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Preface

In the first article of this issue, Bordonaro presents the findings of a content analysis investigating the self-directed language learning of adult English as a second language (ESL) learners in libraries. Her method involved analyzing journal articles ($N = 216$) and library websites ($N = 200$). Findings indicate that self-directed language learning can occur online, via physical materials made available by libraries, or in the libraries themselves. Her findings offer opportunities for libraries to further the service provided to ESL learners in their self-directed language learning.

In the next article, Wagner explores the self-directed learning readiness and practices of elementary teachers using a 2-phase, mixed methods design. The quantitative phase revealed a majority (76%) of the teachers ($N = 100$) as being above average in self-directed learning readiness as measured by the Learning Preference Assessment (formerly titled the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale). A subsample of these teachers ($n = 9$) was subsequently interviewed in the qualitative phase in order to understand more about their self-directed learning activities. Findings reveal that these teachers engaged in self-directed learning in myriad ways that facilitated both their personal and professional growth (i.e., “creative and professional selves”) with the latter compensating for perceived inadequacies in professional development experiences.

Acknowledgement

Professor Paul Guglielmino has been a member of the *IJSDEL* editorial board since the journal’s inception in 2004, which included service after retiring from Florida Atlantic University in 2009. As a presenter at the inaugural International Self-Directed Learning Symposium in 1986, author/coauthor of numerous SDL articles, and 2002 recipient of the Malcolm Knowles Memorial Self-Directed Learning Award, he has brought a wealth of knowledge as a peer reviewer for submitted manuscripts particularly at the intersections of business and culture with self-directed learning readiness. Due to his wish to retire from the editorial board, this issue represents his last as a journal reviewer.

Thank you, Paul, for your service!

Michael K. Ponton, Editor

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SELF-DIRECTED SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN LIBRARIES

Karen Bordonaro

This content analysis research study investigated self-directed language learning of adult English as a second language (ESL) learners in libraries. ESL learners are a growing population in libraries, and understanding how they can use or are using libraries helps libraries better serve them. The purpose of this study was to determine if they can or are engaging in self-directed learning in libraries. The documents analyzed comprised library journal articles and library websites. The first finding suggests that self-directed second language learning is taking place in libraries but mainly through online instruction. The second finding is that many types of second language learning material are available for use in and through libraries. The third finding is that physical spaces dedicated to second language learning do exist in libraries. Together, these findings show that library services, resources, and spaces can support self-directed second language learners in their learning.

Keywords: self-directed learning, English as a second language, libraries

Libraries exist to foster and sustain learning outside of formal classroom settings. Libraries would seem to be a natural place for self-directed learning (SDL) to occur. This article investigates one type of SDL in libraries: English as a second language (ESL) by adult learners. Second language learning, as used here, refers to the learning or improving of English by adult nonnative speakers. Adults as defined here refer to people 18 years of age or older, and the libraries investigated here include both academic and public libraries. Adult ESL learners were chosen for this study because they are a growing segment of library users (Click, Wiley, & Houlihan, 2017; Jones, 2015), and because libraries can better serve them if they know more about them (Carlyle, 2013).

This article explores the following: Is it possible for self-directed second language learning by adult learners to occur in libraries, and if so, is there any evidence of it taking place?

ESL Learners in Libraries

ESL learners are a recognized group of library users. Their presence in libraries encompasses public libraries, school libraries, and college and university libraries (Hickock, 2005). Much of the work investigating their use of libraries comes from the academic sector and often relates to issues of information literacy or instruction in the use of academic library tools for successful information discovery purposes (Click et al., 2017). How ESL learners individually engage in information seeking processes for academic research purposes has therefore been of great interest to many librarians (Ishimura & Bartlett, 2013). Navigating academic library services such as ESL students' use of reference desks or consultations with librarians has been studied as well (Curry & Copeman, 2005) as has developing collections for this group of library users (Schomberg & Grace, 2005).

Although the presence of ESL learners in libraries has mostly been investigated in academic libraries, there is now growing interest in discovering their use of public libraries as well. In particular, library services to new immigrants in communities is fueling new investigations into how well public libraries may be serving this group of library users (Kidder, 2016). These considerations are often connected to adult literacy programming offered by public libraries (Hill, 2013).

School libraries have also come under increasing interest in terms of ESL students making use of their resources and services. In school libraries, the focus is often on making these students feel comfortable (Kim, 2015) or offering extended support to their families (Paradis, 2017).

The use of library resources and services by ESL learners in all types of libraries has generally been viewed from the perspective of information provision rather than that of language learning. Although some language learning issues have been considered by librarians, they tend to be tied to information literacy concerns. These concerns revolve around the use of English by nonnative speakers as a source of miscommunication in library instruction classrooms mainly in higher education settings (Conteh-Morgan, 2002).

The magnitude of the problem of second language learners in libraries reflects a growing number of nonnative speakers of English coming to North American libraries. This includes increasing numbers of nonnative speakers of English registering as international students in the United States and Canada (Yochim, 2017; Yu, 2016) as well as increasing numbers of new immigrants and refugees in public and school libraries (Cowles, 2016; Reta, 2018).

The socioeconomic status of adult ESL learners often varies with their educational level with college and university ESL learners generally already able to access online library resources and services (Hodis & Hodis, 2012). For adult ESL learners with a lower socioeconomic status, public libraries could potentially play a crucial role in offering computer support and access to library materials (Visser & Ball, 2010). What all ESL learners may have in common, however, is the need to improve their English language proficiency skills in order to better navigate the new communities that they find themselves in of which libraries form a part. Librarians needing to work with these growing groups of new adult library users may therefore

well benefit from an enhanced understanding of the role SDL could potentially play in these learners' ESL learning in and through libraries.

Self-Directed Learning

SDL is a useful framework for studying library use because it lends itself to a deeper investigation of learning. SDL has been defined in different ways and considered in different settings many of which could support a library perspective.

SDL has been defined as being a personal characteristic of an individual learner: "SDL as a personal attribute refers to an individual predisposition toward this type of learning, and comfort with autonomy in the learning process" (Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 63). It has also been defined as a process "in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating those learning outcomes" (Knowles, 1975, p. 18). This current study explores evidence of SDL in either form: a personal attribute of library users learning English as a second language or as a process that these library users engage in to further develop their own second language abilities.

SDL has been studied in various settings. These include contexts that are "personal, professional, organizational, educational, and online environments" (Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 71). Library use by second language learners could potentially fall under any of these contexts as well depending on where learners are, who they are, and how they want to engage with library resources, services, or spaces to move their language learning forward. Knowles (1976) himself was known to advocate for libraries as a recognized site for self-directed learning as he offered the following predictions for the future over 40 years ago:

We will have self-directed learners making use of resources of all sorts. Now, when you think about it, what institution is most like that right now? Isn't it the library? The institution that I just described as the educational institution of the future is more like the library than any of our existing schools, colleges, or universities, except the libraries in them. (p. 47)

Libraries are meant to support learning in all of its various facets, and SDL would seem to fit well in a setting that often promotes support for individualized or personalized learning (Aitken, 2017; Easley, 2017). The continuing view of the library as a place in which to study quietly in an individual manner or to engage in reflection also potentially supports libraries as a promising setting for SDL to occur (Massis, 2012).

What the framework of SDL can specifically offer to an investigation of language learners in libraries is a focus on individuated learning that is regulated by the learner, not the institution. Librarians help library users find and use information, but they rarely mandate its use outside of formal library instruction settings. Instead, they act more often as facilitators and thereby put the responsibility for learning directly in

the hands of the library user. Choices made by individual learners as to how best to pursue their own learning in this type of setting could potentially allow SDL to flourish.

