., 2018; Knowles, 1989).

Principals have the responsibility to create and promote PLCs in their building during a regular workday, so teachers are not working in isolation without collaboration with other teachers. Teachers who are not collaborating are not learning from each other and not ensuring students' success (Danielson, 2015; Donohoo et al., 2018; Riggins & Knowles, 2020). Principals who promote a collaborative culture have the potential to influence teachers' beliefs in a positive way and promote student performance (Donohoo

et al., 2018), which is supported by Mezirow's (1997) third process of transformative learning, transforming one's point of view. Principals promote collaboration by providing common prep times within course or department levels and parallel schedules for practical arts courses. Staggered start and end times also provide time for collaboration, and in-service and faculty meetings provide already scheduled collaboration time. Principals must also provide guidance about creating goals aligned with student learning (DuFour et al., 2016).

Focusing Professional Development

Focused professional development leads teachers to be independent learners who choose the best method and content for their own growth (Cosgun & Savas, 2019; Knowles, 1989; Kyndt et al., 2016; Mezirow, 1997). Professional development focused on specific pedagogies also increases the use of those pedagogies in the classroom (Desimone, 2009; Glover et al., 2016). Teachers with different experience levels need different types of professional development. Teachers who are seasoned and trained can become leaders of collaborative PD for other teachers. Lead teachers, however, need to have learning opportunities as well. One school in study conducted by Klein and Riordan (2009) implemented individualized PD and saw results in engagement, content area beliefs and knowledge, assessment, and differentiation. When teachers increase the pedagogical skills they need, specifically outside of the classroom, they modify their pedagogical practice inside the classroom (Klein & Riordan, 2009; Knowles, 1989; Mezirow, 1997). According to Watkins (2019), teachers prefer professional development, which they choose autonomously, and which is relevant and applicable to their specific needs (Mezirow, 1997).

Summary

Professional development is presented in many different forms, both effective and ineffective. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) identifies several effective methods of professional development to increase teacher pedagogical skills. A focus on transformation learning (Mezirow, 1997) and adult learning theory (Knowles, 1989) can be used to shape professional learning for teachers, to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. Teachers who are reflective are more invested in their professional growth and are more culturally responsive. District leadership also shares in the responsibility of providing effective professional learning in all areas, including cultural responsiveness.

In Chapter Two the researcher provided a thematic presentation of the existing literature based on Mezirow's (1997) transformational adult learning theory and Knowles' (1989) conceptual theory of andragogy. These are tied to the theoretical basis of constructivism, which assisted in the development of a deeper understanding of the importance of different types of professional development to increase the pedagogical skills of teachers, including culturally responsive pedagogies. This study sought to add to literature about the perceptions of middle school teachers and their participation in different types of professional development to modify their practices in understanding and applying culturally responsive pedagogies. The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of three emerging teachers, three developing teachers, and three proficient and/or distinguished teachers relating to professional development, to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies, through personal interviews, journaling,

and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks.

Chapter Three will outline the qualitative methods used to determine teachers' perceptions of focused professional development on pedagogical skills and classroom practice, including cultural responsiveness. The methods included the personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks. Chapter Four provides results from personal interviews, journaling, and archival data about focused professional development regarding increasing pedagogical skills and classroom practice, to modify instructional practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. Chapter Five was the findings from the study, professional implications, and application to academic practice of the use of focused professional development.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The level of experience of teachers is important when it comes to students' success, especially in high-poverty, diverse areas (Cardichon et al., 2020; Kelly, 2020) with culturally and linguistically populations (Hammond, 2015). Middle school students are not achieving due to multicultural and language differences and developmental changes (Harry & Klinger, 2006; Johnson, 2005, as cited in Cramer & Bennett, 2015) and increases the need for culturally responsive teaching to close the achievement gap. To close the gap effective methods of professional development (PD) must be considered. Sit-and-get, passive professional development is not always effective (Passmore & Hart, 2019). Other more effective types of PD have been identified. The more effective PD considers teacher needs and is focused specifically on those needs (Darling-Hammond et al. 2017).

The purpose of this narrative study was to examine the perceptions of middle school teachers in suburban Missouri public school districts regarding their experiences with different types of professional development, particularly around CRP and the degree to which they implement the learning in their classroom. The theoretical framework of Jack Mezirow (1997) and the conceptual framework of Malcolm Knowles (1989) were used to tie all pertinent literature to the research questions. In this study, professional development will generally be defined as structured professional learning, which results in changes to teacher knowledge and practices and improvements in student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This study used a constructivist approach,

using semi-structured interviews with suburban middle school teachers in Missouri.

A narrative qualitative approach was used to conduct the study. A basic narrative qualitative research strategy was used to gather information through personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks. Inductive and deductive data analysis was used to build patterns and themes to determine if more information needed to be gathered. Personal interviews were conducted with individuals or a group of two, which used a mixture of video, phone, and in-person interview styles. Interview questions were semi-structured with open-ended questions to elicit views and opinions from participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; L.R. Gay, et al., 2009). To develop themes and patterns of data for analysis, computer software was used to transcribe interviews. The research plan, including participants, research setting, research design, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis, are the primary components of this chapter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of three emerging teachers, three developing teachers, and three proficient and/or distinguished teachers relating to professional development, to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies, through personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks. The theoretical framework of Jack Mezirow (1997) and the conceptual framework of Malcolm Knowles (1989) were used to tie all pertinent literature to the research questions. In this study, professional development was generally defined as structured professional learning, which results in changes to teacher

knowledge and practices and improvements in student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This study used a constructivist approach, using semi-structured interviews with suburban middle school teachers in Missouri.

Research Questions

This study explored the experiences of emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished middle school teachers regarding the application of different types of professional development using narrative, qualitative research through personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks.

The central questions driving this study were:

RQ: How do different types of professional development motivate teachers to modify their instructional practice?

a. Based on teachers' readiness and orientation to learn, how is the focus of teacher professional development determined?

b. How do teachers use prior experiences to determine the best professional development to take responsibility for growing their culturally responsive pedagogical skills?

Participants

To examine the research questions for this basic narrative qualitative study through purposive sampling, nine participants were intentionally chosen (Creswell & Creswell, 2020) to aid in the examination of the research questions and to gain a deep understanding of professional development, particularly CRP. The total number of participants in this study was nine, which included three emerging, three developing, and

three proficient or distinguished teachers in core and practical arts from three suburban school districts with similar demographics of size and student diversity. Participants were chosen from schools that were similar in size, demographics, and socioeconomics. Teachers selected were defined by the principal as emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished. It is vital to develop the capacity of staff, including emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished alike (DuFour et al., 2016). The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE, 2013) identified teachers as emerging, developing, proficient and distinguished. DESE also requires all teachers to receive a specific number of hours of professional development each year, based on years of experience. Therefore, exploring the experiences of teachers at each level of expertise will provide insight into how teachers perceive professional development at all levels of experience. The participants chosen provided thoughtful and articulate information. Purposive sampling was used to select participants based on the knowledge and experience level of the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; L.R. Gay, et al., 2009).

The study encompassed nine participants in total: three emerging, three developing, and three proficient or distinguished teachers. The teachers taught either core or practical arts classes in grades 6 through 8. Since DESE (2013) identified teachers as emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished, examining the experiences of teachers from each of these experience levels was the guide in discovering different perceptions about professional development and how the learning motivated them to change their instructional practice.

Teachers were chosen from three Missouri school districts that were considered suburban, that had diverse student and teacher populations, and that include a cultural

relevance component in their district mission and goals or their strategic plan. Districts of geographic locations were chosen to garner various perspectives. The three school districts chosen were similar in size, ranging from approximately 4,500 to 6,500 students district wide. The three school districts were similar in demographics, teacher-student ratio, and administrator-teacher ratio to reduce any biases and weaknesses in the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

According to Creswell and Creswell (2020), the number of participants and sample size in a qualitative study should vary according to the type of research and should include a variety of perspectives. For this qualitative study, a representative sample of nine was chosen from three suburban school districts in the three largest metropolitan cities in Missouri. The participants were assured that any information they provided would be kept confidential. The teachers selected were based on the number of years of experience as emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished. The sample size of nine was also chosen to represent three teachers from each district; one emerging, one developing, and one proficient or distinguished middle school teacher from each of the three suburban school districts located in different areas of Missouri with similar demographics of size and student diversity. Suburban schools in these areas tend to have a more culturally diverse student population. They were also selected based on their availability and interest in the study. Participants were chosen from three suburban school districts in Missouri, which included a cultural relevance component as part of their district mission and goals or strategic plan with a diverse student population and a diverse teaching staff. Three emerging, three developing, and three proficient and/or distinguished teachers were chosen based on the recommendation of the building-level

principal from teachers who met the study criteria of emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished, with participants being from both core and practical arts areas.

Research Setting

The three schools chosen to participate in the study were identified because they were suburban school districts similar in size and diversity of students and teacher populations in located in different areas of Missouri with similar demographics of size and student diversity. The three schools were similar in size, with student populations ranging from approximately 4,500 to 6,500 students district wide. The schools chosen were also similar in demographics and socioeconomics to reduce any biases and weaknesses in the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Interviews were conducted with participants through individual phone, video, and in-person interviews. The narrative qualitative research was comprised of video and phone interviews in groups of one, two, or three. Each video or phone interview was held in a private room or office to alleviate distractions and maintain focus. Interviews took between 30 and 45 minutes using a laptop with a microphone and Zoom software. Interview questions were semi-structured with open-ended questions to elicit views and opinions from participants (Appendix B; Creswell & Creswell, 2020; L. R. Gay, et al., 2009)

Research Design

The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of three emerging teachers, three developing teachers, and three proficient and/or distinguished teachers relating to professional development, to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies,

through personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks. A narrative qualitative research design was chosen to collect information through personal interviews, journaling, and archival data as opposed to understanding the relationship between an independent and dependent variable in a population (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

A basic narrative qualitative research design was chosen because it was suitable when exploring the experiences of teachers in relation to professional development, particularly around CRP. Narrative research was also chosen to capture emotions, thoughts, and the strengths and weaknesses involved in the professional development programs to which each teacher at various experience levels was exposed (L. R. Gay, et al., 2009). This aligns with Mezirow's (1997) and Knowles' (1989) theories about how humans experience the world differently.

To research the process of focused professional development and experiences and perceptions, a narrative, a qualitative research design was chosen over other types. Qualitative method research is suitable for collecting data in the setting where the participants experienced the professional development and in a face-to-face manner (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Qualitative research was used to gather multiple types of data, including personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks, which helped develop and complex picture of the professional development program. A narrative research design was selected as opposed to a case study to explore the process of professional development rather than exploring a phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; L. R. Gay et al., 2009).

Building principals were contacted by phone and/or emailed to obtain permission to conduct the study. Names and contact information of teachers who met the criteria of emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished teaching in core and practical arts were obtained. The interviewer contacted participants by email explaining the study and requesting informed consent (Appendix A), setting up the interviews, and gathering the data. Teachers were provided with the purpose of the study and assurance of confidentiality. Teachers who participated were sent an email explaining the procedure. Interviews were conducted through individual phone, video, and in-person interviews. Interview questions were semi-structured and open-ended to elicit views and opinions from participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Appendix B).

