THE ELEMENTARY TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF MOTIVATION FOR AND THE PRINCIPAL’S INFLUENCE ON THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN SELF-DIRECTED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

All teachers participate in self-directed professional development (PD) at some point in their careers; however, the degree to which this participation takes place varies greatly from teacher to teacher and is influenced by the leadership of the school principal. The motivation behind why teachers choose to engage in PD is an important construct. Therefore, there is a need for better understanding of the leader’s role with respect to how and why teachers engage in self-directed professional development. The purpose of the research was to explore the elementary teachers’ motivation for and the school principal’s influence on their engagement in self-directed professional development. Three research questions guided this study:

1. What motivates teachers to engage in self-directed professional development?
2. What are the conditions necessary for promoting teachers’ engagement in self-directed professional development?
3. What are teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s role in supporting, fostering, encouraging, and sustaining the professional development of teachers?

A qualitative research approach was adopted for this study. Six elementary teachers from one south-eastern Ontario school board, consisting of three novice and three more experienced teachers, provided their responses to a consistent complement of 14 questions. Their responses were documented via individual interviews, transcribed verbatim, and thematically analysed.

The findings suggested that, coupled with the individual motivating influences, the culture of the school was found to be a conditional dynamic that either stimulated or
dissuaded participation in self-directed PD. The school principal provided an additional
catalyst or deterrence via relational disposition. When teachers felt their needs for
competency, relatedness, and autonomy were satisfied, the conditions necessary to
motivate teachers to engage in PD were fulfilled. A principal who personified the tenets
of transformational leadership served to facilitate teachers’ inclinations to take on PD. A
leadership style that was collaborative and trustful and allowed for personal autonomy
was a dominant foundational piece that was critical for participant participation in self-
directed PD. Finally, the principals were found to positively impact school climate by
partaking in PD alongside teachers and ensuring there was a shared vision of the school
so that teachers could tailor PD to parallel school interests.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In my lifelong learning journey as an elementary school classroom teacher and subsequently an elementary school principal, self-directed professional development (PD) has played an integral role. Before entering the teaching profession, I recall a clear message in my teacher education program that emphasized the expectation for teachers to engage in ongoing professional development in order to remain current with their teaching practices, expand their knowledge base, and keep open the opportunities to dialogue and share resources and expertise with colleagues.

As a new teacher, I naively assumed that all teachers, regardless of duration of employment within a school board, participated in some form of self-directed professional development as part of the self-improvement efforts of a teaching professional. As I gained more experience in a variety of educational settings and became more acquainted with other teachers within my school board, it became increasingly apparent that there was a vast discrepancy in terms of how much and what kind of professional development individual teachers chose to complete.

Early in my teaching career, I approached my principal to seek some guidance regarding what sorts of professional development opportunities I should pursue, confident in knowing my principal would be more informed than I in terms of current educational trends and board emphasis. At the meeting, we discussed what kinds of professional development opportunities outside of those mandated by our school board would best suit my professional needs. I took my principal’s advice to heart and pursued as many self-directed professional development opportunities as my time outside of
school would permit. The additional knowledge and experiences that I gained proved to be of great benefit in my teaching practice and, ultimately, to the students that I taught. The self-directed professional development enabled me to establish professional relationships and use a critical insight into my own practice.

Despite the benefits that engaging in self-directed professional development had for my own teaching practice, some of my teaching colleagues did not share the same level of enthusiasm. While some teachers also chose to engage in many self-directed professional opportunities, others chose not to participate at all. This discrepancy between why some teachers eagerly pursued self-directed professional development opportunities, while others shunned any suggestion that personal time should be spent on school-related activity is of great interest to me now that I am an elementary school principal. As a leader, I became interested in gaining a better understanding of the leader’s role in teachers’ engagement in self-directed professional development when considering the best interests of students in our school. My inquiry into the importance of school culture and leadership in motivating teachers to participate in self-directed professional development led me to conduct this study. To this end, I considered it necessary to further investigate the influence of leadership within the culture of the school – whether it be teacher colleagues, principals, or others in the school community – in terms of who and how many have had an impact on individual decisions to participate in self-directed professional development pursuits.
**Purpose**

The purpose of the research was to explore the elementary teachers’ motivation for and the school principal’s influence on their engagement in self-directed professional development. The following research questions guided this study:

1) What motivates teachers to engage in self-directed professional development?

2) What are the conditions necessary for promoting teachers’ engagement in self-directed professional development?

3) What are teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s role in supporting, fostering, encouraging, and sustaining the professional development of teachers?

**Context of the Study**

The context within which I investigated the leader’s role in teachers’ engagement in self-directed professional development was one school board in the south-eastern part of the province of Ontario. The school board is geographically large, but hosts a relatively small student population when compared to other school boards in Ontario. The school board consists of both rural and urban school settings, primarily in small towns and cities.

This research was also contextually nested within the notion of transformational leadership. Our school board has placed considerable emphasis on the importance of transformational leadership in recent years. There has been much in-servicing and conversations among principals and between in-school and central office administration, both explicitly and implicitly, with respect to transformational leadership. As a result of attention to transformational leadership in our school board, I have shaped my own personal practice as a leader in our school around the major tenets of this leadership style.
The tenets of transformational leadership have become the foundation through which I carry out my day-to-day duties in our school. Noting such an emphasis and internalization of transformational leadership in my own leadership style and through school board encouragement, it seemed most relevant and poignant for me to view my research through this theoretical lens.

**Rationale**

The role of the elementary school principal is diverse, requiring leadership in many capacities. Teachers often seek out the advice and expertise of principals in terms of direction for their own teaching practice, which may include self-directed professional development. In order for teachers to initiate the process of seeking such guidance from their principal, there needs to be a certain level of trust. Teachers would not choose to ask their principal for guidance if they did not value or trust the information that might be given; hence there was a need to explore in further detail the role principals play in developing and maintaining a positive culture within the school organization. It is also part of the role of the principal to motivate teachers to pursue their own learning and create the conditions necessary to facilitate such professional motivation.

My study endeavoured to address the current gap in qualitative research regarding the role of principals in teachers’ choices to participate in self-directed professional development. Much of the research surrounding this topic is quantitative in nature (e.g., Hattie, 2012). There is also much research that involves professional development by teachers that is mandated by schools or school boards. My research sought to address the question of how principals’ leadership behind professional development, which is not
explicitly directed by another party, affects teachers’ decisions to take on professional
development through their own initiative on topics they determine to be most relevant.

**Significance of the Research**

All elementary school principals have at least partial ownership in creating a
healthy culture within the school. A positive school culture is a contributing factor in
motivating teachers to do well for the benefit of their students. By taking a qualitative
approach, the research tried to gain insight into the primary tenets that can make
 principals positive, influential leaders in schools, adding to the existing body of
knowledge. The implications for practice in light of such insight could have an
informative impact on how principals lead their schools. Policy implications also arise at
both the school and school board level in that the research offers insights into decision-
making capacities that lend themselves to creating a school culture that is positive and
encourages teachers to continually improve their practice.

**Definition of Terms**

Seven key concepts were instrumental for this study: professional development,
self-directed professional development, motivation, school culture, leadership,
transformational leadership, and trust. Therefore, in the following section, I provide
definitions for these key terms.

**Professional development.** Professional development (PD) as a whole refers to
the activities, courses, conversations, and endeavours in which teachers participate inside
and outside of the school setting. It can consist of, but is not limited to, course work,
conferences, professional dialogue, teacher collaboration, inquiry-based learning,
workshops, and professional reading. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2007) defined
professional development as “self-chosen learning activities that teachers investigate individually or as part of a professional learning community (e.g., action research, lesson study, graduate work, additional qualification courses, writing)” (p. 3). Professional development is undertaken to improve practice, to remain current in the profession, and for personal reasons, such as salary improvement and self-interest. Professional development may be instigated by the individual teacher, the principal, the school board, the Ministry of Education, or other parties.

**Self-directed professional development.** Self-directed professional development mirrors the above-mentioned description of professional development with the exception of the part of whose decision it is to partake in such activities. Within the confines of self-directed professional development, it is solely the teacher’s decision about whether or not to participate, unlike professional development in general, which may be directed by the school principal, sponsored by the board office, or mandated by the Ministry of Education. In addition to the decision to participate in PD resting with the individual teacher, the decisions around with whom to participate and the timelines around participation are within the individual teacher’s prerogative.

**Motivation.** Although motivation can be physical or mental (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008), Weiner (1992) describes motivation as an individual’s desire to act in a particular way. In order for motivation to take hold, it requires some form of action or motion (Criss, 2011). More specific to an educational setting, motivation occurs when individuals feel a sense of autonomy, feel a connection to the school, and feel that they have the requisite competence required to be successful in a school site (Ryan & Deci, 2003).
School culture. Schein (2004) defined organizational culture as:

a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 17)

Leadership. Leadership entails promoting a certain cause or vision and taking steps to guide others in the context (for example, school) to follow. Most common definitions of leadership have described it as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2010, p. 3). DeSpain (2000) added that leadership is “an imperfect art practiced by those who lead in which the leader defines reality for his or her followers while creating and nurturing a vision of a new, better reality to come” (p. ix).

Transformational leadership. Bass and Riggio (2006) defined transformational leaders as: “those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity” (p. 4). A key characteristic of transformational leaders is that they respond “to individual followers’ needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leader, the group, and the larger organization” (p. 4).

Trust. Trust is defined as:
the extent to which one engages in reciprocal interactive relationships such that there is willingness to be vulnerable to another and to assume risk with the confidence the other party will possess some semblance of benevolence,
competence, honesty, openness, reliability, respect, wisdom, and care.

(Kutsyuruba, Walker, & Noonan, 2010, p. 24)

**Overview of the Thesis**

Chapter One introduced the reader to the notions of professional development, self-directed professional development, motivation, transformational leadership, school culture, and trust. It described the significance of the research and the reasons for the investigation of self-directed professional development at this time. In addition, the purpose and research questions were given along with the relevant definitions required for the completion of the study. Chapter Two reviews some of the current literature pertaining to the areas of self-directed professional development, transformational leadership, motivation, trust, and school culture. Chapter Three details the research methodology, collection of the data, and data analysis procedures used in the study. The research findings are presented in Chapter Four. A summary of the study, recommendations for theory, practice, and policy, and further research, and final thoughts is the focus of Chapter Five
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Professional development can take many forms and can look very different in varying settings. The review of the literature first introduces the perspectives on professional development, as defined in the literature and in the Ontario Ministry of Education documents, and self-directed professional development, which is the focus of this research. Further, the literature on transformational leadership is the lens through which to consider the role of the principal in promoting self-directed professional development. After defining transformational leadership and considering what role transformational leadership might play in terms of influencing teachers to seek out their own professional development opportunities, I discuss the concept of individual teacher motivation and the need for trust for participation in self-directed professional development. In particular, I focus on the literature on how motivation and trust are influenced by school leadership, specifically the role of the principal. Leadership, motivation, and trust are all factors that influence the culture within a school to some extent. As a result, the literature review concludes with an exploration of what role the culture of a school might have on a teacher's decision-making choices about whether or not to participate in self-directed professional development.

Self-Directed Professional Development

There are various definitions of professional development in the literature. It has been traditionally positioned within a “deficit” paradigm as a process to maintain and sustain quality and accountability of the teaching profession. For example, Gall and Renchler (1985) described professional development as “efforts to improve teachers’
capacity to function as effective professionals by having them learn new knowledge, attitudes and skills” (p. 6). Some scholars have located it within a “professional growth” paradigm that characterizes development as more self-directed arising from the learner’s interests and needs (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Others have situated it within an “educational change” paradigm that views development as focused upon bringing about change. Guskey (2002), for example, defined teacher professional development as “systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitude and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students” (p. 381). More recently, scholars have positioned it within the “professional learning” paradigm. In the comprehensive definition, Day (1999) noted:

Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which constitute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives. (p. 27)

The Ontario Ministry of Education (2007) has defined professional development as “self-chosen learning activities that teachers investigate individually or as part of a professional learning community (e.g. action research, lesson study, graduate work, additional qualification courses, writing)” (p. 3). The Ontario Ministry of Education has
further distinguished professional development from staff development by defining the latter as “usually system-wide professional learning activities that are not chosen by the teacher, but are job-embedded and driven by the broader community and education system needs (e.g. early literacy for groupings of primary teachers, anti-bullying programs)” (p. 3). The key difference between these two definitions is the notion of choice, specifically whether it is the teacher’s decision to participate in ongoing professional development or whether the professional development is directed by the school board or principal.

It was apparent within my school board that teachers do not differentiate between professional development and staff development as defined by the Ontario Ministry of Education. The Executive Summary of the literature surrounding professional development by the Ministry of Education supported the interchangeability of the terms ‘professional development’ and ‘staff development’: “there are many definitions of professional development. Most refer to both formal and informal learning experiences and processes that lead to deepened understanding and improvement of practice” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8). Both entities are considered to be professional development, regardless of choice or directive. Acknowledging this definition, professional development can take a wide variety of shapes. Possible professional development opportunities may include more formal undertakings, such as taking courses, attending conferences, attending school board or Ministry of Education in-services, attending school-level professional learning communities, and participating in teacher initiation and mentoring programs, as well as less formal undertakings, such as
professional reading, informal conversations with colleagues, the sharing of resources and information with colleagues, and the like.

For the purposes of this research, I was interested in professional development that was self-directed. In the ongoing life of a classroom teacher, there have been many instances where teachers were called upon to attend mandatory sessions at our board office, participate in school-level inquiries, and maintain certain levels of proficiency (WHMIS training, anaphylaxis awareness, Bill 168 training, etc.). Individual teachers had little choice in whether or not to attend or participate in such professional development. As a result, motivation or the influence of others was largely irrelevant in these scenarios. Because I was interested in what role the principal might have played in why teachers chose to engage in professional development, it was important that whatever form the professional development pursuit took, it was voluntary and taken on without external pressure or directive. Exploring the voluntary participation in my research further allowed me to better understand what motivates teachers to pursue self-directed professional development of their own accord.

The focus on self-directed professional development provided insight into how staff development might have affected personal professional development. Teachers coming from a school or context that was viewed in a positive light might have considered professional development opportunities in a different light or favourability than teachers coming from a school or context that was viewed in a negative light. The context and culture of the school, therefore, was important when considering individual teacher decisions about whether or not to engage in self-directed professional development.
Transformational Leadership

School principals are leaders in school organizations. Although definitions of leadership vary, Northouse (2010) offered a comprehensive definition of leadership, describing it as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). Just as leadership definitions vary, there exists a number of different theoretical perspectives regarding the types of leadership. Transformational leadership that is discussed in detail below is but one of the types that is pertinent to the school principal’s role. As noted previously, transformational leadership was chosen as a theoretical lens for this study.

Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as “the reciprocal process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers” (p. 425). Building on the work of Burns, Bass and colleagues have further expanded the definitional and conceptual bases in terms of how transformational leadership could be measured, as well as how it impacts follower motivation and performance (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bass & Riggio, 2006). This perspective indicates that transformational leadership motivates followers to do more than expected by a) raising followers’ levels of consciousness about the importance and value of specified and idealized goals, b) getting followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team or organization, and c) moving followers to address higher level needs (Bass, 1985). Accordingly, transformational leadership can be defined based on the impact that it has on followers.
Transformational leaders, Bass (1985) suggested, garner trust, respect, and admiration from their followers. Bass and Riggio (2006) defined transformational leaders as:

- those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity. Transformational leaders help followers grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers' needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leader, the group, and the larger organization. (p. 4)

Leithwood has done much research into transformational leadership from an educational perspective, which has fronted an established framework around the major tenets of transformational leadership (Geijsel, Sleegers, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2003; Leithwood, 1992; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000, 2005, 2006; Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Such tenets include transformational leadership behaviours in schools that set direction, help people, redesign the organization, and manage the teaching and learning program (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Setting goals entails a charismatic or inspirational vision by the leader, creating group goals, and having high expectations. Helping people includes individualized support, intellectual stimulation, and modelling key values and practices. Redesigning the organization involves building and fostering a collaborative culture. Managing the teaching and learning program encompasses stability in the school, providing teacher support, and buffering distractions that might move teachers away from their work. The positive impact and influence of the principal when using a transformative model of leadership is most greatly felt when all of these conditions are met and are thriving within the school setting.
Yu, Leithwood, and Jantzi (2002) advocated transformational leadership as including vision building and group goals consensus, which leads to shared school goals and culture. More broadly, the criteria presented by Yu et al. also fall into a model of transformational leadership that involves setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization. Adding to their own work, Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) found that transformational leadership had a significant and positive effect on teacher capacity and classroom practice. Principals who used the transformational leadership dimensions of setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization were able to move teachers’ classroom practice forward via an increase in motivation.

Barnett and McCormick (2004) concurred with the notion that a clear vision by the principal through transformational leadership leads to school improvement. As Finnigan (2010) indicated, the principal must facilitate transformational leadership to provide the foundation for teachers to successfully implement school improvement policies. Principals must enact a policy that is both supportive and motivational to achieve optimal results.

In addition to setting a shared vision and setting goals together with teachers, it is important for principals to provide the foundational conditions that allow teachers to engage in professional development. When teachers believe they have the ability and capacity to better their practice, they are more likely to engage in training opportunities through an increase in motivation (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2008). This idea is supported by Kwakman (2003), who concluded that teachers are more apt to willingly participate in professional development that integrates a sharing of ideas with colleagues to improve lessons for students. Conversely, Thoonen, Sleeegers, Oort, Peetsma, and Geijsel (2011)
found that failing to include teachers in the vision building process actually caused teachers to be less enthusiastic about strengthening their knowledge. The decrease in teacher enthusiasm would occur when principals created a vision for the school, independent of teacher input, and presented the vision as a collective undertaking, contrary to the main tenets that Leithwood puts forward regarding transformational leadership.

Intellectual stimulation influences professional development activities when considering a link between transformational leadership and teachers’ extra effort (Geijsel, Sleegers, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2003). Hallinger (2003) contended that understanding the needs of staff is a more productive avenue to encourage personal growth than attempting to coordinate and control teachers to meet the school board’s goals. Such an argument aligns with the aforementioned tenets of transformational leadership.

**Motivation**

Weiner (1992) described motivation as an individual’s desire to act in a particular way. It can be physical or mental (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008) and requires some form of action or motion (Criss, 2011). More specific to an educational setting, motivation occurs when individuals feel a sense of autonomy, feel a connection to the school, and feel that they have the requisite competence required to be successful in a school site (Ryan & Deci, 2003).

A framework that is instrumental for this research was Self-Determination Theory (SDT). It served as the lens through which the motivation behind why teachers chose to partake in self-directed professional development can be understood. Within the scope of Self-Determination Theory, three principal needs must be satisfied for well-being and
growth to occur: (a) competence, (b) relatedness, and (c) autonomy (Orsini, Evans, Binnie, Ledezma, & Fuentes, 2016). Jansen in de Wal and colleagues (2014) provided an extensive overview of how these three concepts related to teachers’ engagement in professional learning. Competence refers to individuals’ feeling that they are capable of fulfilling their professional obligations within the school setting and that there is opportunity to exercise this competence. Relatedness entails a feeling of being a relevant part of the social fabric of the school where there is a connection to others, a sense of caring for one another is mutual, and there is a sense of belonging between colleagues and the greater school community. Autonomy encompasses the notion that individual teachers have control over the decisions that need to be made in their own teaching practice. When the threshold for these three basic needs is met, motivation can flourish. When the threshold for these three basic needs is not met, motivation is stalled (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Within Self-Determination Theory, there is a taxonomy of motivation that follows a continuum from least motivated to most motivated and from most controlled to most autonomous (Deci & Ryan, 2000). On the controlled extreme of the continuum is amotivation. As Deci and Ryan (2000) point out, within the scope of amotivation, a person lacks an intention to act. As it pertains to education, amotivation entails individuals’ feeling a sense of incompetence, not believing their actions will catalyse a desired outcome, and, with respect to this study’s topic, not valuing and not engaging in a PD experience (Deci, 1975; Ryan, 1995; Seligman, 1975).

Next on the continuum is external extrinsic motivation, which deals with an individual activity that is carried out to gain some sort of external reward (Deci & Ryan,
such as a salary increase. It can also be the motivation behind ensuring an undesired outcome does not come to fruition, for example, making decisions that do not lead to some sort of punishment or reprisal. Moving more towards more autonomous motivation is extrinsic motivation that is introjected, which is more judgment-based. Motivation that is less inclined to take place in order to receive rewards or deflect punishment to make way for one to be more cognisant of what colleagues perceptions might be involves introjected motivation. In this scenario, individuals behave a certain way or perform certain actions to attain a feeling of worth from colleagues or to avoid a negative perception of themselves from colleagues.

Two forms of extrinsic motivation are largely autonomous: identified extrinsic and integrated extrinsic (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Identified motivation deals with personal values. For example, a teacher might engage in self-directed professional development in mathematics because of the impact the newly acquired knowledge will have on teaching practice, which, in turn, will benefit students. Most autonomous of the extrinsic motivations is integrated motivation, in which individual actions are fully self-determined. As it is related to PD, integrated motivation occurs because of personal, largely subconscious belief systems.

Most autonomous is intrinsic motivation, which Deci and Ryan (2000) define as “the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence” (p. 56). Within the scope of intrinsic motivation, teachers would engage in self-directed PD simply out of personal interest or enjoyment.

The overall competence of the principal is an important factor for teachers who are considering professional development (Wagner & French, 2010). Teachers were more
apt to internalize feedback from their supervisor when they felt that the supervisor was aware of what was happening in the classroom and provided feedback that was specific about teaching practices and classroom activities. Wagner and French (2010) advocated that the relationship between the supervisor, who in most cases is the principal, and the teacher is important in relation to whether or not teachers choose to take on or embrace the supervisor’s advice. When teachers perceived supervisors to be unaware of what was happening in their classrooms, supervisor feedback was less likely to catalyze teachers to improve in areas outlined in the supervisor feedback, thus decreasing the likelihood of teachers to seek out professional development.

Leadership style also appears to have some significance in terms of teacher motivation and professional development. Thoonen, Sleegers, Oort, Peetsma, and Geijsel (2011) indicated that transformational leadership practices stimulate teachers’ professional learning. Transformational leadership entails all teachers within a school internalizing school goals into their own personal goals. The internalization leads to increased commitment of teachers to incorporate the school vision into personal practice and catalyzes motivation to improve personal practice. In order to remain current with teaching practice, the prospects of these teachers to engage in self-directed professional development increases. In other words, when the current practice of committed teachers differs from desired practice within the framework of the school vision, the committed teacher is inspired to improve personal practice via professional development.

In addition to the importance of having teacher colleague support in creating satisfying workplace conditions for professional development to occur, Clement and Vandenberghe (2001) advocated that school leaders must share a healthy collegial
relationship with teachers. Although school leaders may set the tone and academic focus of the school, Clement and Vandenberghe proposed that teacher autonomy must be maintained in the process. Such autonomy allows teachers some learning space to work with professional development opportunities with the school leader as a co-learner. Creating professional learning opportunities and maintaining a learning space to investigate such opportunities are both important facets in promoting teachers to engage in professional development. Vaughan and McLaughlin (2011) support the notion of autonomy in an anecdotal recounting of professional development participation. During interviews with six teachers, Vaughan and McLaughlin asked participants about what motivated them to continue to learn. Autonomy was a key component of their motivation. One of the interviewed teachers “attributed much of her growth and success to the support of her principal. …She says that we know our students, and she lets us do what we need to do with our students” (Vaughan & McLaughlin, p. 52). This support from the principal fosters a culture of professional development while allowing individual teachers the autonomy to have some input into improving personal practice.

**Trust**

Adams (2008) emphasized that trust “operates within the cognitive and psychological domain as a motive for behaviour, at the interpersonal level to shape social exchanges, and within organizations to influence collective performance” (pp. 29-30). Kutsyuruba et al. (2010) noted that establishing, maintaining, and sustaining trust in schools between principals and teachers is a complex undertaking. Establishing trust requires strong motivation and competence on the part of principals, in addition to persistent work in the form of time and effort. Regarding maintaining trust, a teacher
working with a principal for an extended period of time may be more comfortable with the predictability of their relationship, impacting trustworthiness. If a teacher experiences a pattern over time from his/her principal that demonstrates following through on commitments and consistently putting words into actions, then that teacher would be more apt to trust the principal than if such undertakings often resulted in unfulfilled promises. Developing open communication between teachers and principals, coupled with authentic collaboration and transparent decision-making serves to foster this sense of trustworthiness, increasing the likelihood that trust can be sustained. Key in the sustainability of principal trust is the observance of modelling desired behaviour and including collective values in the principal’s decision-making capacity. Much of the task of establishing, maintaining, and sustaining trust derives from relationship-building, which is a continual process.

There is a notable link between the idea of trust and transformational leadership. Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) argued that schools with a high level of trust between teachers and principals exhibit more collective decision-making. Collective decision-making is more likely to occur when all staff members share in the collective goals of the school. Again, trust has been demonstrated to have a positive impact on the life of the school. Handford and Leithwood (2012) concluded that there are several indicators for trust: competence, consistency and reliability, openness, respect, and integrity. All of these indicators are likely to foster an environment in which transformational leadership is a reality.

Despite ongoing efforts to establish, maintain, and sustain trust between teachers and administrators, trust remains a fragile covenant (Walker, Kutsyuruba, & Noonan, 2009).
A leak in a confidential conversation, unfulfilled promises, and flip-flopping in decision-making can all lead to broken trust. Fortunately, as Kutsyuruba et al. (2011) advocated, trust can be restored and renewed in many scenarios. Restoring and repairing trust is challenging and time-consuming, but possible.

The notion of trust with respect to the likelihood of teachers participating in self-directed professional development is important because teachers often look to their administrators for guidance and advice. A teacher is more likely to consider, accept, and follow through on the advice from his/her principal that he/she undertake professional development if there is a trustworthy relationship in place.

**School Culture**

Northouse (2010) defined culture as “the learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions that are common to a group of people” (p. 336). Moreover, “culture is dynamic and transmitted to others” (p. 336). Similarly, Smith and Stolp (1995) postulated that school culture can be defined as the historically-transmitted patterns of meaning that include the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions, and myths understood, maybe in varying degrees, by members of the school community. This system of meaning often “shapes what people think and how they act” (Stolp, 1996, p. 2). Peterson and Deal (1998) elaborated further on culture, maintaining that “culture is the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that has built up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges” (p. 28).

The principal’s role in developing and maintaining a positive school culture is paramount in helping to coordinate and develop the vision for the school in conjunction with input from teachers (Yin, 1993). As Petersen and Deal (1998) stated, the positive
culture of schools includes staffs that share a collective purpose where the school norms of collegiality, improvement, and hard work pervade all that is done. “Strong positive cultures are places with a shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, and a shared commitment to helping students learn” (Petersen & Deal, p. 29).

Leithwood and Mcadie (2007) ascertained that a positive school culture is most likely when principals ensure expectations for teachers are clear and achievable, the atmosphere is positive, and collaboration among teachers is encouraged. Principals currently working in a school would most likely say that collaboration among teachers is encouraged by setting the conditions necessary for such collaboration to take place. Some of these conditions include allocating funds and resources to facilitate collaboration, making time available in the school day for teachers to meet, offering friendly advice about professional development and best practices, and putting school initiatives into a context that is applicable and relevant to teachers and students.

Fullan (2002) emphasised five essential components that principals need to lead cultural change in schools. They include a moral purpose or a social responsibility to the school, understanding change and seeing the big picture, improving relationships, creating and sharing knowledge, and coherence making or having a clear and concise vision for where the school needs to move. Fullan (2002) continued by proposing that sustaining a positive change in school culture is dependent on a variety of factors, including principals learning alongside teachers, believing that all students can learn and supporting teachers on these students’ behalf, and learning at work where principals examine real issues in their own systems and context.
Trust is also a critical element when fostering a positive school culture (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011). The element of trust encompasses the lineage between administration and teachers and is reciprocal. Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) found that teachers who had trust in their principals tended to be firm in their foundation for learning and for forming professional communities. Principal-teacher trust is affirmed when principals encourage teachers to share in the voice of the school and support teacher learning.

**Summary**

Professional development can be highly varied and diverse in theory and practice, often incorporating courses, workshops, professional reading, and informal dialogue and collaboration, as well as many other formats. PD is sometimes instigated by the principal, school board, or Ministry of Education. For the purposes of this research, professional development that was self-selected and motivated primarily by each individual teacher’s wants or needs was paramount.

The lens through which leadership is addressed within this study is transformational leadership. As it pertains to an educational setting, transformational leadership essentially entails teachers’ willingness to take on and enculturate the goals and vision as set out collaboratively with the principal. In doing so, teachers, in collaboration with the principal, develop the vision for the school and move to set the direction for the school. As this process takes hold, teachers become the leaders and champion the new vision, transforming what is happening at the school level. In such a scenario, it is important for principals to provide the necessary conditions for this transformation to take place, including a belief that teachers’ contributions are meaningful and that they have the capacity to make meaningful change.
Self-Determination Theory serves as the lens through which motivation is considered for this study. The three main elements of SDT are competence, relatedness, and autonomy. When these three main elements are satisfied, motivation can flourish. Conversely, when these three elements are unsatisfied, motivation generally declines. Other motivational factors that are important for principals in motivating teachers to participate in PD include a perception that the principal is competent, having a principal who employs a transformational style of leadership, and having a principal who allows for individual teacher autonomy within the confines of the PD initiatives that are at play.

The notion of trust plays an important part when considering principals’ influence on teachers to take on PD. Simply put, when teachers trust the principal and enjoy a collegial and respectful relationship with the principal, teachers are more likely to take advice regarding PD from the principal or are more likely to take ownership over whatever PD pursuits may be occurring at the school.

Finally, school culture was considered as it pertains to its implications for PD. Schools that maintain a healthy school culture have an increased likelihood of having motivated teachers, and this occurs when the expectations and vision of the school are clearly defined and communicated by the principal. When a healthy school culture is nurtured, teachers are more likely to engage in PD in order to meet the demands of the school vision and goals. Within the context of sustaining a positive school climate, reciprocal trust is again an important condition to be met between teachers and the principal.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the research was to explore the elementary teachers’ motivation for and the school principal’s influence on their engagement in self-directed professional development. In this chapter, the research design, data collection process, and data analysis procedures are presented.