SDL could also connect the self-regulation of individual learning in libraries to the wider scope of adult education. According to Cranton (2012), “self-directed learning has long been a central concept to adult education” (p. 14). Adult education is another concept highly touted by libraries as a reason for their continuing existence in a world of increasing accessible online information (Rapchak & Behary, 2013).

Background Literature

Although the analysis of library literature constitutes a large piece of this investigation, a brief overview of background literature is still in order. This overview will necessarily be brief because little has been written about self-directed language learning either created for or engaged in by adult library users. This paucity of information shows that a gap exists in the literature.

Language learning does appear in the library literature. This literature includes both second and foreign language (FL) learning. For example, Reznowski (2008) examined the role of librarians in motivating students of foreign languages (in this case, Spanish) to make use of academic library resources. For second language learners, most of the library literature deals with how to accommodate them linguistically and culturally in library instruction classes (Amsberry, 2008). What does not appear in this literature is much in the way of the explicit self-directed aspects of language learning in libraries.

In a similar way, SDL can appear in the library literature as well. Yoshida (2016), for example, noted that the experiences of citizens using the public library “suggest the possibilities of public libraries as places of self-directed learning” (p. 670). Roberson (2005) likewise named the public library as a place that can offer older adults a physical location in which to engage in SDL. What is similarly scarce in the SDL literature, however, are explicit connections to second language learning. One research study that did find some connection between ESL and SDL in an academic library (Bordonaro, 2006) has not been followed up by any current work. What this suggests is that self-directed second language learning in libraries remains ripe for investigation.

Method

The method that was used to investigate the self-directed second language learning of adults in libraries is that of content analysis research. This research method makes use of documents as a source of information and serves as an unobtrusive means of gathering and analyzing data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The documents used in this study included both journal articles in the literature of librarianship as well as library websites that are openly available online and freely posted for public use. Both sets of data—journal articles and websites—were analyzed for information about second language learning opportunities offered by libraries or occurring in libraries.

The journal literature was chosen because it provides information by librarians on what might be considered the most pressing research questions in the field. The

journal content portion of this study took as its model the Hayes and Smith (1994) content analysis on women in adult education. Library websites became the second type of data collected because they can often serve as a useful supplement to journal articles. The usefulness of examining websites lies in how they represent the authentic practice of librarianship. The web analysis content of this study took as its model the Yoon and Schultz (2017) content analysis of library websites' research data management services.

The differing audiences for the chosen documents also informed this study. Librarians tend to write journal articles for other librarians, and library websites generally exist to serve the needs of library users. Viewed in this way, the journal literature can serve as a vehicle for the discussion of theory and reflective professional practice whereas websites can serve as the vehicle for various manifestations of library practices.

The particular form of content analysis chosen for this investigation was that of qualitative research analysis. Its purpose is to investigate data for transferability, not generalizability, so a purposive sample was used instead of a random sample (White & Marsh, 2006). In this case, the purposive sample came from the online searching of documents described below, and its intent for transferability rests on the idea that other librarians could perform similar searches in order to find similar results and that any interpretations of results arising from this study would make sense in their own libraries as well.

The library database LISTA (Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts) served as the discovery tool for the content analysis of the library journal literature. It covers the literature of librarianship from the mid-1960s to the present through its indexing and abstracting of over 700 journals.

The search began broadly to find journal articles that discussed language learning and libraries and then to narrow those results to ESL and adult learners. Because library authors do not always include the specific word "adult" in their research articles, a broader search at the start was made. The following terms were all used (where quotation marks denote phrases and asterisks denote variable word endings): "self-directed language learning," "language learning" and librar*, "second language learning" and librar*, ESL and librar*, "foreign language learning" and librar*, and "self-directed learning" and librar*. Limiting the results to scholarly, peer-reviewed articles containing references that appeared from 2004 to 2018 yielded a set of 216 articles for coding.

Library websites were examined as the second phase of the content analysis data collection. A general web search through Google on the phrases of "library websites" and "self-directed learning" served as the initial search terms. This search produced over 3,600 results that included PowerPoint presentations, commercial research services, and some articles similar to those found in LISTA as well as library documents such as strategic plans and annual reports. The phrase "self-directed learning" mostly appeared on library annual reports and strategic plans but not on library websites. This shifted the hunt for library website content from self-directed learning to language learning with the following phrases: "library websites" and languages, "library and ESL," and "library and languages." This set of results formed the second set of data for the content analysis, the front end of library websites that

include language resources or services for library users. The first 200 results from this search were chosen for coding so that the number of websites ($N = 200$) would approximate the number of journal articles ($N = 216$). Library database relevance ranking and Google ranking do produce different results depending even on where a search is performed (Wilkinson & Thelwall, 2013). In both cases, however, the automated ranking schemes can result in the most consulted or most known items appearing first, which does serve the interests of this research content analysis by highlighting more heavily cited or visited sources.

The categories used for coding the sets of initial results were *services*, *resources*, and *spaces*. As used here, the term services refers to any assistance, programs, or instruction offered to library users; the term resources refers to library collections whether physical or online; and the term spaces refers to the rooms or grounds of a physical library building. These categories were chosen by me prior to the search because they represent current aspects of commonly accepted library work offered for the benefit of library users (Agosto, 2016; Bashir, Soroya, & Khanum, 2018; Montenegro et al., 2016; Stvilia & Gibradze, 2017; Zhang, 2016). An emphasis on current learning needs of today's library users therefore accounts for the use of these coding categories.

The process of categorizing results was accomplished through the use of the citation management software tool Zotero. This software stored the lists of searching results as well as allowed for the adding of the categories of services, resources, and spaces to each of the records. It also allowed for the sifting of lists by these tagged categories that then formed the basis for the next stage of research.

This next stage involved reviewing all of the examples found for each of the categories to determine what specific types of services, resources, and spaces were being described or identified. I reviewed, coded, and analyzed the data independently that yielded codes such as *online instruction*, *in person instruction*, *reference desk service*, *research consultation*, *chat service*, *print resources*, *online resources*, *books*, *virtual spaces*, *physical spaces*, *computer lab*, and *classroom* and so on. These codes emerged from the results and were not predetermined by me in accordance with commonly accepted qualitative research parameters (Creswell, 2008).

The following stage of the investigation was the analysis of the results for any evidence of SDL. In this case, all of the results in all of the three categories of services, resources, and spaces were once again reviewed for any descriptions of learning that might have happened in an individual way that could potentially have been self-directed. The codes that emerged from this phase of the investigation came directly from the authors' own words and included terms such as *learning*, *individual*, *solo*, *personalized*, and *self-directed*. It was through the connecting of these instances of learning to particular examples of library services, resources, or spaces that led to the emergence of the three findings detailed below.

In terms of triangulation, the same searches were conducted on two separate occasions over the course of 6 months. Resulting bibliographies were therefore twice created in Zotero; twice divided into the categories of services, resources, and spaces; and then further coded twice with emerging examples of library specifics and learning-related notes. This approach of running more than one search over journal content as

well as websites was used in order to comply with qualitative research methodology regarding triangulation as described by White and Marsh (2006): “Collecting, analyzing, and cross-checking a variety of data on a single factor or aspect of a question from multiple sources, and perhaps perspectives... is termed triangulation and is a way to heighten a qualitative study’s credibility and confirmability” (p. 38). The emerging library specific codes (physical space and virtual space, print resource and online resource and so on) were shared with librarian colleagues who confirmed their authenticity as library constructs that would readily be understood by practitioners. This last step was taken so that any applicable results from this investigation could be put into potential practice in many libraries.

