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Training Staff's Experiences, Perceived Needs, and Suggestions for Professional Development in a Military Training Organization

George R. Young II
*University of South Florida*, richyoung87@gmail.com

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Training Staff’s Experiences, Perceived Needs, and Suggestions for Professional Development
in a Military Training Organization

by

George R. Young II

A dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education with a concentration in Program Development Department of Teaching and Learning College of Education University of South Florida

Co-Major Professor: Janet Richards, Ph.D.
Co-Major Professor: Howard Johnston, Ph.D.
Johanna Lasonen, Ph.D.
Randy Borum, Ph.D.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my Lord and personal Savior. Through him nothing is impossible. I would also like to dedicate this to my wife and family who supported me with love and patience throughout this endeavor. I hope this effort will serve as an example and inspiration to my two sons, Chase and Cade, to continually learn and seek self-improvement throughout their lives. Last, I would like to dedicate this to all the Special Operators in harm’s way and keeping peace around the world.
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Table of Contents

List of Tables ........................................................................................................................................ iv

List of Figures ......................................................................................................................................... v

Abstract .................................................................................................................................................... vi

Chapter One: Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 1
   Situating Myself in the Research ........................................................................................................... 1
      Setting the stage for a military career ............................................................................................... 1
      Life change and career in the military. ............................................................................................. 3
      Self-reflection leading to research. ................................................................................................... 7
      Personal purpose of research. ........................................................................................................... 8
   Introduction to the Problem .................................................................................................................. 9
   Context of the Research ....................................................................................................................... 11
   Statement of the Problem ..................................................................................................................... 13
   Purpose ................................................................................................................................................ 16
   A Priori Research Questions ................................................................................................................. 18
   Conceptual Framework .......................................................................................................................... 18
      Andragogy and adult learning principles. ........................................................................................ 18
      Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development ........................................................................... 20
      Instructional Systems Design Model ................................................................................................. 21
   Definition of Terms ............................................................................................................................... 22
   Significance .......................................................................................................................................... 24
   Assumptions .......................................................................................................................................... 25
   Limitations ............................................................................................................................................ 25

Chapter Two: Literature Review .................................................................................................................. 28
   Introduction .......................................................................................................................................... 28
   Andragogy ............................................................................................................................................ 30
      Andragogy’s history ........................................................................................................................... 30
      Critics of andragogy .......................................................................................................................... 38
      Research on andragogy. ...................................................................................................................... 43
      Summary of andragogy and its role in adult education and training. ............................................. 51
   Professional Development .................................................................................................................... 52
      Professional development design ..................................................................................................... 56
   Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development ................................................................................. 60
   Instructional Systems Development (ISD) Model (ADDIE Model) .................................................. 62
   Training Needs Assessment .................................................................................................................. 67
   Innovation, Andragogy, and Professional Development: A Synergy .................................................. 72
(RQ 3): Theme five: Organizational solutions ................................................................. 198  
  Leadership and personnel solutions ...................................................................... 198  
  Mission, purpose, and personnel solutions .......................................................... 200  
  Standards solutions .............................................................................................. 200  
  Implications and recommendations from theme five .............................................. 201  
(RQ 3): Theme six: Professional development approaches and activities ............ 202  
  Training analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation solutions ............... 202  
  Professional development approaches ............................................................... 204  
  Professional development activities ................................................................. 206  
  Implications and recommendations from theme six ............................................ 207  
Researcher’s Reflections ..................................................................................... 210

Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations ............. 213  
  Summary of Study ................................................................................................ 213  
  Conclusions .......................................................................................................... 214  
  Implications .......................................................................................................... 217  
    Trainers. .............................................................................................................. 218  
    MTO leadership. ............................................................................................... 218  
    Professional development program developers. ................................................ 218  
  Recommendations for Further Research ............................................................ 219  
  Recommendations for MTO professional development program design ............ 221

References ............................................................................................................. 223

Appendices ............................................................................................................. 245  
  Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval Letter ..................................... 246  
  Appendix B: Interview Protocol Invitation Letter ................................................... 247  
  Appendix B: Interview Protocol Invitation Letter (continued) ............................. 248  
  Appendix B: Interview Protocol Invitation Letter (continued) ............................. 249  
  Appendix C: Participant Consent Form Approved by Institutional Review Board ...... 250  
Appendix D: Sampling of Coding Notes ................................................................. 255  
  Appendix E: Themes Discovered .......................................................................... 256  
  Appendix F: Semi-Structured Interview Questions Related to Research Questions .... 257  
  Appendix G: Member Check Invitation ................................................................ 259  
  Appendix H: Study Recommendations ................................................................ 261  
  Appendix I: Copyright Permissions ...................................................................... 262
List of Tables

Table 1: A Comparison of the Assumptions of Pedagogy and Andragogy .................................33
Table 2: Andragogical Measurement Instruments ......................................................................44
Table 3: Attending to Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research ....................................................83
Table 4: Different Steps of the Constant Comparative Analysis Procedure .............................96
Table 5: Participants’ Profiles .................................................................................................102
Table 6: Theme One: Trainer Experiences .............................................................................168
Table 7: Theme Two: Professional Development Experiences .............................................172
Table 8: Theme Two: Organizational Issues ............................................................................177
Table 9: Theme Four: Training Issues .....................................................................................185
Table 10: Theme Five: Organizational Solutions .....................................................................199
Table 11: Theme Six: Professional Development Approaches and Activities .....................203
Table 12: Themes Discovered ................................................................................................256
Table 13: Study Recommendations ........................................................................................261
List of Figures

Figure 1: The stages and tasks of the Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development ..........63
Figure 2: Data Collection Circle.................................................................82
Figure 3: Participant 1’s responses to research questions .....................................109
Figure 4: Participant 2’s responses to research questions .....................................115
Figure 5: Participant 3’s responses to research questions .....................................121
Figure 6: Participant 4’s responses to research questions .....................................130
Figure 7: Participant 5’s responses to research questions .....................................137
Figure 8: Participant 6’s responses to research questions .....................................144
Figure 9: Participant 7’s responses to research questions .....................................151
Figure 10: Participant 8’s responses to research questions ..................................159
Figure 11: Participant 9’s responses to research questions ..................................165
Figure 12: Four Factor Performance Analysis Quadrant Model ............................183
Figure 13: The Iceberg Model.........................................................................184
Abstract

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to understand the individual and organizational training needs of a military training organization (MTO), which trains battle staffs to inform professional development program design. The study findings might lead to an improved trainer professional development program design, which fully supports the organization’s and trainers’ efforts to deliver effective adult training. The exploratory questions used in this study were: (a) in what ways do participants in MTO perceive trainer and professional development experiences throughout their military and professional careers; (b) what are participants’ perceptions of training needs in MTO; (c) what are participants’ ideas for developing and implementing a trainer professional development program to meet these needs. The theoretical frameworks for this research were based on Knowles’s adult learning principles (2015), Lawler and King’s (2002) Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development, and the U.S. military’s Instructional Systems Design (ISD or ADDIE) model.

The data in this study were documents and artifacts, semi-structured interviews, and a researcher reflection journal. The exploratory case study revealed six major themes: (a) trainer experiences, (b) professional development experiences, (c) organizational issues, (d) training issues, (e) organizational solutions, and (f) professional development approaches and activities. MTO participants’ revealed perceptions of organizational issues related to leadership, mission and purpose, standards, personnel, and resistance to change which affected training performance. They also identified training performance issues in material development, delivery, and
evaluation due to knowledge and skills deficiencies in instructional design and adult learning principles. MTO participants suggested various professional development approaches and activities for the organizational and training issues needs identified. The study’s results suggested the professional development recommendations and implications might inform changes to MTO’s existing professional development program and generate organizational inertia to further explore and address the organizational and training issues identified. The results also add to the body of literature on adult training, professional development, and training needs analysis.
Chapter One: Introduction

Situating Myself in the Research

The purpose of the beginning section of this proposal is to provide insight into my personal development, experiences, expertise, and motivations, which led to my research interest in trainer professional development. Wolcott (2010) said in qualitative research readers have a right to know about the researcher. “They want to know what prompts our interest in the topics we investigate, to whom we are reporting, and what we personally stand to gain from our study” (p. 30). Innovation, individual and organizational improvement, training, and education are consistent themes, which shaped my personal and professional values. Sharing my personal experiences and characteristics will help explain how I made decisions in this research.

Setting the stage for a military career.

I have a deep and enduring belief in improvement; life, job, sports, religion, or any other endeavor. It defines who I am, how I think, and what I do. This life-long focus on "improving" started in Camden, South Carolina. Throughout grade school, I developed a strong work and achievement ethic getting A's and B's (mostly A's) in my schoolwork. In middle and high school, I took many advanced courses and volunteered for numerous leadership roles in clubs and activities. Early in high school, I attended a national leadership program, Boy’s State, at the Citadel, a military college in South Carolina. Attendance at Boy’s State sparked my interest to attend a military college en route to a career in the military and to join its elite Special Forces. I
had a laser focus on my goal to attend either the Citadel or the United States Military Academy (West Point). I established a pattern of personal improvement through the most challenging means early in my youth because it filled me with a sense of accomplishment and purpose.

To gain admission to these prestigious schools, especially West Point, I knew I had to excel in academics, leadership, sports, and extracurricular activities. I developed and executed a detailed plan achieving excellence in academics, athletics, religion, and responsibility to demonstrate I was a well-rounded candidate for admission to West Point. I was the class president my freshman, sophomore, and junior years; president of the Latin Club, president of the Ecology Club, and played varsity soccer for all four years serving as the team captain my senior year. I graduated co-valedictorian with a 3.7 GPA. I also had several jobs: restaurant busboy, theater projectionist, soybean farmer, gas station attendant, and yard worker. I even drove a school bus at the age of 16, responsible for 47 children each day. I attended church with my grandfather and spent time helping my grandparents during summers.

The plan worked well because both the Citadel and West Point offered full scholarships, which was an extreme honor and acknowledgment of my accomplishments in high school. I selected the latter because of its national recognition as the premier undergraduate leadership school in the United States (U.S.) and it was a steppingstone to a career in the Army. I also had a decent social life to balance out my high school life; girlfriends, a red Triumph Spitfire convertible, and several close friends. My high school years were the fondest and most formative years of my life. I learned to be independent and goal-oriented, sought opportunities to lead, and developed a strong work ethic. I enjoyed taking charge, providing vision and guidance, and self and organizational improvement for whatever organization or group I led while at the same time having a balanced social life. These attributes formed the core of how I approached life.
Life change and career in the military.

My perspective on life changed once I entered West Point in the summer of 1983, embarking on what I viewed as a noble effort much larger than me; being an officer in the United States Army. I quickly became serious about life and the profession I wanted to enter. West Point’s motto, “Duty, Honor, Country” became more than a cliché, it became my way of life. My aspiration was to graduate from West Point and join the elite U.S. Army Rangers or Special Forces. I was top of my class in high school but found myself just one of many “top” cadets at West Point. This was a humbling experience, meeting so many talented peers. At first, I struggled with academics but through my strong work ethic and perseverance, I managed to graduate on the Dean’s list, high enough in my class to choose my Army branch and first assignment of choice, Infantry in Korea. I completed Airborne parachutist training as a cadet and attended U.S. Army Ranger School after graduation en route to the Infantry Officer Basic Course at Ft Benning, Georgia. Few soldiers pass Ranger School, a grueling 72-day leadership course, which defines and tests physical, mental, and leadership limits. I was in my element and steadfast on my life plan; a young, serious, Airborne, Ranger, Second Lieutenant leading a platoon of mechanized infantry warriors in the Demilitarized Zone in South Korea in 1988. At this point in my career, I had experienced adult training as a student modeled from West Point and multiple Army schools. I was the lead trainer for developing and conducting Army training for my own soldiers in Korea. This was the beginning of an extensive career relationship with training and education of adults.

My next assignment was Fort Jackson, South Carolina where I managed and conducted basic training for Army support personnel. As a company training officer and later, battalion
operations officer, I ensured our drill sergeants and training companies adhered to Army training methods and standards. I spent three long years immersed in situated learning in a basic training environment, continuously assessing changes to improve training. In my sparse off-time after working 60-70 hours weeks, I completed a master’s degree in management from Webster University where my final paper topic was the Army’s basic training program.

During my Fort Jackson tour of duty, the first Gulf War started. The Army denied my request for early release from this assignment to participate in the war because the basic training mission was considered too critical. I was angry because I did not join the Army to become a professional trainer. I joined to lead soldiers in combat, the ultimate career goal for a young infantry officer, so I sought another route to combat, volunteering for Special Forces. During this phase in my early professional career, I would characterize myself as idealistic, serious, focused, career-oriented, and head-strong. I had a fervent desire to make myself, my soldiers, and the Army better. My studies and acculturation at West Point grounded me in the ideals of the Profession of Arms. On one occasion in my lieutenant years, I gave my immediate leadership what I thought was ample time to fix a systemic training problem. The entire system of training guidance outlining training tasks, conditions, and standards was outdated by several years, which affected the quality of training. When my chain-of-command did not act promptly after I had repeatedly reported the issue, I knew it was my professional duty to call the commanding general's hotline to report the issue and offer solutions. I received harsh counseling from my brigade, battalion, and company commanders; however, I believed my actions were right and just. Organizational leadership needed to fix an important training system which affected soldier readiness. My actions as a young lieutenant were not career-enhancing, but they offer insight into my nature of understanding and improving training systems.
In 1992, the Army selected me to attend Special Forces Assessment and Selection training where I did not pass the final selection board. This shocked me because I had been in the top percentile in all physical and technical tasks. The board told me to report to the Special Forces psychologist who said their psychological profiling identified me as too “black-and-white” in thought process. Special Forces looks for soldiers comfortable with working in “grey” and ambiguous environments. I managed to convince the selection battalion commander to accept me in Special Forces, but this "black-and-white" mentality created a personal standard, which I found too high for many subordinates and peers throughout my military career. I characterize the mindset as one forged from the core principles West Point constantly espoused to cadets; graduates were the glue and foundation to maintain clear and high moral, legal, and ethical standards of professionalism within the Army. The West Point Cadet Prayer exemplifies this core ethos and still directly influences my thoughts, beliefs, and actions:

Strengthen and increase our admiration for honest dealing and clean thinking and suffer not our hatred of hypocrisy and pretense ever to diminish. Encourage us in our endeavor to live above the common level of life. Make us to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong, and never to be content with a half-truth when the whole can be won. Endow us with courage born of loyalty to all noble and worthy, which scorns to compromise with vice and injustice and knows no fear when truth and right are in jeopardy… Help us to maintain the honor of the Corps untarnished and unsullied and to show forth in our lives the ideals of West Point in doing our duty to Thee and to our Country Wheat (1918-1926).
Reflecting on my Special Forces career, my high standards sometimes caused friction with the Non-Commissioned Officers who preferred more ambiguous standards in complex environments.

After acceptance into the Army’s Special Forces in 1992, I completed the rigorous year-long Special Forces qualification course and assumed duties as a Special Forces detachment commander. Special Forces 12-man teams train foreign forces to maintain internal defense or to support insurgency or resistance. I spent three years developing and conducting special operations training for many Southeast Asian countries including the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and South Korea. The Army then selected me to teach military doctrine and special operations at West Point and sent me to Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government in 1996-1997, where I completed a second master’s degree in public administration. I took a course at the Harvard School of Education, entitled Designing Educational Experiences Using the Internet, where I designed an online course format for students to access materials. In 1997 this was a leading innovation for course management at West Point. My previous eight years of training experience facilitated my transition to an educator role at West Point where I developed a passion for undergraduate, student-centered teaching and saw academic excellence modeled daily throughout the institution. During my West Point assignment, I also served as an adjunct professor at American Military University teaching undergraduate special operations courses online.

I next attended the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College for a year in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas as a student followed by a two-year operational assignment as a Special Forces company commander and battalion executive officer in Okinawa, Japan. During my Okinawa assignment, my Special Forces counterterrorism company developed and trained the
Philippine national counterterrorist force and other special operations forces in several Southeast Asian countries. After this assignment, the Army sent me back to the Command and General Staff College as an instructor due to my prior teaching experience at West Point, where I taught master’s level courses in military strategy and special operations for three years. I finished my last five years in the military as a strategic planner at United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), course director and instructor at Joint Special Operations University, and adjunct instructor at the National Intelligence University in Tampa, Florida. After I retired in 2010, I took a contractor job as a senior special operations trainer at USSOCOM for five years and transitioned to a government service job with the U.S. Air Force as a joint training specialist.

**Self-reflection leading to research.**

With 30 years of military training and education experience, two master’s degrees, and an insatiable desire for self and organizational improvement, I decided to take advantage of my GI-Bill educational benefits and enroll in an Ed.D. program at the University of South Florida (USF) in program development with an emphasis on innovation. Completion of three courses in the program (Adult Learning, Instructional Development Using Adult Learning Principles and Practices, Theory and Practice of Program Evaluation) compelled me to critically reflect on my previous training and educational experiences, knowledge, skills, and assumptions. I realized how little I knew about adult learning theory and practices and about learning in general. From what I gleaned in these courses, I think I could have been more effective as an instructor, professor, and trainer had I known more about adult learning theory and practices.

This epiphany prompted me to question how prevalent this lack of adult learning theory and practice is in my current military training organization. Throughout my training and educational career, I received minimal trainer, or trainer professional development grounded in
adult learning theory. Yet I still successfully trained and educated thousands of trainees and students according to Army and Special Operations training and education standards. I received above average performance reports and student evaluations as a trainer and instructor. Had I received formal training and education in adult learning theory and techniques early on in my military training and education career, how much more effective could I have been? The realization of my lack of adult learning and teaching theory during my doctoral classes at the University of South Florida prompted me to research this issue. Is this lack of emphasis on andragogical skills in military training a cultural aversion and trend across the military? Are trainers and instructors who have formal adult learning theory knowledge, understanding, and skills more effective? What are the training needs of military trainers engaged in adult training? What is the role of professional development in trainer effectiveness? These questions led me to explore, develop, and implement a trainer professional development program in the military training organization in which I serve.

**Personal purpose of research.**

I conducted this research because I am a problem solver; never content with the status quo. I always look for ways of personal or organizational improvement. New and innovative ideas, approaches, and technologies excite and energize me to think about their application to my life, my family, and my job. I enjoy being a part of any improvement effort. Whenever I meet resistance about my enthusiasm for improvements and innovation from family, friends, co-workers, or my bosses, I try and step back with an open mind to ensure I have effectively communicated my ideas and am receptive to constructive criticism. As a leader and manager, I set high standards for myself and as a result expect the same for those I lead. My personal and professional goals have always focused on individual, team, and organizational improvement.
As an adult educator and trainer, I have a contextualist epistemological view, which supports a transactional, student-centered, andragogical approach to instruction and training. In this approach, students are responsible for creating “shared understandings in supportive contexts” and instructors are responsible for facilitating this process (Olafson & Schraw, 2006, p. 72). I view myself as a facilitator of learning and a co-learner, humbled by the experience and knowledge fellow adult learners bring to the classroom. I like to explore, contradict, and leave fellow learners with more questions than answers to ignite their curiosity.

I believe in continuous, lifelong learning through formal and informal educational opportunities and self-directed learning. Discovering innovative ideas, theories, and experiences often leads me to critical self-reflection, constantly challenging my beliefs and assumptions about my identity, roles, purpose, and actions. My new knowledge and understanding of adult learning from USF graduate courses caused me to transform my views on trainer development and led me to this research to improve training in my organization (Mezirow, 1998, p. 29).

**Introduction to the Problem**

On any given day, 8,000 Special Operations Forces (SOF) soldiers, commanded by military staffs of the U.S. Special Operations Command, conduct combat and non-combat operations across 80-plus countries (Thomas, 2017a). Special operations require professionalism, competence, adaptability, and innovative problem solving to achieve battlefield success in a rapidly changing diplomatic, informational, economic, and security environment. On May 4, 2017, General Raymond A. Thomas III, USSOCOM commander, told the Senate Armed Services Committee, “It is imperative we continue to provide the most highly trained and educated force to…advance our nation’s interests…and we continuously develop their talent by
providing demanding, realistic training...maintaining this highly trained force is the critical objective – it enables everything we do” (Statement of General, 2017a, p. 3).

The challenge to maintain a highly trained force is compelling U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) military organizations to reassess the effectiveness of their training and education programs (Department of the Army [DA], 2015a; Schatz et al., 2012b). U.S. military training organizations are enhancing efforts to modernize training and learning with an emphasis on trainer development through improved faculty development efforts (Keller-Glaze, Bryson, Riley, Horey, & Bickley, 2016, April; Ross, 2015). Professional development programs provide intentional and ongoing processes and activities designed to improve trainer professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs so trainers can enhance learning of students (Guskey, 2000). Literature suggests the kind and quality of professional development programs make a difference in improving trainer knowledge, motivation, and performance, which in turn improves student performance (Ashton & Crocker, 1987; Darling-Hammond, 2000). The effectiveness of professional development, “regardless of its content, structure, or format, depends mainly on how well it is planned” (Guskey, 2014, p. 1).

I conducted an exploratory case study (Yin, 2017) to explore extant literature, research, and perceptions of participants in a military training organization in the Southeastern United States (U.S.) (hereafter referred to as MTO) to improve the organization’s existing trainer professional development program. Although there is significant research in professional development in the education and training fields, limited research addresses the professional development needs of military trainers who train battle staffs. Merriam and Simpson (1995) noted, "the case study is a particularly useful methodology for exploring an area of a field of practice not well researched or conceptualized" (p. 112). I used Knowles’s andragogical
principles and processes, Lawler and King’s (2002) Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development, and the Instructional Design Model (ADDIE Model) (2015b) as theoretical underpinnings to explore and discover training needs relevant to designing, implementing, and sustaining an effective adult professional development program in a military training context (Knowles, 1970; Knowles, 1980). The term trainer is synonymous with instructor in this research.

**Context of the Research**

MTO trains and educates senior-level military battle staffs at the operational and strategic levels to conduct command and control of military forces conducting joint combat and peacetime operations. The trainers are a mix of 57 contractors and active-duty officers assigned from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and U.S. Special Operations Command. Ninety percent of trainers in MTO are contractors, senior military retirees with an average of 20 to 30 years of military subject matter expertise and an average age of 50 (Baby Boomer Generation Born 1946-1964). MTO relies on contractors as trainers because of a shortage of active duty military personnel due to many ongoing military operations and current Department of Defense personnel limits. The 10 percent of active duty officers assigned average 13 to 17 years of military experience mostly at the tactical and operational levels. Fifty percent of the contractors and less than ten percent of the officers have varied levels of prior formal trainer experience. Military trainers in MTO serve a two to three-year assignment while contractors serve for the duration of the contract, usually a five-year period. When a new contract occurs in MTO every five years, most contractors are retained, thus extending their longevity and experience.

MTO trainers conduct battle staff training and education for general officer-level, senior staffs consisting of short, graduate-level, academically oriented classes given one to two weeks
before a major military exercise. Battle staffs can include 40-200 mid-to-senior level military personnel who support a military commander's decision making through planning, coordinating, and managing military information and operations. The average age of battle staff personnel is 35 (Millennials or Generation Y- Born 1980-Present). "Training and education are not mutually exclusive" in military training (Department of the Army [DA], 2017c, p. 10). Battle staff training and education at operational and strategic levels require trainers with extensive previous experience and expertise serving on senior-level battle staffs. Trainers must have military staff technical subject matter expertise and be able to facilitate adult instruction (DA, 2017c). MTO trainers also conduct observations, coach, teach and mentor military staff members during military exercises. Trainers research, develop, and update curricula to ensure accuracy, currency, and relevancy of the military training and education provided. The curricula focus on various military battle staff functions, such as command and control, operations, planning, logistics, intelligence, fire support, medical, legal, and personnel. The predominant method of instruction is lecture-based with Socratic questioning. Trainers do not formally evaluate the training or performance of battle staffs during academic education and training or during exercises. The military commander of the organization conducting the exercise is responsible for evaluating training and exercise performance of his staff.

Since its inception and various organizational restructures, MTO had no formal professional development program. Military and contractor trainers developed and updated training materials and presentation skills through self-directed action based on personal training experiences and motivation. MTO established a formal professional development program in April 2017 based on my recommendation after I conducted a class project on professional development in my doctoral studies at the University of South Florida. The project resulted in the
development of a professional development program framework, hiring of the first instructional systems designer in MTO, and addition of contractual language citing a preference for contractor trainers with formal trainer experience. MTO’s leadership approved the professional development concept for enactment on October 18, 2017, and formed a professional development working group, which I lead.

Statement of the Problem

Ensuring trainers are current in their military functional area subject matter expertise and instructional knowledge and practice drove the need for a professional development program at MTO. Military trainers in MTO serve two to three-year assignments with minimal prior instructional experience or knowledge, and most having no previous special operations or strategic-level staff experience, which are the core areas of technical knowledge in MTO training. The military makes personnel assignments to training organizations for a variety of reasons, which may not relate to ability or even interest in instruction (Johnson-Freese, 2012). For many, this short two to three-year period is an “insufficient duration to naturally achieve mastery or even competency” as a trainer (Phillips, 2017, p. 3).

The majority of MTO’s trainers are retired military contractors hired for their extensive technical special operations and staff subject-matter expertise. Ninety-five percent are male with an average age of 50 and considered the Baby Boomer Generation (Born between 1946-1964). MTO’s contract does not require formal instructional experience for contractors. Doing so would jeopardize filling all the contractor trainer positions because few special operations retirees have served in formal “schoolhouse” trainer assignments throughout their careers. Due to this contractual stipulation, there is a wide variance of instructional ability among the military contractors. The career and technical education field reflects the same phenomenon with
instructors who have technical subject matter expertise gained through industry job experience but lack formal teaching experience (Jamerson, 2012, p. 17). In addition, experience for retired military contractors “has a shelf-life, which begins to expire on the date of retirement” (Johnson-Freese, 2012, p. 144). Contractors have a difficult time maintaining currency in military technical knowledge due to the rapid pace of operational changes in military areas of conflict. Contractual constraints prohibit MTO from deploying contractors to combat zones and embedding them with battle staffs to refresh their technical subject matter expertise.

In July 2017, MTO’s leadership recognized the need to mitigate these issues by establishing a trainer professional development program to improve trainers’ technical currency and competence in adult instruction. Based on my recommendations, I was tasked to design, develop, and implement MTO’s trainer professional development program. The knowledge base for professional training continually expands, and trainers must “keep abreast of this emerging knowledge base and be prepared to use it to continually refine their conceptual and craft skills” (Guskey, 2000, p. 16). Professional development efforts are designed to affect positive change and improvement in trainers through a systematic effort to create change (Guskey, 2000). Considerable studies have indicated the positive impact of professional development programs on teachers and the subsequent impact on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Keller-Glaze et al., 2016, April; Rockoff, 2004; Sanders, Wright, & Horn, 1997; Whitehurst, 2002). Guskey and Yoon (2009) state, “In the history of education, no improvement effort has ever succeeded in the absence of thoughtfully planned and well-implemented professional development” (p. 497).

Although I established a well-intentioned trainer professional development program in 2017, the original design was flawed by my incomplete knowledge and understanding of
research-based, adult learning principles and professional development design. For example, I did not fully incorporate the wealth of training knowledge and experience of MTO’s adult trainers or their desire for inclusion during the program design (Devlin, 2018). The program design also lacked a stated vision and purpose to drive content, processes, and procedures. In addition, the program’s current framework lacks a formalized policy for guidance, established trainer performance competencies, and a trainer evaluation program similar to other U.S. military training organizations’ programs (Department of the Air Force [DAF], 2016; DA, 2017a; Department of the Navy [DON], 2015a). Military professional development program policies and manuals establish organizational responsibilities, procedures, standards, and support required to plan, develop, deliver, and assess training materials and instruction (DAF, 2016; DA, 2017a; DON, 2015b), while established trainer competencies facilitate the selection, assessment, and development of trainers (Ross, 2015).

The lack of established trainer competencies and program policies makes it difficult for MTO to create an evaluation process. Evaluation processes before, during, and after the development and implementation of a trainer professional development program are critical because they inform decisions about appropriateness and adequacy, help to improve and strengthen effectiveness and help determine if the efforts are worth sustaining (Guskey, 2000). MTO realized the shortfalls in its original design process for establishing a trainer professional development program and sought to improve it through “a clear, systemic approach to professional development, which considers both individual and organizational development needs” (Guskey, 2000, p. 21). I began this systematic approach to redesigning MTO’s trainer professional development program guided by Knowles’s andragogical assumptions and processes for adult learning (1970; 1980, 1984) and the Adult Learning Model for Faculty
Development (Lawler & King, 2002) (Add ADDIE Model for Instructional System’s Design). Knowles’s andragogical assumptions require a focus on the adult learner, considering their experiences and needs as part of mutual planning for professional development (Lawler & King, 2002). The focus of my research was MTO participants’ training needs assessment, which occurs during the preplanning stage in the Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development (Lawler & King, 2002) and is also a key component in the analyze phase of the ADDIE Model (Need reference).

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study originated when I sought an appropriate doctoral program to meet my personal and professional adult learning needs. I enjoyed teaching and training adults throughout my military career and wanted to take advantage of my GI-Bill benefits to earn a doctorate degree, which would benefit my current job as a Joint Exercise Training Specialist, improve my organization, and give me options for adjunct teaching as a final career move. In line with Knowles’s andragogical assumptions of readiness to learn and orientation to a learning experience, which meets professional needs, I enrolled in the Doctor of Education in Program Development at the University of South Florida College of Education program, because it met my professional and personal needs. The program’s purpose: “Our program prepares graduates to create, launch and evaluate promising, sustainable innovations in their own professional settings” allowed me to address the need to develop a trainer professional development program in MTO through this research ("Program Development," n.d.).

While extant literature and research I reviewed suggested addressing adult learner needs is a characteristic, which facilitates defining effective professional development (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, & Powers, 2010; Houston, 2016; Lawler & King, 2002; Perrin, 2000); no
studies explored the issue from the perspective of military battle staff trainers. The purpose of this exploratory case study was to understand the individual and organizational training needs of a military training organization, which trains battle staffs to inform professional development program design. In this study, my findings might lead to an improved trainer professional development program design, which fully supports the organization’s and trainers’ efforts to deliver effective adult training. I engaged with select MTO trainers, leadership, and staff to capture their trainer and professional development experiences and perceptions of current and future training needs, concerns, and input on ways to adjust the current trainer professional development program. The research’s intent was to meet MTO’s individual trainer and organizational training needs and inform the community of professional development program designers in a military environment. The research was exploratory because there was minimal information known about the current training experience, needs and perceptions of MTO’s trainers, leadership, and staff regarding the ongoing professional development program.

During the research I: 1) Explored extant literature on andragogy, professional development, instructional systems design, training needs analysis, and innovation; 2) Explored participants’ perceptions of trainer and professional development experience; and 3) Conducted individual and organizational training needs assessment of MTO participants. The results of this research might provide useful information to military organizations designing and developing professional development programs for their military battle staff trainers or any other organization concerned with keeping trainers current in their technical and trainer knowledge and practices associated with adult learning. Participant in this research refers to MTO trainers, professional development staff, and leadership.
A Priori Research Questions

1. In what ways do participants in MTO perceive trainer and professional development experiences throughout their military and professional careers?

2. What are participants’ perceptions of training needs in MTO?

3. What are participants’ ideas for developing and implementing a trainer professional development program to meet these needs?

Answers to these questions may inform MTO’s efforts to improve the design and implementation of its trainer professional development program. Research results may also be useful for other military organizations, which conduct staff training and to those interested in research in professional development, military battle staff training, and trainer competence.

Conceptual Framework

Andragogy and adult learning principles.

MTO’s trainers are both adult trainers and adult learners; therefore, it was appropriate to utilize a theory of adult learning to guide this research. I selected Malcolm S. Knowles’s andragogical assumptions and processes of program development for adult learners as the theoretical underpinning for this research. Knowles’s definition of andragogy is, “the art and science of helping adults learn” (p. 43). Andragogy considers the unique attributes of adults and is the most popular concept guiding adult training and education (Brookfield, 1986, p. 91). Knowles popularized the term andragogy in the United States beginning in 1968 (Knowles, 1984). His conception of andragogy consists of six assumptions: (a) adults need to need to know why they need to learn, (b) as adults mature, they move from dependent to self-directed learning, (c) adults have a wealth of experience, which provides a rich resource for learning, (d) adults
become ready to learn when they have to cope with real-life situations, (e) adults’ orientation to learning is problem-centered versus content-centered, (f) adults are primarily intrinsically motivated to learn (Knowles, 1984; Knowles, Holton III, & Swanson, 2005). To operationalize the model’s assumptions for developing adult learning activities and programs, Knowles (1984) developed a process design consisting of seven elements: (a) climate setting, (b) involving learners in mutual planning, (c) involving learners in diagnosing their own needs for learning, (d) involving learners in formulating their learning objectives, (e) involving learners in designing learning plans, (f) helping learners carry out their learning plans, (g) involving learners in evaluating their learning (pp. 14-18). Knowles’s andragogical assumptions of self-directed learning and utilizing adult experience related to his processes of engaging learners in mutual planning and diagnosing their own needs are most applicable to this research.

The popularity of a model or theory should not drive acceptance and validation, research and evidence of successful application should. Andragogy’s 50+ year history in the field of adult education and training has shown mixed results and a difficulty to research. In Andragogy in Action (1984), Knowles presents compelling evidence of andragogy’s effectiveness applied through 36 case studies across a wide variety of settings: business, industry, government, colleges, universities, legal, medical, religious, elementary and secondary education. However, Rachal’s (2002) review of 18 empirical studies of the effectiveness of andragogy reported mixed but inconclusive results “beset by considerable variability in definition, resulting in differing approaches to andragogy’s implementation” (Rachal, 2002, p. 210). Ferguson’s (2018) recent research at the U.S. Non-Commissioned Officer’s Academy provides current evidence of andragogy’s efficacy and applicability alongside a pedagogical approach in a military training setting. “With a Cronbach alpha greater than .70,” Ferguson’s results from 20 students and four
instructors surveyed showed students’ perceptions of their learning environment were more andragogical and instructors’ perceptions were mixed between andragogical and pedagogical (p. 74).

There are many critiques of andragogy discussed in detail in Chapter Two, however, andragogy as an adult learning theory has withstood this scrutiny of critics for 50+ years and continues to be the most widely used to design professional development programs for adults (Brookfield, 1986; Merriam & Bierema, 2013; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; St Clair, 2002). Merriam and Bierema (2013) state:

The fact that andragogy is studied in all academic programs preparing people to work in adult education and human resource development, that research continues to be conducted, and that practitioners continue to find ways to apply it to their fields of practice speaks to its durability and utility in planning and implementing programs with adult learners. The appeal of andragogy is that educators who encounter it can readily relate the assumptions to their own learning and in so doing, transition to planning meaningful instruction for adults (p. 57).

**Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development.**

Lawler and King’s (2002) Adult Learning Model for Professional Development fully integrates Knowles’s andragogy and adult learning principles and processes as it seeks to develop faculty professional development, which considers both the faculty’s and organization’s needs for learning. The model embraces engagement of the faculty’s experience in a collaborative manner showing respect for faculty as adult learners and contributors to their own personal success. The model integrates the adult learning principles with four program planning
principles, preplanning, planning, delivery, and follow-up in an iterative manner to create an
effective professional development program, which stresses meeting adult learner needs.

