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CONTINUING TO GROW OR CHECKING THE BOX: TEACHER ACHIEVEMENT GOAL ORIENTATION IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOCUS

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ALEXANDRA PARSONS
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CONTINUING TO GROW OR CHECKING THE BOX: TEACHER ACHIEVEMENT GOAL ORIENTATION IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOCUS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
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BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Maeghan Hennessey, Chair

Dr. Teresa Debacker

Dr. Ji Hong

Dr. Benjamin Heddy

Dr. Angela Urick

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Key Terms

Achievement Goal Orientation: The reason a learner chooses to engage or disengage in a learning experience. The five factors used in this study are mastery approach, mastery avoidance, performance approach, performance avoidance, and work avoidance (Dweck, 1986; Elliot & Church, 1997).

Teacher Effectiveness: The ability to progress student knowledge gains and achievement as cognitive skills that can be enhanced and refined (Darling-Hammond, 2009).

In-Service Teacher Growth: The process of developing and refining professional knowledge and skills to increase teacher effectiveness while employed as a teacher (Guskey, 1986).

Teacher and Leadership Effectiveness: The division of the Oklahoma State Department of Education responsible for monitoring teacher effectiveness through evaluation and teacher growth (OSDE, 2012).

Professional Learning Focus: A mandated learning structure for certified staff in the state of Oklahoma where teachers set a professional learning goal related to teaching practices. Nested within Teacher and Leadership Effectiveness, it is intended to facilitate teacher growth that is not tied to evaluation scores (OSDE, 2017).

Resources for Learning: Structures and activities intended to support and facilitate teacher learning. The specific resources used in this study are those offered as examples by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE, 2017)

Chapter 1: Need and Purpose

Introduction

Teacher growth is the addition and refinement of the professional skills needed to help a teacher accomplish and excel at their job tasks (Guskey, 1986). This growth is embedded and parallel to the other tasks required of teachers and is generally framed as a way to improve teacher effectiveness to best help students learn and grow. Even though teacher growth is deemed important, how to best facilitate and drive teacher growth is yet to be determined (Desimone, 2011).

In the state of Oklahoma, teacher learning is now mandated and reported under the Professional Learning Focus mandate for the purpose of decoupling teacher evaluation and teacher growth (OSDE, 2017). This is intended to help teachers be more intrapersonally invested in their learning in a more mastery goal-oriented way. The process is new—less than two years old—so the actual goal orientation of teachers towards the mandated process is not yet known. This is a quantitative study determining the extent of interactions between teacher demographics, their achievement goal orientation towards their Professional Learning Focus, and learning behaviors associated with achieving their learning goals.

Need of Study

The purpose of the traditional school system is to increase the cognitive knowledge and ability of students. At face value, this is a simple, easy to understand statement, which means that student cognitive achievement should be the justification of every decision and action made within a school. Essentially, every teacher should continually ask whether their choices increase

student academic achievement. However, the realities of schools are much more complicated than solely the question of academic achievement. Schools are complex, open systems that are influenced by more than the production of student cognition (Hoy & Miskel, 2004). Each day, a school tries to satisfy its entire community and address every issue with swiftness (Fullan, 2013). Stakeholders bring their own experiences to the school, and their perspectives and needs cannot be ignored. The subsequent diversity of needs and wants creates a complicated existence for the people working within the school. Thus, the actualization of processes and structures to increase student cognitive growth is more complicated than just the black-and-white narrative of direct, visible impacts of student success or lack thereof.

This complexity has created vast professional development opportunities for teachers—if they have the time and desire to devote to their learning. Each subcomponent of the school can be examined to determine how and why it supports student learning. Activation of cognitive structures (Anderson, 2013), increasing student engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004), and teacher quality (Hallinger et al., 2014) make an introductory—and far from fully inclusive—list of constructs that have a potential connection to the support or inhibition of student cognition. Although all facets of learning and of a child are important, this amount of ubiquitous importance is daunting for teachers who are trying to make moment-to-moment decisions to support a positive learning environment. All these needs and potential decisions allow for a wide selection of professional development topics for teachers to learn more about. Even within research, there are entire domains specific to each individual and experience within a school.

One of these domains within the school that drives student learning and growth is how teachers learn and grow to increase that quality. Teacher quality is a large contributor to high student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Gershenson, 2016). In fact, student access to

highly qualified and competent teachers has been an assumption and a mandate for almost as long as public schooling has existed in the United States (Hinsdale, 1898). However, this quality is not—and cannot be—fully conferred in an undergraduate preparation program (Chesley & Jordan, 2012; Liston et al., 2006). The contextualization of knowledge to specific classrooms and the fine nuances of teaching are honed through experience and continuous, purposeful learning throughout the tenure of a teacher's career (Day, 2002; Berliner, 1994). Teachers are expected to continually grow professionally to enhance their teaching abilities. However, what they learn—and how a school manages that learning—varies according to the school, which creates different growth experiences and needs (Cochran-Smith, 2012; Sawyer & Stukey, 2019).

When conceptualizing teacher quality as the compilation of all the individual choices and actions a teacher makes (Mirzaei et al., 2014; Siuty et al., 2018), each choice and action becomes more important. From a macro-level perspective, this pressure put on every decision is what makes teaching so high-stakes. Studying how to help teachers increase their abilities in order to maximize their potential quality—for the sake of maximizing students' potential quality—is also a difficult and high-stakes task. All teachers should be learners, no matter how long they have been in practice (Day, 2002), but implementing a method to encourage and accomplish this in a post-NCLB, performance-accountable era has been difficult to determine (Wieczorek, 2017). Expecting all meaningful learning to happen in one's pre-service education experience goes directly against theory on skill refinement and expertise formation (Berliner, 1994). Consequently, research on in-service learning should focus on not *if* professional learning should happen, but *what*, *when*, and *how* professional learning best happens.

The current accountability-centric era does not help lessen the pressures of teaching. Since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), teachers have been

formally evaluated to determine their levels of competence (Ramsey & O'Day, 2010). With the reauthorization of ESEA through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, teacher evaluation and monitoring and facilitating teacher growth remained as a mandate (ESSA, 2015). Monitoring teacher effectiveness combined with tracking student achievement has made teachers' stakes more visible, thus increasing the pressure put on teachers to make the "right" decisions (Corcoran et al., 2011). With a decreased margin of error and increased diversity of needs (El-Khawas, 2003; Galinsky et. al, 2015), finding the time and space for effective teacher learning is vital (Fullan, 2014; Gay, 2013).

Razor thin budgets continue to be cut smaller and smaller, so the resources and time available to devote solely to teacher learning have decreased steadily over the decades (Admiraal et al., 2016; Merritt, 2016). Meaningful, productive learning opportunities for teachers are highly dependent upon the availability of time and resources and upon the importance placed on teacher learning by leadership (Merritt, 2016; Whitworth & Chiu, 2015). This is especially true in states with lower per pupil spending, such as the state of Oklahoma (Baker et al., 2015). Because of this low budget, the mandated professional effectiveness model in Oklahoma, Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (TLE), does not adequately meet the requirements of teachers and administrators in the face of limited time and money (Ellett & Teddlie, 2003; Marzano, 2012).

The evaluation models being used in Oklahoma are theoretically grounded in teacher growth models (Danielson, 2011; Kane et al., 2011; Marzano, 2012). However, some studies show this formal observation and evaluation model is not increasing teacher quality or learning as much as desired (Grissom et al., 2013). Part of the gap of expectations versus implementation is blurring the line of using the teacher growth model as an evaluative tool rather than a learning tool (Marzano, 2012). Further, there is question in the effectiveness of using the tool even for

evaluation because of the extra steps required after identifying an underperforming or overperforming teacher.

When used as an evaluation tool rather than a growth-focused tool, most of the "learning" that teachers would engage in would happen in class while teachers are simultaneously being judged for their abilities to master a task when it may be their first attempt (Grissom & Loeb, 2017). When comparing this scenario with any learning theory, this would be judged as less than ideal, and very little learning, growth, or new behaviors would be expected after the evaluation (Jennings & Bearak, 2014; Stillman, 2011). In response to this, the Oklahoma State Department of Education has started a new teacher effectiveness structure that goes beyond evaluation and targets teacher learning and growth.

Starting during the 2017-2018 school year, Oklahoma teachers are not required to be evaluated on a yearly basis, but all are required to engage in planning and working towards a yearly learning goal. This learning goal is called the Professional Learning Focus. Although the skills gained from the learning focus should be tied to a component on the school district's evaluation form, this is a separate process that is not included in evaluation files or documentation. Professional Learning Focuses are intended to foster a more intrapersonal approach, for the sake of skill mastery, to professional learning in schools. This is an appropriate intention, since intrapersonally, mastery-oriented learners tend to have higher long-term retention and transfer to practice rates compared to those who are extrinsically, reluctant, performance-oriented learners (Postholm, 2018). Further, the motivational stance of the teacher predicts the motivational inspiration for the learning strategies they select for their classroom (Ciani et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2017). If teachers are encouraged to adopt a mastery orientation themselves, they are more likely to have a mastery-oriented classroom and students. However, the key word

for the Professional Learning Focus is "intended." The process is very new, and how this process is actually activating teacher mastery approach motivation still needs to be determined.

Following the pilot in the 2018-2019 year, where all schools were to have participated, the 2019-2020 school year is the first year during which all Oklahoma schools are required to implement the Professional Learning Focus structure. Because this is such a new process, this is the time to determine the motivational approach teachers have in setting and working towards their Professional Learning Focus.

The purpose of this study, then, is to determine the extent of interactions between teacher demographics, their achievement goal orientation towards their Professional Learning Focus, and learning behaviors associated with achieving their learning goal. As previously discussed, the intention of the Professional Learning Focus is to activate intrinsic, mastery-oriented feelings about profession learning, and this study sets out to determine if that is the reality of implementation. The ultimate goal would be to inform on implementation practices and begin a discussion of ways to enhance teacher learning and whether the Professional Learning Focus implementation accesses the mastery-oriented feelings and behaviors intended by the model.

Current Study

Because of the participant-driven nature of Professional Learning Focus goal setting and activity selection and execution, achievement goal orientation theory (Dweck, 1986; Elliot & McGregor, 2001) will be used as the foundation for interpreting results. This also provides a framework of further understanding teacher motivation to learn and what possible learning resources and activities support or amplify this motivation. That is, the Professional Learning Focus is a structure for goal setting and reflection. The specific learning actions and availability of support towards learning is dependent on the goal itself. With this study, the most desired or

utilized types of resources and activities could provide further insight into teachers' and administrators' mastery-specific needs and desires. The current study is a quantitative study to determine the extent that teachers are endorsing specific achievement goal orientations in relation to their Professional Learning Focus.

Based upon the literature of teacher goal orientation and teacher learning, the following research questions can provide insight on the teachers' perceptions of the Professional Learning Focus and how it is or is not supporting teacher learning:

1. In what ways are teachers in Oklahoma utilizing the Professional Learning Focus model?
    a. How much collaboration is there between participants and evaluators in determining and facilitating participants' Professional Learning Focus?
    b. How much time was put into determining participants' Professional Learning Focus?
    c. What activities have teachers done up to this point for their Professional Learning Focus?
2. To what extent do years of experience or certification routes predict goal orientation towards the Professional Learning Focus?
3. To what extent does goal orientation predict behaviors and desires towards completing the Professional Learning Focus?

Conclusion

In this chapter, the background of this study on teacher and administrator learning through Oklahoma's Professional Learning Focus is offered, as well as the purpose of the current study. The following chapters will describe the study to examine the utilization of Oklahoma's Professional Learning Focus in public schools and how this utilization matches or mismatches

with teacher desires to learn based on the achievement goal orientation theory. In Chapter 2, relevant prior research related to achievement goal orientation and in-service school professional learning is synthesized as a foundation and rationale for this study. Chapter 3 provides the methodology for the study justified by the problem statement and prior literature. Chapter 4 details the analysis of data and presents the findings related to the research questions. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings and the implications, limitations, and next steps after this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Research Questions

Introduction

The prior chapter highlighted the inspiration for the study as well as the problem statement to be addressed. This chapter provides a review of the literature relating to in-service teacher growth and the structures implemented to support teacher growth. This review places emphasis on the educational policies that have led to the professional growth model mandated by the state of Oklahoma. In light of the Professional Learning Focus, this review also discusses literature pertaining to teacher goal orientation. Chapter 3 details research study methods. Chapter 4 gives the results of the data analysis, and Chapter 5 gives the discussion of the results that includes implications of the results.

Theoretical Framework

With the rollout of the Professional Learning Focus, the Oklahoma State Department of Education decreased emphasis on teacher evaluation and increased emphasis on teacher growth. In the Professional Learning Focus, teachers self-select their targeted learning goals and individually seek and engage in learning. The process is intended to activate the internal desire to gain skills or knowledge and translate these into actionable learning experiences (OSDE, 2017).

The theoretical framework within educational psychology that matches this intention is achievement goal orientation (Dweck, 1986), which captures the internal intention of what brings someone to a learning experience. This review of the literature details achievement goal orientation, how this applies to teachers, and how it manifests in the Professional Learning Focus.

Achievement Goal Orientation

Motivation to learn is a complicated intersection of feelings and perceptions, and it influences every learner in some way. One of the ways to conceptualize a component of learning motivation is achievement goal orientation, first described by Dweck (1986). The original structure of achievement goal orientation is two-pronged (Dweck, 1986). These two prongs are the fully intrinsic desire to learn for the sake of personal development (mastery orientation) and the extrinsic desire to learn for the sake of external validation or out-performing others (performance orientation). Mastery and performance orientations represent two different motivational reasons to engage in learning, and they result in different cognitive processes, retention, and learning behaviors (Covington, 2000). A visual showing the original theory of achievement goal orientation is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1
Achievement Goals and Achievement Behavior (Dweck, 1986)

Theory of Intelligence	Goal Orientation	Confidence in Present Ability	Behavior Pattern
Entity theory (Intelligence is fixed)	**Performance goal** (Goal is to gain positive judgements/avoid negative judgements of competence)	If high	**Mastery-oriented** Seek challenge High persistence
		If low	**Helpless** Avoid challenge Low persistence
Incremental theory (Intelligence is malleable)	**Learning goal** (Goal is to increase competence)	If high or low	**Mastery-oriented** Seek challenge High persistence

For learners, their beliefs about whether competence is malleable (incremental) or not (fixed) determines their approaches to learning (Dweck, 1986; Elliot, 2005). That means that an individual needs to feel like engaging in a learning task will be useful and translate to knowledge gains to make the effort worthwhile. If an individual (in this study, a teacher) holds an

incremental mindset but has low confidence in her current abilities, she would still observe mastery-oriented behaviors because she would still consider these efforts as an improvement on her present ability (Dweck, 1986; Elliot, 2005). No matter the combination of beliefs in intelligence and current abilities, these manifest in specific learning behaviors related to supporting the endorsed goal orientation (Dweck, 1986; Elliot, 2005).