Findings

Three major findings emerged from the coding and analysis of the documents each of which is related to some aspect of self-directed second language learning in libraries. The first finding is that SDL by adults does take place in libraries, but it is most evident in online instruction. The second finding is that second language learning materials not only are present but also take many different forms in library collections. The third finding is that physical space in libraries does exist for the explicit support of second language learning.

Self-Directed Learning Online

Self-directed learning by adults does take place in and through libraries. This can be seen in library journal articles containing proof of its existence. As noted earlier, the phrase “self-directed learning” does not generally appear explicitly in library websites, so this first finding emerged from evidence found in the library literature.

Evidence for self-directed learning comes mainly from measurements of learning taking place online. For example, one study stated that its university “developed a self-directed learning module to guide graduate students through the process of researching and writing a literature review. Students ...diagnose learning needs ...select appropriate learning strategies, and evaluate their own learning outcomes” (Ladell-Thomas, 2012, p. 376). In another example, evidence comes through invoking the ability to control one’s own learning online through “YouTube [which] generally provides a conducive learning environment that affords learners the resources to meet their SDL objectives” (Lee, Osop, Goh, & Kelni, 2017, p. 611).

SDL is often equated to opportunities for online learning (Yamagata-Lynch et al., 2015). This generally takes the form of offering students access to online learning modules that can be completed by them individually, at their own pace, and when they choose to do so. Stagg and Kimmins (2012), for example, named as SDL their development of a virtual learning environment as “asynchronous, self-paced learning opportunities delivered via appropriate accessible, easy-to-use technology” (p. 63). Tseng (2013), in another example, cited the provision of online library resources as a way to connect SDL with entrepreneurial learning. Finally, Wong (2013) advocated for libraries to more fully embrace mobile technology for “more personalized, self-directed

learning experiences beyond the four walls of classrooms” (p. 319). What these various studies all seem to have in common is the use of an online format serving as a potential marker for SDL.

SDL theory is also present in the library literature. De Klerk and Fourie (2017), for example, stated unequivocally that their SDL framework was

influenced by models on professional practice, the sphere where continuing education originates, the work of Knowles (1975) and Brockett and Hiemstra (2012) on self-directed learning theory, and the personality trait of self-directedness as understood and constructed by Oddi (1984), another self-directed learning theorist. (p. 90)

Further literature widens the study of self-directed learning in libraries to include other forms of library services and support. Murphy (2014), for example, invoked SDL as a good way for students to learn about the library itself. Curry (2017) tied SDL to library makerspaces. Makerspaces are physical locations in libraries dedicated to offering library users access to the latest technology such as 3D printers, music studio recording equipment, and virtual reality hardware for the purposes of collaboration and creation (Kroski, 2017). Additionally, Walther (2018) viewed SDL in the development of personal course plans for graduate library school students.

It is important to note that all library projects described in the literature may well encompass authentic SDL; however, stating this to be the case does not ensure that it can necessarily be proven to be true. The underlying assumption seems to be that if library resources are made available online for individual student use in a self-directed manner, SDL will occur.

Another important note to make is that SDL in the library literature is not specifically related to language learning but rather to learning of a more general nature. For example, Stagg and Kimmings (2012) viewed SDL in libraries as a way to give new university students “a sound opportunity to develop their academic learning skills, including information literacy” (p. 61).

The support of online instruction was found to be the service component most associated with SDL in libraries. This suggests that online instruction is where libraries focus most of their efforts on supporting SDL. It also suggests that SDL is taking place in and through libraries.

Second Language Learning Material

The second finding is that second language learning materials exist in many different forms in library collections. This underscores the importance of material provision as a function of libraries because second language learning that can be engaged in by adults could depend on what is available for their use. Evidence for the variety of second language materials in library collections comes primarily from library websites that list, describe, and make available these various types of resources.

Forms that second language material in library collections take broadly include both online and print forms. The most common online resource made available by

libraries for second language learning seems to be that of commercial language learning databases such as Pronunciator, Mango Languages, and Rosetta Stone. At the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library in Buffalo, New York, Pronunciator has been made available for its users “which offers English instruction for speakers of 50 foreign languages including Arabic, Bengali, Nepali, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese.” In a similar way, the Ottawa Public Library in Ontario, Canada offers Mango Languages for its ESL patrons through courses such as English for Somali Speakers, English for French Speakers, English for Japanese Speakers, English for Chinese (Mandarin) Speakers, and English for Vietnamese Speakers. The Calgary Public Library in Alberta, Canada makes Rosetta Stone available for its second language learners in a comparable way by offering English instruction online. Another common online second language learning resource found on library websites is the free online learning tool Duolingo offered by the Monroe County Public Library in Indiana.

E-books are another form of online library material that can be used by self-directed second language learners. Algonquin College in Ottawa, Ontario, offers a selection of featured e-books for ESL learners on its library website. The Winnipeg Public Library similarly offers access to many e-books through its website that includes ESL offerings from a series of e-book providers.

Audiobooks are a further form of material that can be used by self-directed second language learners in and through libraries. At Queens Library in New York, a collection of digital audiobooks is made available to learners for this purpose. Audiobooks in the form of CDs or DVDs available for checkout are present as well in some libraries such as at Parkland College library in Champaign, Illinois. Some libraries make both formats of audiobooks available for second language learners as in Pima County Public Library in Arizona.

Print resources for self-directed second language learners are still bought and maintained as well by libraries. The Richmond Public Library in British Columbia has an extensive ESL print collection that includes books on grammar, pronunciation, idioms, vocabulary, and textbooks among others. Collections of “easy readers” or books written in simplified English for ESL students still exist in libraries as well as at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario.

Links to websites that are compendiums of ESL learning material is another form of material support that libraries provide to second language learners. Sacred Heart University Library in Connecticut offers a listing of links to its second language learners that directs them to sites for sharpening their listening skills and sites that contain English lessons and games. In a similar way, the University of Washington Libraries offers links to websites for listening and speaking practice, text translators, and grammar sites.

Although evidence of library materials for second language learners comes mostly from websites, some evidence of material variety can be found in the library literature as well. Articles that identify and recommend library resources for supporting second language learners serve to illustrate different types of material. Mylopoulos (2007) recommended that public libraries wishing to serve ESL learners should buy dictionaries, grammar books, and vocabulary books (p. 38); Jensen (2002) recommended useful print books for building ESL; and Hickock (2005) recommended

different websites that libraries can be aware of and link to for the support of second language learning.

For this finding, it is important to note that the provision of second language learning materials does not necessarily mean that they are being used in a self-directed way. However, if self-directed second language learning were to take place, it would need to first have materials available for that purpose, so this finding can offer libraries a possible stepping stone for making that happen.

The material provided by libraries for second language learners encompasses a wide variety of formats that include online language learning software, e-books, print books, and audiobooks in both digital and CD format. E-books and print books further include simplified readers as well as books on grammar and vocabulary. This second finding of the study shows that libraries do have materials available in and through their collections to support self-directed second language learners.

Second Language Learning in Library Spaces

The third finding of this study is that physical spaces do explicitly exist for second language learning in libraries. Physical spaces can include rooms, furniture, and computer equipment with internet connections as well as access to noncomputer equipment. Libraries provide physical space for literacy professionals to use for this purpose or can make arrangements to provide it themselves. Libraries also often incorporate referral systems in their spaces in order to further support the needs of second language learners in their local communities. This finding highlights the importance of providing library space as a way to serve library users, which could potentially lend itself to self-directed use as well. Evidence of the use of physical space for second language learning in libraries comes from both websites and the library literature.

The physical space in libraries supporting second language learners often takes the form of space used by literacy professionals who may or may not be library staff that teach formal ESL classes there. Many library websites offer examples of this use of physical library space. Queens Library in New York again provides a good example. The patrons at this public library system include many immigrants needing to learn English. Their Learn English section offers an array of services designed to support these users from citizenship classes, language classes, adult literacy programs, and technology assistance workshops all of which take place in library spaces. The Toronto Public Library in Ontario offers a similar arrangement for extensive and ongoing English language classes in the library for adult ESL learners.