**Instructional Systems Design Model.**

The Instructional Systems Design (ISD) (or ADDIE model) provides newly assigned
trainers with no background in instructional design or training a model to develop, deliver, and
evaluate effective training to meet individual and organizational missions (Department of the Air
Force, 1993). The common term for the ISD model today is the ADDIE model, which is an
acronym for its components; analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate. TRADOC Pam
350-70-14 (2015b) described in the *analyze phase* of the ADDIE process, a needs analysis is
conducted “to identify gaps between current and required Army capabilities,” which produces
training and education or non-training solutions as applicable and learning product development
requirements (p. 20). In the *design phase* trainers determine a course or lesson purpose, develop
learning objectives, create assessment plans for the target audience and evaluation plans for the
materials and instructor, determine appropriate learning materials and learning activities,
structure the content, and identify all resource requirements.

In the *develop phase* trainers produce the course or lesson materials, which may include a
program of instruction, lessons, presentations, job aids, student assessment products, course
schedule, instructor facilitator guide, and is completed when the course materials and/or program
of instruction is approved. (Department of the Army, 2017b). In the *implementation phase*,
trainers conduct and deliver training and may: prepare trainer materials, prepare training
resources, provide trainee administrative processing, rehearse, conduct final coordination checks,
prepare a formative evaluation report, provide trainer feedback, and complete student
assessments. The evaluation phase is a continuous, iterative process throughout the ADDIE model process.

**Definition of Terms**

*Adult education.*

...the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development....(UNESCO, 1976, p. 3)

*Adult Learning.* “The process of adults gaining knowledge and expertise” (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 174).

*Andragogy.* “The art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1980, p. 43). It is “a way of thinking about and working with adult learners” (Merriam & Brockett, 2007, p. 135)

*Battle staff.* Military officers, enlisted, civilian, and contractor personnel who support a military commander’s decision making through planning, coordinating, and managing military information and operations.

*Education.* “Structured process to impart knowledge through teaching and learning to enable or enhance an individual’s ability to perform in unknown situations” (DA, 2017a, p. 44).
Evaluation. “Involves making judgments about the merit, value, significances, credibility, and utility of whatever is being evaluated” (Patton, 2017)

Competencies. “A specific range of knowledge, skills, attitudes (KSA) expected of an individual Marine and acquired through the integration of training, education, and experience. Competencies are not associated with a specific course, but rather an individual’s capacity to perform a job” (DON, 2015a, pp. G-1).

Military trainer. “One who can, by perceiving the individual differences in students and learning environments and applying instructional strategies and techniques as appropriate for the situation, create positive student outcomes related to the short and long-term objectives of a course” in a military training organization” (Keller-Glaze et al., 2016, April, p. 49).

Military contractor. “A person who enters a contract with the U.S. military for the performance of services” (Department of Defense [DOD], 2017, p. 49).

Needs Assessment. Assessing as accurately as possible “the capabilities of your staff, their most pressing concerns, and the skills you need to develop or improve” (Brookfield, 1986, p. 251)

Pedagogy. “The art and science of teaching children” (Knowles, 1980, p. 6)

Professional development. Self and organizationally directed activities to improve a professional’s knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes to develop, deliver, and assess effective instruction (Barnard, 2004; Guskey, 2000).

Special operations.

Operations requiring unique modes of employment, tactical techniques, equipment, and training often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and characterized by one or more of the following: time sensitive, clandestine, low visibility, conducted with and/or through indigenous forces, requiring regional expertise, and/or a high degree of risk ("DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms," 2018, p. 153)

Training. “Structured process designed to increase the capability of individuals or units to perform specified tasks or skills in known situations” (DA, 2017a, p. 46).

Significance

In the past seven years, military training and education organizations in DOD Military Services explored ways of improving their trainer professional development programs to meet demanding, realistic training needs of a rapidly changing military force (DOA, 2016; DA, 2017a; DON, 2015a; Schatz et al., 2012a). Services developed training regulations, pamphlets, and policies, which offer descriptive information about their trainer training and professional development program; activities, processes, and procedures, however, scant research and literature exists providing insights into the design considerations or effectiveness of these programs. The military environment presents a unique context with different demographics, motivators, and constraints to inform the existing body of research on professional development (S. Schatz, personal communication, April 1, 2018). In this research, I explored considerations for professional development program design in this unique military context through the insights, experiences, and perceptions of participants directly involved in the process.
Assumptions

I assumed military trainers in MTO want to improve their professional technical and instructor knowledge and skills through the development of an effective trainer professional development program designed to meet their needs. I assumed MTO participants would provide honest and candid feedback. Another assumption was the use of andragogy, involving trainers in diagnosing their own needs and involving them in collaborative planning with MTO leadership and staff, would lead to effective design of a trainer professional development program. I assumed participants’ perceptions of prior experiences, strengths, challenges, and barriers to professional development along with identification of their training needs would provide important data to inform MTO’s trainer professional development program design.

Limitations

A significant limitation is hermeneutic considerations factor into all aspects of qualitative research and impact findings and conclusions. Patton (2015) noted “Hermeneutic theory argues that one can only interpret the meaning of something from some perspective, a certain standpoint, a praxis, or a situational context, whether one is reporting one’s own findings or reporting the perspectives of the people studied” (p. 138). There is no absolute truth; only interpretation through the lens of the readers’ life experiences and context. To place a qualitative study in a proper, hermeneutic context, “one must know about the researcher as well as the researched” (p. 138). Readers will make their own sense of the study based on the way they construct meaning. Hermeneutic considerations posit that others may interpret the data differently from (you) (me) because of differences in life experiences and world views (Richards, class note).
Another limitation is military and contractor trainers may fear trainer competency assessment and their candid responses to interview questions will negatively impact their employment status. I ensured participants in the research were aware of the procedures to safeguard and maintain the anonymity of their data. In this qualitative case study, my results may not be generalizable due to a small sample size. However, as Willis (2014) states, “Criticism of generalizability is of little relevance when the intention is one of particularization” (para. 18).

Military training is a broad field of study worldwide with almost every country having a professional military; however, the sub-field of military battle staff training is much smaller. I found no research related to the topic of trainer professional development program design for military battle staff trainers, so this research was intentionally particularized to meet this need.

My bias, subjectivity, and motivation towards this research with the results potentially supporting personal career gain was also a limitation. I was the originator of this training innovation in MTO and led the professional development working group. Most trainers, leadership, and staff in MTO knew my personal and professional work ethic through long-standing relationships, and my motivation to improve the organization through this effort. The main reason I enrolled in the University of South Florida Ed.D. Program Development with an emphasis on innovation was to use the knowledge gained for innovation and improvement in MTO.

Regardless of my benevolent desire to improve my organization, selecting your own organization to conduct research can be a dangerous proposition for the researcher because it is a power imbalance between the participants and the researcher and depending on the organizational politics, may be risky for the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since I selected my own organization to research, I mitigated the potential power imbalance situation by stressing
the research procedures to ensure anonymity of the results and appealed to a mutual desire to improve MTO performance. In addition, I highlighted the purpose of the research, which was intended to benefit participants’ professional knowledge and skills.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The Department of Defense (DOD) is the largest provider of adult education and training in the United States (U.S.) serving over 3.2 million members (Persyn & Polson, 2012). The current training challenges DOD military trainers face are numerous and include: dynamic global operating environments, increasingly technologically savvy soldiers, utilization of the forces’ extensive depth of combat experience due to multiple combat deployments in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria; and adaptation of training programs, instruction, and instructors to meet these evolving challenges (Keller-Glaze et al., 2016, April). DOD’s Military Services have historically used adult education based on adult learning principles and theory to meet these training challenges and improve instructional effectiveness (Persyn & Polson, 2012). However, the Military Services recently examined their training programs and identified many military instructors have military subject matter expertise, but lack competencies in adult instructional skills, which results in less effective instructor-centered versus student-centered instruction (Department of the Army [DA], 2017d).

A solution to instructor deficiencies in adult instructional skills is improvement of current instructor professional development programs in the Military Services (DA, 2015a; Schatz et al., 2012b). Professional development programs provide processes and activities to improve trainer professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs so trainers can enhance student learning (Guskey, 2000). Utilizing adult learning and education principles in professional development
programs can impact instructor performance and attitudes and meet individual and organizational training challenges (Lawler & King, 2000). Lawler & King (2002) point out assessing instructor needs and organizational culture is a critical adult learning principle, which facilitates effective professional development program design and implementation (Lawler & King, 2002). The effectiveness of an instructor professional development program depends primarily on how well it is designed (Guskey, 2014).

I conducted an explorative case study research to capture trainer, leadership, and staff perceptions, concerns, and input on individual and organizational training needs and professional development in a military training organization. The intent of this research was to inform trainer professional development program design through the lens of Knowles’s andragogical assumptions and processes, (The ADDIE Model cite reference) and Lawler and King’s (2002) Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development to better meet individual trainer and organizational needs. To help understand MTO participants’ experience and perceptions of training needs and professional development, I reviewed literature and research in five areas: andragogy, professional development, instructional systems design, training needs assessment, and innovation. I explored the history and continuing influence of andragogy in adult education and training. I then explored professional development and the role of training needs analysis and innovation in the process of instructional systems and professional development design highlighted in both the ADDIE Model and Lawler and King’s Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development. (Need reference for ADDIE and L&K’s) Lawler and King (2000) noted the impact of adult learning, adult education, program development, and professional development principles upon informed practice can lead to programs, which meet the changing needs of faculty and their institutions.
Andragogy

Andragogy, “the art and science of helping adults learn” is a term popularized in adult education in the United States by Malcolm S. Knowles in the 1970’s and 1980’s (Jarvis, 1995; Knowles, 1980, p. 43). Although there is much debate whether andragogy is a theory, model, or set of assumptions about adult learning, andragogy is a popular model for adult education design and practice in a wide range of global settings to improve individual and organizational effectiveness (Knowles, 1984; Pratt, 1993). Andragogy is a transactional model derived from the philosophies of pragmatism, behaviorism, humanism, and constructivism, which addresses characteristics of the learner and learning transaction (Knowles et al., 2005) and is “applicable to any adult learning transaction, from community education to human resource development in organizations” (Holton, Swanson, & Naquin, 2001, pp. 119-120). The main conceptions of andragogy are self-directed and autonomous adult learning and the role and processes of adult educators as facilitators of learning (Reischmann, 2004b). The emergence of the term and concept of andragogy in the U.S. by Knowles provided an identity to adult learning and was important in efforts to establish adult education as a valid professional field (Knowles, 1984; St Clair, 2002). A thorough review of current U.S. Military Service training organization policy and operating manuals reflects the long-standing, direct and indirect influence of Knowles’s andragogical assumptions and processes in military training and education instructor development programs (Department of the Air Force, 2003).

Andragogy’s history.

The roots of andragogy derive from teaching strategies and principles practiced by the ancient philosophers -Jesus, Lao Tse, Confucius, Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Euclid, Cicero,
Quintilian- whose primary students were adults seeking enlightenment to enhance their social roles and identities (Forrest III & Peterson, 2006; Knowles, 1972; Ozuah, 2016). These earlier historical traditions of adult teaching and learning were lost after the fall of Rome and the beginning of new assumptions of learning were formed when the church organized children’s education in the Middle ages. The church labelled historical assumptions about learning “(learning is a process of discovery by the learner) and procedures (such as “dialogue and learning by doing”) “pagan” and forbid their practice as it developed monastic schools in the 7th century to control the development of children into “obedient, faithful, and efficient servants of the church” (Knowles, 1972, p. 33). Thus began the tradition of pedagogy, the “art and science of teaching children,” which dominated both children and adult educational approaches (Knowles, 1972).

Savicevic (1991) suggests J.A. Comenius is the founder of andragogy in the seventeenth century for adult education and learning as he urged the establishment of distinctive institutions, forms, means, methods, and teachers for adults, “which in fact is at the root of the modern concept of andragogy” (p. 180). However, Andrew Kapp, a German high school teacher, is most commonly cited as the originator of the term ‘andragogik’ in 1833 in an article ‘Die Andragogik oder Bildung im mannlichen Alter’ (Andragogy or Education in the Man’s Age) in the book ‘Platon’s Erziehungslehre’ (Plato’s Educational Ideas) (Reischmann, 2004a). Kapp refers to andragogy in a practical sense of vocational education for adults (Reischmann, 2004a). The etymology of the word andragogy is based on the Greek noun agoge (the ability of leading) and the stem andr (adult) (Suanmali, 1981). Andragogy differs from the term and concept of pedagogy, “the art and science of teaching children” (Knowles, 1980, p. 40). Before and after World War II, U.S. adult educators displayed an emerging interest in adult learning
characteristics. The U.S. was behind its European contemporaries in recognizing the differences between adults and children regarding learning and teaching (Suanmali, 1981). In the U.S., Eduard Lindeman and Martha Anderson first introduced the European concept and term for adult learning “andragogy” into the adult education field in a section of their (1927) work, Education Through Experience, distinctly differentiating it from the method of teaching children (Brookfield, 1984).

The term “andragogy” was dormant in the U.S. until Dusan Savicevic, a visiting Yugoslavian adult educator, introduced it to Malcolm S. Knowles in 1967. (Knowles, 1984). In the adult education field, the continuing lack of a defining theoretical framework of adult learning to differentiate it from the traditional and dominate pedagogical model bothered Knowles (Knowles, 1984). Savicevic explained to Knowles Europeans had developed the term andragogy for this purpose, “as a parallel to pedagogy,” defining it as “the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1984, p. 6). Yugoslavia in the 1950s and 1960s began the systematic training of andragogical personnel for universities and sanctioned the philosophy of lifelong education making andragogy a distinct and independent scholarly discipline “to eliminate amateurism in adult education and to establish the discipline on a professional basis” (Savićević, 1999, p. 129). Knowles (1984) thought it appropriate to adopt the European term “andragogy” as a differentiating label for the adult education field and adopted it in his literature to describe his initial “theoretical framework for thinking about adult learning” (p. 6).

Knowles first introduced andragogy in an article in 1968 and in 1970, published the first edition of The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy Versus Pedagogy introducing four assumptions of adult learning: (a) self-directed concept of the learner, (b) role of learners’ rich experience, (c) learners’ readiness to learn life tasks, (d) immediate orientation of
problem-centered learning (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). He added two additional assumptions in 1984: (e) learners’ internal motivation to learn, and (f) learners’ need to know the reason for learning (Knowles, 1970; Knowles, 1980, 1984; Merriam & Bierema, 2013).

Table 1 described several distinctions which differentiated pedagogical and andragogical approaches. These distinctions had consequences on educational and training program design, curriculum, and instruction. A pedagogical approach emphasized content and an instructor-centered approach for selecting, delivering, and evaluating curriculum. An andragogical approach focused on the learning process in where the instructor facilitated student-centered selection, learning, and evaluation (Ekoto & Gaikwad, 2015; Knowles, 1980; Merriam & Bierema, 2013; Pew, 2007). Another major distinction is the self-directed and autonomous approach of andragogy versus learner dependency in pedagogy (Knowles, 1975; Merriam & Bierema, 2013; Reischmann, 2004a).

Table 1. A Comparison of the Assumptions of Pedagogy and Andragogy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regarding</th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
<th>Andragogy</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept of the Learner</td>
<td>Dependent role. Educator responsible for what, when, how learning occurs</td>
<td>Self-directed role. Learner moves from dependency to self-directedness at different rates. Educators encourage and nurture movement. Adults have need for self-directing however may be dependent in some situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of learners’ experience</td>
<td>Experience brought is of little worth and is a starting point. Learners gain experience from teachers, texts, audiovisual aid producer, experts. Primary techniques are transmittal: lecture, assigned readings, AV presentations.</td>
<td>Learners grow and develop creating deep reservoir of experience useful as a resource for learning. Learners attach more meaning to experience-based learning versus passive-based. Primary techniques are experiential techniques: discussion, problem-based cases, simulation exercises, field experience.</td>
</tr>
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Table 1 (Continued)

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<tr>
<th>Regarding:</th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
<th>Andragogy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readiness to learn</td>
<td>People are ready to learn whatever society (schools) says they ought to</td>
<td>People learn when they experience a need to learn to cope with real-life tasks or problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learn, provided the pressures on them are great enough. Most people of</td>
<td>Educator creates conditions providing tools and procedures to help learners discover their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the same age are ready to learn the same thing. Educators should organize</td>
<td>“need to know.” Learning programs should be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learning into a fairly standardized curriculum, with a uniform progression</td>
<td>organized around life-application categories and sequenced according to learners’ readiness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>for all.</td>
<td>to learn.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Orientation to</td>
<td>Learning is a process of acquiring subject-matter content to be used later</td>
<td>Learning is process of developing increased competence to achieve full life potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning</td>
<td>in life. Curriculum should be organized into logical subject matter content.</td>
<td>Learners want to apply knowledge and skill immediately. Organize learning experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learners have a subject-centered orientation.</td>
<td>around competency-development categories. Learners have a performance-centered orientation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy Versus Pedagogy (2nd Ed.) by Malcolm S. Knowles © 1988 by Pearson K12 Learning LLC, or its affiliates. Used by permission. All Rights Reserved.

Knowles (1970) assessed andragogical assumptions and processes had significant implications for the design and operation of adult educational and training programs. He noted a pedagogical model focused on a content plan where teachers select, organize, sequence, and transmit content. In contrast, an andragogical model “was a process design” where the instructor’s role was to design procedures to facilitate student-centered content learning and act as a resource for the learner (Ekoto & Gaikwad, 2015; p. 14; Merriam & Bierema, 2013). From his assumptions about adult learner characteristics, Knowles (1970) developed an initial andragogical process design consisting of seven elements for teacher-learner transactions: (a) establishing a learning climate, (b) mutual planning (c) diagnosing learner needs, (d) formulating purposes and objectives, (e) designing learning plans (f) conducting learning experiences, (g) evaluating learning (pp. 46-49). He later added preparing the learner for learning (Knowles,
Knowles, Holton, & Swanson (2005) added the last process because their observations pointed to a large percentage of adult learners not prepared for self-directed learning in adult education programs who required a “preparatory learning-how-to-learn activity” (p. 117).

Knowles (1984) noted from 1960 through 1980 a wide variety of adult educators and clinical, developmental, and social psychologists had created a substantial body of adult learner knowledge, more than “accumulated in all previous history,” which warranted an attempt for field-wide organization into “a systematic framework of assumptions, principles, and strategies” (Knowles, 1984, pp. 6-7). His assumptions of andragogy were an initial attempt to provide this framework and build a comprehensive theory or model of adult learning anchored in the characteristics of adult learners (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 1991). The key distinction of andragogy was adults and children have different learning traits, which significantly influenced the processes of curriculum development and instruction (Ekoto & Gaikwad, 2015).

Pedagogy is content focused and teacher-centered whereas andragogy is process focused and student-centered (Ekoto & Gaikwad, 2015; Merriam & Bierema, 2013) echoing trends of method over content for adult education originally espoused by Lindeman in 1926 (Brookfield, 1984). The uniqueness of the andragogical approach is the direct involvement of adults learning in a self-directed and autonomous manner in, which teachers/instructors/trainers facilitate versus dictate and control learning (Draper, 1998; Reischmann, 2004b). Reischmann (2004b) notes andragogy encompasses adult life-long and life-wide learning driven by rapid changes and needs for life and job competencies.

Knowles had originally intended andragogy to be a dichotomous contrast to pedagogy but backed off this contention because numerous educators of youth had successfully applied andragogical principles in specific situations (Malachi, 2015). As a result, in the 1980 version of
his book, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education*, he changed the sub-title from *Andragogy versus Pedagogy* to *From Pedagogy to Andragogy* (Knowles, 1984). Knowles concluded educators should consider both models for all learners testing their assumptions in a given situation between the models’ two ends of a spectrum. Educators should quickly shift from a pedagogical approach when needed to an increasingly andragogical approach for adults in a progressively linear fashion (Knowles, 1980; Knowles et al., 2005). He noted situations where both children and adults can be self-directing and highly dependent (Knowles, 1980). Pratt’s (1988) model of high and low direction and support refined the situational aspect in adult readiness to learn and refuted Knowles’s contention of a linear continuum relationship between the pedagogical and andragogical orientations in a learning situation. His four-quadrant model suggested learners have varying states of dependency when arriving in educational experiences based on level of competence, commitment, or confidence, which dictates the degree of instructor pedagogical support or andragogical self-directedness required. Delahaye, Limerick, & Hearn’s (1994) research verified Pratt’s (1988) contention the relationship between a pedagogical and andragogical orientation was not based on a continuum but is orthogonal.

In the 1970s, Knowles and John Ingalls also promoted andragogy in the human resource development domain of adult education. John Ingalls (1972) developed a *Trainer’s Guide to Andragogy, Its Concepts, Experience, and Application* for personal and professional development of staff trainers in the U.S. Government Social and Rehabilitation Service. The guide provided trainers a theoretical knowledge of andragogical principles and outlined a five-day workshop for a lived experience of the andragogical approach. Additionally in the 1970s, self-directed learning, the first assumption of Knowles’s andragogical concept, became a separate and distinct adult learning theory made popular in adult education by the works of

Knowles’s and Tough’s models of self-directed learning were linear models; where learners progressed through a series of well-planned, linear steps to achieve self-directed learning goals (Merriam et al., 2007). Many other models appeared for self-directed learning theory, which differed from the original constructs of Knowles’s and Tough’s. Interactive self-directed models were less-linear or planned and emphasized two or more factors such as environmental opportunities, learner personality characteristics, cognitive processes, and context of learning (Merriam et al., 2007). Prominent interactive models were: Spear (1988), Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) and Garrison (1997). Instructional models provided frameworks of self-directed methods for instructors to use in their activities and programs. Prominent contributors to interactive models were: Grow’s (1994; 1991) Staged Self-Directed Learning Model and Hammond and Collin’s (1991) model. Merriam et al. (2007) pointed out andragogy and self-directed learning were the first two attempts at defining adult education as a unique and distinct field of practice adult educators could differentiate from general learning and from childhood education in particular.

Jack Mezirow (1981) contributed to the self-directed learning movement by introducing an emerging critical theory for adult self-directed learning and education based on synthesizing
his previous work on individual perspective transformation. Mezirow posited “central to the adult educator’s function is a goal and method of self-directed learning” (p. 21). Mezirow introduced a “Charter for Andragogy” with 12 concepts oriented specifically on facilitating self-directed learning, which although similar to Knowles’s andragogical assumptions and processes, exceeds them in depth and description (Cooper & Henschke, 2004, March 6; Mezirow, 1981). Chidchong Suanmali’s (1981) doctoral research sought consensus and prioritization of Mezirow’s Charter for Andragogy concepts for self-directed learning. He developed the Andragogy in Practice Inventory (API) utilizing 10 of 12 of Mezirow’s andragogical concepts and surveyed 147 adult educator members of the U.S. Adult Education Association. The results showed a high consensus on sufficiency of the concepts as core concepts of andragogy but low consensus on the relative importance of the concepts. Merriam (2001) suggested although andragogy and self-directed learning were highly criticized for a singular focus on the individual learner, they “have become so much a part of adult education’s identity, and have had such an impact on practice, that relegating them to the status of historical artifact is inconceivable” (p. 11).

**Critics of andragogy.**

Knowles’s conception of andragogy in the late 1960s was intended to fill a void in the professional field of adult education by organizing the body of knowledge about adult learners into a systematic framework of principles, strategies, and assumptions (Knowles, 1984). As noted by Cross (1981), andragogy “has been far more successful than most theory in getting the attention of practitioners” (p. 227). The professional literature in varied groups such as nursing, social work, and other fields demonstrates andragogy’s utilization in continuing education and staff professional development (Davenport & Davenport, 1985). Andragogy is associated with
the professionalization of adult education in both the U.S. and Europe (Savićević, 1991). Chan (2010) noted andragogy is applicable in varied contexts and “has changed the teaching philosophy of educators around the world” (p. 33). While there is much applied use of andragogy by various theorists, educators, and practitioners around the world, there is also a substantial amount of controversy surrounding the term and what it represents in the adult education field (Brookfield, 1986; Hartree, 1984; Rachal, 2002). Merriam et al. (1991) point out andragogy is the best-known adult learning model, which has garnered much controversy, critical analysis, and philosophical debate.

A major area of critique was the contention of andragogy’s status as a “theory” of adult learning (Elias, 1979). Davenport and Davenport (1985) highlighted the lack of consensus on the nature of andragogy noting the various classifications given to it at the time: “theory of adult education, theory of adult learning, theory of technology of adult learning, method of adult education, technique of adult education, and a set of assumptions” (p. 157). St. Claire (2002) and Hartree (1984) had mixed views on calling andragogy a set of assumptions as Knowles’s originally intended. St. Claire (2002) posited andragogy does not explain how or why people learn, therefore it does not perform any functions as an adult learning theory. He suggested andragogy has more to offer as originally intended by Knowles as a set of assumptions to guide teaching adults in a more humanist versus instrumental approach. Additionally, Hartree (1984) believed the baseline andragogical assumptions were precarious leading to uncertainty whether andragogy will lead to teaching theory, learning theory, or a philosophical construct of prescriptive best practices in teaching. Hartree commented although Knowles “appears to approach his model of teaching from the point of view of a theory of adult learning, he does not establish a unified theory of learning in a systematic way” (p. 207).
Howell and Swanson (2005) cited Dubin (1969) who explained the criticality of defining boundaries in theory building efforts, and noted much of the criticism and confusion regarding andragogy stemmed from the adult education community’s “attempts to make it become more than it was intended to be,” which “violated the boundaries of the theory” (p. 145). Although Knowles mentioned in earlier works, (1973, 1978), andragogy may contribute to a unifying theory for adult and all education, he later recanted in (1984) stating “I don’t know if it is a theory; this is a controversial issue…I feel more comfortable thinking of it as a system of concepts that, in fact, incorporates pedagogy rather than opposing it” (pp. 7-8). In his final position on andragogy as a theory, Knowles (1989) stated he “prefers to think of andragogy as a model of assumptions about learning or a conceptual framework that serves as a basis for an emergent theory”(p. 112). Howell and Swanson (2005) noted the era of the debate in the U.S. adult education field trying to identify andragogy as “its defining theory” has past (p. 233).

Another area of contention with andragogy was its singular attention on the individual learner, dismissing any consideration of the sociohistorical context where learning takes place and its impact on the learner (Grace, 1996; Pratt, 1993). Knowles’s humanistic perspective considers an adult learner as an autonomous and free individual oriented on growth, devoid of considerations of social situation, relevant cultural contexts, or “awareness that social institutions and structures may be defining the learning transaction irrespective of the individual participant” (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 88). Lee (2003) pointed out Knowles overgeneralized his conception of andragogy as applicable to all adult learners based on the characteristics of “privileged individuals who were primarily white, male, educated, and from middle class backgrounds,” which marginalized the different experiences and values of other adults, which are less privileged such as immigrants (p. 15). Sandlin’s (2005) critique supported Lee’s (2003)
contention and offered five interrelated critiques of andragogy across critical, feminist, and Afrocentric theoretical orientations where andragogy wrongly: assumes education is apolitical and value neutral; assumes universality of adult learners with white, middle-class values; marginalizes other ways of knowing and learning, which silences other voices; disregards a causal relationship between the individual and society; and reproduces society’s inequalities thus sustaining the status quo. Knowles et al. (2005) refuted the notion andragogy should embrace critical theory issues of social concern and change by reiterating its clear heritage and grounding in pragmatic and humanistic philosophy, which is concerned singularly in the self-actualization of the individual. Additionally, Knowles’s (1984) case studies on andragogical application over a wide variety of professional fields and countries provided contradictory data to critical theory critics indicating andragogy is not culture, socioeconomic, or age bound. Andragogy was successfully applied in “North America, Europe, Africa, Brazil, and Australia” at every socioeconomic level and in both scientific and humanities content (p. 417).

Knowles et al. (2005) suggested “no aspect of andragogy has received so much attention as self-directed learning (p. 185). There is confusion about two prevalent conceptions for the meaning of self-directed learning in the literature (Brookfield, 1986; Candy, 1991; Knowles, 1975). The first conception is self-teaching where students have the ability to select and control methods of learning, and the second conception is personal autonomy, or autodidaxy, where learners assume ownership controlling the goals and purposes of learning (Candy, 1991; Knowles et al., 2005). The conceptions are relatively independent but may overlap. Learners may desire the autonomy to learn but lack the necessary cognitive maturity, student-centered course design and instructor approach, resources, or know-how for self-directed learning and may need assistance along the way (Lam, 1985; Schapiro, 2003). Lam’s (1985) research of 740
university and community college students showed a discrepancy between the intellectual maturity level of adult learners and desired learning experiences. Most adult learners “express a desire for more but not complete partnership in the planning, organizing, delivery, and evaluation of courses” (p. 51). The range of intellectual maturity based on age, life experiences, and personal motivation determined the level of self-versus teacher control of the learning activity. Robinson's (1991) research involving 294 adult distance learners in Open College reported learners rejected self-directed learning indicating they wanted clear instructions from the instructor. Robinson suggested three causes: the courses were not designed for self-direction, self-direction is difficult requiring more time than adult online learners were prepared to give, and learners were unfamiliar with self-directed learning in a university setting and needed guidance on how to be self-directed. Lam’s (1985) and Robinson's (1991) research provided empirical evidence supporting Pratt’s (1993) reservations about potential “‘ideological andragogues,’ which champion prescriptive methods into an uncontestable orthodoxy of self-directed learning, which assumes adults are self-learning and thus do not need to be taught anything (Brookfield, 1986). Knowles et al. (2005) suggested the degree of self-directedness, too much or too little, may be a problem based on the learner, who weighs many factors when choosing whether to engage or not engage in self-directed learning such as: learning style, previous experience with subject matter, social orientation, efficiency, previous learning socialization, and locus of control.

That an adult learner may choose not to be self-directed, for whatever reason, does not invalidate the core principle that adults…have a self-concept of being independent. In fact, it is having the freedom to choose their learning strategy that is critical. It is the sense of personal autonomy, not self-teaching, that seems to be the most important for
adults. The biggest problems arise when adult learners want to have more independence in their learning but are denied that opportunity (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 189).

Holton (2001) noted Knowles never intended for his andragogical assumptions and processes to be holistically applied in every learning situation. Knowles’s (1984) concluded his casebook of 36 applications of andragogy compiled over two decades of experimentation in a wide variety of disciplines and settings by emphasizing his assumptions were meant to be flexible and altered depending on the situation. He stated, “It is not an ideology that must be applied totally and without modification…In fact, an essential feature of andragogy is flexibility” Knowles (1984, p. 418). Rachal (2002) offered a counterview to Knowles’s case studies suggesting many were “at best elastic variants of andragogy and at worst seem to violate it altogether” (p. 213).

**Research on andragogy.**

Over the past forty-plus years andragogy has developed into an adult learning framework due to its increasing popularity and the significant increase and changes in the adult population (Ekoto & Gaikwad, 2015). Despite the controversy and negative critiques of andragogy in the adult education field, Merriam and Bierema (2013) pointed out numerous applications of andragogy in a wide variety of settings including: agriculture, nursing, e-learning, engineering, criminal justice, management, and human resource development. Rachal (2002), however, highlighted universal acceptance of andragogy’s efficacy and widespread acceptance is not backed by sufficient empirical research to defend Knowles’s (1970) “art and science of helping adults learn” (p. 38); its science has “tended to be inconclusive, contradictory, and few” (Rachal, 2002, p. 211). Rachal further warned extensive “anecdotal, expository, and polemical writing” on andragogy has shrouded the limited empirical studies, which are in the forms of published and unpublished dissertations without widespread distribution ” (p. 211).
Adult education and training researchers developed several andragogical measurement instruments since 1975 to address the empirical grounding of andragogy in adult education with mixed results (Holton, Wilson, & Bates, 2009). Table 2 depicts andragogical measurement instruments developed since 1975.

Table 2. Andragogical Measurement Instruments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Validity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Hadley</td>
<td>Educational Orientation Questionnaire (EOQ)</td>
<td>Determines educator andragogical-pedagogical orientation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Guglielmino</td>
<td>Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale</td>
<td>Measures learners self-directed learning readiness</td>
<td>Only Self-Directed Learning</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Conti</td>
<td>Principles of Adult Learning Scale (PALS)</td>
<td>Measures congruency between adult educators' classroom behavior and their beliefs in the collaborative teaching-learning mode</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Kerwin</td>
<td>Kerwin’s Educational Description Questionnaire</td>
<td>Measures student-perceived differences between teaching behavior of andragogically &amp; pedagogically oriented educators, differences between andragogical &amp; pedagogical orientations to education, conditions in the classroom</td>
<td>Modified from EOQ</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Suanmali</td>
<td>Andragogy in Practice Inventory (API)</td>
<td>Measures conceptual agreement with the concepts of andragogy and presence of effective facilitation in practice</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Student Orientation Questionnaire (SOQ)</td>
<td>Measures adult learner preferences, attitudes, and beliefs to determine if perceptions are pedagogically or andragogically oriented</td>
<td>Modified from EOQ &amp; EDQ</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Knowles</td>
<td>Personal Human Resources Development (HRD) Style Inventory</td>
<td>Measures instructor's general orientation to adult learning, program development, and program administration</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Henschke</td>
<td>Instructional Perspectives Inventory (IPI)</td>
<td>Measures the adult educators' personal and contextual attributes, actions, beliefs for guiding practice in relation to using andragogical principles</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Validity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>McCollin</td>
<td>Adapted Principles of Adult Learning Styles (APALS)</td>
<td>Measures student perceptions of instructor teaching styles</td>
<td>Modified from PALS</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Perrin</td>
<td>Perrin Instrument</td>
<td>Measures adult preference for andragogical teaching style</td>
<td>Modified from Knowles</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Colton Hatcher</td>
<td>Online Adult Learning Inventory</td>
<td>Measures andragogical principles in web-based instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>Adult Learning Professional Development Educational Questionnaire (ALPDEQ)</td>
<td>Measures the appropriateness and applicability of andragogy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Holton Wilson Bates</td>
<td>Andragogical Practices Inventory</td>
<td>Measures student satisfaction and outcomes related to andragogical principles and process design elements</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Lubin</td>
<td>Lubin Instrument</td>
<td>Measures extent which coaches use andragogical practices</td>
<td>Modified from IPI</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hadley’s (1975) Educational Orientation Questionnaire (EOQ) was the first empirical instrument, which offered a quantitative methodology for measuring the theoretical construct of andragogy. With a reliability coefficient of .94, the instrument measured adult educator’s attitudes along a continuum between an andragogical or pedagogical orientation towards teaching methodologies. Hadley also developed a second instrument, the Educational Orientation Scales (EOS), to measure the predictive validity of the Educational Orientation Questionnaire.

The instruments used Knowles’s (1970) assumptions regarding the mission of adult educators as a basis of differentiation between andragogical and pedagogical principles: purpose of education, nature of learners, characteristics of the learning experience, management of learning experience, evaluation, and relationships of educator to learner and among learners. During Hadley’s study, 409 public and private education, business, religious, and government adult educator and
administrator responses to Hadley’s questionnaire and scales indicated educators tend to view themselves as more andragogical than their students do.