As research on achievement goal orientations progressed, performance goal orientation diverged into performance approach and performance avoidance orientations (Elliot & Church, 1997). This divergence defines whether a learner actively tries learning for the purpose of outperforming others (performance approach) or actively avoids learning to not appear to underperform compared to others (performance avoidance). Prior to this, mastery and performance orientation categories were categorized as approach only and did not offer nuance to those learners who purposefully disengaged and their reasons for doing so. To include the motivational orientation of disengagement in achievement goal theory, the purposeful disengagement to avoid looking bad or underperforming compared to others (performance avoidance) was added (Elliot & Church, 1997).

There has been further divergence of categories of achievement goal orientations. Elliot and McGregor (2001) offered a further divergence of categories, positing that mastery goal orientation exhibits a dichotomous approach and avoids nature in the same way as performance orientations. The visualization of Elliot and McGregor's 2x2 achievement goal theory is shown in Figure 2.1. Mascret et al. (2014) expanded the 2x2 framework further into the loci of motivation, with avoid and approach motivations of the self (mastery), others (performance), and tasks (context-bound). However, there is not agreement on the stability of mastery avoidance (Baranik et al., 2010). Theoretically there is a difficulty with reconciling an intrinsic desire to

have mastery of a topic while also having an avoidance to learning about the topic. Hallmarks of mastery approach learning are seeking challenging tasks and seeking help (Butler, 2007; Dweck, 1986), which have the assumption for potential failure along the learning path. It is difficult to reconcile avoidance of failure with an intrinsic desire to have deep knowledge on a topic.

Figure 2.1

2x2 Goal Orientation Framework (Elliot & McGregor, 2001)

		Definition	
		Absolute/intrapersonal (mastery)	Normative (performance)
Valence	Positive (approaching success)	Mastery—approach goal	Performance—approach goal
	Negative (avoiding failure)	Mastery—avoidance goal	Performance—avoidance goal

Not all expansions of achievement goal orientation theory are the division of categories. Specifically, when studying the performance category, work avoidance has emerged (Nicholls, Patashnick& Nolen, 1985), which is the desire to learn while doing as little work as possible. Although similar to performance avoidance at first blush, this has remained separate because the learner does not attempt to avoid learning itself, rather the work required to accomplish tasks associated with learning. Work avoidance has been shown to be significant in certain contexts of teaching, both in relation to emotions about learning (Seifert & O'Keefe, 2001), teachers' teaching (Retelsdorf et al., 2010), and their learning (Butler, 2007).

Another component considered in achievement goal theory is whether the topic is broad or specific. Profile versus context-specific reference of goal orientation refers to whether an individual is thinking about a topic broadly (profile) or specific tasks or processes within the topic (context bound). Individuals can have a goal orientation about an overall topic while having different goal orientations with specific tasks within that topic (Elliot, 2005). When considering teaching, there are many specific tasks within teaching that teachers may want to

learn about, more or less, but have an overall idea of their learning as a teacher. When digging into the research of teacher goal orientation, these differences of profile versus context versus perspective is vital.

Teacher Goal Orientation

Although there is a substantial amount of research over the motivational construct of achievement goal orientation, it is predominately from the perspective of the student (Hulleman et al., 2010) or how teachers perceive student goal orientation (Midgley, 2014). In many ways, this is appropriate since student cognitive growth is the primary goal of schools, but every person who is part of the social system of a school is a learner as well. This includes teachers, who should be continuing to learn over their entire career (Berliner, 1994; Guskey, 2002). Starting about a decade ago, teacher motivation—including teacher achievement goal orientation—increased and established itself in education research.

The factors and theoretical framing of goal orientation for teachers are generally the same for teachers as with students. Quite a few measures have been developed for teacher goal orientation (Huang, 2012), and all of them are based on the seminal work of Dweck's (1986) and then Elliot and McGregor's (2001) of mastery or performance, approach or avoidance factors. How prior research is conceptualized to teachers in a school was illustrated by Roessr et al. (2002), seen in Table 2.2. The second row of the figure contains the specific variables used in this study conceptualized within the model.

Table 2.2
Goal Theory in Education (Roessr et al., 2002)

	Objective Environment →	Subjective Environment →	Motivation →	Behavior
Broad Theoretical	Learning Activities & Contexts	Perceived Goal Structures	Personal Goals	Patterns of Behavioral Engagement and Disaffection Related to Learning
Contextual to this study	Professional Learning Focus Policy	Years of Experience Certification Route	Mastery Approach Mastery Avoidance Performance Approach Performance Avoidance Work Avoidance	Time Spent Selecting Goal Desired # of Check-Ins Resource Desire Resource Access Resource Usage

Specific to the domain of teaching, Butler (2012) posits a relational achievement goal structure, namely the desire to build stronger relationships with students and increase knowledge of students specifically. Still, there is disagreement on how relational goals fit into learning goals versus general professional practice goals (Han & Yin, 2016).

Although the theory of goal orientation is similar, the actual learning experiences of a teacher are different than that of the students in their classroom. Teachers must continually grow to refine their skills for the sake of increasing their effectiveness as teachers and stay abreast of evolving best practices (Berliner, 1994; Guskey, 2002). Likewise, teachers must balance the dichotomy of being learners in their profession with being authority figures who command respect and presence in their classrooms (Hargreaves, 2000).

One of the reasons teachers struggle to maintain higher levels of professional, intrapersonal, mastery motivation is the decreased level of choice within professional learning and the everyday choices teachers can make (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; Smith, 2001). This freedom of choice is a component of expertise formation. Klassen and Chui (2010) found that, when greater freedom in instructional strategy selection was given, teachers experienced greater belief in their current competencies in instructional strategy selection. As mentioned earlier, the perception of current competence is a component of goal orientation (Dweck, 1986). Evaluations of teachers' competence have come to focus less on the actions of the teacher and more upon student achievement and other secondary products of teacher actions (Marzano, 2012). These performance-oriented policies are not without an effect on teachers' emotional and motivational well-being.

There is evidence to suggest that elements in students' environments can influence student goal orientation (Ciani et al., 2010). Additionally, teachers adapt to the school culture they work within (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013), so it may be reasonable to hypothesize that, under management systems with a particular goal orientation endorsement, teachers may shift towards that goal orientation themselves. This could be problematic, considering learners exhibiting more performance-oriented, work avoidance behaviors cope in more emotional ways than mastery-oriented learners (Brdar et al., 2006). Teachers who are more performance- oriented tend to, in the face of learning adversity, feel more emotions and want to talk about those feelings. In comparison, mastery-oriented teachers who experience the same kinds of adversity tend to focus on the barriers that exist and problem-solve ways to overcome those barriers. This emotional component of coping is one of the indicators of burnout and lack of resilience in the profession (Hong, 2012). Butler (2007) found that a teacher's goal orientation determines the amount of

help-seeking behaviors and their ability orientation. That is, the more performance-oriented a teacher is, the less help they will seek out. If a teacher is employed in a performance-oriented climate, they will tend to decrease the amount of help they seek out (Butler, 2007), and in the attempt to perform successfully, will select more performance-oriented teaching strategies (Nichols et al., 2006).

In the climate of the performance-goal nature of high-stakes tests, in-service teachers may receive telegraphed messages from administrations and state departments to focus on getting their students to "pass the tests" if there is no buffer to the influence of the tests (Nichols & Berliner, 2007). As early as 1995, when accountability testing became mainstream, teachers had already begun to feel the high stakes of their instructional choices and their freedom to learn new instruction options restricted (Miller, 1995). These conflicting messages create ambiguity in the focus a teacher should have when executing their job responsibilities, which erodes their motivation to want to grow as a professional, since they do not know the direction in which they ought to grow (Roth, 2014). A way to mitigate the ambiguity is for district leaders—including administrators—to allow teachers the freedom of choice not only in selecting their own learning focus, but also the freedom to implement their learning in the classroom (Klassen & Chui, 2010).

Based on the empirical evidence, most aspects of teacher effort are affected by school culture and the actions of administrators (Flores, 2004; Hargreaves, 2012). However, this is not the end of the journey. As the purpose of schools are for student achievement, an examination of these teacher shifts upon student achievement needs to be employed. When looking at the standards from a theoretical stance, there is an implied expectation that they be taught from a mastery-oriented teaching style, but the reality of implementation, even from government institutions issuing the standards, is highly unsupportive of mastery-oriented teaching strategies

(Glatthorn et al., 2016). Although the selection of mastery- versus performance-oriented teaching strategies is in the hands of the teacher, teachers may feel the pressure to act in accordance with the policies, especially in performance-oriented schools. It also has been established that the selection of teaching strategies has a profound impact on student perception of learning and achievement (Ciani, et. al, 2010; Reeve, 2006). That is, students may be increasing their performance on the mandated high-stakes tests, but "real" learning is not occurring (Nichols et al., 2006). If mastery-oriented teachers espouse mastery-oriented students, teacher learning should activate a more mastery-oriented approach in teachers. Knowing more about how teachers feel about their professional learning will help inform attempts to motivate teachers to engage in learning and increase their effectiveness.

In-Service Teacher Growth

The role of the teacher is vital in student learning, meaning that teaching needs to be highly effective and teachers need to always try to grow in their effectiveness (Ingersoll, 2004; 2011). This formation and refinement of teacher knowledge happens over the entirety of a career. Teacher learning needs are different based upon the experience of the teacher (Huhtala & Vesalainen, 2017; Loughran, 2013), including the certification route that brought them to the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond et al., 2001). Although needs may be different, in-service learning towards increased effectiveness and teacher expertise is essential no matter the prior experience of the teachers.

The Novice Versus the Experienced Teacher

There is an American idiom: out of the frying pan, into the fire. This perfectly describes the experience of transitioning from any prior position to being a teacher. Applied to this

situation, the idiom suggests that a preservice teacher entering the classroom has exited one difficult situation and entered into an even harder one. The first three years of teaching is a particularly difficult time (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Davis et al., 2006) with steep attrition rates from the profession (Ingersoll et al., 2012; Allen, 2003). Teacher retention is a large issue. Replacing teachers is time and cost intensive (Simon & Johnson, 2015), and more experienced teachers are generally more effective than novice teachers (Kini & Podolsky, 2016). The only way to have a school staff of experienced teachers refining their effectiveness is to understand how to retain novice teachers through those difficult first years.

Current research on novice teachers is usually framed around teacher retention (Adnot et al., 2017; Hong, 2012), a call to the profession (Richardson et al., 2014), or professional identity as a teacher (Hong, 2010), and this helps inform our understanding of the deeper nature of the teacher. It also speaks to the fragility of the confidence that novice teachers have in their abilities and persistence in the profession (Onafowora, 2005).

To mitigate the tenuous nature of the novice teacher, there are recommended structures at the school site level that support them through the tough, multi-year transition from being a student to having a solid, confident, and committed approach to teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2008). However, not all structures to help support novice teachers in their first years of teaching have the impact hoped for (Parsons, 2019; Knoblock & Whittington, 2002). Some of these efforts have put a substantial strain on school systems (Teague & Swan, 2013), and still do not address the learning needs of experienced teachers. Even though there are many teacher inductee support structures like mentorship, most are not sufficient to allow the deliberate practice towards deliberate growth and are perceived as ineffective in the eyes of novice teachers (Knobloch & Whittington, 2002). In the state of Oklahoma, the teacher induction program is a

non-funded mandate (Oklahoma Statute 70 O.S. 6-195, 2019). This means that all attempts to support new teachers need to fit within the normal contract time with no financial support to allow for learning time or support from more experienced staff members. Figuring out ways to encourage and support the learning of all teachers—novice or experienced—has been difficult for schools and school leadership (Korthagen, 2017; Patton et al., 2015).

Towards Teaching Expertise in Effectiveness

As discussed in the previous section, there is value to teachers' progression toward a higher level of teaching expertise. More experienced, more expert teachers are generally more effective than novice teachers or those with experience but no growth during that experience (Kini & Podolsky, 2016). The inherent nature of expertise requires years of deliberate learning and practice (Ericsson & Smith, 1991). Although there is a perceived divide between undergraduate students as learners and teachers as professionals, the nature of expertise reinforces the mentality that all teachers are still learners in a way that is not equivalent to the undergraduate experience but is still valuable growth toward higher teacher quality. This would mean that it is valuable to encourage and support behaviors and practices that help grow this expertise in all teachers.

Growing toward expertise in general is a deeply personal, mastery-oriented process (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993), and teacher expertise is no different (Berliner, 1994). However, the pressures and requirements of being a teacher have the potential to enhance or inhibit that desire to learn and grow (Fulmer & Turner, 2014; Grissom et al., 2017). There is evidence from Richardson and Watt (2014) that a large proportion of people who train to become teachers do so because they want to help children and support positive change in children. However, this vocational desire is not enough to sustain years of wear and tear through high-stakes testing and

the other pressures of being a teacher. Evidence of disillusionment can be found in the high turnover rate (Chang, 2009) and the swath of research devoted to job satisfaction (e.g., Arifin, 2015; Bogler, 2001) or burnout (e.g., Malinen & Savolainen, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017b). Most teachers enter the profession with a certain perception of their agency to create change with aspirations of effectiveness but struggle to maintain that perception.

Teachers' feelings and abilities to orient as a professional and a learner simultaneously are strained by the pressures of needing to be highly effective with student achievement (Grissom et al., 2017). There is a pattern of teachers reverting to that which feels "safe" or familiar to help the teachers gain "control" or "authority" over their classrooms, even if they cognitively know best teaching practices (Hargreaves, 2000; Patrick & Pintrich, 2001). Every teacher is responsible for their students' achievements, and being seen as the authority is the primary way of achieving and maintaining that order (Emmer & Stone, 2001). Comparing teacher responses to the reality of teaching with achievement goal orientation theory, it aligns with performance avoidance or work avoidance in nature. In an ego-protective, energy-buffering way, large populations of teachers fall into professional ruts and diminish their attempts to incorporate new strategies to enhance their teaching effectiveness (Boekaerts & Niemivirta, 2010; Clarke et al., 2017). Persistence in performance avoidance or work avoidance motivation towards their professional growth will not lead to deep learning and refinement of teaching skills.

Experience has its role in expertise formation, but there are other components of cognitive growth that contribute to becoming an expert versus simply gaining experience (Ericsson, 1991 & 1994; Inoue, 2016). There is a high level of motivation within developing experts, and they seek experiential moments that create a deeper learner experience for

developing experts than for non-experts (Berliner, 1994). Through the lens of achievement goal orientation, the description of the motivation of experts is mastery approach in nature. Developing experts understand the role of growth and seek out learning experiences—even if they are difficult in nature—for the sake of growing.

No matter the specific domain of learning, there are unique characteristics that differentiate the behaviors indicating where an individual may be along the continuum of expertise formation. This difference between just gaining experience and utilizing experience as a learning experience is labeled *deliberate practice* (Ericsson, 2006). In relation to teaching, this means that just being a teacher is not enough—those in the profession must also actively reflect and seek out learning, no matter the ease of the task, to truly progress towards teaching expertise.

Teacher expertise formation is complicated because of the many facets of cognitive awareness and the context-specific nature of expertise (Shulman, 2000). That is, as teachers become experts, according to Berliner (1994), they become more aware of the specific needs of their students and how they can address those specific needs. The consistent thread among all expert teachers is not the demographics or needs of their students, but their awareness of their students and their place in the classroom (Peters, 2010; Clarridge & Berliner, 1991). As teachers gain experience and internalize their new knowledge and how that knowledge changes their practices, it becomes a more nuanced, "artful" nature of teaching. This nuance manifests as micro-adjustments and shaping of the learning environment that happens.