To address the research questions outlined in this study, qualitative methods of data collection were used. To gain authentic information and insight into why teachers chose to engage in self-directed professional development, interviews were conducted with a sample of teachers. Second, field notes were used to record personal thoughts, insights, and further questions that the individual interviews might elicit. Third, a field log was created to document a chronological record that detailed specifics about the research and track the progress of research.

Berg (2001) defined an interview as a conversation with a purpose to gather information. The research that took place in my study was qualitative in nature, as it investigated the meaning, characteristics, and descriptions as to why teachers chose to participate in self-directed professional development (Berg, 2001). An interview was appropriate to obtain responses that tapped into personal reasons about individual teacher decisions around professional development participation. The interview format allowed each participant the opportunity to elaborate on individual factors that promoted or deterred her from pursuing such professional undertakings.
Recruitment

Procedure

The recruitment notice (see appendix A) was distributed to the school board’s appropriate superintendent who then forwarded the invitation to teachers. The board contact approached all possible participants via a collective email with inquiries about the research coming back to me until the required number of participants was obtained. The board contact was able to decipher participant criteria based on the number of years of teaching experience from the information gleaned from the initial recruitment letter, which outlined such parameters. The board contact was able to forward to me the contact information of three teachers per group, meaning, those who had less than two and those who had at least two years of teaching experience and had participated in some form of self-directed professional development over the previous two years. From these forwarded contacts, three teachers per group were chosen to participate in the interviews.

The recruitment process aimed to minimize the question of power influencing the research as I had limited insight into who did or did not respond to participate in the research. All participants were given a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. The workplace of participants was not identified. Principals of schools were not notified and did not have knowledge of which teachers volunteered to participate or did not volunteer to participate in the study to reinforce confidentiality.

The researcher followed up with those teachers who volunteered to participate in research via email to arrange a mutually convenient time and neutral setting to conduct each interview on a one-to-one basis. The follow-up process remained consistent for the
six interviews. Teachers who wished to participate in the research were given the Letter of Information and signed the Consent Form (see Appendix B).

**Participants**

Six female elementary school teachers from the same school board participated in this study. Three teachers were novice and in their second year of full-time teaching. The other three teachers each had more than 10 years’ teaching experience. All teachers had taught in more than one school. With the exception of Christina, who was a subject specialist, the participants taught a range of elementary school subjects. In this school board, regular classroom teachers generally did not teach their own French.

Jane was a new teacher who was completing her second year of teaching full-time in an elementary classroom at the time of the interview. The placement was in a regular classroom where she taught all school subjects. The previous year, Jane had taught all subjects full-time in a multi-grade classroom in a different elementary school in the same school board including, contrary to the general situation in the board, French and Special Education.

Anne was also a new teacher who was completing her second year of teaching in an elementary classroom at the time of the interview. In her first school year, Anne taught all subjects in a Grade 6/7 split classroom. In her second year, Anne was the Special Education teacher in her school. Anne taught full-time in a different elementary school in each of her first two years of teaching.

Christina was a new teacher who had completed her second year of teaching at the time of the interview. Her role as a specialist in a particular subject area (subject area omitted to preserve confidentiality) had her travelling to differing elementary schools,
depending on the day of the week. The schools for which Christina was responsible changed from her first year of teaching to her second year of teaching, presenting her with new students and staff in a new group of schools. In both school years, Christina taught Kindergarten to Grade 8, depending on the day of the week and school work site for that day.

When Elizabeth was interviewed, she was an experienced teacher with over 15 years of teaching experience in many different school settings, including out of the province. During her career, she had taught most elementary grade levels. She was completing her ninth year at her current school, with her most recent placement in a Grade 7/8 split classroom. Elizabeth had always been a full-time teacher working in her current school board.

Mary was an experienced teacher who had spent the previous 15 years at the same school site before moving to a new school setting for one year at the time of the interview. She taught many grade levels on a full-time basis over the years, with much of her teaching experience in Special Education. Her most recent teaching assignment had her teaching in a Kindergarten classroom.

Robin was an experienced teacher with 14 years of teaching experience at three different schools in her school board, teaching in all elementary divisions. When the interview took place, she had been at her current school for the previous four years working in a Kindergarten or primary division classroom. During her teaching career, Robin had taught multi-grade, split-grade, and straight grade classrooms, with the most recent assignment taking place in Kindergarten.
Data Collection

Data were collected using an interview format to gain the perspectives of the participating teachers with respect to why they chose to engage in self-directed professional development. The interviews took approximately 45 minutes to one hour each to complete. A semi-structured approach to the interviews was undertaken. Such a format allowed for consistent questioning of each participant while offering the flexibility to ask follow-up and open-ended questions to elicit additional relevant information from responses. The semi-structured format also allowed the interviewer the opportunity to probe the interviewee to clarify responses and explore answers in greater detail to gain understanding. All interviews were recorded using two recording devices so that verbatim transcription could occur once all interviews were completed. All interviewees were informed of the recording and transcribing of interviews. No identifying information about the participant was made available within the transcription process. Interview questions are presented in Appendix C.

Field notes were taken immediately following each of the interviews to record any thoughts, insights, or further questions that I had about the interview information that had been gained. Field notes included personal reactions, self-reflection, memories, and impressions about information gathered from within the interview. Recording such information within my field notes allowed me to more clearly be aware of my own possible influences on the data and the effects of personal events to the data collection and analysis. Field notes informed me about feelings, reactions, biases, impressions, and possible preconceptions.
In addition, a field log was used to document a chronological record that detailed specifics about my work as I progressed through the research. The field log was meant to supplement the interview process to assist in keeping my research on track.

**Data Analysis**

“Qualitative analysis is a relatively systematic process of coding, categorizing, and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 367). A transcription process was used to create a written account of interview conversations. The transcripts from the interviews were entered into the data analysis program, ATLAS.ti, which helped to organize the information via emic and etic coding. Using a data analysis program facilitated the process of identifying particular information, creating codes as identifiers, establishing categories for the codes, and ultimately determining themes in the data. Emic coding allowed the data to speak for themselves, thereby reducing the risk of personal bias, assumptions, or theories to interfere with the data analysis. All categories, themes, and patterns that emerged stemmed from the interview data that were collected. Etic coding was used to help make sense of the data. As I had been a member of many school communities for many years, the knowledge and insight that I had gained provided context: internal processes within our school board, knowledge of structure within schools, school-based and board-based resources, and school or board-wide initiatives that were currently part of expected practice.

**Trustworthiness**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a researcher should compare “different sources, situations, and methods to see whether the same pattern keeps
recurring” (p. 379). The trustworthiness of my research was verified through crystallization. Crystallization refers to the depth that is achieved in research via the patterns in the data and the support of the themes that are gathered coupled with understanding data through more than one way of knowing by using multiple data analysis tools, such as field notes and member checking (Ellingson, 2009). It allows for elaboration of the findings rather than affirmation of the findings (Janesick, 2000; Richardson, 1994). Within the research, the compilation truths from participants was sought after to come to an understanding of why participants chose to participate in self-directed PD. Participating teachers also brought personal experiences derived from differing schools and backgrounds. Information garnered from my field notes provided immediate perspective and analysis into each participant’s interview. My field notes also acknowledged my own research biases and thoughts that I had that might have added to the relevance of participants’ responses. Key points and immediate themes were summarized to support the accuracy of the data.

Crystallization occurred in my research by using the differing perspectives of teachers who were new to the profession (less than two years of full-time teaching experience) and teachers who were more experienced within the profession (two or more years of full-time teaching experience). Each of these teachers was able to elaborate on their experiences, which included a wide variety of educational settings and scenarios. Additionally, verbatim transcripts were made available to each of the interviewees with the opportunity for each participant to clarify, edit, elaborate, and/or rebuke responses as required. Prior to conducting my first interview, a pilot interview was completed to refine any of the predetermined interview questions to ensure the interview questions were
eliciting relevant responses. Initially, broad themes were identified prior to using digital data analysis to look for more depth in participants’ responses.

ATLAS.ti was used to code all data collected from interviews in addition to paper representations that I created. Etic and emic coding was used complementary in this research. Etic coding was derived from the responses elicited from the interview questions that were based on theoretical concepts framing this study. Initially, the core themes that surfaced during the interview process consisted of transformational leadership, vision building, motivation, professional development, and school culture. Additionally, emic coding was undertaken as emergent theme surfaced. The use of ATLAS.ti allowed me to elicit an additional core theme, autonomy, once initial etic coding has taken place. Coding themes brought commonalities among interview responses to the fore and were based solely on verbatim responses of interviewees. Field notes taken immediately following each interview indicated my thoughts about the interview question responses. The field notes were meant to indicate body language, personal thoughts or insight on responses, and areas for further consideration. Because field notes were written evidence of my personal thoughts and insights, any personal bias that I brought to the research process was more transparent, allowing for increased awareness of the need for data to speak for themselves.

**Ethical Review**

In accordance with Queen’s University ethics policies and the Tri-Council guidelines, ethical clearance for this study was gained from the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at Queen’s University on November 06, 2014, prior to data collection (Appendix D). I contacted the district school board superintendent to gain permission to
interview teachers from the district school board. For teachers who agreed to participate in the study, a Letter of Information and Consent Form were provided. As stipulated in the ethics guidelines, each participant retained a copy of the Letter of Information and Consent Form for her own records.

**Summary**

This chapter has outlined the general research design for this study and the methods used to collect data. The data were gathered from elementary school teachers in one southeastern Ontario school board. This study consisted of qualitative interviews with six (three novice and three experienced) teachers. Furthermore, I discussed the procedures used for data collection, data analysis, and ethical review.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of the research was to explore the elementary teachers’ motivation for and the school principal’s influence on their engagement in self-directed professional development. This chapter provides an overview of the findings from the data analysis. The findings are grouped under three major headings, each representing a research question: a) teacher individual motivation; b) school culture, and c) principal’s role. Despite the overlap in participants’ discussions of these notions, teacher individual motivations refer to the personal motivational factors that led teachers to partake in PD; school culture describes the positive and negative aspects of the school climate that influenced participation in PD; and principal’s role relates how principals directly and indirectly influenced the process of self-directed professional development.

Teacher Individual Motivation

Motivation is an important factor in considering the reasons why teachers engage in professional development (PD). With respect to understanding the nature of their self-directed PD, the types of motivation and the barriers to motivation were important components that affected PD pursuits of the participants. Four themes emerged from the data related to this research question: a) self-directed professional development; b) autonomous motivators; c) controlled motivators; and d) barriers to motivation.

Self-Directed Professional Development

Participants’ engagement in self-directed professional development included both formal and informal pursuits. Some forms of formal self-directed PD were pursued by all participants: conferences, workshops, and Additional Qualification (AQ) courses (e.g.,
special education [all participants], Aboriginal education [Robin], English [Robin], and religious education [Robin, Mary, and Elizabeth]). Other kinds of self-directed PD were more individualized: Additional Basic Qualification (ABQ) courses (intermediate [Anne] and primary [Jane]), principal’s qualification courses (Mary and Elizabeth), curriculum writing (Robin), and presentations (Jane).

Similarly, some forms of informal self-directed PD involved all participants: informal communication between teachers, conversations with students about personal teaching practice, and co-planning activities with other teachers. Additional forms of informal self-directed PD encompassed: professional reading (articles [Christina, Robin], books [Christina, Mary, and Elizabeth], and online reading [Christina, Robin, and Elizabeth]); personal research (Elizabeth); online teacher websites and instructional videos (Christina and Elizabeth); teacher inquiries (action research [Robin, Mary, Jane, and Elizabeth]); mentoring relationships with more experienced teachers (Jane); and the establishment of a teacher math club with colleagues (Mary).

**Autonomous Motivators**

Autonomous motivators are ones over which individuals have control and are not done simply to satisfy others or to gain an external reward. Autonomous motivators were classified into five subthemes: a) staying current as teachers, b) desire for experiential learning, c) networking with other professionals, d) obligation to do one’s best for students, and e) personal interest.

**Staying current as teachers.** A desire to stay current as teachers represents an integrated motivation for teaching excellence and is therefore considered to be autonomous. All participants, with the exception of Christina, explicitly stated that it was
the responsibility of the teacher to stay current. Within the professional mindset of the participating teachers, there was an understanding of a professional obligation to continually improve teacher competence and to familiarize oneself with new ways of teaching as a means to remain current and authentic with students. Elizabeth remarked, “The motivation is just to understand why we’re doing what we’re doing and how to do it better, so I guess it’s just my own professional requirement to understand my profession better and what I’m doing.” A lifelong learning focus allowed teachers to develop a better understanding of current issues and to remain fresh in their pedagogy. In a comment typical to what other participants said, Anne stated:

   I think that as a teacher, it’s kind of my responsibility to stay current with my practices and with my understanding and knowledge and I think that staying current is what’s key to being a successful teacher, so I take courses or go to workshops, not only because I’m interested in that particular area, but just I’m interested in learning more and that’s kind of why I kind of take on these conferences and workshops. I like to be involved and I like to have the opportunity to share my thinking with others as well as on my own.

Furthermore, engaging in self-directed PD allowed individual teachers to reflect on their own practice and to take a critical look at what personal successes might look like and what areas required improvement.

   Sometimes the impetus to stay current came from external sources, rather than from the teachers themselves, but was acted upon by the teachers in an autonomous fashion. For example, participants tended to feel that, within their school board, Ontario Ministry of Education curricular updates often arose with no formal PD on the part of the
Ministry or the school board. More often, it was left to individual teachers to update their own professional knowledge and teaching practice to incorporate any new curriculum. For instance, Elizabeth believed that it was incumbent upon her to remain up-to-date with respect to Mathematics, which had been an area of particular focus in the province of Ontario since 2012. As Elizabeth articulated, “This year, because math was such a big thing, I went back and I was looking at math, so this year I really worked on looking at Marion Small because she taught me how to teach math.” In a similar fashion, Mary took it upon herself to create an informal math club with some of her colleagues at her school to gain more insight into how to teach Mathematics in meaningful ways. As Mary explained:

> We would ask everyone to come to the meeting with their own question about what they’re teaching and then we would look it up in the book, sort of read that chapter, and then come to a new understanding hopefully about what we were doing and then go back into the classroom and try it and then meet again the following month and talk about how that worked or didn’t work.

**Desire for experiential learning.** All participants mentioned that it was part of their own personality profile to seek out new information on their own initiative. To know that there were colleagues in the school who were more knowledgeable and much more experienced in a particular area or with respect to content knowledge motivated them to become more informed and knowledgeable about that particular need. As

1 Canadian researcher and author on elementary school math
Christina noted, “I think seeing other teachers with positive leadership skills sort of motivated me to show my own.”

Christina, Anne, and Jane were relatively new to the teaching profession when their interviews took place and expressed their desire to engage in professional development in order to learn from the experiences of others. Being unsure of personal practice and lacking the confidence of more experienced teachers engendered a consistent apprehension among the three novice teachers. According to Anne, “Teachers that I work with were really supportive of me taking my specialist [courses]. They were always actively involved in asking how it was going, if they could help with anything, providing resources…they’ve certainly promoted my participation in PD.”