Kerwin (1979) developed an Educational Description Questionnaire (EDQ) for his dissertation to measure student-perceived differences between teaching behavior of andragogically and pedagogically oriented educators, differences between andragogical and pedagogical orientations to education, and conditions in the classroom. Kerwin’s dissertation chair was Malcolm Knowles. Kerwin issued students the EDQ, which he developed from Hadley’s Educational Orientation Questionnaire (EOQ) while the educator completed Hadley’s EOQ. Kerwin administered the EOQ to 74 college professors at two and four-year colleges in North Carolina and had 961 students complete his EDQ. He used seven factors to measure andragogical or pedagogical teaching behavior: student involvement, control, distrust and detachment, professionalism, counseling, individual inattention, and organization. His study results indicated instructor differences between pedagogical and andragogical orientations toward education were greater than the differences between student-perceived teaching behavior. Student-perceived behavior of both andragogically and pedagogically-oriented teacher behaviors occurred in similar frequencies. In addition, his study concluded andragogically-oriented instructors have not made student evaluation a joint responsibility between student and instructor.

Christian’s (1982) Student Orientation Questionnaire (SOQ) instrument with a reliability coefficient of .77 measured adult student preferences, attitudes, and beliefs about education to determine pedagogical or andragogical orientation. Hadley’s (1975) Educational Orientation Questionnaire (EOQ) and Kerwin’s (1979) Educational Description Questionnaire influenced the development of Christian’s SOQ. His study of 300 military and civilian personnel attending
mandatory and voluntary training and education found the military more andragogically oriented towards learning and instructor responsibilities compared to the civilian and mixed group of military and civilians. The implications of his study suggested instructors need training on how to identify students’ orientations to learning and match instructional methods accordingly.

Knowles (1987) created the Personal Human Resource Development (HRD) Style Inventory as a self-assessment tool to assist trainers and instructors in determining their general orientation to adult learning, program development, learning methods, and program administration. Porterfield (2004) used the Personal Human Resource Development (HRD) Style Inventory in a study of 62 nurse educators to identify the factors, which influence andragogical orientation of faculty in associate degree programs. The results surprisingly revealed prior faculty educational experiences ranging from formal adult learning courses to standard continuing education had no impact on andragogical orientation toward teaching. In addition, years of experience had no statistical impact on andragogical orientation, which countered Knowles’s contention of experiential influence in andragogical processes.

Beder and Carrea’s study (1988) intended to study the impact of a nine-hour staff development program in andragogical teaching methods for adult educators on student satisfaction of teacher performance and class attendance. The results for 87 educators and their students indicated a marginal statistical significance for higher attendance. The results did not indicate statistical significance for improved satisfaction of teacher performance using andragogical methods.

Perrin (2000) developed an andragogical instrument for his study to “evaluate the validity of the theory of andragogy proposed by Malcolm Knowles” (p. 129). He surveyed 419 graduate and post-graduate students using an instrument developed from Sinnott’s (1995) concepts on
adult learners and four of Knowles’s (1970, 1980) assumptions of andragogy. The results showed support for three of Knowles’s assumptions of andragogy indicating adult learners want responsibility in planning their learning and for it to meet their needs in closing gaps between where they are and where they want to be. However, there was no consistency of preferences across the three assumptions, which suggests “it is inappropriate to think of Knowles’s ideas as a single characteristic” Perrin (2000, p. 132).

Holton, Wilson, & Bate’s (2009) Andragogical Practices Inventory (API) instrument measured student satisfaction and outcomes related to adult educators’ application of andragogical principles and process design elements based on six of Knowles’s andragogical assumptions and seven process elements. Holton et al. administered the survey to 404 MBA program graduate students and used the results to validate the study’s purpose of developing a valid and reliable instrument to measure educators’ andragogical behaviors. The authors did not report on the measured student satisfaction in the study.

Conaway’s (2009) research using a modified Adult Learning Professional Development Educational Questionnaire (ALPDEQ) instrument (Wilson, 2005) found no difference between three age groups of 59 college students ranging from 18 to 59 in the degree of acceptance of andragogical principles in learning; however, age in combination of acceptance of andragogical principle did show prediction of course satisfaction.

Clemente's (Clemente, 2010) qualitative research demonstrated the congruence of Knowles’s model of andragogy with experiences of 14 non-traditional, adult students in a multi-generational community college. The andragogical assumption adult learners move away from dependency to self-dependency in novel academic situations as they mature was validated by research results. The older adult participants experienced less anxiety, shifting from dependent to
independent, self-directed learners as time progressed during the semester and their comfort level with younger generational adult students increased. Both younger and older adult students had a wealth of experiences, which they shared as they became comfortable with the generational differences in perspectives.

Ferguson’s (2015) study of 16 U.S. Army Drill Sergeants and four instructors at the U.S. Army Non-Commissioned Officer Academy using Holton et al.’s (2001) Andragogy in Practice (AIP) Inventory for the students and a modified version of Henschke’s (1989) Instructional Perspectives Inventory (IPI) for the instructors “revealed and confirmed Malcolm Knowles’s assumptions as they relate to adult learners: self-concept, experience, readiness, orientation, motivation, and the need to know” (p. 79). The results also indicated a mix of pedagogic and andragogic methods in use at the Academy, which corresponds with Knowles’s concept of a continuum between the two based on the situation (Knowles, 1980). The instructors perceived the adult learning environment as andragogical. The results were statistically significant, suggesting evidence of a student-centered learning environment in congruence with the U.S. Army’s preferred use of the Army’s Learning Model (Department of the Army, 2017d).

Malachi’s (2015) qualitative exploratory case study of 25 male and female millennials, ages 18-35, in a multigenerational workforce demonstrated a preference for andragogical versus pedagogical instructional methods in a classroom setting, however, in on-the-job training, the results were mixed. Similar research and literature of Cekada (2012) and Skiba and Barton (2006) supported Malachi’s research findings highlighting Net Generation or Millennials’ preferences towards an andragogical learning environment in training and education, which addresses experiential and collaborative learning, as well as immediacy and relevance.
Muduli, Kaura, & Quazi’s (2018) study of 313 post-graduate Indian business school students using a Student Orientation Questionnaire (SOQ) instrument based on Hadley’s (1975) Educational Orientation Questionnaire (EOQ) showed students preferred an andragogical over a pedagogical approach in business management courses to address their learning needs as well as the needs of employers.

The literature is replete with calls for more empirical research to validate the meaning, role, and efficacy of andragogy in the adult education field (Caruth, 2014; Merriam, 2002; Merriam et al., 1991). Over the period 1975 to 2013, the adult education field responded with the development of fifteen empirical instruments (See Table 2) to assist instructors and training developers in designing learning experiences and programs based on andragogical or pedagogical orientations with the continued assumptions andragogical principles are appropriate and most preferred by all adults (Knowles, 1975, 1980, 1984, 1995).

The research and literature, however, continued to show mixed results, which supported Rachal’s (2002) assertion 16 years ago “the empirical literature examining the efficacy of andragogy remains, after over three decades, both inconclusive and beset by considerable variability in definition, resulting in differing approaches to andragogy’s implementation” (p. 210). The research I reviewed showed positive results on the efficacy of andragogy in multiple settings including business, military, college, global business (Ferguson, 2015; Malachi, 2015; Muduli et al., 2018; Perrin, 2000), but also highlighted results non-supportive or marginally supportive of efficacy. Beder and Carrea’s (1988) research showed marginal results on the impact of andragogical training on student attendance and no results at all with student satisfaction of teacher’s andragogical approaches. Porterfield’s (2004) research refuted the assumptions prior teacher andragogical formal education and training would positively influence
teacher andragogical orientation. The adult education field now has 15 empirical instruments to measure the validity and definitive contribution of andragogy to the field; however, homogeneity and consensus is still circumspect. Ekoto and Gaikwad (2015) noted andragogy does not hold universal consensus and warns “andragogy tends to be considered as the panacea for adult learning thus facing the danger of becoming a one-size fits all model” (p. 1379). Caruth and Gail (2014), however, offered a positive horizon toward future research suggesting “with validated and reliable instruments available to measure the constructs of andragogy, clearer validation of andragogy in higher education is promising” (p. 21).

**Summary of andragogy and its role in adult education and training.**

Historical antecedents of andragogy were overshadowed in medieval times and replaced with a didactic, pedagogical teaching method for institutional instruction of children, which came to dominate all fields of education and training. The search for a distinctive, unifying term and concept to rally adult educators in the U.S. led Malcolm S. Knowles to adopt the European term andragogy for these purposes (Knowles, 1984). Knowles’s six andragogical assumptions about adult learners and eight processes focused on adults as self-directed and autonomous learners, and educators as facilitators and resources for learning (Knowles, 1980, 1984). Andragogy provided enough pragmatic grounding for widespread adoption across many varied disciplines worldwide (Chan, 2010; Fox, 2004; Roberson Jr, 2002). Andragogy fell short, however, in providing a holistic theory of adult learning and created many critics in the adult education and training fields who continued research in this complex endeavor (Brookfield, 1986; Davenport & Davenport, 1985; Elias, 1979; Hartree, 1984; Lee, 2003; Pratt, 1984; Rachal, 2002; Sandlin, 2005; St Clair, 2002).
Researchers produced 15 different empirical instruments over a 38-year period to facilitate the validity and assist application of Knowles’s andragogy with mixed results (See Table 2, p. 41). After years of experience with his original conception of andragogy, Knowles (1989) concluded “andragogy was less of an adult learning theory than a set of assumptions about learning or conceptual framework, which serves as a basis for an emergent theory” (p. 112). Houston (2016) said andragogy was a “useful lens” because it offers a theoretical framework to design learning activities unique to adult learners (p. 59).

**Professional Development**

The core function of any business, organization, or profession is to survive through relevancy (Senge, 1990). Those which survive do so through continuous transformation responding quickly to changing conditions and threats and capitalizing on internal and external opportunities and resources and are considered learning organizations (Schatz, Fautua, Stodd, & Reitz, 2015). Successful learning organizations “promote continuous improvement at the individual level” with an organizational climate, processes, practices, and values to support and promote individual and organizational learning to increase knowledge, skills, competence, and performance (p. 6). Professional development was the term used to describe the processes and practices, which lead to professional learning and development (Boylan, Coldwell, Maxwell, & Jordan, 2018).

Professionals in a wide variety of professions and business fields such as the military, government, education, medical, accountants, legal, human resources development viewed professional development as critical for success and refer to it in varying terms: professional learning, faculty development, in-service education, staff development, adult continuing education, adult continuing professional education, continuing technical education, continuing
professional education (Lauer, Christopher, Firpo-Triplett, & Buchting, 2014; Mizell, 2010; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997). The most common references to professional development found in literature and research are in the education field where the National Staff Development Council (2009) defined professional development as the “comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving the effectiveness of teachers’ and principals’ in increasing student achievement (p. 1). Guskey (2000) offered a congruent definition of professional development in the education field defining it as “those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so they might, in turn, improve the learning of students” (p. 16). Evans (2014) defined professional development as “the process whereby people’s professionalism may be considered to be enhanced, with a degree of permanence, which exceeds transitoriness” (p. 17). The common theme among these varying definitions of professional development in numerous fields was the focus on adult education and a design to achieve “positive change in beliefs, knowledge, skills, or behaviors” Lauer et al. (2014, p. 207)

Evan’s definition differed from Guskey’s and the National Staff Council’s definitions of professional development with a focus solely on the adult educator and not tied to subsequent student achievement. She contended an assumption of “generative, causality effect on student achievement from professional development “is impossible to identify and pinpoint” (p. 16). Research supported both positions. Darling-Hammond, Gatlin, & Heilig’s (2005) study of Teach for America candidates showed training and certification significantly impacts student achievement gains. Kannapel, Clement, Taylor, & Hibpshman’s (2005, February) report found sustained teacher professional development, aligned with curriculum and focused on teaching positively, impacted elementary and high school level student math and science achievement.
However, other research showed no difference in students’ achievement because of teacher professional development efforts. Glazerman, Seifullah, & Mathematica Policy Research’s (2012) research reported despite teachers’ participation in a Chicago Teacher Advancement Program, no significant differences in student learning occurred.

Conflicting research may frustrate a practitioner searching for universal and evidence-based professional development best practices; however, it also serves a useful purpose highlighting the importance of context when determining applicability of professional development attributes and activities. The National Staff Development Council (2001) suggested effective professional development does not occur from implementation of common-to-all best practices, but rather from a precise reworking of diverse methods to distinct content, process, and context elements. There are many interrelated perspectives on the reasons and rationale of instructor change due to professional development. Understanding these varying perspectives considering the organizational, political, social, and individual contexts are important to the proper development of a professional development program (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002). Houston (2016) acknowledged “contextually relevant learning experiences” are especially important to veteran instructors who want professional development experiences, which consider their “career stage, knowledge and expertise, and readiness for learning” (p. 116).

Faculty professional development programs have progressed in focus over time. Prior to the 1970’s college and university faculty professional development efforts viewed faculty as experts and supported improvements in discipline expertise and curriculum at the expense of improvement in instruction (Gaff & Simpson, 1994; Lewis, 1996). Student revolt against “irrelevant courses and uninspired teaching” in the late 1960s and early 1970s drove growth in
colleges and universities professional development programs focused on effective teaching for more diverse student populations (Gaff & Simpson, 1994, p. 168; Lewis, 1996).

The 1980’s, faculty development efforts broadened for a holistic focus including the personal aspects of faculty life due to deteriorating faculty conditions in the academic workplace such as reductions in staff support and travel budgets, and reduced pay support (Lewis, 1996). The 1990’s saw a significant increase and expansion of scope of faculty professional development programs in US college and universities due to parent and legislator concern for higher “accountability in US higher education” (Lewis, 1996, p. 29). Institutions of higher learning discovered faculty professional development was linked to improved vitality and explored new priorities for programs such as: establishment and retention of new faculty, multicultural sensitivity, assessment, preparation of teaching assistants, distance education, part-time faculty preparation, and curriculum development (Graf, 1992).

This focus continued and intensified in the 2000’s with a much larger adult, ethnic, and social mix entering post-secondary education causing universities to rethink traditional modes of instruction (Lawler & King, 2002). Baiocco and DeWater’s (1998) analysis of faculty development programs showed a strong need for increased efforts and a “radically different faculty development program to ensure faculty understand the changing nature of the student population, education, and their respective disciplines” (p. 40).

With more adults in education, faculty developers began to integrate the concepts of adult learning and education into faculty development programs (Lawler & Wilhite, 1997; Licklider, Fulton, & Schnelker, 1998) to address failed initiatives, which treated faculty as “traditional dependent learners or as employees in a corporate setting” and not as adult learners (Lawler & King, 2002, p. 15). Professional development experienced a major shift from a change done to
teachers based on a competency deficit model to one of change as personal growth and
development (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002). The military experienced similar shifts in its
education and training programs in the 1980’s. In 1987, the House Armed Services Committee’s
Panel on Military Education reviewed joint training practices at 12 professional military
education organizations and incorporated new requirements emphasizing the use of adult
learning principles. A review 20 years later confirmed accomplishment of many of the desired
educational and training changes through this process (Persyn & Polson, 2012). The U.S. Army
completed an in-depth review of its training and education programs in 2011 finding deficiencies
in its adult training and education approaches and committed to a reemphasis on an instructional
approach based on adult learning and teaching principles in its Army Learning Concept 2015
(Department of the Army, 2011; Persyn & Polson, 2012).

Professional development design.

Guskey (2000) suggested what is required for improvement in professional development
is “a clear and compelling vision of the improvements needed” developed and implemented in a
clear, systemic approach for both organizational and individual development (p. 21). Research,
however, suggested much professional development practice in the education field is developed
and mandated from a hierarchical structure and lacks a systematic approach to program
development (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Engstrom & Danielson, 2006).
Top down, one-size-fits-all approaches to professional development models sought no input from
learner needs and causes disengagement, especially from veteran educators (Fitzgerald, 2014;
Houston, 2016). Many faculty critiques focused on the unmethodical and sporadic manner of
faculty development offerings, which consisted of a “patchwork of opportunities—formal and
informal, mandatory and voluntary, serendipitous and planned (Wilson & Berne, 1999, p. 174).
To alleviate these concerns, professional development programs initiated, designed, developed, implemented, and evaluated in a systematic way have an increased chance for success (Killion, 2008). Research in professional development demonstrated a need for sufficient planning and flexibility by all stakeholders involved to accommodate tailored local needs (Donaldson, 2006; Hord, 2004). In Houston’s (2016) study, teachers expressed professional development should align with their current learner needs and be relevant and applicable. Teachers approach professional development programs with a pragmatic view hoping to acquire specific and practical methods directly applicable to daily teaching responsibilities (Guskey, 2002). Professional development planners should design inclusive learning activities, which are meaningful and relevant to each instructor’s unique perspectives and experience (Fitzgerald, 2014). Providing differentiated professional development solutions for individual instructors facilitates meeting instructor needs in a respectful manner (Hirsch, 2015).

When designing professional development programs, Guskey (2002) recommended three planning considerations for program planners: (a) change will be a difficult process for teachers, which will occur over an extended period of time; (b) ensure teachers receive consistent evaluation and feedback, which determines changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors; (c) provide sustained support after all professional development activities to support periods of experimentation. Teachers’ must first resolve how professional development activities will personally impact them before they can address how they will impact students (Hall & Loucks, 1978). In addition, Guskey (2000) offered professional development program planners four principles of effective professional development design: “(a) a clear focus on learners and learning, (b) an emphasis on individual and organizational change, (c) small changes guided by a grand vision, (d) ongoing professional development, which is procedurally embedded” (Guskey,
Gordon (2004) provided seven characteristics of effective professional development: “(a) strong leadership and support, (b) collegiality and collaboration, (c) data-based development, (d) program integration, (e) a developmental perspective, (f) relevant learning activities, and (g) professional development as ‘a way of life’” (p. 16). Developers must intentionally design professional development with deliberate goals and purpose to create positive change. Fitzgerald’s (2014) research suggested professional development program designers are best served by knowing the aspects of effective professional learning methods to inform a program design, which involves teachers in self-directed learning.

The research-derived principles, characteristics, and planning factors for effective professional development planning and implementation share many of the characteristics of Knowles’s (1970; 1980, 1984) assumptions on adult learning and education processes. Adults are self-directed and life-long learners who bring and use deep and rich life experiences to their learning experiences. Adults want learning to be relevant to their learning needs and applicable to their unique learning situations. Adult educators should factor in adults’ need to know, readiness and orientation to learning, experience, motivation, and self-concept into professional development program planning (Fitzgerald, 2014; Knowles et al., 2015; Lawler & King, 2002).

Fitzgerald’s (2014) research of 289 urban, secondary school teachers concluded greater than 50% of teachers reported they perceived learning best when adult andragogical principles were used in their professional development activities yet 90% noted they rarely experienced these principles in their current programs. Results also showed teachers perceived they learned best when evidence-based strategies and methods were used in professional development activities (active learning, role playing, modeling, professional learning communities, peer coaching). Fitzgerald recommended educational leaders evaluate current professional
development programs to determine if they are providing research-based professional
development strategies and methods, which are relevant, meaningful and meet individual
teachers’ unique needs. She specifically recommended: (a) designing professional development
opportunities based on “core adult learning principles of Knowles et al. (2011),” (b) ensuring
facilitators are knowledgeable in these principles to create relevant and engaging learning
experiences, (c) integrating strategies, which promote real-world application through active
learning techniques, (d) using evidence-based strategies. She also suggests professional
development program designers use tools such as diagnostic performance assessment, learning
style inventories, and simulations to help learners conduct a learning needs assessment.

Another analysis useful for professional development program designers is Trivette,
Dunst, Hamby & O’Herin’s (2009) quantitative research synthesis of 79 studies, which
determined the extent of association of four adult learning methods (accelerated learning,
coaching, guided design, and just-in-time training) to improve learner outcomes. Accelerated
learning provides a relaxed emotional state, a synchronized and multi-sensory learning
environment, and active learner engagement. Coaching includes processes for joint planning and
goal setting, and information gathering, sharing, modeling, practicing, and coach and personal
reflection. Guided design promotes self-directed learning through real-world, problem-based
procedures in a facilitated small group forum. Just-in-time training provides individualized
training used to meet real-world, immediate training needs.

Trivette et al. coded the data using six adult learning characteristics (introduce, illustrate,
practice, evaluate, reflection, mastery) aligned to three adult learning elements (planning,
application, deep understanding) to determine, which characteristics achieved the largest effects.
Results showed all six characteristics had an impact on achieving positive adult learner
outcomes. Optimization occurred when learners used many of the characteristics simultaneously. Active learner participation was a common element found among effective methods. Frequent learning opportunities with self and instructor reflection and feedback against an external set of standards also contributed to the effectiveness of the professional development program design. An important finding for both designers and facilitators of professional development, particularly in training and technical assistance professional development settings, was the discovery of a middle ground between one-time didactic experiences and experiential learning. For facilitators, “guiding but not directing can promote and facilitate mastery of new knowledge or practice” (p. 10). The results also indicated “learners [should] be as actively involved as possible in all aspects of the training experience” (p. 10). The findings were consistent with Knowles’s andragogy and other adult learning theories (Knowles et al., 2015).

Although many of the professional development program design considerations, principles, and characteristics, and suggestions offered by Guskey, Gordon, Trivette et al., Houston, and Fitzgerald are congruent with Knowles’s assumptions and processes of andragogy, none explicitly described the process and importance of involving adult learners in mutual planning to diagnose both learner and organizational needs. Lawler and King (2002) suggested if adherence to adult learning principles is central to professional development program design then “getting to know and understand the faculty and their needs is imperative” (p. 52)

**Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development**

Lawler and King (2002) provided an Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development as an answer for many ineffective and sporadic failed faculty development efforts, which view faculty as dependent traditional learners. Faculty in post-secondary and tertiary education “by nature of their profession, are self-directed in their work, independent and autonomous in getting
their job done, and collaboratively participate in the policy and governance of the university” (p. 14). The Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development offered a systematic framework based on the research and practice of adult learning and education, which focuses on the adult educator as an individual, but also captured organizational and societal needs. This model of professional development, unlike business models, which focus on organizational needs over individuals (Chiu, Thompson, Mak, & Lo, 1999), valued growth and development of the adult educator. McQuiggan (2012) noted the Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development is “the only [faculty development] model, which is explicitly grounded in adult learning theory” (p. 34). The Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development combined adult learning and program principles and incorporates overarching themes of adult education planning: “a nonlinear approach, organizational context, evaluation, inclusion of fundamental elements, and responsible planning” (Lawler & King, 2002, p. 27). Each stage of the model incorporated adult learning principles into program planning principles in an interrelated fashion suggesting dynamic movement back and forth between stages.

The model has four stages: preplanning, planning, delivery, and follow-up. The stage of the model relevant to this research was the preplanning stage with a focus on the subtask of assessing needs. The preplanning stage set the start point for effective faculty development program planning design by assessing both the organizational and individual learner goals and needs. An accurate assessment of both organizational and individual learner needs was critical for providing faculty and professional development program design for effective activities (Pilcher, 2016). The other tasks involved with the preplanning stage were: understand the organizational culture, identify the role of the faculty developer, evaluate resources available, and establish goals (Lawler & King, 2002). I will not address the other stages of the model;
planning, delivery, and follow-up in this research. Figure 1 outlines the stages and tasks of the Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development. A major focus in the preplanning stage was assessing individual and organizational needs.

**Instructional Systems Development (ISD) Model (ADDIE Model)**

The Instructional Systems Development model (ISD) was an appropriate choice as a theoretical underpinning for this study due to the perceived problem of MTO trainer’s variability in adult training skills. The model provides newly assigned trainers with no background in instructional design or training a model to develop, deliver, and evaluate effective training to meet individual and organizational missions (Department of the Air Force, 1993). The common term for the ISD model today is the ADDIE model, which was an acronym for its components; analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate. The model originated in 1975 from a joint research project between the U.S. Army and the Center for Educational Technology at Florida State University (Hannum, 2005). Hannum (2005) noted the collaborative effort produced an instructional design model for training developers, which all U.S. military services (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines) adopted. The Joint Chiefs of Staff Interservice Procedures sponsored the Instructional Systems Development (ISD Model) and published it in 1975. The need for the model stemmed from the Army’s requirement in the mid-1970’s to develop and deliver training to meet a gap between the initial capabilities of the all-voluntary service soldiers and the increasingly technological requirements of the Army (Hannum, 2005).
**Figure 1.** The stages and tasks of the Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development.

Hannum (2005) explained the origin of the commonly used acronym ‘ADDIE’ to describe the ISD model is unknown and “did not emerge from the original ISD design team” (p. 6).

Hannum noted Robert Gagne, considered a pioneer in the instructional design field, consulted on the project in the areas of theoretical basis for learning and instruction. He highlighted several theoretical underpinnings, which have influenced the ISD model as it has morphed over the years to include at inception, B.F. Skinner’s behavioral theory, Gagne’s cognitive theory, and later on constructivist theory and cognitive flexibility theory. He suggested the theoretical foundation of instructional design was cognitive theory and acknowledged the emergence of constructivist and cognitive flexibility theories. These latter theories emerged to account for avoidance of oversimplification of instructional design in increasingly “complex and ill-structured” knowledge domains” experienced in military environments (Hannum, 2005, pp. 11-12).

Since the introduction of the ISD model in 1975, the U.S. Army has undergone many reviews to continually modernize its training and education capabilities to meet dynamic changes in training technologies and other external environmental factors. The Army’s recent review in 2011 resulted in the development of the Army Learning Concept for 2015, which still includes use of the ISD or ADDIE model (Department of the Army, 2011). The Army’s TRADOC Pamphlet 350-70-14 (2015b) recommended training and education developers should incorporate training guidelines “during the ADDIE process to create rigorous, effective, and relevant learning products across the career span” (p. 17). The pamphlet described in detail the five components of the ADDIE model: analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate.

TRADOC Pam 350-70-14 (2015b) described in the *analyze phase* of the ADDIE process, a needs analysis was conducted “to identify gaps between current and required Army
capabilities,” which produces training and education or non-training solutions as applicable and learning product development requirements (p. 20). The pamphlet categorizes potential non-training solutions to Army performance problems as doctrine, organizations, material, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities. Both Hannum (2005) and the U.S. Army (Department of the Army, 2017b) emphasized the use of the ADDIE model to provide a proper training solution when organizational and individual performance analysis indicates a deficiency in skills or knowledge. If the problem was related to training, the next step was to perform a mission analysis or job analysis, task analysis, and target audience analysis to determine the training requirements (Department of the Army, 2015b).

In the design phase trainers determined a course or lesson purpose, develop learning objectives, create assessment plans for the target audience and evaluation plans for the materials and instructor, determine appropriate learning materials and learning activities, structure the content, and identify all resource requirements. During the design phase, trainers also determined their trainer strategy, which consisted of five methods of training: direct instruction (lecture), independent study, indirect instruction, collaborative or interactive instruction, and experientials instruction. Selection of a trainer strategy was dependent upon resources available, target audience analysis, and command guidance. In the develop phase trainers produced the course or lesson materials, which may include a program of instruction, lessons, presentations, job aids, student assessment products, course schedule, instructor facilitator guide, and was completed when the course materials and/or program of instruction was approved. (Department of the Army, 2017b).

In the implementation phase, trainers conducted and delivered training and may: prepare trainer materials, prepare training resources, provide trainee administrative processing, rehearse,
conduct final coordination checks, prepare a formative evaluation report, provide trainer feedback, and complete student assessments. The evaluation phase was a continuous, iterative process throughout the ADDIE model process. Trainers included evaluation during the implementation through student assessment to measure trainee learning outcomes. Trainers and training managers conducted formative evaluations during the implementation phase collecting critiques, feedback, after-action reports, which contribute to a summative evaluation during the evaluation phase. A summative evaluation provided feedback on overall trainer material and trainer performance related to trainee and organizational satisfaction and training objectives accomplished (Department of the Army, 2017b).

Some of the critiques of the original ISD model over the years included: the necessity of the model over intuitive development, non-alignment with andragogical principles of adults determining learning objectives, and the model was too training (specific purpose) focused versus education (broader education) (Hannum, 2005). Hannum (2005) suggested,

training organizations that rely on ‘natural’ instructors…to ensure consistent high quality in training outcomes are destined to be disappointed. Only a few ‘natural’ artists can perform at uniformly high levels. Only training organizations that rely on an ISD process are likely to produce consistent results…(p. 13).

He noted ISD focuses on individual performance at an acceptable level on the job versus andragogy’s focus on satisfying “felt needs and interests” of adults (p. 14). He suggested the ISD model was appropriate for both training, which required near transfer of knowledge, and education, which required far transfer of knowledge. He noted “both can be approached using an ISD model,” but it required “more careful specification of the learning objectives since they deal with problem solving and far transfer (Hannum, 2005).
The ADDIE model has undergone changes since its inception providing an alternative to what many viewed as a linear process. The U.S. Air Force Manual 36-2234, *Instructional Systems Development*, (1993) added systems functions to the model of management, support, administration, delivery, and evaluation to link the ISD process to its broader instructional system architecture and highlights the central function evaluation played in every phase. The manual noted the updated model “represented simplicity and flexibility” providing instructional system developers with various levels of expertise the ability to “enter or re-enter the various stages of the [ADDIE] process as necessary” (p. 11). Hannum (2005) explained the ISD model “is more of a way of thinking” versus a fixed approach to training development, which “has been sufficiently robust to incorporate advances in our knowledge and changes in the environments in which we live and work” (Hannum, 2005). The U.S. Army (2017b) and many other Services must agree as they still include the ISD or ADDIE model in their doctrine on instructional development and delivery.

**Training Needs Assessment**

Pilcher (2016) said training and learning needs assessment was a systematic way of exploring what individuals, groups, or organizations need to learn and served as the base for designing effective educational activities. Brown (2002) suggested a training needs assessment (TNA) was a data gathering process for determining training needs to support training development and delivery to meet organizational objectives. From a business perspective, a TNA was conducted to identify organizational problem areas, acquire management support, develop evaluation data, and determine the financial costs and return-on-investment for training. Several factors could influence the necessity of a training needs assessment for an organization and individuals such as introduction of new technologies or procedures, new employees or
reassignments, performance or inspection deficiencies, employee requests, and career
development (Brown, 2002). A TNA could also be proactive and identify abilities, skills, and
knowledge employees and the organization will need in the future to meet new social,
educational, or market changes.

Training needs assessment has three levels of analysis: organization, task, and individual
(Van Eerde, Simon Tang, & Talbot, 2008). This three-level conception was based on the
Organization-Task-Person Framework developed by McGhee and Thayer (1961), which served
as the core for most TNA models (Van Eerde et al., 2008). An organizational needs assessment
determined organizational goals training could accomplish and identified organizational training
requirements. A task needs assessment focused on what the learner must learn to perform
effectively. An individual needs assessment determined which learners needed training and for
what specific purposes (Arthur Jr, Bennett Jr, Edens, & Bell, 2003; McGehee & Thayer, 1961;
Van Eerde et al., 2008). Knowles (1980) offered another perspective to the Organization-Task-
Person Framework three level approach. He suggested an educational need was the gap between
what an individual, organization, or society is versus what they wanted to be; the “distance
between an aspiration and reality” (p. 88). He further suggested the more specifically individuals
can pinpoint their aspirations and judge their current competencies related to them, the more
precisely they can determine their educational needs. This led to increased motivation to learn.
Additionally, the more congruent individual needs were with the desires of their organizations
and society, and reciprocally for organizations and society towards individuals, the higher the
odds for effective training and learning. Arthur, Bennett, Edens, & Bell (2003) suggested the
existence and comprehensiveness of a needs assessment should be associated with training’s
overall utility because it provided the means whereby important questions to effective training programs could be answered.

A well-designed and enacted comprehensive training needs assessment integrating individual, tasks, and organizational needs could provide many benefits. Warshauer (1988a) noted benefits of: (a) improving individual and leadership commitment to current training and development, (b) highlighting the training program, (c) clarifying important organizational problems, (d) optimization of scarce resources, (e) providing innovation in program design, and (f) developing varied approaches to training activities. Harman and Surface (2014) pointed out an important feature of a TNA is its ability to translate to specific and relevant training objectives, which drove selection of appropriate training methods and tools and served as the basis of formative and summative evaluations to measure effectiveness. The assessment allowed alignment “between learning, testing, policy, capability, and performance created throughout the system” to achieve “individual, team, and organizational outcome” (p. Slide 13).

Conducting a training needs assessment aligned with several of Knowles’s adult learning assumptions, which suggested a focus on learners as adults; capitalizing on their needs and rich experiences (Lawler & King, 2002). Knowles suggested, “As people grow and develop they accumulate an increasing reservoir of experience, which becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning-for themselves and for others” (Knowles, 1980, p. 44). Faculty were a necessary resource for faculty development designers, because they were accomplished at their jobs and know their needs, especially veteran teachers who often provided healthy skepticism based on deep experience with failed faculty development efforts (Alvy, 2005; Lawler & King, 2002). Adult learners also displayed a readiness to learn when needs were explored and were relevant to immediate professional applications (Knowles, 1980; Lawler & King, 2002)
Pilcher (2016) provided five steps in conducting a training and learning needs assessment: “(a) identify the purpose, (b) identify parameters, (c) select the tool and conduct the investigation, (d) analyze the results, and (e) ongoing analysis” (p. 189). Identifying the purpose provided the desired outcome of the intended professional development program and facilitated selection of the appropriate data collection tool. Identifying parameters focused on learner characteristics such as current knowledge, demographics, and learning style preferences, and understanding the learning environment. Parameters could also include exploration of appropriate learning strategies; however, as noted by Pilcher, this part may be delayed if specific learners have not been identified. Selecting the proper tool(s) and conducting the investigation is the next step. A range of formal and informal tools and methods could be used based on the level of assessment conducted (Brown, 2002; Grant, 2002; Knowles, 1980). Analyzing the results was assessing the adequacy of the assessment tool output and organizing the data. Ongoing analysis referred to a continuous, iterative process tied to formative, summative, and confirmative evaluations to determine how well training accomplished the intended outcomes (Pilcher, 2016).

A systematic literature review on training needs assessment (TNA) scientific literature by Ferreira and Abbad (2013) presented a less optimistic look at its utility and applied use across many professional fields and countries. Their results analyzing 51 studies from 1983-2006 produced in 15 countries showed a lack of consensus on ways to measure training needs, a reactive nature of most TNA methods and models, which failed to address contextual factors, and apathy towards building theories, concepts and definitions. The researchers noted TNA studies were most predominate in the management field (25), followed by medical (11), psychology (7) and education, public management, marketing, and information technology. Results also pointed to a lack of multilevel TNA analysis; (16) studies on the individual level, (8)
on the group, task, process level, (8) at the organizational level and 19, which did not distinguish levels.