Therefore, when considering the hallmarks of teachers as they move along the continuum of expertise, consider their ability to problem-solve, problem-solve quickly, take agency over their knowledge and choices, and handle the learning environment that addresses appropriate supports—these are all indicators of a teachers' level of expertise (Hirschfeld, 1994). Expert

teachers exhibit unique characteristics when compared to experts in other fields, but the acquisition and internalization of their knowledge is a process similar to the acquisition and internalization of expert knowledge in other domains (Berliner, 1994; Ericsson & Smith, 1991).

As the progression of expertise moves from novice to expert, the main identifier of the level of expertise within the domain of teaching and pedagogy is the ability to determine what details in a situation are important and what details are unimportant (Berliner, 1994). Considering that a decreased amount of working memory is required as expertise develops and comfort in the domain content increases, a more expert individual expends less energy processing the stimuli in a situation and can expend more energy contextualizing and determining solutions to the stimuli (Anderson, 2015). The determination of what details are important and which are not applies to individual professional learning goals as well. Years of experience shapes teachers' abilities to home in on what learning they specifically need (Louws et al., 2017). This means that all teachers need to engage in learning, but identifying learning goals will be easier for experienced teachers.

Oklahoma state legislation calls these experienced teachers "career" teachers who have "completed three or more consecutive complete school years as a teacher in one school district" (HB No. 2957, p. 3). This classification of teacher now means that a yearly evaluation is not necessary if they received a "superior" or higher rating the year before, but every teacher must have a yearly goal for learning and make a yearlong plan to achieve that goal. This separation between evaluation and professional growth was intended to "create professional development opportunities and continuous improvement of the practice and art of teaching and leading" (OSDE, 2017). The "[creation of] professional development opportunities" is the practical manifestation of in-service growth for teachers. However, constructing effective in-service

learning that intrinsically inspires teacher learning is not the easiest task for school leaders (Gorozidis & Papaioannou, 2014; Stewart, 2014). This is especially true considering the behaviors of mastery approach goal-oriented individuals—high challenge, help seeking, and persistence; in-service growth that inspires a mastery approach in teachers is ideal.

In-Service Learning Opportunities

As already discussed, professional teachers are just as much learners as students are, but knowing how to structure effective learning experiences for teachers is difficult (Korthagen, 2017). This is not only because a small amount of time is allotted to teacher learning, but also due to the long list of skills a teacher needs to master to be effective (Stevenson, 2017). Even tasks teachers are prepared for require further learning to progress towards mastery and expertise (Huizinga et al., 2014). This progression towards expertise takes time and deliberate practice (Berliner, 1986; Ericsson & Smith, 1991). That is, becoming a better teacher takes time and should involve tasks aimed specifically for growth. There is learning in doing, but the zone of optimal growth are those tasks intended for learning or reinforcing learning (Ericsson & Smith, 1991). That is, the act of teaching on its own is not enough to be a fruitful path towards refinement and expertise. There must be a purposeful mastery mindset of engaging in learning activities—whether gaining new information or trying out new things for the purpose of growth and reflection— for knowledge to be retained and transformed into new professional behaviors. This is why teachers in the United States (as well as other countries) are required to engage in a certain amount of professional learning and development while within the profession (DeMonte, 2013).

The main goal of continued teacher education is to improve teacher effectiveness (Gershenson, 2016) through the overarching goal of increasing teacher expertise (Fink &

Markholt, 2013). As detailed in the previous section, espousing deeper, masterful learning in teachers will lead to not only knowledge of a teaching subject, but also the ability to transfer it to their classroom and students for a more proficient execution of best teaching practices. In direct conflict with this conceptualization of teacher learning is the most popular form of teacher instruction—the whole staff professional development (PD) session (Walker, 2013). Although cheaper and easier to schedule than individualized professional learning, whole staff PDs remove all choice from teacher-learners, decreasing the motivation for them to actively engage in the information offered in the session (Desimone et al., 2007; Spillane, 2002). There are ways of structuring a one-shot PD to encourage further growth in teachers (Desimone, 2011). Literature supports year-long, embedded learning targeted to specific needs of each teacher for the most growth (Desimone & Pak, 2016).

Needless to say, not all in-service learning experiences for teachers are created equally; there is large variability in the quality of content and presentation (Desimone, 2009; Kennedy, 2016), transferability into the classroom (Dhillon et al., 2015), and teacher access to more desirable training (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Additionally, the time available to teachers to engage in deliberate practice to develop their skills is often not provided (Korthagen, 2017; Zepeda, 2012). This limits teachers' time to "practice" to instructional time with students, threatening the effectiveness of the practice as well as, potentially, the students' achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Guskey, 2002). This is not saying that all in-service learning is ineffective; rather, it says that teacher growth is a complex issue steeped in inequity and high-stakes choices which make it a non-optimal environment for expertise formation. In the state of Oklahoma, this strain was acknowledged by the State Department of Education (OSDE, 2019),

which has led to the implementation of the Professional Learning Focus as a way to try to meet the learning needs of teachers.

Oklahoma's Professional Learning Focus

Oklahoma teachers have been required to prove their continuous learning within the profession since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA, 1965). There are some learning experiences that are required on a yearly basis, such as training to handle bloodborne pathogens, alcohol and drug awareness, and bullying prevention (OSDE, 2014). However, these focus on the physical and emotional safety of the school rather than the nuance of teacher instructional effectiveness through the decisions in their classrooms and with regards to their instruction.

Since 2012, an entire department has existed in the Oklahoma State Department of Education focused on teacher growth and effectiveness, called "Educator Effectiveness." Housed in this department are connections to teacher preparation programs, teacher induction efforts, and teacher evaluation (OSDE, 2012). In the state of Oklahoma, the teacher growth and evaluation system is called Teacher and Leadership Effectiveness (TLE). School districts in Oklahoma are required select their teacher evaluation from a list approved by OSDE, and they are required to report their teacher evaluation scores to the Educator Effectiveness department every year.

Prior to the implementation of the Professional Learning Focus model, the TLE system was used for both teacher growth and teacher evaluation. However, reliance on the specific components of TLE evaluation models like informal walkthroughs may have a negative effect on student achievement, while focusing on growth interactions like coaching the teachers offered positive impacts on student achievement (Grissom et al., 2013). Even Marzano (2012), one of the developers of a widely used TLE model, agrees that teacher growth and judgments of teacher

effectiveness should be kept separate and have been mixed too much for the sake of efficiency in past years.

One of the ways that OSDE tried to separate the teacher *effectiveness* and teacher *evaluation* mentality was to reduce the frequency of teachers' formal evaluations but maintain the requirement that all teachers maintain their Professional Learning Focus annually (OSDE, 2017). Piloted in the 2017-2018 school year and fully implemented in the 2018-2019 school year, the Professional Learning Focus is a process within the TLE system to encourage individualized, mastery-oriented learning in Oklahoma teachers. Teachers classified as "superior" or higher are not required to be evaluated yearly, but all teachers, no matter their effectiveness ratings, must engage in a Professional Learning Focus. The details of the different categories of teachers and the requirements of evaluation versus Professional Learning Focus requirements are detailed in Table 2.1. As seen, all certified personnel are required to engage in the Professional Learning Focus. This establishes the difference between effectiveness ratings versus learning, with the objective that all professionals, not just those who require remediation, should be learning for the sake of growth.

Table 2.3
OSDE Definitions of Teachers

	Classification		
	Probationary Teachers	Career Teacher without High Rating	Career Teacher with High Rating
OSDE Definition	A teacher who is employed by a school district and has completed fewer than three consecutive complete school years as a teacher in one school district. This includes teachers with years of experience from other school districts but less than three in the current school district.	A teacher who is employed by a school district and has completed three or more consecutive complete school years as a teacher in one school district. A teacher that has achieved a district evaluation rating of "effective" or lower as measured on the district chosen TLE model.	A teacher who is employed by a school district and has completed three or more consecutive complete school years as a teacher in one school district. A teacher that has achieved a district evaluation rating of at least "highly effective" as measured on the district chosen TLE model.
Evaluation Requirements	A full TLE evaluation to be conducted every school year until classified as a career teacher.	A full TLE evaluation to be conducted every school year until reclassified as a Career Teacher with High Rating.	A full TLE evaluation to be conducted once every three school years.
Professional Learning Focus Requirements	A Professional Learning Focus must be established every year regardless of TLE evaluation exemption status		

The Professional Learning Focus was created to allow the freedom of choice for both what to learn and where to gain knowledge in comparison to the "sit and get" whole-group learning made popular by the professional development point system tied to teacher certification (Walker, 2013). Targeted professional development goals and activities allow for more

intrapersonal, mastery-motivated learning (Matherson & Windle, 2017), which can lead to deeper learning and higher transfer to teaching rates (Patton et al., 2013). For the requirements of the Professional Learning Focus to espouse the intended mastery-oriented focus, the mandate needed to be specific enough to be adhered, to but vague enough for teacher choice. To allow the space for teachers to have access to such a targeted learning experience, but also maintain comparable, measurable, monitoring of all teachers' progress, the mandated components of the Professional Learning Focus are:

- All certified personnel must complete a Professional Learning Focus yearly.
- The chosen focus must be tied to a subcomponent of the TLE model utilized by the school district the teacher is employed within.
- Even if the Professional Learning Focus is a large, multi-year topic, a yearly plan must be created within the first quarter (or 6-week block) of the school year.
- At least one check-in on progress should happen between participant and evaluator by the end of the school year. (OK HB No. 2957, 2015; OSDE, 2017)

Embedded within these mandates is a substantial amount of potential choice for the participant to select and facilitate their own learning. The intention is to reinforce the need for growth and spark a desire for professional growth. This flexibility includes:

- Allowing space for the participant to decide their Professional Learning Focus in collaboration with—but not dictated by—their evaluator.
- Not requiring the Professional Learning Focus to address weak subcomponents of participant's TLE evaluation, nor connecting Professional Learning Focus with TLE rating.

- The chosen learning activities can be informal or formal as long as evidence artifacts can be produced for the activities. (OK HB No. 2957, 2015; OSDE, 2017)

Although not required for proper execution of a Professional Learning Focus, OSDE offers multiple templates for building a Professional Learning Focus, reflection during the checkpoint(s), and feedback from the assigned evaluator included in Appendix 1, 2, and 3 respectively. Even though the templates are not required, there is a mandatory "qualitative report" that administrators and district leaders turn in to OSDE to prove participation and progress in the Professional Learning Focus. The report can be manually constructed or uploaded from the electronic platform used for TLE evaluations.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent of interactions between teacher demographics, their achievement goal orientation towards their Professional Learning Focus, and learning behaviors associated with achieving their learning goal. Although much is known about student achievement goal orientation (Reeve & Lee, 2014) and teacher's perceptions about student goal orientation (Midgley, 2014), little is known about the teachers' goal orientation towards their professional learning and structures implemented to encourage teacher learning. Table 2.2 outlines the variables utilized in this study, as well as functional definitions within this study and proposed relationships.

Table 2.4

Variables of Interest, Definitions, and Hypothesized Relationships

Variable	Definition	I/D/C*	Hypotheses
Demographics	Information such as gender, ethnicity, certification route	C	N/A
Years of Teaching Experience	The amount of time a teacher has been employed as a full-time teacher	I	Achievement goal orientation towards both teaching and towards Professional Learning Focus will differ based on years of teaching experience.
Urbanization of School	NCES classification of size of community and distance from major metropolitan area	I	Achievement goal orientation towards both teaching and towards Professional Learning Focus will differ based on urbanization classification.
Professional Learning Focus Utilization	Specific reported behaviors related to setting and working towards the mandated Professional Learning Focus	D	Professional Learning Focus utilization will differ based on years of experience and urbanization.
Achievement Goal Orientation towards Teaching	Goals teachers hold towards their teaching practice: mastery approach, mastery avoidance, performance approach, performance avoidance, work avoidance	I/D	Professional Learning Focus utilization will differ based on reported achievement goal orientation.
Achievement Goal Orientation towards Professional Learning Focus	Goals teachers hold towards their Professional Learning Focus: mastery approach, mastery avoidance, performance approach, performance avoidance	D	There will be no/little variance between reported achievement goal orientation towards teaching and achievement goal orientation towards Professional Learning Focus.

*I = Independent variable, D = Dependent variable, C = Covariate

Chapter 3: Methods

Research Questions

The professional learning of teachers while in their position is vital. Not all teacher learning can happen during pre-service education efforts, and further expertise grows with the nuance of experience, classified as "deliberate practice." To help facilitate attention toward this deliberate practice in Oklahoma teachers, the State Department of Education implemented the Professional Learning Focus requirement. This is a quantitative study determining the extent of interactions between teacher demographics, teachers' achievement goal orientation towards their Professional Learning Focus, and learning behaviors associated with teachers achieving their learning goals. Based upon the literatures of teacher goal orientation and teacher learning, the following research questions can provide insight into teachers' perceptions of the Professional Learning Focus and how it is or is not supporting teacher learning:

1. In what ways are teachers in Oklahoma utilizing the Professional Learning Focus model?
    a. How much collaboration is there between participants and evaluators in determining and facilitating participant's Professional Learning Focus?
    b. How much time was put into determining participants' Professional Learning Focus?
    c. What activities have teachers done up to this point for their Professional Learning Focus?
2. To what extent does years of experience or certification route predict goal orientation towards the Professional Learning Focus?

3. To what extent does goal orientation predict behaviors and desires towards completing the Professional Learning Focus?

Participant Recruitment and Selection

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Every certified professional in an Oklahoma public school is required to complete the Professional Learning Focus process in the 2019-2020 school year, regardless of how long they have taught, what they teach, or where they teach. Thus, the sample population for this study was specific to the state of Oklahoma, but open in terms of the school location and demographics. Given that focus, participants eligible for inclusion in this study must be: (a) a public-school teacher in the state of Oklahoma, (b) employed full time as a certified teacher during the 2019-2020 school year, and (c) hold any certification status, including emergency, alternative, and traditional certifications. Exclusion criteria include: (a) not being a certified teacher during the 2019-2020 school year, (b) not being a full time employee at a public school district (e.g., employed at a parochial school, homeschooling, or public or private charter schools not bound by public school state policies), (c) being a full time staff member in a school district but not a certified personnel member (such as central office employees or teaching assistants), or (d) any other certified staff member besides a teacher (such as an administrator or counselor). Personal demographics were not used to restrict inclusion criteria because all teachers, no matter their personal demographics, are required to engage in a Professional Learning Focus in Oklahoma.

Measures

This study employed a self-report, survey design. This section describes each instrument used in the survey.

Demographics

First, demographic prompts were included for the purpose of potential covariation during regression analysis. All demographic items are included in Appendix 4. For example, study participants were asked demographic questions such as subject(s) taught, years' experience, and personal information. Beyond asking participants for their years' experience and the urbanization classification of the community in which they teach, their gender, age, and ethnicity were asked.

