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Exploring Part-Time Teacher Professional Development and Best Practices on Adult Learners' Outcomes

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Abstract

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Doctoral Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

This study addressed the role of limited part-time teacher professional development on adult learners' success at an adult education center in the northeast United States. At the research site, almost 50% of the teaching staff are adjunct instructors. Professional development opportunities have been limited for these instructors, with only a single opportunity recorded during the 2014-2015 school year. When teachers are provided appropriate and relevant support for the curriculum and student needs, evidence suggests that they realize their own craft growth, with measureable student achievement as a result. Knowles's adult learning theory served as the conceptual framework and provided structure for exploring and understanding nontraditional students. Using a qualitative exploratory case study design, the research questions focused on part-time teachers' perception of professional development on their teaching and instructional practice. Purposeful sampling was used to select 8 adjunct instructors to participate in semistructured interviews. Data analysis involved an inductive study of coded data revealing 5 themes: barriers to delivering an excellent teaching plan, teacher knowledge of student needs, administrative concerns, sense of community, and professional development needs. These themes informed the development of a 3-day adult education training program, which may promote appropriate and relevant professional development opportunities for adjuncts. This advancement of ongoing professional development could improve teaching and learning for adjunct instructors that may result in their craft improvement, positively impacting their students.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated first and foremost to my Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ; without Him, I would be nothing, and nothing would be possible. It is also dedicated to the many individuals who have encouraged me throughout my life, too numerous to mention. To Lloyd, my husband and best friend, my constant encourager and support. To my son Harrington, who I pray understands that nothing in life is handed to you, and if it is, it is worthless. I hope and pray that with this achievement, he will understand that hard work pays off. Lastly, I also dedicate the study to my parents Lambert Wilson and Barbara Eloria Robertshaw, and my maternal grandmother Hilda "Baugh" Smith who loved beyond measure. I wish they were here to see this, but each inspired me to pursue my dreams, and enjoy life with a heavy dose of humor. In a very large way, this is for you!

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Section 1: Introduction

Background of the Problem

In the increasingly competitive global community, President Obama emphasized the United States cannot fill or keep jobs without a 21st century trained workforce (The White House, 2012). More complex than the past, the 21st century trained workforce skills as defined by Kereluik, Mishra, Fahnoe, and Terry (2013) are almost every lifestyle skill and attribute that is important for student graduates to lead productive lives both personally and professionally. These skills demand more than the "20th century skills of repetition, basic applied knowledge, and limited literacy" (Kereluik et al., 2013, p. 128). While these skills are still necessary, the 21st century has infused the importance of technology on foundational knowledge and globalization, which must be incorporated at every level of the curriculum (Spring, 2014). Workforce skills required today demand flexibility, critical thinking, knowledge of economic trends, and proficiency in technology-related fields (Crow & Muthuswamy, 2014). The president voiced that Congress should support a plan where citizens are able to capitalize on educational opportunities to level the educational and economic playing fields created by an increasingly complex, competent, competitive, and educated global community (The White House, 2012).

In agreement with the president's assessment of the United States' educational climate and the need for trained educators, Goodman, Finnegan, Mohadjer, Krenzke, and Hogan (2013) noted that a significant number of Americans are deficient in numeracy and literacy skills. Knowing this information is important, for Ross-Gordon (2011)

revealed that nontraditional learners' enrollment in postsecondary institutions is the fastest growing group of learners, warranting attention regarding the quality of education provided to these learners 25 years and older. To combat the possibility of adult learner failing in secondary and postsecondary institutions, the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education (NCSDAE) advocated for trained educators to teach adults in specialized programs (Larson, Gaeta, & Sager, 2016). Secondary, workforce, and higher educational institutions' enrollment continues to escalate, and there is a corresponding increase in employment of adjunct instructors to meet the need, as well as to fill positions opened by faculty attrition (Stenerson, Blanchard, Fassiotto, Hernandez, & Muth, 2010). Teachers are significant in student achievement, although it is not clear which characteristic of teachers is most important to adult student success (Metzler & Woessmann, 2010). To meet the needs of the new adult learner demographic, professional educators must become more efficient, knowledgeable of adult teaching theories, and skilled at delivering a successful curriculum to students whose goals and outlook are more varied than those of traditional learners (Howell, 2014).

Community colleges are witnessing high growth in enrollment, with workforce development programs and adult education centers are also reporting large numbers of students, mostly over 25 years of age (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011). This NCES report explained that between 2000 and 2013, the number of students enrolled in adult education centers increased dramatically from 29% to slightly over 40% in less than a decade. As a result, these institutions are

relying more and more on adjunct faculty to address program needs (Kezar & Maxey, 2013).

While the reasons vary for the increased number of adjuncts on many campuses, this trend cannot be disputed. According to Kezar and Maxey (2013), the noticeable change in the number of adjuncts hired on community college campuses has increased from 21.7% in 1969 to 66.5% in 2013, and on some campuses it is as high as 75%. As an illustration, in a special report from the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE), McClenny and Arnsparger (2014) commented that adjuncts comprise 58% of the teaching staff at community colleges in the United States. In their opinion, this will be an increasing trend. This noticeable increase is also consistent within the research site, where 49% of teachers are part-time, and per a site administrator this number will increase within the new school year (site administrator, personal communication, April, 15, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study is the need for appropriate training of part-time teachers in an adult education center, to develop applicable strategies that would measurably impact adult student achievement. Trained part-time teachers are needed to deliver an effective educational program to combat adult learner failure, thus addressing the new demographic trend of increasing adult learner enrollment in secondary and career training programs. Because teachers are a significant variable in the success of students, the increase of part-time teachers teaching adult learners must meet the needs of the new adult learner demographic, and become more efficient, knowledgeable of adult teaching

theories, and skilled at delivering a successful curriculum to students whose goals and outlook are more varied than those of traditional learners.

Increased use of adjuncts can be cause for concern. For example, in the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement, McClenny and Arnsparger (2014) revealed that "part-time faculty are less likely to use high-impact educational practices—the practices that are most likely to engage students with faculty and staff, with other students, and with the subject matter they are studying" (p. 3). McClenny and Arnsparger also asserted that adjuncts often do not participate in the collegiality as experienced by full-time faculty, and unlike full-time faculty, adjuncts are afforded less opportunities to participate in professional development. These findings mirror those reported earlier by Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron (1995), who maintained that adjunct faculty are often estranged from the larger educational community, and lack position orientation and other training relevant to their position on the campus. For instance, adjuncts are more likely to be assigned to teach students in need of developmental education, and frequently do so without specialized training.

The CCCSE (2014) stated that even though adjuncts bring a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and experience to their teaching practice, they might not make connections with students, which CCCSE noted is a possible ingredient for student success. This lack of connection between adjuncts and students is also supported by research conducted by Kunter et al. (2013). Agreeing with this need of teacher involvement and inclusion, Knowles (1980) asserted, "the behavior of the teacher probably influences the character of the learning climate more than any other single

factor" (p. 15). Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE, 2013c) reported that teachers are a vital component in raising student achievement. Given that adjunct instructors comprise over half of the faculty at community colleges and in many adult education institutions, every consideration should be given to enhance and improve what they do in the classroom.

This project's research site's administrators wanted to explore teacher professional development provided to part-time teachers, because they were concerned about student achievement, and have an understanding that there has been limited professional development offered to adjuncts at the site (site administrator, personal communication, December 23, 2015). This emphasis is consistent with current adult education research regarding the impact of teaching strategies on adult student achievement and overall success (Datray, Saxon, & Martirosyan, 2014). Kenner and Weinerman (2011) suggested that many adjuncts might not have had training in adult student learning theory or teaching and classroom delivery methods. According to one administrator at the research site, the professional development offerings are often centered on the New York State Common Core requirement and the standards established by the new High School Equivalency (HSE) test, and not in adult learning theory, methods for working with adult learners, or classroom delivery. This is especially noteworthy, as current research demonstrates that lack of educator training impacts traditional students and potentially the nontraditional adult learner (Carey, 2004; Soares, 2013).

Literature addressing the education and success of nontraditional learners speaks specifically to the need for teacher training and ongoing professional development precisely to the needs and traits of students (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2014). The number of part-time faculty in Central Adult Learning Center (CALC, a pseudonym), as at other educational programs, has consistently increased in recent years; yet, there are no conclusive data regarding the quality of part-time adult education teachers and how they impact students (Jacoby, 2006; Wyatt, 2011). The issue of nontraditional student success poses a challenge to teachers in adult education centers nationwide (Bell, 2012). Data from the relevant research literature suggested that educational institutions' policy makers and administrators must be flexible in considering the needs of the nontraditional adult learner. They should provide appropriate training opportunities for their teachers, especially adjuncts, to develop applicable strategies that would measurably impact student achievement (Lindeman, 2015).

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Effective teachers are important determinants of student success, and that through ongoing training and relevant professional development, teachers can improve the quality of their teaching (Allen et al., 2013; Loughran, 2014; Polikoff & Porter, 2014). What is not known is how adjuncts view professional development opportunities that would impact their teaching practice, or how they personally feel regarding professional development relevant to their professional craft. As posted on CALC's school district's website, student poverty and unemployment rates are high with 84% of students eligible

for free lunch, and 22% of schools at 90% or higher are within high poverty areas, and overall high school graduation rates are at less than 45%. It is important that adjuncts are provided professional development opportunities to ensure that they are the most effective teachers to help their students achieve personal and professional goals (site administrator, personal communication, April 14, 2016).

Operating in New York, CALC has served adult students for over 40 years. Affiliated with the local urban school district's Academic and Workforce Development, the adult education program offers a variety of career, technical, English as a second language, and workforce preparation skills. Learners can acquire or sharpen literacy and numeracy skills to enter college or prepare for the job market. As stated in CALC's brochure, in providing adult literacy programs, the center prides itself in being an official HSE testing center for residents within the county, "utilizing our experienced and qualified staff to help meet each student's educational, employment, and personal goals" (site brochure, n.d., para 3). Striving to live up to the philosophy of the school district that there is no one curriculum that incorporates or addresses the needs of all students, and all students can learn, the program reflects this via its publicized mission statement by providing various educational programs for county residents.

The CALC's student body is diverse and inclusive of the urban area residents: 65% African Americans, 21% Hispanic, 11% White, 2% Asian and others, with 81% disadvantaged (District, 2009-10 enrollment report). The educational programs comprise opportunities for English and non-English speakers. The adult education program also partners with community businesses, the city, and the county to offer workforce

education to area employment and governmental entities. Although there has been a marked increase in adult learner enrollment in this vocational and secondary instructional center, the graduation rates for adult students are consistently low as compared with actual enrollment figures.

CALC's current (2015) passing rate is 52% (site administrator, personal communication, December 28, 2015). As the school leaders examine possible interventions, there are growing concerns related to the training of its part-time teachers, many of whom are not trained in the discipline they teach or pedagogy, or hold a teaching certificate. These concerns are justified according to one of CALC's administrators, who advanced that adjunct faculty do not always attend the professional development offerings as they are not always required to participate in them.

With recent budget cuts and full-time teacher attrition, adjunct positions continue to surge. Currently, CALC has 45 teachers: 23 full-time and 22 part-time or hourly; hence, adjuncts currently comprise 49% of the teaching staff. Professional development opportunities at CALC are scant; when provided, they are not relevant or appropriate to learning theory, methods, or delivery (site administrator, personal communication, March 9, 2016). Teachers here are encouraged to collaborate and plan lessons, but there are no checks in place to ensure that this consistently takes place or how it impacts student achievement (site administrator, personal communication, April 12, 2016).

In the past year, there was only one professional development opportunity reported at CALC, and this opportunity was offered in the area of alignment of state standards along with the new student reporting system (site administrator, personal

communication, April 12, 2016). Many adult education teachers across the nation, as at this research site, do not hold certification in adult education or in the specific discipline they teach (Minnick, Warren, Ingram, Russell, & Warren, 2013). At this center, where 23 teachers are employed full-time, only three are certified in adult education and four in a secondary (Grades 7-12) subject area necessary for the TASC completion. Only four part-time teachers possess 7-12 subject area certification.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

There has been a significant increase of part-time faculty in educational institutions nationwide to offset full-time teacher attrition, increased enrollment figures, and/or budget cuts (Bedford & Miller, 2013). According to CCCSE (2014), part-time faculty make up more than 58% of the teaching staff on many campuses, and could have implications school leaders should be aware of. Research conducted in K-12 settings has established a connection between teacher training and student achievement (Darling-Hammond, Berry, & Thoreson, 2001; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000), although a thorough search of the literature has not uncovered similar studies at the postsecondary level. It is known that institutional and teacher support can help adult learners increase persistence and lower dropout rates thereby increasing students' likelihood of passing the TASC (Auerbach, Barahona, Midy, Vaquerano, & Zambrano, 2013). However, if part-time faculty are not given appropriate and relevant professional development opportunities, students do not succeed (CCCSE, 2014; Datray et al., 2014). Soares (2013) and Datray et al. (2014) contended that faculty, particularly adjuncts, who teach nontraditional students should be familiar with nontraditional adult students' needs and participate in appropriate

ongoing professional development programs. Being aware of the needs of the

nontraditional adult learner and the theories that relate to their educational needs, overall

educator training could result in improved effectiveness of adjuncts, ultimately

strengthening adult student persistence and improving overall achievement (Soares,

2013).

A workforce of educators trained in adult education theories and classroom

delivery might combat low scores, to the extent that part-time teacher training and

ongoing professional development could possibly have the greatest impact on quality and

effectiveness of teachers. However, to facilitate this process, Soares (2013) argued the

need for adult educators' familiarity with the characteristics and motivation of

nontraditional learners, and their own participation in relevant ongoing professional

development programs. Bell (2012), Joseph (2013), and Knowles, Holton III, and

Swanson (2014) agreed that this knowledge of adult students' characteristics and

motivation could have beneficial results on adult student persistence and overall

achievement.

Adult students taught by full-time faculty may be more successful than students in

classes taught by adjuncts. Mueller, Mandernach, and Sanderson (2013) examined the

outcomes of students in their online courses taught by full-time and adjunct faculty. The

results revealed that student outcomes were more favorable, and that students were more

satisfied with their experiences, in courses taught by full-time faculty as opposed to

adjuncts. Mueller et al. were clear that the results did not suggest the lack of quality in the

adjunct faculty. The study findings called for additional research on adjuncts and the need

for appropriate and ongoing professional development opportunities specifically planned for adjuncts. To help students improve and achieve success, adult education researchers agree that more studies on adult education teacher quality is needed (Darling-Hammond, 2010a; Ross-Gordon, 2011). There has been research conducted at the K-12 grade level about what comprises traditional student success (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). However, research is needed on what comprises adult student success, and how adjuncts perceive their educational contribution in the adult education arena.

Adult education has economic implications for the adult learner as well as the community (Gibb & Walker, 2011; Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2014; Ross-Gordon, 2011). Effective adult learning embodies change reflected in perceived economic advantages and a change in worldview, in both the individual and the community (Hess, McLendon, Moore, & Rosin, 2012). Eney and Davidson (2012) theorized there is little doubt that adult learners need to be engaged in a program where they are challenged to be successful. Eney and Davidson concluded that adjuncts who teach nontraditional students need relevant and appropriate professional development opportunities designed to improve their craft performance as well as increase student achievement.

Definition of Terms

Adjunct Faculty: Part-time or contingent teachers in an educational setting (Mueller et al., 2013).

Adult Basic Education (ABE): ABE are literacy programs and services that target adults functioning below the ninth-grade level based on an approved assessment.

Education leaders design these services to help adults get the basic skills needed to be productive members of society (USDOE, 2012).

Adult nontraditional learners: A category of students at tertiary educational institutions. No precise definition exists for nontraditional students, but students who have a part-time status, and ages over 24 are common elements (USDOE, 2012).

Andragogy: The system of ideas, concepts, and approaches in helping adults learn. Unlike teacher-focused pedagogy, which researchers defined as the art and science of educating children, researchers use the term *andragogy* as a synonym for teaching adults. Andragogy is learner-focused and defined by Knowles as the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson 2014).

Andragogical practices: "Behavior of the teacher that influences the character of the learning climate" of the adult education classroom (Knowles, 1980, p. 47).

Common Core: An agreed on set of high-level standards in English Language Arts, Literacy, and Math that outline learning outcomes students should know and accomplish at the end of each grade level, including adult levels (as adult education testing is connected to the Common Core in New York). As of February 2016, 42 states, the District of Columbia, four United States territories, and part of Minnesota have voluntarily adopted these standards as consistent learning goals for all students in their states (LaVenia, Cohen-Vogel, & Lang, 2015; USDOE, 2013c).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): The new education law signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015, which replaced No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This law reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and

reaffirms the nation's commitment to equal opportunity as it attempts to close the achievement gap (Wong, 2015).

Faculty development: One of many programs which focuses on the professional and personal development of faculty (Darling-Hammond, 2010a).

General Education Development (GED): According to the USDOE (2013a), the GED is a battery of five tests used to measure the skills considered outcomes of a high school education. Education leaders focused these tests on the use of skills and concepts rather than upon recall of facts. Education leaders focused the questions on the general abilities to analyze, evaluate, and draw conclusions. Institution leaders award certificates to learners who attain passing scores on each subject test and on a total passing score.

Lifelong learners: Students who participate in the lifelong learning process of schooling (Blaschke, 2012).

Lifelong learning: Learning that continues throughout life and beyond traditional schooling (Blaschke, 2012).

Pedagogy: The art of teaching, as in an academic subject or theoretical concept, and often related to teaching children. Pedagogy is teacher-focused, as the teacher directs the learning (Darling-Hammond, 2010b).

Professional development: A continuous process where educators acquire new skills and knowledge more geared toward adult theory, delivery, and development, which is sustained and intensive (Blaschke, 2012).

Student persistence: A term people often mistakenly use interchangeably with retention. However, while retention refers to ongoing relation with an educational

institution, persistence means situations exist which could help or hinder a student's continuance of his or her education (Habley, Bloom, Robbins, & Robbins, 2012).

Student success: The desired outcome of student attainment, achievement, and persistence to the completion of the academic program (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

TASC: Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC), the new High School Equivalency (HSE) test, effective January 2, 2014, which replaced the GED for students wanting a New York High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) (Brinkley-Etzkorn & Ishitani, 2016).

Teacher training or preparation: Involves the following: knowledge of the subject to be taught; skill in how to teach that subject, being able to apply strategies to help students increase achievement as well as apply knowledge of human development to motivate and engage students, and being able to diagnose individual learning needs while developing a positive climate in the classroom to make it a stimulating learning environment (Wiseman, 2012).

Teacher quality: A collection of talent, skills, and understandings an individual brings to teaching that includes dispositions to behave in certain ways, which, if used appropriately, ultimately results in measurable student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2010a).

Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE): Educators use TABE to assess skills and knowledge of adult learners. Typically, the TABE measures learner gains in reading, language, and math (USDOE, 2013a).

Significance of the Study

I explored adjunct instructor awareness of adult learning principles through professional development, and what types of professional development opportunities they believe would support their overall performance and instructional practice. There appears to be a disparity in adult student persistence to graduation and their initial enrollment numbers in secondary schools (Klein-Collins, 2011; Ross-Gordon, 2011). While there are limited studies conducted on the professional development needs of adjuncts who teach adult learners, Brown (2010) affirmed that to a large degree high quality instruction, and incorporating knowledge of learning theories, among other variables, contributes to adult student persistence and overall success. Subsequently, if part-time educators who teach nontraditional students are to improve their students' academic outcomes, it is vital to make a concerted effort to improve their knowledge of adult learning theory and classroom delivery skills (Auerbach et al., 2013).

This qualitative case study has value for many constituencies: traditional and nontraditional students, administrators, teachers, institutional leaders, policy makers, educational designers, and other stakeholders involved in adult education. This study data could also be a means to contribute to the empirical literature to improve part-time adult educator training and delivery skills, which could result in improved nontraditional student success. This project study has both local setting significance to the secondary education center, as well as significance in the larger educational context based on principles of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (1998). Providing resources and strategies for adult educator improvement, the Adult Education and Family Literacy

Act of 1998 and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) allows

each state to create its teacher development program for improvement (Uvin, 2015).

Within the local setting, findings from this study could provide administrators

information to understand the extent to which adult education theory and professional

development guide the practice of adjunct instructors. Given the outcomes of the study

and the connections established in the literature between the learning theory and

achievement, this will be a leading step in searching for ways to improve adult student

success. Study results could provide information for part-time adult educators and

administrators through the vehicle of continuous professional development opportunities,

collegial sharing, and collaboration. According to Bingman and Smith (2013) and Zepke

and Leach (2010), if educational institutions do not provide ongoing instructional training

for adult educators, nontraditional students will be at risk of failing, dropping out of

school, or becoming dissatisfied with the offered program. Conversely, with this ongoing

training, part-time adult student educators could possibly benefit the local and larger

educational community.

Educational researchers have established that teacher quality plays an important

part in the academic outcomes of students (Bingman & Smith, 2013; Weimer, 2013).

Based on research outcomes, this project study informs CALC and other adult

educational institutions regarding potential andragogical gaps. With proper professional

development planning and support, teachers of nontraditional learners can plan and

execute relevant instructional strategies for learner success (Bingman & Smith, 2013). In

the hope of adding to the professional literature, this project study was focused on

andragogical methods employed at the local level to include professional development opportunities, learning principles, and teaching strategies that are perceived to contribute to adult learner success.