After all the interviews were completed, data were organized and prepared by sorting the data collected from interviews and archival data into different types. Data were also visually scanned to provide clarity, compare themes, get an impression from the data, and aid with validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). A third-party transcription service, Otter, was used to collect and transcribe the interviews and other materials related to teacher professional development and recordings to increase the accuracy of the data and prevent researcher bias and ensure the validity and reliability of the data. To assure the accuracy of the data with no mistakes in transcription, all transcripts were manually reviewed. An organized story was created with the data by using a coding frame designed to capture the overall meaning of the stories and narratives (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). Coding was conducted around related themes of professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). After the data were coded, themes and relationships

were identified. Direct quotes from participants were used to assist the development of themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

Instrumentation

After a broad review of literature, questions were developed that sought to report the experiences of nine middle school teachers from three suburban Missouri school districts. Through this narrative qualitative study, the researcher sought to determine teachers' perceptions about their experiences with different types of professional development, particularly around CRP and the degree to which they implemented the learning in their classroom. To gain a deeper understanding of professional development, particularly regarding CRP, narrative qualitative research was chosen as a viable option.

Using a semi-structured method of interviewing participants is an efficacious method to collect trend, attitude, and opinion information from a small sample of a larger population (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; L. R. Gay et al., 2009). By using a qualitative interview method of semi-structured but open-ended questions, the views and opinions of the participants were elicited. To guide the development of the interview protocol, the review of existing literature and theoretical frameworks from Chapter Two were used.

Demographic data were collected from each participant and included years taught, years taught at current school, education level, and grade level currently being taught. Interview questions were developed based on different types of professional development used to motivate teachers to modify their instructional practices, teachers' readiness and orientation to learn and how the focus of teacher professional development is determined, and teachers' use of prior experiences to determine the best professional development to take responsibility for growing their culturally responsive pedagogical skills. Interview

questions were based on Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy and peer review determined the credibility of the interview questions.

To establish content validity and reliability, consistency, improve question content and format, and clarify instructions, a pilot test group was used. As stated in Creswell and Creswell (2020), conducting a pilot test is a vital step to identifying any problems. The test group consisted of one emerging, one developing, and one proficient or distinguished teacher from core and practical arts from one school district, not being used in the study. Building principals were contacted by phone and/or emailed to obtain permission to conduct the pilot study. Names and contact information of one emerging, one developing, and one proficient or distinguished teacher in core and practical arts were provided. Confidentiality was assured by assigning each school a numerical identifier to each school and each interviewee will be assigned a letter identifier. The three participants were contacted by the interviewer by email to set up the interviews to gather the data. Interviews were conducted individually through Zoom video platform. Interview questions were semi-structured and open-ended to elicit views and opinions from participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Appendix B).

The online transcription service, Otter, was the primary form used for transcription of semi-structured interviews using divergent, open-ended questioning and convergent, closed questioning. To improve data collection, the interviewer listened more than talked, used think time, asked for concrete details, clarified, and followed up when needed (L. R. Gay et al., 2009). Computer software aided in the development of themes and patterns for data analysis. Semi-structured interviews, which included open-ended

questions (Appendix B), were conducted to understand the following research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

The central questions driving this study were:

RQ: How do different types of professional development motivate teachers to modify their instructional practice?

a. Based on teachers' readiness and orientation to learn, how is the focus of teacher professional development determined?

b. How do teachers use prior experiences to determine the best professional development to take responsibility for growing their culturally responsive pedagogical skills?

Data Collection Procedures

In compliance with Southwest Baptist University guidelines regarding approval from the Research Review Board (RRB), approval to conduct an ex post facto data collection of teachers in suburban Missouri public schools was obtained. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the middle school building principal of each district studied through email and phone calls. Interviews were conducted through video chat sessions such as Zoom platform.

Schools with similar demographics of size were chosen to gather data that were consistent. The three schools selected were suburban middle schools with student populations that were similar in size, ranging from approximately 4,500 to 6,500 students district wide. The three school districts were also similar in demographics, teacher-student ratio, and administrator-teacher ratio. Possible participants were screened through means of a demographic survey (Appendix B) to ensure they met the selection criteria.

From those meeting the requirements, nine participants were selected for interviews. An informed consent form (Appendix A) as required for each participant choosing to participate.

After obtaining RRB approval to conduct the study, building principals were contacted by phone and/or emailed to obtain permission to conduct the research. Names and contact information of emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished teachers in core and practical arts were also obtained. The total number of participants in this study was nine, which included three emerging, three developing, and three proficient or distinguished teachers in core and practical arts. The nine participants were contacted by the interviewer to set up the interviews and gather the data. Interviews were conducted through Zoom video platform and were recorded for later review and verification of information. Video also provided the opportunity to review the participants facial expressions and body language. Using video is more accurate and objective than trusting memory (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Interview questions were semi-structured and open-ended to elicit views and opinions from participants. Probing was also used to elicit addition information or clarification of concepts (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Appendix B). Participants were provided with copies of transcripts for assurance of accuracy if requested.

To make sense of the data, the information was winnowed inductively to identify patterns and common themes and then deductively to determine if more information was needed. Winnowing removes information that is not useful to the study. (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). A journal was maintained to contain notes of thoughts and conjecture throughout the interview process. Triangulation of three data sources included

personal interviews, which was the primary source of data; archival data, which included but was not limited to professional development schedules and handbooks; and journaling, which helped justify the identified themes and add to the validity of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). All the printed evidence and documents as well as the researchers journal, were organized and reviewed in relation to the transcribed interviews. After the interviewer read through the raw transcribed interview data, journal, and printed documents, computer software was used to aid in the development of themes and patterns for data analysis. The interview transcriptions were color coded to assist in identification of patterns and themes. The coding method of chunking or grouping was used to identify patterns and organize and discover related raw data themes. The groups were labeled with a specific category name or theme (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the information collected was organized and prepared by sorting the data collected from interviews into the different categories of emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished teachers. Archival data such as professional development handbooks, professional development opportunities, and schedules, which helped justify the identified themes and added to the validity of the study, were also organized into different types. Additionally, the researcher used journaling notes to identify themes around professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017) and cultural responsiveness, and to reduce researcher bias (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Visually scanning the data provided an opportunity to compare themes and get an impression from the data and aided in the validation and reliability (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). A third-party transcription service, Otter, was used to collect and transcribe the

interviews. The transcriptions and data sources related to teacher professional development were visually scanned to ensure the accuracy, validity, and reliability of the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

An organized story was created with the data by chunking or grouping data and then using a thematic color-coding frame designed to capture the overall meaning of the stories and narratives (Gall et al., 2010). Coding was conducted around related themes of professional development and cultural responsiveness (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). After coding the data, themes and relationships were identified. Direct quotes from participants were also used to assist in developing themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Data were then winnowed inductively to identify emerging patterns and common themes and then deductively to determine if more information was needed (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). A journal was kept during the interview with notes identifying themes. Source data were triangulated to examine evidence from all sources such as personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks, which helped justify the identify themes and add to the study's validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). After all of the data had been coded and themes identified, connections were made.

Summary

Professional development comes in many different types, some more effective than others (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Studying the experiences of teachers at different experience levels about their experiences with different types of professional development, including cultural responsiveness provides a deeper context than that of professional development alone. This study is based on Mezirows' transformational

learning theory (1997) and Knowles' theory of andragogy (1989) and encompasses the work of Hammond (2015) and Hollie (2018).

Chapter Three outlined the qualitative methods used to determine teachers' perceptions of focused professional development on pedagogical skills and classroom practice, to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. Participants for this narrative qualitative study were chosen for the purpose of exploring research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). The study encompassed nine total teachers, three emerging, three developing, and three proficient or distinguished Missouri middle school teachers from regular and practical arts classes. The research was conducted through in-person interviews, Zoom platform. Otter, a digital transcription service, was used to assure accuracy of the data.

Chapter Four provides results from teachers' perceptions about focused professional development regarding modifying pedagogical skills and classroom practice, including cultural responsiveness. In Chapter Five the researcher will present the significant findings from the study, professional implications, and application to academic practice in the use of focused professional development. Chapter Five will be a synthesis of the findings from the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

Chapter One was an introduction to the study, Chapter Two was a presentation of the literature review, and Chapter Three was an outline of the methodology of the research. This study was an examination of three experience levels of teachers and their perceptions of the different types of professional development in their district, to understand and modify their pedagogies, including cultural responsiveness. Chapter Four was a synopsis of the findings of the research and described perceptions of teachers' experiences with different types of professional development in their district. The interview, on average, took 25-40 minutes, utilizing the prewritten questions in the protocol (Appendix B) to ensure consistent, reliable, and valid results.

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of teachers relating to PD to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. To better understand teacher perceptions about PD to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies, the researcher conducted interviews with middle school emerging, developing, and proficient and/or distinguished teachers in suburban schools in Missouri. This study adds to literature about the perceptions of middle school teachers and their participation in different types of PD to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies.

The design of this study was grounded in two different theories, one theoretical and one conceptual. Mezirow's (1997) theory of transformational learning was the

theoretical basis and explained how exposure to certain things influences behavior and learning of adults and defines how the ideas, beliefs, values, and feelings of adult learners are transformed to make them more inclusive, discerning, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change. Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy was the conceptual basis for this study and described how self-directed learning is applied to adult learning situations. This study allowed the researcher to view both theories from the professional development lens.

The analysis of data was divided into four sections. Section 1 described the participants of the study, the setting, and school demographics. Section 2 addressed the pilot study, verification and trustworthiness of the research data, and methods used for collection. Section 3 examined member checking, triangulation of the data, document mining, and coding procedures. Section 4 addressed the research questions and findings from the analysis of data and the results of patterns and themes identified from participant interviews, journals, and archival data.

Research Questions

This study explored the experiences of emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished middle school teachers regarding application of different types of professional development using narrative, qualitative research through personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks.

The central questions driving this study were these:

RQ: How do different types of professional development motivate teachers to modify their instructional practice?

a. Based on teachers' readiness and orientation to learn, how is the focus of teacher professional development determined?

b. How do teachers use prior experiences to determine the best professional development to take responsibility for growing their culturally responsive pedagogical skills?

As participants responded to the interview questions, the researcher made journal entries regarding the teachers' perceptions about focused professional development to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. The theories of Mezirow (1997) and Knowles (1989) guided the researcher in creating eight major themes for emerging, developing, and distinguished experience levels. Findings from each research question were reported based on the theories but also included any extraneous themes that emerged as well. Interviews, archival data, and the journal kept by the researcher were used to gather information pertinent to answering the research questions.

Interviews were recorded on Zoom and then uploaded to Otter.ai for transcription. The transcribed interviews were coded based on common ideas. Themes were then developed from the codes and based on research questions. District websites provided strategic plans and missions information or were requested if unavailable on the website. One participant from each school provided professional development calendars, handbooks, or surveys that were provided to them by the district. These documents were used as a reference in triangulating information. Tables were created using the identified codes and themes (Appendix C). Specific quotes were included for questions to provide additional context and coding examples.