**Networking with other professionals.** Networking with other colleagues allowed participants to gain insight into the profession and to improve upon their own practice. For example, as Mary stated:

I think when you get a group of people that are sort of the same mindset and wanting to do, I think it makes it easier; however, at the same time, working in environments where there’s people that push back isn’t, although it makes it more of a challenge. It isn’t a bad thing either in the sense that it makes you have to really think and be a little bit more eloquent in what you’re trying to promote based on what you’ve done in your own professional learning.

Networking was especially beneficial for the novice teachers, as it acted as a support system for them to speak with someone who was experiencing similar challenges, such as managing their classroom (Christina), implementing curriculum (all novice participants), implementing board- or school-wide initiatives (all novice
participants), keeping pedagogy relevant for students (all novice participants), and organizing their time (Anne and Jane).

**Obligation to do one’s best for students.** Robin, Mary, Christina, and Anne emphasized that students should be at the centre of one’s teaching practice. These teachers articulated their professional obligation to try and do their best for their students each day. To do so, these participants identified that it was essential that they remained current and that their pedagogy was useful to students. Remaining current in the pedagogy allowed Robin and Christina to have more informed conversations with parents and students. It was a common understanding for Robin and Christina that the more informed and included parents were with their own child's education, the more successful students tended to be in their educational careers. Christina mentioned, “You see the results in your students, so I think that’s what sort of spurred that in me, which is wanting to do better for the students.” Robin seconded this sentiment by articulating that:

> Classroom teaching and keeping that relationship with kids really fresh and vibrant would be my motivation to be a better teacher. As basic as that sounds, to be the best teacher that I can be, I have to have professional development because I need to bring things back to my kids so things don’t get stale.

**Personal interest.** In addition to seeking self-directed PD for autonomous, extrinsic reasons, Anne, Christina, and Jane chose to pursue self-directed professional development for intrinsic reasons, namely, personal interest. For example, Anne had a keen interest in special education and chose to read books and look for resources online that keyed into this personal interest. Anne also had an attraction to the use of technology in the classroom and was always looking for new ways to use technology and incorporate
it into her daily teaching practice. Intrinsic motivation was gained when Anne chose to pursue these two interests due to the fact that they were also personal interests. At the same time, she acquired knowledge about the teaching profession and teaching instruction. For instance, Anne partook in:

[A] workshop at the board office on an iPad app called Proloquo2Go, and it was an app used for students with non-verbal learning disabilities. I was able to take the day and go to that workshop specifically because I had a student with a non-verbal learning disability who also was autistic and using the iPad as a form of communication with staff and peers. That gave me some areas of growth in my profession because I hadn’t had any experience using iPad technology, especially with a student with special needs, so being able to participate in that workshop really enhanced my understanding of what this particular student needed and the areas which I could help her to communicate or giving her the opportunity to communicate with staff and peers and parents in a more effective way versus using her anger or frustration to communicate.

Christina had a particular interest in yoga, for which she participated in classes and formal instruction for personal development. In learning more about yoga, she thought it would be beneficial for her students, incorporating it into her repertoire of activities for teaching physical movement skills in Kindergarten. Christina’s intrinsic motivation involved in learning about yoga for her Kindergarten students was evident when she recalled:

I was really motivated to do something that was going to be accessible to all students because last year I did Phys. Ed. a little bit with Kindergarten and the
first thing that they would always say was I’m tired or I don’t like this or this is too hard, so with [yoga] I find they’re asking for it rather than being afraid of it. So that was really my motivation, which was finding something that they would like and it was successful.

During her interview, Jane described herself as someone who liked to be efficient and “good at what she does.” As such, she was continually on the lookout for PD opportunities that would guide her pedagogy in terms of increasing her baseline knowledge and becoming a more skilled teacher. She described her intrinsic motivation for helping students via pursuing what interested her personally by putting forward: “We’re in a profession where we’re serving kids and so having 30 faces stare at you, you need to know what you’re doing and that’s a huge motivation in being proficient in what I’m doing.”

**Controlled Motivators**

**External motivation.** External motivation, as it pertains to self-directed professional development, refers to motivation that is rewards-based. The origin of external motivation rests solely in the knowledge that a specific action will result in personal benefit or gain. As such, external extrinsic motivators are controlled motivators. The singular subtheme that emerged with respect to external motivation, as described below, incorporated participants’ desire for remuneration and salary increase.

**Remuneration and salary increase.** As referenced during interviews, teachers within this school board were on a 10-year salary grid. For each year of teaching experience gained, individual teachers moved up on the grid, resulting in an annual salary increase for the first 10 years of teaching. Salaries were also linked to achievement in
interviewees’ pre-teaching degree and the number of courses taken after getting a teaching degree or the number of Additional Qualification courses or Additional Basic Qualification courses that had been completed. In terms of salary, teachers are paid the highest amount in category A4, with category A1 being the lowest pay scale. It was not uncommon for teachers new to this school board to begin teaching in the A3 category. New teachers involved in this study were aware that the jump from A3 to A4 was significant, totalling thousands of dollars annually. The difference in salary was a strong motivator for participants to engage in self-directed PD, particularly Additional Qualification courses or Additional Basic Qualification courses, as salary lost over the course of a career could potentially amount to tens of thousands of dollars. Anne, being a new teacher, blatantly stated, “being at the salary grade that I am at and wanting to be motivated to get to A4” was a main motivator for her.

**Introjected motivation.** Introjected motivation, unlike external motivation, is founded less in what rewards can be obtained through specific actions, but rather what judgments others might make as a result of specific actions. As it pertains to self-directed PD, individuals are motivated to undertake PD pursuits if successful completion of the undertakings is likely to solicit a positive judgment from teacher colleagues or supervisors. Two concepts emerged that highlight introjected motivation: the school board’s focus on mathematics instruction and fitting well into a new school or a new position.

**School board’s focus on mathematics instruction.** Mathematics instruction was a current priority both at the provincial and board level. With respect to the vision of the Ministry of Education, there was an expectation that school boards prioritize mathematics
instruction and make it a focus for teachers and students. Elizabeth acknowledged that “the Ministry is looking at increasing teachers’ understanding of the subject of math to teach math and I’ve recently really come to understand that that’s really important.” At the board level, there was an expectation that all teachers participate in board-designated PD activities, which Mary supported by saying, “that the most recent professional development has been around the area of Mathematics and I think as a school community recognizing that need.” Mary demonstrated her own initiative by volunteering to do a board session on Mathematics. “We had the Kindergarten in-service here a while back and they were looking for people to present, and I’d looked at it initially and thought I could do something on Math.”

Sometimes these board-designated PD activities took place at the board office, but more commonly were moved down to the school level in which individual principals were required to create their own school-wide mathematics initiatives. In addition to the mandated professional development by the Ministry of Education, school board, or school, teachers often pursued their own self-directed mathematical PD pursuits to complement what was already mandated to take place at the school or at the board level. The additional PD allowed teachers to tailor further learning to best suit their personal needs and was included into the vision or mandate of the school. As Mary recognized, “our vision for scholarship, I think we’re right along the same lines because we look at like I know the kids aren’t doing well in math so I think it starts in Kindergarten.”

**Fitting well into a new school or a new position.** For new and experienced participants, the move to a new school or to a new position within the same school included a steep learning curve. Moving to a new school encompassed new routines, a
different set of expectations by the school principal, and a different level of achievement on the part of students. Moving to a new teaching location required teachers to adjust to the needs of the new school, thus adjusting their own teaching practice accordingly, which served as a motivator to engage in their own self-directed PD to ensure a more seamless fit into the new school community while gaining the respect and trust of their colleagues. Anne and Jane shared examples of how moving from an intermediate grade to Kindergarten or moving into a special education role from the regular classroom had drastic effects on teaching practices on a daily basis. Anne felt supported in her new role and school by admitting that “our culture at our school is very open to people trying different things and trying to be the best teachers we can be for these kids, so I’ve always had that really open culture to professional development.” Similarly, Jane felt supported, learning that “it was a very welcoming environment and there are a lot of staff members on my school team who are very interested themselves in self-directed PD and so that was really nice because they promoted that.”

**Barriers to Motivation**

With respect to motivation, three subthemes emerged that served as barriers that inhibited teachers from engaging in self-directed PD in some way: time and financial constraints; lack of support from colleagues and principal; and lack of awareness about professional development options.

**Time and financial constraints.** All participants talked about being very busy within the hours of their workday; thus opportunities to meet face-to-face with colleagues before or after school or during break times was limited. Anne declared that “I think that time is a major factor as well.” Elizabeth emphatically admitted that “time is probably the
biggest barrier” in terms of participating in professional development. Jane, Christina, and Mary commented on the finite nature of school budgets, noting that it was difficult for principals to offer release time opportunities within the working hours of the school day. Another constraint on time that was expressed by Robin and Mary was family commitments. The profession of teaching required Robin and Mary to spend many hours outside of the regular school day to complete daily tasks, such as marking, planning, and gathering resources. All of these outside hours came at the expense of time that could have been committed to family life. As Robin declared, “Family life would be the barrier because you work all day and then do the extra courses.” Mary spoke with animation about having an easier time participating in PD before her daughter was born and noted that it was an issue “finding time to make it all fit in” when referring to balancing family commitments with PD.

Being away from class too often was a time constraint expressed by Robin. Examples of such pressures included required days at school board in-services, school-based professional learning meetings, and absences due to illness. As Robin stated, “I don’t like to be away from my class that often. That’s a tricky one. It’s a balance between your professional development and not being away too often.” Robin felt that the combination of all of these times that pulled her away from her students allowed for little opportunity to pursue self-directed professional development. The planning and preparation required for the class in order to be away for the day acted as a deterrent to motivation because of the additional work that was required.

Much like the barrier of time, all participants noted financial factors as a barrier, remarking that participating in conferences and workshops outside of school or taking
courses was an expensive undertaking. A two-day conference for an Additional Qualification course cost participants over $1000; the financial burden of such undertakings served as a motivation deterrent. Anne, in particular, viewed financial barriers as a significant factor: “If you really want to go to a conference and it’s offered in Toronto, I mean there’s a huge cost to that.”

**Lack of support from colleagues and principal.** All participants, except Anne, shared that they worked in positions with little opportunity for collaboration with colleagues. Lack of collaboration options was the case where there was only one French, Special Education, or Arts teacher within the school. Other examples were smaller schools where there was only one teacher within a certain division (e.g., a school where there was only one teacher teaching a Grade 7/8 classroom in the intermediate division). As such circumstances presented themselves, it was difficult for teachers to dialogue with colleagues because of the differences in the teaching positions. Such a dilemma presented itself in the case of Christina who needed to travel to several schools within a given work week and with Jane who was the only teacher in her division at a previous school and was also the only French teacher at a previous school.

A related barrier to motivation manifested itself through the unwillingness and the lack of interest for some colleagues within the same school to partake in face-to-face collaboration. This barrier resulted from different personalities, differing interests, or general apathy with respect to PD on the part of colleagues. An example of differing interests was put very bluntly by Mary. “I like to share what I’d learned and people aren’t always open to wanting to listen to what I’ve learned.” Elizabeth supported Mary’s sentiment by saying, “There is about half the staff who is not interested and who really
don’t want to put in the additional time and are not willing to develop or take part in professional activities on their own time.”

Elizabeth, Robin, Christina, and Mary additionally expressed a lack of support from the principal, which served as a barrier to motivation due to the inherent lack of common interest. Robin and Elizabeth believed that, if they had approached the principal about a self-directed PD pursuit in which they were interested, but the principal did not share the same enthusiasm, the lack of enthusiasm deterred them from pursuing participation in the desired self-directed PD. Elizabeth articulated this lack of support clearly and with conviction when she declared the following quotation with regard to choosing to participate in PD that she felt was beneficial: “I’m thinking of one principal in particular. We came from diametrically different viewpoints on what education was and the purpose of education and so, you know, it basically was a waiting game.”

Christina passionately commented on her disliking of a top-down approach to PD by noting, “If you have a principal who really has their thumb on everything and doesn’t allow for that flexibility or doesn’t allow for that growth to happen through trial-and-error that is very difficult.” She preferred to base her PD pursuits on needs that she recognized within her own practice, rather than being told explicitly what conferences and workshops to attend.

Mary detailed an event where she experienced lack of support from her principal to attend a conference because the principal thought the conference was more of a social outing than an opportunity for helpful PD. As Mary explained, “We had created a big proposal, filled out everything, done everything, but because it was three colleagues who were friends outside of work, the principal maybe didn’t see the value in what we wanted
to do, so turned us down.” The decision to disallow Mary and her colleagues to participate in the conference served to deter her from approaching her principal about similar requests in the future.

**Lack of awareness about professional development options.** Two participants (Jane and Anne) felt that lack of awareness of options limited their self-directed PD. Jane illustrated this lack of knowledge: “I think lack of information of specific PD I should be taking. As it is self-directed, it’s up to me to find that out, but it took a lot of time for me to filter through what I needed to know.” The overwhelming sense of what to take or how to prioritize sometimes led Jane to not taking anything at all until a clearer picture of what PD opportunities to pursue became evident. Anne was not aware of budgetary supports from the school, from the board office, or from the local teacher unions that could have been applied toward self-directed PD opportunities, thus encouraging such PD. She commented on her lack of awareness regarding financial support by offering, “there’s not a lot of flexibility in terms of coverage.” The assumption around the inability to have coverage for her class while she participated in PD was made without consultation with her principal, who might have had the ability to facilitate such undertakings through the school budget or via school board funds.

**School Culture**

While individual teacher motivation played an important role in whether or not participants chose to engage in self-directed PD, school culture also surfaced as a central factor. With respect to school culture, participants’ decisions about whether or not to engage in self-directed PD could be partitioned into two broad categories: positive conditions and negative conditions. Positive conditions, which stimulated participation in
PD, incorporated trust among colleagues, teacher autonomy, and staff collaboration. Negative conditions, which served to inhibit participation in PD, were comprised of negative mindset of colleagues, unbuilt relationships, and lacking a sense of belonging.

**Positive Conditions**

Positive conditions that stimulated participation in self-directed PD hinged on a healthy school culture. All participants made remarks about how feeling confident enough to place trust in those within the school, having autonomy with respect to PD, and having a supportive set of colleagues with whom to collaborate, were important conditions to support self-directed PD.

**Trust among colleagues.** The most frequently mentioned positive condition that surfaced during the interview process was the need for trust among colleagues. Trust was seen as an overarching condition that enabled other necessary conditions like relational connections and a willingness to share ideas. The presence of trust and the negative influence of mistrust were discussed in terms of working relationships among teacher colleagues and in interactions between the teacher and the principal.