Research Questions

When provided with appropriate support and ongoing professional development, teachers of adult students, especially adjuncts, improved their craft and were able to positively influence classroom delivery and student achievement (McClenny & Arnsparger, 2014). Based on the assessment of nontraditional learners' potential achievement by Knowles et al. (2014); Ross-Gordon (2011); and Mueller et al. (2013), it is the contention of adult theorists that understanding learning theories, adult learners' needs, and their characteristics will provide essential support for adult learners' success. In this case study I described and explored part-time adult educators' current practice, understanding, and needs for professional development that focused on adult learner achievement.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do part-time teachers in an adult education program reflect on their awareness of adult learning principles through practice and professional development?

2. What types of professional development opportunities do adjuncts believe would support their overall instructional performance and their students' success?

Review of the Literature

More and more noticeable in educational research regarding school enrollment is the indication of a demographic shift, with an increased enrollment of adult students in adult training centers and higher educational institutions (Bell, 2012; USDOE, 2013c). At the same time, there is a growing presence of adjunct faculty in adult and higher education institutions. With adult students' increased enrollment in workforce training centers and higher education institution campuses, administrators who design curricula recognize the enrollment change and the need to reconsider faculty training applicable to the new demographic shift of student population (Aud et al., 2012). Based on their research and that of others, Rose and Rose (2012) asserted that adults return to school for many personal and professional reasons. For example, adult immigrants in the United States attend secondary schools to learn English and become a vital part of the American culture. While economic reasons appears to be central, many adult learners return to academic centers to retrain or upgrade skills and credentials for the job market, or due to change in their personal lives (Rose & Rose, 2012).

Being knowledgeable of these reasons, professional educators must be more efficient, informed of adult teaching theories, and skilled at delivering a successful curriculum to students whose goals and outlook are more varied than those of more traditional learners (Klein-Collins, 2011; Hess et al., 2012; McPhail, 2013). This literature review focused on adult learning theory as a model for teaching adult learners, best practices in the adult learning classrooms, part-time teacher training, and

professional development of adult education adjuncts, all as a means of improving the teaching craft and increasing student achievement.

The purpose of this review was to identify and examine the literature relevant to the research study, as it focused the research questions regarding the teaching and learning practices that adjuncts identify as having the most positive impact on adult student learning. In this literature review, I assessed the objectives of adult learning using the theory of Knowles (1984) and its relation to student achievement. I examined andragogical classroom best practices as they affect student achievement, and I scrutinized faculty professional development as a strategy for teachers of nontraditional students to strengthen their craft and improve the learning environment. The conceptual framework for this project study was the adult learning theory of Knowles, and its emphasis on how adult students benefit from the andragogical approach. In reviewing and investigating the theory of adult learning and Knowles's work in this area, it was evident that nontraditional students' needs are more complicated now than in the past (USDOE, 2012).

Most of the studies selected for this review were published between the years 2011 and 2016. Included are seminal and other contributions before the 1990s: Malcolm Knowles (1980, 1984, 2005), Mezirow (1981, 1992, 2003), Beder and Carrea (1988) and Beder, Tomkins, Medina, Riccioni, and Deng (2006) among others. The literature review contains a minimum of 70 peer-reviewed sources published after 2012. I obtained internet sources, peer-reviewed literature, and books related to the topic by using search engines through the Walden University online library. The search strategy used in this

review included information from searches via EBSCOhost and Google Scholar, and the

National Staff Development websites. A few of the keywords used for searches were

adult and nontraditional learner, staff development, staff development for adult education

teachers, Common Core and adult learning, learning theory, adult education,

professional development, adult learner success, teacher training, andragogy, pedagogy,

best practices, adjunct, part-time teacher in secondary and adult institutions, adjuncts,

teacher quality, teacher training in adult education, GED tests, TASC, and *educational*

reform. I purchased books and articles based on references to authors who are experts in

the field of adult education, teacher training and student outcomes, and qualitative

research design. This literature review was focused on a conceptual framework and on

literature relevant to the adult learning theory as a model for teaching nontraditional

learners. This literature review consisted of four sections: (a) adult learning theory as an

instructional model, (b) best practices, (c) teacher training, and (d) professional

development.

Conceptual Framework

Although no one theory exists that solely forms the conceptual base of adult

education, andragogists follow a problem-based approach to learning (Merriam,

Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2012). Because of this fact, Knowles's adult learning theory,

emphasizing the self-directed nature of adult learning formed the basis of this research

project study (Knowles et al., 2014). In discussing the landscape of learning in adulthood,

it was important to connect learning theory in many areas of adult education, considering

the relevance of how curriculum and educator practice impact student outcomes. Derived

data from research literature regarding student achievement demonstrated that teacher

quality influenced student outcome and can result in higher student achievement

(Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Hess et al., 2012; Meador, 2016; Soares, 2013).

The combination of learning theory with curriculum and classroom delivery, in relation

to how adults learn, was central to understanding the connection of educator training and

subsequent practice on student academic outcomes.

While claims from the existing literature suggests that teacher education is

important to student outcomes, there is a scarcity of research on adult education teacher

training, knowledge of adult learning theory, adjunct teachers in adult education settings,

and best practice in adult education (Chang, 2013; Ross-Gordon, 2011). For this reason,

it is possible that the adult education community is unaware of the best way to utilize the

growing number of part-time adult educators in adult learning programs. To address this

gap in the literature, this project study was framed by the adult learning theory. The

conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 1 demonstrates the connection between part-

time teacher knowledge of adult learning theory, initial or ongoing adjunct training and

professional development, and best practices on student achievement.
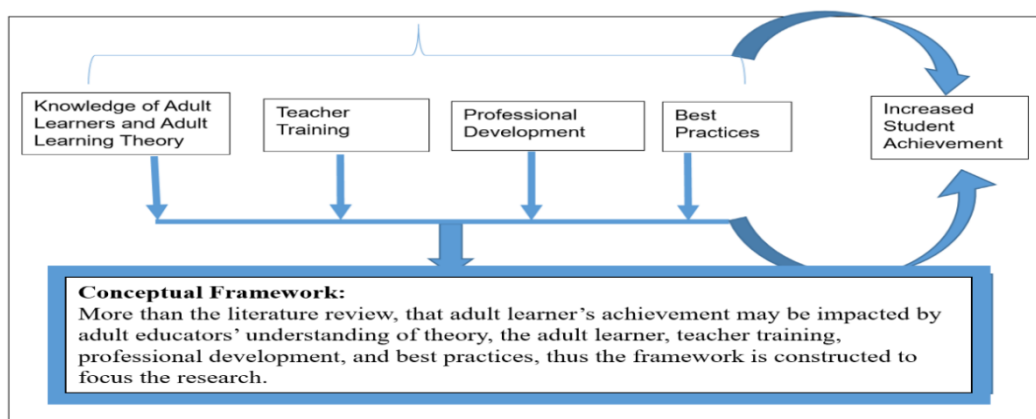
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework. Demonstrating part-time teacher knowledge of adult learning themes work in concert with teacher training, teacher professional development, and educator-demonstrated best practices cooperate to result in student achievement.

Adult Learning Theory

Researchers in the field of adult education agree there should be a difference in how educators teach children and adults, because the learning processes are different (Rochester Institute of Technology, 2013; Ross-Gordon, 2011). Knowles et al. (2014) identified six assumptions of adult learning, and later added a seventh. They affirmed that adults: (a) are inspired by their own life goals and self-direction, (b) bring personal and professional life experiences to the learning environment, (c) are inspired by the tangible and abstract things they want to achieve, (d) are guided by what is meaningful, (e) are practical, and (f) aspire to be respected as adults. Knowles asserted that adult educators should consider these assumptions when designing lessons for adult learners. Adult learning theory defined andragogy simply as "the art and science of helping adults learn" (Knowles, 1970, p. 4). The andragogical model of adult learning is the basis for the adult learning theory. Knowles believed adults, unlike children, have a need to know why they

are required to learn a particular skill or lesson. Adults need to experience learning in a way that informs them for it to be meaningful. In his understanding, Knowles theorized that adults benefit the most from a learning experience when it is practical and provides immediate value.

Incorporated within these assumptions are components of andragogical practices of the effective adult educator. Educators need to give nontraditional learners autonomy to construct their learning (Knowles, 1970). Observed in this perspective is the idea that the educator supports the process, but is not the critical person, as would be in the teacher-centered pedagogical environment (Knowles, 1970). Moreover, because adult learners bring many experiences to the learning environment, Knowles advocated that educators should incorporate these experiences for the greatest possible knowledge acquisition. In this way, teachers provide support and guidance when adult learners encounter problems, and adult learners in turn apply knowledge gained to real life situations, thus allowing relevancy for this theory. Galbraith (2004) and Kenner and Weinerman (2011) agreed that it was important that adult educational practitioners understand what guides their practice and what constitutes teaching and learning. Applying learning theories to instructional practices requires an understanding of how students learn and how the school environment and students' personal experiences affect academic outcomes (Merriam et al., 2012). The training of the adult educator, which is to become familiar with the various ways the adult nontraditional, learner learns, is critical to the adult learners' overall success (Darling-Hammond, 2010a; Merriam et al., 2012; Sockalingam, 2012).

Knowles et al. (2014) underscored that andragogy is more than an extension of pedagogy, which Knowles earlier defined as the art of teaching children. In andragogy, adult students' maturity and responsibility for their own learning demand varying and diverse instructional strategies that can maximize learning and prevent resistance to learning in the adult education classroom (Caffarella, 2002; Knowles, 1970). Brookfield (2013) and Minter (2011) posited that to be a successful teacher of adult students, an educator must understand the difference between how children and adults learn. Moreover, Howard and Taber (2010) stressed that the educator must involve adult learners in every aspect of their own education, including planning, execution, and evaluation, to facilitate learning and achieve maximum results. Caffarella (2002) theorized that student-to-student and student-to-teacher collaborations, and interactive experiences via individualized learning plans are options that result in increased adult student interaction and eventual academic success. These qualities in adult educators could result in measurably improved student achievement (Knowles, 1984, Mezirow, 2003).

Bringing adult students' life experiences to the educational arena is useful in teaching them, for these experiences address the cognitive, emotional, and physical aspects of the learner (Mezirow, 2003). Adult students are most comfortable in achieving their stated goals by subscribing to a holistic learning approach, building on their experiences, and being intrinsically motivated (Joseph, 2013; Merriam & Bierema, 2013). As a comprehensive theory of adult learning, transformative learning, as developed by

Mezirow (1992), suggests change in the individual as an opportunity to improve one's

life, in and out of the classroom (Brookfield, 2013; Cranton & Taylor, 2012).

Adult learning theorists focus on the learner (Merriam et al., 2012; Minter, 2011).

These researchers made the point that to see measurable gains in the academic success of

adult students, adult educators should understand the characteristics of adult learners and

use andragogical teaching methods and delivery strategies, because the learner is

involved and central to the learning process. Minter (2011) emphasized that knowledge

about learning theory and collaboration with other educators are important concepts for

the adult educator. Supportive of adult learning theory in teacher training, Ross-Gordon

(2011) and Lambert et al. (2014) confirmed that because adult learners typically

multitask various roles, institutions should know and understand the challenges faced by

them and be flexible in planning programs for their success. Educators often perceive

adult learners as having various learning styles, within a broad range of abilities. Day,

Lovato, Tull, and Ross-Gordon (2011) emphasized the need for the adult educator to

receive training and be current regarding adult learning theories, learners' potential

motivators, and learning styles, as well as using strategies for best practices in the

classroom.

Andragogists view the learner as independent, and insist special performance-

centered learning approaches enhance the adult learners' experiences, maturity, and self-

directed qualities (Knowles, 1970; Knowles et al., 2012). These approaches are often

informal educational practices, which include the classroom climate of flexibility

between the educator and the adult learner (Smith, 2010). Knowles et al. (2014) argued

that differences exist in how adults learn as opposed to how children learn, and, as such, the teacher of nontraditional students should consider these unique differences. Knowles advocated that adult educators should incorporate these adult learning theory strategies, as well as the adult's life experiences into the instructional design to achieve adult learner improvement and overall success.

Although andragogy supports a learner-centered adult education system, it is not without its critics. Minter (2011) argued that there was no one size fits all theories for learners in general and adult learners in particular. Researchers critical of andragogy noted that limited amounts of empirical research exist, and that previous research has focused on learning for the benefit of the business sector and not for adult learners or their educators (Henschke, 2011). In relating the many critics' position about andragogy as a learning theory, Henschke (2011) pointed out that a common thread among most critics against andragogy was that the discussion centered on Knowles and not necessarily on the theory.

Another criticism that even Knowles himself addressed was the idea that pedagogy, the method of teaching children, should not be totally discounted in the realm of adult education. There are useful views in both andragogy and pedagogy regarding how students learn, and the fact that adults and children learn differently should not undermine one over the other (Mezirow, 1981). Critics have noted that even as Knowles (1970) clarified the importance of andragogy as a learning theory, he also voiced the need to do more research on learners and their teachers (Minter, 2011). Another concern about the claims of andragogy is ambiguity about teaching or learning in adulthood (Hartree,

1984). In her criticism of andragogy, Hartree confirmed that adult learners could assist the teacher in planning their learning outcomes, but holds a similar opinion as Robles (1998) that it is impossible to apply this to all learning situations.

Taylor and Laros (2014) contended that a need exists for additional research to prove some of the vast claims made by Knowles and other supporters of the adult learning theory. While concerns about andragogy exist regarding Knowles's exclusion of cultural differences, values, and that this is indeed a learning theory, there is agreement that there is validity in the viability and practical opportunity for andragogy (St Clair & Benjamin, 2011). Henschke (2011) also theorized that in spite of its obvious lack of empirical studies, further research could quite possibly grant andragogy a respectful place in the scientific, academic discipline.

Best Practices

The phrase *best practice,* borrowed from other professions, often refers to work in the field that is exemplary and possibly high-tech. If professionals are adhering to best practice standards, they will understand and incorporate the best of current learning trends and procedures for student success (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2012). Zemelman et al. (2012) emphasized that best practices in education represent classroom demonstrations and interactions with students, which a skilled practitioner of education knows will result in enhanced and ongoing student engagement. Educational best practices are those research-based, effective strategies used in the classroom that promote improved, continued, and measurable student achievement.

Based on a review of K-12 research literature regarding educator classroom delivery, a positive relationship exists between teacher training, classroom delivery, and student accomplishment (Beder, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Karten, 2013). Providing opportunities for educators to improve their professional offerings will assist them in demonstrating the best of their craft, thus affecting engagement, persistence, and overall student academic outcomes (Alhassan, 2012; Joo, Lim, & Kim, 2013). Education leaders hope these opportunities affect centers and other educational institutions, and make them "more student-centered, active, experiential, authentic, democratic, collaborative, rigorous, and challenging" (Zemelman et al., 2012. p. vii). As educators of nontraditional learners demonstrate their knowledge of how these students learn, teachers will exhibit various approaches that result in improved overall student accomplishment, thus exemplifying best practices (Arendale, 2013).

A closer investigation of states' educational attempts to lessen or close the educational achievement gap, which often exists between low-income and minority students and their peers, has confirmed that teacher quality matters, thus calling for improved strategies to inform nontraditional student educators (Arendale, 2013; Samaroo, Cooper, & Green, 2013). Within the andragogical model, it is understood that adults and children learn differently; therefore, it was important to clarify to what extent adult educators understood and addressed the difference between teaching adults and pedagogical instruction outlined by Samaroo et al. (2013). While Samaroo et al. understood that adults and children learn differently, they emphasized that even adult self-directed learning can benefit students when educators guide the learning process.

Teachers of adult students should understand this, so that in designing lessons, teachers can influence the process of challenging nontraditional learners, structure classroom delivery and interaction, and accommodate the learner's willingness to learn. In this way, the educator's knowledge and classroom demonstration become more effective and students are engaged.

Educational best practices are instructional strategies supported by research (Boud & Molloy, 2013). Highly qualified teachers use these active and transformative learning strategies, which promote cognitive growth, to exemplify their understanding of what works best in the classroom, as well as to secure noticeable and measurable academic improvement for their students (Brookfield, 2012; Ross-Gordon, 2011). Although much of the teachers' research studies by Candy (1991) on instructional practices of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and the GED did not address secondary education instructional practices per se, the research data have provided valuable information regarding classroom behaviors or best practices of teachers of nontraditional students. Subsequent and current research of adult education best practices support the perception that teachers of nontraditional students realize measurable improvements when the learning environment enhances students' involvement and teacher best practice strategies (Blank, 2013). These methods are to (a) be flexible, (b) involve students, (c) inspire learners to realize that any experience is invaluable, (d) include real life when referenced within academic contexts, and (e) encourage teacher-to-student collaboration in curriculum planning and execution (Blair, 2010).

A review of adult education literature showed that researchers should conduct

more research in the area of best practices training for educators of adult students. Keillor

and Littlefield (2012) suggested best practices in teaching nontraditional learners should

include the known concepts of andragogy, which encourages adult readiness to learn. In

Keillor and Littlefield's estimation, these best practices should include collaboration with

students on their learning needs as well as learning objectives and a culture of

approachability. Keillor and Littlefield advocated that an understanding and support of

best practices should help a facilitation of learning and autonomy and independence.

Teacher Training

In a detailed report that emphasized the need for trained teachers, Staiger and

Rockoff (2010) outlined the academic benefit to students and educational institutions

when teachers are highly effective because of training. This report asserted that with

subsequent training, teachers' effectiveness could result in guaranteed academic gains for

schools (Staiger & Rockoff, 2010). The findings also documented the likelihood of

schools providing continuous training for new teachers and part-time teachers, and

rewarding those teachers whose performance registers measurable student gains.

Other researchers who supported the benefits of teacher training documented

evidence of teacher quality. Desimone, Smith, and Phillips (2013) disclosed from the

National Educational Longitudinal Studies of 1988 and 2012 that when certified teachers

teach students in their particular discipline, students outperformed other students in a

similar subject area. In many ways, Desimone et al. argued that many variables determine

student achievement, but that when teachers are specially trained in the area they teach,

there are noticeable and measureable student gains. Based on other research studies,

teachers are important determinants (Aguerrebere, 2011; L. Brown, 2010). Hess et al.

(2012) addressed two factors, which appear to be critical to student outcomes about

teacher determinants. These factors are teacher training in a discipline in which they

teach, and teachers meeting criteria of a highly qualified teacher. To emphasize their

position, Hess et al. concluded,

> Given the diversity of programs, clientele, cultures, needs and professionals
>
> between and within states—it is clear that one size will not fit all. Many teachers
>
> come into the field "sideways," with little or no preparation for teaching, or with
>
> little or no preparation for working with adults. There is an essential and
>
> immediate need for all new educators to learn and understand adult learning
>
> theory and to build on a base of common knowledge. (p. 6)

Researchers have confirmed that teacher training impacts student outcomes

(Brown, 2010; Chisholm, 2012). A need exists for additional research reevaluation of

teacher preparation programs, particularly in the subject matter area, education leaders

find that ongoing training, collaborative partnerships with other schools, and on-site

collegial partnerships are beneficial to teachers as is evidenced by students' academic

achievement (Chisholm, 2012). *Reach Higher, America*, the National Commission on

Adult Literacy (2008), and more recently, Johnson, Simon, and Mun (2014), provided

critical data that more than 1.2 million Americans drop out of high school each year;

moreover, the numbers are higher in certain racial and ethnic groups (Johnson et al.,

2014). In making his claim for an andragogical instructional model that is relevant in

educating nontraditional learners, Knowles (1984) argued that adult learners' success is contingent upon exceptional teachers using strategies geared toward the needs and characteristics of nontraditional students. Tighe, Barnes, Connor, and Steadman (2013) concluded from their study that teachers of adult learners play a significant role in their students' success; moreover, in active nontraditional classrooms, where teachers employed varying strategies to enhance learning, positive and goal-focused interaction exists.

Demonstrating the best of their craft, adult educators should know learning theories that apply to adult learners, they should be familiar with adult students' learning styles, and they should be knowledgeable regarding instructional methods that result in success for nontraditional adult students (Aud et al., 2012; Auerbach et al., 2013; Bell, 2012; Taylor, 2012). Because adult learners comprise a diverse canvas of experiences, Beder et al. (2006), Bell (2012), and Knowles (1984) asserted that educators of adults must understand this characteristic of the nontraditional learner. Teachers of adult students should devise means to convey program goals, which outline individual student's potential for a seamless entrance into the job market, incentives to help learners persist to graduation or program completion, and skills that convey the ability to diagnose nontraditional learner concerns, which may potentially prevent achievement (Bell, 2012).

In spite of a student's socioeconomic background, studies reveal that often teacher training influenced their success (Desimone et al., 2013). Supporting the need for specific training in classroom delivery, Baumert et al. (2010) reported it is important for all educators to have pedagogical training, and have a focus on classroom delivery. After

reviewing several research studies, Van Doorn and Van Doorn (2014) concluded a need

exists for teachers of adult students to raise their effectiveness to increase the success of

their students. To achieve this level of efficacy, Bingman and Smith (2013) underscored

that improving adult educator quality could result in greater adult student achievement.

The research literature is replete with evidence that teacher quality is an important

determinant of student academic achievement. Hess et al. (2012) reasoned many

employed nontraditional student educators are not trained in teaching methods to teach

adults; however, they are expected to "perform the complex task of teaching all subjects

at twelve grade levels to adults, up to half of whom are learning disabled" (p. 2). While

this may be the case in many adult education arenas, to keep pace with the global

marketplace, adult education teachers should be prepared with high-quality educational

training, compensated with better employee benefits, and provided appropriate ongoing

professional development opportunities to secure the best trainers for the United States'

workforce (Burton, Bessette, Brown-Jackson, & Grimm, 2013; Hess et al., 2012; Pappas,

2013).