Other examples of physical library space used for second language learners are the provision of conversation circles that is an opportunity for second language learners to engage in less formal English speaking such as at the Chelmsford Public Library in Massachusetts. The Vancouver Public Library in British Columbia offers both conversation circles and library tours to adult second language learners. Writing support is sometimes offered in libraries as well as evidenced by the existence of a writing club at the Calgary Public Library.

One-on-one tutoring between literacy volunteers and adult learners is another common use of library physical space. The local literacy organization for Buffalo and Niagara Falls, New York, provides one-on-one tutoring in the public library through both a scheduled and a drop-in system. The Regina Public Library offers a direct online tutor training program for working with adult second language learners. The Hamilton Public Library in Ontario supports one-on-one tutoring both in the public library and in other public places in the community.

Offering referral systems for further learning opportunities is a way that libraries can extend their physical support of second language learners. Links to experts or referral to other community resources appears on library websites in public libraries. The Stratford, Ontario, Public Library's referral to Anytime ESL is an example of this. Anytime ESL is an online learning tool developed by the Centre for Employment and Learning in support of Canadian Language Benchmark competencies. Another example is the Toronto Public Library's referral to the Literacy Access Network, a telephone referral service to a suite of community services for ESL learners and tutors.

The evidence of physical library space being used for second language purposes comes from both the websites mentioned above and from the library literature. The library journal articles that describe or cite ESL programming in libraries such as literacy classes and tutoring tend to highlight public libraries. McCook and Barber (2002) considered ESL learners to be lifelong learners who deserve public policy support. Scott (2011) viewed ESL programming in public libraries as a way for libraries to engage in community building. Varheim (2011) interpreted ESL programming in public libraries to be a form of social capital. These different interpretations, however, all point to the physical space of public libraries being used for second language learning purposes.

For this finding, it is important to note that although physical spaces dedicated to second language learning have been found to exist in libraries, this does not mean that they are being used in a self-directed manner. However, they could be used in that way if individuals could also make use of these spaces to study English on their own with any print or online materials potentially available for such study. Again, this can offer libraries another stepping stone to providing service to self-directed second language learners.

The third finding, that physical spaces do exist in libraries in which second language learning can take place, offers another way to consider how self-directed second language learning could manifest itself in libraries. The three findings taken together may aid in understanding how self-directed second language learning could happen in libraries and in how libraries can effectively support these learners.

Discussion

The findings above suggest that self-directed second language learning by adults can and is taking place in libraries. Each finding lends itself to a further interpretation of possibility. For example, if SDL is taking place through online instruction, could not the online instruction take the form of second language learning? For the second finding that libraries provide a variety of materials that support second language

learning, could not the use of such materials by individual learners be tracked and identified as self-directed? And for the third finding that libraries are supporting second language learning in physical spaces, could not their support also include options for doing so in a self-directed manner as well?

The findings from this study also strengthen the library literature and add scope to library offerings found on public websites. For example, the finding that SDL is taking place in libraries girds the background literature by providing evidence for it happening. Thus, Yoshida's (2016) suggestion of libraries serving as places where SDL could possibly take place can be fortified by this finding. The finding that libraries offer many different types of second language learning materials can likewise strengthen library websites claims. For example, the Kitchener, Ontario, Public Library can verifiably state that they offer "a wide selection of language learning materials." The physical space dedicated to second language learners can signal to the public that this is a very important function for libraries to engage in. When potential library patrons of the London, Ontario, Public Library view the current programs offered, this message resonates very clearly in their extensive list of offerings.

These findings also suggest that libraries can offer fertile ground for self-directed second language learning. Libraries have second language learning material, physical places where second language learning can take place, and professional staff who are committed to providing services. The structure is robust for supporting self-directed second language learners in libraries.

The conditions are ripe as well. Online availability of material can open the door to more opportunities for engaging in self-directed second language learning in libraries. Growing communities of second language learners exist both in the local community of public libraries and in the academic community of university ESL students. The support of learning is becoming more recognized as an important function of libraries (Tuamsuk, Kwiecien, & Sarawanawong, 2013), and lifelong learning in particular is growing as a stated library goal (Elmborg, 2016).

Tantalizing glimpses of self-directed second language learning can be seen in libraries as well. Branyon (2017), for example, noted that immigrant mothers take out books in English to read to their own children as a way for them to engage in language learning themselves. This can be construed as an act of self-directed second language learning because these mothers have not been directed to do so through a class or any other group setting; they are choosing to do this themselves as way to learn English on their own. Supporting actions such as these could be recognized as opportunities for libraries to support self-directed second language learning.

Implications

The main implication of this study is that libraries can support self-directed second language learners. Libraries can do this by buying second language learning materials in various forms and making it available to this group of library users for their individual self-directed use. Libraries can do this by providing and also potentially creating learning material online as well that could be used in a self-directed manner.

Libraries can do this by making physical library spaces available for second language programming that could also support self-directed uses.

Another implication is that self-directed second language learning may already be happening in libraries, but it needs to be better captured, measured, and shared. The first step might be to find out if there are self-directed second language learners in a community who could be served by the library or who are already using it. This could happen if the library hosted a welcome program for new users or put up an initial book display of material on learning English as a second language to draw them in. It could involve inviting a guest speaker on literacy to put on a workshop in the library to gauge community interest or developing a user survey or conducting interviews with library users. Connecting with local literacy providers might also provide an avenue for beginning to consider potential second language learners as library users. Even looking at circulation statistics to see if books on learning English have been checked out could offer a way to begin.

Devising ways to capture and measure the learning of self-directed second language learners in a library would then be very helpful in justifying expenses for materials and services to support them. This is not to suggest that wholesale research projects need to be fully developed and carried out before such learning can be verified. Learning could potentially be captured in an initial way by providing a link to a free online language learning tool such as Duolingo on a library website and then keeping statistics on how often it gets used; surveys could be distributed to ESL students in classes given through the library asking what else the library can do to help them improve their English on their own; or ESL tutors could be interviewed to see if and how the students might be using the library in different individual ways.

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations for this investigation stem from the sources used as documents that formed the basis for the content analysis. This could include a potentially too narrow universe of library literature investigated from a single library database. It could also include a potentially too broad universe of web content through Google searches. Another limitation could be the potentially restrictive focus on the specific learners being investigated. Libraries exist to serve all learners, not just second language adult learners, so a wider net may have yielded more wide ranging results that could have then perhaps been applied to this particular set of learners as well.

The need for future research comes from finding that self-directed second language learning can take place in libraries. Future research that involves directly observing these learners in their library use could potentially yield stronger insights into how and why this learning is taking place.

Conclusion

Self-directed second language learning by adult learners occurs in libraries. It can happen (a) online through self-directed use of learning material, (b) through the provision of a variety of second language learning materials made available by libraries

used in a self-directed manner, or (c) in physical places found in libraries dedicated to ESL classes as well. In sum, library spaces, collections, and services can all help self-directed second language learning potentially take place in libraries. Libraries should become aware of self-directed second language learners in order to increase their service to the community and to this specific group of library learners.