There was a strong emphasis on the positive role that trust played among colleagues in the school with respect to the conditions necessary for teachers to participate in self-directed PD. Teachers who retained strong connections with colleagues were far more apt to pursue informal dialogue with colleagues to talk about what worked in classrooms, classroom management techniques, and curricular interests. As Anne noted, “I think you need to trust people in order to feel comfortable around them and I think that that plays a huge factor. If you have trust and support from the people that you work with, I think you’re going to be more successful.” Where there was trust among
colleagues, teachers were more likely to be open about their successes and where they needed to improve without fear of what their colleagues might think about them or about what might be said to others. Jane exemplified this sentiment by admitting, “I think trust is very important because you know when you ask for help you’re kind of letting people know that you don’t know the answer.” Thus a required condition for participating in self-directed PD in terms of trusting colleagues was the need to feel comfortable and supported. Christina offered an example of trust:

If I didn’t trust [my colleagues] or if I thought maybe they’re just telling me oh yeah that’s a great idea but in the back of my head I thought I don’t really know if I trust that that’s a great idea, I probably wouldn’t have been as likely to do PD for sure.

Robin furthered the notion of the importance of trust by maintaining, “If you’re away doing professional development and you can’t have professional conversations about it, it’s kind of flat. You come back and people don’t care, it’s kind of sad, so the trust part is part of a relationship.” As Elizabeth stated, “You know you do better when you are working with a team of people and you can have a discussion, so I think that that’s critical.”

For Mary, it was necessary for her to trust in the PD information that was given to her by the source as being current and relevant. If she viewed her colleagues as being less competent by simply making up or exaggerating information, her trust in what they had to say was greatly diminished. If a teacher had been handling classroom management or some curricular points of interest the same way for many years, there was some concern from Mary that the information being presented could be perceived as archaic. In such a
dynamic, Mary was less inclined to trust in the information that was given. Mary described the mistrust in the following analogy:

If you’re going to a doctor, do you want a doctor who got his degree in 1942 and then has done nothing since then or do you want the doctor who got a degree in 1942 and continues to grow? You know and then when he makes a recommendation, is he going to do something modern and new that you know is the best practice, so I think that’s sort of what motivates me to sort of continuing to do my own and I also think with self-directed, I know what I need and I know what my kids need and sometimes those needs aren’t being met with the school’s needs or the board’s needs, so if you don’t do your own self-directed, you’re not getting what you need.

Teacher autonomy. Autonomy refers to the ability of teachers to decide on their own accord whether or not to take on PD at all as well as which PD opportunities to pursue. In contrast, a lack of autonomy entails being told what PD should be taken or how PD should take place (for example, conferences, courses, and workshops).

Autonomy surfaced as one of the key subthemes throughout the participant interview process. All participants indicated that autonomy was an important element in their decision-making process about whether or not to engage in self-directed professional development. All participants felt that it was important to be able to select PD pursuits that were important to them as opposed to PD pursuits that were important to the school board or to their principal. As Mary stated, “Different opportunities like that that are made available to us and giving us the time so we can go and do, I think that’s important for the administration.” Anne complemented Mary’s views by asserting,
“Rather than select what you want to focus on, being told what you’re going to focus on or being told what group you’re going to be in is certainly a hindrance because it makes you less willing to want to participate in discussions and workshops.” Jane vigourously spoke more about the financial aspects of autonomy, suggesting, “Our principal’s very clear that as long as it benefits the students he’ll be willing to foot the bill” in allowing her to take the PD that she felt was beneficial.

All participants shared that they enjoyed the flexibility that came along with autonomy and having independence over their own adult learning. Of autonomy, Elizabeth energetically noted, “More importantly, who’s in control of PD and if the principal’s telling you what to do all the time, then really how is that different from the teacher standing in front of the classroom telling students what to think all the time?”

**Staff collaboration.** All participants stated that having a collaborative and supportive environment among colleagues was a key positive influence when considering whether or not to pursue self-directed PD. Good communication was viewed as a central element to being on a supportive staff where colleagues freely shared resources and worked well together. The importance of a supportive staff was evident with participants who worked in a school setting where a positive mindset was the baseline to all that took place. Robin’s perspective exemplified this sentiment: “Our culture at our school is very open to people trying different things and trying to be the best teachers we can be for these kids, so I’ve always had that really open culture to professional development.” As Anne excitedly advocated:

I think that if you have a really great staff who are supportive makes you feel more sense of involvement and community in your school than versus if you
don’t have that support, so I’ve been really lucky to have the support of staff to promote and engage in my professional development.

Engaging in some sort of PD was an unwritten expectation among colleagues, whereby there was an inherent willingness for teachers to improve their collective practice. Working towards the betterment of shared student interest was central to the premise that teachers needed to engage in some sort of PD. Jane added, “There are a lot of staff members on my school team who are very interested themselves in self-directed PD and so that was really nice because they promoted that.” In such settings, senior teaching staff often acted as mentors to less experienced teachers and to teachers who were new to the school. In the school in which Mary worked, colleagues were often willing to put in extra time after school hours for professional development. Teachers met at school or in teachers’ homes to discuss curricular pursuits, such as the implementation of mathematics curriculum and the improvement of mathematics instruction. Similarly, Christina described the extra time as:

One of the teachers at the school has started up a math club so a lot of the teachers go to that. I think it’s every Tuesday night and there are often times that people will put out an e-mail and just say “hey this is something that I’m working on, does anybody have any ideas or would anybody like to meet in the book room after school to discuss such and such,” so I feel like that has really helped.

Collaboration and support were also manifested through the sharing of resources. Elizabeth noted that it was not uncommon in schools for some people to be open and willing to share more often and more freely than others. In her experience, some teachers were more reserved and rarely initiated dialogue and collaboration among peers. In order

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for self-directed PD to take place, teachers expressed a need to feel that there was some willingness to share resources and ideas with colleagues and that this willingness was reciprocated by others. Elizabeth provided the following narrative about the benefit of sharing resources with colleagues; “I’ve been in schools where there’s a lot of staff members who are interested in PD and they visit each other’s classrooms and they borrow problems from each other and they look at how one teacher did it and compare it and it’s a very safe environment.” Christina, who worked in more than one school, discussed the differing cultures within these schools in terms of pursuing professional development opportunities. In some school settings, teachers naturally engaged in professional development opportunities that seemed to be part of what was done each day on a regular basis. In other school settings, teaching practice was more siloed, and opportunities to engage with colleagues about professional development were more forced and unnatural: “I was at six different schools, so that was a little bit disjointed. Being at one school mostly this year and having that support from other staff members is huge. I couldn’t imagine working at a school where other staff members were not supportive of professional development.”

Negative Conditions

Negative conditions for self-directed PD hinged on an unhealthy school culture. Within this context, a negative mindset of colleagues, unbuilt relationships, and lacking a sense of belonging within the school all served as factors that inhibited participants from engaging in self-directed PD.

Negative mindset of colleagues. Elizabeth, Robin, Mary, and Anne expressed a negative baseline culture at the school at some point within their teaching careers. Within
this type of school setting, there were differing levels of staff motivation with regard to PD, whereby some staff members simply did not want to participate at all in PD pursuits. There was a negative mindset on the part of some of their colleagues, which caused Elizabeth to work more in solitude and to collaborate less. A frustration that Elizabeth spiritedly shared was that

You want to fit in with your colleagues and if you are not working with a group of colleagues who think similarly to you or are interested in their own PD, it’s very hard to be a person who’s pursuing PD and engaging in a dialogue with people who are not interested.

Elizabeth also mentioned that she had worked with colleagues who simply did not participate in self-directed PD or rarely participated in self-directed PD. Whether these colleagues were close to retirement or whether there was just a general sense of apathy in terms of self-directed PD, they were not colleagues upon whom Elizabeth could lean for advice or dialogue as they seemed to want to be left alone to do the job on their own. Elizabeth shared that:

There is about half the staff who is not interested and who really don’t want to put in the additional time and are not willing to develop or take part in professional activities on their own time, so unless they’re given release time, they’re not interested.

There were also circumstances where colleagues were uninterested in the PD pursuits that interested the participants. For example, Robin was very interested in pursuing Aboriginal Education professional development opportunities and learning about how this information could be implemented into the school setting. When Robin
approached colleagues about this interest, it became obvious very quickly that her colleagues did not share the same level of enthusiasm and were generally apathetic to the topic. Robin expressed that “I like to come back and talk about whatever I’m doing whether it’s course work or just conferences.”

Mary and Anne, who worked at smaller schools, were the only teachers within their division, and taught a subject that no other teacher in the school taught, expressed a concern that they often felt that they were going it alone. They lacked a colleague with similar interests with whom they could share ideas or thoughts about possible resources. Mary referred to colleagues in the past as, “people not always being as keen to hear about what you learned; that would be an example of one,” referring to colleagues not being interested in her PD pursuits. Similarly, Anne mentioned, “I work in two schools and I’m half-time at each school, so I find it really hard and that really inhibits my ability to participate in types of things,” again referring to PD pursuits.

**Unbuilt relationships.** Jane and Anne expressed that they sometimes refrained from approaching colleagues for advice, resources, or simple dialogue because they did not want to be a burden. The teaching day was often busy and sometimes stressful and adding to this complement of busyness sometimes overshadowed the need to ask questions or to discuss information with others. As a new teacher, Jane said, “It took a long time for me to build relationships with people before I could feel confident with asking them for direction.” Teachers who were new to the profession or to the school setting also stated that, when relationships were not yet fully built, they were less inclined to talk to colleagues about PD for fear that the same level of motivation or interest would not be shared. For example, Anne mentioned that, at the start of a teaching career,
“you’re a little bit afraid to show at times because you think oh I just sort of want to fly under the radar. I don’t want to make too much noise or ruffle too many feathers.” She felt that “it took a long time for me to build relationships with people before I could feel confident with asking them for direction.”

Lacking a sense of belonging. A negative influence on the part of colleagues stemmed from participants, such as Christina and Anne, not feeling like they were truly part of the school. In some cases, despite the fact that teachers were employed on a full-time basis, their work actually took place in several different settings, depending on the day of the week or the time of the day. For example, Christina only spent certain days of the week at a particular school or would have to go to another school during the lunch hour. Similarly, Anne worked half-time in two school settings. As a result of this lack of school stability, there was a feeling on the part of Christina and Anne that their colleagues did not see them as truly part of the school and thus they were less likely to approach their colleagues regarding PD. Reciprocally, the other teachers were less likely to approach Christina and Anne about these other teachers’ own self-directed PD pursuits. As Christina stated, “I was at six different schools so that was a little bit disjointed.”

Principal’s Role

The third research question explored participants’ perceptions of the school principal’s role in initiating, catalyzing, supporting, or discouraging teachers to pursue their own PD pursuits. The sections below present the three most frequently discussed themes – principal’s relational disposition; leadership style; and impact on school climate
through the positive and negative perception prisms as evident from participants’ interview responses.

**Relational Disposition**

Relational disposition encompasses the capacity to engage in social practices that exist between the participants and their respective principals. Relational disposition is further delineated into two subthemes: direct support and interpersonal connection, considering the positive and negative aspects of both subthemes. While direct support deals more with the principal helping to set up the conditions necessary for participants to take on PD interests through conversations or logistics, interpersonal relationships have more to do with the social connection or rapport that has been developed between the participant and the principal.

**Direct support.** Direct support refers to the level of backing that was provided to participants with respect to their PD pursuits. Depending on direct support, participants felt that either their principal was supportive of their participation in PD or that their principal was unsupportive of their participation in PD.

Jane felt heartened when principals encouraged her to pursue self-directed PD on her own time. When she approached the principal to discuss or share some of her self-directed PD pursuits or interests, there was much appreciation for positive feedback and continued encouragement. Jane felt that, in some ways, this support allowed her to be a leader in the school and that she was gaining expertise in a particular area that could be shared with others. The newfound knowledge served as a positive motivator for Jane to continue with her PD pursuits in the same area or other areas. For instance, Jane expressed content in “the principal just being very open in saying he would facilitate any
PD opportunities…I’ve been able to come to him many times during the year and ask for guidance and support.”

A logistical piece that encouraged trust between the teacher and the principal was enabled when principals were willing to use school budget funds to support self-directed PD pursuits. Offering release time and setting aside monetary amounts for participants to pursue their own PD interests were two key areas to this support and trust. Jane referred to times when the principal was willing to facilitate the professional development that was of interest to her. This kind of support took place more formally during the school day or less formally outside the school day. An example of this kind of support was evident in Jane’s encounter: “My principal at the school I’m currently at also has made it very clear to the staff that he’s not saving our school budget for a rainy day. If you want to attend a meeting or if you want resources or professional reading, ask and you shall receive.”

As Jane spoke about the positive aspects of the direct support that was provided by her principal, Elizabeth’s experiences had not always been as helpful. “I’ve also been one of those teachers who have not been supported, so I don’t get to participate in anything, I don’t really know what’s going on, and I just sit in my classroom and do my own thing.” Elizabeth’s remarks derived from one of her previous schools in which she did not perceive her principal as being a person who supported what Elizabeth thought were important PD interests. As a result, Elizabeth simply withdrew from or discontinued seeking out PD opportunities until the principal left the school.

**Interpersonal connections.** Interpersonal connections occurred when participants felt supported through a trusting relationship with the principal. Open and positive
communication, where the principal took interest in the teachers’ personal learning, occurred as the principal was perceived to be open to PD ideas that originated at the teacher level in addition to what might already be taking place at the school. These principals had a listening ear through which they made the teacher feel important. Within this relationship of trust, there was a healthy comfort level with the principal for communication to take place as a working colleague as opposed to a superior/subordinate connection.

Anne, Mary, and Robin, at one point or another, regarded their principal as a mentor. The principal’s advice and guidance were sought out, and they were able to learn from the principal. As with all relationships involving trust, there was a critical element of honesty between the teacher and the principal whereby the teacher could count on an honest account. It was important for the principal to have the ability to recognize personal strengths and suggest appropriate professional development even when PD was not the top priority of the teacher at the time. This honesty sometimes encouraged teachers to pursue the suggested PD activities instead of pursuing PD activities that were originally intended. Anne described the teacher-principal dynamic by offering:

I want to have that relationship with my principal that is strong and supportive and open and I really value their opinions and really look up to their thoughts and ideas, so I think that that really influences me as a young teacher and as a new teacher really influences my decisions to take certain things.

Anne continued by expressing that “it’s really important to be supported by your principal in any way, shape, or form…to make the decisions that support your learning and have the support of your principal to help you with making your decisions.”

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Mary’s experiences were similar to Anne’s experiences. She emphasized her familiarity with her principal in her discussion of the benefits of healthy interpersonal relationships:

I continue to sort of read and do and that person is just as keen as I am to hear all about it, so I actually find that we still continue to engage in those discussions even though I no longer work for them, but you know we still find time to sort of meet and we’ll discuss academic things and problem-solve things together and look at articles together still, so I think that’s interesting and there’s no reason for us still to do that but I would say we would do that and then I think that continues to keep me motivated and encouraged to look at more.

The extra effort put into making arrangements to facilitate PD by the principals demonstrated appreciation for the hectic pace that teachers like Robin experienced each day. In Robin’s case, a meaningful relationship was established between herself and her principal in which her principal was able to recognize Robin’s strengths and interests and encourage her to pursue some PD opportunities. For Robin, “If your principal comes to you directly and asks you for professional development opportunities, it’s very affirming…That makes a big difference. It makes you feel that you’re doing a good job.” Robin continued, “When you have a principal find something that’s kind of your niche and they recognize that’s your niche and come to you and ask you about that… it’s good for your relationship.”