The USDOE (2015) published that adjunct employment across the United States

has increased more than 160% within the last two decades. As the trend in the

employment of adjuncts increases, there is a need to ensure that quality instruction is not

sacrificed to address the instructional needs of increased student enrollment (Datray et al.,

2014; Heuerman, Jones, & Kelly, 2013). Because of the increased enrollment of adult

learners, there is a need to ensure that part-time faculty are trained to teach this increased

demographic of nontraditional learners in secondary schools. Rowh (2014) contended

that adjunct faculty should be trained and supported in how to deliver quality instruction, and how to engage students. Rowh advanced that in addition to being knowledgeable about the subject matter or discipline taught, part-time faculty should be provided training in their interaction with students. Teaching in a secondary educational program requires flexibility and skill in delivering a program geared toward developing learner knowledge in areas that the teacher may have no prior training or expertise. For this reason, adjunct faculty must be afforded these traits that would help them navigate the path to instructor and student success by way of institutional inclusion in departmental meetings, collaborative opportunities with all faculty, and other training opportunities afforded full-time teachers.

Professional Development

With the changing of the educational landscape in the 21st century, school leaders understood that the promotion of improved student achievement and increased educator performance depends, to a large degree, on individual teacher knowledge and competency, as well as skill in technology integration (Stanley, 2011). However, Eaton (2011) argued that with the increasing demand for accountability from governments, policy makers, and educational researchers, educational institutions appear more inclined to ensure that a marked increase in student academic outcomes occurs, and are willing to invest in more results-driven performance enhancement opportunities for teachers. Desimone et al. (2013) also reasoned that teacher training was influential to the success of students, despite many of the students' socioeconomic backgrounds.

Although the research literature is not conclusive, evidence exists that professional development opportunities offered to teachers of varying students could lead to student academic gains (Heller, Daehler, Wong, Shinohara, & Miratrix, 2012; Stanley, 2011; USDOE, 2013a). Measurable improvement in student outcomes occurs when professional development activities are (a) comprehensive, (b) focused on content knowledge, (c) characterized by active learning, and (d) offered over several hours or ongoing over time, with follow-up support (Boud & Hager, 2012; Desimone, Porter, Garret, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; McPhail, 2013). Suggesting that educational executives provide professional development opportunities to educators, McPhail as well as Hunzicker (2011) advocated further that institutions should formulate an assessment of practical strategies, as well as those that do not work. Chesbro and Boxler (2010) reported that when educators create opportunities to share collegially, especially via technology use and common disciplines, the professional development opportunity is enhanced.

The National Staff Development Council, as reported by Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, and Goe (2011), outlined that professional development delineates what teachers should know: Education leaders, including adjuncts, should structure the experience to improve the effectiveness of the classroom delivery, create opportunities for teacher-to-teacher collaboration, student continued interaction, and should describe precisely how this training reflects student achievement (Hunzicker, 2011). Ongoing professional development opportunities, as noted by proponents of teacher quality, improve the knowledge and skills of teachers when the offerings are planned and executed to support

district, school, and teacher planned initiatives aimed at increasing student achievement

and teacher pedagogical strategies (Goodwin, 2011; Zepke & Leach, 2010). Additionally,

Blank (2013) and Cole (2012) advocated for a model of professional development, which

included teacher coaching and evaluation, classroom demonstration of training, and a

follow-up program with appropriate feedback. Chisholm (2012) and Wyatt (2011)

suggested that without the monitoring and intensity of program content, many

educational researchers feel that professional development will lack the force needed for

the outcomes desired.

Effective professional development planning and execution take into

consideration the teacher's needs, open-ended learning activities, the inclusion of high-

intensity interactive activities, and documented classroom interface with feedback, as

they sustain ongoing support (Blank, 2013). McPhail (2013) advised that professional

development should include collaborative tools whereby institutions can identify if they

meet objectives, and if not, work cooperatively to improve. McPhail's plan to identify

gaps and various need-to-know challenges is an opportunity for schools to analyze

current data and formulate plans for future success.

An important segment of the school campus to include in professional

development is training opportunities for part-time teachers, for the simple reason that

they are often not included yet comprise a growing number of the teaching staff on many

secondary institution campuses (Kezar & Maxey, 2013). Although part-time teachers are

routinely invited to participate in professional development opportunities, there is a need

to standardize these opportunities as a part of the institution's program to develop educator skills and strategies to increase student success.

Millner-Harlee (2010) explained that adjunct faculty at community colleges expressed that in addition to their feeling of disconnectedness, they were not provided appropriate and needed professional development opportunities, and unlike newer faculty, who were assigned mentors, they were not. Adjuncts, like full-time faculty, impact students in meaningful ways that could improve student outcomes and overall success (Bedford & Miller, 2013). What adjuncts stated overwhelmingly in the Millner-Harlee study was that they felt unsupported, unneeded, and disconnected from other faculty and, to a certain extent, from the campus. A continuous program supporting professional development opportunities for part-time teachers should include prospects for continuous and open communication to collaborate with other faculty, both adjuncts and full-time, inclusion in departmental or institutional meetings to share relevant information to improve craft and alleviate feelings of isolation, as well as improve and increase student achievement (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011).

School leaders who articulate a vision and set expectations for achieving these goals via ongoing professional development are successful, as they witness improved teacher talent and increased gains in student achievement (Heller et al., 2012). Documented student achievement occurs when professional development is content-specific, involves teacher-to-teacher collaboration, is supported with mentors, is cyclic, and ongoing; therefore, measurable and improved teacher quality occurs, which includes classroom practice (Blank, 2013; McPhail, 2013). When all teachers demonstrate the best

of their craft, students benefit; moreover, there is evidence of academic gain when teachers update their professional and academic skills, and professional development is monitored and ongoing (Saunders, 2012). Owusu and Yiboe (2014) articulated that when developmental opportunities for teachers include curriculum and learning, students' academic gains become a reality; the result is noticeable, improved student achievement.

Implications

The benchmark of any successful educational initiative is increased student performance. Any plan that does not result in measureable and improved student outcomes fails (Blank, 2013). In this study, the goal was to examine collected data derived from the research study questions, and then use this data to identify themes and strategies deemed the most conducive to assist adjunct instructors in meeting adult learner success.

Without an education, underprepared adults will be unemployed and lack the necessary skills to compete, among other things, in the increasingly complex global community. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD; 2011), more than 36 million adults are deemed low-skilled. This number is growing. If educational and workforce development institutions do not aggressively work to solve this alarming statistic, this number of illiterate adults will adversely affect the American economy. Adult learners desiring training to obtain core competencies or to qualify for the highly competitive workforce represent a complex mix of students. These students are older than 25 years, have other life issues where they are care providers for

children or a significant other, and did not complete high school, among other identifiers (Blair, 2010).

By changing one's educational standing, there are indicators that this could possibly affect socio-economic status, and open opportunities for a variety of social change (Shor, 2012). Based on the available demographic data of CALC, education could be a critical ingredient to combat the high incidence of poverty necessary for skill development and economic advancement. Preece (2013) suggested that to reverse poverty, a condition that restricts and deprives, adult education could be the key to achieve social change. Social change is an important element in supporting individuals on the local, national, and global level (OECD, 2013).

According to Walden University, social change is defined as "a deliberate process of creating and applying ideas, strategies, and actions to promote the worth, dignity, and development of individuals and communities alike" (Walden Impact, 2012, p. 2). Because of ongoing training, the potential for adjunct faculty improvement in classroom delivery and increased student interaction are possibilities, which could increase student persistence and graduation rates (Taylor, 2012). Based on this project study, the findings highlight the importance of effective part-time educators and their influence on improved student learning at CALC.

As a result of this research study, the potential exists for part-time teachers at CALC to form collaborative groups, to create or promote collegial sharing and provide practical evaluations through constructive feedback. The report from the project study will inform administrators where the gap in practice exists, and propose areas of needed

professional development for part-time faculty. Students will benefit because they will experience quality learning. Adjuncts will be better trained in how nontraditional students learn and thereby raise the graduation or completion rates of the adult education center.

In chronicling achievement, educational leaders could improve the delivery skills of part-time teachers of nontraditional students in an ongoing program. Program graduates could then affect their communities, for prospective employers will have a supply of trained candidates from which to staff their establishments, all the while lowering the unemployment rate in the county public school community.

Summary

As shown in the literature review and the earlier sections of this paper, evidentiary support for this project's research questions exists. The success of adult learners in vocational and secondary educational institutions may depend in large part on how well trained the educators are who teach them (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Professional part-time educators must be more efficient, knowledgeable of adult teaching theories, and skilled at delivering a successful curriculum to students whose goals and outlook are more varied than are those required for more traditional learners (Hess et al., 2012; McPhail, 2013). Faculty training, collaborative activities, and subsequent ongoing professional development are opportunities for part-time teachers of nontraditional learners to strengthen their craft and improve student academic outcomes.

Section 1 of this project study was an outline of the problem of the lack of professional development opportunities for part-time instructors. In a review of the literature related to teacher quality as a determinant of adult student achievement,

researchers suggested how appropriate instructional strategies and a working understanding of educational theories obtained through teacher training could improve instructor delivery, classroom interaction, and overall best practices to achieve improved student success. This process could ultimately result in improved adult student academic outcomes demonstrated in measurable graduation rates (Blank, 2013; McPhail, 2013). Section 2 includes an explanation of the design methodology for this project study. In Section 2, I outlined the plan for data collection and demonstrated how the problem and study questions guided the research. Finally, I delineated the process used to collect and analyze the project study data, as well as procedures for dealing with discrepant cases should there have been any in the data collection and analysis.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

I explored current practices and professional development training that part-time faculty perceive to contribute to adult student success. In attempting to understand the phenomenon that has been shown to affect adult student achievement, a qualitative approach was appropriate, as this design allows for uncovering meaning and undertakes the collection of data via interviews (Merriam, 2014). Houser (2014) stressed that research is the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to understand a phenomenon. Gall (2013) further elaborated that researchers seek to understand and apply solutions to real-life issues. Baxter and Jack (2008) endorsed that qualitative case study is an opportunity "to explore or describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources" (p. 544). To describe and explore adjunct instructors' current practices and needs for professional development that focus on adult learner needs, the research questions that guided the study were:

1.   How do part-time teachers in an adult education program reflect on their awareness of adult learning principles through practice and professional development?

2.   What types of professional development opportunities do adjuncts believe would support their overall instructional performance and adult student success?

Qualitative methodology was appropriate because the purpose of this study was to understand in-depth the professional development that adjunct educators of adult students

identify as having the most positive impact on adult student learning. This choice of research design is flexible. It allowed me to address the types of research questions I have developed, as well as gain background information. Accordingly, I was able to explain the design in detail, including the participant selection process, the data collection method to include open-ended, semi-structured interviews, and data analysis of the research project study (Creswell, 2012; Tellis, 1997; Yin, 2014).

Research Design and Approach

To provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomena through the firsthand experiences of participants, I selected a qualitative approach as the best means of answering the research questions; this allowed me a better understanding of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2012). I used a qualitative, exploratory, single case research design, as illustrated by Tellis (1997) and Yin (2014) to explore the professional development needs and teaching practices of part-time teachers of adult learners. A quantitative approach was considered; however, I was interested in obtaining an in-depth understanding of the adjuncts' adult learning practices and professional development needs that could not be interpreted with numbers. It was not my intent to determine relationships between variables, test a hypothesis, or establish cause and effect relationships.

In contrast, Hancock and Algozzine (2011) stated that the objective of qualitative research is to understand the phenomena from the participants' perspective, which was my goal. This qualitative research project allowed me to represent the knowledge, perspectives, and experiences of the part-time teachers (Stake, 2010; Tellis, 1997).

Qualitative researchers desire to understand and interpret social interactions, whereas quantitative researchers test hypotheses and look at potential cause and make predictions (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). To understand interactions and "determine the feasibility of the research," qualitative researchers study the whole phenomenon, not variables (Tellis, 1997, p. 3). As I interviewed adjuncts, I hoped to capture their unique viewpoints regarding professional development on their craft, and how it impacted their professional growth in aiding the achievement of adult student success. The data collection process was insightful, for in collecting data, a qualitative researcher explores words, images, and even objects to identify patterns, features, and themes critical in answering the research questions (Creswell, 2012; Tracy, 2010).

Case Study Design

Little to no research had been conducted about how adjunct instructors' practices are guided by adult learning theory, and how they perceived their professional development needs for teaching adult learners. The information gained from this is unique and lay the groundwork for further research. My choice of a case study design was solidified by what Merriam (1988) referred to as "uniqueness" (p. 33).

While the research outcomes of a case study are not typically used to make broad generalizations, the findings are indispensable in gaining a deep understanding of a phenomenon and could be helpful in decision-making at the local level (Yin, 2009). Yin articulated that case study fulfills three principles of qualitative methodology: describing, understanding, and explaining. These aided in allowing a researcher to collect data as opposed to derived data obtained from questionnaires and surveys. Yin (1994) also

outlined five components of research design critical for case study: the research question(s), design propositions, the unit of analysis, how data are linked to the proposition, and the criteria for interpreting the findings (p. 20). Bromley (1986) further supported that a qualitative case study would "spread the net for evidence widely, whereas experiments and surveys (quantitative study) have a narrow focus" (p. 23). As advanced by Miles and Huberman (1994), a case is "a thing, a single entity, a unit around which are boundaries" (p. 25), and without these boundaries, the research is not case study. According to Creswell (2012), case study is "an in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection" (p. 485). Case study is "fenced" because it "is separated out for research in terms of time, place, or some physical boundaries" (Creswell, 2012, p. 485), and the researcher can control what is not included. *Bounded* suggests that the study has distinct parameters in what is to be researched. Merriam's definition of the boundedness of a case study allows for flexibility to research the phenomenon. In this study, the case or unit of study (adjuncts) is bounded by space (only adjuncts at the research site) and time (the adjuncts perception currently). Full-time teachers and their characteristics at the site were not included in this study.

Merriam (1998) also emphasized that a case study would yield the rich, thick descriptions of the phenomenon in a shortened time frame without the researcher being a participant observer. "Qualitative case study can be defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive and heuristic, and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources" (Merriam, 1988, p. 16).

A researcher is not restricted in the use of how or why questions in case studies, for any of the research strategies suggested by Yin (2009) can be utilized. Case study research allows a researcher an opportunity to use the inductive method of investigation and focus on participants' perceptions to understand the phenomenon being investigated (Lodico et al., 2010). Finally, in this research project a case study approach provided me an in-depth understanding of the phenomena as well as it allowed me to examine it through the perceptions of the participants.

Design Justification

I considered approaches such as ethnography and grounded theory for this study. I did not choose either, because this was not an in-depth study of a culture (Compton-Lilly et al., 2015). Grounded theory was also rejected. Based on the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), researchers use this approach to develop a theory (Lodico et al., 2010). However, this project study's focus was not to provide an explanation or build a theory, but to develop a deep analysis of the stated phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). In view of that, I selected a qualitative case study design.

Participants

Purposeful sampling was used in this research project study to maximize efficiency and increase validity, as well as ensure that the research questions are informed and the phenomenon is understood (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2014). Participants were selected who could address the important elements of the research questions. The research questions were developed to explore the bounded system of part-

time teachers' best practices and professional development training in an urban adult student educational setting.

Criteria for Selection of Participants

I explored how part-time teachers in an adult education program reflected on their awareness of adult learning principles through practice and professional development, and what types of professional development opportunities part-time teachers believed would support their overall instructional performance, and improve adult student success. Because I wanted to understand the participants' perception in-depth, the criteria for selection and the number of participants was key, as they informed the research questions and provided a thorough understanding of the phenomena. Participant selection in qualitative research has a profound effect on the ultimate quality of research data (Yin, 2014). Finally, the expressed sampling purpose of this project was to "ensure all the key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter are covered," and that participant confidentiality was maintained (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013, p. 79). In this study, eight part-time instructors with a minimum of 2 years' experience teaching in the adult education program were selected to participate in the research project.

Justification for Number of Participants

Qualitative research does not require the sample size be of a specific number as in quantitative research, which requires a sample size that will provide statistical significance to determine statistically significant discriminatory variables (Merriam, 2009; Ritchie et al., 2013). A larger sample size in qualitative research may not result in new evidence from the data, "because phenomena need only appear once to be part of the

analytical map… there is, therefore, a point of diminishing return" (Ritchie et al., 2013, p. 83). Because of efficiency, context, and available resources, researchers typically confine qualitative studies to a particular geographic location as was done in this study (Ritchie et al., 2013). In any event, this size permitted me to identify a consistent pattern, suggesting that there are no new patterns or themes emerging and saturation had been achieved (Ritchie et al., 2013). One thing that is most important is selecting a pool of participants who can answer the research questions, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and reach data saturation; this was achieved in this study (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009).

Because it may have been necessary to supplement the sample size of eight participants, the participant pool was larger than the initial sample size, in the event that participants decided to withdraw from the project. Yin (2009) and Ritchie et al. (2013) contended that as the research progresses, adding additional participants might be necessary. However, due to administrative issues at the research site, CALC, I was able to secure my initial participant number and did not rely on the pool participants.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

To gain access to participants, I followed the appropriate procedures at various levels. Having received prior permission to conduct the research study at CALC, and gaining committee and University Research Review (URR) approval for my proposal, I secured approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), and followed CALC's protocol as required before any contact was made with participants.

Provided with teacher e-mails, I sent out invitations via e-mail to all teachers who fit the criteria for inclusion in the study. After receiving e-mail confirmation regarding participants' willingness to participate in the project study, I then created a list of potential participants who had expressed their desire to participate, and sent a letter of informed consent via e-mail. After securing a participant group, there were three teachers who offered to participate, but who were now full-time with the program, and were not eligible to take part in the study. I thanked them for their willingness to participate in the project, and spoke with them about their work with adult students, but informed them I had acquired my quota of participants who met the study criteria. It was my intention to collect data in the least intrusive way as possible with participants, so I developed rapport with participants prior to the interview, all the while maintaining participant confidentiality (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Elected participants were encouraged to electronically sign their informed consent in a return e-mail that stated "I consent." After reviewing the informed consent document of potential participants, the participant and I decided on the initial interview based on a mutually agreed upon time and place. Although full-time teachers consented to sharing information about their knowledge of the adult education program, interviews were limited to part-time teachers in the program who satisfied the criteria for the research.

I had e-mailed all known part-time teachers in the adult education program to invite them to participate in the study. Responses from potential participants were few who fit the criteria outlined in the invitational e-mail. On the first day after sending out the e-mail, I received a response to participate. The following day, three other teachers

consented to participate. After not getting favorable responses, I walked the halls of the

center and personally invited teachers to participate in the study. As a result, four teachers

who fit the criteria consented and were selected. All part-time teachers interviewed were

passionate about teaching adults, and appeared invested in their careers as adult education

professionals. The attributes of the participants are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Attributes of Participants

Participant	Gender	Certification	Race	Years at CALC	Highest Degree
A	M	Trade 7-12	W	4	Masters
B	M	N-6	W	3	Masters
C	F	None	W	2	Masters (in process)
D	F	Spec. Ed. K-6	W	3	Masters
E	M	Adult Ed/Spec. Ed	B	4	Masters
F	M	Spec. Ed. Trade	W	3	Masters
G	M	N-6	W	2	Masters (in process)
H	M	Elem. Ed	H	3	Masters

Note. M = Male; F = Female; W = White; B = Black; H = Hispanic.

Based on information shared with me in the interviews, many of the part-time

teachers were retired from teaching in a K-12 setting, some from the same district. Some

part-time teachers in the program were newly graduated from college, and were not

trained in methods. Part-time faculty did not receive any benefits from the district, and

were paid a percentage of their final salary if they were retired from the district. Others

were paid about $20 an hour. Only one participant had no certifications, and two others

were attempting to acquire a master's degree in education.

The part-time teachers voiced that they were uncomfortable to share some of their

concerns with the program administration for fear of reprisals. Understanding teachers'

roles, commitment to their position, and their willingness to participate in change will reduce the complexity of the implementation of educational change (Shaheen, Gupta, & Kumar, 2016). Belogolovsky and Somech (2010) stated that having knowledge of the concerns and traits of teachers would help educational organizations provide a better work environment that is conducive to teacher satisfaction and student success. Below is a detailed discussion about the findings of the study.

Method of Establishing Researcher-Participant Working Relationship

It is essential for a researcher to develop a good relationship with research participants so they will be relaxed and open during the interview. This is important as participants are the gatekeepers to getting the needed data (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Holloway & Wheeler, 2013). By being transparent and honest about the research process and study goals before the research begins, and answering all questions, participants were encouraged to respond to my questions during the interview (Robards, 2013).

Prior to the start of interviews, I visited the site and personally met each participant. When each potential participant responded to my initial introductory e-mail, each was assured again of the voluntary nature of the project. The informed consent provided a description of the research project, as well as a listing of the process to ensure participant understanding and confidentiality. I verbally emphasized this information, and assured part-time teachers they would be able to withdraw at any time without any consequences. I e-mailed interview questions to participants several days ahead of the interview to lessen any anxiety, and to allow them time to think about their answers to the questions. I also informed participants that they would have access to the initial summary

analysis of their responses for their review and revision before it would be used as research data. Participants were assured that they each had direct access to my e-mail and private cell phone number to contact me with any current or future concerns they may have. Although participants were advised that the interview might take less than an hour, should it become necessary to extend the interview time, their permission would be requested for an extension, and each was informed that their refusal would be honored should they decline.