Another meta-analysis conducted by Arthur et al, (2003) of training and development literature between 1960-2000 sought to determine the relationship between needs assessment and training effectiveness of training and professional development programs. The researchers hypothesized a small sample size of 22 of 397, or 6% of the data points reporting a needs assessment conducted, caused inconclusive results. The researchers suggested studies might have completed a needs assessment without mentioning it because the relatedness to training effectiveness was not significant enough to report.

Lauer, Christopher, Firpo-Triplett, & Buchting's (2014) narrative literature review of 23 short-duration (<30 hours) professional development studies in education and human service-related professions painted a similar picture to Arthur et al.’s review on the scarcity of studies addressing the correlation of training needs assessment with training success. Although the review concluded professional development had a positive impact on training outcomes, only two of the studies specifically mentioned the use of a needs assessment to design the professional development program. This indicates a scarcity of empirical data on the effectiveness of training needs analysis.

Burke and Hutchin’s (2007) study substantiated the research gap in empirical data for training needs assessment studies. They conducted an integrative literature review of three factors influencing knowledge transfer. One of the three factors, intervention design and delivery, included training needs assessment before and during the training. Results showed a scarcity of empirical studies linking positive training transfer to training needs assessment and
suggest "additional research is warranted to substantiate the vast anecdotal evidence supporting the relationship between needs assessment and training transfer" (p. 273).

Van Eerde, et al.’s (2008) study was one of few found, which demonstrated a positive utility of using a training needs assessment. The research on 96 organizations from transport and warehousing industries in New Zealand found a direct relationship between comprehensive training needs assessment, utility of the training programs, and better organizational effectiveness. The results suggested training needs analysis are useful in making effective training design decisions on the necessity of training, who needs it, and how it should be delivered and evaluated.

**Innovation, Andragogy, and Professional Development: A Synergy**

While not offering an explicit definition of innovation, Peter Senge’s (1990) depiction of a learning organization offered an implicit prescription for innovation in an organization, and is applicable to this research’s ultimate goal, which was to innovate training effectiveness in a military training organization. Senge’s model of a learning organization consisted of four interrelated *disciplines* synchronized by the most important discipline, systems thinking. Senge suggested “building a *shared vision* fosters commitment to the long term,” while *mental models* provided the “openness needed to unearth shortcomings” in present operating processes (p. 12). *Team learning* created an ability within groups of people to surpass individual perspectives seeking a broader picture. *Personal mastery* ignited intrinsic, self-directed and continuous personal learning to move beyond a reactive mindset and understand how personal actions affect the world. And last, but most importantly, *systems thinking* synchronized, uncovered, and “made understandable the subtlest aspect of the learning organization— the new way individuals
perceived themselves and the world,” which allowed them to continuously discover ways to create and change their reality (pp. 12-13).

Senge’s model of a learning organization and the innovation it could achieve aligned well with Knowles’s (1970; 1980) innovation of andragogy in the adult education field. Knowles’s leadership, passion, and shared vision for the field of adult education led him to propose andragogy as an innovation in a field struggling for identity as a profession. His innovation provided the adult education field “team” a means for continuous learning, debate, and creation as it changed the way education was viewed for adults (Knowles et al., 2005).

Andragogy’s focus on the adult learner as a self-directed and continuous discovery of knowledge and a changing role of the instructor as a facilitator of learning versus a deliverer of learning were novel concepts when introduced. Both areas of focus sparked much controversy, but also caused significant, sustained growth in the adult education field and are practiced widely today (Reischmann, 2004b). Senge’s principles of shared vision and mental models were reflected in the andragogical assumptions and processes of adults needing to know why they are learning, establishing a trusting climate, and diagnosing both self and organizational needs through mutual planning. The principles of personal mastery and systems thinking aligned with the assumptions adults are intrinsically motivated to learn and were self-directed in their learning. The processes of andragogy for the individual adult learner and Senge’s principles for organizational learning had similar goals; both sought new ways of self-discovery for the purpose of continuous creativity and change (Knowles, 1980; Senge, 1990).

While Senge’s model of a learning organization provided a perspective for all types of organizations to achieve and sustain innovation, Young (2016a) offered a perspective of innovation unique to a military training organization. He defined innovation as having two
components: “the creation of a novel idea or development of an alternative and the operationalization of that idea or alternative….The latter component is the most influential because without it, innovation achieves no purpose” (p. 4). He suggested sustainability of military training innovations occurred when “adequate, relevant, and adaptive leadership and resources, which produce technically, tactically, and ethically proficient soldiers and leaders to protect the nation” were consistently provided (p. 13). Zhou and Shalley’s (2003) research suggested a positive relationship between innovation and creativity occurred when an organization provided a safe and open climate, resources, support communications and leadership, which supported Young’s (Young, 2016a) prescription for sustainable innovation.

Leadership was a crucial factor in providing the proper tone, climate, expectations, environment, resources and support necessary to develop, implement, and sustain innovation. Kim and Yoon’s (2015) research suggested creation and sustainment of an organizational culture of innovation was dependent upon senior leaders’ transformational leadership. To institutionalize innovation, leaders must provide innovative visions to replace old practices with new ones. The researchers defined transformational leadership as a “leadership style that valued organizational change through the recognition of the needs for change, the creation of a clear vision, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration, and the implementation of changes” (p. 151). Inspiring vision was a key human factor, which created hard work, collaboration, and inspired a culture of innovation for organizations with a “well-defined output” (Edmondson, 2016).

Leaders must also prevent complacency by holding subordinates accountable to an organizational timeline and proper management of resources to ensure successful operationalization of the innovation. Innovation was likely to fail without proper leader initial guidance, support, and iterative feedback throughout the process; all aspects of accountability
(Hunter, Ligon, Myer, & Thoroughgood, 2011). Young (2016a) pointed out leadership must be visible throughout the organization through consistent actions and have elements of challenge and boldness, which provide energy; developing a culture of movement and change centered on a clear purpose. Leadership was important to the organization. It was a key source for organizational effectiveness and innovation.

The literature and research on professional development and training needs assessment presented mixed results on efficacy similar to the literature and research conducted on the application of andragogy in adult education and training. A major gap identified across all three was a need for more empirically based research to show correlational effects of the application of professional development programs integrating andragogical design on positive training outcomes. Fifteen empirically based andragogical measurement instruments in the field of adult education and training supplied researchers ample opportunity to substantiate or refute the usefulness of adopting an andragogical approach in professional development design and implementation. I found limited studies associating andragogy with professional development design to inform professional development design practice. I found no studies on training needs assessment in a military training organization, which called for research in this area to inform military professional development program designers who focus on battle staff training.
Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The need for quality battle staff training by competent trainers for Special Operations headquarters conducting vital military operations globally is paramount in today’s challenging security environment (Thomas, 2017b). Competence for military trainers in MTO consists of expertise in both military functional area knowledge and skills in adult education. The latter was a known deficiency in both MTO and many other organizations (Cranton, 1996; Hennessey, 2017; Jamerson, 2012). Career and technical education instructors as well as many university faculties were often content subject-matter-experts yet rarely had any formal adult education training or experience (Cranton, 1996; Hennessey, 2017; Jamerson, 2012; Lawler & King, 2000).

Professional development was the primary means of mitigating knowledge and skills deficiencies in adult education and training. As Guskey (2000) noted, a “constant finding in the literature was that notable improvements in education almost never took place in the absence of professional development” (p. 4). Within an effective professional development program design, research demonstrated a need for participation of all stakeholders in adequate planning ensuring flexibility “to meet local needs” (Hirsch, 2015, p. 140). Kennedy (2005) reinforced the premise gaps in instructor performance were not solely linked to individual instructor knowledge and skills deficiencies; organizational and management practices also factored in to the collective responsibility. Hence, seeking training needs from both individual instructors and the organization through a training needs analysis was a foundational step in developing an effective
professional development program design, which met individual and organizational training needs (Barnard, 2004; Knowles, 1980; Lawler & King, 2002).

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to understand the individual and organizational training needs of a military training organization, which trains battle staffs to inform professional development program design. The findings might lead to an improved trainer professional development program design, which support trainer efforts to deliver improved adult training. I engaged with select MTO trainers, leadership, and staff to capture their trainer and professional development experiences and perceptions of current and future training needs, concerns, and input on ways to adjust MTO’s current trainer professional development program. The intent of the research was to meet MTO’s individual trainer and organizational training needs and inform the community of professional development program designers. The research was exploratory because there was minimal information known about the current training experience, needs and perceptions of MTO’s trainers, leadership, and staff regarding its recently established professional development program.

I focused the qualitative data collection on exploration of MTO participants' perceptions of professional development and individual and organizational training needs. The research questions were:

1. In what ways do participants in MTO perceive trainer and professional development experiences throughout their military and professional careers?
2. What are participants’ perceptions of training needs in MTO?
3. What are participants’ ideas for developing and implementing a trainer professional development program to meet these needs?
Design of the Study

Qualitative methods were most appropriate for this research for several reasons. This research explored MTO participants’ trainer professional development experiences and. Stake (2010) suggested professional knowledge “relies heavily on personal experience, often in an organizational setting” (p. 14). Qualitative research was most appropriate when considering “personal experience in described situations” (p. 14). A qualitative approach to research relied on inquiry based on interpretations of the researcher, research participants’ experiences, and of the intended audience’s experience all within the context of the natural setting of the problem or issue researched (Stake, 2010).

Because the design of this research relied on my own personal values, beliefs, experiences, and bias, it was important for transparency I explain my interpretive framework, which was based on pragmatism and transformation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I based my focus and rationale for this research on the “actions, situations, and consequences of inquiry” (pragmatism) (p. 26), and on “bringing about changes in practices…engaging participants as active collaborators in their inquiries” (transformative framework) (p. 25). Pragmatists used varied approaches in collecting and analyzing data focusing on practical implications, selecting those, which best address the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The means I used to collect data in this research were semi-structured interviews and review of existing documents and artifacts to achieve a comprehensive assessment of individual and organizational training needs to inform professional development program design.

Creswell (2018) noted qualitative research is appropriate when there is an issue or problem, which needs exploration requiring a complex and thorough understanding. The complexity and variables of the issue can only be understood by talking to people directly in the
contextual settings where the issue resides (i.e. a bounded system). Context was important because it allowed understanding of “how events, actions, and meaning are shaped by the unique circumstances in which they occur” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 30).

The specific context of this study focused on a military training organization in the Southeastern U.S. with a mission to train senior-level military battle staffs. Due to military personnel constraints within the parent organization, MTO relied on a large percentage of retired military contractors versus active duty military personnel to conduct battle staff training, which was unique among the battle staff training organizations within the U.S. Department of Defense. Other U.S. military Services’ battle staff training organizations had active duty military personnel as the primary trainers with a much smaller number of contractors providing analytic support. Designing a professional development program, which trained contractors exposed some unique contractual issues and challenges for MTO.

MTO’s trainers were both adult educators in performance of their jobs and adult learners as the recipients of professional development training. Their trainer roles were unique within the military combining attributes of traditional educational instructors with those of observer-controlled who coach, teach, and mentor in training exercises. During the literature review, I did not find any research on professional development for military battle staff trainers or specifically on their training needs. This may be due to the limited population of battle staff training organizations within the U.S. military. There were only three other similar battle staff training organizations; (Deployable Training Teams in the Joint Staff J7, Mission Command Training Program for the U.S. Army, and the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Staff Training Program for the U.S. Marine Corps).
**Exploratory Case Study**

Creswell (2018) defined case study research as “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case)…through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews…and documents and reports) and reports a case description and themes” (pp. 96-97). Merriam (1998) suggested case studies are often utilized so “specific issues and problems of practice can be identified and explained” (p. 34).

The unique context of the MTO organization and its military trainers and the lack of research found about their training needs were priori reasons why I selected an exploratory case study approach for this research. The focus of an exploratory case study was the “exploration of the hitherto unknown” (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010, p. 373). MTO was the bounded system in which I collected data to understand its participants in their natural context (Stake, 1995). The research was exploratory because there was minimal information known about MTO’s organizational and individual emotional and intellectual perceptions about training development needs.

The exploratory qualitative case revealed MTO participants’ stated perceptions concerning staff professional development programs and individual and organizational training needs. These perceptions were developed from prior experiences throughout their professional military and civilian careers. This research was also exploratory because it was a prelude to potential further stages of MTO’s professional development program and no other research had been conducted in this area before.

The results might lead to a revision of the current professional development program design. Results may also lead to additional research to determine if program design changes meet
MTO’s organizational and individual trainer needs. This research might set conditions for further formative and summative evaluations of MTO’s professional development program.

**Data Collection**

Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested there are numerous actions in qualitative research data collection, which goes “beyond the typical reference point of conducting interviews or making observations” (p. 148). It is wise to seek multiple sources of information by using a combination of methods such as document analysis, observations, and interviewing to provide a comprehensive, deep, and rich understanding when researching the case. At the advisement of my dissertation committee, I did not conduct observations of participant trainer behavior, because I was only concerned with their past and current experiences, perceived needs, and recommendations for professional development. Personal observation of participant behaviors was not necessary to validate participant perspectives of individual and organizational training needs.

I used two methods of data collection, document and artifact analysis along with semi-structured, face-to-face interviews to engage in triangulation of the data. Triangulation allows validation and cross-checking of information to improve the validity of the findings (Patton, 2015). I used Creswell and Poth’s (2018) data collection circle as a guide for my data collection activities with a focus on ethical considerations in each activity (Figure 2).
Figure 2. Data collection circle.


Locating site.

The focus of this research was a military training organization located in the Southeastern U.S. Due to recent changes in regulatory policies for non-U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) sponsored research, the U.S. Air Force Survey Office advised me to conduct this research as a private citizen and engage participants as voluntary citizens in a location publicly accessible. I conducted interviews at various locations on our military base, which were accessible to all
participants in their status as either retired military, contractors with base access, or active duty during lunch hours.

Gaining access and attending to ethical issues.

Design of any qualitative research should consider ethical consequences from start to finish (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2014). Creswell and Poth’s (2018) table of ethical issues offered a comprehensive guideline of ethical issues and appropriate mitigation actions throughout the phases of research I used to design and execute my qualitative research (See Table 3). I modified the table slightly, selecting the issues, which addressed the context of the case study site and participants.

Table 3. Attending to Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing During Research Process</th>
<th>Type of Ethical Issue</th>
<th>How to Address the Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to conducting the study</td>
<td>• Seek university approval. • Gain local access permissions. • Select a site without a vested interest in</td>
<td>• Submit for institutional review board approval. • ID and go through local approvals for the site and participants. • Select a site that will not raise power issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to conduct the study</td>
<td>• Disclose the purpose of the study. • Refrain from pressuring participants to sign consent forms.</td>
<td>• Contact participants and inform them of purpose of the research. • Assure participants that their participation is voluntary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting data</td>
<td>• Respect the study site and minimize disruptions. • Avoid deceiving participants. • Respect potential power imbalances and exploitation of participants. • Do not “use” participants by gathering data and leaving the site without giving back. • Store data and materials (e.g. raw data and protocols) using appropriate security measures.</td>
<td>• Build trust and convey the extent of anticipated disruption in gaining access. • Discuss the purpose and use of the research data. • Avoid leading questions, withhold sharing personal impressions, and disclosing sensitive information. • Provide rewards for participating, and attend to opportunities for reciprocity. • Store data and materials in secure locations for five years (APA, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing data</td>
<td>• Avoid siding with participants and disclosing only positive results. • Respect privacy of participants.</td>
<td>• Report multiple perspectives and contrary findings. • Assign fictitious names or aliases; develop composite profiles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing During Research Process</th>
<th>Type of Ethical Issue</th>
<th>How to Address the Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting data</td>
<td>• Avoid falsifying authorship, evidence, data, findings and conclusions.</td>
<td>• Report honestly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Avoid disclosing information harmful to participants.</td>
<td>• Use composite stories so individuals cannot be identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicate in clear, straightforward, appropriate language.</td>
<td>• Use language appropriate for audiences of the research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do not plagiarize.</td>
<td>• See APA (2010) guidelines for permissions needed to reprint or adapt the work of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing study</td>
<td>• Share report with others.</td>
<td>• Provide copies of report to participants and stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tailor the report to diverse audiences.</td>
<td>• Share practical results; consider website distribution and publishing in other languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do not duplicate or piecemeal publications.</td>
<td>• Refrain from using the same material for more than one publication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete proof of compliance with ethical issues and lack of conflict of interest.</td>
<td>• Disclose funders for the research and who will profit from the research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The University of South Florida Institutional Review Board approved my application for research on 3 December 2018 (IRB#: Pro00037699) (Appendix A). I recruited study participants and conducted interviews during off-duty hours and at locations of participants’ choices accessible to the public on the military installation where MTO was located. I conducted document and artifact analysis at my home office. I used the USF official IRB stamped participant consent letter to ensure potential participants understood the legal and ethical rules and procedures in place to protect their anonymity, particularly with the contractors. The participants’ consent letter outlined key provisions in the University of South Florida regulations for protection of subjects in human research. I took extra care to ensure participants, especially contractors, did not believe they were obligated to participate due to my government civilian position or seniority within MTO, and understood they could leave the study at any time and ask me to remove part or all their data input.
Selecting one’s own organization to conduct research can be a dangerous proposition for researchers, because it may present a power imbalance between the participants and the researchers and depending on the organizational politics, may be risky for the researcher’s career (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since I selected my own organization to study, I mitigated the potential power imbalance situation by stressing the procedures for anonymity of the research results and by valuing their collaborative participation. In addition, I highlighted the potential benefits of the research, which might improve participants’ technical knowledge, skills, organizational environment, and capabilities through professional development program improvements. Since September 2017, my perception of the overall receptivity of MTO leadership and trainers towards the initiation of the MTO trainer professional development program has been positive.

Confidentiality was important in qualitative research because it ensured study participants were protected from punitive action or harm, and in doing so promoted an atmosphere more conducive to obtaining candid responses (Patton, 2015). To achieve confidentiality in this study, I assigned pseudonyms (i.e. Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.) for audio recordings of interviews and in subsequent transcriptions and removed any potentially identifying information. I asked interviewees to not mention any specific names during interviews, and to keep the content of the interviews confidential. For inadvertent references to specific names in taped interviews, I used (XX) in place of the names.

**Locating individuals and sampling purposefully.**

The intended participants in this exploratory case study were a mix of contractors, active-duty officer, and government civilian with prior or current backgrounds from the Army, Air Force, and U.S. Special Operations Command. Ninety percent of the 57 trainers in MTO are contractors, senior military retirees with an average of 20 to 30 years of military subject matter
expertise and an average age of 45 (Baby Boomer Generation Born 1946-1964). All the contractors were hired because of their military functional area subject matter expertise; however, there was a wide variance of formal instructor experience and instructor training among the contractor trainers, military officer trainers and organizational leaders.

MTO’s trainers, both military, government service, and contractors, were or currently are senior in rank and have extensive experience throughout their military careers either being trained, leading training, or commanding units undergoing training. Although many of MTO’s trainers did not have formal instructor training with regards to adult learning theory, they had deep and extensive experience with the concept and application of “military training.” One of Knowles’s (2015) six andragogical assumptions centers on adult learners’ rich and deep life experiences, which should be considered when planning adult education in professional development programs.

Based on Knowles’s premise and my personal knowledge of MTO participants’ knowledge and experience levels in military functional areas formal training, I used purposeful sampling, a “primary sampling strategy in qualitative research,” to select participants who could “purposefully inform an understanding” of the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 326). Purposeful sampling was appropriate for this case study approach because the total population of trainers, leadership, and staff involved in professional development program design was small (57), and I have deep knowledge of the populations’ skills and experience in training.

Within this small population, I used purposeful sampling of maximum variation sampling, which entailed determining participant differentiation criteria in advance and then selecting participants who vary based on the criteria. Patton (2015) noted maximum variation
heterogeneity) sampling attempts to capture and describe “the central themes that cut across a great deal of variation” and was particularly useful in small samples where a lot “of heterogeneity can be a problem because individual cases are so different from each other” (Patton, 2015, p. 283).

The common patterns uncovered through great variation play a key role in capturing the central aspects and values of a setting. This sampling strategy increased the probability my findings would reflect different perspectives and experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The criteria used for participant selection were longevity in the organization, military functional areas of expertise (Operations and Plans, Intelligence, Logistics, Communications), military service affiliation (Army, Air Force, Special Operations), and roles within the organization (Trainer, Leadership, Instructional Systems Designer).

I sent an interview protocol invitation letter (Appendix B) by email and received positive responses from all. Prior to the scheduled interviews, I sent an Institutional Review Board approved consent form (Appendix C) to participants and had them sign it the day of the interview. I interviewed seven contractors, one active duty military, and one government civilian representing trainer, instructional systems design, and leadership functions within MTO. Six of the seven contractors were retired military; (2) Colonels, (2) Lieutenant Colonels, (1) Major, and (1) Senior Master Sergeant. The contractor without prior military active duty service worked in both civilian and military organizations. The government civilian was a retired Lieutenant Colonel. Functional areas of expertise represented by the participants were: (2) Communications, (2) Intelligence, (3) Operations and Plans, (1) Logistics, and (1) Instructional Design. My purposeful sampling strategy provided a diverse mix of trainer perceptions representing a good cross-section of the organization.
Collecting data.

I used two data collection methods (documents and artifacts and semi-structured, face-to-face interviews) to explore the individual and organizational training needs of a military training organization, which trains battle staffs to inform professional development program design.

**Documents and Artifacts.** Patton (2015) said traditional material culture in anthropology, records, documents, artifacts, and archives, provides a “rich source of information about many organizations and programs” (p. 376). Access to emails, policies, after action reviews, memoranda tell a story about the past and present of an organization, which cannot be observed revealing relationships, aspirations, tensions, and decisions made, which can help frame the data collection effort (Patton, 2015). I explored current and historical training related documents (historical training guidance, emails and survey data conducted in 2017) to identify codified organizational and individual trainer needs addressed and not addressed by MTO.

These documents and artifacts provided information on the following: mission, tasks, previous survey of training strengths, needs, weaknesses, which informed the development of my semi-structured interview questions and provided insights into the purpose, direction, and current status of trainer requirements and needs. I conducted analytic memoing using a field journal while reviewing these document and emails capturing my reflections on the organization's mission, tasks, and the study's research questions.

**Interviews.** Brinckmann and Kvale (2015) described a qualitative interview as “attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experience, to uncover their lived world” (p. 3). Interviews tended to use open-ended questions with a design to probe participants for in-depth answers about their “experiences, perceptions,
opinions, feelings, and knowledge” yielding “verbatim quotes with sufficient context to be interpretable” (Patton, 2015, p. 14).

Patton (2015) described the importance of the interviewer’s skills noting “the quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer” (p. 427). He explained interviewing can be accomplished based on the researcher’s level of skill gained through much or little learning and practice; “a lot of people engaged in interviewing lack fundamental skills, have never been trained, and are actually lousy interviewers” (p. 422). Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) referred to interviewing as a craft developed through extensive practice. This research was my first foray in the art of qualitative interviewing. Due to scheduling and timing, I was not able to take a class on interviewing during my doctoral studies.

To improve my knowledge about interviewing, I conducted an extensive review of interviewing literature by qualitative research experts in the field (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015; Stake, 1995). Michael Patton (2015) provided the most profound advice I found from my literature review on interviewing, which emphasized a “deep capacity for empathetic understanding:”

While this chapter has emphasized skill and technique as ways of enhancing the quality of interview data, no less important is a genuine interest in and caring about the perspectives of other people. If what people have to say about their world is generally boring to you, then you will never be a great interviewer. Unless you are fascinated by the rich variation in human experience, qualitative interviewing will become drudgery. On the other hand, a deep and genuine interest in learning about people is insufficient without disciplined and rigorous inquiry based on skill, technique, and a deep capacity for empathetic understanding (p. 505).
My 30+ year career as a military educator and trainer allowed for experiential empathy while conducting fieldwork including document/artifact analysis and interviews and motivated my personal passion to seek and provide holistic and representative findings of MTO’s training needs to inform professional development. My training perspectives, experience, and doctoral studies in ethical research enabled me, in my view, to mitigate to a great degree my personal bias and perceptions of training needs within MTO. I was able to use my training and organizational experience to facilitate a deep and rich dialogue via the semi-structured, face-to-face interview process to capture a holistic understanding of MTO’s leadership’s, staff’s, and other trainers’ training experiences, perspectives, and biases.

For this research, I used a semi-structured, open-ended interview methodology utilizing an interview guide. I selected this approach because it provided a disciplined framework to develop and sequence questions allowing the researcher flexibility in determining, which information to follow in depth (Patton, 2015). The interview guide was advantageous because it facilitated time management and focus for the interviewer, ensuring all pertinent areas were addressed to answer the research questions.

I designed the interview guide after extensive document and artifact review and considerations from an extensive literature review. I developed the interview guide with the aim to capture comparable data among MTO’s leadership, instructional systems designer, and trainers while also eliciting data unique to the varied interviewees based on their roles. Yin (2017) suggests using a pilot study as a first step in identifying and critiquing interview questions for appropriateness in case study research. I utilized my first interview with MTO’s instructional systems designer as a pilot to critique my interview guide, since she was the most knowledgeable expert in MTO on adult learning principles and techniques.
I contacted potential participants individually, explaining the purpose of the research, voluntary participation, and measures to ensure confidentiality via an Interview Protocol Invitation Letter (Appendix B). Confidentiality was critical in this study because some participants were contractors who might fear their responses would jeopardize their employment. I administered a University of South Florida approved consent letter (Appendix C) to participants who responded to my invitation to participate in an interview. The consent letter outlined in detail what the study procedures entailed and procedures ensuring confidentiality and safeguarding of interview data. All queries for participation and actual interviews took place off the military installation during non-duty hours at public locations on the base. All participants solicited accepted my invitation to participate in the research. I selected interview locations on base, which provide a relaxed environment.

Prior to the interview process, I informed participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. For member checking, I sent participants their transcribed interviews, my synopsis of their interview, and the final dissertation draft for their review and approval.

**Recording information and storing data securely.**

Taking field notes is a crucial part of the mechanics of qualitative research. Lofland (1971) suggested field notes are “the most important determinant of later bringing off a qualitative analysis” (p. 102). Field notes should contain everything a researcher believes is relevant to answering the research questions; a description of where an observation occurred, who was present, setting characteristics, social interactions, relevant activities, and what people say (Patton, 2015). Field notes should also include the researcher’s “insights, interpretations, beginning analyses, and working hypotheses” about what is being observed and annotated separately in context (p. 388).
My field notes avoided capturing sensitive information, which would make the data become classified and therefore unusable in this unclassified research. I used a portable voice recorder to capture interview data. I manually transcribed the first two interview transcripts and determined due to my slow typing abilities I should use a commercial transcription service. I sent the remaining seven transcripts to rev.com for transcription and made minor modifications to the transcripts due to errors found. I kept all research digital files on my personal computer and backed up files daily on a USB drive, which I secured daily in a lockable Sentry 1170 fire safe in my residence. I also made a duplicate copy of all handwritten and printed field notes and kept them in the fireproof safe.

**Minimizing field issues.**

The first issue often encountered by researchers is lack of full understanding of the time required to conduct qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To address this issue, I submitted the institutional review board approval in November 2018 while simultaneously preparing for the proposal defense timeline of events. I limited the number of interviewees to nine to ensure ample time for analysis. I determined no need for secondary interviews due to the thorough responses to research questions during the interviews.

**Data collection.**

My first step in data analysis process began with a review of the theoretical underpinnings for this research and documents and artifacts. The purpose of this review was to collect general information about the organization and individuals and help develop an interview guide with appropriate questions. I conducted semi-structured interviews using an interview guide (Appendix F) and a small voice recorder and then transcribed the data manually and by
using a commercial service. During the data collection phase, I began initial analysis noting and recording potential emerging themes and patterns and confirming or disconfirming thematic ideas while I collected and transcribed the data from hand written and recorded notes. I conducted member checking providing participants the opportunity to validate their transcribed interviews, my synopsis of their interviews, and the final dissertation draft. I did this with participants to verify and validate the verisimilitude of my descriptions and interpretations.

**Managing and organizing the data.**

I ensured all data (notes from document and artifact review, interview transcriptions) were complete, organized, backed up, and ready for coding (Patton, 2015). I used a qualitative data analysis software program (MAXQDA) and an Excel spreadsheet to organize the data for coding, which allowed easy retrieval of categories, codes, and themes developed.

**Reading and memoing.**

I read my organized field notes several times in preparation for detailed analysis paying particular attention to the reflective notes taken during and immediately after data collection. This type of review provided the big picture of the data prior to breaking it down and aggregating it to establish patterns or themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Once I started detailed analysis, I continued to write analysis memos in MAXQDA to capture my reflections and facilitate organizing ideas, connections, and disparities in the data. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) suggest memos are “not just descriptive summaries of data but attempts to synthesize in them into higher level analytic meanings”(p. 95). Memoing also provides an “audit trail,” which helps document conceptual and interpretive processes over time and facilitates validation of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
**Analysis of data using constant comparative methodology.**

Qualitative data analysis involves “multifaceted analytical integration of disciplined science, creative artistry, skillful crafting, rigorous sense making, and personal reflexivity” when turning raw data derived from field collection methods into findings (Patton, 2015, p. 521).

“Good field methods are necessary, but not sufficient, for good research. You may be a skilled and diligent observer and interviewer and gather “rich data,” but, unless you have good ideas about how to focus the study and analyze those data, your project will yield little of value.” (Whyte, 1984, p. 225).

I framed my data analysis based on my research questions analyzing the trainers’, leadership’s, and the instructional designer’s experiences, perceptions, and ideas about trainer professional development.

I employed constant comparative analysis (CCM) to make sense of the data. (Boeije, 2002; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Patton, 2015). Using this approach, I conducted categorical aggregation of data and found emerging patterns. I then grouped these data into themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). CCM offered a systematic way to analyze data to “check for consistency and accuracy” of developed themes, and also look for any inconsistencies, differences, or variations within the data (Patton, 2015, p. 658). Patton said, “constant comparison is an ongoing analysis of similarities and differences,” which offers explanations and implications for what data goes together and what is different (p. 658).

CCM is associated with a systematic approach of data analysis, which generates and plausibly suggests “many categories, properties, and hypotheses about general problems,” which
leads to an integrated explanatory theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 104). Tesch (1990) explained researchers used CCM to form categories, and subsequently establish boundaries, assign segments, summarize content, and find negative evidence for these categories with the ultimate goal to “discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns” (p. 96). CCM consisted of two major actions, fragmenting and connecting. Fragmenting separates themes, which arise during an interview, observation, or review of documents and helps to extract “coded pieces out of the context…as a whole” while connecting “accentuates the context and richness” of data interpreted holistically (Boeije, 2002, p. 394).

I used Glaser and Strauss’ (1967; 1987) four stage CCM and Boeije’s (Boeije, 2002) approach (see Table 4) in my research. In Glaser and Strauss’ first stage of CCM, I compared data within a single incident and generated tentative categories, coding each incident into as many categories as appropriate using open coding and documenting my reflective insights during this process using memos. I described and coded what I discovered in the data using two coding perspectives, emic and etic coding. Emic (i.e. insider) coding is based on “the language and categories used by the people in the culture studied” and captures the unique vernacular and customs of a group or organization (Patton, 2015, p. 337). In addition, I used etic codes, those derived from the literature and my interpretive perspective as the researcher, in an effort to winnow down the data into emerging patterns and themes, which helped make sense of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Etic (i.e. outsider) coding involves the outside perspective of the researcher “standing far enough away from or outside of a particular culture to see its separate events…in relation to their similarities and differences” (Pike, 1954, p. 10). In the second stage of CCM, the unit of comparison changed from “incident with incident” to “incident with
properties of the category” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 108). In the third stage of CCM I reduced similar categories to a “smaller number of highly conceptual categories”, and checked the data for proper fit into the emergent framework (Merriam & Simpson, 1995, p. 116).

Table 4. Different Steps of the Constant Comparative Analysis Procedure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Comparison</th>
<th>Analysis Activities</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Comparison within a single interview</td>
<td>Open coding; Summarizing core of the interview; Finding consensus on interpretation of fragments.</td>
<td>Develop categories Understanding</td>
<td>What is the core message of the interview? How are different fragments related? Is the interview consistent? Are there contradictions? What do fragments with the same code have in common?</td>
<td>Summary of the interview; Provisional codes (code tree); Conceptual profile; Extended memos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Comparison between interviews within the same group; persons who share the same experience</td>
<td>Axial coding; Formulating criteria for comparing interviews; Hypothesizing about patterns and types.</td>
<td>Conceptualization of the subject produces a typology</td>
<td>Is A talking about the same as B? What do both interviews reveal about the category? What combinations of concepts occur? What interpretations exist for this? What are the similarities and differences between interviews A, B, C…? What criteria underlie this comparison?</td>
<td>Expansion of code words until all relevant themes are covered; Description of concepts; Criteria for comparing interviews; Clusters of interviews (typology).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Comparison of interviews from groups with different perspectives but involved with the subject under study</td>
<td>Triangulating data sources</td>
<td>Complete the picture Enrich the information</td>
<td>What does Group 1 say about certain themes and what does Group 2 have to say about the same themes? What themes appear in Group 1 but not in Group 2 and vice versa? Why do they see things similarly or differently? What nuances, details or new information does group 2 supply about group 1?</td>
<td>Verification of provisional knowledge of interviewees from Group 1; Additional information; Memos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from Table 1 from, “A Purposeful Approach to the Constant Comparative Method in the Analysis of Qualitative Interview,” by Hennie Boeije, 2002, Quality and Quantity, 36(4), p. 396. Copyright 2002 by Springer Nature. Adapted with permission.

This process of categorical aggregation grouped like information into categories which subsequently reduced the data and helped answer the research questions. Maxwell (2013)
suggested organizing data in categories assists in development and arrangement of theoretical constructs using an inductive approach in qualitative research.

In the fourth stage of CCM, I wrote my conclusions from the analysis describing themes with narrative examples and relating findings to my theoretical framework. I concluded my analysis when I was convinced the “analytic framework…is a reasonably accurate statement of the matters studied, and is couched in a form others going into the field could use” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 113). CCM allows for a rigorous and systematic way of analyzing data, which increases traceability and credibility of findings and conclusions (Boeije, 2002; Merriam & Simpson, 1995).

**Quality, credibility, and validity of research**

Patton (2015) suggested there are four elements relating to the credibility and quality of qualitative research: a) “systematic, in-depth fieldwork,” which produces quality data; b) “systematic and conscientious analysis of data” with a focus on credibility; c) “credibility of the inquirer,” which is dependent on experience, status, training, etc. d) “readers’ and users’ philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry” (p. 653). Creswell and Poth’s (2018) view of validation and quality in qualitative research aligned with Patton’s. They suggested validation was an effort to “assess the accuracy of the findings” achieved through extensive field research time, rich and detailed descriptions, and closeness to participants described through a combination of the researcher, participants, and readers (p. 259). In addition to seeking quality and validity in qualitative research, an important aspect of qualitative research is its ability to divulge new questions, possibilities, and dialogue about research questions posed, which creates a transformative effect promoting change and action (Angen, 2000).
I established my bonafides and credibility for this research with the reader in the introduction where I outlined 30+ years of military training and education experience, two master’s degrees and current doctoral work, and my current role as a Joint Exercise Training Specialist in charge of MTO’s professional development program. In addition, my self-described natural tendencies towards critical self-reflection, constantly challenging my beliefs and assumptions about my identity, roles, purpose, and actions aligned with the “systematic and conscientious analysis of data” focused on accuracy to achieve credibility and quality in qualitative research (Patton, 2015).