A factor that had a tremendously negative impact on whether or not teachers chose to engage in self-directed professional development derived from teachers simply not trusting the principal. The situation presented itself when Robin felt unsupported and
saw education in a different light. In such situations, Robin felt that the principal lacked follow-up. The principal did not see the value of learning from the teachers’ perspectives and did not support their self-directed PD interests. The negative influences instigated Robin to consider dropping pending self-directed PD pursuits or influenced her to simply not pursue them in the first place. Robin described the following encounter with a past principal:

It’s really deflating when you come in after being at a really great workshop and you want to talk about it or tell how you’re going to share it with your kids and it’s just kind of like who cares. “I let you go and great. Go back and do your job.”

That’s really deflating.

From a logistical perspective, Robin mentioned barriers that were created when the principal was unsupportive of PD. She indicated that principals would not support PD pursuits by refusing to allow for certain necessities, such as budget, supply teachers, and time. Poor communication ensued between herself and her principal in which Robin felt that the principal did not respect her personal interests.

**Leadership Style**

Evident within the participant interviews was the impact of principals’ leadership styles on motivating their teacher colleagues to participate in PD. In general, there was emerging agreement that teachers benefitted from a principal’s leadership style when it was collaborative, open to conversation, and founded on trust. Conversely, a more authoritarian leadership style in which the principal stated what PD should be done and was less inclined to accept input on such a decision tended to deter staff’s willingness to partake in PD.
The relationship that principals had with their staff was an important factor that supported PD pursuits. Principals who learned to work alongside the participants tended to be perceived as being more trustworthy and knew the strengths of each staff member in order to recommend appropriate PD opportunities. This principal leadership style allowed for participants to emerge as teacher leaders within the school. Their input was sought out; a general feeling of inclusion in the decision-making took place in the school. The principal was a leader in promoting collegial dialogue among staff members and setting high standards for staff, which included continual improvement of teaching practice. Principals were willing to share their own resources in support of PD activities.

All participants, excluding Mary, vouched for the impact of leadership style in terms of promoting their own willingness to engage in PD. Anne talked about a conference that her principal introduced to her that sparked an interest. The discussion was founded on a collaborative relationship between Anne and her principal that was open to conversations regarding PD. As Anne explained, she “was fully supported and kind of gave me even more interest in wanting to go after speaking to my principal just finding out what the conference was about and then learning more about the themes of the particular conference.” Jane mentioned a similar experience about her principal instigating participation in a conference: “I actually just attended a conference that my principal sent me to which was really helpful which was put on by the attendance counsellors and it talked about mental health and well-being at school.” Christina also talked about a comparable occasion with her principal. She acknowledged, “It definitely is a positive thing to have a principal who recognizes what your skills are and how those skills could benefit the school.” Clarifying this statement, Christina went on to explain
that, in light of her skill recognition, “my principal encouraged me to attend the wellness conference.”

Elizabeth appreciated the open conversation and the invitation from her principal in soliciting teachers within the school to take leadership on a particular initiative. Regarding a technology opportunity that arose in the school, Elizabeth explained that her principal “puts out suggestions in hopes that some teacher will take it on. I know he’s approached me for specific tasks and I’m sure that he does that with other teachers.” Jane communicated her enthusiasm for taking on PD suggestions from her principals. She admitted, “I know a principal suggested a book and whenever that happens, I always jump at that and so I will find and buy a lot of the professional reading materials.” Robin echoed much of the same feeling with respect to the principal’s leadership style influencing her decision to take on PD: “It makes you feel like they’ve noticed something that’s an area of passion.”

Regarding the negative influence of principal leadership style on involvement in PD, Robin acknowledged that the principal was the leader of the school and was ultimately in charge of the decisions of the school. Despite the level of power that was held within the principal role, Robin believed that a good balance between promoting the principal agenda and the teacher agenda was critical. “If you’ve got a principal who makes it clear that there’s no space for a discussion to me that’s problematic.” Robin noted that principals who employed a more authoritarian style of leadership were less apt to gain trust from her when compared to the leaders who were seen as more willing to work alongside her and make decisions as part of the team. Christina summed it up by relating:
Having a principal who has that bottom-up approach, again, I don’t think would benefit everyone. It benefits me because it gives me a bit more wiggle room to say I think this is a great idea for the kids. The kids are going to love it. I’m going to do it, whereas if you have a principal who really has their thumb on everything and doesn’t allow for that flexibility or doesn’t allow for that growth to happen through trial-and-error that would be very difficult.

There was concern for personal autonomy that was limited with respect to PD selection. Anne felt that autonomy was restrained in some cases when the principal was not current on research and did not truly understand or was not fully aware of what was happening at the school. The resulting consequence was mistrust between Anne and the principal. “Rather than select what you want to focus on, being told what you’re going to focus on or being told what group you’re going to be in is certainly a hindrance because it makes you less willing to want to participate in discussions and workshops.”

Impact on School Climate

From the interview process, it became evident that how the principal affected school climate could be further demarcated into two subthemes: whether or not the principal served as a role model for PD and whether or not there was a shared vision within the school between the principal and the teachers.

Role model for PD. Rather than the principal being a keeper of information that was imparted to teachers, the principal’s role changed to a more communal one in which the principal was part of the team and was part of what was happening. The principal learned alongside teachers and had similar interests. Robin mentioned that she appreciated when principals themselves were also participating in PD opportunities.
Opportunities included sessions that were taking place at the school as well as activities outside of the school day. Sometimes the principal’s PD pursuits led to conversations about teacher PD that enhanced teacher PD experiences. Robin spoke about principals as co-participants in PD:

That is a big influence because you feel like you’re working with them and learning with them and most principals I’ve worked with are pretty intelligent and pretty with it and so it’s nice to be on the same team and working on the same kind of ideas to bring back to the classroom, so the influence is an interesting part of that involvement.

Jane also spoke of how she felt she benefitted from her principal’s inclusion in the school’s PD sessions. She clarified about a past PD workshop around improving French instruction. “We could have that professional discussion and especially around new curriculum in the French language and so it was really nice to have experienced teachers and colleagues as well as an administrator who was willing to facilitate.” Mary echoed Robin’s and Jane’s accounts when she discussed “the number of staff that participated in our attempts at the book club, just even for dialogue and discussion, and the administrator who came to some of those meetings in the evening.” Mary went on to elaborate how she felt validated that the administrator felt it was important to be a co-learner in the book club, thereby authenticating her PD book club initiative.

From the team perspective, principals who were not engaged in PD themselves or were not present in the school for a variety of reasons had a negative impact on PD pursuits. Jane, who felt she benefitted from her principal participating in PD, was frustrated that the PD that was happening at a different school in which she had worked
lacked principal involvement. She articulated, “In terms of our principal, I will say that he’s not engaged in a lot of that. He will facilitate it but then not participate in a lot of the professional learning.”

**Shared vision.** An important condition for teachers to participate in self-directed professional development that dove-tailed with the priorities of the school necessitated a focus on the part of the principal to ensure that the vision of the school was made clear and that contribution of individual teachers was allowed. All participants, with the exception of Anne, felt it was beneficial when they were aware of the vision of the school, and there was a partnership between the principal and staff in setting these school goals and vision. Standards that were set for the school were high, while allowing for teachers to take risks in a safe learning environment and to have input into the process. When goal setting and vision discussions took place, it helped to build a positive community in which teachers and other staff members were always talking about school improvement. In this regard, principal and staff visions aligned well and served as a motivator for staff.

Elizabeth supported the benefits of being aware of the goals and vision of the school by affirming that:

Probably the most effective principal I’ve ever seen made the goals abundantly clear. The goals were very, very specific with fairly broad and general, but at the same time, pretty specific about what the expectations were about, what classrooms would look like, what kinds of resources would be used, what kinds of field trips, everything.
Christina elaborated on the teacher-principal partnership when she discussed how the vision setting took place in her school: “The goals of the teachers were brought up and the principal aligned his goals with our goals which was, rather than a top-down version, it was sort of a bottom-up way to look at it, which is also positive.” Jane’s experience in vision and goal setting paralleled Christina’s. “Our principal did give the floor to veteran teachers at our school to talk about what kind of past practices and things were at the school.” The principal additionally communicated his goals: “Right from the get-go in our first staff meeting, our principal let us know what his goals were.” Speaking specifically about creating a positive climate in the school, Jane continued with the following account of the vision and goal setting. “Building community and building a strong sense of pride in that community was what our principal has the vision of and moving forward, it’s going to be part of our new mission statement and that’s definitely how I feel.” Similarly, Mary furthered the value of a shared approach to determining the vision of the school by the principal: “We went into small groups, then we had a committee to look at the vision of the school that we were moving to and then the committee went from there and then the ideas were put down on paper.” Robin supported the profits of shared goal setting when she gave details of her involvement in the vision setting process.

The principal has told me what our school goals were as much as we’ve worked together to decide what our school goals are, so in how is it communicated it’s usually through conversations like what do you think about this goal, is this a good goal for us, why or why not. This year we did our school improvement plan in September, which was fantastic.
Negative sentiment prevailed for PD that took place at the school where there was little or no follow-up. The lack of follow-up also was a factor when school vision or goal setting took place early in the year and was not really spoken of with any relevance for the remainder of the year. As Jane explained:

That new vision wasn’t always communicated and so it wasn’t always clear what the goal was until closer to the end of the year when we debriefed as a staff, as a whole staff on what happened this year and what goals did we meet and how can we take that going forward...the thing that might be lacking or the disconnect is the follow-through or how that’s going to look, so it’s nice to have those goals and the vision but there hasn’t been a lot of direction on how that can look in our school and sometimes the practices don’t always match up with the vision and so that can be a little bit difficult to process as well.

Problems were additionally created when teachers did not share the same vision for the school or education as did the principal. The disparity between the two parties produced situations where a more authoritarian leadership style needed to be adopted in order for participants for follow through with school goals that were set, despite participants perceiving the goals as largely irrelevant. As Anne clarified,

It’s really important for staff and principals’ visions to be the same because we’re applying these visions and goals to the students and, if teachers are saying one thing and your principal’s saying another thing, then the students don’t really know what to believe or know or understand.

In contrast to the other participants, Mary expressed that, regardless of what the vision for the school might have been or what goals the principal had set for the school, it
had little or no impact on what her own PD pursuits were. She suggested that she would have undertaken certain PD pursuits regardless of what was happening at the school, the school board, or the Ministry of Education. Mary phrased this notion quite simply, “I think I would just take self-directed professional PD regardless.”

**Summary**

The data from the participant interviews demonstrated that there were important teacher individual motivators that inspired or deterred teachers from engaging in self-directed PD. While autonomous motivators were more self-directed and included elements such as staying current, finding experiential opportunities, networking with colleagues, doing one’s best for students, and taking self-directed PD for one’s own interest, controlled motivators were more reward- or judgment-based. In terms of rewards, motivation was external with the main finding revolving around increasing one’s salary. Regarding judgments, the introjected motivation encompassed an aspiration to look desirable in the eyes of colleagues or board personnel. Unlike the positive motivators, there were also three main barriers that discouraged participation in PD, namely a lack of time/money, support, and awareness of PD options.

Coupled with the individual motivating influences, the culture of the school was a conditional dynamic that either stimulated or dissuaded participation in self-directed PD. From a positive perspective, trust among colleagues, autonomy, and the ability to collaborate with others were noteworthy sub-themes that promoted PD and took place in schools where components of a healthy school culture were present. Conversely, from a negative perspective, a negative mindset of colleagues, unbuilt relationships, and lack of
a sense of belonging were aspects that prevented PD and took place in schools where components of an unhealthy school culture existed.

The school principal provided an additional catalyst or deterrent via relational disposition, such as the amount of direct support that could be offered or the deepness of interpersonal connections that were built. A leadership style that was collaborative and allowed for personal autonomy was a dominant foundational piece that was critical for participant participation in self-directed PD. Finally, the principal positively impacted the school climate by partaking in PD alongside teachers and ensuring there was a shared vision of the school so that teachers could tailor PD to parallel school interests.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of the research was to explore the elementary teachers’ motivation for and the school principal’s influence on their engagement in self-directed professional development. To achieve this purpose, I interviewed three novice teachers and three experienced teachers, asking a consistent set of 14 interview questions that addressed three main research questions; a) What motivates teachers to engage in self-directed professional development? b) What are the conditions necessary for promoting teachers’ engagement in self-directed professional development? c) What are the teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s role in supporting, fostering, encouraging, and sustaining the professional development of teachers? Teacher responses were audio recorded and transcribed to allow for data analysis to take place in which common themes were compared and contrasted based on the three research questions. These common themes were labelled: teacher individual motivation, school culture, and principal’s role.

Teacher Individual Motivation

Teacher individual motivation deals with the incentives and inspirations behind why each teacher makes a decision to take on PD opportunities. As all participants in the research were active in their PD pursuits at some point in their teaching career, there was a wide array of reasons regarding what motivated these teachers to take steps to improve their practice. Although there are many reasons why teachers choose to take on PD opportunities, these reasons can be broadly categorized into two main classifications: autonomous and controlled (Jansen in de Wal et al., 2014).
Autonomous motivation refers to motivation that is interest/enjoyment-based (intrinsic) or personal value-based (extrinsic-integrated or extrinsic-identified) where individuals have control over the motivation. In such a landscape, PD is done more to satisfy personal inclinations rather than to satisfy others or to obtain some sort of external award. As such, autonomous motivation is internal in its self-directed nature. In contrast, controlled motivation is largely outside the individual, inclining itself more to a rewards- or judgment-based proclivity. Within the parameters of controlled motivation, extrinsic-external motivation deals mostly with incentives that offer a reward for participation in PD, whereas extrinsic-introjected motivation deals mostly with incentives that provide positive judgment by others upon an individual who engages in PD.

A clear and consistent finding within the current research was that, initially, controlled, external motivation was key in motivating participants to engage in self-directed PD. All participants chose to take on PD pursuits as new teachers to gain an extrinsic reward, namely financial gain. For the novice teachers who participated in the research, it was important from a financial perspective to move up the teacher pay grid to the highest possible level. In their school board, the highest pay scale on the grid was referred to as A4. The jump from A3, the second highest pay scale on the grid, to A4 entailed an annual pay increase of two to five thousand dollars, depending on years of teaching experience. Over the course of a full teaching career, the monetary incentive at play was enormous. For this reason, it was important for newer teachers to move up to category A4 as quickly as possible so that they could take full advantage of the salary increases that accompanied this movement. Taking Additional Qualification and Additional Basic Qualification courses was the most logical way to achieve the upward
movement to A4. For the more experienced teachers who participated in the study, partaking in PD happened for different reasons later in their careers; however, all veteran teacher participants also described taking on PD pursuits initially to satisfy the financial importance of being at the top of the teacher pay scale, namely A4.