Ethical Considerations

A researcher must behave responsibly and professionally and should anticipate potential ethical issues (Lodico et al., 2010). Consequently, in complying with the IRB of Walden University for the protection of human study, I secured a letter of cooperation from the site to conduct the research project study. I secured approval of my proposal and IRB application, Approval #10-10-16-0253829 prior to any participant contact. Participants were provided a copy of the informed consent. The informed consent emphasized the voluntary nature of the study. Participants were assigned unique numbers to protect confidentiality, and were also assured they are free to withdraw at any time upon their request. I emphasized that I would never engage in deception or involve participants in harmful practices.

I took extra precaution to be open and honest with participants. I shared that this type of study could involve some risk with minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue, stress, or becoming upset. To prevent fatigue during the interview, I verbalized that I would accommodate each participant's schedule when

arranging interview times, and make schedule changes or adjustments to fit the

participant's need. To further ensure confidentiality, I emphasized that no participant or

site personnel would be identified in the study report. All study materials would be

secured in a locked file in my home during the actual research project, and at its

completion for five years afterwards. To abide by IRB requirements and guidelines, I

earlier completed the online training regarding the protection of human participants given

by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Office of Extramural Research. The date of

training completion was April 28, 2015, Certificate Number 1754766 (see Appendix E).

Each participant was sent a thank you letter for participating in the study.

Data Collection

Qualitative case study provides a researcher with multiple options for data

collection (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2009). Interviews, observations, and field data are the

most common processes of data collection in case studies. Yin (2009) advised that

qualitative researchers be cognizant of how the research question, the actual events, and

the phenomena fit together. In this single case study research project, I used interviews as

the data source. How participants described their lived experiences is important;

therefore, recording and portraying accurately the rich details detected within context was

critical to assuring validity and credibility of the study's findings. To capture this

portrayal accurately satisfied the requirements of qualitative data collection (Suter, 2011).

Collecting and analyzing qualitative data can become overwhelming (Baxter &

Jack, 2008); a researcher should devise a strategy to "organize and manage the potential

voluminous amount of data" as it is collected (p. 559). Before collecting the data, I

reviewed the literature for collecting data in a qualitative case study. To ensure that I

followed the process, I made sure to understand new trends that might be appropriate, and

how best to proceed. To make sense of the retrieved data, it was important to manage the

mountain of words in an ongoing process so as not to be overwhelmed. Yin (2009)

advised to make use of a case study database. However, I chose to use Microsoft Excel

because of my familiarity with it, and it provided a convenient organizational strategy for

coding and generating identified themes. Prior to conducting the actual interviews with

participants, I conducted a field test with one part-time teacher who had been at the center

and was supportive of the study. He assisted me in providing feedback about the

questions, and I was assured that some of my probing questions would yield the rich thick

data needed to answer the research questions. I also transcribed the interview and

provided a summary to get a feel for what to expect as the study was under way.

Interviews

The interview is one of the most conventional means of data collection, as well as

one of the most important (Yin, 2009). As described by Ritchie et al. (2013), interviewing

in case study research is a rigorous and telling verbal exchange with a purpose. Rubin and

Rubin (1995) argued, "Through qualitative interviews you can understand experiences

and reconstruct events in which you did not participate" (p. 1). I intentionally chose

interviewing as the primary data collection instrument for this research project.

Interviewing provided me a deep understanding of how adjuncts reflect on their

perception of adult learning principles through their practice and professional

development, as well as the types of professional development they believe would

support their instructional performance and student achievement. Merriam (2014) emphasized that a researcher must take care to refine questions to avoid irrelevant verbiage and refrain from asking multiple questions before the interviewee can answer. The semi-structured interview method as suggested by Glesne (2011) was used, and generated rich data as opposed to a strict interview arrangement. The project interview questions are included in Appendix J.

I composed open-ended questions to permit participants opportunities to respond in the least restrictive way, and for me to probe for deeper understanding. By crafting the interview in this way, participants were comfortable as they shared personal experiences, provided follow-up and further clarification, and added information that the initial question may have inadvertently eliminated (Glesne, 2011). I, in turn, upon exploration, gained a rich and deep understanding of the participants' perspective and thereby achieved answers to the project's research questions.

Most of the interviews lasted approximately 50 to 90 minutes depending on the respondents' answers (Lodico et al., 2010). I conducted the interviews at locations most convenient to participants to ensure quiet, comfort, and confidentiality. Participants were encouraged to be relaxed, as I took care of concerns prior to the actual interview, and gave opportunities during the interview for time to relax, to again ensure confidentiality and care as I recorded their responses (Creswell, 2012). Probing initial responses provided the opportunity to gain clarity from the participants (Glesne, 2011). Yin (2014) and Crowe et al. (2011) underscored that the interview, particularly the flexible and semi-structured interview, where a researcher acts as the human instrument, is the most

conventional method of gathering data in a qualitative design. For this reason, I structured the interview questions carefully in a neutral manner to focus on the research questions, thus allowing for a vivid picture of participants' perspective of the research topic. Techniques used in the interview process were designed to elicit rich, unique, and detailed stories from participants (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

A qualitative researcher is encouraged to take precaution to prevent bias during data collection. Participants were informed and consented to being tape recorded during the session. I then transcribed the audio recordings, and later allowed for member checks, allowing participant review of their perspective, as a way of promoting credibility (Stake, 2010). Tape recording the interview became a quality control process to improve validity and credibility of the interview. By using an audio recording of the interviews, Glesne (2011) and Lodico et al. (2010) highlighted the importance of ensuring validity by the quality of the recording. For this project study, this was accomplished by making sure that the equipment did not malfunction, and by also taking notes to compare during transcription of the interview data. As the interview notes were transcribed continuously (Merriam, 2014), the playback of the interviews resulted in hearing comments during the initial interview that I had forgotten; the playback was a valuable opportunity to gather data without using personal memory that could bias actual feedback and prevent accuracy.

It is important to allow participants the opportunity to review their responses early after the interview through member checks (Stake, 2010). In doing this, they can then see that the interview recording and transcription were authentic rendering of their own

perspectives (Stake, 2010; Toma, 2011). It is also important to the researcher to do this to improve accuracy, trustworthiness, and validity of the recorded and transcribed interview (Merriam, 1988; 2014). For this reason, participants were e-mailed summaries of the transcript prior to coding or looking for themes, and asked to return their responses within seven days. In my study, all participants returned the summaries within a couple of days with no revisions needed. This review allowed participants to verify that I had captured their experiences accurately (Carlson, 2010).

Tracking Data

In his comprehensive discussion of data collection and analysis, Creswell (2012) argued that field notes are objective, reflective logs that could be compiled from conversations during the interview. I organized the information retrieved from the transcribed interviews and carefully reviewed them using my side notes. One strategy to organize to easily retrieve and analyze data involved my creating a document in Excel with participant's responses to the interview questions, and notes coded to the side of the response to ensure meaning and my initial thoughts during the interview. To save time during the entire data collection process, and after each interview, I simultaneously collected and categorized themes (Merriam, 2014).

To keep track of and organize the retrieved data, I created an Excel spreadsheet, which was selectively coded, and invaluable to access and retrieve data (Cresswell, 2012; Glesne, 2011). Creswell (2012) stressed that data organization should begin at the interview to help organize subsequent information, so that retrieval and transcription

would be orderly. This was a valuable process to enhance accuracy, efficiency, and credibility (Glesne, 2011).

Role of Researcher

Merriam (2014) wrote that the researcher is critical to the research process. In this project study, I was not connected in any formal way with the school district, the center, nor involved in teaching adult students, but assumed the role of the primary investigator responsible for the design of the study, data collection, and data analysis. Because I had no present or recent professional relationships with the center, I had no bias regarding the selected participants or the site. I taught adult students in the past and had some biases; however, I guarded these to disallow any interference or prejudice whatsoever (Merriam, 2014).

To create trust and rapport, as well as to encourage openness and participants' viewpoint, I developed a positive relationship with the participants at the research site (Lodico et al., 2010). I attempted to minimize or eliminate biases, and consistently self-evaluated to make sure that there were no predetermined ideas that would hamper the outcome of the research data.

Data Analysis and Results

The primary purpose of data analysis is to get answers to research questions and arrive at conclusions based on these findings. Baxter and Jack (2008) stated that the identified strategy to analyze the data should enhance credibility, accuracy, and provide easy access to coded data. Baxter and Jack, Creswell (2012), and Merriam (2014) advised that during the collection process, data should be organized and analyzed continuously to

ensure that data collection does not become tedious. For this reason, the data collected

from the interviews were transcribed verbatim after each interview. Participants were

provided a transcribed summaries of their interview to maximize data accuracy.

Participants all reviewed a summary of their interview, and returned with their comments.

This process ensured that I did not compromise or exclude participants' views (Stake,

2010).

In case study, per Merriam (2014), transcription and analysis of data "involves

examining, sorting, categorizing, evaluating, comparing, synthesizing, and contemplating

the coded data as well as reviewing the raw and recorded data" (p. 131). For these

reasons, I transcribed the interviews using a word-processing program. I undertook the

lengthy task of recording each interview word for word. Because I sought clarity in the

interview, I read and reread through the transcribed data for a general understanding. I

made notes using the word processing comment tool during the transcription of the word

document, and highlighted important phrases to note their significance.

Merriam et al. (2012) emphasized that coding qualitative data involves

examining descriptive responses provided by participants. As an interpretive act, coding

in this project study was used "symbolically to assign a summative, salient, essence-

capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data"

(Saldaña, 2015, p. 3). In this way, data were categorized and labeled using the actual

language of participants. As qualitative data collection and analysis could be a lengthy

process, Saldaña (2015) advocated that a researcher frequently reflect, categorize, and

analyze the data during the collection process, thus the data is continually labeled and organized to increase accuracy and efficiency.

Allowing the coding system to emerge required that I review the transcripts from each interview and isolate concepts and categories to generate themes. This process helped me create master headings and sub headings. The audio recording took many hours to transcribe (Glesne, 2011). However, using the process outlined by Creswell (2012) to read through transcripts again, and divide into segments color-coded similar themes helped me to organize the data and check for accuracy. Consequently, as I continuously reviewed the data, it was preserved in a way that created meaning, helped to interpret categories, and isolated the connection between the identified themes (Creswell, 2012).

Accuracy and Credibility

Credibility and validity, the strengths of a qualitative study, are important to ensure truthfulness, arrive at a comprehensive conclusion, enhance ethics, and promote the absence of bias (Stake, 2010; Toma, 2011). In this research project, sources of data included multiple teacher interviews to triangulate and ensure that the data collection process was strong. Lincoln and Guba (1985) advocated that triangulation ensures the data collection "is rich, robust, comprehensive, and well-developed" (para. 1). As the single researcher, it was important to confirm the research findings including any possible divergence.

I used triangulation as a strategy from multiple participants, and corroborated repeating themes to provide rich in-depth information and minimize or remove potential

biases (Hastings, 2010). Creswell and Miller (2000) argued the importance of triangulation as "the validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study" (p. 126). It was important that credibility be assured and make sense to the readers of the findings of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In his discussion of data quality, Leung (2015) defined validity as the "appropriateness of the tools, processes, and data" of a research study, and added that value of research findings "can be assessed in terms of validity, reliability, and generalizability" (p. 4). Consequently, in the final data analysis, validity was achieved as participants authenticated the correctness of the data by undertaking member checks; the feedback confirmed that I accurately captured their authentic information (Stake, 2010). Stake (2010) also emphasized that in the data analysis, data should not be excluded due to researcher perspective, opinion, or bias. Finally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) asked how a researcher could persuade audiences that the study findings are "worthy of their attention" (p. 290).

The answer is that qualitative researchers must be skillful in bearing the burden "of discovering and interpreting the importance of what is observed, and of establishing a plausible connection between what is observed and the conclusions drawn in the research report" (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 61). In other words, using multiple data collection methods or triangulation--such as the many part-time teacher interviews, spending extended time in the research field, thus establishing validity, securing rich thick descriptions, and by allowing the participant an opportunity to review the responses helped the researcher achieve validity and credibility.

Discrepant Cases

Because the participant viewpoint may vary considerably, it was my intention to include each participant's perspective. Should I have received any contradictory results, they would have been included in the findings along with any discrepant case data to augment the results and demonstrate diverse viewpoints (Creswell, 2012; Glesne, 2011). However, there were no discrepant cases in the study; there was no situation whatsoever, where a response varied from the norm.

The Research Findings

In undertaking this research study project, it was my intention to explore how adjunct faculty view professional development related to their teaching and learning practice. The research questions that guided the research were designed to explore how part-time teachers in an adult education program reflect on their awareness of adult learning principles through practice and professional development. The questions were intended to also understand the types of professional development opportunities adjuncts believe would support their overall instructional performance and their students' success.

In this section, I demonstrated how the findings of this project study relate to the scholarly literature, and explored how adjunct faculty view professional development related to their teaching and learning practice. To answer the research questions, the interviews were designed to solicit participant perspective. The participants in the study comprised eight part-time teachers currently teaching at CALC for a minimum of two years. At a place and time of their own choosing, the eight teachers were interviewed. As a result of these interviews, with a duration of between 35 and 90 minutes, data were

collected, transcribed, and analyzed. Only one part-time teacher who had previously worked with the school district, currently retired, and working as a part-time instructor in the adult education program had an idea about the percentage of students achieving their HSE diploma. He said he had heard it was less than 40% compared to an earlier figure shared by the administrator supervising teachers. While I spent time talking to faculty at the center, I also reviewed a general position description for faculty that was not specific to part-time teachers. This provided information about how the part-time faculty perceived their responsibilities.

Discussion of the Findings

After analyzing the data and coding the responses, there were five major themes that emerged from this research study. These were determined by their frequency in the data, and relevance to the study questions. These themes were: (a) Barriers to Delivering an Excellent Teaching Plan, (b) Teacher Knowledge of Student Needs, (c) Administrative Concerns, (d) Sense of Community, and (e) Professional Development Needs.

Table 2

Emergent Themes

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5
Barriers to teaching	Teacher Knowledge of Student Needs	Administrative Concerns	Sense of Community	Professional Development

Following is a detailed description of the themes as well as participant conversation for the themes.

Barriers to Teaching

The first theme to emerge was regarding the barriers part-time teachers encountered in teaching adults. Teachers were asked about the theory that impacted their classroom delivery and to share their beliefs about teaching adult learners. The responses from the participants were consistent in that they felt adult learners were different from the traditional student. While they agreed that there were differences in how to teach the nontraditional adult student, most the part-time teachers felt that there were things in place at the center that prevented them from doing their very best.

Participant 1 stated,

The rolling admissions policy, where students can enter the program and any class any day, does not promote consistency. In some ways, this is okay, because I can reinforce rules and policies by having "older" students teach the "newer" ones. But there are times when it doesn't work. It would be better to have a general orientation program-wide, and then have students as a cohort begin on a specific day.

In agreement with Participant 1's position, Participant 3 shared a similar sentiment on the topic of rolling admission:

Sometimes you have a good thing going with a certain group. You hope to continue this, but you can't, because there is no real cohort that supports and encourages each other. The fact is there is a large dropout rate, but the new enrollments offset this. I am not really sure how this is accounted for. I do know

that there is no continuity, and very little opportunity to work with a whole group

as they are all at different levels. Sometimes it is discouraging.

Participant 8 stated, "I wish we knew more about the places where some of the refugees

come from. This would help me, as an ESOL teacher, to know how to address them

within a cultural context, and plan appropriately for them and the others."

 This comment was in line with the frustration of Participant 4 who shared,

As a result of the recent budget cuts, there are added responsibilities, but no paid

time to complete them. We have to multitask during the 3 hours we teach. This is

not good, because in my room the students require constant attention as several

are nonreaders. I don't have the luxury of just letting students read or work

independently when I take attendance or work on another of the required

paperwork. We teach 3 hours straight without a break, which means we have to be

very creative to do other things.

Concerned about class time and time to complete administrative responsibilities,

Participant 2 added,

There is no collaborative planning time. When it is 12 noon, classes end. We are

not paid overtime to complete what we did not finish in the classroom. We really

have to be creative to input data on the new data collection program, call students

if they are absent, and make notes on the computer and on the required

paperwork. This is too much. But we need the job, so we do it.

Without administrative support for infrastructure concerns, Participant 6 voiced why

some things were as they are,

I let students use their cell phones in my room. I have to. If their family or

someone for me calls the building, there is an endless loop that the caller goes

through, and we never get the call in our classrooms. We have complained, but

it's at least one year now, and it is still not repaired. These are adults, and they

may be contacted in an emergency by their children or some other entity – most

of them are refugees, so you never know. Also, they are non-English speakers and

use their phones as translators. This also works for me, so I let them use their

phones in my room. I also use my cell phone to make calls when they are absent.

There were concerns about the way the rooms currently were set up. In one wing of the

building, according to Participant 4,

Currently housing the ESOL classrooms, there is concern about usability. For one

thing, the rooms earlier housed the nursing programs and there were structures set

up for the nursing equipment that hindered the full use of the room. The

inconvenience caused teachers to be creative, but limited what they were able to

do in the room. You just do what you have to, to help students.

These responses from the part-time teachers illustrate some of the hurdles they

encounter to help adult learners achieve success. There is no research data regarding the

classroom effects and the adult learner. However, both Fraser (2015) and Marianella and

María Esther (2015) argued that the physical classroom does have an effect on student

learning. Although teacher modifications can be made to affect the student, it is clear that

the physical and emotional environment plays a crucial role in students' academic

success. In understanding the stated concerns of teachers, Johnson, Kraft, and Papay

(2012) concluded that social conditions in a school are the most important in causing teachers to remain at a school. Based on their study findings, Johnson et al. (2012) advanced that teachers' working conditions have an impact on their overall professional satisfaction and their students' achievement. They also stated that "providing a supportive context in which teachers can work appears to contribute to improved student achievement" (p. 1). Johnson et al. (2012) argued that when teachers' work conditions were positive there was documented evidence of increased student gains.

Teacher Knowledge of Student Needs

Participants were asked about their classroom delivery strategies, best practices, and what, in their opinion, contributed to their student success. There were a variety of responses as to how to understand how students learned and what constitutes self-directedness. Respondent 4 stated,

> I see the evidence of self-directedness in adult learning. Most have a worldview and their own experiences that I try to connect in the classroom. Because students are at various ends of the learning spectrum, I have to be very creative to involve and include all in a day's lesson.

Excited about teaching his students, Participant 1shared,

> Many students who have come to our program had had nothing but failure in their school experience, and possibly personal life. I feel challenged to help them succeed. I have seen students' level of motivation spike when their children are in school. Their children ask them why they earlier dropped out, and why they didn't

finish and graduate. This inspires them to work hard. This history of no success is

an opportunity for me to help develop their potential self-directedness.

Participant 8 advanced,

I don't have a learning theory that governs how I relate to students. This is one of

my areas of weakness. I often relate to students in a way that would get them to

interact with others. They do this well, and are driven by their own desire to

achieve.

The part-time teachers appeared enthusiastic about teaching their adult students,

even with some of the barriers they encounter. They were anxious to share their

classroom experiences, and expressed the desire to learn and share with each other. While

there was no standard method of relating to students, each teacher had his or her own way

of teaching and relating to students. Participant 2 stated,

I teach English to speakers of other languages, and concentrate heavily on reading

in my room. My main objective is to get students to transfer learning from my

room to real life situations. I encourage them to be responsible for their learning.

In a probing question about the difference between adult and traditional students,

Participant 3 stated,

Having taught for many years in the traditional classroom, I have noticed that

adult students are more self-directed, because many have an idea what they want

to do in life. The projects they undertake in my class requires that they have direct

input to complete them.

Participant 4 added,

Adult students are respected and encouraged in their desire to learn and receive

their high school equivalency certificate. They set their own pace and advance

accordingly. They are aware that they can go as far as they want. It's up to them.

Participant 5 shared a concern to help students accomplish success in their own way,

I wish we had training in differentiation. I just know that students here learn in a

different way; many have learning limitations, so I plan lessons according to how

best to get them to move ahead. I am not a special education teacher, but I suspect

there are some learning disabled students in my room.

Asked the probing question about the characteristic of the nontraditional students that

may cause them to want to succeed on returning to school, in this program, Participant 7

stated,

Our students are accustomed to failure. That is one reason they are here, they

want another chance. They failed in school and dropped out. Many have failed in

life and are looking for another chance to become successful. Most are motivated

to achieve, have a different outlook on life; so we try to share ways to become

successful by encouraging them to stay in school and complete their studies.

This characteristic of self-directedness of adult learners is a quality that must be

understood and encouraged (Jameson & Fusco, 2014; Smith, 2010). To help

nontraditional students achieve success, Knowles et al. (2014) agreed there should be an

understanding of adult student characteristics and how they learn. Notwithstanding, some

of the participants voiced they were weak in the area of differentiated instruction, they

were differentiating to some degree, and worked to accommodate students in varying

their lessons, but needed assistance.

Administrative Concerns

This third theme emerged as participants shared concerns about the adult

education program's administration. Many participants stressed that the administration

was reluctant to divulge certain information about the program's viability regarding its

continuance in certain job areas. While all participants expressed satisfaction and even a

passion for their profession of choice, the majority shared that their job satisfaction did

not suggest how they were perceived, supported, or treated by the administration of the

program or the school district. Cohen and Brown (2013) hypothesized that when

educators feel supported and valued, they will go over and beyond what is required of

them, and there is marked improvement in student outcomes. Cohen and Brown also

emphasized that mutual trust and respect between administrators and teachers are

essential to a positive and productive school environment promoting a positive school

culture.