Urbanization

Urbanization classification was used as a grouping variable to represent community development and, potentially, resources available to teachers. Participants were asked the urbanization classification of the school district they work in for the 2019-2020 school year. NCES classifies urbanization by combining population of the community with distance from a large metropolitan area. The definitions of urbanization that were provided to guide respondents were provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) will determine the urbanization category (NCES, 2019). The definitions were (a) Urban: within a metropolitan with a population of over 250,000, (b) Suburban: within a metropolitan with a population greater than 100,000 but less than 250,000, (c) Town: a metropolitan area between 10 to 35 miles from a suburban area, and (d) Rural: a populated area over 10 miles from a town area.

This urbanization classification matters for a few reasons. Many resources are tied to community size, such as teacher salaries (Rose & Sonstelie, 2010), access to preferred

professional development (Blanchard et al., 2016; McConnell et al., 2013), access to instructional technology and resources (Sundeen & Sundeen, 2013; Wang, 2013), and sometimes funding per student (Diaz, 2008). However, the inequities of student achievement due to variability in community socioeconomics increases for larger school districts (Howley & Bickel, 2000). In terms of funding distribution, Oklahoma received a "C" on funding distribution and an "F" on effort of equitable funds distribution between high-need and low-need school districts (Baker et al., 2015). These funding differences affect teachers. Perceived access to resources influences teachers' perceptions to be able to effectively accomplish their job (Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011). Additionally, the funding and resource access of a community creates differences in perceptions of professional collaboration and agreeableness to change (Burton, 2013) and teachers' ability to respond to standards-based reform efforts (Hannaway & Kimball, 1998).

Years of Experience

Teachers' years of experience were also investigated in this study. In this study, a novice teacher is defined as having 0-3 years of experience, mid-career teachers are defined as having taught for 4-20 years, and late-career teachers are defined as having 21+ years of experience (Klassen & Chui, 2010; Steffy et al., 2000). The literature on teacher motivation and professional self-perception suggests that years of experience impact aspects of teachers' perceptions of ability and motivation to learn. For example, teacher self-efficacy increases—then decreases—over the tenure of their careers (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Other changes are more linear, such as the perception that working on the self is perceived as a more effective coping mechanism with experience (Alhija, 2015). Moreover, novice teachers inherently need professional growth (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Davis et al., 2006), and those growth needs cover a large list of all

the skills a teacher is expected to have (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Boyd et al., 2009). As teachers persist in the profession, their growth needs and desires are more individual and nuanced (Louws et al., 2017). Louws et al. (2017) found that learning goals as a broad topic like curriculum or instruction are ubiquitous no matter the experience of teachers, but there are noticeable differences in the specifics of the learning goals and how aware a teacher is of their specific learning needs based on their experience. Considering the growth potential associated with teachers' experiences (Papay & Kraft, 2015), comparing the learning approach and needs of teachers at different experience levels would be useful.

Professional Learning Focus Utilization

The Professional Learning Focus Utilization instrument was developed by the researcher specifically for this study to ask about specifics pertaining to the selection of, and activity related to, teachers' Professional Learning Focus where participants responded about their access to, desire for, and utilization of the intended resources for setting and completing their Professional Learning Focus. The Professional Learning Focus Utilization instrument is a self-reported, ten-item measure with eight multi-select option items and two seven-point Likert-type items. The inspiration for these items came from legislation detailing the requirements of the Professional Learning Focus (OK HB No. 2957, 2015) and information released on the OSDE website to help school leadership with implementation (OSDE, 2017).

In these items, participants reported the specific behaviors in which they have engaged to meet their Professional Learning Focus to determine the relations between teacher behaviors and their reported goal orientation. This included asking who inspired the impetus of the Professional Learning Focus and the amount of support and resources available to accomplish their Professional Learning Focus goals. Examples of these items include, "What level of desire do

you have to use this resource? (Desire is not bound by access.)" with resource options being those directly mentioned by the OSDE as suggested activities. These environmental factors highly influence achievement goal orientations of the learners (Ciani et al., 2010), so understanding teachers' perceptions of access, desire, and perceived use is an important part of understanding their feelings towards the Professional Learning Focus. The entire instrument is included in Appendix 5.

Achievement Goal Questionnaire (AGQ)

Elliot and Murayama's (2008) Achievement Goal Questionnaire (AGQ) is a self-report survey asking about the participant's achievement goal orientation in relation to a specific class. The scale was modified for this study to assess the teacher's perspective and not the student's, as well as to address the Professional Learning Focus specifically. Examples of this include editing the item, "My aim is to completely master the material presented in this class," to be, "My aim is to completely master the material needed for my Professional Learning Focus." Another example of the edits included changing the item, "I am striving to do well compared to other students," to "I am striving to do well compared to other coworkers with my Professional Learning Focus." A full list of the original wording and the edited versions of the items is included in Appendix 7.

The original instrument included 12 items rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). Of the 12 items, three items assessed each factor of the 2x2 achievement goal orientation framework: *mastery approach*, *mastery avoidance*, p*erformance approach*, and *performance avoidance*. Elliot & Murayama's (2008) confirmatory factor analysis supported a four-factor model with adequate fit ($x^2/df = 1.63$, CFI = .99, IFI = .99, RMSEA = .053). The responses for each factor were averaged for a single value of

the factor. Within the factors, there was sufficient internal consistency between items, shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Reliability of AGQ (Elliot & Murayama, 2008)

Factor	Cronbach's α
Mastery approach	.87
Mastery avoidance	.89
Performance approach	.92
Performance avoidance	.83

Goal Orientation and Learning Strategies Survey (GOALS-S)

To measure work avoidance, three items from Dowson and McInerney's (2004) Goal Orientation and Learning Strategies Survey (GOALS-S) were added. The original measure had three academic achievement goal orientation—mastery, performance, and work avoidance—measured on a seven-point Likert-type self-response survey. Only the work avoidance items were used. Cronbach's alpha for work avoidance is .81, meaning internal consistency is sufficient for use. The responses to the three items will be averaged to create one work avoidance score per participant. Just as AGQ, items were edited to apply specifically to the Professional Learning Focus. The edits of the items are shown in Appendix 6.

Procedures

Distribution

The survey was distributed to every current certified teacher in the state of Oklahoma via email. Public school employee email addresses are considered open access directory items, and

they are published on the OSDE website (OSDE, 2019). At the time of this study, published email addresses were available for all certified personnel employed during the 2019-2020 school year. The Excel spreadsheet with the emails also contained other certified staff like instructional coaches and administrators, so a filter was applied to only show teacher email addresses to ensure those who could fit the inclusion criteria were contacted. The email included: (a) an email body explaining the study and asking for participation, (b) a link to the Qualtrics survey, and (c) contact information for any questions. This email was sent to every teacher email address listed in the directory data. Based upon a power analysis of a significance of 0.05 and a power of 0.8, the target sample population was about 400 participants. After 5 days of the survey link being sent out, a reminder email was sent. The final sample size was 761 participants. Since the minimum sample size was exceeded, data collection ended, and analysis began.

Analysis Methods

Assessing Internal Consistency

Once data was collected, multiple stages of quantitative analysis occurred. All quantitative analyses were conducted using SPSS 24 and the AMOS structural modeling add-on. Before any research questions were answered, data collected from the revised GOALS-S and AGQ assessments were analyzed for reliability and to ensure the factor structure was maintained. This was needed considering the language edits made to the items to accommodate this specific study. For part of the GOALS-S and AGQ, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which the factor structures of the modified scales used in this study sufficiently measure the intended constructs (Schreiber et al., 2006). Once that was established,

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine internal consistency between items for each of the factors (Cronbach, 1951).

Research Question 1

Research question 1 was "How are teachers in Oklahoma utilizing the Professional Learning Focus model?" This question will be answered from the results of the following sub questions.

Research Question 1a

Research question 1a was "How much collaboration is there between participants and evaluators in determining and facilitating participant's Professional Learning Focus?" From the Professional Learning Focus Utilization measure, the item "What was the level of collaboration between you and your evaluator when determining your Professional Learning Focus for the 2019-2020 school year?" was used to answer this research question. Also used to answer this question was "How many check-ins have you had with your evaluator about your Professional Learning Focus this academic year?" A frequency count and percentages of each answer option selected were used to answer the question.

Research Question 1b

Research question 1b was "How much time was put into determining participants' Professional Learning Focus?" From the Professional Learning Focus Utilization measure, the items, "How long did you think about what your Professional Learning Focus should be before your initial meeting with your evaluator?" and "How long was your Professional Learning Focus initial meeting with your evaluator?" were used to answer this question. A frequency count and percentages of each answer option selected were used to answer the question.

Research Question 1c

Research question 1c was "What activities have teachers done up to this point for their Professional Learning Focus?" From the Professional Learning Focus Utilization measure, participants were asked their desire and access of specific resources, and if that particular resource has contributed to progressing with their Professional Learning Focus. Responses to those prompts were used to answer this question. A frequency count and percentages of each answer option selected were used to answer the question.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 was "To what extent do years' of experience or certification route predict goal orientation towards the Professional Learning Focus?" The responses from the edited Achievement Goal Questionnaire (AGQ) and Goal Orientation and Learning Strategies Survey (GOALS-S) were used to answer the research question. For each respondent, their answers to the three items for each particular factor were averaged to provide an average response for that factor. Also used were the demographic prompts, "How many years of experience do you have?" and "Which describes your certification route?"

A regression analysis was used for this question. Years of experience and certification route were entered as independent variables, and average responses to the achievement goal orientation were the dependent variables. The results of the model, including regression coefficients and significance levels, were used to answer the question.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 was "To what extent does goal orientation predict behaviors and desires towards completing the Professional Learning Focus?" The responses from the edited Achievement Goal Questionnaire (AGQ) and Goal Orientation and Learning Strategies Survey

(GOALS-S) were used to answer the research question. As in research question 2, answers to the three items for each particular factor were averaged to provide an average response for that factor. The responses to the prompts “How long did you consider your Professional Learning Focus before meeting with your evaluator?”, “How many check-ins would you like to have with your evaluator?”, desire to use resources, access to resources, and usage of resources were used as dependent variables. Also used as a dependent variable were coded responses to the open response prompt, “What are your thoughts and feelings about the Professional Learning Focus in general?” These responses were binary coded with regard to a positive or negative perception towards the Professional Learning Focus.

A regression analysis was used for this question. Average responses to the achievement goal orientation are the independent variables, with the behaviors and perceptions related to engaging in and completing their Professional Learning Focus were the dependent variables. The results of the model, including regression coefficients and significance levels, were used to answer the question.

Chapter 4: Results

This is a quantitative study determining the extent of interactions between teacher demographics, their achievement goal orientation towards their Professional Learning Focus, and learning behaviors associated with achieving their learning goal. To investigate this, a survey was sent out to all Oklahoma teachers. This chapter shows the results of the analyses completed to answer the research questions. Specifically, it includes descriptive information and regression analyses to determine the extent to which results goal orientations are predicted by demographic characteristics and the extent to which goal orientations predict use of various resources to achieve one's Professional Learning Focus. The results, supported by prior literature, will be discussed in the next chapter.

Participant Demographics

Participation for this study included 761 respondents. Overall, the characteristics of the sample population are comparable to those of all teachers in Oklahoma. It is not a perfect comparison, such as 84.8% of respondents being female while 78.0% of Oklahoma teachers are female, but other categories such as ethnicity are closer to state percentages—such as 83.4% white in the sample and 82.0% white in Oklahoma. The highest difference is an 8% difference between the sample of teachers who have taught 0-3 years (20.0%) and those representing the state of Oklahoma (28.0%). Full demographic characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 4.1. Also in Table 4.1 are the descriptive statistics of all teachers in the state of Oklahoma found from the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE, 2018) and the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES, 2012; 2018). The comparison of urbanization came from population percentages of the state rather than teacher population specifically because that subpopulation comparison was not available (UDSA, 2003).

Table 4.1

Demographic Percentages of Participants (N= 761) and All Teachers in Oklahoma

Demographic	Category	Sample	State of OK	Demographic	Category	Sample	State of OK
Gender	Female	84.8%	78.0%	Years of Experience	0-3	20.0%	28.0%
	Male	15.1%	22.0%		4-20	54.5%	48.9%
Ethnicity	White	83.4%	82.0%		21+	25.5%	23.1%
	Black	3.4%	3.5%	Certification Route	Comprehensive	75.2%	79.7%
	Hispanic	1.3%	2.1%		Alternative	19.2%	11.2%
	American Indian	10.1%	8.6%		Emergency	2.5%	4.7%
	Asian	1.2%	0.7%	Urbanization Classification	Rural	31.1%	22.0%
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.3%		Town	20.2%	17.9%
	Other	3.6%	2.8%		Suburban	24.2%	27.3%
					Urban	24.3%	30.8%

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To verify the edits made to Elliot and Murayama's (2008) Achievement Goal Questionnaire (AGQ) and the work avoidance factor of Dowson and McInerney's (2004) Goal Orientation and Learning Strategies Survey (GOALS-S) to contextualize specifically to the Professional Learning Focus, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was built. The items are intended to load appropriately on theoretically defined factors, so those factors were used for building the CFA. Also, the theoretical fragility of the mastery avoidance factor (Baranik et al., 2010) means that two models were built—one with mastery avoidance and one without mastery avoidance. The goal of building two models was to determine whether having five factors or four factors was a better fit for the data. The CFA was built in SPSS AMOS 24. Factors and items loading on each factor were determined based on the previous version of the measures constructed by Elliot and Murayama (2008) and Dowson and McInerney (2004). Normality of the item responses were checked, and every Shapiro-Wilk test was significant, indicating sufficient normality in data (Tabachnick & Fiddell, 2012). Extraction was a maximum-likelihood method with a Promax rotation (Hendrickson & White, 1964). The Promax rotation was applied because of unrotated correlation matrix having correlations over 0.32 (Tabachnick & Fiddell, 2012).

Table 4.2 shows the comparison of global fit measures for the five-factor and four-factor model. The threshold of model fit will be (a) chi-square and degree of freedom ratio less than 5, (b) RMSEA less than .07, and (c) CFI greater than .90—preferably above .95 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).

Table 4.2
Comparison of the Five-Factor and Four-Factor Model of AGQ Responses

	Five-Factor	Four-Factor
X^2	417.032	172.222
X^2/df	5.213	3.588
RMSEA	.074	.058
CFI	.945	.977

On a local basis, Table 4.3 shows factor loadings for each individual item on the identified constructs. Loadings for items assessing mastery avoidance were lower in comparison with the other loadings. Table 4.4 shows the factor loadings for a four-factor model. Although the significance does not impact the determination of the five or four-factor model, the loadings of the four-factor model are higher than those in the five-factor model.