Section 1: Participants

Participants in this study were strategically chosen by the researcher to represent various populations and demographics of teachers who teach general or practical arts classes in Grades 6-8. Interviews were conducted with nine participants (A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, C1, C2, and C3) total. Participants included one emerging, one developing, and one proficient or distinguished teacher from each of the three schools chosen as the sample. School principals identified teachers of each of the varying experience levels, who taught in either general or practical arts classes. The principal then provided an email address for each teacher identified. The participant was contacted via email to confirm participation and to schedule an interview time. Once a time was confirmed, the Informed Consent and a Zoom link for the scheduled interviews were sent to the participant with a request to sign and return the informed consent.

Of the three emerging participants, two had 1 year of experience, and one had 2 years of experience. Of the developing participants, all three had 4 years of experience. All three of the proficient or distinguished teachers fell into the distinguished category. One had 13 years of experience, one had 14 years of experience, and one had 23 years of experience. Five of the participants were in their first year of employment at their current district, one in their third year, one in their fourth year, one in their fifth year, and one in their 22nd year. Five of the participants taught a practical arts class, and the other four taught core classes. Five of the participants were involved in determining their professional development activities, while four did not have a role. All nine teachers participated in determining at least part of their professional learning plan goals. Table 1 shows the participants' experiences and study identifiers.

Table 1

Participants' Experience and Identifiers

Participant	Years in education	Years in current district	Dissertation identifier
Emerging Teacher 1	1	1	A1
Emerging Teacher 2	1	1	B1
Emerging Teacher 3	2	1	C1
Developing Teacher 1	4	1	A2
Developing Teacher 2	4	1	B2
Developing Teacher 3	4	4	C2
Dist'd Teacher 1	23	22	A3
Dist'd Teacher 2	14	5	B3
Dist'd Teacher 3	13	3	C3

Setting

All three school districts were suburban and located in the three largest metropolitan areas in Missouri. All three schools ranged from approximately 4,500 to 6,500 total students district wide. The diversity of each school ranged from 15% to 25% of the total student population. Interviews took place through Zoom, with the teacher choosing their interview location. Interviews lasted on average 25-40 minutes.

School A

School A was a suburban middle school in a large metropolitan district located in the northwest region of Missouri. The district population was 6,292 students. The population of students that were not White was approximately 25%. The teachers in the study from School A were identified as A1 (emerging), A2 (developing), and A3

(distinguished). Teacher A1 taught general classes, A2 practical arts, and A3 taught an elective. All three teachers participated in creating their professional growth plan on some level. Teachers A1 and A2 each had a district-level goal, a building-level goal, and a personal goal. Teacher A3 had a building-level goal and personal goal.

School B

School B was a suburban middle school in a large metropolitan district located in the northeast region of Missouri. The district population was 4,484 students. The population of students that were not White was approximately 23%. The teachers in the study from School B were identified as B1(emerging), B2 (developing), and B3 (distinguished). Teacher B1 taught practical arts, B2 taught general, and B3 taught an elective. All three teachers participated in creating their professional growth plan on some level. Teachers B1 and B2 each had a district-level goal, a building-level goal, and a personal goal. Teacher B3 had a building-level goal only.

School C

School C was a suburban middle school in a large metropolitan district located in the southwest region of Missouri. The district population was 6,212 students. The population of students that were not White are approximately 14%. The teachers in the study from School C were identified as C1 (emerging), C2 (developing), and C3 (distinguished). Teacher C1 taught general classes, C2 taught general classes, and C3 taught practical arts. All three teachers participated in creating their professional growth plan on some level. Teachers C1, C2, and C2 each had a district-level goal, a building-level goal, and a personal goal.

Section 2: Methods

Interview questions were semi-structured with open-ended questions to elicit views and opinions from participants (Appendix B; Creswell & Creswell, 2020; L. R. Gay et al., 2009). Interview questions were developed based on different types of PD used to motivate teachers to modify their instructional practices, teachers' readiness and orientation to learn and how the focus of teacher professional is determined, and teachers' use of prior experiences to determine the best professional development to take responsibility for growing their culturally responsive pedagogical skills. Interview questions were based on Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy and peer review determined the credibility of the interview questions.

Pilot Study

According to Creswell and Creswell (2020), conducting a pilot test is a vital step to identifying any problems before conducting the final research. A pilot study was conducted to establish content validity and reliability, consistency, improve survey question content and format (Appendix B), and clarify instructions. The test group consisted of two distinguished teachers, one from a general education classroom and one from a practical arts classroom. The teachers were from one school district not being used in the study. The building principal was contacted by email to obtain permission to conduct the pilot study.

Questions were mostly clear and understood by the participants. One question in Section D of the interview protocol was moved to Section B, as it referenced a question in that section, therefore fit better in that section. Two questions in Section D needed to have the term "cultural responsiveness" added for clarity. The final open-ended question

was expanded to included “cultural responsiveness.”

Verification and Trustworthiness

Data were collected through interviews, journaling, and archival data (Creswell and Creswell, 2020). Collecting data through each of the methods allowed participants the opportunity to tell the story of their experiences, practices, and participation in different types of professional development (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Each interview session allowed the researcher to understand how participants perceived their experiences with PD and how each participant integrated learning in their classroom and school (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data were verified, when possible, through PD documents retrieved from the district website or when unavailable, from the participants themselves. The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore teacher perceptions of effective PD and how different types of PD are used to modify teacher pedagogies.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through recorded interviews of the nine participants. The researcher took notes for each question during the interview, documenting important words and phrases for later use and comparison to the transcript. Interviews provided the researcher the opportunity to understand the different perceptions of the participants involved. Once an interview was completed, the audio was uploaded to the transcription service Otter.ai. Once the audio recording was transcribed, the transcript was printed. Each transcript was read over, the recorded interview reviewed, and any errors in the transcription were corrected. Keywords and phrases were highlighted and noted in the margin. A table listing School A, School B, and School C and Emerging, Developing, and Distinguished was created in which to enter the words or phrases. All three emerging

teachers were labeled as (1), all three developing teachers were labeled as (2), and all three distinguished teachers were labeled as (3). The first school with a participant that was interviewed was labeled as School A, the second as School B, and the last school to have a participant interviewed was labeled as School C. Documents, such as, PD calendars, PD handbooks, strategic plans, and mission, were retrieved from the district website or if unavailable on the website, requested verbally or via email.

Section 3: Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the information collected was organized and prepared by sorting the data collected from interviews into the different categories of emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished teachers. Journaling notes were also used to identify themes around professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017) and cultural responsiveness and to reduce researcher bias (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Additionally, the researcher used archival data such as professional development handbooks, professional development opportunities, and schedules, which helped justify the identified themes and added to the validity of the study, and which were organized into different types.

Member Checking

According to Creswell and Creswell (2020), member checking is determining the accuracy of data and justifying major findings of themes by letting participants view information and allowing for comments from the participants. Interviews were digitally recorded using the recording feature on Zoom. The digital recordings were then uploaded to Otter.ai and converted into transcripts. Participants were provided the opportunity to review their interviews for accuracy and clarity. Transcripts were emailed to participants

if requested. Three requests were made to view the original interview transcript. One of the three participants that requested a copy of the transcript gave a follow-up answer.

Triangulation

According to Creswell and Creswell (2020), triangulation of data helps to justify themes and adds to the validity and reliability of the research content. Source data were triangulated to examine evidence from all sources and included personal interviews, journaling, and archival data that included but were not limited to professional development schedules and handbooks. All the printed evidence and documents, as well as the researcher's journal, were organized and reviewed in relation to the transcribed interviews. All participants were provided the opportunity to view transcribed interviews for accuracy.

Archival Data Collection

Supplementary archival data were collected through document mining. Document mining provided the researcher an opportunity to verify participant information and connect themes already identified in the study. The researcher reviewed information through archival schedules, professional development handbooks, strategic plans, and mission statements found on the websites of schools participating in the study and from participants who shared documents not found on the website. Data were used to verify and add to data collected from participants.

Coding Procedures

A third-party transcription service, Otter.ai, was used to transcribe the interviews. The transcriptions and data sources related to teacher professional development were visually scanned to ensure the accuracy, validity, and reliability of the data (Creswell &

Creswell, 2020). The researcher read through each transcript and listened to each recorded video again, making anecdotal notes and getting an overview of the content. A second reading was done in which the researcher highlighted sections of the data that were similar. Visually scanning the data provided an opportunity to compare themes and get an impression from the data and aided in the validation and reliability (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

To make sense of the data and to remove information that was not useful to the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2020), the data were winnowed inductively to identify patterns and common themes and then deductively to determine if more information was needed. Using a Google document, tables (Appendix C) were created for each question. Data were then sorted from each question into the corresponding table. Tables were labeled with the three categories of emerging, developing, and distinguished and by schools labeled A, B, and C to help the researcher stay organized. All teachers in the experience level of proficient or distinguished fell into the category of distinguished based on year of experience, therefore, that category was titled "distinguished." Data were sorted first by the emerging experience level for each question. The process was repeated for each experience level until all data were sorted. Once important words and phrases were sorted into the proper area of the table, the words and phrases were turned into codes. For example, instructional coaches were coded as IC and content specific was coded as CS. Codes were then grouped to find commonalities and to identify themes. For example, PLC and coaching were sorted into the theme of collaboration.

Section 4: Findings

Section A

Section A of the protocol was demographic and general teacher information (Table 1). Emerging teachers in this study were teachers who were in their first or second year of teaching. Participants A1 and B1 were first-year teachers and C1 was in their second year. Developing teachers in this study were teachers who were in their third or fourth year of teaching. All three developing teachers were in their fourth year of teaching. Distinguished teachers in this study were teachers who had 6 or more years of teaching experience. Participant A3 was in their 23rd year of teaching, B3 was in their 14th year of teaching, and C3 was in their 13th year of teaching.

Section B

Section B of the protocol was based on the central research question which asked, How do different types of professional development motivate teachers to modify their instructional practice? This section was based on Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy. Questions in Section B of the protocol provided data about the types of PD in which the participants participated, the amount of time spent in PD weekly, the types of collaboration and coaching, the types of helpful PD and resources provided by the district, the challenges of the PD provided, and the satisfaction level of PD provided by the district. In this section, three main themes were identified: collaboration, preservice PD, and challenges.

The first theme was based on questions centering around how different types of professional development motivate teachers to change their instructional practice. This included the types of PD in which teachers have participated, the types of collaboration or coaching teachers engaged in to modify pedagogy, the most helpful professional development resources and activities provided by the district, and challenges of PD at

their school.

Theme 1: Collaboration

This theme encompassed two codes: coaching, and professional learning communities (PLCs), which was further broken down into department, building, team, strategies, and data. The codes in this section were included with reference to teacher comments to interview questions about professional development that modified their pedagogies. Collaboration was mentioned regarding coaching, which included coaching with an instructional coach, a mentor, or a peer, and to PLC.