To achieve validation during my research, I corroborated evidence through triangulation of multiple data sources: documents and artifacts and in-depth interviews. I highlighted evidence, which led to correlational aggregation of themes and noted evidence, which did not fit any pattern (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 260). I did not discount evidence because it did not seem to fit with general trends during constant comparative analysis. I also facilitated validation of the research by exposing my personal experiences, biases, and values, which influenced the lens through, which I collected, analyzed, and interpreted the data.

Another strategy pursued for verisimilitude (truthfulness) of the research is member checking; a review of data collected, analysis conducted, and interpretations and conclusions with the participants so they can judge the credibility and accuracy of the work (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Lincoln and Guba (1985) considered member checking to be “the most critical technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). The purpose of using strategies to ensure validity, credibility, and quality in this research are designed to facilitate extrapolation and transferability more than to achieve generalizability to other contexts (Patton, 2015). I sent participants an invitation (Appendix G) via email to conduct member checking of their
transcribed interviews and my synopsis of their interviews. Only four of nine participants validated their transcription and two validated the synopsis.
Chapter Four: Discoveries

Introduction

I conducted research and analysis of data collected from December 2018 to April 2019. Data obtained from face-to-face interviews with nine participants, which lasted approximately one hour provided sufficient depth, richness, and saturation to adequately answer the research questions. All participants were enthusiastic in offering their perceptions about personal and organizational training needs regarding professional development and organizational effectiveness. I felt the participants appreciated the opportunity to voice their perceptions, frustrations, and recommendations about the organizational culture and professional development in MTO. None had any reservations about providing anonymous feedback as a private citizen outside of their contractor or government role as required by the U.S. Air Force Survey Office for this study.

The major themes, which emerged from the data analysis were; (a) trainer experiences, (b) professional development experiences, (c) organizational issues, (d) training issues, (e) organizational solutions, and (f) professional development approaches and activities. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, I used the following research questions to guide the interview process:

1. In what ways do participants in MTO perceive trainer and professional development experiences throughout their military and professional careers?

2. What are participants’ perceptions of training needs in MTO?
3. What are participants’ ideas for developing and implementing a trainer professional development program to meet these needs?

Participants Perceptions on Professional Development and MTO’s Training Needs

I employed the purposeful sampling strategy of maximum variation sampling due to the small population of MTO trainers, staff, and leadership where heterogeneity among individual cases can be problematic. As stated in Chapter 3, I deliberately selected trainers with varied military Service and functional subject matter backgrounds and included both trainers, staff, and organizational leadership, which is deemed essential in conducting a comprehensive training needs analysis (Warshauer, 1988b). The pseudonyms I selected (i.e. Participant 1, Participant 2, etc…) offered anonymity, which was a concern of mine considering the small population size of MTO participants. All quotes used in this section included the line number locations from the full interview transcripts. Table 5 illustrates participants’ profiles depicting relevant factors for this study.

Participant 1

Participant 1 was an instructional systems designer contractor hired two years ago to fill a void in MTO professional development related to instructional materials development and presentation. She had a master’s degree in adult education and counseling and several industry certifications in Microsoft, PeopleSoft and was familiar with corporate training methodologies such as the Ed Jones methodology and adult education practitioners like Malcolm Knowles, Kirkpatrick, and Pat and John Robinson. She worked for various contractor companies in both the civilian and military sectors with extensive experience developing and implementing professional development programs. She noted, “I’ve been working with staffs for a long time to either build or to revise and revamp and make sure that training takes place…” (P1,9).
Table 5. Participants’ Profiles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Retired or Current Military Rank</th>
<th>Current Duty Status</th>
<th>Military Service Background</th>
<th>Functional Expertise</th>
<th>Formal Trainer/Adult Education Training</th>
<th>Years of Military / Contractor Training Experience in a Training Organization</th>
<th>Time in MTO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant #1</td>
<td>Civilian</td>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Instructional Design</td>
<td>Yes (M.A. degree)</td>
<td>16 yrs</td>
<td>17 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #2</td>
<td>LTC</td>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>US Army US Special Operations</td>
<td>Logistics</td>
<td>Some (2 Weeks)</td>
<td>5 yrs</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #3</td>
<td>MSgt</td>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>US Air Force</td>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Yes (A.A. degree)</td>
<td>15 yrs</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #4</td>
<td>MAJ</td>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>US Air Force</td>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>7 yrs</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #5</td>
<td>COL</td>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>Some (1 Day Crs)</td>
<td>16 months</td>
<td>16 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #6</td>
<td>LTC</td>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>US Army US Special Operations</td>
<td>Operations / Plans</td>
<td>Some (4 weeks)</td>
<td>10 yrs</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #7</td>
<td>LTC</td>
<td>Govt Civilian</td>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>Leadership Intelligence</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>19 yrs</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #8</td>
<td>COL</td>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>US Air Force US Special Operations</td>
<td>Operations / Plans</td>
<td>Yes (14 Weeks)</td>
<td>10 yrs</td>
<td>9 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant #9</td>
<td>COL</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>US Army US Special Operations</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8 yrs</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant 1 was the only participant without any prior military service and one of two employees in MTO with significant formal education, training, and experience in adult education, training, and instructional systems design (WASD). MTO hired Participant 1 as a major part of its plan to develop and implement a professional development program. She defined professional development as “anything that helps you be better at your job in the current environment,” which she explained was focused in two areas in the context of MTO trainers, “the individual as a facilitator of learning and the materials that they use as a change agent” (P1,11).
She was passionate about improving the quality of MTO trainers’ instructional materials, delivery methods, and training evaluation abilities while recognizing and respecting MTO trainers’ experience and expertise as she explained,

These guys aren’t your average Burger King trainers, oh, these guys are special; they are unique…just respecting the rank even though they’re largely civilian at this point; just respecting that former rank and being able to identify with them and say, "Hey, I get it." But let’s see what you have, but this was what I can do if you’re interested. Always from the approach of collaboration and it’s not my product. I don't know anything about what you do. (P1,25)

Participant 1 highlighted the difficulties working with senior trainers who have extensive military experience and expertise in their technical areas of specialty;

Everybody here is a rock star in their own ways or in their previous life…they are bringing something to the table that’s rare. So, in this environment it’s hard to convince somebody who is maybe a CT [counterterrorism] expert, that there’s room for improvement on what you are delivering to the customer. That’s been the most difficult part. (P1,23)

She was knowledgeable on the ADDIE Model, Knowles’s version of andragogy, and adult learning principles and integrated them into her role as MTO’s instructional systems designer. From Knowles, she said she focused on and tried to impart to MTO’s trainers the “respect factor” acknowledging “everybody brings something to the table” (Knowles, 1980). She outlined her struggles with MTO trainers’ lack of knowledge and practice of adult learning principles of student-centered versus trainer centered;
and although you are the SME [subject matter expert], they’re the customer…and it’s almost like there’s a curtain there for our staff members; that when I’m talking to you it’s about me. It’s not about you, and just shifting their paradigm towards more of a Knowles’s method, that it is really about the person sitting at the other end of the table….I’ve focused so much on working the materials up to standard and trying to make the shift from lecture, but I don’t think I’ve done a very good job. (P1,29)

She described her observations of the MTO trainer to trainee relationship during training as, “The student is persona non-grata. If they are asleep, that's fine; if they are doodling, that's fine; because it's one way. It's lecture. It's not, I'm, as an instructor, I’m there to give my pitch and it doesn't matter if you are receiving it” (P1,35).

I purposefully chose Participant 1 as my first interviewee because she had the most knowledge and experience with instructional design and adult learning theory based on her master’s degree in adult education. I used her interview as a pilot to help validate my research questions. It was interesting when she told me she did not think trainers would be able to answer my second research question focused on identifying trainer needs to develop, conduct, and evaluate effective adult military training. She told me, “I don't think that they will know Knowles’s theory or be able to communicate to you what they do or how they do it in meaningful terms” (P1,130). Although she mentioned strengths of MTO as number of trainers, years of experience, and ability to travel and outreach, her general perspective of MTO trainers was one of a fundamental lack of knowledge and skills in adult learning principles and practices. She said, “I haven’t met anybody yet that doesn’t want to do better but they don’t know” referring to instructional design principles outlined in the ADDIE model and Knowles’s adult learning principles (P1,134).
From her instructional systems design expertise and experience, Participant 1 identified some specific MTO trainer training needs, which affected the quality of battle staff training. One training need identified was an unfamiliarity with training technology; specifically audiovisual capabilities. She mentioned her frustration about collaborating with one trainer to improve his materials by adding multimedia segments, but he removed them when he executed a training session because of his unfamiliarity with the video component of the multimedia system he was using. From her perspective as MTO’s sole instructional designer, she thought about “my customer and where they are on the pendulum of electronics and technical things because I don’t want my customer to feel nervous or anxious about what they are teaching” (P1,53).

Participant 1 used the A, analyze component of the ADDIE model, to highlight poor training needs analysis skills of MTO trainers. She offered several examples where MTO trainers either failed to understand the customer due to poor training analysis skills, a trainer-centered versus trainee-centered attitude, or simply a resistance to change attitude; “nobody here wants to hear that your product can be improved. They’re the SME with 20 years’ experience…the customer says…I’ve been here two years, and this is the exact same brief from two years ago” (P1,19). She wanted to see more problem solving to avoid “the mindset again that I’m that SME and you’re going to get what you’re going to get” attitude (P1,62). She taught her first group of MTO trainers how to analyze age demographics of the training audience and how to select an appropriate training example, which would appeal to the identified average age group. In this case, they identified the average age of a particular training audience, 23, and selected an example showing the US’s interception of the enemy’s use of TWITTER and texting, which led to a tactical victory. She emphasized improving their analysis skills to “peel back the layer of the
onion; who’s your customer and what’s the best way to facilitate learning and get them excited” (P1,62)

For the D, development component, of the ADDIE model, she preferred seeing improved technology for better real-world simulation shifting current PowerPoint into interactive media. She also indicated a shortfall in proper skills of MTO trainers to design appropriate training materials,

So, I’m looking at this brief, number one guy, CT [counterterrorism] expert. No objectives. Here’s a bunch of information….So, he thanked me, but he didn’t know…that he needed graphics…We made a PE [practical exercises], a small group discussion. We added a map; all kinds of stuff and he was appreciative. (P1,90)

For the D, design component of the ADDIE model, she proposed “to shift that paradigm away from briefing PowerPoint, lectures…from giving a pitch and really doing something like sitting in a circle; really having dialogue and discussion and having the skillset to facilitate. We're not facilitators we're briefers” (P1,70). Participant 1 noted good facilitation is a primary goal for the professional development program and recounted the only time she has seen good facilitation skills from an MTO trainer:

“[Trainer Z] had two slides for a full day presentation, and it was masterful….he would say like ‘What would success look like?’ and just being able to engage them remaining invisible at the same time and he had it; like this guy nailed facilitation. Two slides, and even though it was in our standard, I’m going to talk, and I have something up on the screen, it wasn’t the focus of his time and it wasn’t abused and if we could get to that, I would hail a major success. (P1,76)
This was countered by another group of MTO trainers she observed and said were “awful” facilitating a table-top exercise (P1,74). For the I, implementation component of the ADDIE model, Participant 1 expressed a desire to teach MTO trainers different ways of reaching a training audience. “There's so many ways to do outreach, just thinking about different ways to touch our audience time and time again and even after they deploy or they're forward; how do we capture and keep that going” (P1,100)?

Participant 1 reflected on certain aspects of organizational culture, which bothered her from a leadership, accountability, and standards perspective. She highlighted the heavy operational tempo of the trainers but commented on a lack of an organizational expectation for productivity and currency. When referring to the D, develop component of the ADDIE model, she asserted,

Develop; I would like to see us demand more. Our guys have a lot of time when they have down time. It's fast-paced and it's crazy when they're on the road but when you're home and after you've done your travel voucher, what are we working on? And I think the expectation has been that's your time. What we [trainers] did last year still stands but no need to update it. (P1,80)

She desired to see an “expectation that we develop, that we evolve, we grow, and other people are looking at it. We have guys that go out and nobody has ever seen their brief” (P1,82). She asserted a lack of standards and leadership attributed to many MTO trainers not updating their training materials and staying current. “It goes to character because there’s no [organizational] expectation that you’re not lifting weights or watching Fox News….So where’s the edict that we get better and remain current? Write a white paper; do something to stay current” (P1,118). She was pretty forceful and animated when she said, “I’d like to see
production and action; however, you do it, whenever you do it. Show me you’re staying current” (P1,122).

Participant 1 has been a tremendous asset to the MTO professional development program based on my personal observations and years of training experience. She enacted formal instructional systems design and adult learning and training expertise to fill a significant void in MTO. In 2018, she had the opportunity to work with a small segment of MTO trainers and received positive feedback on her professional development efforts.

Working with [XX] and having those guys feel like they were the bottom of the barrel and seeing their stars rise from being the group that got sent home to the group that's requested has just been phenomenal for the department, for [MTO] as a whole, and definitely for the individuals who recognize and can appreciate our craft. (P1,15)

She commented, “I know that what we have done as a professional development team is working and they know it too and that feels good” (P1,13). Figure 3 illustrates Participant 1’s interview question responses linked to the research questions.

**Participant 2**

Participant 2 retired from a full career in the US Army in 2012 as a Lieutenant Colonel and became a contractor trainer in MTO. He had no formal training or education in adult learning during his military career and noted his contractor job in MTO was “my first and a formal job as an instructor” (P2,4).
Figure 3. Participant 1’s responses to research questions.

He described having mixed experiences with professional development during his military career noting some organizations had programs while others did not. He recalled an experience in his last Special Operations unit, which focused on a “win-win” strategy of teaching career progression skillsets benefiting both individual and organizational growth (P2,14). He had a positive view of his unit’s approach to professional development which he said, “was looked at more holistically not as necessarily professional development but as talent management” (P2,12).
His perspective on the purpose of professional development in the military was one of “a process where you can see a roadmap ahead of you where there’s progression and there’s promotion for the people who want it. I think it only helps improve the organization as a whole…having the structure there is important” (P2,14). He described a definite need for a professional development program in MTO:

because the mission constantly changes, right. The enemy constantly changes and the reality of it is unlike a civilian organization where maybe you’re working for a grocery store chain…We have the opposing force that’s real and dynamic and we have to constantly counter…(P2,18)

He described a common situation in MTO where “the standard is always changing; the missions are always changing,” which required “some kind of development program in order to get all of our guys, military and contractor, to a level where they can respond” (P2,18).

His military professional development experiences and perceptions contrasted sharply to what he experienced as a contractor for the last five years in MTO where he noted “no professional development whatsoever” after employment with three companies (P2,10).

Working for this company for the last four years; no chance for professional development, no chance for promotion, no chance for growth. Of course, it's really easy to get in that and ‘Hey man, I don't have to do anything, I don't want to do anything, and I still keep getting a paycheck.’ There's nothing that drives you towards…(P2,14)

Participant 2 did not agree with this mentality as he repeatedly demonstrated during the interview his passion and commitment to improving training and serving the customer. He described his internal motivation for personal professional development and performance as driven by his
desire to “make sure that my family stays safe….I'm helping to train the people that are going to keep my family safe, so I'm investing 110% in the information that I give to our customers” (P2,20). Like Participant 1’s perceptions, he contrasted his intrinsic motivation against other trainers in MTO that he perceived are not motivated.

There's [sic] guys that are sitting in there doing online learning for their GI Bill. They're like, ‘Well screw it, I don't have to do anything for this job because there's no metrics, no performance evaluation, no milestones that I need to hit. I can do the same briefing for the next five years and that's all anybody's asking of me, so why should I professionally develop myself? I get paid for my time and do my online GI Bill and get my $800 a month VAH [variable housing allowance], and who knows and who cares? (P2,20)

During the interview, Participant 2 portrayed an antagonistic and frustrated attitude towards a part of the MTO trainer staff he perceived as doing the bare minimum and an organization, which allowed this behavior and substandard performance. His description of an unmotivated trainer in MTO illustrated his personal dissatisfaction with MTO leadership.

If I do the same briefing every day for five years, who’s going to know the difference? Who’s going to care? Because there’s nobody coming to look at, nobody’s evaluating, assessing the quality of my information; and not just the quality of my information but the quality of my performance. (P2,24)

When asked about his perceptions of the role of the organization in professional development, Participant 2 talked extensively about the importance of understanding the organization’s purpose and mission. He said,
First and foremost, I think they provide a purpose….so the first thing and organization should be doing is saying here’s what your purpose is….and you know, how you’re going to get there and what your desired endstate is. That’s not clear anywhere [in MTO], but that’s probably one of the biggest functions of an organization, of the leadership of that organization. (P2,32)

He described uncertainty with MTO’s mission statement and purpose,

I looked at the mission statement that we had hanging on the wall in our office and it still doesn’t make any sense. It’s a paragraph of how we’re going to do something; provide the best training to SOF operators. (P2,28)

He expressed frustration when relating professional development to “achieve the purpose of the organization” when there is a lack of understanding from his perception of MTO’s mission and purpose (P2,39).

If the purpose isn’t clear and stated by the organization and reiterated by the organization and enabled by the organization…you don’t know what the purpose is, how the hell do you know how to get there? How do you know what you’re supposed to professionally develop yourself on?..How does the organization determine how to prepare to provide you professional development if there’s no clear stated purpose? (P2,30)

Participant 2 discussed a training need for a better understanding of analyzing training requirements “to build a professional development program that allows us to address; it allows us as coaches, teachers, and mentors [to] gain the tools so that we can give our customers what it is they are asking for...” (P2,53). He described a linkage between analysis and determining professional development focus areas stating, “you know, if we took an honest look inside
[MTO] and said this is what our customer wants, this is our [MTO] mission, getting after what our customer wants means X, Y, and Z skillsets” (P2,75).

Participant 2 recommended continued use of a two-week faculty development course at the Joint Special Operations University he attended in October 2018 for MTO trainers and liked the exposure in the course to different ways of instruction. He discussed a constant problem with maintaining currency in technical subject matter expertise. “Every minute I spend in that cubicle away from my customer, my subject matter expertise becomes stale. I no longer am as much of an expert as I was last week because something has changed” (P2,61). To stay current, he relied heavily on professional reading, which he described his access to as “very random…there’s no dedicated process in [MTO] by which we disseminate information” (P2, 61). He suggested development of a daily reader to share within MTO. He also recommended MTO make space on the calendar available for professional development for trainers based on their high operational tempo.

Participant 2 portrayed a perception of incongruity within MTO related to organizational standards and practices for training evaluation and metrics. He spoke favorably for his joint training team (JTT); “Our JTT has a purpose, so we know where we want to go. We know how we want to respond to our customer” (P2,83). He described his JTTs relationship between analysis and evaluation in terms of constant interaction and feedback from our customers, so it’s almost [Kirkpatrick] level four analysis. ‘Hey, are you getting what you need; how do you want me to adjust’….there’s a conversation about how we build that and how do we define whether or not it worked and what are the metrics for training success….and that those metrics are constantly changing. (P2,79)
However, he described differences within the other two JTTs in MTO.

We can’t get the other two JTTs to go, ‘Yeah, let’s do that,’ because there’s no purpose; .Between the three JTT leads, there’s no uniform approach or methodology or uniform metrics by which we measure anything; therefore, no uniform professional development; whether it’s for the military or the contractors because there’s no freaking desired end-state. There’s no understanding of what our purpose is in [MTO]. (P2,83)

Participant 2 discussed his personal opinion on the implementation of a trainer proficiency standards model to mitigate some of the identified organizational standards shortfalls stating. “Personally, I’m good with that. I think anything that gives me an opportunity that, first to be exposed to an outside way of doing something, a different way of doing something, that's great” (P2,59). However, he expressed concern many other MTO trainers would be resistant to this effort. “There are people who will be violently resistant to it. I would expect that because there are still people who have been doing things the same way since it [MTO] was SOCJFCOM [Special Operations Command-Joint Forces Command]” (P2,59). Figure 4 illustrates Participant 2’s interview question responses linked to the research questions.

Participant 3

Participant 3 was one of two MTO trainers interviewed, which had prior enlisted military service before retiring after 20 years as a Master Sergeant in the U.S. Air Force. He had fifteen years of experience serving in various training organizations within the Air Force and various civilian contractor companies. Besides Participant 1, he was the only other study participant with formal education in adult learning, an Associate degree as a Technical Training Instructor from the Air Force Community College. Throughout his military and civilian career, he served in many trainer positions such as: marksmanship instructor, manager of training programs for
organizational maintenance, instructor of Microsoft applications, trainer for intelligence applications, and his current position as a communications analyst trainer in MTO.

He said his formal experience, training, and education in adult learning impacted all of his training.

Figure 4. Participant 2’s responses to research questions.
Participant 3 described professional development in the U.S. Air Force as “extremely well-defined” relating details about a structured program for professional promotion through the enlisted ranks; “with our testing system, you were inundated with knowledge; exactly what the Air Force wants at every level and inundated with everything about a job” (P3,75). He expressed not having any organizational-specific professional development experiences in the Air Force. As a contractor, however, he described a good experience with organizational professional development during his employment with Booze Allen Hamilton.

People used to joke about Booz Allen. They said, it's kind of like being in the National Guard. Yeah, they just had a very regimented system [for professional development]. Yeah, they just did; and they were very hands on as far as management of the individuals. (P3,41)

His personal views on professional development reflected an emphasis on personal initiative and motivation. “As far as professional development; I’ve just always have been one that personal initiative, that’s the number one for us as an NCO [Non-Commissioned Officer]. What they [USAF] taught you is personal initiative” (P3,41).

Participant 3 described his experience of military organizations he served in as having distinct norms and expectations; “when you came into that office, there was a norm and expectation from your boss you will do this” (P3,45). His description of right for organizational professional development was the expectation of personal initiative to constantly maintain relationships, continually seek out new technologies, and learn them well enough to build classes and teach them to a standard, which displayed mastery of the subject. For MTO, he described elements of complacency regarding the preparation of materials and instruction presented by most trainers in MTO.
Here’s where I see it. I see us as pushing out a specific product, Hey, we’re going to go, we’re going to do academics. Ah, we’re going to teach this, this, and this, and it’s usually the same thing every time. There’s [sic] some exceptions: [Participant 2] gets very creative because it’s reaching out to your customer base. That’s what I don’t see in other elements of MTO. (P3,83)

He suggested an appropriate approach for training and his perception of MTO’s incongruence with this approach.

You have to have…the three phases of the Aristotle’s teaching mode; logos, ethos, and …you have to be logical in your delivery. You have to be credible, and you have to have emotional connection. And you can't do that if you're just, ‘Well, this is my PowerPoint’….Here's my estimation of who’s got the time because there tends to be kind of an expectation and a norm that if we're not out supporting and exercise, back here, we just kind of killing time waiting here to go out. That's bad. That is a bad model. They [USAF] used to tell us for every hour you're up on the platform, you should be putting in eight hours of hard charging research. (P3,124)

Participant 3 portrayed his attitude towards training as one where you are “out in the neighborhood trying to find out how to make things work better for the individuals,” but he does not see this attitude in many of his peers who “are not acceptable to change” (P3,126).

Participant 3 was knowledgeable of the ADDIE model but inferred the model was not well known or used in MTO;
It’s kind of like the ISD [Instructional Systems Design] system, right, and that system informs the development of the objectives and tests….It’s the same thing ADDIE and ISD; almost the same. I don’t see a lot of that in [MTO]. (P3,101)

He also described a trainer-centered versus trainee-centered approach to training from MTO trainers and its impact on the training audience. His experience as an Air Force instructor was,

I’m telling you, we lived and died by this; keep your training student-centered, right.

These guys [MTO trainers] keep it, ‘Look at me,’ but this is instructor-centered’….I did this, and I did this, and I did this. ‘Dude, that was 10 years ago and that’s great. You can talk at the VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars] about that, but we don’t really care.’

(P3,119)

He gave a vivid description of the impact of this approach on a foreign Colonel who commented the MTO training given using this approach was “just a waste of time” (P3,117).

Participant 3 said MTO used a murder-board (rehearsal) process for trainer material and instructional technique review, which he characterized as, “It’s all subjective. That’s a waste of time. It’s just people sitting around; ‘Yeah, we’re good.’ It’s a SWAG [Scientific Wild-Assed Guess]” (P3,146). He reflected upon his time as an Air Force instructor subjected to strict trainer presentation standards.

You were certified every quarter…There has to be specific criteria for what makes this a good class and it shouldn’t be on, ‘Oh, this is my opinion.’ I’ll tell you, if you want to see what a criteria sheet looks like, go to the Air Force instructor’s manual…It’s incredible. It is exhaustive. It has every type of training situation you could ever possibly imagine…(P3,137)
His recommended approach to trainer professional development was “You’ve got to challenge people. You’ve got to. That’s what learning is; changing somebody’s behavior” (P3,141). He also suggested tapping into the audience’s experience by getting them involved acknowledging, “It’s hard to do, and you have to be very, very prepared to do that” but acknowledged the reward (P3,153). He cited benefits of trainee engagement from the trainee’s viewpoint but noted the tendency of MTO trainers not to elicit participation.

“As soon as somebody [trainer] asks you or calls on you, what happens? You’re interested…I [trainee] don’t want to listen to some guy [MTO trainer] jacking crap. Guys do it as a time filler; ‘Well, my part’s done.’” (P3,153)

Participant 3 described the trainer-centered, PowerPoint approach of his peer trainers as a “poor model” for training (P3,155). “When…I see the way the instructor is carrying himself and his big PowerPoint, I can tell this is gonna be a dud. You know he’s just filling the block” (P3,155). Harkening back to his Air Force instructor days where being an instructor “is a big deal,” he suggested MTO’s standards for instruction should be, “You will carry yourself properly. You will be a subject matter expert. You will be honest, and you will prepare” (P3,156).

Participant 3 identified significant challenges for MTO trainers in analyzing training needs from training audiences, which made training preparation difficult. He highlighted a training environment where the recipient organization of the training does little to prepare the trainees for the training. “They’re basically expecting us to come in and start mopping floors…But again, back to ask them what they want to learn, they don’t know. It blows me away” (P3,195). He reiterated, “I’m stunned at the amount of preparation that is not conducted.
So that’s the beast right there. They [the training organization receiving training] don’t care…that’s why it’s kind of frustrating” (P3,198).

Participant 3 recommended a training model for MTO trainers used by a fellow trainer where the trainer conducts a brief introduction, pairs trainees with appropriate partners, gives trainees a scenario and puts them to work. The benefits of this model were building and leveraging experience within the teams, which created trainee-centered instruction vice training via trainer-led PowerPoints. Figure 5 illustrates Participant 3’s interview question responses linked to the research questions.

**Participant 4**

Participant 4 was one of three participants interviewed with U.S. Air Force experience. He served a total of 27 years in the U.S. Air Force; 13 as an enlisted Airman, and 14 as an officer retiring at the rank of Major. Upon retirement in 2017, he took a contractor job in MTO as a communications analyst trainer. Like the other Air Force participants in the study, Participant 4 described having broad and diverse experience in military training noting, “probably during the entirety of our [Air Force] career, we’re either in training or conducting training as a trainer” (P4,2).

He described having various jobs in the Air Force as both an enlisted and officer training manager, consolidating and reporting squadron training status. As an officer, the Air Force selected him for a unique assignment as an instructor at the Japan Air Self-Defense School for communications where he took part in a revised version of their instructor training program. He taught Japanese officers an Introduction to Computing class and another elective class in their native language. Participant 4 recounted his trainer instruction in Japan as “not that formal. It wasn’t like a military formal training or anything like that” (P4,13). He described the process of
initial instructor oversight as; “I would have my responsible officer basically translated to [his training materials translated] and so he would watch it; gets the feedback from the students….And they would provide that feedback to me” (P4,10).

Figure 5. Participant 3’s responses to research questions.
Like the other Participants with military backgrounds, Participant 4’s perception of professional development purpose was twofold.

It’s kind of flavored by the military upbringing that we have. Professional development has always been not a particular skillset base, but more on usually leadership, regulations, things that you need as a military member. So again, for us at the NCO level it's really kind of training for that next position…So really, I've always looked at it as professional development as almost having two lanes, right; you have, what does it take to advance in your career as an NCO, as an officer; and then what you need to know as you advance in your job, if that makes sense.” (P4,19)

He also identified his perception of a third aspect of professional development in the military, unit specific training defined as “the kinds of things that the commander is like ‘Look, if you’re going to work here, you have to know how to do these things’ ” (P4,33).

Participant 4 described two differing experiences of unit professional development in units he was assigned to; his first assignment to a unit in Germany and one in Oklahoma. He attributed the significant differences in professional development experiences to the contrast in deployment pace and leadership within the two units. In his first assignment in Germany he said, “I was gone every other month. We went to very ad hoc training….So, we didn’t have the time to be more systematic about taking care of training, and it showed” (P4,38). He contrasted this experience with his second assignment in Oklahoma where the unit had a scheduled operational readiness inspection, which allowed a detailed plan and predictability for training. Participant 4 made a point about professional development at the unit level; it “goes back to what’s advertised, what’s pushed, right? What’s the leadership emphasis, right?” (P4,32).
When Participant 4 transitioned to the officer corps, he noticed a shift of professional development emphasis from job-focused to more of a holistic focus “concerned with the big picture…it’s more about leadership at that point” (P4,33). He mentioned as an officer he experienced much less organizational professional development. He explained the difficulties of training and operating in a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) assignment. He experienced working with different national militaries having different operating standards and noted the similar challenges in his assignment to MTO. “It was challenging because there was like another paradigm shift. Now you’re coming into Special Operations, which is different than joint, different than multinational” (P4,52). He described how his previous training experience helped him address these challenges.

So, when I came here, I have all that [NATO and Japan instructor experience] behind me. And it helped. I was very comfortable. I had no problem being a trainer, and I'm very comfortable in my history, my experience, my skills. (P4,52)

Participant 4 noted, however, the challenge of a new assignment in MTO with no previous Special Operations experience or skills and the lack of any formalized professional development to prepare him for success. “It wasn’t so hard to adjust…but it’s definitely a challenge. And again, not really having anything formalized [within MTO], you just kind of jump in there and it’s like, ‘Okay, what am I supposed to do?’” (P4,52). He suggested the diversity of MTO trainers’ experiences and missions as reasons for needing a professional development program.

You have a lot of guys that come in with a lot of SOF [Special Operations Forces] experience and you have guys come in without too much….we have kind of a spectrum in our office, it’s a unique environment…everything from that ELLIPSE [a particular
exercise name] program….the TSOCs [Theater Special Operations Commands], these JSOTFs [Joint Special Operations Task Forces]… even the day-to-day missions with the Components…(P4,57)

In addition, he described the diversity in MTO trainer roles, “whether you’re an operations guy, plans, comms, intel; something [professional development] that levels the bubbles” (P4,57). He reinforced the need for a MTO professional development program through his portrayal of his experience as a newcomer in MTO.

I had the same thing [experience] when I showed up. It's like, well, just go look at the portal and figure it out. I'm just digging in there. There was nothing formalized [in MTO] to say okay, beyond just the SOF 101. It's like, what is this TSOC? What is this CJSOTF? What is an ELLIPSE? What are all these things across the board, to help kind of get you up to that common level of understanding before you even start applying your specific skillset to it….and I don’t think we’ve ever had that. (P4,58)

Participant 4 attributed a part of this shortfall to MTO’s organizational history. In 2012, a former military battle staff training command deactivated in Suffolk, VA and personnel and its missions combined with an existing staff training element in MTO. He noted,

they kluged them [two training organizations] together….and I think when everybody came here [to MTO], they didn’t really know what are we doing, what’s the mission?” MTO experienced “that first kind of notorious re-org…where I think they started very well. (P4,64)

He described a positive effort by the MTO staff, which conducted analysis on the organizational mission and developed ways to structure the organization to “meet that mission
need and go forward” (P4,65). He explained, however, this group effort, “seemed like it got undone in one day because I think leadership just said we’re doing something different....So, I think that just stymied progress a little bit” (P4,65). Five years later, he commented, “We’re getting better. I think we’re finally at least starting to kind of say, okay, ‘What is [MTO]?’ What are we as an organization? What are we supposed to be?” (P4,67).

He described a few bottom up review efforts, like a grassroots Critical Assessment Review Board (CARB) effort designed to define MTO’s mission and purpose, establish training standards, and improve training performance, “which fizzled…A few starts and then it just derailed,” and suggested leadership was the solution (P4,136).

I really believe this; it’s going to have to be a leadership emphasis. I don’t think we have that as much. Our boss at the O6 (Colonel) level gets eaten up by everything above him, and nobody is really kind of working on that down and in. Everybody’s kind of looking up and out. (P4,73)

Participant 4 further suggested,

Two people. What we really need is a, no kidding, training manager that’s looking at the program as a whole and looking at all the trainers….and a Deputy of Ops [operations]…or a Chief of Staff; someone who’s looking down and in on you and not worried about the budget; not worried about the up and out stuff. Looking at the people. What are we doing? What are the operations day to day?….I think we’ve just never really had that; we’re flying by the seat of our pants a lot…. I think we’re doing a better job, at least trying to put the training together. (P4,79)
Participant 4 recommended the first task for MTO’s professional development program is to understand what the organizations does and then focus on functional area tasks and defining standards for conducting those tasks. “There’s got to be some standard…on the way we do our seminars, because even that has been so contentious” (P4,116). He mentions the new 350-12 SOF headquarters training directive gives a little more of a baseline.

Participant 4 had no formal knowledge of the meaning of andragogy, Knowles’s adult learning principles, or the ADDIE model, but through his descriptions of his approach to training, he demonstrated a working, informal knowledge of these subjects. When describing his interaction with a Marine Colonel’s communication training materials, he said, “I had to adjust what I had because now you have to get them ready to go forward (to Iraq). I had to adapt it [training materials] from being very generic to being more specific” (P4,189). This showed an intuitive sense and application of the ADDIE model’s components of design, development, and implementation and the adult learning principle of providing specific job-related materials. He commented on his innate ability to read the training situation and adapt materials on the fly. He commented, “I think that is the adult learning. It’s understanding that part. I mean just intuitively….and again, I’ve been doing it a while” (P4,189).

Participant 4 suggested many actions for MTO to include in its professional development program to facilitate improved training. He emphasized reaching out to other J-Code Directorates (functional directorates like intelligence and operations) and working groups in the organization outside of MTO to improve the accuracy and currency of training materials. He mentioned his training team reached out to the J6, Communications Directorate, for review of their training materials for accuracy “and to get that feedback.” He noted, “We are carrying their
He suggested other actions and described his motivation to maintain training currency.

If you talk about the missions, yeah, it's important that you try to get ... you can still get tied in. A lot of these things are still done via SVTCs [secure video-teleconferences]; [like] CJSOTF-I. They [select MTO trainers] try to listen to the weekly [CJSOTF-I] update briefs all the time, data mine and everything like that. From a functional aspect, I still get some periodicals. I try to stay current on a lot of things that are going on. I get a magazine called Signal. It talks about military communications. That helps a lot…You just have to be motivated enough to kind of keep out there and keep in contact with it via emails or anything like that. (P4,151)

His rationale for conducting these activities was, “I don’t want to be standing in front of an audience and look like an idiot because I’m not current” (P4,153).