Table 4.3
Factor Loadings of Items—Five-Factor Model

Factor	Item	Loading	R^2
Mastery Approach	1	.712*	.506
	8	.909*	.827
	10	.879*	.773
Mastery Avoidance	3	.282*	.080
	6	.681*	.464
	12	.593*	.351
Performance Approach	4	.830*	.533
	9	.853*	.728
	13	.855*	.731
Performance Avoidance	5	.718*	.516
	11	.892*	.795
	14	.850*	.723
Work Avoidance	2	.747*	.699
	7	.871*	.759
	15	.859*	.737

*$p < .0001$

Table 4.4
Factor Loadings of Items—Four-Factor Model

Factor	Item	Loading	R^2	*p*-value
Mastery Approach	1	.706*	.799	<.0001
	8	.910*	.848	<.0001
	10	.881*	.777	<.0001
Performance Approach	4	.732*	.535	<.0001
	9	.852*	.726	<.0001
	13	.855*	.731	<.0001
Performance Avoidance	5	.716*	.536	<.0001
	11	.898*	.807	<.0001
	14	.851*	.724	<.0001
Work Avoidance	2	.752*	.702	<.0001
	7	.872*	.760	<.0001
	15	.858*	.739	<.0001

**p <.0001*

Finally, correlations between factors for five-factor model are shown Table 4.5 and those for the four-factor model are shown in table 4.6. Again, Promax rotation was applied to the factor analysis (Hendrickson & White, 1964).

Table 4.5
Factor Correlation Matrix—Five-Factor Model

	Mastery Approach	Mastery Avoidance	Performance Approach	Performance Avoidance
Mastery Avoidance	.182			
Performance Approach	.406*	-.312*		
Performance Avoidance	.456*	.383*	.132*	
Work Avoidance	-.590*	.173	-.273*	.687*

**p <.0001*

Table 4.6
Factor Correlation Matrix—Four-Factor Model

	Mastery Approach	Performance Approach	Performance Avoidance
Performance Approach	.598*		
Performance Avoidance	.362*	.569*	
Work Avoidance	-.634*	-.467*	-.335*

*$p < .0001$

Although the five-factor model was adequate in fit, in all global measures the four-factor model is a better fit for the data (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The comparison of the two models regarding fit statistics and factor loadings, along with the theoretical instability of mastery avoidance (Baranik et al., 2010), means that the four-factor model is what will be used for the rest of data analysis. Because mastery avoidance is not included for the rest of data analysis, mastery approach will be referenced only as "mastery."

The main reason for the CFA was to determine if the edits made to the items allowed the items to factor as they did in the original measure. Based on the above analyses, there is no evidence that the changes to the items affected the factors enough to reject those changes. This means that the intention of the stems was retained, and the rest of the analysis could proceed. Although mastery avoidance is being dropped from the rest of analysis, this is not a commentary of the existence or rejection of mastery avoidance as valid. Rather, this is only to be read on the basis of model fit for this particular study.

Achievement Goal Orientation

For contextual and theoretical understanding of the results for research question 1, descriptive analysis of the responses to the AGQ items was conducted. Each item was ranked on a seven-point Likert-type, with 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 7 being "Strongly Agree." In accordance with the original measure (Dowson & McInerney, 2004; Elliot & Murayama, 2008), items assessing each factor are averaged together to produce a single value per factor. Table 4.7 shows the descriptive statistics for these averaged item scores on each factor.

Table 4.7
Descriptive Statistics for AGQ Responses

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
Mastery	1	7	2.65	1.33	1.079
Performance Approach	1	7	2.99	1.33	.733
Performance Avoidance	1	7	3.31	1.54	.498
Work Avoidance	1	7	4.78	1.53	-.495

From this descriptive data, it can be seen that the most endorsed factor is work avoidance and the lowest endorsed factor is mastery. This will be discussed more in the implications section, but overall, this is a disheartening data point. Despite the intention behind the Professional Learning Focus being the activation of a more mastery-oriented perspective, descriptive data shows that is not the case. In fact, mastery orientation was the least endorsed goal orientation, with a mean of 2.65. Work avoidance, in comparison, had an average response of 4.78. Granted, on the Likert-type scale used here, 4.78 falls between the neutral option, 4, and "Somewhat agree," 5. This means that the value of 4.78 is not a resounding endorsement of work avoidance; rather, the lower value of mastery is a rejection of that goal orientation. The

performance approach and performance avoidance factors also averaged below the neutral option, meaning participants generally felt that those two factors did not describe their perceptions or feelings about their Professional Learning Focus to at least some extent.

Open Response

An additional question asked on the survey was, "What are your thoughts and feelings about the Professional Learning Focus in general?" Of the 761 participants, 570 offered a response to the prompt ($\mu = 21.67$ words, $\sigma = 4.21$ words). The short answers were analyzed using Shank's (2006) inductive coding. Each answer was open coded, and those codes were compiled into categories, then themes. For the purpose of quantitative data analysis, the open responses were coded as a binary categorical variable of either positive or negative. Positive codes were assigned if participants' responses about their thoughts were positive in nature, such as increased reflection, helpfulness, or collaboration. Negative codes were assigned if the response was negative in nature about the Professional Learning Focus task, such as being an extra burden, a waste of time, or disappointment in evaluator's actions. Table 4.8 shows a summary of the different codes and corresponding quotes to those codes. The entire code book is included in Appendix 9. Triangulation occurred through the help of two fellow graduate students to ensure trustworthiness of the codes. The codes were divided in half, where each coder read the response and the code to determine if they would agree with the coding or not. In the case of a disagreement, the code was sent back with an explanation and a discussion between the coder helping and myself. Once there was full agreement, the rest of data analysis proceeded.

Table 4.8

Examples of Open-Response Quotes and Codes

Positive	# of codes	Example quotes	Negative	# of codes	Example quotes
Helpful	33	"It is helpful to have so that you think about how you can better serve current students as well as future students."	Just another thing to do	154	"It's just jumping through the hoops because the demands of the job and the needs of students will overwhelmingly overshadow anything else."
Allows reflection	32	"It's a very good way to self-evaluate and detect what are your strengths and weaknesses in your teaching process and also how you can improve."	Waste of time	77	"It seems like a waste of teacher's time. I don't mind doing things to better myself professionally but why must it all be documented…"
Helps focus to learning	42	"I like it because it helps keep me accountable and reminds me to keep working on that particular skill."	Was already doing this	61	"Teachers in general are always researching and learning. I am not sure they need to be evaluated for something we already do."
Something like this has been needed	16	"It is playing a crucial role and without it no improvement could be seen."	Administrator misuse	70	"Many administrators don't check in or do but only vaguely. You are mostly left on your own to find information."
Control over own learning	15	"I think it is great to be able to pick a goal that is specific to my students and myself and our needs."	No time or money to be done right	20	"I don't feel it is effective because I had to change mine due to lack of opportunity to attend PD sessions."

Research Question 1

Research question 1 is, "In what ways are teachers in Oklahoma utilizing the Professional Learning Focus model?" This research question is answered through sub-questions. Research question 1a is, "How much collaboration is there between participants and evaluators in determining and facilitating participants' Professional Learning Focus?" Table 4.9 shows the amount of reported contributions teachers gave in establishing a Professional Learning Focus. Any gap from teacher contribution to 100% is the reported contribution of the evaluator. For example, the 40-49 percent teacher contribution would reflect a 51-60 percent contribution from their evaluator.

Table 4.9
Reported Percentage of Contribution of Teachers to Establish Professional Learning Focus

Teacher Contribution	*n*	%
0-9	72	9.5
10-19	10	1.3
20-29	13	1.7
30-39	3	0.4
40-49	7	0.9
50-59	95	12.5
60-69	22	2.9
70-79	47	6.1
80-89	70	9.2
90-99	134	17.5
100	288	37.8

As seen in Table 4.9, 37.8% reported complete contribution towards determining the content of their Professional Learning Focus with no contribution from their evaluator. This was the most endorsed range across all data points. Overall, most respondents felt that they were primary contributors to their Professional Learning Focus, with over two-thirds of participants (68.5%) reporting between 50-100% contribution to its content.

Research question 1b is, "How much time was put into determining participants' Professional Learning Focus?" Table 4.10 shows the frequencies of responses to the questions of how much time participants spent thinking about what their Professional Learning Focus should be and the length of the meeting with their evaluator to finalize the focus.

Table 4.10

Reported Frequencies and Percentages of Time Spent Considering Professional Learning Focus

Time Thinking About Professional Learning Focus (min)	*n*	%	Length of Professional Learning Focus Meeting (min)	*n*	%
0-10	256	34.8	0-10	343	50.0
11-20	149	20.3	11-20	136	19.8
21-30	130	17.6	21-30	111	16.2
31-40	30	4.0	31-40	28	4.1
41-50	25	3.3	41-50	25	3.6
51-60	61	8.0	51-60	27	4.0
61-70	17	2.2	61-70	5	0.6
71-80	5	0.6	71-80	2	0.2
81-90	13	1.7	81-90	4	0.5
91-100	49	6.5	91-100	5	0.7

Based upon the responses, it appears most teachers spent a small amount of time thinking about their Professional Learning Focus and establishing it with their administrator. In fact, most teachers (72.7%) reported thinking about their Professional Learning Focus for 30 minutes or less. One-third of respondents, 34.8%, reported thinking their Professional Learning Focus for 10 minutes or less. For the meeting length between teachers and evaluators, most meetings (86%) happened in 30 minutes or less. Within that range, half of the respondents reported the meeting to establish their Professional Learning Focus lasting 10 minutes or less. A stark percentage within the 0-10 minute range are that 9.2% and 8.5% of respondents reported their meeting lasting zero minutes or five minutes, respectively.

Research question 1c is, "What activities have teachers done up to this point for their Professional Learning Focus?" Participants reported how many check-ins they engaged in, shown in Table 4.11. The legislation for the Professional Learning Focus suggests a meeting between teacher and evaluator at least one more time beyond the initial meeting to set the focus, but more are recommended.

Table 4.11
Number of Check-ins with Evaluators

Number of Check-ins	n	%
0	171	22.5
1	227	29.9
2	236	31.1
3+	126	16.6

Compared to the other responses up to this point, the number of check-ins with evaluator offers a different picture. The state mandate requires at least one check-in between participant and evaluator, with more recommended. About half (47.7%) of respondents reported having more than the required number of check-ins with their evaluator. This is a promising data point, considering this aligns with the recommendations and exceeds the minimum expectations. However, almost a quarter (22.5%) of participants reported not having any check-ins with their evaluator. That means those participants have had no debrief of their successes or needs to further their professional learning up to the point of data collection. This particular result includes the be caveat of the data collection timeframe—early March. This means that the required check-in could still happen—but has not happened yet.

Resource Desire, Access, and Usage

Participants were asked to rank their desire of (not bound by access), access to, and level of usage to achieve their Professional Learning Focus for eight resources: Professional Learning

Community (PLC), Mentoring, Instructional Coaching, Professional Development (PD), Grade Level Collaboration, Subject Level Collaboration, Action Research, and Book Study. These resources were those specifically named as examples of available learning resources offered by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE, 2018). Desire of the resource was measured on a 7-point Likert-type, with 1 being "Extremely Useless" to 7 being "Extremely Useful." Access to the resource was measured on a 7-point Likert-type with 1 being "Extremely Difficult" to 7 being "Extremely Easy." Usage was measured using a 5-point Likert-type with 1 being "Definitely Will Not" to 7 being "Definitely Already Have." Table 4.12 shows the descriptive statistics for responses to each of the resources.

Table 4.12
Descriptive Values of Resource Desire, Access, and Usage

Resource	Facet	Mean	Std. Deviation	Resource	Facet	Mean	Std. Deviation
PLC	Desire	3.10	1.82	Grade-Level	Desire	2.42	1.63
	Access	3.13	1.83	Collaboration	Access	3.13	2.05
	Usage	2.80	1.19		Usage	2.48	1.29
Mentoring	Desire	2.58	1.62	Subject-Level	Desire	2.34	1.57
	Access	3.36	1.91	Collaboration	Access	3.32	2.02
	Usage	2.59	1.22		Usage	2.48	1.26
Instructional	Desire	3.01	1.80	Action Research	Desire	3.14	1.58
Coaching	Access	3.72	1.98		Access	3.74	1.68
	Usage	2.96	1.32		Usage	2.86	1.15
PD	Desire	2.79	1.75	Book Study	Desire	2.86	1.65
	Access	2.90	1.66		Access	2.64	1.64
	Usage	2.47	1.21		Usage	2.56	1.21

As seen from the table, there exists a visual consistency between the responses no matter the resource and no matter if talking about desire, access, or usage. Correlation analysis was conducted to see if this would allow variable reduction. Bivariate Pearson correlations and their significance suggests a lack of discrimination between the individual resources. Specifically, every tested relation between desire, access, and usage was significant for all resources.

Correlations between resource desire and resource access range from .246 to .509, showing a moderate correlation between desire and access (Tabachnick & Fiddell, 2012). Correlations between resource access and usage were in the moderate range, from .333 to .553 (Tabachnick & Fiddell, 2012). Correlations between usage and desire ranged from .517 to .769, showing high relations between variables (Tabachnick & Fiddell, 2012). All correlations are displayed in Table 4.13. The correlations show that participants did not perceive differences in desire, access, or usage based on the specific resource. Because of this, the desire, access, and usage variables for each resource were averaged into a single score representation of each. That is, each desire response for all eight resources were added together and divided by eight. The same procedure happened with access and usage.