Coaching sessions took place with an IC, a mentor, or with a peer. All three districts assigned ICs to teachers, but distinguished teachers were generally assigned ICs less often. Participants mentioned different types of collaboration in which they participated with the IC assigned to them. Participant A2 mentioned coaching from their administrator as well. Participant A2 stated, "I do have an instructional coach who is assigned to me…most of my collaboration has come from either my admin or my instructional coach." Participant A1 was observed one time each month, with discussion following the observation. Participant B2 participated in Lunch and Learn sessions with their IC, with the focus being on strategies. Participant B3 mentioned they also meet with their IC one time each month. Participant C1, who was a first-year teacher, was assigned to three different ICs: one for content, one for academic prep, and one for alternative. Participant C3, who was a distinguished teacher in the same district, still participates in co-teaching with their IC.

All three districts had some form of PLC collaboration. PLCs were further broken down into building, department, team, strategies, and data. Building-level PLCs were

mentioned by six of the nine participants: A1, A3, A3, B1, B2, and C1. Participant C2 stated, “I know we have PLCs. We have, like, team meetings and department meetings.” Participant B2 stated, “Um, just because our school has set up PLCs now…during that process {PLC} is typically talking about different strategies and different things.” Building-level PLCs were specific to the building in which the teacher was assigned. Meetings were not necessarily content- or grade-level specific. Department-level PLCs were mentioned by 8 of the 9 participants: A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, C1, C2, and C3. Department level was defined by the participants as the course or subject they taught, such as, ELA, social studies, or PE. Department meetings were across the district and included teachers in other buildings. Team-level PLCs were also mentioned by six of the participants: A1, B1, B2, B3, C1, and C2. Team meetings were with the specific grade-level team in one building and included all the subjects of that particular team. In the context of the focus of PLCs, strategies and data were mentioned by several participants. Table 2 displays which participant mentioned each code.

Table 2

Collaboration Code Mentions

Collaboration Codes	School A	School B	School C
Coaching	A1, A2, A3	B1, B2, B3	C1, C2, C3
PLC			
Building	A1, A2, A3	B1, B2	C1
Department	A1, A2, A3	B1, B2	C1, C2, C3
Team	A1	B1, B2, B3	C1, C2
Strategies	A1, A2	B1, B2	C1
Data	A1	B2	C1

Theme 2: Preservice PD

This theme encompassed three codes: new teacher, procedures, and expectations. The codes in this section were included with reference to teacher comments to interview questions about professional development that modified their pedagogies. Table 3 displays which participants mentioned each preservice code. Participants A1 and B1, emerging teachers, both mentioned new teacher orientation as preservice professional development and procedures and expectations were mentioned by both as part of their preservice PD program. Participant A1 stated,

> I've also had a significant amount of professional development for myself as a first-year teacher during the first week before school started before the first month. I had meetings after school once a week to help me get accustomed to like new behavior management strategies and stuff.

Participants A2, B2, and C3 all mentioned new teacher orientation in relation to preservice. Participant C1 mentioned preservice in the context of HR training, specifically in relation to sexual harassment training, rights to privacy, and FERPA training. Participant C1 did not mention new teacher orientation, or any other preservice PD. Participants B1, B3, and C3 all mentioned the EdCamp style of PD. Participant B1 mentioned that the EdCamp style PD was combined with two other area schools and the participant liked that it was active and collaborative.

Table 3

Preservice Code Mentions

Preservice Codes	School A	School B	School C
New Teacher	A1, A2	B1, B2	C3
Procedures	A2, A3	B2	
EdCamp	0	B1, B3	C3

Theme 3: Challenges

This theme encompassed six codes: time, content specific, beneficial, applicable, accountability, and limited. The codes in this section were included with reference to teacher comments to interview questions about professional development that modified their pedagogies. All but one of the teachers that were interviewed felt there were some challenges with the PD program in their district. Participant A1 stated, "…it's just the time, making sure we have time to have the professional development, but also get everything else done that we have to do in our classroom."

While reasons varied widely, several common themes surfaced. Lack of time to complete PD duties was mentioned by participants in two schools. Participant C3 a sports coach had missed PD activities due to games and practices and felt that it was hard to find the time to make up missed PD. Regarding the theme "specific," B1 related it to the focus of PD as not being specific to the content area they taught. Participant B2 found it boring and not engaging if it did not pertain to their area or interest but would be more engaged if they could learn something and teach it to another teacher. Participant C3 related code "specific" to lack of personalization and not being targeted to what they specifically need.

At least one teacher in each school felt some of the PD was not applicable or

beneficial to their teaching needs. Accountability was something that A1, A3, and B3 were lacking with the PD in their districts. Participant B3 framed their response as “lack of follow-through,” “no accountability,” and “fluffy learning.” Three teachers also felt that the PD in their district was limited. Participant A1 felt it was limited due to Covid as some PD activities in their district were canceled due to Covid, but nothing was offered to replace the canceled PD. Participant A2 felt it was limited because they were the gifted teacher for two buildings and did not have a team to collaborate with. This participant also mentioned that they did not have as many PD assignments due to being a traveling teacher. Table 4 displays which participant mentioned each code.

Table 4

Challenges Code Mentions

Challenges Codes	School A	School B	School C
Time	A1, A3	0	C2, C3
Content Specific	0	B1, B2	C3
Beneficial	A3	B1	C2, C3
Applicable	A3	B2	C3
Accountability	A1, A3	B3, B3	0
Limited	A1, A2	B1	0

The number of professional development hours spent each week varied. Teachers spent a collective average of around 4 hours each week on professional development activities, which included district and self-assigned PD. Emerging teachers spent an average of 4 hours each week, developing teachers spent an average of 3.9 hours each week, and distinguished teachers spent an average of 5 hours each week on PD. Participant C3 spent the most time in weekly PD activities, approximately 12 hours total. However, only one or two hours of that was district assigned. The rest of the time was self-assigned. Participant A1, a first-year teacher, talked about some of that time being spent to discuss strategies and interventions for students.

Satisfaction levels varied for each category of emerging, developing, and distinguished. A satisfaction level of (1) was very unsatisfied with district PD and a satisfaction level of (10) was very satisfied with district PD. School A had an average satisfaction rating of 9. Reasons for the satisfaction ratings included negative reasons of missed opportunities due to Covid with none rescheduled and lack of value or benefit for

the classroom. While positive comments included valuable for the classroom, timely, autonomy, clear expectations, and administration support, School B had an average satisfaction rating of 5. Reasons for the satisfaction ratings included negative reasons of not content-specific, limited, bad presentation, and not data driven. Participants B1 and B3 both gave a satisfaction rating of (4). Participant B stated, "I think it's for sure where my personal mission for education and passions lie. It's like [the school] could be there; it's just taking a really long time to get there. So, not totally in alignment yet."

School C had an average satisfaction rating of 7.6. A reason for the satisfaction ratings included negative reasons of lack of resources. Positive comments included teamwork, care, educational awareness, and forward thinking.

Section C

Section C of the protocol was based on Research Sub-Question (a), which asked, "Based on teachers' readiness and orientation to learn, how is the focus of teacher professional development determined?" This section was on Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy. Questions in this section were centered around what brings teachers satisfaction and motivates them, how teachers personally choose their PD, and how teachers know what new strategies to try. A question about whether the teachers have been reflective and how effectiveness of the learning from PD is determined was also included.

Theme 4: Personal Satisfaction and Motivation

This theme encompassed three codes: student achievement, student success, and helping struggling students. The codes in this section were included with reference to teacher comments to interview questions about professional development that modifies

their pedagogies. The first question asked was about what brings satisfaction and motivation to the teacher. This question did not separate the two, therefore, participants gave general answers that the researcher was not able to separate for individual analysis. Student achievement was mentioned by 5 of the 9 participants and included participants A2, A3, B1, B2, and C3. Participant C3 stated, “Seeing kids achieve goals, especially specifically to my, that I’m in right now…”

Student success was mentioned by 5 of the 9 teachers. Helping struggling students was mentioned specifically by 2 of the 9participants. Other reasons that teachers were satisfied and motivated included culture, student excitement, being effective, and teacher A3 still enjoyed the job even after 23 years in the classroom. Table 5 displays which participant mentioned each code.

Table 5

Personal Satisfaction and Motivation Code Mentions

Satisfaction and Motivation Codes	School A	School B	School C
Student Achievement	A2, A3	B1, B2	C3
Student Success	A2	B1, B2	C1, C2
Helping Struggling Students	0	B3	C1

Theme 5: Personal PD

This theme was comprised of three codes: reflection, self-awareness, and interests. The codes in this section were included with reference to teacher comments to interview questions about professional development that modifies their pedagogies. When teachers were asked how they personally choose the professional development in

which they participated answers varied widely. A few common themes were identified. Five of the nine teachers, A1, A3, B2, B3, and C3, chose PD based on reflection of their teaching. Participant A2 stated,

"And so, I was just looking through that [topic mentioned earlier] and just kind of finding those resources on my own, just based on the needs that I've identified for myself…"

However, all nine teachers had been reflective this year about their teaching in general. Three teachers mentioned self-awareness, and five teachers mentioned choosing PD based on their own personal interests or passion. There were several keywords that did not fit into a specific code but were mentioned by at least one participant. These included notes; need, which was mentioned by A3 and B3; social media and professional organizations, both mentioned by B1; and gaps. Table 6 displays which participant mentioned each code.

Table 6

Personal PD Code Mentions

Personal PD Codes	School A	School B	School C
Reflection	A1, A3	B2, B3	C3
Self-awareness	A1, A2	0	C3
Interests	A2	B2, B3	C1, C2

Theme 6: Strategy

This theme was comprised of five codes: collaboration, trial and error, feedback, data, and reflection. The codes in this section were included with reference to teacher comments to interview questions about professional development that modified their pedagogies. Participants were asked how they know what to try when they need to try a

new strategy in their classroom. Several strategies were mentioned, which included collaboration, trial and error, feedback, data, and reflection. Collaboration was mentioned by 5 of the 9 participants, specifically A1, A2, B2, B3, and C1. Participant A2 mentioned collaboration with veteran teachers and B2 mentioned collaboration with a mentor. Participant B2 stated, "I'll either ask someone, yeah, I'll ask them. And I'll ask my mentor." Table 7 displays which participant mentioned each code.

Table 7

Strategy Code Mentions

Strategy Codes	School A	School B	School C
Collaboration	A1, A2	B2, B3	C1
Trial and Error	0	B1, B3	C1
Feedback	A2,	B2	C3
Data	A3	B1	C2
Reflection	A3	B3	C1

When asked about being reflective about professional learning this past year, all participants said they had been reflective on at least some level this past year. Although the question was a yes or no question, several participants expounded on their answers. Some of the ways the teachers had been reflective were based on data, students'and their own growth, what can be used and what can be taught to other teachers, and challenges of the past year. Participant A2 admitted they had not been deeply reflective because they were in survival mode. Participant A2 stated,

> I don't know that I've really hit that reflective state yet, because I feel like I've kind of been in a little bit of a survival mode. Just with new district, in two new schools, and two new sets of admin and two staffs, and a new science curriculum

> and gifted…so much new that I'm just trying to survive at this point. So, I don't feel like I've been super reflective yet.

One teacher talked about journaling each year since they started teaching, while at least two others kept notes to reflect on. Teacher C3 talked about being self-aware, however, the researcher made note that several teachers seemed to have self-awareness of their teaching and needs.