Once the financial incentives of taking on PD were satisfied, other motivational factors tended to take over. Once A4 was achieved, there simply was no further monetary gain to be had in terms of moving up the teaching pay grid and therefore no further external incentive to take on PD. The motivation to engage in self-directed PD shifted from a rewards-based incentive to a judgment-based incentive where PD was sought to gain positive judgments from others. The controlled, introjected motivation at play following the rewards-based external motivation aimed for a positive outlook by colleagues upon participants. For the three novice teachers involved in the research, being seen positively by their colleagues was particularly important. At the forefront of the novice teachers’ motivation to engage in PD was the impression that others within their respective schools would look upon them favourably, seeing them as being competent, capable, and self-sufficient. These teachers did not wish to be perceived as being a burden or pest to more experienced and established teachers who were also busy with their own daily teaching practice. PD was the vehicle through which novice teachers could take steps to ensure self-sufficiency, thereby gaining a positive outlook from colleagues. While financial incentives entailed primarily taking courses with respect to PD, individual PD undertakings were far broader, incorporating courses in addition to workshops, professional reading, and informal dialogue with colleagues.
Much like novice teachers, the three more experienced teachers shared similar motivations to take on PD when they moved to a new school or to a new teaching position within the same school. For much the same reasons as the novice participants, ensuring their new colleagues at their receiving school or their existing colleagues perceived them as capable teachers was important.

Once financial gain was established and participants were feeling comfortable in their position within a school in terms of collegial relations, the motivation for taking on self-directed professional development shifted once again. From here, the motivation to take on PD took on a more autonomous format, whereby more internal factors came into play. In such a dynamic, the motivation to pursue PD opportunities at hand was founded more on the value that the PD had to the participants’ teaching knowledge base or for personal interest and enjoyment.

While all participants in the study explicitly stated that they took on PD initiatives because it was beneficial to their students, the depth of participant responses was greater with the three more experienced participants. Regarding the obligatory feeling of needing to do one’s best for students, participants expressed a strong motivation to continue with much the same PD pursuits as in their introjected, judgment-based scenario of moving to a new school or a new position within the same school. Although the types of PD that were undertaken remained much the same, the motivation for engagement became more student-oriented and more suited to fulfilling the professional obligations of a good teacher to remain current and relevant in terms of pedagogy. PD was again the vehicle through which participants pursued learning that would best meet their needs within the scope of helping their students as well as helping to ensure they remained on the front
end of what was happening in schools, such as confirming their mathematics instruction was current.

When linking the findings of the study to those of the extant literature, there was a strong parallel with regard to integrated motivation. In both instances, teachers who believed that they had the ability to better their professional practice and competence were more likely to engage in training opportunities (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2008). Participants chose to pursue PD for the betterment of their personal teaching practice, which allowed them to remain current within the profession. Better professional practice incorporated improving lessons for students (Kwakman, 2003). Improving lessons for students was aligned with doing one’s best for them. By ensuring that the lessons prepared on students’ behalf were constructive, participants in the current study and in previous studies were thereby ensuring that they were meeting their integrated motivation of being excellent teachers.

**School Culture**

In addition to the impetus behind individual teacher motivation with regard to engagement in self-directed PD, there were school culture factors that were important. On a positive note, trust among colleagues, teacher autonomy, and staff collaboration were key elements in encouraging teachers to take on PD pursuits. Elements that discouraged teachers from engaging in PD incorporated a negative mindset of colleagues, unbuilt relationships, and lacking a sense of belonging. Regardless of the exact reasoning behind the choice about whether or not to participate in PD, trust, as it relates to autonomy, was an overarching concept in the decision-making process, whether viewed positively or negatively.
Trust among colleagues played an integral role in the choice as to whether or not to partake in self-directed PD (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Where there was an atmosphere of trust among colleagues, there was an increased likelihood that steps would be taken together to improve personal practice in conjunction with others. The reasoning behind the relationship of trust varied from sharing ideas to remaining current and relevant to feeling comfortable in approaching others to ask questions or seek advice about teaching practice. The link to autonomy when addressing trust among colleagues rested with the essential dynamic that teachers were able to work with whom they felt most comfortable. Predetermined pairings or groupings served to inhibit PD when a relationship of trust had not yet been developed or one particular teacher simply did not trust one of her group members (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Regarding autonomy specifically, moving beyond the ability to select pairings or groupings or to choose a colleague with whom to dialogue informally, allowing for the capacity of teachers to select what type of PD to take on and the timelines surrounding PD pursuits were imperative. Teacher autonomy in such a setting was in contrast to PD that had been directed by a principal, school board, or Ministry of Education, where PD topics, timelines, and groupings were often predetermined. It was clear that teachers were more apt to take on PD when their autonomy was taken into consideration within the school culture. Important for principals, who are in more direct contact with teachers, was the notion of trust in allowing for such autonomy to take place when introducing new curricular initiatives or facilitating school-based PD. Allowing for teacher autonomy in these circumstances endorsed motivational intentions for taking on PD.
Staff collaboration organically brought together trust among colleagues and teacher autonomy. Collaboration was most likely to take place when there was cooperation and a supportive environment among staff with ongoing PD an expectation. To support each other, PD resources were shared, encouragement and advice were forthcoming, and teachers took the initiative to address PD needs, such as starting a Math Club. For any of these PD initiatives to flourish, trust among colleagues and teacher autonomy were paramount.

Concerning the negative conditions of school culture, in certain school settings, there were some members of a school staff who were not interested in PD. In fact, a small minority of colleagues actively worked to avoid participation in PD, regardless of the topic. When relationships were unbuilt due to a teacher moving into a new school setting, approaching colleagues was intimidating for the newer teachers. When teachers did not feel like they were truly part of a school’s staff due to a split in teaching assignments across more than one school, the motivation to work with colleagues to address PD interests was diminished. All of these factors were exacerbated when teachers were not able to address their own PD needs as they saw fit, thereby reducing their autonomy. Similarly, in situations where PD was deficient, the lack of PD was linked to the absence of trust. Teachers chose not to work alongside those who had a negative mindset in terms of taking on PD, which sometimes meant limiting the amount of PD that was undertaken.

The connections between the findings of the study and those of the research were plentiful. Adams (2008), Handford and Leithwood (2012), and Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) established that trust among colleagues was essential for positively influencing collective performance. Healthy school cultures, which included a framework of trust,
promoted hard work, which often took the form of PD engagements (Petersen & Deal, 1998), thus supporting this study’s finding that trust was a central precondition necessary to catalyse and support active engagement in PD. Vaughan and McLaughlin (2011) found that autonomy was the key component for teachers to participate in PD, which is the same central finding of this study. Regarding collaboration, Tschannen-Moran (2001) identified that trust is an essential component. Tschannen-Moran (2011) asserted that, where trust was present, collaboration was more likely and, where trust was deficient, collaboration was problematic, with corresponding impact on students and staff.

Tschannen-Moran (2014) maintained that integrity and competence were critical elements of trust that led to authenticity within a school leader.

Although it was not explicitly stated in the interview process, the importance of trust between teachers and the principal was implicitly referred to by all participants. As noted in their comments, trust was perceived to be fostered when a transformational leadership approach was embraced by the principal (Handford & Leithwood, 2012; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Benevolence, competence, honesty, openness, reliability, respect, wisdom, and care are the characteristics that Kutsyuruba, Walker, et al., (2010) cited as being necessary for a relationship of trust to flourish within a school. As these characteristics are solidified over time, the relationship of trust also solidifies. Bryk and Schneider (2003) complement the above research by positing that relational trust is supported by respect, personal regard, competence, and integrity. Lastly, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) supplement the characteristics of trust by discussing the notion that, in schools where there is reciprocal trust among school personnel, a shared focus is more likely, thereby promoting the likelihood of sharing expertise and learning from one
another. If such an environment is present, the probability of teachers taking on self-directed PD increases.

**Principal’s Role**

Building on the importance of individual teacher motivation and school culture, the principal’s role was the third main impetus in bringing teachers to engage in self-directed PD. The principal’s role was divided into three core sub-themes: a) relational disposition, which was subdivided into direct support and interpersonal connection; b) leadership style; and c) impact on school climate, which was subdivided into role model for PD and shared vision. All three subthemes relate to motivating teachers to engage in PD as seen through the lens of transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership was the overarching concept when considering what influence the principal played in terms of mobilizing teachers to take part in PD. Transformational leadership is used as the overarching concept because of the value of the tenets that it encompasses. As explained by Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) and Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), transformational leadership entails setting goals, helping people, redesigning the organization, and managing the teaching and learning program. These four tenets lend themselves to the same criteria that build trust within principal-teacher relationships, while allowing for a certain level of autonomy within a school setting; both are central criteria for mobilizing teachers to engage in PD.

As related to personal characteristics, both setting up the conditions necessary for participants to take on PD interests and establishing healthy interpersonal relationships between the principal and teachers were crucial to promoting the four main tenets of transformational leadership. Dysvik and Kuvaas (2008) and Kwakman (2003) concluded
that teachers were more motivated and willing to participate in PD when PD integrated a sharing of their ideas. Thoonen, Sleegers, Oort, Peetsma, and Geijsel (2011) advocated that transformational leadership practices stimulated teachers’ professional learning. Finally, Clement and Vandenberghe (2001) explained that PD occurs most often when principals share a collegial and healthy relationship with teachers. The findings of this study are consistent with published research in terms of establishing the need for a constructive relationship between the principal and teacher if an optimum level of PD is to become part of the school routine. Autonomy was built into collective undertakings endeavours, such as setting up the curricular goals for the school and helping colleagues to become more proficient in their teaching practice. It is most possible to apply the tenets of transformational leadership to the PD journeys in schools once individual teacher autonomy is permitted to come to the fore through ongoing input from teachers.

Leadership style is a vital component of transformational leadership. It was clear from the findings of this study that teachers did not prefer an authoritarian style of leadership in which they were told what PD to take or with whom they must collaborate. All of the study’s participants clearly stated that they appreciated the ability to choose PD that was relevant to them. An authoritarian style of leadership is contradictory to transformational leadership, so much so that these two styles of leadership cannot co-exist. Because a more collaborative and inclusive style of leadership was more conducive to providing the conditions necessary for teachers to take on PD, transformational leadership should be advocated as the strategy through which teacher self-directed PD can be achieved (Vaughan & McLaughlin, 2011). Similar to personal characteristics, autonomy is built into the fabric of a more collaborative, transformational style of
leadership, serving to enhance and generate PD opportunities that might take place in schools.

School climate, with its requisite for building a shared vision, is the third area of focus that surfaced in this study’s research that related to transformational leadership. Yu, Leithwood, and Jantzi (2002), Harvey (2013), Barnett and McCormick (2004), and Finnigan (2010) submitted that allowing teachers to share in the vision-building process via transformational leadership served to motivate teachers. Within this study, there was a clear appreciation for principals who learned alongside teachers as opposed to principals who chose to impart their knowledge to teachers. Learning alongside teachers helped to build trust within principal-teacher relationships, which was critical in building and sustaining a healthy school culture. Inherent in a relationship of trust was the need for principals to allow for autonomy in the form of teacher input in terms of developing school goals and having high expectations when setting the direction of the school. When a shared vision was able to come to fruition in a school through an exercise in teamwork, where principal and teacher involvement were intertwined, the outcome was increased buy-in from teachers, thereby increasing motivation, encouraging PD, building trust, allowing for autonomy, and solidifying the foundational aspects of creating a healthy school culture.
Implications for Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) serves as one lens through which the motivation behind why participants in this study chose to partake in self-directed PD can be better understood. Within the scope of Self-Determination Theory, three principal needs must be satisfied for well-being and growth to take hold: a) competence, b) relatedness, and c) autonomy (Orsini, Evans, Binnie, Ledezma, & Fuentes, 2016). When the threshold for these three basic needs are met, motivation can flourish; yet, when the threshold for these three basic needs is not met, motivation is stalled (Ryan & Deci, 2003). In either scenario, SDT has major implications relating to the motivation that teachers hold with respect to the likelihood of partaking in self-directed PD.

Competence in this research refers to the ability of participants to master their teaching practice and to feel confident that they are doing a good job in the eyes of students and colleagues. All participants indicated that they wanted to do their best for their students. Similarly, there was an abundance of support for introjected, judgment-based, external motivation regarding the need to be seen as a capable and proficient member of a school staff, particularly among more novice teachers. All participants were motivated to use PD as one of the avenues by which competence could be enhanced.

Relatedness deals more with the need to feel included and to be a valued member of the school team. It aligns most closely with being a contributing member of a staff who work together to build a healthy school culture and share in the same vision or goals to help students succeed. The findings of this study support the notion that schools that foster and maintain a vibrant and positive school culture are more apt to support the foundational constructs necessary to motivate teachers to join in PD with their
colleagues. Relatedness also links to teachers sharing in a trusting relationship not only with teacher colleagues, but also with principal colleagues. Much like the benefits of a healthy school culture, a healthy relationship between the teacher and principal is important in nurturing whatever motivation teachers may have to engage in PD.

Autonomy allows individuals to hold the decision-making power regarding the PD choices available to them. It takes into account personal preferences and judgments. Throughout the findings of this study, autonomy was critical for all participants regarding motivation to pursue PD. As the research questions focused on self-directed PD, there was some innate inclination on the part of all participants to take on this PD, insofar as self-direction and autonomy are conceptually similar. When teacher autonomy was diminished, the motivation to engage in PD also diminished; hence the importance of preserving autonomy in PD opportunities that may arise throughout the school year.

When competence, relatedness, and autonomy are compared against the backdrop of the findings of this study, the clear principal need that was consistently woven into the fabric of teacher motivation to participate in self-directed PD was autonomy. Much like competence and relatedness, more specific dynamics, such as trust, school culture, and transformational leadership, were all important factors that supported motivation, but the connecting influence among all of these factors was autonomy. Whether autonomy took the form of selecting the type of PD, choosing with whom to take PD, or the timelines surrounding a PD initiative, autonomy was the dominant determinant regarding teacher motivation to participate in self-directed PD.
Implications for Practice

Based on the key findings of this research study, the implications for practice are subdivided into three sub-sections: a) individual practice that supports autonomy, b) developing a school culture that promotes autonomy, and c) principal’s role that supports autonomy. Results from this study provide insights for the district school board, school principals, and teachers who are interested in pursuing PD.

Teachers in the current study were more likely to engage in self-directed PD when they were able to exercise autonomy over the PD options that were available to them. At an individual teacher level, regardless of the motivation that enticed teachers to pursue PD opportunities, participants wanted personal influence over PD choices. These motivations shifted from controlled to autonomous as the participants shifted across career stages. With the individual time and cost factors of self-directed PD, it is essential that teachers be provided support to pursue PD that is career-appropriate, especially once financial rewards for PD disappear.

All participants were more motivated to undertake PD opportunities when a positive school culture was present at their respective schools. Implications regarding school culture relates to all members of a school community working together to fashion a positive workspace that promotes PD. There are many players within a school who contribute to creating a positive atmosphere. Individual teachers must be willing to share resources with others and to have collegial relations. Active participation by individual teachers in self-directed PD promotes a positive school culture as well. Furthermore, a critical mass of teachers must be willing to work together for the betterment of the school. Most important for any school looking to maintain a healthy school culture is
trust. PD includes asking questions of colleagues and allowing oneself to be vulnerable by attaining new knowledge or applying new learnings in the classroom in front of students. Such vulnerability requires a community of colleagues to be open to changing their practice, incorporating new learnings, and refining personal practice on an ongoing basis.