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THE SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING PRACTICES OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

Susan R. Wagner

This study examined the relationship between elementary teachers' self-directed learning and activities in their classrooms. A 2-phase, mixed methods design first utilized a quantitative study to denote the type of data collected in the second, qualitative phase. The quantitative Phase 1 gathered data with the Learning Preference Assessment (formerly titled the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale) administered online to 100 teacher respondents. Statistical analysis generated descriptive statistics for this population of teachers and identified teachers high in self-directed learning readiness. For the teachers in this study ($N = 100$), the mean was 240.89, standard deviation of 20.19, and range was 91. This score indicated the teachers had developed an above average readiness for self-directed learning (cf. Guglielmino & Guglielmino, n.d.). In Phase 2, 9 teachers scoring high and above average were interviewed. Qualitative results revealed that teachers participate in self-directed learning activities that expressed their creative and professional selves. When the teachers in this study found that professional development did not meet the immediate needs of their classroom, they planned and sought additional knowledge on their own. It was found that teacher self-directed learning actually included characteristics that research has found to be essential for successfully implemented professional development that results in improved student achievement.

Keywords: self-directed learning, elementary teachers, professional development

Public and private school teachers are role models for their students and facilitate the means in which student learning takes place. Teachers who seek to offer the best instruction for their students must often look outside their district or school's professional development offerings to gain professional knowledge, stay current in their content areas, and develop better teaching methodologies to facilitate student learning (Hill, 2009). Teachers who invest time and resources in directing their learning may transfer that enthusiasm for learning and knowledge to their students in the classroom. Self-directed learning (SDL) can be explored as an opportunity for professional growth for teachers, which can result in a more personalized learning experience that will also benefit student learning in the classroom. Teacher professional development research has examined prescribed teacher professional development programs, yet what is not contained in the research are studies examining how individual teachers gather skills

and knowledge on their own to perfect their expertise in the classroom (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009).

Literature Review

As part of Goals 2000 ("H.R. 1804," 1993), the U.S. Department of Education stated that for teachers to steer students toward meeting the more rigorous standards set in place by the 2002 No Child Left Behind legislation, professional development would serve as the "bridge" that connects teachers at their present location in experience and knowledge to where they need to go in order to raise the achievement of their students. Likewise, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (n. d.) created a 5-phase framework of research-based teacher professional development. These phases of teacher professional development should be ongoing, overlap, repeat, and serve as guidelines for administration and teachers in selecting, conducting, and pursuing ongoing education.

Grootenboer (1999) and Hill (2009) were critical of educational research into the current practices of teacher professional development in that the research itself has been immaterial to teachers, disconnected from their daily classroom interactions, and offered little influence on their teaching. Hill asserted that teacher professional development as "broken" and referred to many of the newer innovations in teacher professional development methods as "fads" and found that most teachers "engage in only the minimum professional learning required by their state or district each year" (p. 471). Using data compiled from the National Center for Education Statistics, Hill contended that the low turnout for professional development merely matched minimal state requirements for keeping teacher licensure up to date, which is on average 15 professional development days over a period up to 5 years.

There have been some critical findings on what is working in professional development (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009) in that sustained and intensive professional development is related to student achievement, and collaborative approaches to professional learning can promote school change that extends beyond individual classrooms. Effective professional development is intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice; focuses on the teaching and learning of specific academic content; is linked to other school initiatives; and builds strong working relationships among teachers.

Self-Directed Learning

SDL offers teachers the opportunity to choose, plan, evaluate, and implement their learning in the classroom and affords teachers control, something that standard teacher professional development has not. Knowles (1975) defined the process of SDL for adult learners and focused attention on its importance. Merriman, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) acknowledged that adults learn by themselves at different stages of their lives and for various purposes. They organized research and theory into SDL within three areas: self-directed learning as goals of the learner, the process of self-directed study,

and the personal attributes of self-directed learners. Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) affirmed that learning takes place throughout life. SDL, in regards to teacher professional development, can afford teachers opportunities to expand their knowledge base without teachers suffering some of the negative consequences that can reportedly follow the traditional, one-size-fits-all teacher professional development programs.

Grow's (1991) staged model moves learners through four learning stages: from that of being the dependent learner needing coaching, to the inspired student motivated by the instructor, to an involved learner equal with a facilitator, and finally capping with the self-directed learner sometimes relying on a consultant. This model focused on teachers assisting learners by meeting them at their stage and describes the characteristic of teachers at each level. Grow stated that "being a dependent learner is not a defect; it can however be a serious limitation" (p. 129). I posit that teachers involved in professional development setting are dependent learners. This dependency leads to teacher dissatisfaction with their learning and the outcome of their professional development. Grow also stated that SDL in stage 4 is not possible in public or in an institution, with learners being highly self-directed and the teacher serving as a consultant. However, this type of learning situation is usual for classroom teachers isolated in their classrooms once the school year begins. What often occurs in a typical professional development setting is a learner/teacher mismatch. This mismatch often occurs between the teacher or deliverer's style and the learner's stage of self-direction (Grow, 1991). When a teacher is just released from a 1- or 2-day professional development seminar, he or she may still be a reliant learner and still thoroughly dependent on a teacher or coach for direction. A mismatch between stages of learner self-direction and level of teacher instruction explains the teacher-as-learner's inability to apply new knowledge when he or she returns to the classroom.

In genuine SDL, the learner rather than a school administrator, principal, or seminar leader takes the responsibility for his or her learning. Hiemstra and Brockett's (2012) updated Person Process Context (PPC) model reflects the person as learner, the teaching-learning process within the social context, and that vibrant relationship between these three dimensions of SDL each with equal bearing and impact on the learning process. In the context of this study, the Person is the elementary teacher, and his or her SDL includes the personal characteristics used in pursuing that learning: "creativity, critical reflection, enthusiasm, life experience, life satisfaction, motivation, previous education, resilience, and self-concept." (Hiemstra & Brockett, 2012, p. 158). The Process of their SDL involves "the teaching-learning transaction, including facilitation, learning skills, learning style, planning, organizing, and evaluating abilities, teaching styles, and technological skills" (Hiemstra & Brockett, 2012, p. 158). In the PPC model, Context is recognized as influencing SDL and applies to the teachers in this study who are seeking their own professional development and is influenced by the federal and state policies, administrative mandates, and learning needs of their students and teacher interests (Hiemstra & Brockett, 2012).

This relationship between these three dimensions within the PPC model for SDL applies to teachers as self-directed learners and recognizes the unique context of teachers in classrooms and schools with varying learning demands for professional learning as well as content knowledge for use in teaching their own students.

Research on SDL in Teachers

Wang, West, and Bentley (1989) reported that 13 different groups had been targeted in SDL research. While there are studies examining the SDL of K-12 students and how teachers can best facilitate K-12 learners in becoming self-directed learners, at the time of this study, little research into the SDL of public school teachers existed at the elementary school level. Targeted areas of adult education included secondary high school teachers (Beatty, 1999), exemplary elementary principals (Guglielmino & Hillard, 2007), teacher performance appraisals (Rowe, 2000), teachers working with students as self-directed learners (Bolhuis & Voeten, 2004; Eilon & Kliachko, 2004), corporate and seminar trainers (Johnson, 2006), rural adults (Terry, 2006), breast cancer patients (Rager, 2004), and graduate nursing students and faculty (Lunyk-Child et al., 2001). Rowe concurred that “there appears a scarcity of empirical evidence to link concepts of SDL and teacher professional growth” (p. 7).

Within the K-12 community, Guglielmino and Hillard (2007) examined the use of SDL in 10 exemplary elementary principals using the Learning Preference Assessment (LPA; Guglielmino & Guglielmino, n.d.); the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS; Guglielmino, 1977) is currently referred to as the Learning Preference Assessment to participants in order to eliminate response bias. They found that the exemplary principals engaged in SDL not only for themselves but they also fostered it for their teachers and built shared learning communities within their schools. When Guglielmino and Hillard compared the principals’ scores on the LPA to other groups, they found that these principals had the highest scores ever recorded on the instrument at that time. In the accompanying interviews with the 10 principals studied, the researchers were able to identify themes shared across the participants: teacher empowerment, innovation, shared leadership, and reliance on data to lead their schools. The principals were found to be highly self-directed and also to model and enable self-direction in their staff.