Table 4.13

Pearson Correlations of Resource Desire, Access, and Usage

	1a	1b	1c	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4a	4b	4c	5a	5b	5c	6a	6b	6c	7a	7b	7c	8a	8b
1b	.246**																						
1c	.517**	.346**																					
2a	.449**	.127**	.315**																				
2b	.182**	.478**	.290**	.206**																			
2c	.367**	.211**	.541**	.572**	.418**																		
3a	.421**	.183**	.327**	.563**	.229**	.440**																	
3b	.135**	.359**	.261**	.118**	.624**	.331**	.207**																
3c	.308**	.203**	.459**	.374**	.329**	.621**	.662**	.455**															
4a	.431**	.147**	.292**	.401**	.147**	.322**	.416**	.110**	.310**														
4b	.184**	.309**	.189**	.131**	.399**	.190**	.177**	.418**	.186**	.235**													
4c	.327**	.115**	.374**	.269**	.151**	.377**	.327**	.142**	.414**	.716**	.333**												
5a	.358**	.192**	.283**	.389**	.183**	.307**	.371**	.115**	.263**	.423**	.158**	.282**											
5b	.177**	.421**	.286**	.109**	.484**	.198**	.133**	.392**	.210**	.152**	.343**	.151**	.354**										
5c	.239**	.240**	.465**	.243**	.293**	.414**	.266**	.236**	.407**	.297**	.211**	.380**	.632**	.507**									
6a	.323**	.113**	.307**	.390**	.154**	.310**	.357**	.110**	.238**	.347**	.184**	.255**	.632**	.215**	.418**								
6b	.182**	.403**	.322**	.080*	.532**	.244**	.129**	.438**	.247**	.125**	.373**	.148**	.261**	.652**	.366**	.279**							
6c	.241**	.165**	.470**	.242**	.297**	.449**	.263**	.271**	.440**	.264**	.219**	.383**	.448**	.323**	.665**	.593**	.475**						
7a	.354**	.153**	.358**	.424**	.152**	.383**	.411**	.109**	.346**	.445**	.141**	.374**	.384**	.154**	.292**	.351**	.106**	.246**					
7b	.168**	.271**	.269**	.147**	.413**	.264**	.218**	.428**	.298**	.200**	.342**	.204**	.216**	.317**	.213**	.143**	.355**	.199**	.424**				
7c	.203**	.135**	.393**	.281**	.206**	.428**	.255**	.195**	.403**	.286**	.175**	.353**	.269**	.181**	.344**	.215**	.148**	.354**	.698**	.553**			
8a	.237**	.181**	.249**	.250**	.132**	.222**	.284**	0.044	.178**	.394**	.130**	.317**	.238**	.169**	.163**	.175**	.124**	.123**	.503**	.237**	.347**		
8b	.186**	.176**	.120**	.123**	.168**	.115**	.159**	.170**	.101**	.229**	.265**	.215**	.208**	.244**	.123**	.134**	.202**	.103**	.247**	.373**	.247**	.509**	
8c	.169**	.089*	.249**	.172**	.096**	.254**	.206**	0.034	.220**	.294**	.116**	.321**	.154**	.139**	.185**	.116**	.090*	.194**	.407**	.221**	.422**	.769**	.544**

1= PLC Desire, 2 = Mentoring, 3 = Instructional Coaching, 4 =PD, 5 = Grade-Level Collaboration, 6 = Subject-Level Collaboration, 7 = Action Research, 8 = Book Study

a = desire, b = access, c = usage

**p<.001, **p <.0001*

Urbanization of Schools

Participants were asked about their access to and usage of the suggested resources listed above, because differing access and subsequent utilization may be based on urbanization of the school. The relationship between urbanization and perception of resources was analyzed using an ANOVA with urbanization as the fixed factor and perceived access towards each individual resource as the dependent variable. Overall, there was no significance in the between-group comparisons, meaning urbanization was not causing significant differences in responses. When similar ANOVAs were conducted with desire of each resource and usage of each resource, similar insignificant results were found. The table of comparisons is shown in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14

Between Subject Effects for Urbanization and Resource Desire, Access, and Usage

Fixed Variable	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Urbanization	Resource Desire	.950	.576	.068
	Resource Access	1.627	.182	.007
	Resource Usage	.983	.511	.070

The insignificant results were surprising, considering the structure, staffing amount, and funding access held by urban versus rural schools are well documented (Blanchard et al., 2016). However, the nature of the survey is perceptive rather than actual. So, no matter the urbanization of the teacher participants, their perceptions of access, desire, and usage are the same. Although this discrepancy matters and will be discussed in the next steps, for the purpose of this study, urbanization will not remain in the regressions since there is no indication that this variable will provide a unique interaction.

Gender and Age

Based on prior literature, age and gender would not have a predictive effect on either achievement goal orientation (Kassaw & Astatke, 2017; Kooji & Zacher, 2016). To ensure these variables did not affect the current study, a MANOVA analysis of gender, then age, was conducted as the fixed factor and the four achievement goal orientations as the dependent variables. As predicted, neither gender nor age produced significant differences in responses to achievement goal orientation variables. Thus, for the final models, those variables will not be included. The between-subject effects are shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15

Between-Subject Effects for Gender, Age, and AGQ Responses

Fixed Variable	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Age	Mastery	1.241	.126	.091
	Performance Approach	1.062	.361	.079
	Performance Avoidance	1.095	.306	.081
	Work Avoidance	1.083	.326	.080
Gender	Mastery	1.388	.056	.011
	Performance Approach	2.293	.102	.007
	Performance Avoidance	.376	.687	.001
	Work Avoidance	1.109	.298	.014

Research Question 2

Research question 2 is, "To what extent do years of experience or certification route predict goal orientation towards the Professional Learning Focus?" A multivariate regression model was constructed to answer this question. The fixed factors were the years of experience and certification route. Certification route is a categorical variable, so the responses needed to be dummy coded to be used in the regression analysis. Dependent variables consisted of the four achievement goal orientation factors. Table 4.16 shows the overall model summaries between

years of experience, certification route, and achievement goal orientation. Four separate models were run, one for each dependent variable.

Table 4.16
Model Summaries of Teacher Demographics on Goal Orientation

Model	R	R square	F Change	Sig.
Mastery	.053	.000	1.047	.352
Performance Approach	.091	.005	2.996	.051
Performance Avoidance	.121	.012	5.383	.005
Work Avoidance	.095	.006	3.341	.036

As can be seen from Table 4.16, the omnibus test for mastery-oriented feelings toward the Professional Learning Focus is non-significant, meaning neither years of experience nor certification route significantly impacts teachers' mastery-oriented feelings towards their Professional Learning Focus. Also, the omnibus test for performance approach was above the accepted threshold of significance. Finally, the test for performance avoidance and work avoidance was significant, meaning years of experience or certification route significantly impacts teachers' performance avoidance and work avoidance feelings towards their Professional Learning Focus. The significant and insignificant predictive nature of the independent variables in the model can be better seen through the regression coefficients for each independent variable (Table 4.17). Mastery coefficients are not included because the entire model is insignificant.

Table 4.17
Research Question 2—Coefficients of Regression Models

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	β	*p*-value
Performance Approach	Years of Experience	.097	.015
	Certification Route	.026	.508
Performance Avoidance	Years of Experience	.123	.002
	Certification Route	.006	.883
Work Avoidance	Years of Experience	.102	.010
	Certification Route	.027	.490

As seen in Table 4.17, certification route did not predict teachers' responses for any achievement goal orientation towards the Professional Learning Focus. Years of experience significantly predicted performance approach, performance avoidance, and work avoidance goal orientations. It should be noted that the beta weights are small, meaning that years of experience may not be the strongest predictor of teachers' goal orientation towards their Professional Learning Focus. The effect size that the predictive power of years of experience has on teachers' goal orientations are low (partial η^2 performance avoidance = .013; partial η^2 work avoidance = .008). That, with the low beta values, mean that there are more influencing factors than just years of experience on teacher goal orientation towards their Professional Learning Focus. In this study, the models show, however slightly, the impact of years of experience compared to certification route. The question about years of experience was asked to participants with three options: 0-3 years (novice), 4-20 years (experienced), and 21+ years (veteran) (Klassen & Chui, 2010; Steffy et al., 2000) to offer a layer of anonymity to participants who may be in small, rural areas, and to reflect the phases of perceptions of teachers throughout their career. However, this question is set up and treated ordinal the same way as a Likert-type would in a regression analysis, as the responses that exist within are ordered categories (Tabachnick & Fiddell, 2012).

Table 4.18

Pairwise Comparisons of Between-Subject Effects for Years of Experience

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables		Mean Difference	Sig.
Performance Approach	0-3	4-20	-.146	.247
		21+	-.305	.036
	4-20	21+	-.158	.176
Performance Avoidance	0-3	4-20	-.124	.399
		21+	-.487	.004
	4-20	21+	-.364	.007
Work Avoidance	0-3	4-20	-.289	.048
		21+	-.382	.023
	4-20	21+	-.094	.487

Within these results, it shows that the predominant predictive differences are between novice versus more experienced teachers. In both performance avoidance and work avoidance, novice teachers—those who have taught for three years or less—have lower mean differences than those more experienced as teachers. This means that more experienced teachers, especially veteran teachers with 21+ years of experience, are endorsing slightly higher in perceptions of performance avoidance and work avoidance towards their Professional Learning Focus.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 is, "To what extent does goal orientation predict behaviors and desires towards completing the Professional Learning Focus?" To answer this question, a multivariable regression model was constructed. The fixed factors were the four achievement goal factors: mastery, performance approach, performance avoidance, and work avoidance. The dependent variables were the desires or actions that would be influenced by achievement goal orientation: time spent thinking about what their Professional Learning Focus should be, how many check-ins the teacher desires to have with their evaluator, and their resource desire, perceived access, and usage. Also included as a dependent variable was the coded open response variable consisting of positive or negative general feelings about the Professional Learning Focus. Table 4.19 shows the model summaries. Six separate models were run, one for each dependent variable.

Table 4.19

Model Summaries of Goal Orientation On Teacher Beliefs or Behaviors

Model	R	R square	F Change
Resource Desire	.515	.261	65.624*
Resource Access	.353	.120	25.917*
Resource Usage	.557	.306	81.665*
Desired # of Check-Ins	.471	.218	52.433*
Time Thinking for PLF	.380	.139	30.044*
Feelings in General	.446	.193	33.597*

*$p < .0001$

Every dependent variable was significantly predicted by the responses to the achievement goal stems overall. Considering there were four independent variables, the coefficients and significance of each independent variable is needed. Table 4.20 shows the coefficients of all the models.

Table 4.20
Research Question 3—Coefficients of Regression Models

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	β	Sig.
Resource Desire	Mastery	.429	<.001
	Performance Approach	.052	<.001
	Performance Avoidance	.048	.322
	Work Avoidance	-.062	.312
Resource Access	Mastery	.357	<.001
	Performance Approach	.042	.462
	Performance Avoidance	-.030	.569
	Work Avoidance	.031	.489
Resource Usage	Mastery	.462	<.001
	Performance Approach	.083	.101
	Performance Avoidance	.038	.143
	Work Avoidance	-.053	.183
Desired # of Check-ins	Mastery	.287	<.001
	Performance Approach	-.068	.205
	Performance Avoidance	-.055	.260
	Work Avoidance	-.179	<.001
Time Thinking of PLF	Mastery	.331	<.001
	Performance Approach	.078	.164
	Performance Avoidance	-.034	.501
	Work Avoidance	-.106	.017
Feelings in General	Mastery	.338	<.001
	Performance Approach	.010	.867
	Performance Avoidance	.028	.618
	Work Avoidance	-.166	<.001

As with research question 2, results were mixed. Mastery goal orientation towards the Professional Learning Focus predicts participants' responses for all reported behaviors in this study. Although performance approach significantly predicted resource desire, the beta values of

mastery compared to performance approach are dramatically different. The beta for performance approach is very low, meaning that—although significant—it is not a dramatic predictor of teachers' resource desire like mastery orientation is. Work avoidance did not significantly predict participants' perceptions of resource desire, access, or usage, but did significantly predict participants' behaviors related to attaining their Professional Learning Focus, such as the number of check-ins they would prefer, how long they thought about their Professional Learning Focus, and their overall feelings about the Professional Learning Focus. Moreover, responses to performance avoidance items significantly affected participants' reported resource desire and usage for achieving the Professional Learning Focus. Overall, the general trends of the significance and beta values showed that mastery orientation predicted higher levels of resource engagement and work avoidance predicted a greater aversion to the activities required for the Professional Learning Focus. Additionally, a higher response to mastery-oriented items predicted a more positive feeling in general towards the Professional Learning Focus. In comparison, a higher response to work avoidance items predicted a more negative feeling towards the Professional Learning Focus.

Conclusion

This chapter reports on the results of a quantitative study designed to determine the extent to which teacher demographics, achievement goal orientations towards teachers' Professional Learning Focus, and learning behaviors associated with achieving those learning goals are related. Overall, teachers tended to endorse a work avoidance goal orientation towards their Professional Learning Focus and generally did not endorse the intended mastery goal orientation. Moreover, years of experience predicted teachers' goal orientations towards their Professional Learning Focus, but certification route did not. Finally, teachers' mastery goal orientations

predicted their desire, perceived access, and usage of resources to achieve their Professional Learning Focus. Mastery goal orientation and work avoidance predicted teachers' desired number of check-ins with their advisor, how long they thought about what their Professional Learning Focus should be, and their general thoughts about the Professional Learning Focus model. Discussion, implications, and limitations of these findings are detailed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This dissertation is a quantitative study determining the extent of the predictive nature between teacher demographics, their achievement goal orientation towards their Professional Learning Focus, and learning behaviors associated with achieving their learning goal. The results of this survey study show that teachers are interacting with their Professional Learning Focus at different levels. Years of experience predicted performance approach, performance avoidance, and work avoidance goal orientations, but certification route did not. Additionally, mastery goal orientation predicted all Professional Learning Focus behaviors and feelings, but performance approach and avoidance goal orientations did not. Finally, work avoidance goal orientation predicted the number of desired check-ins for progress, time put into thinking about their Professional Learning Focus, and their feelings in general about the process. In this chapter the findings are discussed along with implications, limitations, and next steps.

Research Question 1

Teacher learning has been a federal mandate since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA, 1965). How states enact that requirement is up to each state. With the reenactment as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), teacher evaluation and growth remain, but states have more flexibility on what teacher effectiveness looks like in practice (ESSA, 2015). Most states have either a specific learning structure or a list of allowable processes upon which school districts can decide (Jaquith et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2017). Since 2012, Oklahoma has used a process called “Teacher and Leader Effectiveness” (TLE). Despite the models within TLE being designed to facilitate teacher growth, its primary purpose in Oklahoma

has been as a summative evaluation tool. Thus, starting in the 2017-2018 school year, the Oklahoma State Department of Education added a subcomponent of TLE specific to learning and growth: the Professional Learning Focus (OSDE, 2017). The first part of this study was designed to determine the process by which teacher participants currently establish their Professional Learning Focus in relation to what is required or anticipated.

Research question 1 is, "In what ways are teachers in Oklahoma utilizing the Professional Learning Focus model?" This research question is answered through sub questions. The first sub question is, "How much collaboration is there between participants and evaluators in determining and facilitating participants' Professional Learning Focus?" Results of this study showed that most participants (68.5% of respondents) felt they were the primary person contributing toward the formation of their Professional Learning Focus. When looking at the data more closely, more than one-third of teachers (37.8%) reported being alone in the determination of their Professional Learning Focus. This is despite the language in the bill and information distributed by OSDE that formation of a participant's Professional Learning Focus should be a collaboration between them and their evaluator (OSDE, 2017). On the opposite end of the continuum, 9.5% of participants responded that they had no input in the establishment of their Professional Learning Focus.

These findings show two different ends of the spectrum: full involvement and no involvement in setting a learning goal for the school year. Through the lens of achievement goal orientation, a more intrapersonal, mastery approach motivation would correspond with the teacher participants being the primary contributor towards their Professional Learning Focus (Dweck, 1986; Butler, 2007). Considering the highly intrapersonal nature of mastery learning, the teacher who chooses to engage in learning will have a deeper knowledge and understanding

of what they want to learn than someone else. Thus, teacher participants giving more contribution to establishing their learning goals are exhibiting more mastery-based behaviors. With 68.5% of participants reporting 51%+ contribution towards forming their learning goal, this is a promising sign towards the level of mastery-oriented approaches.

Based upon the findings, though, 31.5% of teachers are not the primary contributor towards their Professional Learning Focus, with 9.5% of teachers reported having no part in determining their Professional Learning Focus. Although this is a much smaller portion of respondents, it is disheartening that any teachers have little to no say in their learning focus, making the entire process somewhat disconnected from their perceived needs and desires.