Participant 4’s noted a negative trend in MTO trainer performance and its impact on organization’s desire for MTO training services.

I think we've actually fallen off the last couple years because we're not doing as much battle staff training as we had been. But I think part of that is, I think we're finally kind of reaping what we sow a little bit. We're not relevant enough that when you go up there and talk to these guys, they're going to be asking for it. (P4,176)

His explanation for this situation was,
A lot of guys [MTO trainers] are still trying to push this SOC-JC [previous training organization] model, where we’re going to come in there and teach them the JOPP [Joint Operational Planning Process]...And a lot of the feedback is...I understand the process....I mean these guys get it. I mean we’re talking mid-level staff here. They’ve already had CGSC (Command and General Staff College)...And I think it’s because we’re not making it relevant to the event. (P4,180)

Participant 4 explained many MTO trainers resort to generic doctrinal briefs without understanding training customer wants and needs. He asserted in over four years of training CJSOTF staffs, “We found out very quickly; we ended up doing three days of mission analysis, because that’s what they gave a crap about. They’re like, ‘Look, we’re going into Iraq. We don’t know anything about it” (P4,184). He commented, “I think, they [MTO trainers] realized, okay, make it more of that....It’s on the unit to build the staff. It’s on us to prepare the staff for the theater, for that mission” (P4,185).

Participant 4 described the challenges apathy and resistance to change as barriers to MTO professional development.

That’s the biggest challenge I see. It’s very incremental in what we’re able to do in there [MTO], but I also see it happening. And that’s just the thing; a little bit of that perceived apathy may be from above and that resistance to change. Those are the two biggest barriers we have. (P4,199)

For implementation of professional development in MTO, he suggested,

I think you have to sell it more...what comes to mind is that you are talking about a lot of people with a lot of experience. So, you can’t come in trying to say, ‘Look, I want to
change everything you do….’ Maybe you have to have kind of a certain loose structure, because again, mostly officers; so, you don’t want to come in and do like you would with an NCO or an Airman. A little more ambiguous, got it, but there are certain things we need to get at…I think that’s why it has to be more from the top down. (P4,195)

He noted,

You got a lot of people that are passionate. We did. We had some guys that came in and said, ‘Well, this is how it’s been done for years and years and years.’ A lot of that has faded away. I think a lot of guys want to innovate” (P4,197).

Figure 6 illustrates Participant 4’s interview question responses linked to the research questions.

Participant 5

Participant 5 was a retired U.S. Army Colonel who served in various intelligence command and staff positions throughout his military career. He was one of three participants interviewed with minimal formal adult learning trainer training or education. He mentioned attending a one-day guest instructor course at the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU). Although having never served in a formal military training organization prior to his contractor job in MTO, he noted experience in organizational military training and presentations as a leader at the platoon, company, and battalion levels plus guest teaching at JSOU a few times.

Participant 5 was a senior intelligence analyst contractor in one of MTO’s joint training teams who conducted training support for two exercise in his 16 months of employment. Participant 5 described experiencing professional development throughout his military career at all levels and noted leaders focused development primarily at the higher-ranking officers when he served on battalion, brigade, division, and corps level staffs.
Figure 6. Participant 4’s responses to research questions.

The common activities were reading programs and presentations on different topics. He commented, “throughout, there’s always been a professional development program at the primarily battalion commander responsibility” (P5,18). As a contractor for several companies, he experienced mandatory training focused on regulatory requirements rather than on opportunities for personal and professional growth like he experienced in the military. He recounted one
example, however, of a company, which offered a project manager program (PMP) course for personal growth.

Participant 5 expressed the purpose of professional development training “helps you accomplish your mission essential tasks that are defined in however you do that process.” He described professional develop as,

linked to mentorship where that helps you develop for the next job and grow professionally, and I think it’s tied to education as well. So, you train on your job to accomplish your mission in the unit you're at. You professionally develop to kind of broaden your skills, to either be able to do your boss's job, or to see into the future and project other areas you're going to need the skill set in and can develop that way. (P5,4)

He depicted the individual’s role in professional development “is to read, and I don’t say that lightly” and asserted leaders and mentors can “help identify what to read” (P5,8). He highlighted the importance of personal initiative in self-development; “…but you know in our business you’re not going to grow professionally by somebody telling you everything. You’ve got to get out there and read and study…” during the duty day and at night on personal time (P5,8).

Participant 5 said an organization owed a professional development program, which showed a path for growth within the organization. He emphasized an organization “needs to understand what they're trying to develop, who they're trying to develop and why they're trying to develop it…in line with what the mission is” (P5,11). For MTO, he expressed, “[MTO’s] Colonel has an inherent responsibility to mentor and develop…his military and his civilians” (P5,26). However, Participant 5 did not think the organization owed professional development for personal interests not related to the organizational mission. He also questioned the
responsibility of MTO on professionally developing or expending resources to professionally develop a contractor.

Do the contractors need to have some kind of training program? And I would say this from the standpoint of a Judge Advocate General coming and going, ‘Wait, why do you have a contractor professional development program versus a proficiency sustainment program where you’ve identified the standards and the standards are changing? (P5,34)

He recommended not calling resources expended on contractors to gain and maintain proficiency with emergent technologies, processes, and design professional development. Participant 5 reflected ambivalence toward needing organizationally provided professional development based on his current stage of his career. “Everybody’s got different Service experience, culture experience. My experience is like, professional development, thanks, I mean what are you trying professional development for” (P5,116)? He thought MTO’s professional development program was “ill-defined on what the professional development scope was” (P5,115).

Participant 5 suggested there was role ambiguity related to his job title and description. His job title was senior intelligence analyst trainer, but he noted, “that’s not really what I did….my duties rarely included me training people, if that makes sense….Most of what I did was I observed and gave assessments or impressions on joint mission essential tasks per a mission scope” (P5,76). He mentioned some historical organizational reason for not being able to call contractors observer trainers because military trainers retained that title; “I have to be called an analyst trainer” (P5,28). He displayed a degree of frustration with this role ambiguity and expectation.
Hey, my job title says trainer. I'm given no opportunities to actually train. And then people tell me I'm not training." And it's like a do-loop based on who do you want me to train? I had more training time with JSOU asking me to teach classes because I couldn't get over to Europe or it was just tied to the battle rhythm of two days prior to the exercise. (P5,101)

He also explained many MTO trainers think their most important attribute to battle staff training audiences is their 20+ years of operational experience; “It’s not our slides. We’re the product. Hey, [MTO] is able to deliver you some very experienced E9’s, Sergeants Majors” (P5,47). He described additional ambiguity on the role of MTO trainers;

Do we do more than training? We’re exercising, because I think you’d have a better argument, or at least I’ve heard, is they’re [MTO trainers] exercise designers, and executors, and observers of proficiencies, and we coach mentors on how they can increase proficiency. (P5,178)

Participant 5 explained his experiences in his joint training team were more aligned with coaching and mentoring versus platform instruction or doctrinal classes. He questioned the training role of the XX branch who conducted week-long Strategic Appreciation seminars. “What did the force [MTO trainers] do?...Well they pretty much orchestrated it [training], but there was no real platforming” (P5,170).

Based on his experiences, he questioned MTO sending trainers to JSOU’s Faculty Development Course for instructors. He noted, “I was always kind of struck by all these people who were going for two weeks to the JSOU instructor’s course, because I was like, ‘Now we’re instructors.’ That’s different than trainer, so again define your terms” (P5,143). “Are we
instructors, and what do we instruct” (P5,146)? He described the uncertainty of the MTO mission.

Are we delivering an exercise? No, I mean what’s the product? And I would tell you in the Geo branches, it just seemed the product [doctrinal classes] wasn’t necessary. It was the exercise and that mission set and it was training to that mission set….I was just sort of surprised at the amount of just doctrinal classes…(P5,89)

Regarding the ambiguity described on the exact nature of MTO’s trainer roles, Participant 5 suggested, “you need to figure out the subjects and the matters and then what we’ve got to be experts on, the subject matter experts” (P5,186). He recommended having a well-defined definition of professional development such as “[MTO] is maintaining skills proficiencies to execute our missions” (P5,160).

Participant 5 perceived the nature and level of focus of MTO training should be at the operational and strategic levels vice technical systems. He commented,

we were able to do some one-on-one training with leaders, because again, a lot of it is leadership and how you manage. Managing the intel enterprise is a task at the strategic and operational level…if you’re going to ask me to go down there and teach how to use the ARES system [intelligence program], I’m not the guy for that. You can go and find a trainer for that. (P5,133)

In addition to the challenges of developing professional development for the diverse trainer roles, Participant 5 described other challenges of identifying training requirements and evaluating training due to the diversity of mission requirements for the various organizations MTO trains. He described an environment where the various Geographical Combatant and
Theater Special Operations Commands MTO trains have different training needs for their mission. He noted, “since there’s no standard TSOC, there’s not really a standard of what everybody’s doing in terms of different [joint training teams within MTO]” (P5,164).

He mentioned organizations ask for opportunity training events where he noted he did not have an evaluation standard. In addition, he emphasized the challenges of infrequent contact with the training audience getting contact only once every eight months and the frequent turnover of staff. Because of this, he forewent traditional training needs analysis admitting,

Honestly, I just changed it [training] to what I wanted it to be and what I thought it needed to be, which was at least give them a blueprint of a process of how to do it for that mission set versus giving them doctrinal classes. (P5,92)

Participant 5 had no formal knowledge about the terms andragogy, Knowles’s adult learning principles, or the ADDIE model. He said he knew adult learning principles from his experience in a master’s program at the U.S. Army’s War College using the Liddell Hart learning model. His interpretation of adult learning was significant personal reading followed by interaction with other adults to learn through collaboration and feedback.

Participant 5 offered varied training approaches for MTO’s professional development program. He highlighted the value of the JSOC (Joint Special Operations Command) 301 course, which provided a holistic understanding of the integration of GCC and TSOC tasks associated with a certain mission set. He noted attendance at this course provided the necessary knowledge to provide training audiences feedback on mission essential tasks. He championed the intelligence ROC (rehearsal of concept) drill modeled from the logistics ROC drill and how it focused on the training audience conducting the appropriate training work instead of training
being trainer-focused. He highlighted sustaining the level of daily information exchange between the joint training teams and noted, “we’ve got a pretty skilled workforce right now” (P5,113). He recommended coordination with the other command J-Code Directorates.

Participant 5 suggested an important role for the trainer, coach, and mentor was to direct training audiences to the right resources and readings to meet identified needs and allow a lot of smart people to learn on their own. He also identified the need for some type of assessment mechanism to ensure return on investment for resources expended on both military and contractors for professional development. He suggested discussions versus any type of testing as the proper mechanism to determine compliance and understanding of professional development activities. He affirmed the current reading program was productive as well MTO’s professional journal, Instructus, efforts, but was uncertain whether MTO expected contractors to contribute articles. Figure 7 illustrates Participant 5’s interview question responses linked to the research questions.

**Participant 6**

Participant 6 retired as a Lieutenant Colonel with 25 years of service in the U.S. Army and U.S. Army Special Forces. Ten of those years were in formal Special Operations training organizations. His last military assignment was in MTO where he retired and MTO hired him as a contractor analyst trainer. As a Training Company Commander at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, he gave classes to Special Forces trainees, and as an Observer Controller at the U.S. Army Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), he observed, coached, and mentored special operations soldiers during exercises.

Participant 6 described preparing for his JRTC duties by conducting an informal right-seat ride with the outgoing trainer;
watch another observer controller who's been there for a while, who's taught these classes for a while. Okay, I see what he's doing right that I want to emulate, or I see something that he's doing not so well that I want to discard. (P6,22)

Figure 7. Participant 5’s responses to research questions.

He commented on the lost value of the right-seat ride technique MTO used when he was assigned there as a battle staff trainer stating the practice now is “taboo and that’s just hurting us” (P6,26). He described the impact of not conducting right-seat ride training for new trainers in MTO;
You’ve got guys that we do murder boards [for] here…in front of your peers…it’s harder to give a class in front of your peers…one particular person…froze up because he wasn’t given an opportunity to right-seat ride…I think it’s something we need to go back to.

(P6,26)

Participant 6 described professional development as

a means to hone your skills, to professionally present, be able to present, something whether it's giving a class, whether it's writing a paper. Something that's going to say alright, this is where you're at right now in doing this task but there's some tools that's going to help you bring you to a higher standard. (P6,48)

He recounted having only one organizational professional development experience in his 20+ year career outside of the normal career progression schools in the Army. He attended a two-week Joint Special Operations University Faculty Development Course in 2013 while serving in MTO. He characterized the professional development experience as pretty good. Although receiving some formal instructor training, he noted he was not familiar with adult learning principles or the ADDIE model. This did not seem to bother him, because he described himself as a career-long trainer having served most of his career in U.S. Army Special Forces whose primary task is to train indigenous forces around the world.

I think my career has set me up for success…being an officer in Special Forces…in the Infantry…whether I’m giving an operations order…or whether I’m giving instructions to an indigenous force, I’m presenting. So, getting used to presenting was instilled in me for the last 25 years of service. (P6,44)
Participant 6 characterized the responsibility of professional development in MTO primarily resting on the trainers, because they are “mid-grade to senior fellas…expected to bring a lot to the table;” however, there is an expectation to remain current (P6,63). He emphasized, “The guys and girls that come to this command, they come here armed and ready to do business, but you have to stay current” (P6,64). He described an air of infallibility among MTO trainers; “So, we think we’re subject matter experts, there’s no need for instructor [training]” (P6,103). However, despite the level of seniority and technical skills expertise of MTO trainers, Participant 6 reinforced the need to continue to hone those skills and make sure one stays relevant.

Participant 6 described his personal professional development technique was reading followed by collegial discussion.

That’s where the real moneymakers [are] right there, having discussions….I learn more by interacting, discussion; not just sitting down in the corner and reading something by myself and being self-educated…So leveraging people around you and get [sic] someone else’s point of view as opposed to everything being, ‘Well, this is my point of view.’ (P6.61)

Participant 6’s portrayed MTO’s current efforts for professional development as, “I think we’re getting there. I think we’ve got a ways to go” (P6,68). He commented positively on MTO’s introduction of an instructional systems designer, Participant 1, in 2017 and noted her efforts identified some trainers with poor training techniques. “You know we have guys who literally have a PowerPoint slide that has 8 font words that cover the entire page. No one’s going to read this!” (P6,68). He acknowledged growing up in a military training culture where “you grew up, death by PowerPoint and pay attention because you’re going to get smacked…” (P6,109).
He recounted how the ISD staffer has since helped MTO trainers improve their training materials development skills and adapt training materials appropriately to training audiences. “We [MTO] brought one person in here…and she’s made such a big difference and now someone’s bringing another one [ISD staff] in” (P6,103). She taught MTO trainers how to adapt materials according to demographic considerations as he noted, “The new generation, the millennials, they learn differently. You got to relate to them” (P6,113). He explained how Participant 1’s ISD mentoring improved his training skills.

I was teaching class the way I was taught classes, which is not good. It's a good way, but it's not the better way. The better way is the way [Participant 1] taught me. I went from a PowerPoint that was filled with words, and we'd discuss enough and stuff, to just a single picture and we're saying the same thing. I learned presentation; presentation's key.

(P6,243)

Participant 6 described having standards for training materials or instruction in MTO, “but nothing in writing…” “When I showed up [as a] contractor, no one said, ‘Here’s the standards’…nothing in writing that says, ‘Well, you must meet these five standards to be proficient.’” (P6,75). However, he described having informal standards for trainer evaluation during his training team’s murderboards (training rehearsals). He noted, “We have standards when we get our murderboards; say, ‘Hey, that’s irrelevant, that’s outdated, that don’t make no sense’” (P6,75).

He emphasized the virtues of having organizational training standards because he said, “everybody gets lazy” (P6,83). He gave an example of some MTO trainers who say, “Well I did this class a dozen times already, I’m going to leave it the same” (P6,83). One guy he noted; “He gave a phenomenal class. That class is like four years old now. It’s the same exact class. It’s still
a phenomenal class, but it’s not good” (P6,83). He explained outdated presentations still occurred in MTO because, “We’re not murderboarding, we’re not saying, ‘Why are you teaching this [outdated presentation]?” (P6,85). Since he mentioned his team conducted murderboards, I assumed he referred to other teams in MTO, which may not. He stressed the need to keep training materials fresh and relevant due to constant changes in the operational theaters.

Participant 6 indicated his training team administers a survey to the training audience for training performance evaluation but mentioned the feedback is not good. He noted, “We used to have that [surveys] when I was in uniform, but that was a waste,” because the training audience receives “eight hours of intense training; either death by PowerPoint, discussion, or death by freaking practical exercises” (P6,164-165). His perception of the training audience’s motivation at the end of a training day when asked to fill out a survey was “yeah, whatever, whatever, whatever” (P6,166).

As a military joint training team leader, he admitted to not reading the training audience survey data. He preferred discussion as a better technique of evaluating training performance. His team received candid feedback from the training audience when they informally asked, “Hey, was this a good course? Did you learn anything from this?” (P6,172). For internal training team evaluation, Participant 6 noted “we have discussions about what we’ve done, what we think we could have done better, what we’ve done that needs to be sustained” (P6,174). Participant 6 also commented on the difficulty of getting MTO leadership feedback on MTO trainer performance.

Col [XX], He’s a phenomenal guy…he knows what we do. He’d been doing this since several years ago. But to get him to come out, he’s pulled in ten different ways, so he has yet to come out. But, we’re the main effort…We ain’t no main effort. (P6,222)
Participant 6 mentioned individual resistance to change as a major barrier to implementation of professional development in MTO.

People are pigeon-holed. This is the way I've always done it. Why you gotta change, man? You gotta be adaptive. You have to change. The way I did things 10 years ago when I was a captain, or a major, that's completely different today. So that's the biggest barrier right there, hands down. It really is bad. We deal with it every day. (P6,208)

An additional barrier he mentioned was the inability of getting contractor trainers into operational theater in Iraq and Afghanistan to conduct staff assistance visits due to contractual constraints. He also cited difficulty in trying to attend the daily operations and intelligence (O&I) briefs conducted in Iraq via secure video-teleconference due to the extreme time differential; “Who’s going to come in at 3:00 am to listen to an O&I brief?” (P6,132).

Participant 6 recounted a positive and effective professional development experience while serving as a military training lead in 2013 when he was able to conduct a staff assistance visit in Iraq. He recalled MTO had not conducted a staff assistance visit downrange since 2013 but highly recommended reinstating the process to maintain relevancy. He noted, “So, the minute you leave out of theater, you become irrelevant every minute you’re back home” (P6,120). He recommended sending an MTO trainer into theater every three months to get ground truth on what training is needed and what was effective when received. He described the practical differences of training preparation back in garrison versus conducting staff assistance visits downrange.

Well we sit in a cubicle, we talk, we read SITREPS (situation reports), but you're only as smart as what you got in front of you. You go downrange, it's ‘Oh, this is our job. This is
how y'all are doing business. This is what it smells like down here. These are the hours you guys are working.’ You come back with so much more than reading a sitrep.

(P6,126)

Participant 6’s staff assistance visit in Iraq provided valuable feedback identifying, which classes given by MTO prior to deployment were ineffective and effective. He highlighted “the joint planning group [class], that was a moneymaker,” and said he “wouldn’t have known that unless I went downrange. I wouldn’t have gotten that information over reading a SITREP” (P6,129).

He also recommended using an informal approach during training team murderboards to relieve the pressure and fear for MTO trainers, especially new ones.

Get up there and just talk us through the material. Don't give a class, don't give ‘My name's [X], I'm going to be giving a seminar, whatever, whatever.’ No, that's slide one. This is what I'm going to talk about in slide one, and it comes across so much more easy. No one's really freaked out, but they actually [are] going through the class and before you know it, it's [the trainer is] sitting back and writing down notes. ‘Okay, I got the jitters out.’ (P6,142)

Participant 6 claimed his training team’s attitude and approach to improving training is letting people know what we do and continue to do it better each time we do it, you know. To not get stuck and complacent, ‘Well, that’s the way we always done it’ Keep on looking for the next level. (P6,230)

He noted his team is also trying to integrate more functional areas into their training like psychological operations and civil affairs and other outside agencies. He recommended “just
thinking outside the box to improve training and development. He reported his training team’s efforts to train a battlestaff going into Iraq “received a lot of praise. Not trying to toot my horn or our horn; but Wow man, that was good…We needed that” (P6,241). Figure 8 illustrates Participant 6’s interview question responses linked to the research questions.

**Figure 8.** Participant 6’s responses to research questions.
Participant 7

Participant 7 was a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel with an intelligence background who is now a government civilian training manager with a 19-year tenure in MTO; 12 years as both a military and contractor trainer in Joint Forces Command and seven years as a government civilian in MTO. Throughout his 19-year career in training organizations, Participant 7 acknowledged he received no formal adult education training as a contractor or as a government civilian.

He attributed this to organizational cultural issues in his first training organization, which disbanded in one location and reformed as MTO in another in 2012. The commander of U.S. Special Operations Command told the commander his first training unit, “Hey, [General X], if you’re going to be the Joint Forces Command trainer, I don’t have a professional SOF [Special Operations Forces] joint trainer. Let’s make your [SOF training organization] into that” (P7,283).

Participant 7 explained, “We took a bunch of great Americans and we built what we thought was right…But we never trained to be trainers; I was an intel guy” (P7,279).

He noted these trainers had the technical skills but did not take the time to receive formal training to become professional trainers. He noted,

We brought that functional stuff with us, but we didn't say, ‘Okay, guys, for the first six months, all we're going to do is go to Fort Leavenworth, and learn how to instruct, and learn how to build a seminar; learn how to [develop] facilitation skills.’ Yeah, we didn’t do any of that…We spent the first seven years in Afghanistan. (P7,289)

He reflected on this history and explained, “We didn’t have time for that, but we should have went to laser pointer 101 class to learn how to teach from the platform. Should we [MTO]
do that now? Absolutely. Can we? Probably not" (P7,301). He attributed this state of trainer readiness to a continued high operational tempo where trainers come in and they put them right on the road. Participant 7 said he had no formal training as a trainer and was not familiar with andragogy, adult learning principles, or the ADDIE model of instructional systems design.

Participant 7 described a good professional development program as one, which “would let you or help you improve in your job….and in your general lifestyle…It’s a two-fold street. One, it makes you a better job performer [and] makes you more technically smart; not so much a generalist” (P7,23). He shared positive experiences of professional development in the Army through career schools focused on leadership development. He described one instance as a Lieutenant when his commander made all Lieutenants take this one business course more for personal development. However, he noted not having “any professional development as a contractor and limited opportunities as a Government Civilian (GS) in the past 15 years. He attributed this to “bosses that said, ‘Civilians don’t go to professional development; we can’t afford to let you go’” (P7,8).

Participant 7 highlighted the benefits for military officers of a three-year assignment in MTO; “All you do for this job is learn about joint operations…because all you do is either prepare your product or teach your product….you’ll become one of their smartest people out there” (P7,37). He explained trainers must have the intrinsic motivation to learn how to train when arriving at MTO, and noted, “some guys do…[and] some guys don’t” (P7,41). He reflected on MTO’s inadequate historical efforts at professional development for newly arrived and existing trainers. He noted MTO had never done a department-wide professional development program up until just this past two years; the best they had was a professional reading program. “We have done a very poor job across the board” (P7,53).
On a positive note, Participant 7 highlighted the MTO Division Chief “supports the current professional development program, big time,” but said, I don’t know how successful we’re going to be with it” (P7,63). He doubted if everyone in leadership was behind the initiative like the Colonel was. He said, “Everybody right now I think sees the professional development as a burden; that it’s going to make them do something that they think is not useful” (P7,195).

He suggested,

The biggest barrier to professional development is the naysayers. The guys in there that don't want to change, and they just talk bad about it. ‘I don't know why do we need this stuff?’….I think the leadership's behind this. In fact, I know they're behind it….But, I think we have to force the guys to see that it is useful. It does make you better. (P7,255)

He recommended initially making all elements of professional development “mandatory” during the duty day for six months, because if

it is voluntary, they won’t go…. If we make it mandatory…and they can see the value of it; "Oh that wasn't bad, and I actually learned something in that hour. Then start introducing stuff on a voluntary basis. I think we'll get more people. (P7,185)

However, he noted he “was pleasantly surprised at the number of people that sought or [are] signing up for those [brown-bag lunch] classes; I think that’s a great idea” (P7,65). He noted the effort of establishing a current professional library is a plus noting, “It’s more than we’ve ever done before in the past” (P7,69). He recognized the need for MTO to conduct a professional development program. He emphasized MTO had a responsibility to keep trainers current; both currency in theater and at the functional level.
Participant 7 discussed the challenges MTO faced getting qualified military trainers from the military Services.

My guys are not school trained trainers and evaluators and assessors and things like that…. it would be nice if the Services, or if our Components saw the real value of our unit, and they sent us their good people…But, most of them, they don't see the value in that. So we get what we get. (P7,85)

He described added challenges in hiring and retaining contractor trainers with adequate formal adult training skills. Retired military contractors make up the majority of trainers in MTO. His perception was few retired military personnel had both special operations functional experience and formal adult education skills in the local labor market. He noted,

if we say our requirement is the guy has [to have] formal training [in] training and educating, there’d be very few people out there to choose. So, about the best way we can do is ten years of functional level intelligence operations. And so, when we get a retired intel guy, and if he’s real good, he’ll move along fast out there and go for a better job.

(P7,103)

Participant 7 characterized the overall military and contractor training skills and performance as,

I think across the board; my guys are pretty good…It’d be nice if we had everybody at least at a level three and some guy would be fives. Some guys we’ve had would never make a one, and we’ve been fortunate enough to get rid of those guys. (P7,89-91)

Since Participant 7 had the most longevity in MTO, I asked about his thoughts on the topic of role ambiguity relayed to me by Participant 5 who said he did not understand why he was hired as an “analyst trainer” versus an “observer trainer”. He said most of his time was spent...
observing, coaching, and mentoring. Participant 7 explained MTO had not changed the position description, “analyst trainer”, for contractor trainers to reflect the reality of job performance changes due to organizational personnel issues.

Most of the trainers in the unit prior to MTO’s establishment were military “observer trainers” who were out in front of the training audience teaching, training, and observing. The contractor “analyst trainers” were in the background conducting research, helping prepare materials and providing answers to the military observer trainers. During the transition from the old training organization to MTO in 2012, Participant 7 said, “We [MTO] started not getting enough military guys. That’s when we were forced to make the analyst trainers start teaching. Today, we have three military guys on a team and 14 contractors” (P7,117).

Even though currently there are fewer military trainers in MTO, Participant 7 expressed the Division Chief’s expectation for all the military personnel assigned to training branches to train in addition to conducting project officer and branch lead duties. He stated,

Now the Branch (military) Leads are normally the C2 [command and control]. The ops guys will teach. The intel guys will teach. It just depends on how the team does it, but there’s no rule that the military guys don’t teach….It should be greensuiters [military personnel] teaching greensuiters, but we just can’t do it, and some guys are lazy and they don’t want to teach. (P7,127)

Participant 7 reported mixed perceptions on training standards in MTO. He said he and the Division Chief usually talked twice a month constantly about standards. He described the murder board (training rehearsal) as a primary way to enact quality control over training
materials and presentation skills. His overall impression was “his guys are pretty good” and “conduct routine murder boards” to assess newly constructed classes (P7,105).

Before we go out on a mission, we do PMT, pre mission training, a week of it, and where all the seminars are briefed to the Branch Chief and all the branch guys, and they're checked for quality control….and the new guys will spend a lot of time practicing with their functional leads….It [murderboards] needs to be tweaked…because every team does it differently. (P7,105)

For training material development, he reported, “We have a SOP (standard operating procedure) on how to build slide decks, what fonts to use and stuff…. But they’ve not been looked at by a person like Participant 1 (MTO’s Instructional Systems Designer), and we probably need that” (P7,165). However, he noted, “I guess we don’t have a standard on anything other than what the slide is supposed to look like” (P7,325).

Participant 7 praised Participant 1’s instructional systems design skills and the potential to help his training team in training material development and facilitation skills. He described his efforts to shift his trainers away from being briefers to facilitators of training. “We tell everybody, you’re not briefers; you’re facilitators and that’s what makes it hard. It’s hard to be a good facilitator…Some people aren’t comfortable with that” (P7,171).

Participant 7 suggested the need to get Participant 1, MTO’s instructional systems designer, more involved with his training teams to help with training material development and their presentation skills. Participant 7 acknowledged his training teams do not receive formal evaluation feedback from the training audience; “We have a formal feedback process us to them with our quick look reports and facilitated after action reviews, but we don’t do a survey
anymore” (P7,143). He mentioned certain individual trainers received informal “good job” feedback and the Division Chief got regular feedback from the training audience commander; “Hey, appreciate your guys being out here. They did a great job; learned a lot” (P7,145). He mentioned, “They ask us back, which is a form of feedback, I guess; because if we weren’t hitting the mark, they wouldn’t ask us back” (P7,147). Figure 9 illustrates Participant 7’s interview question responses linked to the research questions.

Figure 9. Participant 7’s responses to research questions.
Participant 8

Participant 8 retired from the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Special Operations in 2017 with 27.5 years of service. He had an extensive background in training serving in many capacities; as a Chief of Training at a U. S. Air Force Squadron and Group, a B-52 and C-130 navigator instructor, and instructor at the Joint Advanced Warfighter School (JAWS) for advanced staff and planning training. Although he only had nine months experience as a plans and operations analyst in MTO, he was comfortable with his technical and adult training knowledge and skills. He noted, “I’ve kind of been interlaced with training my whole career; so I don’t know if that makes me an expert, but I’ve been around the block a little bit” (P8,20). He described having a comfortable level of knowledge of andragogy and adult learning methods.

He reflected on positive professional development experiences through a normal progression of U.S. Air Force career schools for officers and commanders, which taught him how to write professionally and to prepare and give presentations. During his military career, he attended U.S. Air Force Squadron Officer School, Navy Command and Staff College, and the Air War College for senior officers. He also attended instructor and faculty development schools for a total of 14 weeks in preparation for instructor pilot duties and instructor duties at JAWS. He highlighted the Air Force did a fairly good job of providing adequate professional development for instructors.

Participant 8 discussed developing and running organizational-level professional development programs at the Squadron and Group levels for flight and ground training, and leadership development. He integrated key internal and external leaders, and subject matter experts for topical presentations and discussions. He suggested professional development is absolutely necessary and its purpose was to prepare service members for increasing levels of
responsibilities and skills capabilities. “So as you move up, your learning never stops, and so you have to have the capability, the ability to be able to go to the classes, and if you don’t go to the classes, it just detracts” (P8,34). He acknowledged the importance of instructor receiving formal training on training; “You have instructors who have been instructors for a long time teaching you on how to be an instructor, and I think that’s very important” (P8,33).

Participant 8 portrayed an average characterization of MTO trainer skill levels and performance.

I would probably say about 50-60% are good. I think there are some that have work to do. They could use their time better to make them more effective, but they choose not to, which I think is unfortunate. There are guys that are in positions that probably are only in that position because of their background and don’t have probably the degree of expertise or knowledge that they should, but they choose not to put forth the effort to make themselves better. (P8,55)

He commented, “I think the organization could do a better job of picking the candidates for the positions, and I think they are trying to do that….But I think there are folks probably in this organization that I don’t know how they got this job, but they did” (P8,56).

Participant 8 expressed his views on opinions of some MTO leadership against expending resources to train contractor trainers.

That the organization should not try to make an individual better is very myopic. I think that if a person has almost the right amount of skill but needs a little bit of something to push them over the top, and that would make them better, then absolutely they should go. (P8,43)
He described some trainers in MTO as “the right person to hire” due to having the right technical skills, “an expert in intel, say, that has not done a lot of presenting” (P8,43). He suggested MTO should allow individuals to go to a class if they have deficiencies in adult training skills. He emphasized the risk to MTO’s credibility by sending a guy out to an external command “to present, x, y, or z and he doesn’t have the capability, doesn’t have the self-assurance to be able to present something. It just makes us look bad” (P8,37).

Participant 8 commented, “I don’t think there’s enough standards [in MTO].” He said,

I think there needs to be standards, and I think that needs to be driven by the leadership. The leadership needs to tell us, ‘Hey, this is how I want you to do business. This is the way I want you to interact with the commands that you go down range with and provide that foundation cornerstone…that all of us have before we go out. And it's not just, ‘Well, this is the way I do it’, because if you do that, then you have one team doing A; you have one team doing B; and you have the third team doing C; and if you have to intermix, it just throws everything off. (P8,69)

He stressed, “If you’re not out there being effective because there ain’t no standards, then you have to derive the standards” (P8,98). He suggested the responsibility for training standards for the joint training teams lies with the Branch Chief who “provides that guidance, ‘Hey, this is how I want you guys to do things, but that doesn’t happen either. There’s no interaction with that either” (P8,98). To mitigate these concerns, Participant 8 recommended running the Newcomer’s Orientation Class more often reviewing MTO’s standards, functions, and things, which are important. He commented he did not attend the Newcomer’s Orientation Class until month six of his nine months employment in MTO.
Participant 8 described a disappointing experience as a senior operations and plans analyst trainer on his joint training team due to leadership and contractor personnel issues. He noted his team had not presented anything in nine months while other teams had “because our team doesn’t push for that…the other two teams, they’re doing stuff all the time” (P8,130). He anticipated having to conduct a murder board in preparation for instruction but had not taught anything yet. He emphasized, “that’s one of the main reasons for me coming here” (P8,130). He commented, “Well one person has presented stuff…He’s very knowledgeable…he can present well, but there are other guys that I think could do it just as well” (P8,134).

He described the military to contractor leadership on his team as dysfunctional and detrimental to morale.

I think it's got to be a team thing. You can't have the contractors be the ones that are always up there sitting and talking. The military guy is the lead…the one that's responsible, providing the right information, and if he's not up there teaching, and he relies on the contractor to do all the talking, then that's not going to happen. I see it in my team. Other teams are more engaging; they're more interactive. My team, there's no discussion at all. The…military and one of the contractors keep everything to themselves, and don't include the rest of the team, and that detracts from the effectiveness of the team, and one individual is always the one that does all the briefings and presentations despite the fact there are guys on our team that could do it just as well as he can, but for whatever reason, it is what it is. (P8,89)

Participant 8 suggested the solution
has to be driven by the leadership, by the Division Chief telling military guys ‘You are going to be the ones that are going to lead the teaching. You have your contractors…they’re here to perform a function, but you lead, and they help design it, put it together, but you’re the guy that has the pinpoint of having to [instruct]. (P8,90)

Another issue Participant 8 described was his training team’s lack of an internal feedback process on the team’s training performance after an exercise. He noted his frustration with his team not conducting a hot wash (post event internal team discussion) but said another joint training team he assisted did.