On this topic, Participant 1 expressed her feelings,

"I don't think the district value our work here in this program."

Participant 2 echoed, "Because of the low graduation rates, and not much to publicize, I

think we are treated like step-children." Participant 5 said, "Because the passing rate for

the high school equivalency is extremely low, I don't believe many people at the district

office values our program." Participant 3 added,

There is no support. The recent budget cuts have hurt our program. Clerical staff

and key programs were cut that were vital to help students move from welfare to

the job market. Much of the required local and state paperwork that was

previously completed by clerical staff is now thrust on teachers to complete.

Participant 7 stated that for full-time teachers completing all this paperwork may not be

so bad as they could do this on their break or other paid times. Part-time teachers are not

so fortunate. They are paid for only the times they are teaching.

In concert with this argument, Participant 8 shared, "We often have to purchase certain

needed supplies due to the budget cuts, out of our own pockets with limited income. New

hires are even more at a disadvantage as salaries are low." Participant 7 offered in support

of this line of conversation, "The district keeps changing or eliminating programs. This is

problematic for those of us who want to teach adults, but are not sure one year to the next

if we   will have employment." Again Participant 6 voiced, "Administration is often

supportive of the regular adult education classroom, but not of part-time teachers who

teach the 17-25-year-old high school equivalency students. There are constant and

consistent discipline issues that are growing."

On this issue, Participant 4 stated,

Because the district is so strict about attendance, an orientation at the start of the

program enrollment would be helpful to screen students for success. However, it

has come to our understanding that even the Department of Social Services

support to our program incentive funds go to the district, and do not remain with

us in the program. To whom should we go and complain? That is not good.

Participant 3 who had been with the program for a few years, but was planning on exiting, shared,

> After these many years with the program, I have not received a single raise. I am qualified educationally and experientially. I love what I do, but I feel slighted. After four years, three years, then two, it's time to move on. They should see that they are losing good teachers because they offer no incentives to remain, the pay is lousy, and there are no benefits. I love what I do, but I should be remunerated fairly.

In contrast to the above discussion, Participant 2 voiced,

> I worked in the traditional school age students, and I prefer it here. Students need to understand that they are here to learn. In high school, you had students who were chronically absent, who disrupted the educational process, and did worse with no consequence. This is my second part time job, so even when I don't always agree, there is a financial safety net for me. I try to stay under the radar and everything is fine.

Leveraging a model that benefits the organization and students, the adult education center will need to understand the frustration voiced by its part-time teachers that they do not feel valued, supported, or appreciated by the district. Willeke (2015) suggested that in many ways, part-time teachers encounter similar challenges in their personal lives as do some of the students they teach. Because of this, there should be effort on the part of school leaders to include them in school effects without merely inviting, but with permanent inclusion built into the program. To exclude this could

inadvertently impact adult learners in the school. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015)

argued that faculty trust of administration and school climate have a direct effect on

student outcomes. Although there was limited research about school climate within the

adult learning community, Marzano (2007) stipulated that "positive school climate, by

definition, is characterized by strong collaborative learning communities" (p. 6).

Cohen and Brown (2013) confirmed that positive school climate improves teacher

practice as well as student learning through dialogue and collaboration around engaging

classroom instruction. The fact that adult learners often exhibit characteristics of

intermittently stopping out due to varying life situations, is incumbent on the program

administrators and teachers to provide every opportunity for nontraditional students to

complete what they have started, and in a timely way (Belzer, 1998; Sparks, 2016). Best

practices in ensuring a positive school climate is an important feature within the adult

learning theory as suggested by Marzano (2007). Based on the adult learning theory, a

positive environment will ensure nontraditional learner success (Knowles, 1984).

Sense of Community

Participants felt that there should be time for their inclusion and collaboration to

foster consistency amongst teachers who teach similar classes, such as English to

Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), ABE, and HSE preparing for the TASC. A sense

of community was the fourth themes derived from the data analysis. This, they echoed,

would be of support for their delivery in individual classes, as well as ensure student

success in achieving their personal goals. Participant 1 stated, "We need to know the

accurate numbers of students passing the TASC, and honest conversation about how to improve."

Participant 4 added, "We need to share actual census numbers of students in the programs. Our rooms are very diverse, but I believe if we work together, and not as a 'farm,' we will see improvement in our building." Participant 2 offered,

The fact that some of our students are Social Services recipients is important. We cannot share personal student information, but working together we can come up with strategies to help them become positive achievers, hence contributors in their own communities.

Participant 4 remarked,

On the floor where I teach, I don't know other teachers' names, and I have been here a while. I just know my neighbors on either side of my room. Even when we are not paid overtime to remain after class with students, we often remain to catch up on administrative work. There needs to be more opportunities to meet each other and become a part of this program in a real sense, and not working in seclusion.

Participant 8 shared,

I feel isolated even from other part-time teachers. I really feel we could help students, especially the ESOL ones my colleagues near me teach, if we could meet periodically. I would even welcome informal meetings. We don't team teach, but we have students with similar backgrounds, collaboration would help.

There are many advantages for adult education teacher collaboration with other adult education program teachers. In participating in any form of collaborative sharing, teachers experience professional growth, meet their classroom goals, solicit support in pedagogical or andragogical areas where they need strength, voice concerns about program or teaching areas, and strengthen and develop skills and strategies (Murugaiah, Ming, Azman, & Nambiar, 2014). Participating in the cultural community of sharing is also an opportunity to mentor teachers. Zutter (2007) suggested that feedback from peer mentoring of adjunct instructors could improve organizational as well as program goals. Schwartz, Wiley, and Kaplan (2016) affirm that adjuncts often feel isolated and disconnected from the organization in which they teach. Collaborative opportunities need to be geared toward an inclusive program with benefits for program participants. Not only is this an effective approach to helping teachers, but a model for classroom delivery for students where the learning environment can be interactive as a result of collaboration (Davis, 2013).

Professional Development (PD)

The fifth identified theme was the need for relevant, ongoing, and appropriate professional development. Participants were asked about the types of professional development they participated in, and to share those that were meaningful or not and give a reason for their answer. All the part-time teacher participants unanimously responded that there was virtually no PD, and that none offered were related to their students' needs, to them, or what they were teaching. In fact, they all agreed with the site administrator who stated earlier that only one PD was offered the previous year, and the ones offered

the previous year (2015-2016) related to student data, google docs, and the new student tracking program the district initiated.

When asked about professional development needs and it appropriateness for best practices, classroom delivery, and student success, Participant 1 responded,

I see PD as a way for teachers to sharpen their skills and learn new ones. Yet here, we are invited to attend PD offerings once a month on Fridays, but they have no relevance to what I or my colleagues do in the classroom. I go because even when we are not required as part-time teachers, we are paid for our time in attendance.

Participant 3 shared, "We have a person that was recently hired to provide PD for all the faculty. However, to date there has been nothing except training on Assist, a management program, and how to take attendance on the new system." Frustrated about this lack of craft support, Participant 2 stated," While we are not forced to attend, I go to the PD offerings once a month on a Friday, because we are paid to attend. I hope each time I go that this will be the day there is something I can use with my students; there never is." Participant 5 responded in agreement for needed PD that,

There should be a formal orientation for new teachers. I don't mind sharing, but new teachers really don't know much. Especially considering there are a few in our program fresh out of college or from the Peace Corps who are not trained teachers. They are limited to about 18 hours a week, but still they need training in teaching our adult students. Teachers who teach adults should know how these students learn.

Participant 4 offered,

I often attend webinars and attend PD on my own that helps with my

understanding of the population I teach. There needs to be PD offered in diversity

of teaching adult learners, basics in culture and ethnicity, teaching methods in

adult education, and learning issues of adult students.

In concert with Stewart (2014) who affirms that professional development must

be collaborative and planned with activities that demonstrate teacher growth, hence

student achievement, all participants echoed that there is no relevant training or PD

geared to help teachers in the classroom. Participant 7 specified,

I hate PD here at the adult education program. They are usually unrealistic, and

have nothing to do with teaching here. I have learned that adults can manage their

own learning. To help them, we have to be unconventional. I strongly believe that

when students fail here at the center, you must look at the teacher. We need PD

that addresses how we relate to these students. That is key.

Participant 6 remarked,

Some rooms are equipped with the Smart Board, but it either doesn't work, or

teachers don't know how to use it. We rely on each other for training. This means

we have to remain after class for unpaid and unofficial training.

Teachers must be equipped to offer a high-quality course of study to their

nontraditional adult learners. This is not possible if the part-time teachers are not offered

appropriate professional development. Participants also shared that because of the diverse

group of students they teach, they need training in adult student learning theory.

Participant 5 stated,

I am an experienced teacher, but I realize I need to develop my talent in working with adults. There is a need for continuous PD on the adult brain. We have an idea why many of the students are back in school, but we really cannot pinpoint how to stop the cycle of failure they have been accustomed to in their earlier school experience. Understanding how they learn could help.

Eney and Davidson (2012) agreed that adjuncts who teach adult students must understand how they learn. This, they agreed, will not only improve the teaching craft, but will increase student success. If there is to be improvement in teacher effects and measurable student achievement, adult education leaders must provide suitable and appropriate faculty development opportunities (Sawyer, Kata, & Armstrong, 2014). These part-time teacher responses demonstrated that there needs to be adequate, appropriate, relevant, and ongoing training provided for them. The researchers found that if part-time faculty are not afforded appropriate and relevant professional development opportunities, students will not succeed (CCCSE, 2014; Datray et al., 2014). The findings of the study support a need for continued and constant professional development for part-time teachers. In agreement with Knowles, Cohen and Brown (2013) advocated professional learning communities that provided opportunities for teachers to learn from each other and receive ongoing instructional development that would transform their teaching and result in measurable gains for students.

Summary

Section 2 was a detailed outline of the research design for this project study. This section also included a discussion of the qualitative case study findings that took place at

an adult learning center in an urban adult education facility in New York State. Walden

University's IRB and that of the research site's institution were both aware of and

approved the process. I documented the participant selection process and the data

analysis procedures to provide transparency, to guarantee protection of participants'

rights, and to ensure that I conducted the study under ethical conditions. I interviewed

eight part-time teachers during the data collection portion of the study. After carefully

transcribing the data verbatim, and confirming member check, five themes emerged and

were identified: (a) Barriers to Delivering an Excellent Teaching Plan, (b) Teacher

Knowledge of Student Needs, (c) Administrative Concerns, (d) Sense of Community, and

(e) Professional Development Needs.

Section 3 will be a presentation and description of the project based on the

retrieved data and the generated themes. I will discuss current research that address the

research questions and a project to address the retrieved findings of the study.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

This qualitative case study was conducted to explore current practices and professional development training that part-time faculty perceive to result in adult learner success at a local adult learning center. In this section is a discussion of the development of the project's goal, rationale, description, an evaluation plan, the target audience, and the project's implication. As a result of the research findings, it was deemed appropriate to conduct a professional development training workshop. Also in this section, I outline the project for the study, a literature review mitigating the need for the project, and an evaluation process for the project.

Project Goals

The adjuncts interviewed for this study shared that they would benefit from appropriate, relevant, and ongoing professional development opportunities. Using a qualitative approach, the face-to-face interviews were helpful in revealing the viewpoints of part-time teachers regarding the benefits of professional development on their teaching practice. Most of the part-time teachers were not trained in adult learning theory or adult teaching methods, and some were not trained teachers. As I analyzed the data, I concluded there is a need for ongoing specialized teacher training that would benefit the population of nontraditional students in the adult education program. In analyzing the research data, I confirmed that there were few offerings of professional development for all teachers, none required for part-time faculty, and none specific to the population or content taught in the adult education classes. There was only one professional

development offering in the last year, adjuncts were not required to participate in the program's professional development offerings, and program leaders did not provide applicable or appropriate training. These facts confirmed that there was a deficiency in the adjuncts' knowledge of the population they taught, and that there needed to be applicable and continuing training within the adult education program pertinent to them. Based on participant information in the interviews, Respondent 2 shared why this training is needed:

Many times I feel like our rooms are a holding cell for our students, because we take attendance, and we keep up enrollment numbers, but I feel inept and not valued as we go through the motions of being in a classroom, but there is no thought to how well we are doing professionally.

The goal of this professional development training program is to ensure that part-time teachers of adult learners acquire and develop the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to improve and strengthen classroom delivery and knowledge base. In strengthening their craft, there will be documented student achievement.

Section 1 outlined that CALC's administrators wanted to explore teacher professional development provided to part-time teachers because they were concerned about student achievement and knew that there had been limited professional development offered to adjuncts (site administrator, personal communication, December 23, 2015). Developing a professional development program aligned with program objectives, and the needs of CALC as well as with information retrieved from the data analysis, adjuncts will be provided beneficial information on adult learning theory,

characteristics of adult learners, and delivery and lesson planning strategies for adult

learner success. The project that was developed as a result of research data from

interviews and the literature review is a professional development workshop to be

conducted over a 3-day period.

Rationale

The quality and availability of professional development offerings to teachers of

adult learners, while scarce, are important to learner success and overall school goals

(Rieckhoff & Larsen 2012; Stewart, 2014). The project was designed after collecting and

analyzing the research data. In the qualitative data collected, it appeared that this type of

project would be the best way to provide initial training on the topics that the study

participants stated they needed to understand, and follow-up in an ongoing way to ensure

that educator's professional needs are met. Up until the time of this study, there was no

professional development offered directly to adjuncts' needs in the adult education

classroom.

This workshop project would be presented in a hands-on approach that would

solicit immediate participant feedback, and provide information to the administrators on

the value of such a program. The immediate goal for this project is threefold: (a) to

provide clarity and purpose for adult learning, (b) to supplement the adult education

program's plan for ongoing part-time teacher training and development, and (c) to

support the excellence in teaching for part-time teachers in an adult education program.

The research-based recommendation includes an executive summary to be presented to

the community partner. The developed project will also be presented to the program

manager for consideration to enhance the skills and talents of the part-time teachers in the adult education program, thus resulting in strengthened and improved student achievement.

The creation of a data-informed professional development workshop seemed to be the best project genre for displaying the results of the project study (Kennedy, 2016). This project would provide part-time teachers with meaningful professional experience to improve their quality and teaching practice (de Vries, van de Grift, & Jansen, 2013).

Review of the Literature

Project Genre

In Section 1, the literature review discussed Knowles's (1984) adult learning theory, which served as the conceptual framework for this project study. This framework provided structure for exploring and understanding nontraditional students who possess complex characteristics and experiences. In the earlier literature review, I argued the connection between part-time teacher knowledge of adult learning theory, initial or ongoing adjunct training and professional development, and best practices on student achievement. In this literature review, I explained how the genre of professional development is appropriate to address the research project. The earlier review of the literature was important in understanding the research project's direction. The analyzed data of the project study revealed a need for professional development that is directed toward part-time teacher understanding of adult learning theory, specifically how adults learn, how they are different from the traditional learner, along with their unique

characteristics. This section's literature review will focus on the professional development

workshop as the product of the research data (see Appendix A for the project details).

Several sources informed the literature review. Search terms included *professional*

development, adjuncts in adult education, part-time teacher training, adjuncts in

secondary education, adult learning theory, part-time teachers and the adult learner,

adult learner success, and *adult education teacher quality.* Keywords used were *teacher*

training, teacher quality, *professional development*, *professional learning, part-time*

teacher, adult learner motivation, and *part-time teacher professional development*.

Databases included ERIC, Thoreau, ProQuest Central, EBSCOhost, Walden

dissertations, and Sage. All literature selected for this section's literature review were

peer reviewed and written within the past 5 years. The themes in this section are arranged

in the following format: the need for professional development, the unique characteristics

of the adult learner, and instructional strategies in the adult learner classroom. The

literature selected for this review was helpful in addressing the adjunct concerns and

developing the professional development workshop as the most appropriate genre of the

project.

The Need for Professional Development

Educational scholars define professional development for teachers in many ways,

because of the wide range of topics and format covered by the actual training. A general

definition of teacher professional development suggests specialized training to improve

and enhance teacher skill and effectiveness (Loughran, 2014). One feature of the

professional development that many educational scholars agree with is that the

professional development must be appropriate, relevant, ongoing, measured, and evaluated (Bayar, 2014; Earley & Porritt, 2014; Stevenson, Hedberg, O'Sullivan & Howe, 2016). In support of professional development for educators, Loughran (2014) wrote that the professional development training "must be purposefully conceptualized, thoughtfully implemented, and meaningfully employed" (p. 280). Because teacher quality results in improved student outcomes, it is appropriate to ensure that educators are renewing their skill level. Not only did Rutz, Condon, Iverson, Manduca, and Willett (2012) conclude the benefit of a learning culture for faculty, but a benefit not often mentioned is that faculty attending these opportunities "transmit what they have learned to their non-attending colleagues" (p. 8). In this behavior, teacher-teacher collaboration is inspired, which is a vital component in continued learning and development of skills and strategies. Participants interviewed in the project felt that this understanding of the proposed training is what they needed.

One participant voiced, "I feel so on my own. I really wish that the offerings on these Fridays were geared toward my needs in the classroom as a teacher, and that of my students." The part-time teachers stated that being provided this type of ongoing training would help them professionally to improve confidence in their craft, develop camaraderie with other teachers, provide a basis for collaboration, and eventually increase the current number of graduates from the program.

Teachers also expressed that they would benefit in their practice by getting ongoing training relevant to their student population. Participating in professional development training would allow part-time teachers to improve their teaching, their

collection of teaching strategies, reflect on their own teaching, and collaborate with other teachers (Bernhardt, 2015; Whitworth, & Chiu, 2015). This should not be understood as a one-time activity, but according to an "enhanced professionalism" that would promote continued learning and enhancement of skills to benefit both teacher and student (Evans, 2014, p. 25). Another goal of the project is to address the characteristics of the student demographic they teach in a continuing way to update student information as student enrollment continues to rise. For example, when adjuncts participate in the workshop program offering, they will learn strategies designed to support overall professional development, and identify adult learner characteristics, create appropriate lessons, and develop their own collection of strategies to increase student learning outcomes (King, 2016; Usher & Bryant, 2014).

According to Heward and Wood (2015) and Howard and Taber (2010) teacher quality is important to student outcomes. It is then important for teachers to update their skills in classroom delivery, be knowledgeable about adult learners and their needs, and stay current to positively influence student outcomes (Jacobson, 2013; McClenny & Arnsparger, 2014; Yuan, Powell, & Cetis, 2013). To develop the most efficient faculty and at the same time produce measurable student achievement, educational institutions must invest in increasing teacher quality (de Vries, van de Grift, & Jansen, 2014; Stewart, 2014). This investment includes the importance and validity of faculty participation in suitable and applicable professional development as well as administrative support (Hightower et al., 2011; Whitworth & Chiu 2015). Research is needed on what constitutes teacher quality specific to adult education (Udouj, Grover, Belcher, & Kacirek, 2016).

However, the literature on teacher quality in general and its impact on student

achievement is clear; this statement reverberates applicably within all teaching formats,

but particularly in adult education.

A quality teacher is one who has a positive effect on student learning and

development through a combination of content mastery, command of a broad set

of pedagogic skills, and communications/interpersonal skills. Quality teachers are

lifelong learners in their subject areas, teach with commitment, and are reflective

upon their teaching practice. They transfer knowledge of their subject matter and

the learning process through good communication, diagnostic skills,

understanding of different learning styles and cultural influences, knowledge

about child development [and adult learning theory], and the ability to marshal a

broad array of techniques to meet student needs. They set high expectations and

support students in achieving them. They establish an environment conducive to

learning, and leverage available resources outside as well as inside the classroom.

(Center for High Impact Philanthropy, 2010, p. 7)

Based on several research studies on the benefit of well-designed short term

professional development programs, with appropriate topic complexity, as well as

specific aims, and alignment with teacher needs, Lauer, Christopher, Firpo-Triplett, and

Buchting, (2014) and Wahlgren, Mariager-Anderson, and Sorensen (2016) concluded that

these opportunities resulted in positive teacher outcomes. As a result of continually

improving, increasing, and evaluating the training of teachers, it is almost guaranteed that

the institution will benefit by demonstrable student success (Brookfield, 2013; Diegel,

2013; Stewart, 2014). By including part-time teachers, who were once excluded, from the program plan for overall teacher professional development, CALC could see improved part-time teacher quality, and instructional strategies that increase and improve student outcomes (Caruth & Caruth, 2013; Yin, Condelli, Ogut, & Cronen, 2015).

The Unique Characteristics of the Adult Learner

How schools design adult education programs and prepare their teaching staff should include an understanding of the characteristics of their nontraditional learners (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). Adult learning theory not only defines the adult nontraditional learner, but outlines best practices to assist the educator of these students. Knowles (1980) advanced that when the educator is familiar with the significant differences between how adults and children learn, and the unique characteristics of the adult learner, then the effective educator will understand the importance of designing programs that testify to the growth and success of the nontraditional student. Adult students have noticeable differences from the traditional student: all are over 25 years old, have responsibilities outside of school with family or vocation, left or never entered school earlier for a variety of reasons, many have chosen to return to school to update skills or to earn credible certification never previously achieved, and most are self-directed and highly motivated to achieve success.

According to the Rochester Institute of Rochester (2013) adult learner characteristics, the adult learner has the following attributes:

- Problem-centered; seek educational solutions to where they are.

- Results-oriented; have specific results in mind for education--will drop out if education does not lead to those results because their participation is usually voluntary.

- Self-directed; typically not dependent on others for direction.

- Skeptical about new information; prefer to try it out before accepting it.

- Intrinsically motivated; Seek education that relates or applies directly to their perceived needs, and is timely and appropriate for their current lives.