Statement of the Problem

Teacher professional development research has examined prescribed teacher professional development programs and acknowledged the educational system in which teachers must navigate their own learning goals. Teacher moves beyond prescribed learning can enlighten research into additional information on how individual teachers gather skills and knowledge on their own to perfect their expertise in the classroom (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009; Slavit & McDuffie, 2013).

SDL can be explored as an opportunity for professional growth for teachers that can result in a more personalized learning experience that will also benefit student learning in the classroom. While research into teacher professional development examines mandated or assigned teacher professional development programs, teacher professional development research has not fully examined the individual investigations and learning that teachers pursue to perfect their craft. Teachers are performing their learning outside of the typical staff development seminar or school-wide in-service. This area of teacher SDL is lacking in the research literature.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed method study was to determine the relationships between SDL readiness and elementary teaching. That is, do teachers identified as self-directed exhibit characteristics of self-directed learners, and if so, how do these characteristics and learning translate into their classroom instruction? Through SDL, teachers can further their teaching craft, pursue an interest that may influence classroom content, or learn for the sake of learning. Elementary teachers bring much to the classroom beyond the scripted textbook lessons or end-of-chapter assignments (McCall, 2006). More often than not, those teachers identified as “exemplary” bring pieces of their lives into the classroom (Allington & Johnston, 2001; Haberman, 1995). These teachers go beyond the textbooks and provide an extra dimension to their instruction that sets them apart.

By identifying these qualities and perhaps by linking the SDL of teachers to their teaching, a model of self-directed professional development can be shared that will assist preservice teachers and current teachers to improve their practice. If teachers invest in their own learning needs and interests and link those with the needs of their students and school to facilitate learning, knowing how they do this may open a door for future professional growth that lies outside traditional professional development.

Research Questions

This study took place in the southeastern United States and involved teachers in various public elementary school settings. It was comprised of quantitative and qualitative phases. The quantitative phase addressed the following question:

1. How do elementary teachers rate on the Learning Preference Assessment?

The quantitative phase also allowed for a purposeful selection of participants for the second, qualitative phase that addressed the remaining questions:

2. Do elementary teachers participate in SDL activities?
3. What sorts of learning activities do teachers participate in inside and outside of the school environment?
4. Do these learning activities translate into the classroom?

Method

Instrumentation

The LPA, originally developed as the SDLRS by Guglielmino (1977), was used in the quantitative phase of the study (i.e., Phase 1). A contract was negotiated with the survey developer for the purchase of 101 surveys, for the survey instrument to be posted on the university’s server, and to apply additional fields for consent, demographic, and contact information that would be obtained and maintained by me for

confidentiality. Within the survey, additional demographic questions were added at the beginning of the LPA instrument as well as a closing paragraph where teachers could indicate their willingness to participate in a future interview, allow the researcher to identify their data, and obtain their survey score and information about their learning preference. Teachers taking the survey were assigned a respondent number. The online survey was set up to allow respondents to drop out of the survey at any time or skip questions by clicking on a box marked "next." Included in the online survey closing was permission by the participant to allow Guglielmino and Associates to see their data (without respondent identifiers) for data analysis purposes.

The qualitative phase of the study involved conducting semi-structured, focused interviews with nine survey respondents. The interview guide consisted of 14 questions used to gain demographic information as well as open-ended questions to answer the remaining three research questions. Hatch (2002) emphasized that in conducting semistructured interviews using an interview guide or schedule, researchers remain open during the interview to the flow or direction the participant takes them. Respondents could answer questions naturally while using a more conversational context.

Quantitative Phase

In Phase 1, the quantitative method incorporated a survey instrument to identify categories of self-directed learners of the teachers under study. These quantitative data were gathered using the LPA (Guglielmino, 1977; Guglielmino & Guglielmino, n.d.) administered online to respondents located in a southeastern state with the survey closing at 100 respondents. The responses to the instruments were also analyzed statistically to generate descriptive statistics for this sample of teachers. The 100 teachers who responded to the LPA survey were volunteers who received a descriptive email and chose to follow the link and take the online survey. Ninety-five percent of the survey respondents identified themselves as Caucasian with one African American respondent, one biracial, and two respondents selecting "other." One respondent did not answer this question on the survey. The largest number of responses came from the primary grades: 12 Kindergarten teachers, 14 first-grade teachers, 12 second-grade teachers, 6 third-grade teachers, 7 fourth-grade teachers, and 8 fifth-grade teachers.

In addition to elementary and middle grades, 41 teachers identified themselves as "Specialists" ($n = 20$) or "Other" ($n = 21$). Both categories had the option to clarify their position by typing information in an additional comment field. Examples of descriptions entered online for the Specialists category included three special education or resource teachers, six reading and Title 1 teachers, one reading and gifted teacher, three art teachers, three music teachers (including one teacher who was both art and music), two physical education teachers, three guidance counselors, one school psychologist, one literacy coach, and one ESL teacher. The mean age of the survey respondents was 42.43 years with a standard deviation of 11.42. The mean number of years teaching was 15.37 with a standard deviation of 10.20.

The participants also provided information about the public schools where they taught. Of the respondents, 59% taught in Title I designated schools. See Table 1 for

their educational background; note that a majority (76%) had graduate education to some degree.

Table 1. Educational Background

		f	P	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bachelors	24	24.0	24.0
	Bachelors + graduate	13	13.0	37.0
	Masters	29	29.0	66.0
	Masters + graduate	20	20.0	86.0
	Education Specialist	14	14.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	

Qualitative Phase

For Phase 2, a purposeful sample from the online LPA survey respondents was selected for qualitative interviews. A purposeful sample is one in which the researcher selects a sample to gain further insights, understanding, and the most knowledge (Merriam, 2009). To begin purposeful sampling, an initial list of selection criteria was important for narrowing the sample to those participants from whom to learn the most from this study.

Emails were sent to those teachers who had (a) scored "high" or "above average" on the instrument and (b) indicated a willingness to participate in follow-up interviews. Teachers who replied in the survey that they would be willing to participate in follow-up interviews were sent a contact phone number and mailing address. Participants were sent a letter of consent that informed them of confidentiality measures that were taken along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to return to the researcher. Nine teachers responded with phone numbers and times for interviews, and individual participant interviews were conducted via telephone at their convenience. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 35 minutes. All interviews were conducted over the phone and recorded for subsequent transcription. Merriam (2009) emphasized that analyzing data as it is collected is the preferred method of analysis. This method allows the researcher to begin with questions and themes at the very start of collecting to eliminate repetitious and voluminous amounts of data. Therefore, data analysis took place with the conclusion of the administration of the online LPA after which qualitative data analysis ran concurrent to and after the conclusion of respondent interviews.

All nine participants were female. Six had master's degrees including three teachers who had also obtained the education specialist degree. The range of teaching experience within the interview group was 34 years with the least experienced teacher having been in the classroom for 4 years and the most experienced teacher having

taught for 38 years. Throughout the interview process, themes were identified that were common to highly self-directed teachers and compared findings from previous studies (Guglielmino & Hillard, 2007) of other individuals who were also found to rate high on the LPA instrument.

Major Findings

Phase 1 Findings from Quantitative Data

The first research question (How do elementary teachers rate on the Learning Preference Assessment?) was addressed through the analysis of elementary teachers' LPA scores from the online survey instrument. Guglielmino and Guglielmino (n.d.) reported that the adult mean on the LPA is 214 with a standard deviation of 25.59. In interpreting scores, scores were categorized into five ranges: 58-176 were categorized as "Low" readiness for SDL, 177-201 were "Below Average," 202-226 were "Average," 227-251 were "Above Average," and "252-290" were "High." The frequencies of teacher scores into these categories are presented in Table 2.