Another interesting finding from the contribution comparison of teachers and evaluators is the number of responses that show no collaboration. 37.8% of teachers determined their Professional Learning Focus with no input from their evaluating administrator. 9.5% of respondents had no input in their Professional Learning Focus—implying that their administrator dictated what the focus would be. That means that a total of 47.3% of teachers did not collaborate with their administrators to develop their Professional Learning Focus, which is directly opposed to what is stated in the legislation, which reads as:

> The policy of professional development shall establish an annual professional growth goal for the teacher…that is developed by the teacher…in collaboration with the evaluator. (HB 2957, p. 9)

Despite the intention behind the Professional Learning Focus, results of this study show that collaboration is not happening for just under half the respondent population. Although the title is "evaluator," the actual job of school evaluators in terms of the Professional Learning Focus is to facilitate increases in teacher effectiveness through learning and professional growth

(OSDE, 2017). A level of trust and communication needs to be present for effective mastery learning. That is, the teacher participant should feel like they can be transparent about what they want their specific learning goals to be. The administrator should have a conversation with the teacher to understand why and how the teacher has selected a particular goal. That two-way communication would foster a mastery-oriented culture between teachers and administrators, and it should be seen in some level of collaboration. However, the lack of collaboration for almost half the respondents is not an optimal indicator of a strong mastery-oriented relationship between the teacher learners and those responsible for facilitating that learning.

However, trust is something that evolves and is built over time (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Louis, 2007), so it would be unfair to think that a teacher in their first year at a school would have the same level of confidence as a collaborator with their administrator as would be someone who had been working with an administrator for years. To see if this is part of the interpretation of the level of collaboration, the descriptive results were split by the years of experience. The results show that there was not a difference in level of collaboration due to years of experience, as seen in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Descriptive Report of Collaboration by Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Mean Level of Their Contribution Reported	S.D. of Their Contribution Reported
0-3	73.97	29.12
4-20	76.53	32.49
21+	72.98	32.85

This means that, even though there is a differentiation of learning needs based on the level of professional experience (Mirzari et al., 2014), this is not translating to the reality of implementation.

Research question 1b is, "How much time was put into determining participants' Professional Learning Focus?" Most respondents (72.7%) reported that they spent less than 30 minutes thinking about what their Professional Learning Focus should be. Additionally, the descriptive analysis of participant responses of their achievement goal orientation towards their Professional Learning Focus shows a predominately work avoidance endorsement. From the perspective of achievement goal orientation theory, a mastery inspired learning goal may not need a substantial amount of time to consider (Pintrich, 2000). Thinking about learning in a mastery-oriented way is a reflective process that is not bound by a formal, mandated structure of learning. However, this does not seem to be the case in this study. The short time spent thinking about and setting a Professional Learning Focus, coupled with mostly work avoidance endorsements, gives a strong indication that teachers are not feeling an intrapersonal cognitive connection with their learning goals.

Along with short consideration from the teachers, many meetings with evaluators were short—10 minutes or less for 50% of respondents. Considering the contribution comparisons from the previous research question, the short meetings with their evaluators are not surprising. If teachers feel that they are not in collaboration with their evaluator in establishing a learning goal, then it would be expected that the meeting between the teacher and evaluator would be short. This data also aligns with the higher work avoidance endorsement from participants. The theoretical definition of work avoidance is to select a learning task that takes as little work as possible (King & McInerney, 2014). The short time of thinking about their Professional Learning Focus and the very short—sometimes nonexistent—meetings with collaborating evaluators are easy examples of behavioral manifestation in a work avoidance goal orientation.

However, the teachers themselves cannot take full responsibility for short meetings. Teachers select instructional strategies that foster the same goal orientation as the perceived goal orientation of the school (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013), and students adopt for themselves the goal orientation of the learning strategies they are exposed to (Ciani et al., 2010: Reeve & Lee, 2014). The meeting to establish the Professional Learning Focus requires two people: the teacher and the administrator. If the administrator wanted the meeting to last longer than 10 minutes and have a deep conversation about a teacher's professional learning, then it probably would result in a longer meeting. So, the interpretation of teachers' primary goal orientations, along with the level of collaboration and time spent working with their administrators, also needs the extra layer of acknowledging the potential goal orientation of the administrator and of the school overall.

Research question 1c is, "What activities have teachers done up to this point for their Professional Learning Focus?" The two required activities for the Professional Learning Focus are: (a) the initial meeting between the participant and the evaluator, and (b) at least one check-in between the participant and evaluator to monitor progress towards the learning focus (OSDE, 2017). Appendix 3 shows the recommended OSDE (2017) template for administrators to use during the check-in, and explicitly states there are parts to be completed before the meeting and then during the meeting, implying a face-to-face meeting should occur. Judging from the previous sub-question, most of the initial meetings were short, with half lasting less than ten minutes. Surprisingly, the number of check-ins teachers reported having had to follow up on their goal was a mix of zero times (22.5%), one time (29.9%), two check-ins (31.1%), and 16.6% having three or more check-ins. These results are surprising when compared to the time spent with evaluators, the level of collaboration reported between participants and evaluators, and the primary endorsed achievement goal orientation of work avoidance. Only one check-in is

mandated, and that check-in has to happen before the end of the school year. Yet 47.7% of participants reported doing more than the minimum amount well before the deadline since this data was collected right before the end of the third quarter. This data point is in direct conflict with the theoretical definition of work avoidance and aligns more with a mastery achievement orientation behavior.

Allusions to the aforementioned discrepancy were found in the open responses to the prompt asking participants their general thoughts about the Professional Learning Focus. There was a clue from the open response of one participant who reported, "Our administrator is not into the Professional Learning Focus and never discusses it with us. We do it online and all he cares about is did we do it." Although this is not a complete picture, it shows evidence that there may be a disconnect in some cases between the behaviors of teachers who work on their Professional Learning Focus and the engagement of the administrators in the process. Another participant reported, "I don't think my principal has ever read mine. Just paperwork filed away somewhere." In other words, teachers may be attempting to check in, but they do not have the perceptions that their administrators are aware of their progress. To reiterate this, one participant said, "We were given a deadline to complete the focus online. We also had a second deadline to enter any progress being made on the Focus. That is the extend [*sic*] our district is using the Professional Learning Focus."

The open responses may offer some insight into teacher interpretation of the meaning of "check-in" compared to the interpretation offered by OSDE. If teachers perceived a "check-in" as reporting their progress through a specific online form without follow-up from their administrator, that would lead to a higher count of check-ins. This interpretation of a check-in aligns with reported levels of achievement goal orientation. A required form to be turned in

asynchronously does not align with the intrapersonal, reflective nature of mastery learning. Although the check-in was intended to be an open dialogue of progress, next steps, and evaluators facilitating the growth process, this does not seem to be happening in most situations.

Research Questions 2 & 3

Research question 2 is, "To what extent do years of experience or certification route predict goal orientation towards the Professional Learning Focus?" Theoretically, achievement goal orientation flows from the objective environment to the subjective environment, then to intrapersonal goals and corresponding behaviors (Roeser et al., 2002). Revisiting Table 2.2 from Chapter 2, research question 2 is intended to test specific subjective environment factors and how they predict teacher participants' personal achievement goal orientation towards the particular objective environment of the Professional Learning Focus.

Table 2.2
Goal Theory in Education (Roessr et al., 2002)

	Objective Environment →	Subjective Environment →	Motivation →	Behavior
Broad Theoretical	Learning Activities & Contexts	Perceived Goal Structures	Personal Goals	Patterns of Behavioral Engagement and Disaffection Related to Learning
Contextual to This Study	Professional Learning Focus Policy	Years of Experience Certification Route	Mastery Performance Approach Performance Avoidance Work Avoidance	Time Spent Selecting Goal Desired # of Check-Ins Resource Desire Resource Access Resource Usage

Based upon the literature review, it was predicted that years of experience would impact the goal orientation of teachers towards their Professional Learning Focus. Motivation to learn

changes throughout teachers' careers (Klassen & Chui, 2010) and shifts based on the school environment in which they work (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013). Certification route was included for similar reasons. The learning needs of people are different depending upon their expertise (Berliner, 1994; Louws et al., 2017). Further, an individual's expertise may or may not allow for the personal information and reflection required to know specifically what learning is needed (Mirzari et al., 2014). True novices are aware of the large swaths of learning they need, but focusing on one topic for growth can be overwhelming. Picking one topic is what is required of the Professional Learning Focus, which should mean that emergency certified teachers would struggle more with the process than those who went through a comprehensive education program, who have more experience with education content, and who are more aware of their professional strengths and weaknesses. With respect to these theoretical assumptions, then, results of the current study were mixed. Specifically, years of experience predicted the endorsement of performance approach, performance avoidance, and work avoidance goal orientations toward the Professional Learning Focus, but certification route did not.

Years of experience results partially aligned with expectations. In the present study, the phases of professional experience—novice (0-3 years), experienced (4-20 years), and veteran (21+ years)—predict teachers' endorsement of the goal orientations of performance approach, performance avoidance, and work avoidance. Each coefficient of the regression models that were significant were positive, meaning that teachers felt that both performance factors (approach β = .097, avoidance β = .123) and work avoidance factors (β = .102) described them better the longer they had been teaching.

To better understand this finding, the experiences of a teacher in the United States need to be considered. As previously mentioned, teacher learning and evaluation has been a mandated

part of public education since ESEA in 1965 (ESEA, 1965). How teachers are judged as "good" or "bad" has evolved since then, but the evaluation of quality remains (ESSA, 2015). Although the Professional Learning Focus is intended to be a learning structure rather than another evaluation, it has continued to be nested within the same government department in charge of teacher evaluations. Additionally, teachers are not immune to the continual weardown of non-funded mandates that dictate what a teacher should be doing (Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Mausethagen, 2013), particularly considering that the Professional Learning Focus is an additional task to complete rather than one replacing or revitalizing the teacher effectiveness measures already in place. The open responses support this assertation. The code, "just another thing to do" was the most frequent code observed, with 154 codes from the 570 responses. The longer a teacher has been in the profession, the more they have had to adapt and make space for more requirements.

Contrary to years of experience, certification route did not show any impact on teachers' achievement goal orientations. Although this result was not expected, there could be a reason for it. Pre-service undergraduate programs are not—and should not be—the only source of professional learning for teachers (Huhtala & Vesalainen, 2017; Loughran, 2013). That is, no matter the background that brought a teacher to the profession, they all have a wide variety of skills to learn and hone while actively teaching. Granted, there is a "head start" of cognitive knowledge and priming that comprehensively certified teachers have above their counterparts, but the results of this study show that is not a primary contributor of achievement goal orientation. Anyone can have a mastery, performance, or work avoidance desire to learn independent of the depth of prior knowledge.

Research question 3 is, “To what extent does goal orientation predict behaviors and desires towards completing the Professional Learning Focus?” The focus of this research question was to understand the extent of the relationship between participants’ personal goal orientations towards their Professional Learning Focus and the behaviors and desires they have engaged in to accomplish their focus (see Table 2.2). What was expected was for mastery goal orientation to increase teacher behaviors, such as a higher desire to use resources, a higher desire to check in with their evaluator about their progress, and overall positive feelings about the learning process. Conversely, teachers who endorse performance avoidance or work avoidance would have a decreased desire to use resources, decreased desire to do the activities associated with the Professional Learning Focus, and overall negative feelings about the process overall.

As with research question 2, there are some significant and insignificant findings. Specifically, mastery goal orientation predicted responses to every dependent variable (resource desire, access, usage, desired number of check-ins, time thinking about Professional Learning Focus, and feelings in general about the process), with each coefficient positive. In other words, teachers who rated mastery orientation higher also desired, used, and perceived a higher level of access to the resources available to help with professional growth. Ratings of work avoidance significantly predicted teachers’ responses to the number of check-ins they wanted to have with their evaluators, the time they took thinking about what their Professional Learning Focus should be, and their overall feelings about the process. Performance approach orientation endorsement predicted desire of resources for learning, but other than that, neither performance approach nor avoidance significantly predicted any other dependent variable.

The lack of significance of performance approach or avoidance in predicting behaviors and feelings about the Professional Learning Focus was a surprising result. To make more sense

of this particular result, the way the Professional Learning Focus is structured and mandated was consulted. In the bill itself, the methods for collaboration between the participant teacher and the administrator evaluator are not detailed (OK HB No. 2957, 2015), but information provided by the State Department of Education for district leaders provides more insight into the way the process is intended to happen within the schools (OSDE, 2017). The Professional Learning Focus is intended to be a private growth process between the participant teacher and their evaluator. A key component of performance approach or avoidance orientation is the "performance"—the perception that individual progress will be compared to others' achievements (Dweck 1986; Elliot & McGregor, 2001). However, from both the OSDE and the open response of general feelings, there is no indication that there are public or communal moments where the ability to learn information is displayed for others to see. In fact, based on the open response answers, some teachers feel that no one—not even their evaluator—will bear witness to their progress. An external entity besides the learner is needed for a true performance approach or avoidance desire, which does not seem present in the Professional Learning Focus. This has already been mentioned in the analysis of the first research question to understand why the number of check-ins done with an administrator seemed so high compared to the other data points. For example, one participant said, "Many administrators don't check in or do but only vaguely. You are mostly left on your own…" If there is a perception that not even the person tasked with monitoring progress is invested in observing that progress, why would any other teacher with a long list of things to do be invested? From this perspective, it makes more sense that performance approach or avoidance is not a significant contributor to behaviors and feelings associated with the Professional Learning Focus.

In comparison, mastery goal orientation and work avoidance are more personal and less about how the participant looks compared to their coworkers, which could explain the presence of significant results. The significance of mastery endorsement on resource desire, access, and usage shows that teachers who are more mastery-oriented perceive more access to, and usage of, learning resources. This is not surprising, since a mainly mastery goal orientation means that teachers will want to learn and seek out that learning for the sake of growth (Dweck 1986; Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Thus, this finding aligns with theoretical predictions. Results showing work avoidance and mastery orientation predicting desired number of check-ins, time thinking about the Professional Learning Focus, and feelings in general about the Professional Learning Focus also align with expectations from prior literature. Teachers who endorsed work avoidance at higher rates desired fewer check-ins, thought about their Professional Learning Focus for less time, and exhibited more negative feelings about the process in general. In comparison, the higher a participant endorsed mastery orientation, the more check-ins they desired, the more time they thought about what their Professional Learning Focus should be, and the more positive their feelings were about the process in general.

Implications

When the results of this study are interpreted through the lens of achievement goal orientation, they affirm what is already known about goal orientation—especially mastery versus work avoidance behaviors. What these results contribute to the knowledge of achievement goal orientation is the specific context of the learning. One of the complicating factors of the Professional Learning Focus is that it is a mandated structure. That is, teachers have no choice in participation, and administrators are required to collect teachers' progress and report adherence to the OSDE. However, most P12 learning is required for the students within the system, and

research finds that it is possible to activate a mastery goal orientation in students required to attend school (Ciani, et. al, 2010). Thus, there is a way for teachers to feel mastery towards their Professional Learning Focus even though it is a required structure. One of the ways an administrator can help with inspiring mastery goal orientation is to consider all of the tasks teachers are required to fulfill and identify where professional learning fits into the priority list. Considering that seeing the Professional Learning Focus as "just another box to check" was the most frequent code from the open response—154 codes out of 570 responses—this recommendation of examining teacher workload to make space for learning would be appropriate.