They sat and talked about, hey, this is how I think we can do things better. But my team, none whatsoever. And it's not for lack of providing input and feedback to want that, they just don't want to do it…But the lead contractor is a lot of the problem. He's been entrenched for so long that nobody can provide any sort of feedback to him because he knows everything. (P8,106).

Participant 8 suggested the biggest barrier to implementing professional development in MTO was getting trainers engaged with the training activity. He said to break the barrier, leadership would have to get engaged and tell employees what their expectations were. He suggested both the military and contractor company leadership needed to walk around more to see what people were doing; not forcing but encouraging participation in professional development activities. He recommended first selecting meaningful topics, which resonated with the trainers, answering the question, “How is it going to make them better?” (P8,152). Next, he suggested the Division Chief and contractor company leadership send out an email expressing their desire for trainers to get engaged in the professional development program, because the Division Chief needed to get his leaders to buy into it.
The team should have at the team level, the leadership sit down and give the expectations of the boss, and that doesn't happen, but that's got to come from the leader….And it has to come from our contractor lead too on our team, because it’s just like the insurgency from within. (P8,149)

Participant 8 expressed various other recommendations and thoughts about developing and implementing professional development in MTO. One aspect he discussed was the difficulty of developing a program with enough variety to meet the needs of a trainer population with a wide variance in skills and experiences. He noted some trainers absolutely needed professional development because they have never dealt with the interagency at the highest level, while trainers who are retired Colonels and War College graduates may not need as much. He suggested having a speaker series with higher caliber speakers such as Lou Holtz and the Joint Staff leadership to address joint training and exercise issues, but said, “It has to engage the audience, and I know it’s tough. You’ve got a bunch of old coots like us, which say, ‘Why should I sit there and listen to that?’” (P8,80).

Participant 8 emphasized the importance of having a right-seat ride program pairing a new trainer with a veteran trainer; “Sitting there and watching and working with another guy who is part of your team on the same exact function is huge. We don’t do that” (P8,66). He also suggested working with other teams to observe and learn different techniques. He recommended better inter-team communications; “There’s no intermixing. There’s no discussion between analyst trainers, designers, et cetera, on how to make things better. There’s just no discussion on it” (P8,154).

Participant 8 also suggested increased external interaction with the organization’s other functional J-Code Directorates to broaden the joint training teams’ understanding of different
geographical combatant commands’ operations outside the scope of the exercise. He liked the interaction and collegiality of the brown-bag lunch series, which drives organizational cohesiveness. He highlighted, “You sit down and you chat about it, and it makes you a better person, makes them a better person, because you’re going to impart your experiences on them, and they’re going to do that to you” (P8,125). He also thought the Joint Special Operations University courses were value. Figure 10 illustrates Participant 8’s interview question responses linked to the research questions.

**Participant 9**

Participant 9 was an active duty Colonel with 22 years of service in the U.S. Army. For the past two years, he served as MTO’s Division Chief where he was responsible for joint collective training for Special Operations Components and Theater Special Operations Commands. He had an extensive training background as a career Special Forces officer serving as an instructor at the Unconventional Warfare Center at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School and as the Exercise and Training Chief at the Special Operations Command – Central Command. He attended the U.S. Army’s Instructor Course, which focused on building a course curriculum and delivery of presentations to a small or large group audience.

Participant 9 acknowledged an understanding of andragogy and adult learning principles citing “it’s the idea of being able to identify how a person learns and how you implement that person or that organization’s needs” (P9,34). He was less familiar with the ADDIE model and noted, “I’ve heard about it. I’ve never really implemented it myself, but I just know about it, essentially, what the intent of it is” (P9,36).

Participant 9 described the purpose of professional development was,
to continue to provide growth to the individual and organization. When we have a professional development program in place, the intent is to put people in a position to better develop themselves through the adult education learning process. In return, the individual becomes a better instructor...professionally grow...become more innovative...the organization becomes a better organization with better equipped, more capable employees. (P9,17)

Figure 10. Participant 8’s responses to research questions.
His assessment of career experience with organizational level professional development was fair, having served in some units with good initiatives for professional development while others had no plans or programs in place.

His perception of overall trainer performance in MTO was “average” (P9,23). When I'm looking at technical, functional subject matter experts, as a whole, average performers. It [trainer technical performance] collectively requires improvement. And the same thing when you talk about adult learning or teaching, or training skills; average performers, but collectively, we require some improvement overall. (P9,25)

Participant 9 also emphasized the importance of MTO trainers maintaining relevancy noting “everything we do is contingent on how relevant we are” (P9,58).

He highlighted the importance of interaction with the different J-Code Directorates in the command and understanding the latest doctrine and lessons learned among partners nations, the interagency, and conventional forces. He said,

We [MTO] need to be able to take that information, absorb it, and be able to interact with our staff to demonstrate that we are credible and we are providing the most relevant information to the training needs, because without that, you don't have credibility.

(P9,58)

Participant 9 expressed high expectations for military and contractor trainer personal responsibility for professional development.
I think any individual that is looking to improve themselves, is looking to be a contributor to the organization, should take personal interest in professionally managing and developing and implementing a professional plan for themselves. (P9,39)

His specific expectations were for individuals to develop a personal professional development plan and discuss it with their first-line supervisor to ensure if they were using MTO resources, their plan was nested with the organization’s vision and priorities and with the individual’s desires in terms of professional growth. He thought individuals should “look at themselves holistically on where they are and then where they see themselves in the future” (P9,40).

He shared a strong conviction about the importance of individual initiative in putting a professional development plan in place.

I don't think anybody should be within the organization that doesn't have a professional development plan in place. That leads to atrophy. We don't need people not functioning or not being relevant because we are a learning organization. Everything we do is built on…credible, relevant instructors, trainers to stand in front of our training audience. If they are not developing themselves, there's no need or desire to want to have those individuals in our organization. (P9,51)

He described reservations of some MTO trainers regarding MTO’s current professional development program initiative. He noted,

There’s probably reservation for some…with change becomes a little bit of reservation…not wanting to do more than they have to…It’s going to cause some work…a little bit of thinking…People are a little bit resistant to change sometimes. (P9,52)
From an organizational leadership perspective, Participant 9 suggested,

We have to be a little more clear on what the message is. We have, I think we have a vision…an intent, but we have to reinforce that on a routine basis to make sure everybody understands what we are doing is consistent with…the command priorities…and National Defense Strategy. We have to get past atrophy in education. I think people neglect sometimes wanting to change, but we have to introduce ideas on why we should change them. (P9,71)

He recommended giving ownership to the different branches and cells in MTO to make them a part of the adult learning process. “When we assign tasks for people to take on, then it gives them more buy-in into wanting to be a part and help develop and implement the professional development plan” (P9,73).

Participant 9 had positive overall comments on MTO’s current professional development program.

Right now, our professional development plan has been moving slowly, but at the same time, we've been making great strides. Although there's some resistance, there is also some enthusiasm behind it. I think the more we implement…shape and improve…the more people will be a little bit more receptive to it. Right now, it's moving in a positive direction…we are approaching success, because …the vision was to implement a program. We’ve done that…we’re starting to see results from some of the initial initiatives. (P9,83)
He noted there were enough resources within the command to allow contractors to take advantage of different types of professional development seminars; to professionally educate themselves.

Participant 9 highlighted one initiative, MTO’s quarterly newsletter, as a positive contribution to the organization. He cited a two-fold benefit of this professional development initiative; one to the external Special Operations training community and internally for MTO trainers. Participant 9 noted his future command focus was to make MTO’s professional development program a routine affair; to give people an opportunity to educate themselves on a monthly or even a weekly basis. He also mentioned starting a specific military officer professional development program to enhance career and subject matter expertise.

Participant 9 suggested some elements of professional development should be mandatory such as the USSOCOM Staff Education Program course and the MTO Newcomers Orientation Course because they provided “a foundation of what the learning professional should know about organization prior to them actually being in the organization” (P9, 50). Other elements should provide some flexibility and options for individuals. He expected more investment from the trainers to stay current on the operational and intelligence picture, which changed frequently.

He noted a shortfall in MTO trainers’ lack of knowledge and training on existing training tools available such as the Joint Online Information Center. He recommended more trainers attend the Joint Special Operations University Faculty Development Course. This course provides faculty and trainers knowledge and skills to develop curriculum and confidence to get out on the platform and teach in front of a small and large audience.
Participant 9 also recommended improvement in MTO’s ability to evaluate training to determine future training needs. He noted, “Every time we do a [training] engagement, we get a survey from the training audience that basically talks about resources and the trainers” (P9,63). He suggested formalization of the evaluation process through more key leader engagements and using MTO’s quarterly secure video teleconferences and annual conference. He explained the information received is more focused on a specific class or instructor but needed a collective focus on all training delivered. He said MTO needs to get “the Components and our Theater Special Operations Commands in a better position to voice…what they need…when it comes to training [and] evaluating units…we need to do that on a continuous basis” (P9,66). Figure 11 illustrates Participant 9’s interview question responses linked to the research questions.
Figure 11. Participant 9’s responses to research questions.

Training and Professional Development (PD) Experience:
* Active US Army Colonel with 22 years service; 5 years in training organizations; 2 years as MTO Division Chief
* Attended US Army Instructor Course
* Former Instructor at Special Warfare Center and Exercise and Training Chief at SOCCENT
* Familiar with adult learning principles and less so with ADDIE Model
* PD a means for individuals and organizational growth through adult learning process; individuals professionally grow and innovate
* Fair PD throughout military career; some units had PD programs while others did not
* Personal initiative important in PD
* Positive toward current MTO PD efforts

Training Needs:
* Trainers’ performance levels “average”
* Technical/functional subject matter expertise and adult teaching skills needed overall improvement
* Challenge of providing relevant information to meet training needs to maintain credibility
* Resistance from some trainers towards PD
* Get past atrophy in education
* Trainers lack skills on training tools
* Shortfalls in evaluating training needs of customers

Solutions to Professional Development / Training Needs
* Develop personal PD plan with leadership input
* Needed to clarify MTO vision and intent through more consistent communications
* Need to introduce ideas on why MTO wanted individual performance changes
* Give ownership of PD efforts to Branch and Cell leadership; assign tasks, make them part of adult learning process
* Make PD a routine affair; (monthly/weekly) basis
* Starting military officer PD program
* Mandatory and flexible elements of PD program design
* More investment from trainers in operations and intelligence situational awareness
* Increase training on trainer tools such as Joint Online Information Center
* Increased attendance of trainers at Faculty Development Course
* Formalize evaluation process through improved key leader engagements and training conferences
Chapter 5: Identified Themes

My purpose in this exploratory case study was to understand the individual and organizational training needs of a military training organization in the Southeastern U.S., which trains battle staffs to inform professional development program design. I accomplished this by exploring MTO trainers’, staff’s, and leadership’s perceptions of their training and professional development experiences throughout their careers, and their perceived training needs and barriers to professional development within MTO. I also explored their perceptions about solutions to these perceived training needs and barriers because Pilcher (2016) suggested an accurate assessment of both organizational and individual learner needs is critical for providing faculty and professional development program design for effective activities. In this chapter I identified and discussed the themes in the study derived from constant comparison analysis of the data (Boeije, 2002; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Patton, 2015). I then discussed the relationship of the themes to the research questions and theoretical constructs along with implications and suggest recommendations based on those implications. I closed the chapter with my reflections on the research themes.

I discovered six themes from my analysis of data from nine participants’ perceptions and experiences related to the five research questions. Themes one and two (trainer experiences and professional development experiences) answered research question number one (RQ1). Theme three (organizational issues) answered research question number four (RQ4). Theme four (training issues) answered research question number two (RQ2). Theme 5 (organizational
solutions) answered research question number five (RQ5). Theme six answered research questions three (RQ3) and five (RQ5) (Appendix E).

(RQ 1) Theme one: Trainer experiences

Theme one (Table 6) described participants’ responses related to research question one, which explored trainers’ experience. The responses reflected trainers’ overall military service experience, trainer experience, trainer training, and knowledge of adult learning and instructional design principles. Knowles (1980; 2015) explained adults define themselves by their life and career experiences and feel rejected when their experiences are not valued or used in adult education. Adult experience was a rich resource, which professional development program developers used when planning any type of professional development activity (Lawler & King, 2002).

The data in Table 6 reflected extensive technical and trainer experience in MTO. All participants except Participant 1 were retired or active military with 20+ years of experience in their respective technical fields. None expressed a significant weakness in the technical skills they were hired to train or observe in military battle staff training. Participants’ average years of military trainer experience in a training organization was 12 with only one participant having less than 2 years. Participant 5 reinforced this notion of valued experience when he said, “Hey, [MTO] is able to deliver you [training audience] some very experienced E9’s [senior trainers]…It’s not our slides, we’re the product” (P5, 47). MTO trainers bring 20+ years of military experience to the training audience not only as trainers, but also as observers, coaches, and mentors.
However, the data indicated a different story for participants’ experience in formal trainer training or knowledge of adult learning and instructional design principles.

Table 6. Theme One: Trainer Experiences.

| Theme Definition | This theme is defined by participants' years of military service indicating degree of technical experience, years of trainer experience, amount and type of formal instructor/trainer training, formal knowledge of adult learning and instructional design principles, and general reflections on trainer experiences. |
| Research Question #1 | In what ways do participants in MTO perceive trainer and professional development experiences throughout their military and professional careers? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Synopsis of Participant Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Eight participants were retired senior military officers/enlisted; average of 10 yrs of trainer experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>7 had some formal instructor training; 2 with none, 6 with no or little understanding of adult learning or ISD principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Contractor: Only instructional systems designer in MTO; MA degree in Adult Education and Counseling, 16 years as ISD, 17 months in MTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>Contractor: Retired US Army Lieutenant Colonel; trainer for 5 years, 2-week trainer training, no knowledge of adult learning or ISD principles, 5 years in MTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>Contractor: Retired US Air Force Master Sergeant; trainer for 15 years, AA degree in Training, familiar with adult learning and ISD principles, 5 years in MTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>Contractor, Retired US Air Force Major, trainer for 7 years, no trainer training, no knowledge of adult learning or ISD principles, 6 years in MTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>Contractor: Retired US Army Colonel, trainer for 16 months, no trainer training, familiar with adult learning principles, 16 months in MTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>Contractor: Retired US Army Lieutenant Colonel, trainer for 10 years, 2-week trainer training, no knowledge of adult learning or ISD principles, 6 years in MTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>Govt Civilian: MTO Training Manager, trainer for 19 years, no trainer training, no knowledge of adult learning or ISD principles, 19 years in SOC-JFCOM &amp; MTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>Contractor: Retired USAF Colonel, trainer for 10 years, 14 weeks trainer training, familiar with adult learning and ISD principles, 9 months in MTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>Military: US Army Colonel, MTO Division Chief, trainer for 8 years, Army Instructor School, familiar with adult learning and ISD principles, 2 years in MTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>Rated MTO trainer performance as &quot;average&quot;; need improvement in adult training and instructional design skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>MTO trainers never trained to be trainers; no time to learn formal training skills due to 7 years in Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>He taught how he was taught, death by PowerPoint which was not good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Trainers won't know Knowles’s theory or be able to communicate what they do or how they do it in meaningful terms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For formal adult education training, two participants had academic degrees associated with adult education fields, two participants had no formal training, four participants had (one day, two weeks, four weeks, 14 weeks) of formal training, while Participant 9 attended the Army’s Instructor Course but did not specify its duration. Four of the nine participants had various levels of knowledge on adult learning and instructional design principles while five had no knowledge. Cranston (1996) notes it is common in colleges, universities, and business for
educators and trainers to have educational backgrounds in their technical fields, which rarely includes adult education.

Participant 9, MTO’s Division Chief, and Participant 1, MTO’s Instructional Systems Designer, both rated MTO trainer performance as average, which collectively required overall improvement in adult training and instructional design skills. Participant 1 highlighted a low assessment of MTO trainer performance “based on the curriculum, or lack thereof, overall design, and instructor as facilitator, not briefer;” all indicators of an organizational skills shortfall in adult learning and instructional design principles (P1, 37). Participant 7, a 19-year MTO training manager, noted a historical precedent of trainers not receiving formal training on how to be a trainer.

We were never trained to be trainers. I was an intel guy….So, we brought the functional stuff with us, but we didn’t say. ‘Okay guys, for the first six months, all we’re going to do is…learn how to instruct’….we spent the first seven years in Afghanistan, so we didn’t have time for that” (P7, 287-289, 299-301).

Participant 6’s response highlighted a trend in the research data of common trainer behavior uninformed by formal training in adult learning or instructional design principles. He explained he taught classes how he was taught, “death by PowerPoint,” which was “not good” (P6, 243). Participant 1, MTO’s instructional systems designer, had considerable experience with adult learning principles due to her master’s degree and ISD experience. She highlighted, “I don’t think they [MTO trainers] will know Knowles’s theory or be able to communicate to you what they do or how they do it in meaningful terms” (P1, 130). She shared her frustration with a lack of success in shifting the MTO trainer “paradigm towards more of a Knowles’s method” of trainee-centered versus trainer-centered focus (P1, 29).
Implications and recommendations from theme one.

The data indicated a significant level of military technical training experience. I will continue to explore and leverage the extensive technical experience of MTO trainers according to Knowle’s suggestion doing so would make them feel valued and more supportive of the professional development program. They are a rich and valuable resource to develop and teach technical functions aligned with the various MTO training missions (1980). In addition, trainers are a necessary resource for professional development designers, because they are accomplished at their jobs and know their needs, especially veteran trainers who often provide healthy skepticism based on deep experience with failed professional development efforts (Alvy, 2005; Lawler & King, 2002). I will integrate the trainer’s extensive technical experience by recommending the establishment of a trainer advisory committee, which Lawler and King (2002) suggest “can provide information on organizational culture, gather support for the faculty development initiative, and measure colleague interest and concerns” (p. 49).

Although MTO trainers exhibited extensive technical experience, the data indicated a deficiency in adult training and instructional design skills. Knowle’s (2015) noted significant adult experience can also have potential adverse effects in training, which may explain MTO’s cultural preference for “death by PowerPoint” and observed trainer deficiencies (P6, 243). He explained, “As we [adults] accumulate experience, we tend to develop mental habits, biases, and presuppositions that tend to cause us to close our minds to new ideas, fresh perceptions, and alternative ways of thinking” (p. 45). I will recommend addressing MTO trainers’ habits and biases towards trainer-focused training by including sensitivity training in a new MTO trainer/observer course. Many of the MTO senior trainers are not knowledgeable about adult learning and training or instructional design principles because they never received adequate and
sustained adult training and education. They teach like they were culturally taught, which in the military was primarily by trainer-focused PowerPoint presentations (Oleson & Hora, 2014). My challenge is determining how much training is adequate to meet a yet undefined standard for adequate adult training and instructional design skills and integrating required training into an already busy operational schedule.

(RQ 1) Theme two: Professional development experiences

Theme 2 (Table 7) described participants’ responses related to research question one, which explored trainers’ professional development experiences. The responses reflected participants’ perceptions of professional development purpose, need, and experiences in their careers. Pilcher (2016) explained training and learning needs assessment was a systematic way of exploring what individuals, groups, or organizations need to learn and serves as the base for designing effective educational activities.

All the retired military trainers associated professional development with their previous military Service career progression schools (i.e. USAF’s skill level training and testing, officer basic and advanced courses, Services command and staff and war colleges) and had mostly positive experiences. Participants expressed mixed experiences with organizational (unit) specific professional development efforts. Participants 3,4,6 and 7 experienced little to no unit specific professional development outside of the current program in MTO. Participants who did participate in unit professional development programs described them as sporadic and centered around reading lists and topical presentations.

Despite mixed experiences with organizational-level professional development programs, all participants emphasized a need for professional development in MTO. Participant 5 suggested
the need for professional development but questioned the need and legality of providing professional development for contractors.

Table 7. Theme Two: Professional Development Experiences.

| Theme Definition: This theme is defined by participants’ perceptions of professional development purpose, need, and experiences in their careers. |
| Research Question #1: In what ways do participants in MTO perceive trainer and professional development experiences throughout their military and professional careers? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Synopsis of Participant Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Participants</td>
<td>Expessed need for professional development in MTO: Improve technical, adult training, and ISD skills; Maintain technical currency; Some younger trainers with less experience; Diverse group...something that levels the bubbles, Dynamic environment; We are not relevant enough, PD was not formalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>Internal drive for PD motivated by desire to keep family safe; training people which will accomplish that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants 5,8</td>
<td>Ambivalence towards need for professional development due to their seniority; said younger trainers need it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>Division Chief supports PD. All should have a professional development plan in place that shows individual growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants 2,3,5,6,9</td>
<td>Personal initiative expected for professional development; P2: Some have no desire to develop professionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>Organization’s role in PD is to provide a purpose and endstate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>Professional development occurs only if pushed by leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4,6,7</td>
<td>P7: Organization has done a poor job at PD across the board; P6: Have a ways to go, P4: No PD program for generalized and specific information required; In the past nothing formalized for newcomers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>Not all supportive of PD efforts, sees PD as a burden, inability to execute due to newcomer operational tempo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Feels good about PD accomplished; “When they can see the value of what professional development can bring to their craft, it's a wonderful marriage”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>Positive PD experience coached by MTO’s instructional systems designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants (All)</td>
<td>Stated purposes for PD: (maintain currency) (improves job performance in current environment) (process/roadmap for individual progression and promotion; helps improve organization) (career development / job specific knowledge enhancement / organizational specific training) (promote professional growth, broaden skills) (means to hone professional presentation skills / individuals rise to a higher standard) (improves job performance / technical skills) (prepares for increasing levels of responsibility) (provides growth to individuals/organizations through adult learning process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 of 9 Participants</td>
<td>Associated PD with military Services’ career programs for promotion and development; positive experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants 2,5,8,9</td>
<td>Positive experiences with organizational-level PD which offered mainly commander directed reading lists and presentations of selected topics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants 5 and 8 questioned their need for organizational professional development due to their perceived seniority and level of experience as retired Colonels. They, however, suggested professional development for younger, less experienced trainers in MTO.

All participants suggested a need for professional development in MTO to: maintain technical currency, train younger trainers with less experience, accommodate a dynamic military environment, level the bubbles among a diverse range of MTO trainer experience and skills, and to ensure relevancy to training audiences. The participants described professional development’s purpose was to: maintain currency, broaden and improve technical skills, improve job...
performance, hone presentation skills, provide organizational specific training, provide a roadmap for individual promotion, provide career development, and help improve the organization.

MTO instituted its first ever professional development program in 2017 with full support from the MTO Division Chief. His intent was to “put people in a position to better develop themselves through the adult education learning process” (P9,17). Prior to this effort, Participant 7, a MTO training manager, noted MTO never had a professional development program outside of a reading list; “We did not do a very good job” (P7, 73). For the current program, he noted, “Everybody…sees professional development as a burden,” (P7, 195) and he did not think the rest of MTO’s leadership supported the program. This was an interesting observation since all the participants interviewed expressed a need for a professional development program in MTO.

Although Participant 7 supported MTO’s professional development program, he doubted MTO could implement it due to the high operational tempo for new trainers. Participant 4 described his experience as a newcomer in MTO as challenging because there was no professional development program in place to help with his lack of joint or special operations skills and experience; “You just kind of jump in there and it’s like, ‘Okay, what am I supposed to do’” (P4,52).

Participant 5 suggested MTO’s professional development program scope was “ill-defined” from inception, which might explain some of the internal resistance to the program (P5,115). He suggested having a clear definition to promote coherence for professional development efforts. Participant 6 exhibited reserved optimism for MTO’s current professional development program; “I think we’re getting there; I think we have a ways to go” (P6, 68). However, Participant 1, the Instructional Systems Designer, was optimistic about the
professional development work accomplished to date in MTO and noted; “When they [trainers] can see the value of what professional development can bring to their craft, it's a wonderful marriage” (P1, 15).

Over half the participants emphasized the importance of personal initiative in professional development. Participant 2 highlighted some MTO trainers have internal motivation for professional development, while others “have no desire to develop themselves professionally…I don’t have to do anything for this job because there’s no metrics, no performance evaluation, no milestones I need to hit…so, why should I professionally develop myself”’ (P2, 20). The MTO Division Chief’s, perspective was no one “should be in [MTO] that doesn’t have a professional development plan in place that shows growth in development of the individual” (P9, 39,51).

**Implications and recommendations from theme two.**

The data for theme two indicated the presence of two distinct camps within MTO; those who saw the need for professional development and those who do not. All the participants in this study supported and described a need for professional development, but some participants perceived other trainers in MTO who did not. Participant 7 indicated “everybody” saw professional development as a burden and some MTO leaders did not support it, while Participant 2 noted some trainers with no desire to participate.

Although I selected a good cross-section of participants from MTO’s trainer population using purposive sampling criteria, I may have inadvertently allowed my personal bias towards known MTO achievers to interfere with selection of potential unmotivated, recalcitrant trainers. I know who they are in the organization. The data indicate there was an unknown population of
trainers within MTO who did not support MTO’s professional development program, described through the eyes of the participants I selected.

Joyce and Calhoun (2010) said about five to ten percent of educators/trainers are usually reticent consumers of professional development “who push away opportunities for growth and can actively discourage others” (p. 23). Lawler and King (2002) highlighted the importance of considering “all the constituents who will be involved and may be affected by the initiative” (p. 52). Due to my personal time constraints, I was not able to select and interview additional participants who were not supportive of MTO professional development efforts. I will recommend further research to determine the causes of resistance to professional development efforts in this unknown population. I must understand both populations’ needs and perceptions if I am to adhere to adult learning principles (Lawler & King, 2002).

The reasons for certain trainers’ resistance to professional development may be organizational issues not directly related to training or professional development (Hannum, 2005). Participant 2 offered his perception of reasons why this unknown quantity of MTO trainers resist professional development effort. He characterized resistors’ mindsets; “‘I [resistors] don’t have to do anything for this job because there’s no metrics, no performance evaluation, no milestones I need to hit…so, why should I professionally develop myself ’” (P2, 20). I will explore trainer resistance further in theme 3, Organizational Issues.

Participant data in theme two also highlighted a concern with professional development for newcomers who have little joint or special operations knowledge or skills plus often must immediately deploy with a training team upon arrival in MTO. These new trainers have a high readiness to learn to ameliorate their immediate needs for technical and professional credibility since they will quickly stand in front of a training audience of peers expected to be an expert
trainer (Knowles, 1989). MTO’s organizational personnel scheduling supplants these newcomers’ desire for professional development. I will recommend MTO dedicate an initial period of time for professional development activities and create an evaluation plan to ensure a new trainer is technically prepared and demonstrates acceptable performance of pre-determined trainer skills.

(RQ 2): Theme three: Organizational issues

Theme three (Table 8) described participants’ responses related to research question two, which explored trainers’ training needs in MTO. The responses reflected trainers’ perceptions of organizational issues in leadership, mission and purpose, standards, personnel, and resistance to change, which were challenges or barriers to training and professional development.

Leadership.

Participants 6, 7, and 8 discussed MTO leadership’s inability to get military personnel to conduct the trainer function. Participant 6 said the military personnel needed to do training in addition to the other administrative duties they perform. Participant 8 noted a total reliance on the contractors to do all the training on his team. Participant 7, a MTO training manager, noted all trainers, military and contractor, on the training teams were supposed to teach but not all did. He stressed MTO could not achieve that goal because “some guys are lazy, and they just don’t want to teach” (P7, 137).

Several participants expressed a lack of engagement and communications from MTO’s leadership. Participants 2 and 4 said they do not understand what MTO leaders do during a training visit because they never saw them in key training briefings and they never got any feedback from their visits. Participant 6 described never seeing the MTO Division Chief visit his
training even though their team’s training effort was designated as the organization’s main effort. Participant 8 stressed, “…the perception, I think, is that the leaders just don’t get out and talk to the folks [trainers]” (P8, 87).

Table 8. Theme Three: Organizational Issues.

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<th>Theme 3: Organizational Issues</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theme Definition: This theme is defined by participants’ perceptions of organizational issues in leadership, mission/purpose, standards, personnel, and resistance to change.</td>
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<td>Research Question #2: What are participants’ perceptions of training needs in MTO?</td>
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<td>Standards</td>
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<td>Participant 1</td>
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Participants 1,3, and 7 described low or no MTO leaders’ expectations and supervision. Participant 1 and 3 highlighted the lack of MTO leader expectations for work production when trainers return from training trips and have spare time. “Our guys have a lot of time when they have down time…I think the expectation has been that’s your time…there’s no expectation that you’re not lifting weights, watching Fox News…. What we did last year still stands but no need to update it…So, where’s the edict that we get better and remain current” (P1, 118, 80). We have guys that go out and nobody has ever seen their brief” (P1, 82).

Participant 4 echoed this observation noting other than their military Branch Lead, there was no other level of MTO leadership providing quality control over trainer materials and
presentation prior to training events. He said, “… it should scare the leadership a little bit. We're going out there representing them…we’re flying by the seat of our pants a lot…and I think it’s a lot of risk involved” (P4, 219, 87, 225). Participant 3 described his frustration at seeing fellow trainers give the same PowerPoint briefs for each rotation. He recounted his time in the U.S. Air Force as a professional trainer where being an instructor was a “huge deal” and the expectations were to “be a subject matter expert. You will be honest, and you will prepare” (P3, 156).

Mission and purpose.

Participants 2, 4, 1, and 9 identified a need for clarity in MTO’s mission and purpose. Participant 9, the MTO Division Chief, mentioned a shortfall in communicating MTO’s message, vision, and intent related to the command’s priorities. Participant 2 noted trainers have to “know what your purpose is…that's not clear anywhere but that's probably one of the biggest functions of an organization’s leadership” (P2, 30). Participant 4 commented on the lack of mission clarity by MTO leadership during a major organizational change in 2012 when MTO formed. He said after seven years, MTO is finally starting to understand what it is supposed to be as an organization. However, he still expressed MTO trainers had uncertainty on job and mission requirements.

Standards.

Seven participants discussed shortfalls in MTO standards and quality control for training processes. Participant 3 said the training standard for MTO was “just give these briefs” (P3, 186). Participant 4 noted the lack of standards for MTO seminars had been a “contentious” issue within the organization (P4, 116). Participant 8 stressed “he didn’t think there were enough standards” to ensure unity of effort among the various MTO training teams (P8 69).
Participants 2 and 7 reiterated the lack of uniformity on training approaches among the training teams; “...between the three training team leads there’s no uniform [training] approach or methodology or uniform metrics by which we measure anything...because there’s no understanding of what our purpose is in [MTO]” (P2, 83) (P7, 322).

P7 said he and the MTO Division Chief talked about standards constantly yet mentioned, “…I guess we don’t have a standard on anything other than what the [PowerPoint] slide should be” (P7, 325).

Participants 4 and 6 mentioned the lack of formalized standards when they arrived in MTO as contractors making training preparation a challenge. Participant 7 thought his training teams were “pretty good” in performance; they all conducted routine murderboards where briefs were quality controlled by training team military leads. Participant 6 noted his team had standards during murderboards to ensure training was relevant, which were, “’Hey, that’s irrelevant, that’s outdated, that don’t make no sense” (P6, 75). But he noted “there’s nothing in writing that says. ‘Well, you must meet these five standards to be proficient” (P6, 75).

Participant 3 commented he had attended several of these murderboards and observed they were “all “subjective” and “a waste of time” (P3, 141).

**Personnel.**

Participants discussed MTO’s difficulty in getting qualified military and contractors with adult training skills. Participant 7 explained the military Services assigned military personnel to MTO who have a functional specialty, but most do not have any formal training background. He noted the same problem occurred for contractor trainers in MTO; “...if we [MTO] say our requirement is the guy [contractor] has to have had formal trainer training and education, there’d
be very few people out there to choose” (P7, 101). Participant 8 also expressed the challenge of hiring a contractor with extensive technical expertise but little formal training skills (P8, 43). Special operators are a small percentage of military retirees and few have served in formal adult training and education assignments. Participant 7 wished the military Services and SOF Components would see “the real value of our unit” and send “us their good people….but most people don’t see the value in that and we get what we get” (P7, 95). He stressed his “guys are not school trained trainers and evaluators and assessors and things like that…” (P7, 85).

Some participants described ambiguity in the required job duties and role of an MTO trainer. Participant 2 thought the role of MTO trainers was more than being a “briefer”. He said, “I am a firm believer that we are coaches” and should approach training from the perspective of, “I coach, teach, and mentor…But what does it really mean?” (P2, 43). Participant 5 noted his duty description was analyst trainer, but his scope of duties rarely included training people. His duties included primarily observing exercises and providing feedback in an after-action review format. He suggested because they conduct exercises, a better description of the analyst trainer role was exercise designers and executors. He questioned MTO sending trainers to the Joint Special Operations University Faculty Development Course; “…now we’re instructors?” (P5, 143).

**Resistance.**

Seven participants discussed various aspects of resistance to change among trainers, which affected trainer performance and professional development implementation. Participant 7 said the biggest barrier to implementing professional development “…is the naysayers; the guys in there that don’t want to change,” and thinks “the [mid-level] leadership is behind it” (P7, 255). Participant 6 noted “people are pigeon-holed. This is the way I’ve always done it” and suggested
“You gotta be adaptive. You have to change” (P6, 208). Participant 1 described all the subject matter experts with 20 years of experience who “do not want to hear that your product can be improved” (P1, 19).

Participants 2 and 8 provided examples of members of their training team or other training teams who resisted any new initiatives. Participant 8 thought “…the lead contractor is a lot of the problem. He's been entrenched for so long that nobody can provide any sort of feedback to him because he knows everything” (P8, 106). Participant 7 described “…how everybody…sees professional development as a burden; that it is going to make them do something that they think is not useful” (P7, 195). Participant 9 predicted some resistance to MTO’s professional development initiatives; “Sometimes people are resistant to getting outside of their normal status quo” (P9, 54).

Implications and recommendations from theme three.

Although this research was exploratory, which lends itself to unexpected outcomes, I mentally bounded my exploration focused on training needs assessment for MTO trainers to improve the existing MTO professional development program. I used Lawler and King’s (2002) Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development; specifically the sub-step of assessing needs in the preplanning stage. While I expected to find training-related issues, which I did, my exploration also uncovered organizational issues I described in this theme. Many issues are not directly related to training or professional development solutions.

Guskey (2000) noted this is a common occurrence when training professional development developers conduct training needs assessments. He said training needs assessments commonly identify symptoms of needs manifested in problems, concerns, dilemmas, and wants,
which “must be diagnosed more thoroughly and completely…..to determine the underlying conditions that resulted in the expression of those needed symptoms” (p. 57). However, training through professional development will not mitigate many of the performance problems identified in these organizational issues (Hannum, 2005). While Lawler and King’s (2002) professional development model offered a sub-step in the pre-planning stage of understanding organizational culture where these symptoms of organizational needs could be determined, my focus in this research was only to discover training needs, which a professional development program could address.

However, as the practitioner in MTO charged with designing and implementing an effective professional development program focused on trainer skills and knowledge gaps, I cannot neglect these important organizational issues because many are directly and indirectly related to training issues. Through further research, I found two models on human performance technology I will recommend to address the non-training related organizational issues identified in this research.