Guglielmino and Guglielmino (n.d.) included a description of the types of jobs persons who score high on the LPA would perform better. Those jobs would contain tasks that would contain a higher proportion of problem solving, creativity, and change. Persons scoring high choose to determine their learning needs and go about implementing that learning whereas the average scorer would not be as comfortable in those situations that require them to be the sole planner of their learning needs. Those with low scores would prefer structured learning situations such as formal classrooms and courses.

Table 2. Ratings of 100 Elementary Teachers on LPA

Category	Score Range	n	P
Low	58-176	0	0%
Below Average	177-201	5	5%
Average	202-226	19	19%
Above Average	227-251	43	43%
High	252-290	33	33%

For the teachers in this study ($N = 100$), the mean was 240.89, standard deviation of 20.19, and range was 91. This score fell within the above average range

thereby indicating a majority of the teachers (76%; see Table 2) had developed an above average readiness for SDL, the determination of their own learning needs and goals, and the ability to plan and carry out their learning (cf. Guglielmino & Guglielmino, n.d.).

Phase 2 Findings from Qualitative Analysis of Teacher Interviews

For Phase 2, teacher interviews were used to identify key themes and topic areas that were predicated on the remaining three research questions:

2. Do elementary teachers participate in self-directed learning activities?
3. What sorts of learning activities do teachers participate in outside of the school environment?
4. Do these learning activities translate into the classroom?

The elementary teachers surveyed and interviewed do participate in SDL activities. What was apparent in the responses is that for these teachers, these activities fell into two categories: activities that were categorized as *creative outlets* for the teachers and did not necessarily relate to their teaching profession and those professional learning projects that were closely *tied to their teaching or professional selves*.

Themes from participant interviews were derived from categories developed through the convergence of coding participants' transcripts. Using open coding as described by Merriam (2009), assigned codes were derived from participants' own words, word or phrase repetitions, keywords within participant answers, and researcher notations. Transcribed text was then marked and highlighted to sort for common codes among participant responses to seek patterns and commonalities as described by Coffey and Atkinson (1996). Each interview transcript was coded in this manner so that subsequent transcripts could be compared to previous ones. Codes were next combined into lists of groups or conceptual categories that encompassed many codes, quotes, or data. Some codes fit into more than one category. The movement to interpretation was next as the categories were analyzed for meaning. Because I was working with an interview guide, many of the themes were evident as answers to its questions. However, additional patterns or themes were mined from the categories that served to illuminate further the SDL practices of elementary teachers and the meaning of that learning in their lives and careers. Seven themes derived from qualitative analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. *Themes*

Theme	Categories	Examples of Codes
Creative Selves:	Learning for Pleasure, Escape, Crafting, Fine Arts, Social Networking, Vacation Learning, Reading for Pleasure, Lifelong Learning	drawing, family of learners, step aerobics, scrapbooking, painting, decorating, "stargazing," museum visits, travel, reading, decorating, sewing curtains, making pillows, baking birthday cakes, musicals, photography, embroidery, smocking
Professional Selves:	Researching, Learning Strategies, Professional Networking, Learning Communities, Workshops, Seeking Resources, Classroom Application, Career Learning	Inclusion strategies, technology, Autism spectrum, project-based learning, learning stations, Japan unit, Kabuki dance, Hawaiian unit, Hawaiian dance, gardening, Title I, RTI, tiered interventions, reading instruction, teacher study groups, new position, new placement, career advancement, Praxis
Teachers as Readers:	Reading to Learn, Reading for Pleasure, Reading for Research, Reading Models, Teachers of Reading, Time for Reading	"I learn by reading," "I read for research," "I read for pleasure," "always reading books," ideas for classroom, no workshops available, prominent author, enrichment, time for moms, modeling reading, staring club, sharing books, recommending books, meeting authors, the sisters, Math their Way
Internet as Resource:	"My Best Friend is Google," Technology, Availability, Professional Research, Personal Research, Time, Access, Professional Content, Online Learning,	Rural location, internet, innovation, technologies, technology as a learning tool, smartphone, iPad, iPod, Zune, internet hotspot, Wi-Fi, vacation, library, YouTube, online learning, Cricket machine, serging machine, web 2.0
Teacher Self-Directed Partnerships:	Teacher Study Groups, Learning Partners, Mentors, Online Community, Professional Learning Communities, Teaching Teams, Book Clubs	Begin alone, join up, partners, groups, group learning, book clubs, workshop travel, collaboration, school, outside school, community, moms, friends, small town, students, sharing with teachers
Application of Learning in the Classroom:	"Tweaked it," "Made it my own," Standards, Teachers as Readers, Modeling, Classroom Units, Integrated Lessons, Projects, Discussions, Strategies, Technology, Themes, Cultures, Book Clubs	Learning units, lesson plans, classroom themes, grade level standards, modeling reading, improving teaching skills, strategies, inquiry learning, integrate subjects, projects, disco ball, classroom improvements, grant funding, school wide project, garden project
Teacher Reflection on Practice:	Validation, Partnerships, Changed Expectations, Evaluation, Feedback from Others, Professional Growth, Personal Growth, Professional Communities, Continued Learning, Career	Feel more capable, gained experience, identity validation, recognition, student reactions, joy to learn, change career path, job application, move on

Summary of Qualitative Results

The teachers interviewed did participate in SDL activities and participated in many types of learning activities categorized as investigations of their creative selves and professional selves. The teachers in this study offered many illustrations into the ways they translated their SDL activities not only into the classroom but also as partners with friends and fellow teachers. Central to teachers' comments was that their learning was a lifelong and active endeavor that took place outside the confines of the classroom and was an integral part of their identity as teachers. These teachers were always learning and seeking out knowledge that often was initiated from situations including their classrooms, job or grade level transitions, student behavior, or district mandates that left them needing or desiring more knowledge.

Figure 1 illustrates the SDL process used by the elementary teachers in this study. They start with an idea or interest that they explore through one or more pathways: collaborating with a fellow learner, reading, using the internet, or seeking out a mentor. From there, they might collaborate in groups or attend workshops on their way to practicing and using their new learning. Finally, they reflect and decide where

or if to reenter the learning process. Validation comes when they experience success as learners.