Overall, the findings tell a story of teachers utilizing their Professional Learning Focus and the goal orientation towards their progress. The Professional Learning Focus was intended to construct a learning context to facilitate the professional learning that leads to an increase in teacher effectiveness. However, the findings of this study show that this has not happened. Teachers felt primarily work-avoidant, which is in direct conflict with the intention of the Professional Learning Focus. This could be for a variety of reasons.

The findings of this study show that there is low collaboration between teachers and their administrators, despite the explicit language in the legislation that a teacher's Professional Learning Focus should be a collaborative process. This could be a contributing factor to the work-avoidant responses. Granted, this study did not directly address the "why" of teacher goal orientation within their Professional Learning Focus—but certain contextual utilizations of the Focus can be used in the interpretation of the results. Within the Professional Learning Focus, the administrator is tasked with being the facilitator and mentor to teachers. To know what teachers want to learn and why they want to learn more about a particular topic, a higher level of

collaboration than what was reported is needed (Davis et al., 2005). Although it would be imprudent to specify a specific time allotment to collaboration, the appropriate recommendation would be for administrators to understand their role in teacher learning and be mindful of the amount of effort they invest in their teachers' learning.

This work overload and de-prioritization of the Professional Learning Focus could contribute to teachers' lack of differentiation and low utilization of learning resources. Additionally, in many school districts, traditional whole-staff professional development sessions are still being conducted, even if those sessions do not align with teacher goals in their Professional Learning Focus (Davis et al., 2005). This would mean that teachers are required to do two different learning tasks: those related to their Professional Learning Focus and those mandated by their administrator with the whole staff. A recommendation would be for administrators to offer and allow individualized learning time for teachers to still be engaged in their professional practice, but in activities specific to their particular Professional Learning Focus.

The results of this study show that the original intention of the Professional Learning Focus as a mastery learning process is yet to be achieved. However, there are still opportunities for improvement of implementation. The teachers in this study did not express that they do not want to be learners—rather, their accounts commentate on the way the Professional Learning Focus is being implemented, and on the goal orientation most endorsed within the current implementation.

Limitations and Next Steps

Although there are interesting, usable findings from this study, it is not without limitations. Much of the interpretation is from the teachers' perspectives, and the Professional

Learning Focus should be a collaboration between the teacher and administrator. This study is about the teachers, but the administrators have a perspective as well. The next step will be conducting a study specifically targeting the way administrators are implementing the Professional Learning Focus and the ways they perceive and support the learning and growth of their teaching staff.

Additionally, the sample was restricted to the state of Oklahoma and the learning process mandated specifically within that particular state. However, in-service teacher growth is a topic that all schools and states should consider. Certain connections between this study and teacher learning in other states could be made, especially to better understand how to help the Professional Learning Focus be more successful.

Finally, more details on the specific implementation of the Professional Learning Focus from school to school are needed. Through the data analysis and the open responses, there seems to be high variability in implementation at the school level despite the structured format—with handouts for ease of use—provided by the OSDE. There is not enough data in the current sample to parse out the differences in implementation and how these differences influence the goal orientation teachers are endorsing. However, this was an exploratory study over a process less than two years old, so the findings offer a strong starting point for future research. A qualitative study to interview teachers who responded to the survey will provide deeper understanding of why teachers take a predominately work-avoidant approach compared to a mastery, performance approach, or performance-avoidant approach towards their Professional Learning Focus.

Conclusion

This study offers insight into teacher motivation to learn within their Professional Learning Focus. The first finding is that work avoidance was the highest endorsed goal

orientation toward teachers' Professional Learning Focus. Despite attempts by OSDE to activate a personally chosen, personally interesting goal that each teacher will want to try hard to achieve (OSDE, 2017), results show that teachers are doing the required activities in the Professional Learning Focus mandate—but only because they are required to. The lack of enthusiasm for the process may not be because of teachers alone but because of the ways administrators have implemented the process.

Oklahoma's State Department of Education tried to implement a process to encourage professional learning for the purpose of increasing teacher effectiveness, and the process is too new to determine if the Professional Learning Focus is facilitating the intended teacher growth. However, the findings of this study would indicate that there are some teachers who are using this process to guide and focus their professional learning—but most are doing as little as possible to get through the process.

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Appendix 1: Professional Learning Focus Template 1

SMART - PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOCUS

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHAMPION EXCELLENCE

Name: _____

Evaluator Name: _____

Date: _____

Specific

My professional learning focus is:

_____

_____

_____

This focus aligns with indicator/element #_____

How does this focus align with improving student achievement?

_____

_____

_____

Measurable

Methods for showing professional learning:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Attainable

What available resources do you anticipate using to attain your goal?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

1

Appendix 2: Professional Learning Focus Template 2

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOCUS TEMPLATE

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHAMPION EXCELLENCE

Participant Name: _____ Evaluator Name: _____

Step 1: Write your professional learning focus (PL Focus)

I choose Element/Indicator # _____. Date Established: _____

The specific area within the Element/Indicator I would like to focus is _____

Step 2: Identify the types of professional learning you would like to utilize to build your expertise in the area of focus.

- ☐ Presenter-Led Workshop
- ☐ Article and/or Book Study
- ☐ Peer Observation (Instructional Rounds)
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Action Research Project
- ☐ Video Study
- ☐ PLC or RTI

Step 3: Identify Resources

What available resources do you anticipate using to attain your goal?

Step 4: Reflect

Why do you want to improve in this area?

How will it benefit you and/or your students?

Step 5: Monitor your progress throughout the year. *(1 checkpoint mandatory)*

Checkpoint 1		Checkpoint 2		Checkpoint 3	
Date	*Evaluator Initials*	*Date*	*Evaluator Initials*	*Date*	*Evaluator Initials*

Would you be willing to collaborate and/or be a resource for others who choose the same PL Focus in the future? ___ Yes ___ No

Participant Signature:_____ Evaluator Signature:_____

Date:_____ Date:_____

Appendix 3: Professional Learning Focus Feedback Template

FEEDBACK TEMPLATE

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHAMPION EXCELLENCE

Name: _____

Evaluator Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-development of Professional Learning Focus
(to be completed prior to meeting with evaluator)

What element/indicator would you like to focus on?
(Must list at least one element/indicator)

1. Indicator/Element # _____ Specific area: _____
2. Indicator/Element # _____ Specific area: _____
3. Indicator/Element # _____ Specific area: _____

What types of personalized learning are you most interested in? Why?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What evidence would you collect that would connect your personalized learning to student achievement?

_____

_____

_____

What available resources do you anticipate using to attain your goal?

_____

_____

_____

Professional Learning Focus
(Completed collaboratively with evaluator)

Indicator/Element # _____ Specific area: _____

Timeframe for Professional Learning Focus: _____

Primary collected evidence of learning: _____

Appendix 4: Demographic Items

1. Are you a teacher at a public Oklahoma school during the 2019-2020 school year?
2. What is your teacher certification route?
    a. Standard certificate with degree in education
    b. Alternative certificate
    c. Emergency certificate
3. How many years of teaching experience do you have? (Do not include this year)
    a. What year did you start teaching?
4. How many years and months of experience do you have teaching as a full-time, certified teacher?
5. At what school do you work? (This will only be used for rural/suburban/urban classification purposes)
6. In what school district do you work? (This will only be used for rural/suburban/urban classification purposes)
7. How many years have you been working in this particular school district?
    a. What year did you start teaching at this school district?
8. How many years and months have you been teaching the grade level/subject of your current assignment?
9. What is your gender?
10. What is your age?
11. Which is your ethnicity?
12. Would you be willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview?
    a. If yes, your email address:

Appendix 5: Professional Learning Focus Utilization Items

1. What is your Professional Learning Focus for the 2019-2020 school year? (open response)

2. How long did you think about what your Professional Learning Focus should be before your initial meeting with your evaluator? (slider response options from 0-100 minutes)
3. How long was your Professional Learning Focus initial meeting with your evaluator? (slider response options from 0-100 minutes)
4. What was the level of collaboration between you and your evaluator when determining your Professional Learning Focus for the 2019-2020 school year? (Sum response of two answers summing to 100)
5. How many check-ins have you had with your evaluator about your Professional Learning Focus this academic year?
    a. Zero
    b. One
    c. Two
    d. Three
    e. More than three
6. How many check-ins would you like to have with your evaluator about your Professional Learning Focus this academic year?
    a. Zero
    b. One
    c. Two
    d. Three
    e. More than three
7. Who have you sought help from to work on learning for your Professional Learning Focus during the 2019-2020 school year? (select all that apply)
    a. Your Evaluator
    b. Grade level coworkers
    c. Subject level coworkers
    d. Instructional Coach
    e. Other: _____

In the next questions, a particular resource is listed with prompts for each resource. Each resource will ask for the amount of usage and desire for usage for your professional learning.

8. Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Desire to use this resource (Likert-type 1 (no desire at all) to 7 (very desirable))
Frequency of use (never to daily)
Extent to which this resource is helping with Professional Learning Focus growth (not at all to primary contributor)

9. Mentoring

Desire to use this resource (Likert-type 1 (no desire at all) to 7 (very desirable))
Frequency of use (never to daily)
Extent to which this resource is helping with Professional Learning Focus growth (not at all to primary contributor)

10. Instructional coaching
Desire to use this resource (Likert-type 1 (no desire at all) to 7 (very desirable))
Frequency of use (never to daily)
Extent to which this resource is helping with Professional Learning Focus growth (not at all to primary contributor)

11. Professional development during the summer
Desire to use this resource (Likert-type 1 (no desire at all) to 7 (very desirable))
Frequency of use (never to daily)
Extent to which this resource is helping with Professional Learning Focus growth (not at all to primary contributor)

12. Professional development during the school year
Desire to use this resource (Likert-type 1 (no desire at all) to 7 (very desirable))
Frequency of use (never to daily)
Extent to which this resource is helping with Professional Learning Focus growth (not at all to primary contributor)

13. Online professional development
Desire to use this resource (Likert-type 1 (no desire at all) to 7 (very desirable))
Frequency of use (never to daily)
Extent to which this resource is helping with Professional Learning Focus growth (not at all to primary contributor)

14. Collaboration days
Desire to use this resource (Likert-type 1 (no desire at all) to 7 (very desirable))
Frequency of use (never to daily)
Extent to which this resource is helping with Professional Learning Focus growth (not at all to primary contributor)

15. Grade level collaborations
Desire to use this resource (Likert-type 1 (no desire at all) to 7 (very desirable))
Frequency of use (never to daily)
Extent to which this resource is helping with Professional Learning Focus growth (not at all to primary contributor)

16. Subject level collaborations
Desire to use this resource (Likert-type 1 (no desire at all) to 7 (very desirable))
Frequency of use (never to daily)
Extent to which this resource is helping with Professional Learning Focus growth (not at all to primary contributor)

17. Action Research
Desire to use this resource (Likert-type 1 (no desire at all) to 7 (very desirable))
Frequency of use (never to daily)

Extent to which this resource is helping with Professional Learning Focus growth (not at all to primary contributor)

18. Article/Book study

Desire to use this resource (Likert-type 1 (no desire at all) to 7 (very desirable))
Frequency of use (never to daily)
Extent to which this resource is helping with Professional Learning Focus growth (not at all to primary contributor)

Appendix 6: GOALS-S Items

Factor	Original	Edited
Work Avoidance	I choose easy options in school so that I don't have to work too hard.	I choose an easy option for my Professional Learning Focus so that I don't have to work too hard.
	At school I want to do as little work as possible.	For my Professional Learning Focus I want to do as little work as possible.
	I don't ask questions in school even when I don't understand the work.	I don't ask questions about my Professional Learning Focus even when I don't understand the work.

Appendix 7: Achievement Goal Questionnaire (AGQ) Items

Factor	Original	Edited
Mastery Approach		
	My aim is to completely master the material presented in this class.	My aim is to completely master the material needed for my Professional Learning Focus.
	I am striving to understand the content of this course as thoroughly as possible.	I am striving to understand the content of my Professional Learning Focus as thoroughly as possible.
	My goal is to learn as much as possible.	My goal is to learn as much as possible for my Professional Learning Focus.
Mastery Avoidance		
	My aim is to avoid learning less than I possibly could.	My aim is to avoid learning less than I possibly could in relation to my Professional Learning Focus.
	I am striving to avoid an incomplete understanding of the course material.	I am striving to avoid an incomplete understanding of my Professional Learning Focus material.
	My goal is to avoid learning less than it is possible to learn.	My goal is to avoid learning less than it is possible to learn in relation to my Professional Learning Focus.

Performance Approach	My aim is to perform well relative to other students.	My aim is to perform well relative to other coworkers with my Professional Learning Focus.
	I am striving to do well compared to other students.	I am striving to do well compared to other coworkers with my Professional Learning Focus.
	My goal is to perform better than the other students.	My goal is to perform better than the other coworkers with my Professional Learning Focus.
Performance Avoidance	My aim is to avoid doing worse than other students.	My aim is to avoid doing worse than other coworkers with my Professional Learning Focus.
	10 I am striving to avoid performing worse than others.	I am striving to avoid performing worse than other coworkers with my Professional Learning Focus.
	6 My goal is to avoid performing poorly compared to others.	My goal is to avoid performing poorly compared to other coworkers with my PL Focus.

Appendix 8: Recruitment Email

Hello,
You are receiving this email because you are/have been employed as a teacher in Oklahoma. I am Alexandra Parsons, a former Oklahoma teacher and current doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma. I am sending this asking for participants in my dissertation study, which is investigating the utilization of the Professional Learning Focus (Professional Learning Focus) and teachers' goal orientations towards their Professional Learning Focus.

If you are a 2019-2020 public school teacher and would like to participate in this study, please follow the link provided:

[Insert Qualtrics link here]

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, contact me at aparsons@ou.edu.

Thank you,
Alexandra Parsons
Doctoral Student, University of Oklahoma
aparsons@ou.edu

Appendix 9: Open Response Code Book

Code System	Frequency
Total	1056
Source of Success/Failure	23
No Resource Options - Still Whole group PD	19
Resources Beyond PLF	4
Neutral	110
Student Voice?	1
Caveats	6
Necessary - needs to get done	9
Well Intended	71
Locus	47
Students	17
Others	25
Self	5
Negative	5
Other States do it better	1
No Collaboration	5
No Time or Money for Proper Utilization	20
Focus should be on Teaching and Not Learning	9
Still an evaluation	4
Work Avoidance	8
Doesn't do much with it	28
Was already doing this - Not needed	61
Doesn't see Value	30
Not Helping	40
Difficult to be successful	8
Induction has been hard	3
Administrator not doing it correctly	70
No feedback or Follow-up	14
Demeaning to good teachers	16
Not relevent to job	11
Different levels of investment	24
Confusing - new teachers	11
No control over picking goal	19
Just another thing to do - Overwhelming	154
Sudden - without thought	19
Imposed on; Accountability	32
Waste of Time	77
Positive	28
Better than other TLE measures	3
Helps Focus to Learning	42

Relevant	2
Something Like this has been Needed	16
Enjoyment	3
Allows Creativity in Learning	2
Addresses new teachers	7
Addresses stagnant teachers	8
Control over my own learning	15
Allows Collaboration	8
Already doing things like this	3
Allows Reflection	32
Helpful	33
Improved Practice - already working	7
Optimistic	1
Mastery Approach	11