Principals can support autonomy in their roles by providing the conditions necessary for PD to take place, by creating and maintaining a trusting relationship with teachers, by being a co-learner, and by ensuring a shared vision is in place. Within the structure of the school day and within the budget of the school, principals have the ability to take action to facilitate PD. Space and scheduling could be manipulated to offer time to teachers, which is one of the main barriers to taking on PD. Likewise, there is sometimes an opportunity for parts of a school budget to be allocated towards teacher PD. In doing so, a second major barrier, expense, if offset by the school, could be managed, thereby increasing the possibility of teachers taking on PD.

**Implications for Policy**

There are many ways in which various educational initiatives are carried out in schools. It is not uncommon for such initiatives to be implemented with specific guidelines and/or criteria that need to be met, which often guide school boards, schools, and ultimately teachers on implementation. With respect to Ministry and school board policy makers, it is important to embed in any initiative the opportunity for flexibility and autonomy in the roll-out of initiatives. The findings of this study demonstrate that PD is more likely if teachers are able to exercise some autonomy as a new idea or initiative moves forward. If the Ministry or school board allows for individual autonomy to better
reflect the culture within individual schools, there is likely to be a greater chance that
teachers will be more apt to embrace a policy. Additionally, it is imperative that any new
policy that is being implemented comes with a sound rationale as to the benefits for
teachers and students.

Similarly, on a school level, the research findings suggest that principals will have
an easier time successfully implementing new policy if teachers have a voice in what is
proposed so that the vision of the new policy can be shared and developed together as a
team. Collective development encourages trust, allowing for teacher input, and hence
autonomy. Being mindful of this dynamic brings principals to the realization that it is
important for teachers to be aware of and understand the directives and underpinnings of
a new policy to encourage buy-in. For example, if a school chooses to focus PD resources
on mathematics instruction, it is imperative that the teachers involved in teaching
mathematics are aware of the reasoning behind the decision to focus on math, how it is to
be implemented, and what benefit it is likely to have on student achievement. If teacher
colleagues are informed of the reasoning behind policy implementation, they are likely to
have an easier time exercising autonomy within the implementation process, thereby
taking up the new policy or initiative.

**Limitations of the Study and Implications for Further Research**

Based on the key findings of this research study, I offer limitations of the study
and implications for further research that are centred around three matters: a) participants,
b) location, and c) single method.
Participants

Within the context of this research study, all participants were female. At the elementary school level in the school board studied, there was a much greater proportion of female teachers than male teachers. Finding male elementary teachers to become involved in the research was challenging, hence the sample of exclusively female participants. In the future, including a research sample with male participants could be beneficial.

All research participants were taken from the elementary panel. The decision to sample exclusively from the elementary panel was made for logistical reasons. Having participants all from the elementary panel ensured consistency surrounding board focus, such as mathematics, and surrounding structural pieces, such as the scheduling of the school day, workload, and ability to gain release time for PD. Including a sample that encompassed secondary teachers would offer new perspectives to the research findings.

The participants who consented to be part of this research study were all involved in PD at some level. All six participants had been engaged in self-directed PD in the past and had planned to continue to engage in self-directed PD in the future. There are teachers who, for a variety of reasons, participate in very little PD. It could be valuable to collect the perspectives of teachers who do not readily participate in self-directed PD to gain insight into why they chose not to do so.
Location

All participants in the research sample were employed within the same school board in eastern Ontario. As such, board initiatives, policies, and budget allocations were consistent. Other school boards in Ontario vary greatly from the school board from which the research participants were selected. Expanding the research sample to include participants from other district school boards would ensure the inclusion of teachers from school boards that might be comprised of more rural or urban settings, a more diverse student and teacher population, and differing sizes of school boards. Reaching out to participants outside of one school board might aid in ensuring a less homogenous research sample.

I have been and continue to be an employee within the same school board as all of the research participants. Great lengths were taken to mitigate this reality, although all participants would have at least been familiar with my name. Moving to another district board in Ontario outside of the school board in which I work could serve to eliminate the reality of the research participants’ familiarity with the researcher.

Method

The data collected within this study were obtained via a series of research questions asked during the interview process. Although much valuable information was attained through this process, other information might be acquired if the research included other means of collecting information, for example, using surveys, collecting artifacts, or asking principals about teacher PD pursuits.
Final Thoughts

When I started my teaching career many years ago, my principal at the time advised me to take certain AQ courses to enhance my professional knowledge and to remain current in my practice. The Faculty of Education during my preservice years had made a similar recommendation. I had entered the teaching profession at A4, so there was no financial incentive for me to take such courses. Over my first six years of teaching, I completed six AQ courses and one ABQ course, fulfilling my first principal’s advice. I took these courses because I felt an obligation to my profession and my students to continually improve on what I did in the classroom.

At the time, I naively thought that all teachers did much the same as I had in terms of PD. It was not until I transferred into a much larger school with a much larger staff that a new reality came to the fore. It was here that I realized that not all teachers shared the same level of enthusiasm for PD. In fact, there were some teachers on staff who had not taken a course or attended a conference in over 20 years. My concept of PD also expanded beyond taking courses or attending conferences to the inclusion of workshops, professional dialogue with my colleagues, and professional reading.

As I moved into the principal role, the importance of all teachers on a staff contributing to the school for the betterment of our students was paramount. In striving towards this goal, it was important for all teachers to be active and willing participants in PD. This was not the case. Much like when I was a teacher who noticed some teachers working to avoid PD, the same was true in my role as principal, only now it became my responsibility to do something about this reality. It was within this paradigm that I started to seriously consider why some teachers chose to readily engage in PD, while others did
all they could to avoid it. Similarly, it was now important for me to know how I could help move everyone along, regardless of their eagerness to participate in PD.

When I began work on my master’s degree in education, this concern was at the front of my mind. Through my coursework and my thesis research, the motivating factors that entice teachers to engage in self-directed PD became clearer. I now have a greater understanding of why it is teachers take on PD and what conditions need to be in place to encourage such participation. With this understanding in mind, I try to ensure that input from teachers is at the fore of the decision process within our school, including goal setting, beginning a new initiative, or implementing change within the school, ensuring that teacher autonomy is respected. The research has led me to understand that when a collective understanding is achieved and there is a strong culture in the school built on trust, motivation to take on PD increases. It is helpful information to have when trying to lead a staff through a board initiative or moving an entire school population towards a certain vision or goal. It is also information that could benefit my principal colleagues who share the same challenges around PD as I experience. As a result, my work in the program will benefit not only me but also the teachers and principals with whom I work.

Finally, I acknowledge that when I began my literature review, my focus hinged on the role of the school principal. My focus became more complex when other relevant factors came to light, such as autonomy and collegial collaboration. Similarly, when I considered the questions that I would ask participants to gather information that would guide my data analysis, I placed considerable emphasis on the role of the principal, supposing that the principal was the main source of influence when teachers made their decision as to whether or not to participate in PD. After the participant interviews were
completed and the data were being analysed, it became apparent that other factors, such as influence from colleagues, time/money, and collaboration among colleagues, were of greater significance. A revelation for me is to now dedicate my time towards doing what I can to influence building a healthy culture within our school, ensuring that teachers have a voice in school goal setting and vision building, and setting up the conditions necessary for teachers to collaborate with one another in the school.
REFERENCES


http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/pdfs/partnerreport.pdf


*Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44, 458-495.


APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Queen’s University

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH IN

Why Teachers Engage in Self-Directed Professional Development

I am looking for volunteers to take part in a study that examines why teachers choose to participate in self-directed professional development opportunities.

For this study, I am looking for:

- OCT certified teachers who are currently working full-time in our school board
- Teachers who have participated in some form of self-directed professional development over the past 2 years
- Teachers who have less than 2 years of full-time teaching experience
  OR
- Teachers who have 2 or more years of full-time teaching experience

As participants in the study, you will be asked to take part in an interview with me. The interview will last 45 - 60 minutes.

For more information about this study or to volunteer to participate, please contact:

[Contact Information]
APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Letter of Information for Teachers Associated with the Self-Directed Professional Development Interview

“Principal Influence on Teachers Engaging in Self-Directed Professional Development”

Principal Investigator: Carmine Minutillo, Master’s Student, Faculty of Education, Queen’s University, Kingston, ON, Canada, (613) 929-5478, E-mail: 2jcm3@queensu.ca

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Ben Kutsyuruba, Associate Professor, Faculty Supervisor, Queen’s University, Kingston, ON, Canada, (613) 533-3049, ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca

Dear Possible Participant:

This research is being conducted by Carmine Minutillo for a graduate studies thesis in the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario. I am also a principal in our school board. This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen’s policies. This study has also received approval from your school board.

What is this study about? The purpose of the research is to describe the conditions that are necessary to motivate teachers to engage in self-directed professional development as well as teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s role in fostering, encouraging, and sustaining these professional development pursuits. I will seek answers to the following questions:

1) What motivates teachers to engage in self-directed professional development?
2) What are the conditions necessary for promoting teachers’ engagement in self-directed professional development?
3) What are teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s role in supporting, fostering, encouraging, and sustaining the professional development of teachers?

This study will require you to participate in an interview. The questions in the interview will focus on what has motivated you to take on self-directed professional development and your perceptions of the principal’s role in supporting these pursuits. It will take you approximately 45-60 minutes to complete the interview. You should not feel obliged to answer any questions that you find objectionable or that make you feel uncomfortable. Potential risks associated with this study include volunteering information that may be
personal in nature and offering information that might include your current principal. These risks will be minimized by keeping all information obtained via the one to one interviews confidential with the use of pseudonyms in all publications. With your permission, the interview will be recorded and subsequently transcribed.

**Is my participation voluntary?** Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason, without pressure or consequence of any kind. You should not feel obliged to answer any questions that you find objectionable or that make you feel uncomfortable. To withdraw from the research please contact the researcher Carmine Minutillo (2jcm3@queensu.ca; [Phone Number]).

**What will happen to my responses?** Your responses will be confidential. Only the researcher will have access to your responses. The data may be published in a thesis paper, but any such publication will be of general findings and will maintain individual confidentiality to the extent possible. If the data is made available to faculty or other researchers for secondary analysis, it will contain no identifying information. Data will be retained for five years after which time it will be destroyed. Should you be interested, you are entitled to a copy of the findings.

**Will I be compensated for my participation?** You will not receive any compensation for your time.

**What if I have concerns?** Any questions about study participation may be directed to the Educational Researcher, Carmine Minutillo, at 2jcm3@queensu.ca or [Phone Number]. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

Again, thank you. Your interest in participating in this research study is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Carmine Minutillo
M.Ed. Student
Faculty of Education, Queen’s University
Consent Form for Teachers Associated with the Self-Directed Professional Development (Interviews)

“Principal Influence on Teachers Engaging in Self-Directed Professional Development”

Name (Please print clearly):

________________________________________________

1. I have read the Letter of Information and have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.

2. I understand that I will be participating in the study called Principal Influence on Teachers Engaging in Self-Directed Professional Development. I understand this means I will complete an interview where I will be asked about what motivates teachers to take on self-directed professional development and what teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s role are in supporting teacher professional development. I understand that the interview will be digitally recorded and take approximately 45-60 minutes.

3. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without consequence. I understand that I may request removal of all or part of my data from the study. I understand that the researchers will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible. Only researchers involved in this study will have access to this data. The data may be used in a graduate studies thesis, but any such paper will be of general findings and will maintain individual confidentiality to the extent possible. Should I be interested, I am entitled to a copy of the findings.

4. Any questions about study participation may be directed to the research investigator, Carmine Minutillo, at 2jcm3@queensu.ca; [Phone Number]. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

I have read the above statements and freely consent to participate in this research.

Signature: ______________________________ Date: ____________________

I would like to request a copy of the results of this study sent to the following email or postal address below.

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return to Carmine Minutillo. Retain a second copy for your records.
### Teacher Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Purpose of Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In this interview, I will be asking about self-directed professional development. Self-directed professional development refers to professional development that you pursue on your own initiative to inform yourself in an area of your own practice that you have identified as having a desire to improve. Examples of this could include taking courses, action research, professional reading, attending conferences, and engaging in professional dialogue with colleagues. Teachers typically engage in self-directed professional development through the course of their careers. Please tell me about the self-directed professional development that you have become involved with regarding your own professional growth?</td>
<td>To understand what types of self-directed professional development participants have undertaken and why.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. How did the self-directed professional development in which you participated enhance your own professional growth?</td>
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<td>3. What were some of the catalysts to engaging in your self-directed professional development?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. What were some of the barriers to engaging in your self-directed professional development?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Please elaborate on the motivational factors that led to your decision to engage in the self-directed professional development pursuits that you mentioned?</td>
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<td>6. Please comment on how the culture of your school promoted or inhibited the likelihood that you participated in self-directed professional development.</td>
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<td>7. In what ways were the vision of the school and/or goals of the school communicated to you by your principal?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
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<td>8. How does the principal’s vision and/or goals of the school align with your own vision and/or goals?</td>
<td>To gather information on what role a transformational leadership style played in a teacher’s decision to participate in self-directed professional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Could you please elaborate on whether or not professional development opportunities that you may have been considering were catalyzed by the principal through vision building or goal setting at your school?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Could you please expand upon what leadership attributes, if any, played a role in selecting personal growth opportunities?</td>
<td>To understand what role, if any, the principal had on what led teachers to participate in self-directed professional development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. As you think back to your personal experiences, please describe those principal leadership practices that you feel most supported you professional learning? Please explain why.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Which principal leadership practices least supported your professional learning? Please explain why.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. How would you describe your principal’s involvement or influence on your decisions to participate in self-directed professional development?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Thank you very much for participating in this interview. Is there anything else that you would like to add related to influences that had an impact on your decision to participate in self-directed professional development?</td>
<td>To allow for any additional, relevant information to come to the fore.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
APPENDIX D: ETHICAL REVIEW

November 06, 2014

Mr. Carmine Mimitillo
Master’s Student
Faculty of Education
Queen’s University
Duncan McArthur Hall
511 Union Street West
Kingston, ON, K7M 5R7

GREB Romeo #: 6010763
Title: "GEDUC 695-13 Principal Influence on Teachers Engaging in Self-Directed Professional Development"

Dear Mr. Mimitillo:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB) has reviewed and approved your request for renewal of ethics clearance for the above-named study. This renewal is valid for one year from November 20, 2014. Prior to the next renewal date you will be sent a reminder memo and the link to ROMEO to renew for another year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period. An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours. Report to GREB through either ROMEO Event Report or Adverse Event Report Form at http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchethics/GeneralREB/forms.html.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example, you must report changes in study procedures or implementation of new aspects into the study procedures. Your request for protocol changes will be forwarded to the appropriate GREB reviewers and/or the GREB Chair. Please report changes to GREB through either ROMEO Event Reports or the Ethics Change Form at http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchethics/GeneralREB/forms.html.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.
Chair
General Research Ethics Board

c.:  Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba, Faculty Supervisor
      Dr. Chris DeLuca, Chair, Unit REB
      Ms. Angelina Gencarelli, c/o Graduate Studies and Bureau of Research