Theme 7: Effectiveness

This theme was comprised of three codes: usable, data, and feedback. The codes in this section were included with reference to teacher comments to interview questions about professional development that modified their pedagogies. The participants were asked how they determined the effectiveness of their learning from the PD activities at their school. Six of the nine mentioned that it needs to be usable. Participant A1 stated,

> I mean, how do you tell if the student's learning, if they can use it. So, like if I, if they went over a strategy or something in a professional development meeting…if I can take it back and use it, maybe without getting help.

Four of the nine mentioned that data were used to determine effectiveness of PD. Five of the nine participants said feedback is another way they determined the effectiveness of PD activities in their district. Participants A2 and A3 also mentioned reflection in determining effectiveness. Table 8 displays which participant mentioned each code.

Table 8

Effectiveness Code Mentions

Effectiveness Codes	School A	School B	School C
Usable	A1, A3	B1, B3	C1
Data	A2	B1, B3	C1
Feedback	0	B1, B2, B3	C3

Social media came up in a couple of different contexts and questions, however, there was not enough consistency to separate them. Participant B1 used social media for choosing PD activities that other teachers had recommended. Participants A2 and B2 used social media when needing to try a new strategy in their classroom. All three participants mentioned Facebook groups as a form of social media, with A2 and B3 mentioning that it was used to find strategies to use in their classrooms.

Section D

Section D of the protocol was based on Research Sub-question (b), which asked, How do teachers use prior experiences to determine the best professional development to take responsibility for growing their culturally responsive pedagogical skills? This section was based on Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy. Questions in this section were centered around how teachers use prior experiences to determine the best PD to grow their culturally responsive pedagogical skills. Questions included describing an experience where cultural responsiveness was connected to professional learning, the teachers' comfort level in choosing their own PD and their own culturally responsive PD, and what would make the teacher more comfortable in choosing their own PD and their own culturally responsive PD.

Theme 8: Cultural Responsiveness

This theme was comprised of three codes: limited, ABAR, and self. The codes in this section were included with reference to teacher comments to interview questions about the cultural responsiveness connection to PD and growing their CRP skills. Participant B2 stated, “Yeah, we’ve had extensive counseling on anti-bias, anti-racism. Racial equity, we’ve had extensive PD on that.”

According to participants, culturally responsive PD was limited in School A and School C. All three participants from School A remembered touching on CR at least a little at the beginning of the year, but it was limited. Participant A2 thought that the training had been bridged to social emotional learning. Two of School C participants, C1 and C2, mentioned that there was a little CR training. Participant C1 mentioned that was during an EdCamp, and C2 thought there was some training, possibly at the beginning of the year. All three participants from School B mentioned participation in Anti-bias Anti-racism (ABAR) training. Participants B2 and B3 both mentioned equity training and collaboration. Participants B1 and B2 both mentioned a book study from new teacher orientation training around cultural responsiveness. Table 9 displays which participant mentioned each code.

Table 9

Cultural Responsiveness Code Mentions

CR Codes	School A	School B	School C
Limited	A1, A2, A3	0	C1, C2
ABAR	0	B1, B2, B3	0
Self	A2, A3	B3	C1, C3

Participants' comfort levels in choosing their professional development were similar, with Participant A1, a first-year teacher, having the lowest comfort level. Participants A3, B2, and C3 were all very comfortable choosing their own professional development, with Participants A2, B1, and B2 following closely behind. Participant C1 mentioned that they had a high comfort level due to cultural responsiveness training from another district. Participant C3 mentioned always having room for growth, therefore, did not choose the highest comfort level. Participant A1 stated, "I don't know how you could put all that on the district, like, it is my job." When she clarified, she meant that teachers need to take responsibility for their own learning. Table 10 displays each participant's comfort level in choosing their own professional development activities.

Table 10

Comfort Level of Own PD

Comfort Level	School A	School B	School C
Emerging	6	9	7
Developing	9	10	10
Distinguished	10	9	7

Participants' comfort levels when choosing their own CRP PD was a little more varied. The lowest rating of (5) was again from Participant A1, the first-year teacher. Participants A3, B2, B3, C2, and C3 were all very comfortable with choosing PD that centered around CRP growth. When the participants were asked what would make them more comfortable in choosing their own PD, the reasons varied. Participants A1 and A2 both stated having more experience as a teacher, and A2 specifically mentioned more years in the district. Participant C3 mentioned their own self-awareness, and the researcher commented in the interview notes for Participant B2 that they were self-aware in this area. Table 11 displays teachers' comfort levels in choosing their own PD to grow their own culturally responsive PD.

Table 11

Comfort Level of Own Culturally Responsive PD

Comfort Level	School A	School B	School C
Emerging	5	6	8
Developing	8	10	10
Distinguished	10	9	9

The last question was an open-ended question asked to elicit any thoughts or comments that the participants had not had a chance to give previously. During the interviews and after viewing the recordings a second time, the researcher made general notes about impressions of each teacher that was interviewed and notes about comments to the open-ended question at the end of the interview. Overall, the distinguished teachers were confident, self-aware, and the most reflective about the PD in their school and district. Researcher notes about the distinguished teachers included that they valued time,

were reflective, listened to feedback, and were self-sufficient learners. One note made about the distinguished teacher from School B was that they are very passionate about ABAR. This is the district that had provided the most PD in this area of CR. During triangulation of information, it was discovered that School B's website also has extensive information around equity and ABAR.

Two of the less experienced teachers seemed overwhelmed and much less sure of themselves as teachers. One of those was an emerging first-year teacher in a core subject and was very honest about lack of experience and very aware of their growth areas. This teacher, A1, were also the only one that sent the researcher additional information after reading the transcript from the interview. Participant A1 did not change any information previous gathered, only added,

> As a first-year teacher I am trying to balance so many new things that I feel time and experience would help me feel more comfortable with my own CR learning. Also taking the time to review strategies to improve CR learning during Professional Development days and talking with co-workers on what strategies they use in the classroom would help as well.

The other participant, a developing fourth-year teacher, had a few years of experience but was the only gifted teacher in the district, therefore, did not have anyone to collaborate with about specific strategies for her students. The researcher made a note that this teacher seemed open-minded and growth oriented as she had made a comment that the PD in her current district was better than the previous district in which she was employed and that she had done a lot of work on her own for her diverse students. Participant B2 felt that PD should be exciting and that teachers should be excited to go to

it. Participant B2 stated, “I would like to see professional development, like, we should be excited to go to professional development…If everybody’s bored, we’re wasting time.”

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of teachers at different experience levels relating to professional development, and to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. Chapter Four of this study included four sections. Section 1 described the participants of the study, the setting, and school demographics. Section 2 addressed the pilot study, verification and trustworthiness of the research data, and methods used for collection. Section 3 examined member checking, triangulation of the data, document mining, and coding procedures. Section 4 addressed the research questions and findings from the analysis of data and the results of patterns and themes identified from participant interviews, journals, and archival data. Eight themes were identified in Section 4 and included collaboration, preservice, challenges, personal satisfaction and motivation, personal PD, strategies, effectiveness, and cultural responsiveness. A few codes were identified that were only used by one participant and, therefore, excluded in the tables. Some of these codes were referenced in Chapter Four, and others may be referenced in Chapter Five’s Discussion section. This included codes such as forward-thinking, administration respect, gaps, and educational awareness.

Chapter Five contains a summary of the problem along with a discussion of the limitations of the study, the findings, and offers recommendations for moving forward. Additionally, Chapter Five includes the researcher’s professional opinions based on the

findings from the review of literature, which were concluded from the interpretation of the findings that related back to the research questions and problem statement. Implications for practice are discussed along with recommendations for further research, followed by a summary of the chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study was to explore the perceptions of middle school teachers regarding their experiences with professional development to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. Nine teachers of varying experience levels were interviewed from three different schools. This study also explored the comfort level of teachers in choosing their own professional development and their own culturally responsive professional development. Of the nine teachers that were interviewed, three were emerging, three were developing, and three were distinguished. The participants were from suburban middle schools in the three largest metropolitan cities in Missouri. The schools chosen also had a cultural relevance included in their district's mission, goals, or strategic plan and diversity in their student population.

The theoretical framework for this study was centered on Mezirow's (1997) theory of transformation learning, which explained how exposure to certain things influences behavior and learning of adults and defines how the ideas, beliefs, values, and feelings of adult learners are transformed to make them more inclusive, discerning, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change. The conceptual framework was centered on Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy, which described how self-directed learning is applied to adult-learning situations. Both theories grounded the research in the importance of adult-centered, continuous professional development that is content centered, active, coherent, sustainable, and uses a collective participation approach

(Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009) to modify teacher pedagogical skills and increase highly qualified teachers (Danielson, 2007; Hattie, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2018). Chapter Four was a summary of the findings of this study. Chapter Five incorporates a summary of the problem along with a discussion of the limitations of the study. There was one central question and two sub-questions driving the study.

The central questions driving this study were these:

RQ: How do different types of professional development motivate teachers to modify their instructional practice?

a. Based on teachers' readiness and orientation to learn, how is the focus of teacher professional development determined?

b. How do teachers use prior experiences to determine the best professional development to take responsibility for growing their culturally responsive pedagogical skills?

Limitations

The researcher aimed to elicit unbiased and usable data related to focused professional development including cultural responsiveness. While every effort was made to control outside variables through delimitations, some limitations were outside the control of the study and could have influenced the study as follows (L. R. Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009):

- The research was limited to prior research about focused professional development around culturally responsiveness.
- The research was limited to the availability of middle school teachers of varying levels of experience.

- The research was limited to the availability of middle school teachers of regular education and practical arts classes.
- The research was limited to the availability of documentation.
- The research was limited to teachers responding honestly and without biased assumptions of what the study was trying to confirm.
- The research was limited by the interview research design.
- The research was limited by biases the researcher may have held.
- The research was limited by the experience of the interviewer in interviewing participants.
- The research was limited by the teachers' perceptions and/or teacher attitudes about professional development and the consistency with which the questions were answered by the participant.
- The research was limited by teachers' perceptions of the definitions of different types of professional development and the language of the questions when answering the questions.
- The research was limited to generalizing all professional development in the state based on a limited number of interviews.
- The research was limited by the consistency with which the data were analyzed.

Summary of Findings

The researcher was able to establish meaningful conclusions based on interviews conducted with nine middle school teachers. Interviews conducted with each of the nine participants revealed eight major themes focused on professional development and

cultural responsiveness. This study established teachers' perceptions of collaboration, preservice PD, challenges with PD, personal satisfaction and motivation as a teacher, personal reasons in choosing PD, strategies, effectiveness, and cultural responsiveness. These themes were connected to the theoretical (Mezirow, 1997) and conceptual (Knowles, 1989) frameworks and the study's research questions. The information gathered from this study provides a new lens to guide district leadership in providing effective and focused professional development to teachers, including culturally responsive PD that takes into consideration how adults learn best.

Eight themes were identified in Chapter Four, which included collaboration, preservice, challenges, personal satisfaction and motivation, personal PD, strategies, effectiveness, and cultural responsiveness. Twenty-six codes and five subcodes were also identified. Themes were identified based on research questions, and which correlated to the research protocol sections.