- Accept responsibility for their own learning if learning is perceived as timely and appropriate.

Adult learners usually approach learning differently than younger learners. They are more self-directed in their learning. According to Knowles (1975) being self-directed means that the adult learner "take the initiative without the help of others in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources, and evaluating learning outcomes" (p.18). Adult learners bring more to a learning situation because of their wider experience, and can take more away. They require learning to make sense; they will not perform a learning activity just because the instructor outlines the activity.

An important characteristic pointed out by Ross-Gordon, Plotts, Noble, Leal, and Wells (2001) and not addressed in the literature about adult learner characteristics is the possible learning limitation of some nontraditional learners. Several of the part-time teachers interviewed mentioned they surmised that some of their students had learning disabilities, due to the way they completed activities, as well as their overall approach to

learning. Teachers felt that the possible learning disability could be the reason some students had dropped out of school initially.

Participant 7 expressed, "I want to show my students that they can excel, and that life is not just about failure." Even when the community center does not provide a measure for determining student potential disability, or sharing previous school records with teachers, participants in the project expressed that they suspected many of their students, who were accustomed to failure, and could drop out of their program, had some level of learning disability. Part-time teachers wanted training on how to help these students experience academic success. Ross-Gordon et al. (2001) and Stewart (2016) suggested that the adult education classroom could be advantageous in helping students to achieve a level of success, if the teacher knew and understood the learning theory, was familiar with varying intelligence, understood that these students learned differently, and was willing to design individual lessons based on the students' learning style.

Ross-Gordon et al. (2001) also argued that it may be profitable for the student and the institution to secure a working partnership with another agency to work alongside teachers to help students. While professional development on learning disabilities in adult education would be a welcome addition to the overall professional development program, it was a good beginning to offer the characteristics of adult learners as a start. It may be that what is seen in the classroom is a demonstration of the difference in the way students learn. In sharing the findings of a report to help adult learners who may be learning disabled, Belzer and Ross-Gordon (2011) suggested that "adults with LDs (learning disabilities) can benefit from extended instructional and assessment time and explicit and

intensive instruction with extensive practice and elaborated feedback" (p. 78), which is a

consideration for all students in the adult learning program.

Instructional Strategies in the Adult Learner Classroom

Instructional strategies are defined as approaches or techniques that a teacher uses

to help students meet the objectives for the class (Battista & Ruble, 2014). Instructional

techniques could be in the form of discussion, to encourage critical thinking, teacher-

student collaboration, inquiry oriented strategies, online collaboration, and group work

(Chen, Jang, & Chen, 2015; McLaughlin et al., 2014). Because adult learners are

different from traditional learners, the teaching approach should be varied, building on

adult learner experiences and worldview (Petty & Thomas, 2014; Schwartz, 2010).

Bearing in mind the needs and unique characteristics of the nontraditional student, the

effective adult educator should develop, build on, and continually test a repertoire of

research-grounded strategies for adult-student success.

Like Knowles (1980), Battista and Ruble (2014) maintained that adult students

are cooperative and motivated to learn when they can make a connection between real

life and classroom instruction. To encourage learners to participate in class activities, the

adult educator must be knowledgeable about many nuances affecting the adult learner,

and preplan lessons understanding "the student's sense of accomplishment and vision for

the future" (Battista & Ruble, 2014, p. 1). To accomplish adult learner participation,

inclusion, and growth, the effective adult education teacher should use active learning

instructional strategies that are objective-driven, engaging, and relevant (Stewart, 2014).

For a successful lesson presentation, educators should be able to transform their

knowledge of Knowles's (1980) adult learning theory to meet the individual needs of adult learners. While a study conducted by Bayar (2014) primarily in the elementary classrooms, best practices derived from the findings correlate with Knowles's discussion of the needs of adult students. Bayar's findings outlined to improve educator skills were that effective professional development should include: "1) a match to existing teacher needs, 2) a match to existing school needs, 3) teacher involvement in the design/planning of professional development activities, 4) active participation opportunities, 5) long-term engagement, and 6) high-quality instructors" (p. 323).

There is a responsibility incumbent on adult education part-time teachers to improve student learning, understanding that all learners learn differently (U. S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, 2015). There is no one method that will ensure academic success for all students, whether in the K12 learning environment or in an adult education program. Especially in the adult education classroom, the educator needs to understand that there is a need to shift the focus of activity, so that the methods and strategies are student-centered (U. S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, 2015). This is what using active learning strategies do for instruction. Active learning strategies do more than just involve students in the learning. Students are provided skills that will actively involve them in "higher-order thinking tasks as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Within this context, it is proposed that strategies promoting active learning be defined as instructional activities involving students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing" (Bonwell & Eison, 1991, p. 2). By varying the methods and using

strategies that encourage learner involvement, students will solve problems, apply what they have learned, become critical thinkers, and see value in their education.

Project Description

The data derived from the part-time teacher interviews helped me to better understand participant perception of how ongoing professional development could help to improve their teaching practice as well as improve adult learner success. While study results were not generalizable from this qualitative case study, there is benefit for use in evaluating programs. Yin et al. (2015) stated while there was limited research on teacher quality or effectiveness in adult education, there was consistency with their findings with other researchers that students with part-time teachers were not as successful toward program completion as students with full-time teachers. Teachers in these studies were not provided ongoing and relevant professional development that was appropriate for their discipline or students (CCCSE, 2014).

Existing Supports

Implementation of the project for the center would require the center's administrative and teacher support. Should part-time teachers see the benefit in participating, they could be given appropriate credit or financial remuneration. I see the workshop as a resource for development of part-time faculty and for designing future such professional development opportunities (Heward & Wood, 2015; Stewart, 2014). Technical support needed would be accessed from the public domain for storage, access to the PowerPoint presentation, with all of the workshop handouts, and the evaluation assessments.

Potential Barriers

Potential barriers preventing the execution or success of the project could be the 3-day, 7-hour time period needed for the entire workshop. Scheduling this within the planned school year calendar could be difficult. It is also possible that the typical Wednesday or Friday workshop days could already be scheduled, and may prove another hardship for part-time teachers who may have other commitments. However, as the part-time teachers shared during the interview, many teach in the evening, so it may be workable. Another drawback may be the likelihood that the administration may not want to be involved in this project, based on my experience with them prior to data collection. During the data collection phase of this research project, there was a nonchalance and disinterest exhibited by the administration. It is possible that there may be changes in the governance of the adult education program, and the new or incoming administration may not be supportive of this project.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The implementation of this program would best take place over the summer, preferably in late August, just before the start of the new school year. The executive summary would be presented to key stakeholders, the administration both at the center and at the district office, part-time teachers, and the newly hired professional development coordinator. During a discussion of the project in detail, the findings and the reason for the development of this type of project would be shared. At some point during the conversation regarding the project, it would be recommended that there be continued workshops offered to part-time teachers, on similar topics and formative and summative

evaluations to assess the strengths and limitations, and if there is value in continuing the program.

Roles and Responsibilities of Researcher and Others

In my role as the researcher, it is my responsibility to be unbiased and present the project in its entirety to the research site's administrators. These individuals include the administrators at the site and the district office personnel overseeing the site. In the presentation, I will share the background information on the study, and make suggestions regarding the project as an ongoing professional development activity. It will be the site administrators' responsibility to review the project, once it is accepted by the central office administration. The site administration will be responsible for implementation and possible follow up procedures.

Project Evaluation Plan

Although the community site partner did not require an evaluation plan, the professional development project will be evaluated by participants at the end of each day of training, with a final evaluation for the overall project, and after three months a brief survey to determine the success of the program. This later evaluation will be completed by stakeholders including project attendees, who will be asked to evaluate the program. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994) defined evaluation as "the systematic investigation of merit or worth" (p. 3). Because it is important to the entire training to understand the learning outcomes, the evaluation is an essential component (Lakin, & Chaudhuri, 2016; Randel, Apthorp, Beesley, Clark, & Wang, 2016). Guskey, (2014) provided five levels of professional development evaluation that

are important to determine if there is value in the workshop. These levels of professional development are the participants' reactions, participants' learning, organizational support and change, participants' use of new knowledge or skills, and student learning outcomes (Guskey, 2016).

Following the end of the each day's presentation the evaluation forms will be collected, and within a 4-week period a summary of the data will be shared with participants to generate feedback of the workshop's strengths and weaknesses, and for them to provide their perspective about how it could be improved (Randel, Apthorp, Beesley, Clark, & Wang, 2016). The formative evaluation at the end of each day's presentation is to provide immediate feedback to ensure the program is progressing as planned, and if the specific presentation that day is reaching its targeted mark (Glover, Reddy, Kettler, Kunz, & Lekwa, 2016).

After three months, stakeholders will be asked to respond to a brief questionnaire regarding the value of the professional development project. A summary survey will be presented to administrators for their opinion regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the program. This format would encourage stakeholders to submit their response in a timely way (Wahlgren, Mariager-Anderson, & Sørensen, 2016). Provided in the evaluation is a list of the project objectives: The unique characteristics of adult learners, the differences between traditional and nontraditional adult students' ways of learning, strategies that create a dynamic delivery in the adult education setting, and evidence of lessons promoting adult learner success. Because the goal of the project is to improve part-time adult education teacher best practices, this final evaluation will be summative,

which will provide participant feedback about the workshop, and if it was effective and had accomplished its intended objectives (Shenge, 2014). Summative evaluation questions to administrators and part-time teacher participants are located in Appendix A. The feedback gathered from this final evaluation will be shared with stakeholders, as help to determine if the workshop was worthwhile (Glover et al., 2016).

<div align="center">**Project Implications**</div>

Local Community

This project addressed the needs of part-time teachers at an urban adult education center in upstate New York. The professional development opportunity was designed to address a need based on the findings of the project study at the research site. As the number of part-time teachers continues to increase to address the swelling enrollment numbers of adult learners at the research site, this project will be useful to ensure that each educator enters the work environment prepared with enhanced skills and a cache of strategies to be successful. If part-time teachers are encouraged to participate in the professional development workshop as a requirement, they will acquire skills and strategies they could use in their classrooms to develop their teaching craft and help students become more successful.

Far-Reaching Implications

As the demographic shift in educational institutions increases, favoring a marked spike in the adult learner category and increasing the enrollment of the nontraditional student, the number of adjunct faculty members also continue to increase throughout secondary and higher education establishments, as a result of budget cuts and other

reasons. By no means is this issue of increased adjunct employment in nontraditional learning institutions just a local one (Capt, Oliver, & Engel, 2014). Without proper training and continued development, it is possible that the part-time teachers' impact on student learning will not be positive (Figlio, Schapiro, & Soter, 2015). However, research data reveals that when teachers improve their craft with proper training, there is measurable student achievement (DeMonte, 2013). One of Walden University's core values is its core commitment to social change. This professional development project has the potential of promoting social change for the part-time teachers who will develop educational skills. These educators will impact adult students who will then make a difference in their local communities by achieving personal goals and becoming more competitive in the job market.

Conclusion

Section 3 was an explanation of the goals of the project as well as a second review of literature. The project goal was to provide a professional development training program for part-time teachers, in order for them to improve and strengthen their classroom delivery and knowledge base. In this way, part-time teachers would improve adult student outcomes. In this literature review, I discussed the unique characteristics of the adult learner, the need for professional development, as well as instructional strategies in the adult learner classroom. This section included an implementation plan and timetable for project delivery. Stakeholders were identified, the project descriptions and the needed resources described, any existing supports, potential barriers and solutions to barriers were noted, and implications for social change both locally and far-reaching were

explained. Section 4 will be a reflection of the project and its strengths and limitations. I will also reflect on my work as a scholar practitioner, and discuss the project's implication for social change.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study research project was to explore current practices and professional development training that part-time faculty perceive to contribute to adult student success. In Section 4, I will focus on the professional development project's strengths and limitations, and offer recommendations for possible alternate ways of addressing the research project's problem. This section includes a reflection of the program completion, and addresses how I have grown and improved as a scholar practitioner and project developer. Included is what I have learned along the doctoral journey relevant to the research and development of the project. I will comment on the uniqueness and importance of the project study and its potential effect on social change, implications, and possible directions for future research.

Project Strengths and Limitations

In describing the project's strengths, I would assert that its main strength would be the way in which the project's goals addressed the problem presented in Section 1, that is, exploring how adjunct faculty perceive their professional development opportunities that contribute to their adult learners' achievement. The project has merit, considering that the analyzed research data revealed teacher quality is important to student success, and ongoing professional development training is key to teacher quality and student achievement.

One strength of the project is that the training is flexible and addresses the primary concern of participants. Part-time teachers who were interviewed shared their

frustration with the program administrators not offering the necessary training that would help them with their diverse adult students. The adjuncts talked about not having professional development training opportunities that are relevant and appropriate for the subjects they teach and the types of students they educate.

The project is important and its implementation could provide information that would help part-time teachers have a frame of reference in working with the nontraditional student. Part-time teacher participation in the workshop will have the opportunity to use active learning strategies. These various active learning activities are used to help adjuncts test for themselves how to use these strategies in their classrooms. This hands-on, face-to-face training, along with opportunities to role-play the active learning lessons, is a way to help part-time teachers develop a cache of strategies to build on. To cement their desire to participate in learning opportunities, part-time teachers are also encouraged to participate in an ongoing focus group of adult educators where they can share and obtain valuable resources from each other.

Another strength of the project is that there are opportunities for feedback on the presentations during and after the workshop. Adjuncts reflect on what they learned, and what they saw as beneficial, or not. In evaluating the program, they reflect on their own strengths and limitations, students' needs, and introspectively ascertain how they will develop in their career. The professional development project also offers the adjunct a chance to develop new skills and strategies for teaching, and allows participants the real opportunity to transform their own teaching style. The workshop also helps part-time

teachers identify alternative methods of teaching to accommodate student learning styles identified primarily through experience and student involvement.

Project Limitations

There are some limitations associated with this project. Adult education program administrators have not included part-time teachers in the professional development offerings at the site in the past (site administrator, personal communication, December 2015), and it may be that administrators in charge of the adult education program do not see value in the project to include adjuncts. One reason may be due to the recent budget cuts and their limited staff at the site. Although I was unable to address all of the identified themes listed in Section 2, this could be perceived as a limitation. However, the major theme--the absence of applicable professional development--was addressed. In this study eight adjuncts were interviewed, which is a small number, and it could be construed that there was response bias to predict a certain outcome (Creswell, 2012). Palinkas et al. (2015) argued that there could be bias as a result of direct contact with participants, the use of purposeful sampling, and the fact that qualitative research findings are not typically generalizable. Because this was a case study, the limitation is that the project is beneficial at the research site, not generalizable as is a trait of case studies, and may not have the same impact if shared with similar programs.

To address these limitations, it should be noted that initially the workshop addresses the immediate need of training for the adjuncts. Participants were provided copies of the interview questions prior to the actual interview. Another limitation could be that participants were less than truthful in responding to the questions. Creswell (2012)

addressed this bias as a drawback of qualitative case study. Even when member checks were in place, it is possible that participants could have shared the questions with others and discussed possible answers because they were unsure about expectations. To combat this in the future, less time could be provided to participants to prevent disclosure and comment by others. It is recommended that the key stakeholders would manage and direct the continued workshops to address the various and diverse needs of the part-time teachers, and benefit from the evaluations and feedback from workshop attendees. These results will have implications for policy creation and improved outcomes for teachers and students.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Although the themes from the study resulted in a planned 3-day professional development workshop, there may have been other alternative projects to address the development needs of the part-time faculty. The study results showed a need for professional development in an ongoing way, so the proposed training would be favorable. However, by being involved in site-supported focus groups, part-time teachers would also enrich their craft (CCCSE, 2014).

A staff handbook would have been very helpful in addressing some of the frustrations of the participants, but would not immediately provide the necessary and ongoing training requested by study participants. To address issues faced by the part-time faculty, it would be a recommendation to include them in planned programs, and make it a requirement to participate in the bi-weekly professional development offerings.

Scholarship

In preparing for the development and implementation of the capstone project, and as a traveler on the doctoral journey, I learned to demonstrate critical and reflective thinking skills. As a result of many challenges along the way, I learned that the road to achievement is often paved with determination, consistency, and a heavy dose of humility. Success then includes constant self-examination, and the realization that my journey is unlike others and I must own all the pitfalls as well as mountaintop experiences. The process in achieving scholarship requires critically analyzing what appears obvious, to ensure that all avenues for a solution are considered, traversed, and exhausted. Along the doctoral route, I learned that scholarship is also a journey toward self-actualization. This journey has confirmed the need to have an open mind, appreciate the scholarly work of others, know that there is always something else to learn, and at certain stops along the way, always reflect on what has taken place.

Early during the research process, when I had arrived at a certain juncture, I assumed that the end would be somewhat easily attained. That was not the case. The entire process is challenging and time consuming. This made me nervous, and I often wondered if it was just my approach. Pausing to reflect along the way does not constitute failure, for these times are opportunities to reflect and refocus about what is important in the process. I developed talent as a scholar practitioner. In talking through ideas with classmates and mentors, it reinforced for me not just how to evaluate scholarly documents, but that in helping others, I am applying knowledge gained to real-life issues and at the same time promoting social change.

In facing some of the challenges I encountered during data collection and with community partner interaction, I learned lessons dealing with biases. I understood that research, data collection, data analysis, and developing a major project can transform relationships, because this is the process to achievement. It was easy to form opinions in reaction to the behavior of others. I realized it took character and courage to develop a mindset for success and achievement despite obstacles. This helped me in evaluating and completing the capstone project. As a scholar, I now understand the challenges faced by students who struggle each day to be successful in an educational program. I now see value in challenges that would rob one of the joy of achievement. As I stand on the shoulders of researchers before me, I have developed a thick skin, and confidence in my skills acquired on this doctoral journey. I found out that just simple words can change a person's outlook. When I was discouraged, a fellow student shared a sentiment from Steve Jobs who said that after looking closely at most overnight successes, they actually took a long time. On many days, I read and re-read portions of the encouraging book Education: "higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children" (White, 1903. p.18). This redirected me to the work at hand.

Project Development and Evaluation

While part-time teachers are invited, they are not required to participate in professional development offerings at the research site. In an effort to improve adult student outcomes, the community partner determined to look closely at the training of its part-time teachers to increase the nontraditional learner achievement level (site administrator, personal communication, April 2016). I had never created a project of this

magnitude, so this was a learning experience for me. As a result of conducting research, collecting the data, analyzing the data, and creating this project, I learned the value of patience, being flexible, and the importance of evaluation in a project like this. Evaluation and feedback are crucial to the value and success of the overall presentation (Bakx, Baartman, & van Schilt-Mol, 2014). Although I was not sure how the findings of the study would be received, I concluded that the community partners deserved to see the results, as a way of understanding the need for this project, so an executive summary was in order.

Leadership and Change

There are many obstacles that an effective educational leader could encounter in designing programs to develop teachers in the hopes of improving student achievement (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013). Working closely with site leaders initially, the issue of no professional development for part-time teachers was of concern. In identifying and developing the project to address this, I recognized my resiliency and leadership skills. Being cognizant of the fact that being an effective leader means that I must be familiar with current educational research (Harris et al., 2013), I engulfed myself in being familiar with the most salient data that could be utilized and incorporated in the project.

While it was clear that there was a need for implementation of a training program, the challenge was to determine how this would be attained and what it would look like. I determined that participants would be the individuals at the front line. Part-time teachers derived from purposeful sampling were identified to participate in the semistructured

interviews. With support and guidance from my doctoral chair, I created interview questions that would provide data after careful analysis. The data were used to create a program to provide relevant information to make recommendations and thereby promote social change.

Based on the responses from the interviews, there was no doubt that part-time teachers would welcome the project as a vehicle to help them sharpen their professional skills and, in the process, develop a repertoire of strategies for their student success. The final project then is a crafted workshop that supports a culture of change for part-time teachers. This final project could be used as a catalyst for future projects that could be implemented to enhance teacher talents resulting in documented adult learners' success.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

Pursuing a terminal degree has been one of my life goals. My course of study exposed me to the rigors of research and scholarly writing. Had I not enrolled as a doctoral student, I may not have an understanding of what scholarly voice meant, how important the APA parenthetical documentation style is, and the guidelines in formatting my original documents. I never had a clearer understanding of what it meant to exhibit scholarship. One of the characteristics of adult learners is self-directed learning. As I meandered through the courses and finally arrived at the final project, I realized I had experienced self-directedness according to Knowles's (1975) definition: I took the initiative with the assistance of others at times, diagnosed my learning needs, identified learning objectives, searched for resources via many formats, secured learning strategies, and evaluated every step along the way to ensure I was achieving my goals (p. 18).

In almost every course prior to actually writing the dissertation, the learner is inundated with the course activities that reference the terms *scholar practitioner* and *scholarship* at Walden University. In my opinion, it is still very difficult to define scholar or someone who exhibits scholarship for the simple reason that various disciplines have identified characteristics of who, in their estimation, is a scholar. Nevertheless, based on my experience as a doctoral student, I would say that a scholar is someone who possesses integrity, demonstrates a passion for the discipline in which he or she is immersed, exhibits loyalty to lifelong learning and continuously contributes to the subject area, displays persistence in investigating and learning new ideas, unselfishly exhibits expertise and knowledge to enhance the lives of others, and possesses a commitment to uplift others by leading, networking, and being a resource of empathy and encouragement. I have strengthened my resolve to be a scholar practitioner as a result of the many courses taken, interaction with others, actual research conducted, and finally through the capstone project. There is still much to learn and accomplish, but the journey has prepared me for being a scholar.