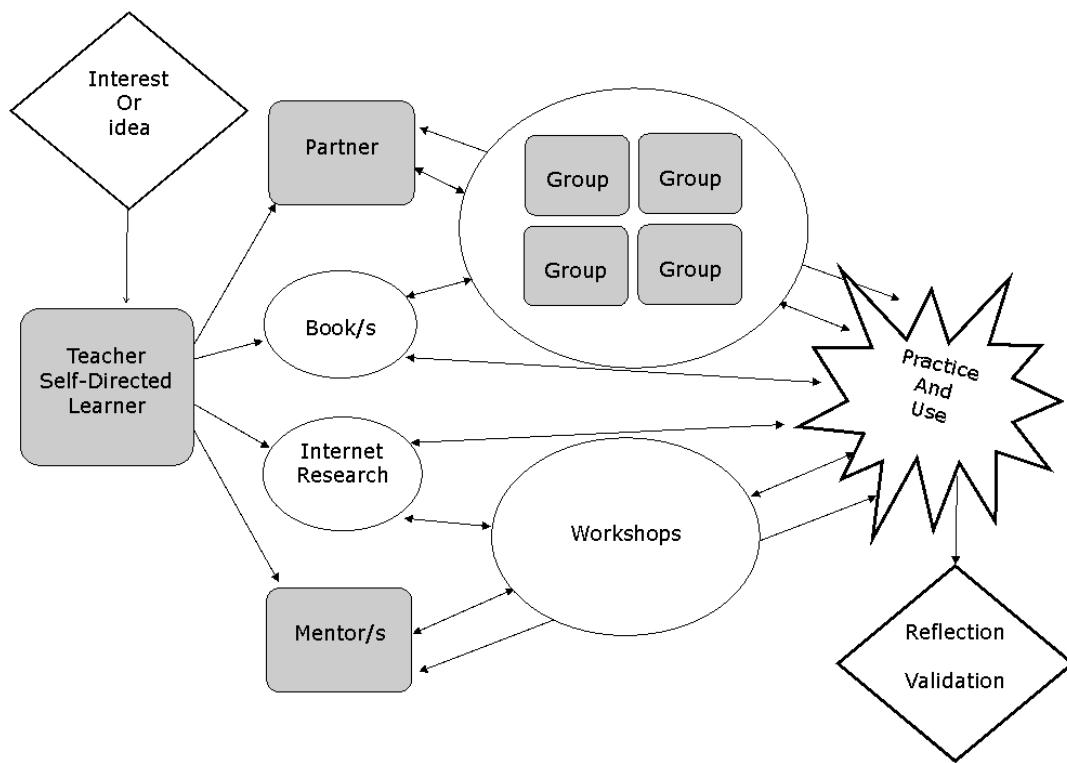


Figure 1. Self-directed learning process of elementary teachers.

Conclusions

SDL can be engaging and powerful professional development in comparison to prescribed or mandated professional development. This study revealed that teachers who were self-directed in their learning researched and conducted their professional learning to improve their content area knowledge and their teaching methodologies.

When the teachers in this study found that professional development did not meet the immediate needs of their classroom, they planned and sought additional knowledge on their own. Their learning included characteristics that research has found to be essential for successfully implemented professional development that results in improved student achievement (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Gabriel, Day, & Allington, 2011; Gilrane, Roberts, & Russell, 2008):

1. offering a sense of autonomy and ownership,
2. sustained over time,

3. creating or a professional learning community, and
4. seeking mentors and experts.

Autonomy. Teachers in this study chose the path of their learning that enabled ownership of that learning. Professionally, they reflected on the needs of their students, their content knowledge needs, and the needs of their school in choosing areas to pursue. Morrow and Casey (2004) reported that motivation for change is highly individual. When teachers identify the need and self-direct their learning, change is the result. Teachers mentioned how their teaching was changed through the professional SDL projects they undertook. The intrinsic motivation that spawned their SDL projects was compelled by their viewpoint that they could always be improving. These views fit research on exemplary teachers (Allington & Johnston, 2001; Haberman, 1995).

SDL for these elementary school teachers grew out of those intrinsic characteristics of the learner as illustrated in the Personal Responsibility Orientation model (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). Because their SDL was a natural outcome of these intrinsic characteristics, these teachers experienced engaged autonomy often described by exemplary teachers (Gabriel et al., 2011). Teachers whose SDL led to successes in the classroom were able to show their results to their principals rather than be mandated to produce results through scripted or prescribed methods. When teachers experienced this freedom in decision making and were commended by colleagues, parents, and administrators, they felt validated as professionals.

Sustained over time. These teachers were intensively engaged in their learning projects for extended periods of time. For example, teachers participated in book clubs, professional learning communities, and online communities. Time involved in SDL varied from a period of days (e.g., one teacher who used vacation time to travel to workshops) to several weeks (e.g., teachers formed a fiction book club) to the entire school year (e.g., one teacher described researching autism and applying different teaching methods throughout the year with her autistic student). Teachers began with an idea or need that sparked research and investigation and led to connecting with partners, reading books, seeking out mentors, and joining communities of learners in order to apply new knowledge. Through extended learning and planning, the teachers revealed commitment and persistence that are qualities desirous of exemplary teachers.

Teacher-created professional learning communities and mentors. The teachers created partnerships and formed professional learning communities within their schools as grade level teams, as groups working on a shared goal, and as teachers reading books. The power of learning communities has been documented in professional development research (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Gabriel et al., 2011; Gilrane et al., 2008; Richardson, 2003). However, despite contrived collegiality that Hargreaves and Dawe (1990) found foisted on teachers as they went through the motions of prescribed professional development, through SDL teachers willingly build communities of learning, seeking out other like-minded learners or motivating others to join them on their journey; that is, their enthusiasm for learning is contagious.

Impact on student achievement: While no information was gathered on whether or not these teachers' students experienced enhanced achievement, previous research suggests that exemplary teachers do share their learning with their students (Allington & Johnston, 2001; Haberman, 1995). Exemplary teachers bring their learning activities, likes, and interests into their classrooms. The teachers interviewed brought their learning projects into their classrooms by matching state standards, designing lessons, and creating a curriculum that allowed their students to see their own excitement for learning and share in learning as well. These teachers illustrate Grow's (1991) fourth stage—learners of high self-direction—having the confidence of what they needed to learn and possessing the skills to get it done.

These teachers SDL experiences match Haberman (1995) who reported that in creating interviews for locating outstanding or "star" teachers for urban schools, one of the characteristics of these teachers was that they were involved in life activities and interests that they transferred into their classrooms to build fervor and passion for learning.

Implications for Practice

LPA as a screening tool. We know that teachers who project their enthusiasm for learning and their learning projects into the classroom are desired teacher prospects (Allington & Johnston, 2001; Haberman, 1995; McCall, 2006). Therefore, the LPA or an adapted version of it could be used as an interview tool in hiring prospective teachers along with other interview guides. While SDL readiness is not, by itself, an indicator of effective teaching, the LPA could be useful to administrators in identifying teachers whose professional development path might be a nontraditional one. Principals could then be prepared to support, rather than to quash, these individuals.

Nurturing teachers with high SDL readiness. Teachers possessing high or above average readiness for SDL and pursue SDL personally and professionally should be mentors for other teachers in their building. These teachers are already forming their ad hoc learning committees. Rather than stifling this innovation within their schools, administrators should embrace and encourage this type of learning. Micromanaging the autonomy out of these teachers would be a risk here as this learning is teacher-initiated. Administrators need to cultivate this type of professional development and not crush it, realizing that not all teachers are self-directed learners but can perhaps join up with those teachers that are in these ad hoc professional learning communities. Administration should also allow and give professional development credits for those teachers who undertake SDL projects with the care that over documentation does not stifle these teachers' initiatives.

Take advantage of the internet. All these teachers readily utilized the internet for SDL. Colleges of teacher education should consider targeting and cultivating those teachers who have SDL readiness. Ways they can do this are by offering more internet courses and opening this portal to students early in their careers so that this aspect of the SDL process is well rehearsed by the time they have a

classroom placement. Inquiry-based projects should be encouraged where SDL readiness traits can be maximized in pursuing professional and research interests. Teacher colleges should consider developing online teacher resources for preservice teachers and their graduates. Rather than maintaining websites with general program information, colleges of education can sponsor a teacher education site for collecting lesson plans, book reviews, forums for sharing information and finding mentors, and focused online learning groups.

Implications for Further Research

There is much room for future research into the SDL readiness of teachers. This study only examined 100 elementary teachers and professionals and cannot be generalized to the entire population of teachers. Other populations of teachers should be examined, including those in middle school and high school and other geographic areas. In addition, research that examines the other end of the LPA scores—those teachers who scored low on the LPA—should prove intriguing.

SDL readiness research has developed out of adult education and psychology. Adult education and teacher education programs should collaborate on research as teachers are adults and professional development is adult learning. These realms of research have much to contribute, and collaboration on future research would be a natural fit.

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