Section A of the protocol contained general demographic and informational questions. The teachers in School A had taught an average of 9.7 years. Two were new to the district and one had 22 years in the district. Two taught core subjects and one a practical arts class. None of the teachers helped determine PD, but all had some participation in determining their professional growth plan goals. The teachers in School B had taught an average of 6.3 years. Two were new to the district and one had 5 years in the district. One taught a core subject and two a practical arts class. One had no say in determining professional development, which was the emerging teacher, while two had some say. All three had some participation in determining their professional growth plan goals. The teachers in School C had taught an average of 6.3 years. One was new to the

district, one had 4 years in the district, and one had 3 years in the district. Two taught core subjects and one a practical arts class. All three participated in determining their PD, and all had some participation in determining their professional growth plan goals.

Central Research Question

The central research question asked: How do different types of professional development motivate teachers to modify their instructional practice? Three major themes were identified in this section: collaboration, preservice, and challenges. Collaboration was the first theme identified to modify the teachers' instructional practice (Mezirow, 1997) and the teachers' growth (Tallman, 2019). This theme was broken down into coaching and PLC. Participants identified building, department, team, strategies, and data as part of the collaboration that they had been part of at their school. When talking about strategies, the participants were referring to strategies to use in the classroom to be more effective teachers and modify their instructional practice (Mezirow, 1997). The new teachers tended to use trial and error when trying a new strategy but were reflective on data and collaboration with other teachers as methods to gain the strategies needed to modify their pedagogical practices. The developing and distinguished teachers tended to use not only data, but feedback and personal reflection about their pedagogical practices, although one distinguished teacher mentioned trial and error. All the teachers took part in some form of coaching to modify their instructional practices; however, the more experienced teachers did not have as much instructional coaching, mentorship, or peer coaching that was district assigned. The amount of amount of time teachers spent with a coach mentor, or peer varied.

Preservice, the second theme, contained a plethora of types of PD and teachers'

answers ranged from broad to specific. All teachers took part in some form of preservice PD; however, several teachers were assigned to new teacher orientation as either a first-year teacher or a teacher that was new to the district. There were also several topics included in the types of PD. Procedures was mentioned by several teachers in different contexts as a form of preservice PD. Procedures encompassed HR, programs, and actual district procedures. EdCamp style PD was mentioned by three different teachers, and one teacher liked it specifically because it was active (Desimone, 2009) and collaborative (Svendsen, 2017). At least one teacher participated in an EdCamp style PD within a cohort with other area schools. Other preservice activities that teachers participated in but that did not fit a theme included lecture and team building at another location.

Challenges, the third theme, included several common ideas, and all but one teacher felt there were challenges with the professional development program at their school. However, this teacher later mentioned that there was little CR PD in their district, and they had to rely on their learning from a previous district. Key thoughts within this theme were time, content specific, beneficial, applicable, accountability, and limited.

Lack of time was something that several teachers mentioned. This was lack of time due to regular teacher duties, especially when the PD was after school, and lack of time due to the amount of PD required. Content that is not specific or applicable to the teachers' disciplines were two other challenges. Some teachers felt that the PD would have been more beneficial if the content had been geared toward them. One teacher called it "cookie-cutter PD," while another mentioned bringing a computer to work on other tasks when they knew the focus of the PD was not going to help them modify or grow their skills. Teachers also felt that the PD sessions should be beneficial, not only for

content, but for understanding and using data and for collaborating.

Lack of accountability was another challenge that teachers felt needed addressing. The lack of accountability was two-fold: lack of accountability of teachers implementing and lack of accountability of leadership in following-up and ensuring teachers were implementing and implementing correctly. PD that is limited was the last challenge that was discussed. This was a limitation in the types and topics of PD offered. An emerging teacher felt that the PD was limited because several of their PD opportunities were canceled due to COVID, but nothing was offered to replace it.

A few other challenges were mentioned that did not fit into a specific theme. A veteran teacher said that a challenge was that the PD was not personalized or targeted for them specifically. This teacher taught an elective, PE, and felt that often they ended up in PD sessions that were geared toward either a specific content, such as ELA, or it was a K-12 scenario that was not beneficial for a lot of teachers. Another teacher referenced "fluffy learning." This type of PD is a filler of time but does not yield much benefit.

The central research question contained three major themes: collaboration, preservice, and challenges. Emerging, developing, and distinguished teachers all collaborated with others in their district, whether it be with a co-teacher, mentor, instructional coach, or administration. All teachers interviewed also participated in some types of preservice PD; however, the focus and time involved varied. All teachers also mentioned some type of challenge, of varying degrees, with PD in their district as well.

Most of the data collected was consistent with previous research, literature, and expected findings: however, the findings related to "helpful PD resources and activities" varied widely. The activities ranged from collaboration with teams and departments to

collaboration with an IC. Some found model and practice helpful, while others found peer observations helpful. Challenges also varied widely with a few items being stated that were unexpected. Lack of time was mentioned by several teachers and was not expected by the researcher. Losing out on opportunities due to Covid was also unexpected.

Research Sub-Question A

Research Sub-Question (a) asked: Based on teachers' readiness and orientation to learn, how is the focus of teacher professional development determined? This question centered on Mezirow's (1997) theory of transformational learning and Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy. Four themes were identified related to questions asked by the researcher: personal satisfaction and motivation, personal PD, strategies, and effectiveness.

When teachers were asked what gives them satisfaction and motivates them as a teacher, all nine mentioned some form of student satisfaction. This ranged from student achievement and student success to helping struggling students. While most of the answers were student-facing, a few answers were teacher-facing including culture, being an effective teacher, respect of administration, and simply the enjoyment of teaching.

Teachers were asked how they personally choose PD in which they participated. There were several commonalities, but several different answers as well. Reflection, self-awareness, and interests were the three key thoughts that were identified. Teachers understand the need to improve their teaching (Ekinci & Acar, 2019; Mezirow, 1997). Teachers were reflective about different aspects of their teaching. The reflection was usually student-centered, such as student interest survey, gaps in learning, student impact,

and student excitement, to name a few. Other reasons were teacher-facing and included social media ideas and resources. Teachers also identified interest or passion about a topic as a way in which they choose PD. One teacher who was in the distinguished experience level was passionate about ABAR, therefore, spent time on this subject. Self-awareness was mentioned by several teachers. Two teachers both mentioned reflection on past lessons, with one of those adding, "How can I grow and make it better in the future?" Also, motivation to grow self was an influencer in choosing PD. One teacher mentioned that they were very aware of strengths and growth areas.

Strategies was the third theme identified by the researcher. The teachers mentioned collaboration, trial and error, feedback, data, and reflection as common ways in which they accrued strategies to use in their classrooms. Emerging teachers specifically more often used trial and error to determine strategies that work in the classroom. Emerging, developing, and distinguished teachers all found collaboration to find new strategies to use in the classroom. At least one teacher from each district used data, feedback, and/or reflection as a method for determining new strategies to use in the classroom.

The researcher identified usable, data, and feedback as ways teachers determined the fourth theme, effectiveness, regarding PD. All three districts had teachers that identified PD as effective if they were able to use it in their classrooms. All three districts also found PD to be effective if data were taken into consideration. School B and School C had teachers that used feedback as a method to determine the effectiveness of PD. The feedback was from students and from administration. School B overwhelmingly had more teachers in each category determining the effectiveness of the PD in their district.

There were mentions of ways of determining PD effectiveness that did not fit in a category. Relevancy and collaboration were two other methods that were mentioned by a couple of teachers.

Regarding sub-question (a) distinguished teachers were generally confident in self-assigning professional development activities and finding resources, while some of the less experienced teachers expressed a need for more support. All teachers were reflective about teaching practices to grow themselves. Emerging, developing, and distinguished teachers were also collaborative in finding strategies to modify their pedagogies. Emerging, developing, and distinguished teachers all found PD effective if it was usable, data focused, and they received feedback.

While most teachers were reflective in some form or another, the researcher was surprised at some of the ways teachers reflected. More than one teacher mentioned notes or journals. One teacher had started keeping a journal from the first year of their teaching and had continued through this research interview. One teacher did not feel like they were deeply reflective and felt they were in survival mode. This teacher later talked about being reflective in a different context.

Research Sub-Question B

Research Sub-Question (b) asked: How do teachers use prior experiences to determine the best professional development to take responsibility for growing their culturally responsive pedagogical skills? This question was based on Mezirow's (1997) theory of transformational learning and Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy. One theme was identified related to questions asked by the researcher: cultural responsiveness.

While two of the districts provided teachers with very little professional

development around CR, almost all the teachers found it important and several of those teachers participated in some form of PD on their own to grow themselves in this area. All but two teachers, which were both emerging teachers, were fairly or very comfortable in choosing their own PD to grow their CR skills. One teacher, who was in their second year as a teacher, used knowledge from their previous district as a basis for their CR pedagogies at their current district. Some teachers who were not completely comfortable with CR PD said that experience would help them feel more comfortable in growing their pedagogical skills all around. The district that provided the most CR PD used different types of PD. The two emerging and developing teachers from this district participated in a book study; all three mentioned ABAR training. Both B2 and B2 mentioned equity training and collaboration.

Regarding Research Sub-Question (b), only one of the schools participating provided any notable CR training as noted by the teachers participating. The other two provided some, but not enough to ensure teachers were completely confident with CR to modify their pedagogical skills. Some teachers, however, determined this as an important aspect of their teaching, therefore, created their own CR PD opportunities.

Discussion

The researcher interviewed nine middle school teachers from three different school districts. The researcher sought to explore the perceptions of those nine teachers around focused professional development. Additionally, the researcher sought to explore the perceptions of those teachers regarding professional development to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. Interviews of the nine participants revealed eight major themes: collaboration, preservice

PD, challenges with PD, personal satisfaction and motivation as a teacher, personal reasons in choosing PD, strategies, effectiveness, and cultural responsiveness.

There were several limitations to the study that needed to be recognized and accounted for. One limitation was previous research around focused professional development and cultural responsiveness. The researcher did thorough research in both areas and covered both areas as completely as possible. Finding middle school teachers of varying levels that taught in either a regular education class or a practical arts class did not present a problem. A teacher from each of the three experience levels at each school and a near equal split between core and practical were interviewed. Teachers' perceptions of what some of the questions were asking was not always consistent. This prompted the researcher to ask follow-up questions on occasion to be clear on how the participant was answering. Teachers generally answered questions honestly, however, some teachers were unclear of what some questions asked. Occasionally, the researcher had to provide clarification or give an example. The researcher became more comfortable after the third interview, therefore, was more consistent in asking questions and taking notes.

While there were similarities between the respective experience levels, there were also differences that the researcher did not expect. Confidence levels of the distinguished teachers remained consistent; however, the confidence levels of the emerging and developing could be identified in the answers provided and in the way the questions were answered. The less confident teachers thought about their answers for longer periods of time and occasionally needed more clarification, rephrasing of some questions, or in some instances, an example. The distinguished teachers were generally self-sufficient and confident when answering questions.