Despite the fact that I never doubted my abilities, there were many times along the doctoral journey that I had to refocus. I now believe that every step on the journey, especially with the many obstacles, were important in helping me develop traits of scholarship. One characteristic that developed along the way was being careful to participate in and even create opportunities for social change. By connecting with others and sharing strategies for success, I was able to do this by interacting as a researcher with teachers, collecting and analyzing the data, and crafting the final project. During the

waiting period of uncertainty with the community partner, I became absorbed in

researching articles on topics relevant to my research area, the training of adjuncts in

adult education, adult learners' success, and in doing this my confidence grew. I read

research findings, and spoke with practitioners and other doctoral students who were

completing their studies. I am now anxious to complete this journey and work with others

to make a positive social impact.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

Prior to embarking on this project study, I had a process in how I conducted

inquiry. It was based primarily on what I felt was the best way to go. However, having

participating in this doctoral program I have learned to look carefully and critically at

phenomena. I no longer arrive at conclusions in isolation. I talk things through with

others, read more to ascertain what scholars and others have discovered, and listen

carefully as I consider other perspectives, even when I may end up solidifying my own

earlier held position. The difference now is that my perspective is more thoughtfully

informed. It is tested as a result of peer input and actual research. That process is now

valued more, as it is derived through reflective and critical thinking.

Analysis of Self as a Project Developer

In developing the project, I wanted to be sure that this was the most appropriate

activity to satisfy the demands of the research findings. There was no doubt that some of

my talents are being creative, resourceful, and resilient. In deciding on the type of activity

for my project, I immediately looked at how this could be conceivably presented and

accepted by the community partner. I encountered a major obstacle that almost cost me

the opportunity to conduct my research study at the community site. But after attempting

to get the assistance of others to move along, I took the proverbial bull by the horns and

completed the data collection in record time.

While I had hoped for on-site collaboration and administrator input, as I enjoy

working as a part of a team, I realized that it was not forthcoming. So I conducted

additional research, and worked at developing the project. To ensure that attendees and

others would have input in the possible continuance of the project, it was important to

build in an evaluation plan. This plan allowed for formative and summative appraisal.

The plan was devised to include potential changes and consideration of the program's

feasibility. The likelihood that there will be information current and newer than what I

was offering was certain; recommendations were in order to encourage additional

research to update training. I enjoyed working on the project, and envisioned what each

of the 3 days of the workshop would be like. My thoughts after this experience confirmed

that I am a good project developer, yet flexible and open to criticism. So even in the face

of adversity, there are avenues for expression that the effective educational leader could

utilize to achieve objectives and attain goals.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Social Change

It is the expected outcome for the project that when part-time teachers develop

their skills and talents and learn strategies for their and their students' success, there will

be measureable outcomes (Grabowski, Rush, Ragen, Fayard, & Watkins-Lewis, 2016;

Petty & Thomas, 2014). The study findings suggested that there is change needed in the

training of part-time teachers for there to be noticeable impact on nontraditional student

learning. There is potential for making major changes in the community partner's response to students' low test scores; this change could reverberate throughout the community, which is one piece of evidence of social change. This is one of the stated expectations of completing the doctoral degree at Walden University.

While not a specified requirement, Walden graduates are encouraged to make a positive impact on their communities. In the same way, having participated in the 3-day workshop training, participants will contribute to social change as they revitalize their students toward achievement, and change their communities for the better (Howells, Fitzallen, & Adams, 2016). The study evidence suggested that the trend demonstrates a continuous increase in adult learner enrollment in secondary and higher education institutions. To meet this trend's need, there is also a noticeable inclination of increased hiring of adjuncts. As a result, there will be a definite requirement to frequently evaluate and ascertain that the needs of the learners are being met and will result in their program completion and graduation.

In developing the review of literature, I noticed that there was a scarcity of research in the area of adult education, specifically in the area of teacher quality and what constitutes adult learner success. There is a need to address adult education teacher preparation, as this study revealed that there is a void in the way adult teachers are trained for their assignments in the nontraditional learner classroom. These adult training centers need to better prepare teachers for the population of students they teach. Not adopting adequate measures for improvement in hiring adjuncts could result in adult learner graduation numbers to continue descending, as well as a possible decrease in enrollment

figures. Conversely, adopting and implementing standards for operation in taking care of the needs of the nontraditional learner could be a recipe for their success as well as that of the program. In addition to hiring concerns of adjuncts, future research could address other areas of the program that may affect the graduation rates of students, specifically the orientation and socialization of part-time teachers. A mixed method could possibly supply information in including student concerns and their overall input.

Conclusion

Professional development opportunities for part-time teachers are crucial, if adult educational institutions continue to increase their hiring of adjuncts and hope to graduate the large numbers of nontraditional students enrolling in their programs. To address the rising number of nontraditional student enrollment, part-time teachers can grow their skills participating in the proposed project. The study findings and the literature review confirms the need for this training. During the data collection process, part-time teachers committed to their craft, and provided their perspective of what they needed. I showed that it is possible to improve delivery, instruction, and teacher knowledge base to improve the new demographic increase of nontraditional students enrolled in adult education centers. Providing a continuous opportunity of relevant and appropriate professional development that is mandated will assist part-time teachers in improving their craft and will demonstrate student achievement.

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Appendix A: The Project

Workshop Information
The purpose of this 3-day professional development program is to offer training opportunities to part-time teachers of adult students. In the 3-day program, adult education adjuncts will train to be active as they participate in hands-on activities to help their students.
The design of the 3-day offering is derived from research information within the adult learning theory model.
The target audience is part-time teachers in an adult education facility in upstate New York.
The Goal is to enable instructors to understand the characteristics of adult students and use instructional strategies that would help in their overall success and student achievement.
The learning outcomes are: Part-time teacher-participants will be able to
1. List the unique characteristics of adult learners.
2. Know and understand the differences between traditional and nontraditional adult students' ways of learning.
3. Demonstrate teaching strategies that result in adult learner success.
4. Learn how to motivate adult learners.
5. Identify and acquire strategies that creates a dynamic delivery in the adult education setting.
6. Plan lessons for the adult learner success.

Housekeeping:
- Please silence all electronic devices
- You are welcome to use restroom facilities
- Conversations outside of activities should be at a minimum
- Refreshments are provided and you are welcome to bring these to your tables
- Review of the 3-day schedule
- Lunch Break – Lunch will be provided each day (Salad, Sandwich and/or Pizza, and Drink)
- Please be careful of break and lunch times that we return and are punctual!
- Reflective Journaling is encouraged for your own professional use. Composition books are on your tables*
- Importance of Evaluations
- Questions?

Adult Education

Adult Learning:
Characteristics of Adult Learners, and
Strategies for Adult Learner Success

*Complete your individual KWL about adult education (both the characteristics of adult learners and strategies for student success).

Objectives

After participating in this workshop, each part-time teacher will be able to:

- Know and understand the difference between traditional students and the adult student.
- Identify and list the unique characteristics of the adult learner.
- Understand how the adult learner learns.
- Learn how to motivate adult learners
- Acquire instructional strategies to become a more effective teacher
- Plan lessons for the learner success

Outline

- The adult learning theory
- Adults as learners
- Motivating the adult learner
- Being the effective instructor
- Collaborative learning
- Instructional strategies

The adult learning theory model

We learn best ...
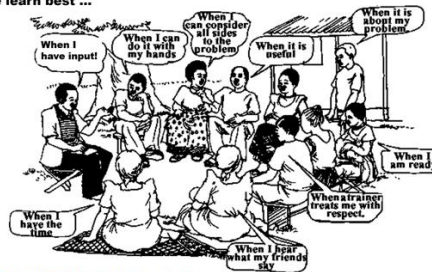
Adapted from UCBHCA: Training of Facilitators Manual

The adult learning theory model

Malcolm Knowles is credited with advancing the term Andragogy a synonym for adult learning.

According to Knowles, andragogy is similar to pedagogy, how children learn, yet the way adults learn is different from how children learn.

ADULTS AND CHILDREN:
THE LEARNING DIFFERENCES EVERY TEACHER SHOULD KNOW

Adult Learners

The "typical" adult learner:

Is 25 years and older...

Often has many other responsibilities:
   -has a dependent other than a spouse
   -
Works part time or full time

Is frequently a single parent

Does not have a high school diploma

Adult Learner Principles

Adult learners:

- are self-directed
- have years of experience and a wealth of knowledge
- have established goals, values, beliefs, and opinions, and want to be treated as adults
- often are relevancy oriented, with a problem centered approach to learning
- tend to be less interested in survey types of courses, desire knowledge for immediate application, and have increased variation in learning styles

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The Difference Between
Pedagogy and Andragogy

In your groups:

*Work with teammates and make a list of what you see as the differences between pedagogy and andragogy, and then compare with the slide.☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Andragogy vs. Pedagogy

Characteristic	Pedagogical (how children learn)	Andragogical (how adults learn)
The Learner	• The learner is dependent upon the instructor for all learning • The teacher/instructor assumes full responsibility for what is taught and how it is learned • The teacher/instructor evaluates learning	• The learner is self-directed • The learner is responsible for his/her own learning • Self-evaluation is characteristic of this approach
Role of the Learner's Experience	• The learner comes to the activity with little experience that could be tapped as a resource for learning • The experience of the instructor is most influential	• The learner brings a greater volume and quality of experience • Adults are a rich resource for one another • Different experiences assure diversity in groups of adults • Experience becomes the source of self-identity

Retrieved from http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2013/05/awesome-chart-on-pedagogy-vs-andragogy.html

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Andragogy vs. Pedagogy

Characteristic	Pedagogical	Andragogical
Readiness to Learn	• Students are told what they have to learn in order to advance to the next level of mastery	• Any change is likely to trigger a readiness to learn • The need to know in order to perform more effectively in some aspect of one's life is important • Ability to assess gaps between where one is now and where one wants and need to be
Orientation to Learning	• Learning is a process of acquiring prescribed subject matter • Content units are sequenced according to the logic of the subject matter	• Learners want to perform a task, solve a problem, line in a more satisfying way • Learning must have relevance to real life tasks • Learning is organized around life/work situations rather than subject matter units

Retrieved from http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2013/05/awesome-chart-on-pedagogy-vs-andragogy.html

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Andragogy vs. Pedagogy

Characteristic	Pedagogical	Andragogical
Motivation for Learning	• Primarily motivated by external pressures, competition for grades, and the consequences of failure	• Internal motivators: self-esteem, recognition, better quality of life, self confidence, self actualization

*Muddiest Point handout for group discussion

Retrieved from http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2013/05/awesome-chart-on-pedagogy-vs-andragogy.html

Roadblocks to Adult Learner Motivation and Eventual Success

Unlike children and teenagers, adults have many responsibilities that they must balance against the demands of learning. Because of these responsibilities, adults have barriers against participating in learning.

https://image.slidesharecdn.com/principles-of-adult-learning-121390904518916O-9/95/principles-of-adult-learning-13-728.jpg?cb=1239369604
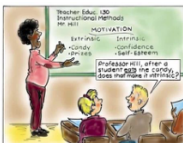

Motivating the Adult Learner

Unlike youthful students, who are required primarily by law to attend school, adults are motivated, but experience obstructions to achieve due to their varied life commitments and experiences. To accomplish the task of helping adult learners achieve, the adult education teacher must posses knowledge of adult learner characteristics, how these students learn, and essentially what are some things that motivate them to achieve academic success.

In essence, the learning must have some relevance to the goals in their personal and professional life.

Motivating the Adult Learner

- Make instructional content relevant and appropriate
- Use various instructional genre to make the lesson exciting
- Encourage group activities and interaction
- Allow self-directed learners to participate in the instructional process: planning and executing lessons
- Help learners make a real life connection
- Be flexible. Accommodate and provide options for learning
- Find ways to incorporate technology and build community in the lesson

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Motivating the Adult Learner

*Reflective activity: Student to Teacher

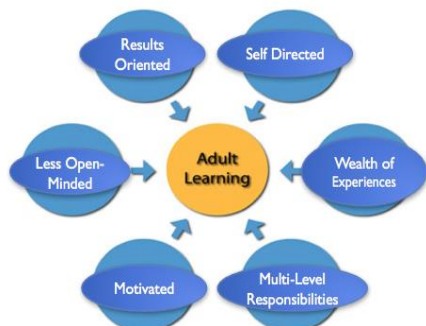## The Adult Learner

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KNOW THE ADULT LEARNER

In planning for the adult learner success:

Be familiar with the characteristics of the adult learner, apply the learning principles of the adult learner, and involve students in the instructional planning…

Slide 1: Adult Learners' characteristics, principles, and Instructional Strategies for Learner Success

Results Oriented • Self Directed • Less Open-Minded • Adult Learning • Wealth of Experiences • Motivated • Multi-Level Responsibilities

Copied from
http://the-adult-learner.blogspot.com/2015/01/andragogy-how-to-value-true-potential.html

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Adult Learners' characteristics, principles, and Instructional Strategies

ADULT LEARNER CHARACTERISTIC	KNOWLES' PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING	INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS
Adult learners want to participate in their learning on a different level than children.	Adults are autonomous and self-directed	**Involve adults in their learning by:** • Asking their preference in a variety of learning activities. • Soliciting their opinion about lessons. • Allowing class time for consultation and assessment • Actively involving learners as you serve as facilitator.

Adult Learners' characteristics, principles, and Instructional Strategies

ADULT LEARNER CHARACTERISTIC	KNOWLES' PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING	INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS
Adults use their varied and diverse experiences to enrich and vary their learning.	Adults have years of experience and a wealth of knowledge.	**Involve adults in their learning by:** • Using their wide experiences in your lesson planning. • Using your adult students as resource as you connect their previous experiences with new knowledge.

Adult Learners' characteristics, principles, and Instructional Strategies

ADULT LEARNER CHARACTERISTIC	KNOWLES' PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING	INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS
Adults are often more motivated than their traditional counterpart.	Adults are goal oriented, and have *clear* ideas what their learning will accomplish for them.	**Involve adults in their learning by:** • Including them in the overall plan for their learning. • Encouraging learners to share their goals and invite conversations about how this will play out for them. • Revisiting this often to encourage them to persist to graduation.

Adult Learners and Teaching Strategies

ADULT LEARNER CHARACTERISTIC	KNOWLES' PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING	INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS
Adults are practical, skeptical of new information, more interested in how-to, and goal oriented.	Adults often are relevancy oriented and practical.	**Involve adults in their learning by:** • Showing them how the course will help them attain their goals. • Using every opportunity to direct the course toward direct applications rather than theory.

Adult Learners and Teaching Strategies

ADULT LEARNER CHARACTERISTIC	KNOWLES' PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING	INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS
Adult learners are often committed to many other life commitments, and can be distracted making "school" secondary.	Adults expect to be treated as adults with all the accoutrements that comes with the characteristics such as **respect.**	**Involve adults in their learning by:** • Treating their in class questions and comments with respect. • Acknowledging their comments and concerns with empathy. • Being flexible. • Establishing a necessary relationship with them.

Adult Learners and Teaching Strategies

ADULT LEARNER CHARACTERISTIC	KNOWLES' PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING	INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS
While they accept responsibility for their own learning, if the learning is timely and appropriate, adult learners have often experienced many failures in their school history and life.	Adult learners have increased variation in learning styles.	**Involve adults in their learning by:** • Using a variety of teaching materials and methods to account for these varying styles of learning. • Encouraging out of class reading. • Providing opportunities for them to develop study skills. • Encouraging group work and peer evaluation when appropriate.

Adult Learners and Teaching Strategies

ADULT LEARNER CHARACTERISTIC	KNOWLES' PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING	INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS
Unlike wet babies who welcome change, adult learners are reluctant to accept "whatever" change is presented, perhaps because of their own life experiences.	Adult learners are often skeptical about new information.	**Involve adults in their learning by:** • Taking the time to clarify new plans and expectations. • Encouraging their questions about their learning plans. • Encouraging an atmosphere and class culture of acceptance to protect all in the room. • Demonstrating how these new ideas connect with their overall goal plan. • Being careful to not make too many changes too often.

Adult Learners and Teaching Strategies

Working in collaborative groups, participants

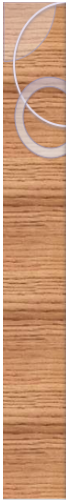## Teaching Strategies: continuing the conversation

Teachers will be given "Creating a LinkedIn account" and information about a group account.
Participants will be encouraged to open an individual LinkedIn account. It's important to continue the Adult Education information as a group. This is an opportunity for workshop attendees and others to connect online- LinkedIn and

Lesson Plan – Instructional Strategies for Adult Education Teachers

Teachers will use Lesson Plan Exemplar handout to work collaboratively to plan lessons.

Do you have questions?

Thank you so very much for participating in this workshop. Your help is appreciated in completing the day's evaluation, as well as the final evaluation.

Place these in the large brown envelope designated on the table by the exit door.

Sandra Brown
Presenter/Facilitator
Sandra.brown4@waldenu.edu

Thank
YOU VERY
MUCH

Day 1: Characteristics and Teaching Strategies of adult education

Target Audience: Part-Time Teachers of Learners	
Setting: Adult Education Center	

Topics: Characteristics of adult learners
      Adult Learning Strategies
      Active Learning	

Purpose:	This session will enable instructors to understand the characteristics of the nontraditional learner and provide teaching strategies to help learners.
Day 1 Learning Outcomes:	Participants will be able to list unique characteristics of adult learners. Participants will be able to demonstrate teaching strategies that result in adult learner success. Participants will be able to identify strategies that creates a dynamic delivery in the adult education setting.
Time Required:	7 Hours

Materials & Equipment needed:	• Enough tables for 12 people (3- 4 per table)
	• Overhead projector, laptop, projection screen, link to internet
	• Post-it notes and note pads on tables
	• Composition notebook for reflective journaling
	• Tray of varied colored pens and markers
	• Poster paper
	• Folder for each participant with handout materials:
	    1. Name Card
	    2. KWL Sheet
	    3. Clock Biddies
	    4. Tips for Teaching The Adult Learner
	    5. Instructional Strategies and Intrinsic Motivators
	    6. *Think-Pair-Share* and *Muddiest Point* (modeling Active Learning Strategy)
	    7. Day 1 evaluation form

Activities and Time Outlined:	Welcome/Overview: objectives/Outcomes 9:00-9:10 am Icebreaker/*Activity 1 9:10-9:40 am Distribute KWL sheet 9:40-11:15 am PowerPoint/Discussion (*Think-Pair-Share*) 11:15-11:25 pm Morning Stretch Break 11:25-12:40 pm Active Learning Activity Report of TPS* **12:40-1:15 pm** **Lunch** 1:15 – 1:25 pm Warm-up Activity – Clock Buddies Distribute The Adult Learner Sheet 1:25 – 2:40 pm PowerPoint /Discussion/ 2:55 – 3:45 pm Afternoon Break 3:45 – 4:00 Pm Reflection Activity/*Muddiest Point*

	Day 1 Evaluation	
Evaluation:	Teachers will complete the evaluation form after this session.	
*Activity One	**Biographic Name Card**. Participants are given a note card to answer questions about themselves. On the card they put their names, what they teach, and two facts about themselves unknown to others in the room. The cards are scrambled, and each person takes the card belonging to someone else and introduce that person to the larger group. **KWL**. To monitor learning, participants will brainstorm with a partner or complete individually, columns 1 and 2 during this session. The card is then collected and returned to participants on Day 3.	

Day 1 Activities: The adult learning theory and Adults as learners
Morning Session: 9:00 – 12:40

Welcome and Overview (10 minutes) 9:00-9:10

Seated 3-4 per table, participants will be welcomed and provided an overview of the 3-day program

Icebreaker: *Biographic Name Card* (30 mins/ 9:10 – 9:40) –
Getting to Know Each Other
- Participants are given a note card to answer questions about themselves, as an opportunity for them to get to know each other. On the card teacher-participants put their names, what they teach, and two facts about themselves unknown to others in the room. The cards are scrambled, and each person takes the card belonging to someone else and introduce that person to the larger group.
- The blank biographical cards will be distributed by the facilitator.
- The activity will be explained by the facilitator and one objective that it could be used by adult students as a team builder when teachers return to the classroom.

Materials needed for the day: bio card, pens/pencils, markers, oversized flip chart

Activity#1 Instructions:
- Each participant at the table will be numbered 1-3 or 4 (based on the number at the table)
- Each participant will complete the card as indicated above.
- The completed card will be handed to the person seated to his/her right.
- The person taking the card will introduce the person whose information is on the card to those at the table.
- The group is encouraged to ask one question of the person as a way of further getting to know each other.

- Participant #1 will then introduce the table members to the larger group.

As in introduction to the start of the PowerPoint introduction, participants will complete the KWL sheet; this is provided to monitor learning, participants will brainstorm individually, then with others at their table, columns 1 and 2 during this session. The sheet is then collected by facilitator, to be returned to participants on Day 3.
NOTE: The facilitator will provide a brief overview of the PowerPoint to be presented over the three days of the project. Participants will be given specific details of the procedure for their participation and eventual learner outcome. They will understand that there will be breakout groups of three or four individuals for their discussion, collaboration, and activity completion first on the adult learning theory and adults as learners.

PPT Presentation: 9:45 - 11:15am

PowerPoint Topics
- The adult learning theory
- Adults as learners

After viewing slides 4-8, participants will work in breakout groups.