All teachers except for one mentioned challenges with the PD in their district. The teacher that said there were no challenges later remarked about the lack of CR PD in their district. The researcher found it interesting that this was not recognized as a challenge when asked, but was mentioned later in the interview. Teachers also found the time needed to complete PD assignments was challenging (Alkhawaldeh, 2017; Chuckry, 2019), however, the reasons varied. The quantity of PD activities required hindered the completion for some teachers, especially when the teachers also had duties that conflicted, such as coaching. Other teachers have felt overwhelmed and in survival mode for different reasons such as, Covid, being new to the profession, and PD in general. Teachers have found some PD as not being beneficial or specific to their content area and a waste of their already limited time. One area that the researcher found surprising was that teachers mentioned there was a lack of accountability in PD activities. This lack of accountability was multidirectional. Teachers would like to have seen follow-up for accountability regarding the application of PD and accountability of leadership in ensuring that PD was implemented effectively. If there is no follow-up accountability for effective implementation attached to PD activities, then PD at that point is a waste of time and resources for everyone. This decreases effectiveness of student learning, growth, and achievement (Wong & Wong, 2018).

Desimone (2009) identified five areas to increase the effectiveness of PD. First, it is focused on the specific content that the teacher is teaching. Second, there is active learning (Knowles, 1989) with feedback and analysis of lessons, rather than passive listening with no follow-up. This is consistent with the findings of this study. Teachers in this study generally liked PD that was active, such as the EdCamp style, the

team-building opportunities, and model and practices sessions (Mezirow, 1997; Sato et al., 2017). They also valued feedback from coaches, peers, mentors, and administration (Danielson, 2007; Hernon, 2019). It is also coherent, with the alignment of content, goals, and activities with the district curriculum and coherence to state and federal mandates (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Li & Jones, 2019). Teachers in this study mentioned that they wanted to participate in PD that was focused on the specific content area in which they taught which aligns with previous studies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009). The professional development plan goals for most of the teachers in the study were aligned to district and building goals. Next, it is sustainable in duration with continuation after the initial contact. Some teachers mentioned PD that was a onetime session. Others mentioned that gradually released PD was something that they liked. Last, there is collective participation of teachers vertically and horizontally in a professional learning community (PLC) fashion (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Li & Jones, 2019). All the teachers in this study participated in some form of collaborative PLC (DuFour et al., 2016). They all found value in collaboration within their vertical or horizontal building team or department team. The PLC time that was valuable included analyzing data, developing curriculum or lessons, and collaborating about classroom strategies.

This study revealed several ways in which teachers were increasing their pedagogical skills and increasing student achievement. It was established that teachers find collaboration important as part of their development in growing their pedagogical skills (Desimone, 2009). The teachers in this study overwhelmingly found instructional coaches and peer teachers to be the form of collaboration they sought most on their own.

Teachers collaborated about classroom strategies to help them be more effective with instructional, behavior management, and other areas. Teachers also found PD that is focused on the content of their discipline important (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009). Another area that teachers found important to increase their pedagogies was intentionally teaching by using data to inform and modify their instruction. This coupled with feedback about the teachers' instruction creates an effective professional development program. Other areas mentioned to modify pedagogies were increasing student excitement, getting student feedback about lessons, and creating a culture of learning.

Historically, students of color have the largest academic achievement gap, and this is especially true for Black male students. White male students have been shown to have a 21% higher graduation rate than Black male students. There is also a lack of diversity among teachers which creates a lack of cultural awareness in students' learning and exacerbates that achievement gap for diverse student populations (Murff, 2020). One thing that was surprising was the lack in diversity of the teachers that were interviewed. While race was not something that was asked as a demographic question, it was noted that most teachers interviewed were white.

Diverse student populations learn best though, through their own cultural lens (Hammond, 2015) and when CR strategies applied. However, there has been a lack of awareness and understanding of how to apply CR strategies in the classroom. One important CR strategy is building relationships so that students feel safe, happy, and valued by classmates and teachers (Hammond, 2015). CR PD was not addressed by two of the schools in this study in a capacity that ensured teachers could talk about it or felt

comfortable in growing their skills on their own. When schools do not provide the training necessary for culturally responsive teaching, teachers may be unable to find CR PD on their own, therefore, do not adequately address the CR in their classrooms.

Students of color struggle to pass standardized tests at a much higher rate than white students; low test scores are not the problem but rather the symptom (G. Gay, 2018). Teachers in this study taught in suburban middle schools with diverse student populations and mentioned the importance of CR PD (Hammond, 2015) but didn't have the strategies needed to ensure success for all students due to the lack of CR PD. Only one district had a PD focus on CR, while the other two did not specifically focus on CR as district PD. Some teachers that did not receive district or building CR PD created their own opportunities which is consistent with Mezirow's (1997) theoretical basis of this study where teachers should be autonomous learners. Being autonomous regarding CR was not as prevalent with emerging and developing teachers, however. Some of the teachers in districts without CR PD felt comfortable in creating their own CR PD because of prior knowledge (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Knowles, 1989; Mezirow, 1997) from a district in which they had previously taught or because of their own personal interest (Mezirow, 1997). Teachers are resourceful and have been shown to find the tools needed to be successful in the classroom. This is not true, however, for all teachers especially those that are overwhelmed, new to the profession and just learning their job, or in diverse contexts.

There seems to be mostly a focus on PD for classroom instruction and little CR PD. Teachers in diverse districts need CR PD to close the achievement gap for students of color but have not been receiving it. One reason for the lack of CR PD may be that the

focus has been on test scores more than student achievement (Hollie, 2018). There may also have been some confusion in what constitutes CR PD. When teachers think they may have had some training but are not sure, there clearly has not been an importance placed on it or it has not been clearly defined. There was negativity around CR PD during some of the interviews (Hammond, 2015; Mette et al., 2016). It was mentioned that some schools just "aren't there yet." Schools are not necessarily placing an importance on or ensuring teachers are responsive regarding classroom management, academic literacy, academic vocabulary, academic language, or learning environment (Hollie, 2018).

Overall, all teachers were involved in creating their professional learning plan, with all three schools having at least one district-level, one building-level, and one personal goal. All three districts had some form of PLC; however, several teachers identified them by a different name, such as DLT or CLT, depending on the focus of the PLC team. All three districts also used instructional coaches with their teachers. At least one teacher had three different instructional coaches that to which they were assigned, each with a different instructional focus. Teachers valued the collaboration with co-teachers, mentors, and coaches for strategies and feedback. They also valued PD that was focused, organized, and based on what they needed. There was not as much CR PD as expected regarding the diverse student populations at the three schools. It was surprising that only one school focused PD heavily in this area.

Implications

This study sought to add to literature about the perceptions of middle school teachers and their participation in different types of professional development to modify their practices and in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other

pedagogies. A qualitative narrative design was chosen for this study to understand teachers' perceptions and feeling around focused professional development and their feelings around culturally responsive professional development. Exploring the feelings of Missouri middle school teachers around professional development and cultural responsiveness was supported by qualitative work because it allowed the researcher to observe voice, tone, and expressions to enhance and clarify the teachers' words when answering the interview questions, therefore returning a more complete picture and data (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Darling-Hammond et al (2017) and Desimone (2009) identified several features that make PD effective. They identified a focus on content, active learning, coherent, sustainable, and collective participation. The background and experience level of each teacher interviewed provided the researcher an exclusive perspective to the study.

Teachers in this study voiced the desire for PD that is ongoing, active, and content centered (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009). If allowed, teachers tend to choose PD that increases their instructional skills. Teachers in this study also talked about their self-assigned PD around CR. District leadership can encourage teacher participation in PD program design. Using follow-up surveys will ensure teachers are providing feedback about PD in which they have participated and in which they wished to participate. Almost all the teachers in the study sought PD that would grow their skills.

District leadership must be aware of the needs of emerging and early developing teachers when planning PD. Emerging and early developing teachers are still learning and becoming comfortable, therefore, need more support and coaching. Teachers in general desire PD but feel that it needs to be beneficial and not a waste of their time.

District leadership can offer PD that is organized and planned well, released gradually, and has follow-up for accountability. Organized PD elicits a change in knowledge and pedagogical skills, which improves student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Mezirow, 1997; State et al., 2019*).* When choosing PD activities, administration must also focus the PD activities on teacher needs, avoiding whole group PD that does not pertain to some teachers. Teachers want to ensure they are applying skills learned from PD correctly, therefore, need administrators to provide feedback about that application.

Participants of this study revealed that leadership and district professional development committees must strategically and intentionally create opportunities that support and provide ongoing, job-embedded PD for teachers that correlates with data and effectively modifies instructional practice (Desimone, 2009). Providing high-quality PD that grows pedagogical skills and the capacity of teachers to choose PD that is focused on their needs is essential (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). For teachers to modify their culturally responsive pedagogy, they must understand and be reflective about their own biases and beliefs (Mezirow, 1997). This would positively affect their classroom instructional practice and potentially close the gap between students in diverse and nondiverse student groups.

According to G. Gay (2018), transformative learners assess and refine their viewpoints and understanding of diverse cultural contexts (Mezirow, 1997). For suburban middle school teachers to be culturally responsive and include cultural responsiveness in classroom practice, they must understand and refine their viewpoints of CR (Hollie, 2018; Mezirow, 1997). Self-reflective teachers in relation to cultural responsiveness

provide a path for student academic success and cultural identity (Hammond, 2015; Hollie, 2018; Mezirow, 1997). District leadership can make this happen by creating PD opportunities centered on CR. The teachers from the district in this study that had a focus on CR felt more comfortable not only with PD in general, but with CR PD as well. At a minimum, providing resources so teachers can self-explore CR would be beneficial as almost all the teachers in this study were aware of their needs and created opportunities to grow.

The findings of this study are consistent with the theoretical framework of Mezirow (1997 and the conceptual framework of Knowles (1989) used to focus this study. The teachers in the study were reflective about their past PD experiences and were open to changing their practice based on past experiences, data, and feedback. They appreciated and welcomed autonomy in choosing PD that focused on their specific growth areas. Teachers in the study voiced that PD that was not applicable to their needs was a waste of their time. Allowing teachers to have some choice in PD activities may elicit reflection and encourage teachers to choose PD activities that will growth their instruction.

Suggestions for Further Research

The research was limited to nine middle school teachers from the three largest metropolitan cities in Missouri. The schools were chosen because they were suburban schools with a diverse student population. Further research could widen the selection to include urban schools in large metropolitan areas and at the high school level. This research could focus on culturally responsive professional development in those areas. Ensuring students of diversity leaving high school have had culturally responsive

environments is crucial to ensure that students are culturally prepared for success outside of school. While this study focused specifically on middle school, ensuring teachers in middle school and high school are using culturally responsive teaching paves a path for success for students leaving middle school and entering high school and then students leaving high school. Teachers from two of the schools in this study found CR PD important but did not receive PD opportunities. Expanding the research to focus specifically on PD around cultural responsiveness, equity, and ABAR would open the door to informing leadership and teachers about choosing PD activities in this area.

Another area for potential research would be to include principals' perceptions about professional development to modify teachers' instructional practices. The article reviews for Chapter Two included information about the principal's role in professional development but were not included in the actual research. Including principals in the research would further inform district leadership about creating effective professional development programs including cultural responsiveness for schools to ensure teachers at all experience levels get the development they need to be successful. This could also be expanded to superintendents and other district leadership.

Much research has been done around PD for teachers; this could also be expanded to include PD for district leaders. Understanding how superintendents and principals choose professional development for the district and for themselves would also inform district leadership about their own biases, preconceptions, and growth potential. Research in the area could be include rural, suburban, and urban areas with diverse student and teacher populations.

The last suggestion for further research would be to expand questions to further narrow down teacher participation in specific types of focused professional development. Narrowing the field of PD to specific types would inform administration of exactly which types of PD teachers prefer and benefit the most from. Interview questions could include more closed-ended questions to gather data that is more consistent than with open-ended interviews.

Summary

The central qualitative question driving the study was this, How do different types of professional development motivate teachers to modify their instructional practice? This study answered that question based on the types of PD that the teachers chose and the reasons they chose specific PD activities. The theoretical framework for this study was centered on Mezirow's (1997) theory of transformation learning, which explained how exposure to certain things influences behavior and learning of adults and defines how the ideas, beliefs, values, and feelings of adult learners are transformed to make them more inclusive, discerning, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change. The conceptual framework was centered on Knowles' (1989) theory of andragogy, which described how self-directed learning is applied to adult learning situations. Both theories grounded the research in the importance of adult-centered, continuous professional development that is content focused, active, coherent, sustainable, and uses collective participation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009) to modify teacher pedagogical skills and increase highly qualified teachers (Danielson, 2007; Hattie, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2018). This study supported the previous findings that PD should be adult centered and continuous. This study also supported the importance of having a PD

focus on the content that teachers teach, active rather than passive learning, coherent in relation to goals, and collaborative.

This study sought to add to literature about the perceptions of middle school teachers and their participation in different types of professional development to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. Nine teachers participated in the study from three suburban middle schools in Missouri school districts to explore their perceptions and experiences related to professional development, to modify their practices in understanding and applying cultural responsiveness and other pedagogies. Through their responses districts can glean an understanding of how teachers perceive PD and desire a PD program that they can take ownership of and reflect on, thus leading to more high-quality and culturally responsive instruction and, therefore, helping to close the achievement gap for students.

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Appendix A

Teacher Informed Consent Letter

My name is Melinda Vandevort, and I am the Dean of Instruction at EAGLE College Prep Tower Grove South. I am currently a doctoral candidate with Southwest Baptist University, and I am conducting research to explore the experiences of emerging, developing, and proficient and/or distinguished teachers from three suburban school districts in Missouri regarding focused professional development, particularly around culturally responsive pedagogy.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study as you can provide valuable insight and knowledge of your school's professional development program. Your school has been selected to participate in this study by having met the criteria as a suburban district with a mission and vision, or a strategic plan that incorporates equity and cultural responsiveness. Your school administrator was contacted by phone and/or email to obtain permission to conduct the study and provided your name as being recognized as a highly qualified educator or new teacher in relationship to leadership, experience, and training. If you elect to participate, please note the following:

- Your participation is completely voluntary.
- You may choose to withdraw at any time.
- There is no penalty for not participating or choosing not to answer all questions.
- All responses are confidential.

- No information identifying you individually or your school will be reported.
- Responses will be compiled and reported anonymously.

This project has been reviewed by the Southwest Baptist University Research and Review Board for research and research-related activities involving human subjects, (417) 326-1659. The committee believes the research procedures adequately safeguard the subjects' privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights.

Please respond to this e-mail if you consent to participate. For questions about your participation or to receive a copy of the results of the study, please contact me by phone at 417-247-9270 or by e-mail at melinda.vandevort@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Melinda Vandevort

Eagle College Prep-Gravois Park

Doctoral Candidate, Southwest Baptist University

Informed Consent

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this basic narrative qualitative study exploring teacher experiences regarding professional development in Missouri school districts. Please note the following:

- Your participation is completely voluntary.
- You may choose to withdraw at any time.
- There is no penalty for not participating or choosing not to answer all questions.
- All responses are anonymous.
- No information identifying you individually or your school will be reported.
- Responses will be compiled and reported anonymously.

In order to participate in the interview, informed consent is required. If you agree to allow me to use your interview responses for research purposes, please sign below.

_____

Signature of Participant

Appendix B

Interview Guide

Instructions

Interview data will be audio recorded for digital transcription upon completion of the interview. The interview should not exceed 30 minutes in length. Questions should be asked as provided in the interview protocol. Follow-up questions may be asked to clarify participant responses.

Introduction

Thank you for meeting with me today. My name is Melinda Vandevort and I am an Educational Technology Specialist with the School District of Clayton. I am currently a doctoral candidate with Southwest Baptist University, and I am conducting research to explore the experiences of emerging, developing, and proficient or distinguished teachers from three urban or suburban Missouri schools regarding professional development programs, especially around Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. Your school has been selected to participate in this study by having a mission and vision, or a strategic plan that incorporates equity and cultural responsiveness. Today, I am going to ask you a series of questions related to your personal experiences with your school's professional development program.

Informed Consent

Participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may back out of the study at any time. A consent form has been made available for you to respond by emailing back your consent if you would like to continue. Your name will not be used in the study and your information will be kept strictly confidential. The entire transcript can

be provided for your review. If you see any errors or find any part of your responses that need to be changed, please let me know. The interview transcriptions will not be published but will be used to identify emergent themes related to the research questions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of three emerging teachers, three developing teachers, and three proficient and/or distinguished teachers relating to professional development, particularly around culturally responsive pedagogies, through personal interviews, journaling, and archival data such as professional development schedules and handbooks. Exploring teacher experiences regarding effective mentoring programs highlights the vital importance of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality. I'd like to know your personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to your school's new teacher mentoring program. My overall goal is centered on exploring the vital importance of establishing a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality.

Do you have any questions at this time about the study or the informed consent process?

Guiding Research Questions

How do different types of professional development motivate teachers to modify their instructional practice? Based on teachers' readiness and orientation to learn, how is the focus of teacher professional development determined? How do teachers use prior experiences to determine the best professional development to take responsibility for growing their culturally responsive pedagogical skills?

Interview Questions

If you are ready, we will begin. Please do not hesitate to stop me if you need any clarification on a question or you need me to provide you with more information during the interview.

A. We will start with general questions about you as a teacher.

1. How many years have you taught?
2. How long have you taught at your current school?
3. What grade level and subject do you currently teach?
4. As a teacher, do you have a say in the professional development you participate in?
5. Do you help create your professional learning plan?

B. The first set of questions will be based on the context of how different types of professional development motivate teachers to change their instructional practice.

1. Describe the types of professional development in which you have participated at your school.

2. On average, how much time do you spend per week engaged in different types of professional development?

3. Describe the types of collaboration or coaching you engage in with other teachers to modify your pedagogy, if any.

4. What have been the most helpful professional learning resources or activities that your school has provided for you?

5. What are some challenges you have had with professional learning in your school?

6. Can you give more details on specific challenges or frustrations?

7. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being unsatisfied and 10 being very satisfied, what is your current level of satisfaction with the professional learning in your district?

8. Provide the top two reasons why you gave this rating of satisfaction level in the previous question.

C. The second set of questions will be based on teachers' readiness and orientation to learn and how the focus of teacher professional development is determined.

1. What brings you the most satisfaction and motivates you as a teacher?
2. How do you personally choose the professional learning you participate in to grow your skills?
3. When you need to try a new strategy in your classroom, how do you know what to try?
4. Have you been reflective about your professional learning this past year?
5. How do you determine the effectiveness of your learning from professional development activities at your school?

D. The third set of questions will be based on how teachers use prior experiences to determine the best professional development to take responsibility for growing their culturally responsive pedagogical skills.

1. Describe an experience where cultural responsiveness was connected to professional learning in your school.

2. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being very uncomfortable and 10 being very comfortable, what is your current comfort level in being responsible for your own culturally responsive professional learning?
3. What would make you more comfortable being responsible for your own culturally responsive professional learning?

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in your school's professional learning program or with culturally responsive PD?

Thank you for your time and valuable reflections.

Appendix C

Tables

Table C1

Participants' Experience and Identifiers

Participant	Years in education	Years in current district	Dissertation identifier
Emerging Teacher 1	1	1	A1
Emerging Teacher 2	1	1	B1
Emerging Teacher 3	2	1	C1
Developing Teacher 1	4	1	A2
Developing Teacher 2	4	1	B2
Developing Teacher 3	4	4	C2
Dist'd Teacher 1	23	22	A3
Dist'd Teacher 2	14	5	B3
Dist'd Teacher 3	13	3	C3

Table C2

Collaboration Code Mentions

Collaboration Codes	School A	School B	School C
Coaching	A1, A2, A3	B1, B2, B3	C1, C2, C3
PLC			
Building	A1, A2, A3	B1, B2	C1
Department	A1, A2, A3	B1, B2	C1, C2, C3
Team	A1	B1, B2, B3	C1, C2
Strategies	A1, A2	B1, B2	C1
Data	A1	B2	C1

Table C3

Preservice Code Mentions

Preservice Codes	School A	School B	School C
New Teacher	A1, A2	B1, B2	C3
Procedures	A2, A3	B2	
EdCamp	0	B1, B3	C3

Table C4

Challenges Code Mentions

Challenges Codes	School A	School B	School C
Time	A1, A3	0	C2, C3
Content Specific	0	B1, B2	C3
Beneficial	A3	B1	C2, C3
Applicable	A3	B2	C3
Accountability	A1, A3	B3, B3	0
Limited	A1, A2	B1	0

Table C5

Personal Satisfaction and Motivation Code Mentions

Satisfaction and Motivation Codes	School A	School B	School C
Student Achievement	A2, A3	B1, B2	C3
Student Success	A2	B1, B2	C1, C2
Helping Struggling Students	0	B3	C1

Table C6

Personal PD Code Mentions

Personal PD Codes	School A	School B	School C
Reflection	A1, A3	B2, B3	C3
Self-awareness	A1, A2	0	C3
Interests	A2	B2, B3	C1, C2

Table C7

Strategy Code Mentions

Strategy Codes	School A	School B	School C
Collaboration	A1, A2	B2, B3	C1
Trial and Error	0	B1, B3	C1
Feedback	A2,	B2	C3
Data	A3	B1	C2
Reflection	A3	B3	C1

Table C8

Effectiveness Code Mentions

Effectiveness Codes	School A	School B	School C
Usable	A1, A3	B1, B3	C1
Data	A2	B1, B3	C1
Feedback	0	B1, B2, B3	C3

Table C9

Cultural Responsiveness Code Mentions

CR Codes	School A	School B	School C
Limited	A1, A2, A3	0	C1, C2
ABAR	0	B1, B2, B3	0
Self	A2, A3	B3	C1, C3

Table C10

Comfort Level of Own PD

Comfort Level	School A	School B	School C
Emerging	6	9	7
Developing	9	10	10
Distinguished	10	9	7

Table C11

Comfort Level of Own Culturally Responsive PD

Comfort Level	School A	School B	School C
Emerging	5	6	8
Developing	8	10	10
Distinguished	10	9	9