Morning Break: 11:15 – 11:25

Activity #2 Following Break (11:25-12:00)
Instructions: Participants will use the *Think-Pair-Share* technique to provide at least 2 things they gleaned from the PPT about adult learners.
Think-Pair-Share active learning strategy is very valuable to engage students in a collaborative activity. The benefits of this learning strategy are many, a few are: it encourages classroom team building, allows students to be comfortable, and not self-conscious, in answering questions, students develop critical thinking and reflective skills. As with all the active learning strategies, this will allow part-time teachers an opportunity to see and use this strategy before adopting and implementing in their individual classrooms.
The facilitator will review and then conclude with Slide 8. Participants will brainstorm the differences between andragogy and pedagogy. The facilitator will provide large flip charts for the groups to report out. The participants will be dismissed for lunch, after they are reminded about the after lunch activity.

Lunch 12:40 – 1:15pm

Afternoon Activity: 1:15 – 1:25
Creation of *Clock Buddies*
Following Lunch, participants will convene to review morning activities. Participants will be provided an opportunity to work with others in the program via *Clock Buddies* partnerships. Participants will be provided the *Clock Buddies* sheet to change groups of 3-4 partners. This is

a great opportunity to not only meet new students in a group, but to allow student/participant to choose their own partners.

PowerPoint Presentation and Group Work: 1:25 -2:40
Instructions for group work. Sitting in their chosen groups, participants will be given the handout:
Tips for Teaching Adult Students By: Brooks Doherty. Using the *Jigsaw technique*, participants will read and list practical tips for teaching their adult learners.
The *Jigsaw Techniques* is an active learning strategy that fosters cooperative learning for student success. In their assigned groups, participants will read an assigned portion of the handout, then share their individual understanding to their group. In this way, the activity time is shortened, and the group will accomplish more together than individually. A great strategy to allow students to develop responsibility for individual and group learning, as well as improve student comprehension for various skill levels.
Whole group discussion and participation to ensue, and the facilitator will record on a white flip-chart, (after reviewing Slides 10-12 with the group, participants' responses to practical tips for teaching adult learners from each group.

Afternoon Stretch Break: 2:40 – 2:55

Afternoon Activity: 2:55 – 3:45
Handout: Adult Learners. Working with their *Clock Buddies*, participants will Jigsaw the handout and respond to listing at least 5 characteristics of the adult student/learner. Participants will share out by having the second person share the group's responses. The facilitator will record on a Flip chart for the entire group's benefit. Then, summarize and direct the group's attention to the reflection Activity: The *Muddiest Point* and finally complete Day 1 Evaluation.

Day 1 Final Events 3:45 – 4:00
Facilitator will direct the group's attention to the reflection activity *The Muddiest Point* and finally complete Day 1 evaluation. Facilitator will wrap up and introduce Day 2 activities. *The Muddiest Point* classroom assessment technique helps to immediately point out where students may have experienced confusion, or where a point was unclear. This allows the presenter or teacher to address the concern right then other than waiting for another day. For home review and to prepare for Day 2's discussion, participants will be given the handout **New Methods in Adult Education,** and asked to read at home and be ready to contribute to the discussion on Day 2.

The Day 1 Evaluation allows for an evaluation of the entire day's work to ensure that objectives were met, and that concerns and program goals were addressed.

PART-TIME FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM

DAY 1

DATE: _____

CONTENT	1 FAIR◄	2	3 ►	4 EXCELLENT
The content was as was described				
The workshop was applicable to my work				
The material was presented in an organized manner				
The activities were effective				
The handouts were appropriate and helpful				
I would be interested in a follow-up presentation				
I would recommend this workshop to other adjuncts who teach adults				
PRESENTATION				
The facilitator was knowledgeable about the topic				
The presenter was personable and professional				
The presenter was a good communicator				
The presenter responded appropriately to questions				
What could be done to improve today's workshop?				
Additional Comments:				
Rate today's workshop: **POOR FAIR GOOD EXCELLENT**				

Day 2: Literacy Strategies

Target Audience: Part-Time Teachers of Learners		
Setting: Adult Education Center		
Topics: Adult Learning Strategies Active Learning		
Purpose:	Participants will understand literacy strategies that will result in improved instruction and delivery in the classroom and result in adult learner success.	
Day 2 Learning Outcomes:	Part-time teacher-participants will be able to: outline key instructional strategies roleplay and use these strategies thy will use in their classrooms	
Time Required:	7 Hours	

Materials:	• Enough tables for 12 people (3-4 per table)
	• Overhead projector, laptop, projection screen, internet access
	• Post-it notes and note pads on tables
	• Composition notebook for reflective journaling
	• Tray of varied colored pens and markers
	• Poster paper
	• Folder for each participant with handout materials:
	    1. *Diversity Bingo*
	    3. From Student to Teacher
	    4. Day 2 evaluation form
	    5. Book Buddies
	    6. Teaching Tips Handout
	    7. New Methods in Adult Education	

Activities and Time Outlined:	Overview: Objectives/Outcomes Icebreaker/*Activity 2 PowerPoint/Discussion Morning Stretch Break Active Learning Activity **Lunch** (working lunch) Diversity Bingo Warm up Activity/Book Buddies PowerPoint/Discussion/ Afternoon Stretch Break Reflection Activity Day 2 Evaluation	9:00-9:10 am 9:10-9:40 am 9:40-11:15 am 11:15-11:25 pm 11:25-12:40 pm **12:40-1:15 pm** 1:15 – 1:25pm 1:25 – 2:40 pm 2:55 – 3:45 pm 3:45 – 4:00 pm
Evaluation:	Part-time Teachers will complete evaluation for this session.	
*Activity 2	**<u>Diversity Bingo</u>** – A Networking Activity - The object of this activity is for each participant to meet as many people in the room as possible, while learning about and celebrating others' uniqueness. In a timed setting, each participant is to locate another person in the room who can "sign off" on one of the boxes on the game chart.	

Day 2 Activities: Motivating the Adult Learner and Characteristics of the Adult Learner
Morning Session: 9:00 – 12:40

Welcome and Overview (10 minutes) 9:00-9:10

Seated 3 or 4 per table, participants will be welcomed and provided an overview of the 3-day program

Icebreaker: *Diversity Bingo* (30 mins/ 9:10 – 9:40)
Getting to Know Each Other
A Networking Activity – More than just networking, this activity is for each participant to meet as many people in the room as possible, to understand obvious or obscure elements of diversity in the group, while learning about and possibly celebrating others' uniqueness. Participant will locate others in the room who can "sign off" on one of the boxes on the diversity chart.
Materials needed for the day: *The Diversity Bingo Card*, pens/pencils, markers, sticky note pads, 1 oversized flip chart per table
Icebreaker Instructions:
After giving general instructions for the activity completion, participants will move around the room meeting each other and asking about any of the card characteristics*.
*It is possible that *The Diversity Bingo Card* may not get filled, especially if the group is homogeneous. The after discussion led by the facilitator could be directed to share participants' feelings about the activity. This will serve as an introduction to the start of the PowerPoint presentation.

PowerPoint Topics 9:45 - 11:15am
- Motivating The Adult Learner Slides 13-16
- Adult Learner Slides 18 and 19

After viewing Slides 13-16, participants work in breakout groups to collaboratively respond to *Student to Teacher*. The presenter will facilitate the discussion on adult learner motivation as well as the home activity **New Methods in Adult Education**. Using the flip chart, participants' responses will be shared with the large group.
The facilitator will announce the morning break, after which the discussion will continue about the adult learner.

Morning Break: 11:15 – 11:25

Following Break (11:25-12:00) Instructions: On returning to their tables, participants will use the *Book Buddies* technique to collaborate and provide at least 3 things they gleaned from the earlier presentation (Slides 18 and 19) about adult learners.

Facilitator will wrap up and dismiss for lunch, and then introduce the after lunch activities re. the Characteristics of the Adult Learner. New Methods in Adult Education .

Lunch 12:40 – 1:15pm

Following Lunch 1:15-1:35
Participants will convene to review morning activities, the *Book Buddies* activity The groups will use the oversized flip charts to share their responses, and elect one member to share with the large group. The facilitator will wrap up and direct the group to a general discussion on motivating the adult learner.

Afternoon Activity: 1:35 – 2:25
The discussion will address what are specific roadblocks to adult learning and their motivation. Using the *What's The Principle* classroom assessment technique, the facilitator will coordinate the discussion and provide opportunities for individual participants to use sticky notes to paste their responses on the front flip chart, on how to motivate the adult learner.
What's the Principle is a useful classroom assessment technique for reflection and problem-solving. This is a great opportunity for teacher participants to discuss and potentially apply what in their estimation cause limited or lack of motivation in adult learners, and what would help to increase motivation in adult learners. Key points will be pasted on the flip chart by participants using sticky notes.

Afternoon Stretch Break: 2:25 – 2:35

PowerPoint presentation and Group Work: 2:35 -2:55
(Slides 20-26): Characteristics of the Adult Learner. Working with their *Book Buddies*, each participant will list at least 5 characteristics of the adult learner. Participants will share out by having the third group member present the group's responses. The facilitator will record on a Flip chart for the entire group's benefit. Then, summarize and direct the group's attention to the reflection, *Focused Listing*. Participants will sum up what they learned regarding the characteristics of adult learners, and finally complete Day 2 Evaluation.

Day 2 Final Events 3:45 – 4:00
Facilitator will wrap up and introduce Day 3 Activities.
The Focused Listing classroom assessment technique helps to inform the presenter what participants recalled from the day's activities, particularly the characteristics of adult learners.
The Evaluation allows for an assessment of the entire day's work to ensure that objectives were met, and that concerns and program goals were addressed.

PART-TIME FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM
DAY 2

DATE: _____

CONTENT	1 FAIR	2	3	4 EXCELLENT
The content was as was described for today				
The workshop was applicable to my work				
The material was presented in an organized manner				
The activities were effective				
The handouts were appropriate and helpful				
I would be interested in a follow-up presentation				
I would recommend this workshop to other adjuncts who teach adults				
PRESENTATION				
The facilitator was knowledgeable about the topic				
The presenter was personable and professional				
The presenter was a good communicator				
The presenter responded appropriately to questions				
What could be done to improve today's workshop?				
Additional Comments:				
Rate today's workshop: **POOR FAIR GOOD EXCELLENT**				

Day 3: Building on the learning. Teachers work in collaborative groups to plan and present lessons

Target Audience: Part-Time Teachers of Learners	
Setting: Adult Education Center	
Topics: Adult Learning Strategies Lesson Construction Collaborative Groups	
Purpose:	Working collaboratively, participants will be able to create dynamic lesson plans for execution in their adult education classrooms.
Day 3 Learning Outcomes:	Part-time teacher-participants will be able to: - Identify effective strategies for teaching the adult learner - Use strategies to create effective lesson plan for adult learners - Collaborate with colleagues to prepare and present lesson plans
Time Required:	7 Hours

Materials:	• Enough tables for 12 people (3-4 per table)
	• Overhead projector, laptop, projection screen, link to internet
	• Post-it notes and note pads on tables
	• Tray of varied colored pens and markers
	• Poster paper
	• Folder for each participant with handout materials:
	  1. KWL partially completed sheet
	  2. From Student to Teacher
	  3. Three Step Interview and Marooned (active learning activities)
	  4. Microscope Buddies
	  5. Creating an individual and group LinkedIn account
	  5. Lesson Plan Exemplar and Template
	  6. Day 3 evaluation form and Final Evaluation

Activities and Time Outlined:	Welcome/Overview: objectives/Outcomes — 9:00-9:10 am Icebreaker/*Activity — 9:10-9:40 am KWL Sheet Review — 9:40-11:15 am PowerPoint/Discussion — 11:50-12:30 pm "Instructional Strategies" **Lunch*** (Working Lunch) — 12:30-1:15 LinkedIn Activity — 1:15-2:00 pm LinkedIn Group Activity Afternoon Stretch Break* Lesson Plan Exemplar and Writing Activity in — 2:00-3:45 pm Collaborative Groups Sharing of Lesson Plans Final Wrap-up and Evaluation — 3:45-4:00 pm
Evaluation:	Teachers will complete the evaluation form after this session. This derived information will allow administrators to further plan necessary training, as well as provide facilitator with valuable information for future such presentations.
*Activity 3	**KWL**. Participants will complete column 3, Learned, on the chart and compare the information learned from Day 1. **From Student to Teacher**: Participants will list all of the ways that their experiences as students can help them become better teachers. What did they experience during this workshop that they can use now? Participants will then share with group members.

Day 3 Activities: Adult Learning Strategies
Morning Session: 9:00 – 12:40

Welcome and Overview (10 minutes) 9:00-9:10

Seated 3 or 4 per table, participants will be welcomed and provided an overview of the 3-day program

Icebreaker: *3-step interview* (30 mins/ 9:10 – 9:40) –
Still Getting to Know Each Other
Even after working together for three days, many professionals still don't connect as they should to develop and network. This activity not only allows members to get to know each other, but participants can reinforce learning by sharing what they have learned over the period of time in the program.
Materials needed for the day: *blank sheets of writing paper*, pens/pencils, markers, sticky note pads, lesson plan template, lesson plan exemplar, instructions for creating a LinkedIn account, and 1 oversized flip chart per table (if not used on previous days).
Icebreaker Instructions:
Have students split into pairs. Each person interviews the other, with questions provided by the instructor. Then the pair finds another couple and forms a quad. Each person takes turns introducing his or her partner and a summary of his/her responses to the group.

Copied from http://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching-guides/learning-activities/Pages/active-learning.aspx
Facilitator will ask table groups to assign a member to share out to the larger group.

Activity #1: PPT Presentation: 9:45 - 11:15am
PowerPoint Topics: Instructional Strategies for the Adult Learner Classroom

Participants will review Slides 20 – 26 and focus on Instructional Implications. This is an opportunity for participants to acquire strategies to help learners in their classrooms. Strategies are practical and address learner characteristics, the adult learning theory, and how to connect the learner using research data to improve delivery methods and planning. Working collaboratively, teachers will outline strategies they deem to be workable in their individual classrooms. The facilitator will allow for a morning stretch break, but a return time earlier to complete the activity.

Morning Break: Open

Facilitator will lead a discussion regarding a possible LinkedIn account to continue the support for attendees to the workshop.

Following Break (approximately 11:20)

Instructions: On returning to their tables, participants will use their composition notebooks to respond to the types of strategies they feel would best suit their needs in their classrooms. Additionally, they will share in their table groups to critique and question the validity of their colleagues' ideas. The facilitator will wrap up and dismiss for a working lunch.

During the Working Lunch …
In collaborating with partners at their table, participants will continue to give feedback and question their colleagues. At this time, participants will be given the KWL they began on Day 1 to complete the remaining columns. Using a flip chart provided to each group, participants will share instructional strategies they gleaned from the PPT presentation. In Round Robin format, the presenter will ask participants to share out to the larger group.
After sharing out and providing a wrap up, the facilitator will guide the group toward creating lesson plans for the adult learner classroom.

Lesson Planning Activity: 2:00 – 3:45
 To demonstrate their understanding of the presentation topics, participants will work on lesson plans with partners of their own choosing. The lesson plans will incorporate the adult learning theory, an understanding of the unique characteristics of the adult learner, and additional components learned during the three day training. To complete these activities, participants will be given the option to use their laptops. Participants will be provided an exemplary and a template to work together to produce a lesson plan for the classroom. The plans will be shared during the final hour of the day.
Participants will create a LinkedIn account for the use of all participants. This will allow for current and continued use and networking to provide and solicit support

Day 3 Final Events 3:45 – 4:00
Facilitator will wrap up and introduce Day 2 Activities.
From Student to Teacher. Participants will list all of the ways that their experiences as students in this training program will help them become better teachers. What did they experience during this workshop that they can use now? Participants will then share with group members.
The Evaluation allows for an assessment of the entire day's work to ensure that objectives were met, and that concerns and program goals were addressed.
Participants will complete the **final evaluation** after this session. This derived information will allow administrators to further plan necessary training, as well as provide facilitator with valuable information for future such presentations.

PART-TIME FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM

DAY 3

DATE: _____

CONTENT	1 FAIR←	2	3	4 →EXCELLENT
The content was as was described for today				
The workshop was applicable to my work				
The material was presented in an organized manner				
The activities were effective				
The handouts were appropriate and helpful				
I would be interested in a follow-up presentation				
I would recommend this workshop to other adjuncts who teach adults				
PRESENTATION				
The facilitator was knowledgeable about the topic				
The presenter was personable and professional				
The presenter was a good communicator				
The presenter responded appropriately to questions				
What could be done to improve today's workshop?				
Additional Comments:				
Rate today's workshop: **POOR FAIR GOOD EXCELLENT**				

FINALWORKSHOP EVALUATION					
Workshop Title: **Date:**					
Facilitator(s): **Location:**					
Categories (On a scale of 1 to 5/ 1 = poor and 5 = excellent.)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Achievement of workshop aims and objectives					
Relevance of content to your work with adult students					
Impact on the way you work					
Pace of the workshop					
Quality of the learning materials and resources					
Facilitation and presentation of the content					
Quality of training materials					
Comments:					
What worked well? Explain why. What could be changed or improved? Did the workshop help participants understand and use the workshop materials? Explain:					
Thank you for completing the Part-Time teacher Professional Development Training Program. Your contribution will have a significant impact on improving teaching and learning at the adult education center and this training program in the future.					

Summative Evaluation Questions

Posed to Administrators:

1. 1. What are some specific strategies presented in the program that you have witnessed being used in part-   time teachers' classes?
2. What specific elements of the training program do you see being used in the teachers' classrooms that present a positive impact on students?
3. What recommendations would you make that would add to the success of the program?

Summative Evaluation Questions

Posed to Part-Time Teacher Participants

1. Have you been able to collaborate with other part-time teachers at the site to plan and share lessons? If so, how often does this occur?

    Once a week _____ Once bi-weekly _____ One a month _____
2. Since the training sessions, have you been able to connect with other adult education teachers via LinkedIn? If so how often?
3. What strategies gleaned from the 3-day presentation are you using in your room, and what is the response from students?
4. What are some recommendations that you have that would make the program more successful?

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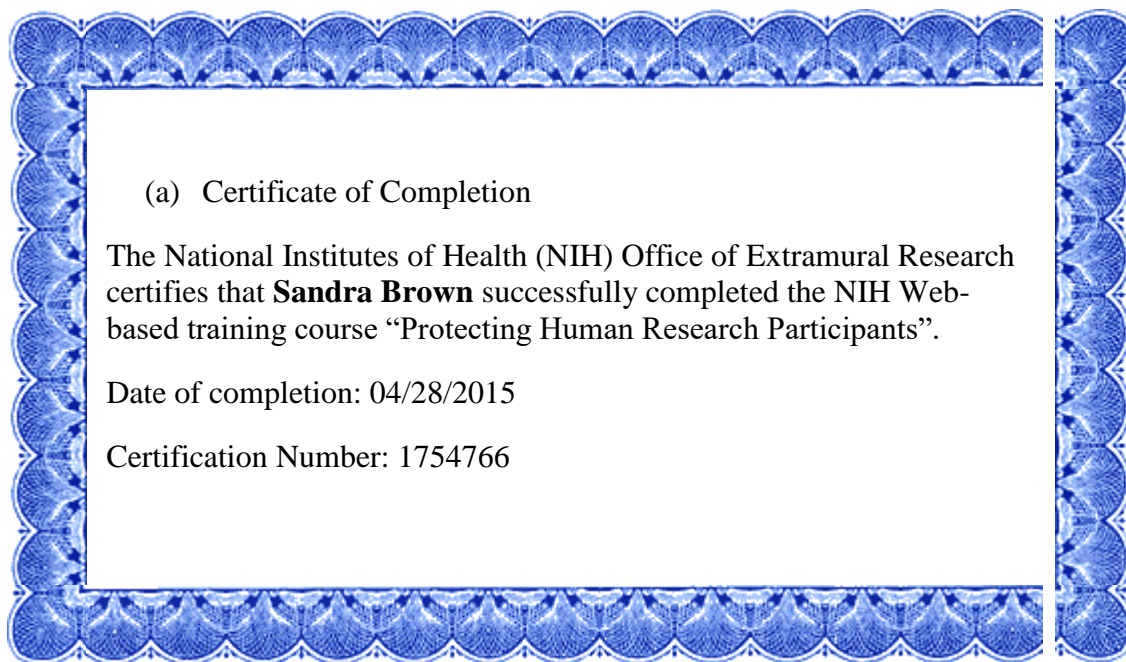Schwartz, M. (2014). New methods in adult education. *The Learning and Teaching Office*. Retrieved from

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Appendix B: National Institutes of Health Certificate of Completion

(a) Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Sandra Brown** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 04/28/2015

Certification Number: 1754766

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Interview Guide

1. How would you describe your beliefs about teaching and educating adults?
2. Please explain your familiarity with self-directedness in adult students?
3. Discuss to what extent an adult learning theory impacts your classroom delivery.
4. How would you develop potential self-directed skills?
5. In what way would you say adult student experiences impact classroom learning?
6. Describe some classroom strategies you use that you believe result in adult learner success? How do you know this?
7. How do you assess student progress?
8. How do you take into account student strengths and interests in your planning of lessons? Describe how you encourage student self-directedness in the classroom and in learning?
9. What are some services, collaborative or otherwise, you have experienced here in this program that have supported you in helping adults achieve success?
10. Please describe the types of PD open to adjuncts in which you participate.
11. What were some of the most beneficial PD? What made them beneficial?
12. Discuss what you believe to be the benefits of PD opportunities here at your program? What were the least favorable PD experiences? What made them unfavorable?
13. How has participation in PD here in this program helped your teaching performance? Why is ongoing part-time teacher professional development important, or not?
14. What are some PD that you want or believe would enhance your classroom delivery methods here at the center?