Clark’s (2015) Performance Analysis Quadrant (Figure 12) described four factors, which affected human job performance: motivation; resource, process, environment; selection; and training and coaching. The second tool was Harmon’s (2003) Iceberg Model (Figure 13) cited in Stolovitch and Keeps’ (2006) Handbook of Human Performance Technology. This model enabled further exploration and integration of “performance improvement solutions with all related components of the organization’s performance system” (p. 46).

The Iceberg Model recommended conducting a cultural audit at the base organizational level followed by gathering information about structures and goals; management practices; priorities, standards, and procedures; tools, resources, and work environment, feedback and
consequences, attitudes and qualifications, and skills and knowledge. The Four Factor Performance Analysis Quadrant and Iceberg model could assist MTO in analyzing and addressing the organizational issues in leadership, mission and purpose, standards, personnel, and resistance to change identified in this research.

Figure 12. Four Factor Performance Analysis Quadrant Model.

Page 181: Figure 12. Four Factor Performance Analysis Quadrant Model.  

I will recommend MTO hire a human performance technology consulting team to help address the organizational issues related to leadership, mission and purpose, standards, and resistance. Human performance technology improves productivity in organizations “by designing and developing effective interventions that are results oriented, comprehensive, and systemic” (Stolovitch & Keeps, 2006). MTO may or may not approve this recommendation based on the
scope, costs, and availability of funding.

![The Iceberg Model](image-url)

**Figure 13.** The Iceberg Model.


As a backup, I will recommend MTO establish working groups to review and address: (a) mission, purpose, standards, policy, expectations, personnel roles; (b) performance accountability issues (military and contractor company), (c) military knowledge, skills, attributes in the joint table of distribution (JTD); (d) creation of a government service (GS) training manager position; (e) counseling (military and contractor).

**(RQ 2): Theme four: Training issues**

Theme four (Table 9) described participants’ perceptions related to research question two, which explored trainers’ needs and issues related to training analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation. Many participants, including MTO’s leadership, assessed MTO’s overall trainer performance as “average”, which required “some improvement in adult training skills” (P9, 25-26). Adult training skills include a working knowledge of andragogy,
adult learning principles, and the ADDIE model (Stolovitch & Keeps, 2011). Five participants had no knowledge of andragogy, adult learning principles, or the ADDIE model while three were familiar with one or more of the terms but could not give any meaningful description.

Table 9. Theme Four: Training Issues.

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<th>Theme 4: Training Issues</th>
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<td><strong>Theme Definition:</strong> This theme is defined by participants’ identification of issues involving analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation of training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Question #2: What are participants’ perceptions of training needs in MTO?</td>
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<td><strong>Participants Synopsis of Participant Responses</strong></td>
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<td><strong>General - Adult Learning Principles</strong></td>
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<td>Participants 1,4,7,8,9 &amp; Participants 5</td>
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<td>(5) Had no knowledge of the ADDIE model, andragogy, or adult learning principles; (3) recognized the terms; (1) Instructional Designer had in-depth knowledge</td>
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<td>Participant 9</td>
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<td><strong>Analysis</strong></td>
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<td>Participants 1,2,3,4,5,6</td>
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| Participant 2 | Newcomer told "here's all the briefs for the last 10 years...figure out what you want to do and brief them."

Participant 3 | Described difficulty when training customer seems not to care; customer does not prepare trainees for training |
| Participant 4 | Adapted generic training to tailor it specifically to the Iraq mission; said other trainers still give doctrinal classes |
| Participant 5 | Difficulty determining training needs for diverse customers; no standard Theater Special Operations Command |
| Participants 5,7 | P5: Infrequent contact with customers. P7 (MTO leader) suggested trainers were with customers "a lot"; noted some trainers think they have to travel to stay in contact |
| Participants 6,9 | Difficulty in attending daily operations and intelligence briefs from Iraq due to time-zone differences |
| **Design and Implementation** |
| Participants 1,3,6,7 | Trainer-focused versus trainee-focused approach; conversion from briefers to facilitators; awful facilitation skills |
| Participant 3 | P3: Used student-centered approach; described peer MTO trainer keep it instructor-centered; P6: I teach how I was taught, by PowerPoint...not good |
| Participant 1 | Student is persona non grata, it’s one-way, lecture. I’m there to give my pitch, doesn't matter if you are receiving it |
| Participant 7 | You’re not briefers, you’re facilitators; It’s hard to be a good facilitator, some people aren’t comfortable with that |
| Participants 2,3 | P2: Great facilitation style, 15 minutes worth of questions and then they roll on the rest of it; P3: Need to get people involved, it’s hard to do, have to be very prepared |
| Participant 1 | Noted some trainers’ aversion to using multimedia in materials |
| Participants 3,6,7,8 | Expressed various views on use of murderboards for training rehearsal. P7 says teams do them all the time. P8 never did one in 8 months because he had not presented instruction. P3/6 agreed murderboards improve trainer performance |
| **Evaluation** |
| Participants 7, 9 | Shortfalls in getting feedback from training customers; MTO needs to formalize processes |
| Participant 7 | MTO has no formal process of getting feedback on trainer performance |
| Participants 2,4,6,7,9 | Inconsistent and unsuccessful use of training audience surveys. P7 said "we don't do surveys anymore", while P9 said MTO does |
| Participant 7 | Surveys not the answer, guys will just do them as fast as possible so they can leave |
| Participant 6 | Used a survey but information is not as good as discussion with the training audience; gets candid feedback |
| Participant 8 | Team did not conduct after-action reviews of performance while other teams did |

MTO’s instructional designer, Participant 1, was the only participant with an in-depth knowledge of adult learning principles and processes based on her master’s degree in Adult Education and 16 years of experience in adult training and instructional design fields. Based on
her observations of MTO trainers’ performance in the past 16 months, she accurately predicted none of the other participants “will know Knowles’s [adult learning] theory or be able to communicate…what they do or how they do it in meaningful terms” in response to interview questions about adult learning (P1,130).

Analysis.

An essential part of providing relevant training begins with analyzing a training audience’s training needs (Knowles, 1980). Participants identified gaps in MTO trainers’ abilities to provide relevant training through analysis of the training audience needs. The MTO Division Chief, Participant 9, emphasized the need to provide “the most relevant information to the training needs, because without that, you don't have credibility” (P9, 58). Several participants described a training culture in MTO where trainers do not refresh their presentation materials based on analysis of the training audience’s needs and resort to doctrinal presentations.

Participant 2 discussed the importance of making a training plan based on an assessment of customer needs developed from “customer metrics, internal and external” (P2,71). However, he described some MTO trainers’ plan is to do “the same thing we did last year, which is the same thing we did the year before….’if left to our own devices, I guarantee we’d give the same problem set every year for 10 years’” (P2, 73). Participant 6 said briefs were “old and outdated” (P6, 89). Participant 5 thought the geographical training teams’ product “wasn’t necessary” and said he “was sort of surprised at the amount of just doctrinal classes” (P5, 89).

Participant 4 observed the level of battle staff training requested by organizations had “actually fallen off the last couple of years’ and his explanation was, “I think we’re kind of reaping what we sow…we’re not relevant enough…for them [training customers] to ask for it’
Participant 1 highlighted a deficit in MTO trainers’ problem-solving and analysis skills affecting their ability to determine “who’s your customer and what’s the best way to facilitate learning and get them excited” (P1, 62). Her explanation for this was, “I think a lot of times we [trainers] go in [and] we do deductive reasoning, ‘This is what I have to offer, I hope it fits your needs instead of ‘What do you need’ ” (P1, 66).

Participants 5 and 3 found challenges in training needs analysis due to the diversity of organizational missions of the military units MTO trains and some units’ apathy towards training. Participant 5 noted, “Every TSOC [Theater Special Operations Command] is different… So, they’ve [trainers] got to build all of that [training essential tasks]…If they don’t provide enough of that, how do you know what they should be professionally developed or skill proficiency accredited at… (P5, 74). Participant 3 was “stunned at the amount of [exercise] preparation that is not conducted” and noted “that’s the beast right there; they don’t care….There’s an assumption that they know things and they don’t” (P3, 198, 202).

Some participants expressed differing realities of trainer engagement with training audiences to conduct training needs analysis. Participant 7, a MTO training manager, noted “some [training] teams do it [analysis] better than others because “we are with our customers a lot” but also noted “we [trainers] can’t be with the training audience all the time” (P7, 83). Participant 2 noted he was able to access his training audiences several times a year but commented on his peers’ lack of interaction; “Professional development could be as simple as, ‘Let’s tell all our people they have to go interact with the customer to find out what the hell it is they need more than once a year.’ (P2, 39).

Participant 5 noted “you only get to touch them [training audience] every eight months a year, and then they change over people…” (P5, 92). As a result of a lack of customer contact, he
“just changed it [training] to what I wanted it to be and what I thought it needed to be” (P5, 92). Participant 3 recommended being “engaged with your customer source…take an active interest in them….That’s absolutely essential to know what’s coming up” (P3, 129). Participant 6 suggested a staff assistance visit (SAV) in a theater of operation was the best way to stay relevant and conduct analysis of training needs. He mentioned MTO has not conducted a SAV since his 2013 visit to Iraq as a military trainer and noted the contractual difficulties of getting contractor trainers into theater. In the absence of SAVs, he expressed a challenge with attending daily operational and intelligence updates from the battle staff in Iraq due to the time difference, “Who’s going to come in at 3:00 am to listen to an O&I brief” (P6, 132)?

**Design and implementation of training.**

After training needs are determined from the training audience, the next step in the ADDIE model is to design and develop proper training methods and materials. Implementation of those materials using appropriate methods is followed by evaluation of the trainers’ and trainees’ performance to round out the ADDIE cycle (Department of the Army, 2017b). Participants described the dominant mode of training design, development, and implementation of training in centered on PowerPoint presentations delivered in a trainer-centered manner to the training audience.

Participant 1 described the implementation approach as, “The student is persona non grata….It’s lecture. ‘I’m [trainer]…there to give my pitch and it doesn’t matter if you are receiving it.’ (P1, 35). Participant 3 suggested the proper approach is to “keep your training student-centered” but described many of his MTO trainer peers “keep it ‘Look at me…instructor-centered’ (P3, 117). He suggested, “You have to be logical in your delivery…credible…and have emotional connection, and you can’t do that if you’re just, ‘Well,
this is my PowerPoint’….That is a bad model” (P3, 124). Participant 6 described he taught classes the way the military taught him; by PowerPoint. (P3, 155).

Participant 1, MTO’s lone instructional designer, described her difficulties in imparting Knowle’s adult learning principle of respect to trainers. She said, “Trainers should acknowledge “although you are the SME [subject matter expert], they are the customer…. It’s not about you…that it is really about the person sitting at the other end of the table,” and “not just focus on what you have to spit out” (P1, 29). She recounted how one of the top trainers brought his brief to her for review, which had no learning objectives, no graphics, and was just “a bunch of information” (P1,86). She helped him add graphics, develop a practical exercise, and add a small group discussion. She noted “…he was humble. So, he thanked me, but he didn’t know…” because he had no formal training in training material design or development (P1, 86, 90).

Participants expressed their views on the role of facilitation as a training implementation skill. Participant 7, a MTO training manager said he tells all his trainers “you’re not briefers, you’re facilitators but noted “…it’s hard to be a good facilitator….some people aren’t comfortable with that” (P7, 171, 179). Participant 1 observed a table-top training event run by the [XX training group] and reported “it was awful. They did not know how to facilitate and play off each other…” (P1, 74). She noted; however, Participant 2 was one of few trainers in MTO with exceptional facilitation skills. She described how he used two slides, which was not the focus of his trainer time and suggested “if we [MTO] could get to that [for other trainers] I would hail major success” (P1, 76). Participant 3 highlighted getting trainees involved during facilitation was an important part of the “adult learning model that is absolutely key! You do not want to perform lectures on individuals” (P3, 73). Respectful of the adult experience in the
training audience, Participant 3 told them, “I am probably going to learn more from you than I think you are going to learn from me…” (P3, 69).

Participant 9 thought MTO trainers were not “exploiting [training] tools, which are already out there” like MTO’s Joint Online Information Center (P9, 31). He suggested, “It's a matter of folks understanding what's in them and then trying to utilize those tools” (P9, 31).

Participant 1 expressed a desire for “more real-world simulation…to make a shift from PowerPoint into interactive media and the technology and desire to do so” (P1, 62). Although she and Participant 9 expressed a desire for more technology in MTO training, she highlighted some trainers do not understand multimedia and get so “unsettled” and frustrated “where it is truly not worth it to have it in the course” (P1, 51).

Participants 3, 6, 7, and 8 discussed differing opinions on the use and need for murderboards, a term used in the military to describe formal rehearsal of classes. Participant 7 described his guys conduct routine murder boards to check for quality control. However, Participant 8 recalled not having to do a murderboard because he never gave a class in eight months and said, “I don’t think anyone’s done that [conducted a murderboard]” (P8, 132).

Participant 6 suggested his team had a good technique for putting trainers at ease presenting in front of peers but noted other teams across MTO do not conduct enough murderboards to ensure relevancy of training materials. Participant 3 expressed excitement in participating in murderboards.

**Evaluation.**

Evaluation processes before, during, and after the development and implementation of a training program are critical because they inform decisions about appropriateness and adequacy,
help to improve and strengthen effectiveness and help determine if the efforts are worth sustaining (Guskey, 2000). The participants’ feedback showed a wide variation in perspectives on the status of evaluation of training audience and trainer performance in MTO. Participants discussed training audience evaluation, use of surveys, internal team evaluation, and evaluation of MTO’s professional development efforts.

Participant 2 related training audience evaluation to the overall purpose of MTO:

So, then you get back into measures of performance and measures of effectiveness; the metrics of how do we [MTO] assess what we're doing. Again, it goes back to what is the purpose for [MTO]. What is our clearly stated mission and then how are we achieving that with activities like professional development, engagement with the customer and then always actually seeing that those metrics are for how we evaluate ourselves. Those metrics should be developed in concert with the customer. (P2, 41)

Participant 7 was the only participant who discussed MTO’s evaluation method for training audience performance, which MTO provided through a Quick Look Report and a facilitated after-review. The MTO Division Chief noted MTO’s focus on trainer feedback versus training audience feedback and expressed a desire to improve in this area. Participant 8 did not observe any trainer or training audience evaluation conducted after being in MTO for nine months and participating in two exercises.

Several participants discussed conflicting perspectives on the use and efficacy of surveys for evaluation of trainer performance. The MTO Division Chief, Participant 9, said MTO provided “opportunities for trainer performance feedback through a survey” for every training engagement (P9, 63). However, Participant 7 reported MTO did “not have a formal feedback
process” through surveys but instead received informal feedback; “...guys [training audience] will say, ‘Hey, great job. I learned a lot. Please come back.’ They ask us back, which is a form of feedback I guess, because if we weren’t hitting the mark, they wouldn’t ask us back. (P7, 147).

He thought surveys were not an effective means of evaluation, because “guys will just do them as fast as possible” so they can leave quickly after a long and tedious exercise (P7, 221).

Participant 6 also thought surveys were ineffective after a long training day for the training audience. Although his team did administer a survey, he felt questions and discussions with the training audience yielded better information. Participant 4 suggested, “You have to have some kind of feedback on how you lead up to it [trainer instruction], and I think that’s what we [MTO] need” (P4, 89). He also described MTO’s survey efforts for feedback on trainer performance as “not very successful, which required a lot of effort to obtain and analyze the information (P4, 135). Participant 2 said his team did not give surveys “half the time” and commented, “Again, if you don’t know what your purpose is, then what’s the point of having a survey…if I don’t know what my desired endstate is from the [MTO] perspective, it doesn’t matter how many times I asked you, ‘Did I do a good job?’ Did I do a good job doing what? (P2, 77)

Two participants shared divergent experiences with training team internal evaluation of performance. Participant 8 displayed frustration at his training team’s lack of any internal training assessment after a training event. He described participating in a hot wash (internal after-action reviews) on another team where they discussed how they could improve their performance. He emphasized, “It’s not for lack of providing input and feedback to want that [a hot wash], they just don’t want to do it’ (P8, 106). He attributed this partly to the lead contractor on his training team who he said has “been entrenched so long that nobody can provide any sort
of feedback to him because he knows everything’ (P8, 106). Participant 6 explained his team has a healthy internal feedback system where they talk “about what we’ve done, what we think we could have done better, what we’ve done that needs to be sustained… (P6, 174)” He also noted his team does not conduct a Facilitated After-Action Review with their training audiences.

Participants commented on evaluation of MTO’s professional development efforts. Participant 5 suggested the efforts must “have some sort of feedback mechanism” (P5, 112). He recommended evaluating through discussions versus having no evaluation or giving a test to determine compliance and understanding of professional development activities. Participant 1 implemented a survey tool in one of the branches she mentored and received “positive feedback” noting, “I know that what we have done as a professional development team is working and they know it too and that feels good” (P1, 13).

The MTO Division Chief, Participant 9, discussed evaluation measures he would use to determine success of the current MTO professional development program. His said the first measure was implementing a program; “We’ve done that” (P9, 85). The second measure was results from execution of the program; “I think we’re starting to see results from some of the initial initiatives. Once we get all five plans in place and we’re actually executing it, I think that is success’ (P9, 86). Success to him was “75% or more say this is a helpful program and they’re getting some type of utility out of it, whether it’s personal or organizational growth’ (P9, 94). He thought the use of periodic surveys “with input and buy-in from the collective training audience” would make MTO a “successful organization” (P9, 96). Other indicators of success he suggested were, observations of improvement in trainer material preparation, integration of new training approaches and technology into training, and trainer performance in front of training audiences.
Implications and recommendations from theme four.

Merriam (2013) suggested, “creating good learning experiences for adults is what andragogy is all about” (p. 44). The data indicated MTO leaders and trainers had a substantial lack of formal knowledge and application of andragogy, adult training, and instructional design principles, which manifested in an overall perception of “average performers” (P9, 25-26). However, lack of adult training skills was not uncommon among trainers in training programs. Stolovitch and Kerr (2011) highlighted, “in many years of research and observations they found few training programs that truly focus on the needs and characteristics of the adult learner” (p. 52). MTO trainers who lack adequate adult training skills and instructional design knowledge present risks to relevancy in meeting important individual trainee performance requirements, which can translate to degraded or failed organizational performance and goals (Knowles et al., 2015; Stolovitch & Keeps, 2011). The core function of any business, organization, or profession is to survive through relevance. (Senge, 1990). For MTO, relevance was even more important because poor training may equate to lives lost on current and future battlefields through poorly trained battle staffs.

Addressing adult learning needs, or training needs analysis, was a well-known mantra as the starting point in adult training development (Brookfield, 1986; Knowles et al., 2015; Lawler & King, 2002). Knowles (1980) suggested successful training programs included “the needs and interests of the clientele,” which the program sought to serve and involved mutual planning between the trainees and the trainers during training development and execution. While a few participants noted tailoring their training materials and approaches based on training audiences needs analysis, others suggested an undetermined portion of MTO trainers repeatedly used the
same briefing materials or presented doctrinal materials when the training audience desired tailored information.

The impact of delivering training not based on a training needs analysis could result in unmotivated learners, a potential waste of training time and resources, learners not trained on necessary battle staff skills, and a bad reputation for MTO as a training organization. If a trainer did not engage with the training audience in a training needs assessment, he could not formulate adequate training objectives, determine appropriate training materials or delivery approach, or develop and evaluation plan to determine training effectiveness.

Participants also highlighted a culture of trainer-focused, lectured-based, PowerPoint-driven presentations as the prevailing means of training delivery for MTO trainers. Using this method could devalue and demotivate adults if their experience was not utilized during the training and cause them to mentally shut down and not learn (Knowles, 1980). The military trainees involved in MTO training events represent a wide range of military experience. Trainers should draw from, speak to, and build on this experience according to adult learning principles to increase the effectiveness and impact of overall learning in a group learning environment (Knowles et al., 2015; Stolovitch & Keeps, 2011).

MTO trainers’ who lack facilitation skills and rely on lectured-based classes may not be able to produce the “dynamic climate” Stolovitch and Keeps (2011) said was required for adult learners to grow and develop (p. 58). Dynamic refers to encouraging an environment where active and experiential participation occurs. Lawler (1991) expressed “Adults learn more effectively and efficiently when they actively participate in the educational activity” (p. 39). If MTO trainers do not learn or were not motivated to learn training skills, which promoted active participation of their adult trainees, they again risked creating resentment from the trainees for
not respecting their experience and neglecting their “deeper…psychological need to be self-directing” (p. 65).

Rehearsals (murderboards) were a good activity for trainers to review their training and approach and materials with peers and superiors. However, if the entire training team had no knowledge of adult training principles or skills, they could not discuss varied training approaches, which value trainees’ experience and provide opportunities for trainee interaction and participation. Unless MTO trainers acquire adult training skills, they would continue to perpetuate in their rehearsals a trainer versus trainee-focused approach to training via PowerPoint presentations.

Organizations use a continuous process of evaluation to improve the quality and facilitate success of their programs (Department of the Army, 2017b; Lawler & King, 2002). The data were inconclusive on the level and frequency of evaluation conducted by MTO for trainee and trainer performance. The data showed a general trend on dissatisfaction with the use of surveys for training audience feedback and an overall lack of a formal evaluation process. Kirkpatrick (2016) emphasized organizations evaluated programs for improvement, “to maximize transfer of learning to behavior and subsequent organizational results, [and] to demonstrate the value of training to the organization” (p. 5).

The lack of a formalized evaluation process in MTO for training inhibited the organization’s ability to determine whether its training was effective and what specific areas needed remediation to ensure future relevancy. After a training event, there was no formal follow-up with the organization to assess whether the training effectively led to improved job performance or positively contributed to organizational results; Level 3 and 4 Kirkpatrick evaluation results (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). MTO could not easily show any objective
value delivered to training audiences to justify sustainment of funding without a formal evaluation process.

A participant’s comment the MTO professional development program’s “scope was ill-defined” upon inception in 2017 was a fair statement. The program was an additional duty to my regular job I volunteered to initiate and manage. We currently did not have a holistic formal evaluation process for all the professional development program activities, but our instructional systems designer did conduct a post-activity questionnaire for select activities. Dennis Sparks in Guskey (2000) noted professional development evaluation served to strengthen efforts and “determined what effects staff development had in terms of its intended outcomes” (p. ix). He also emphasized trainers wanted to know if their participation in professional development had any impact on making “their work more effective and efficient” (p. xi). MTO could not effectively guide future structure, content, and form for its professional development program without improved formalization of the program’s mission, policy, and evaluation processes (Guskey, 2000).

I will recommend MTO address the training issues and needs related to adult and instructional design skills and standards in the Training Advisory Council mentioned earlier in the study. I will recommend continued development of a MTO trainer/observer course, which covers the various functions of a MTO trainer: training, observing, coaching, and mentoring. I will also recommend a review and establishment of evaluation processes for: (a) training tasks, (b) training audience performance, (c) training team performance, (d) professional development program, (e) contract company performance.
(RQ 3): Theme five. Organizational solutions

Theme five (Table 10) described participants’ responses related to research question three, which explored ideas for developing and implementing a trainer professional development program to meet training needs.

Participants expressed ideas for solutions to organizational issues affecting professional development in leadership, mission and purpose, standards, and personnel.

Leadership and personnel solutions.

Participants 2, 4, and 8 suggested leadership provide direction, mission clarity, motivation, and engagement to address resistance to change issues and promote professional development. Participants 2 and 4 thought there “had to be some kind of motivating, some kind of direction,” reinforcement, and emphasis by MTO leadership to steer the path of professional development in MTO (P2, 57; P4, 73). Participant 8 suggested MTO senior military and contractor leadership had to “drive” professional development by “not forcing it but encouraging it” (P8, 84). He also recommended MTO’s senior leadership should walk around and engage with the trainers more stressing what is important and getting feedback. He noted MTO leaders must then “take that feedback and turn it into something” (P8, 86). Participant 4 recommended MTO establish a training manager or chief of staff position to focus “down and in” daily operations of the trainers and training program uninhibited by all the “up-and-out activities of the organization.
Table 10. Theme Five: Organizational Solutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme Definition: This theme is defined by participants’ perceptions of mission, purpose, personnel, and standards solutions to training and professional development challenges and barriers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Question #3: What are participants’ ideas for developing and implementing a trainer professional development program to meet these training needs?</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Synopsis of Participant Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants 2,4,8</td>
<td>Expressed a desire for leadership to provide direction, mission clarity, motivation, engagement to address resistance to change issues and promote professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants 3,4,7</td>
<td>Described a need for increased supervision and accountability for trainer preparation, guidance to newcomers, and contractor company performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>Desired greater MTO leader expectations for MTO trainers to develop, evolve, and grow and quality control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>Recommended MTO senior leader intervention to direct military to train and lead training efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>Suggested increased interaction of MTO military and contractor leadership with trainers; encouraging but not forcing participation in professional development efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mission &amp; Purpose</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>Suggested organizational leadership provide clear mission, purpose, and endstate to drive PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>Suggested determining MTO’s mission and focusing PD on functional tasks to achieve the mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>Suggested MTO figure out the subject and the matters and then what trainers need to be an expert on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>Suggested he needed to clarify MTO vision and intent through more consistent communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>Highlighted need to introduce ideas on why MTO wanted individual performance changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standards</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>Recommended defining specific criteria for what constitutes a good class; referenced USAF instructor’s manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>Recommend MTO standards for trainers as carry yourself properly, be a subject matter expert, be honest, and prepare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>Suggested establishing training standards for seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>Emphasized the need for training standards to prevent laziness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>Suggested murderboards be tweaked due to differing training team standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>Recommended development of MTO training standards driven by Branch Chiefs to improve uniformity among training teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personnel</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>Recommended adding a training manager and a Deputy of Operations for training management and quality control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant 8 suggested the MTO Division Chief direct military personnel to take the lead in training to address their reliance on contractors as the sole trainers. He emphasized “it’s got to be a team thing. You can’t have the contractors be the ones that are always up there…talking. The military guy is the lead…” (P8, 89). Participant 1 desired greater MTO leader expectations for MTO trainers to develop, evolve, and grow and for more quality control before trainers present their training. She suggested leaders demand better utilization of time when trainers return from training trips to improve their training materials.
Mission, purpose, and personnel solutions.

Participants expressed MTO did not have a clearly stated and understood purpose for training, which inhibited the organization’s ability to develop appropriate professional development for trainers. Participant 2 suggested MTO leadership’s biggest responsibility was supplying a clearly articulated purpose, direction on how to achieve it, and a desired end state. Participant 4 suggested MTO leadership should “get in there” to ensure MTO trainers know “what the job is” and “what the mission is” (P4, 215). The MTO Division Chief identified a shortfall in clarity of MTO’s vision and intent and suggested reinforcing both on a routine basis to ensure organizational understanding and consistency with command priorities. He stressed, “That reinforces why you come in the door, what your purpose is, what the intent is” (P9, 71). Participant 1 posed if trainers could change why they were training and really explained the why, trainers “would produce better products” if they knew why they were training (P1, 66).

Standards solutions.

Participants suggested the establishment of training standards in MTO to assure trainer performance and professionalism and achieve unity of effort among training practices and resources within the various MTO training teams. Participants 3, 6, and 7 recommended establishing a standard for MTO murderboards to ensure trainers’ materials and training formats remain relevant and are checked prior to training. Participant 3 suggested developing standards for a good class based on objective criteria derived from military Services’ instructor manuals to reduce the current subjective criteria. Participant 8 suggested MTO leadership needed to establish and drive standards telling trainers, “This is the way I want you to do business. This is the way I want you to act. This is the way I want you to interact with the commands…and
provide that foundational cornerstone…” (P8, 69). Without standards, he said it was hard to intermix between the teams because their training procedures were different.

**Implications and recommendations from theme five.**

The solutions offered in theme five (increased leader direction, engagement, management, clarification and communication of vision and intent, and creating training standards) might address organizational issues but fall outside of the purview of professional development designed to meet training needs (i.e. training to improve gaps in knowledge and skills) (Guskey, 2000; Hannum, 2005). However, there is an important linkage between issues and solutions related to clarity of an organization’s mission, vision, intent, and performance standards noted in this theme and proper design of professional development activities.

Lawler and King’s (2002) Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development asked the following important questions in the pre-planning stage: “What is the purpose of faculty development? [and] How is the faculty development tied to the mission of the institution?” (p. 42). If the mission, vision, and purpose were not well established and understood within an organization, a clear direction, purpose, and outcome goals for its professional development program was unlikely. Guskey (2000) suggested “true professional development” had a clear purpose and goals, which guided a deliberate process to select content and materials, develop procedures and processes, and prepare assessments and evaluations.

A clear mission and purpose in an organization is a prerequisite to establishing performance objectives and standards for those objectives. Standards in a training environment help achieve “unity of effort, accuracy of specific measurable items, institutional agility, learning product visibility, reduced workload, and improved product quality” (Department of the Army,
The issues and solutions to MTO’s training standards suggest further examination to determine which standards exist, which require modification, and if new standards are required.

I will recommend MTO address the organizational issues and solutions at an appropriate time and venue determined by MTO’s leadership. Specifically, I will ask to lead a session to explore the level of understanding and agreement of MTO trainers with the current MTO vision, mission, and purpose, and standards. I will also seek to clarify the role of the military personnel as trainers and discuss the status of standards within the organization. In a separate session, I will discuss the sensitive leadership concerns of expectations, direction, supervision, and engagement uncovered by this research with the MTO Division Chief and Deputy.

(RQ 3): Theme six: Professional development approaches and activities

Theme six (Table 11) described participants’ responses related to research question three, which explored ideas for developing and implementing a trainer professional development program to meet training needs. The responses reflected trainers’ recommendations for solutions to training analysis, design and implementation, evaluation, issues as well as approaches and activities for professional development.

Training analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation solutions.

Participants offered solutions to address issues related to analysis of customers’ training needs, transforming trainers from briefers to facilitators – trainer-focused to trainee focused, trainee engagement during training, and evaluation processes. Participant 1 suggested increasing her focus on problem-solving and training audience analysis skills during her instructional systems design mentoring approach with MTO training teams.
She thought doing so would help them understand the customer and determine the best ways to facilitate their learning and get them excited about it. She also stressed teaching trainers a variety of techniques to engage customers before, during, and after to constantly evaluate and adjust training needs.

Participant 2 suggested developing a professional development program, which allowed trainers as coaches “to gain the tools so that we can give our customers what it is they are asking for” (P2,53).
Participants 6 and 7 suggested increased interaction with MTO’s instructional systems designer to improve the quality of instructional materials, presentation skills, and training evaluation processes. Participants 1 and 3 recommended shifting the paradigm of trainer-focused training to training-focused training by teaching adult learning principles. Participant 1 highlighted the importance of trainers learning to respect the experience of the trainees; a key component of Knowles’s adult learning principles. She noted, “everyone brings something to the table” (P1,29). Participant 3 recommended an emphasis on teaching MTO trainers to get trainees more involved in training. He explained the trainer’s role was to “invoke discussion in a fair and partial way;” not to just give the audience information (P3,73). He noted when you introduce a well-crafted question to students, “they just come alive…” (P3,73).

Participant 5 recommended trainers assess training needs and either provide or direct trainees to the appropriate reference materials. He noted the training audience contained a lot of smart and capable people. Participants 1 and 9 recommended integration of innovative training techniques and simulation in training to facilitate the “shift from PowerPoint to interactive media” (P1,62). Participant 9 suggested improved training on the existing MTO trainer tools and resources available; specifically, the Joint Online Information Center (JOIC). He also recommended formalizing MTO’s key leader engagement processes to obtain first-hand feedback from training audiences and engaging training audiences more through existing quarterly battle rhythm events to obtain training audience training requirements.

**Professional development approaches.**

Participants suggested various approaches to adjust the current design and implementation of MTO’s professional development program. Participant 5 suggested MTO establish a clear definition for the professional development program and then establish a process
to understand what and who the organization is trying to develop and why they are trying to develop in alignment with the organization’s mission. Participant 4 recommended two components for MTO’s professional development program; the first component would baseline trainers on MTO’s mission, while the second component would provide an understanding of the technical processes and standards of how MTO achieves its mission. Participant 5 noted the program had to address proficiency across a wide spectrum of functional skills in MTO, while Participants 2 and 7 said MTO must make time available for the program.

Participant 8 emphasized the professional development program “must treat people as adults” (P8,77). It must provide “meaningful topics”, which interest and engage a senior audience and address how the program will make trainers better (P8,152). He also stressed the program needed to have a tailored versus cookie-cutter approach to accommodate the range of experienced to less experienced trainers. Participant 4 emphasized the target audience had a lot of experienced trainers “so, you can’t come in trying to say, ‘Look, I want to change everything you do’” (P4,195). Participants 4 and 6 suggested the importance of explaining how the MTO professional development process will improve trainers’ job performance and suggested doing so in an informal way noting there may be some formal aspects of the program.

Participants presented different recommendations on making the professional development program mandatory or voluntary. Participant 6 recommended making the program flexible, because “the minute you say this is the formalization of the things, you’re going to turn everyone off” (P6,183). Participant 7 recommended making the program mandatory for one hour during the duty day for the first six months so trainers can see the value of it and then make it voluntary. He said trainers will not attend if the program is completely voluntary from the start. Participant 9 suggested some elements are mandatory for newcomers like the Newcomer’s
orientation to set the foundation “of what the learning professional should know about the organization prior to them actually being in the organization” (P9,50). He also suggested the program should offer flexibility for trainers “to make sure that if they're not taking advantage of some of the recommendations, then they are demonstrating through it, a professional development plan…that shows growth…” (P9,51).

Participant 9 suggested trainers should develop and execute personal professional development plans in collaboration with their first-line supervisors ensuring the plan is nested with the vision of the organization and executed based on its priorities. He also recommended assigning professional development to the various branches and cells in MTO to achieve buy-in from the trainers and make them “a part of the adult learning process” (P9,73). Participant 9 recommended the development of a routine professional development program where MTO is “routinely educating ourselves” (P9,80).

**Professional development activities.**

Participants suggested a variety of activities to facilitate development and implementation of MTO’s professional development program. Participants 7 and 8 highlighted the success of the current brown-bag lunchtime program, which addressed topics recommended and conducted by MTO trainers and outside guests. Participant 8 suggested broadening the focus of the program to bring in strategic-level speakers like the Joint Staff J7. He also highlighted the collaborative benefit of the program where MTO trainers get to know each other and share experiences. Participants 2, 5, 8, and 9 suggested continuing course offering at the Joint Special Operations University with a particular emphasis on the Faculty Development Course. Participant 9 said this course helped instructors design training materials and gain confidence when training in front of large and small audiences.
Participants 2, 4, 5, and 8 recommended improved cross communications between teams and other J-Code Directorates within the organization. Participants 4 and 8 highlighted integration with other J-Code Directorates and working groups allowed them to keep their training materials relevant and broadened their knowledge about their areas of operations outside their normal exercise lanes. Participants 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 recommended sustaining the current professional reading program and having more collegial discussions about readings. Participant 6 said he learned “more by interaction and discuss” than by individually reading. Participant 5 stressed the importance of self-directed reading for professional development and professionalism.

Participants 6 and 8 suggested MTO enact a right-seat program where MTO newcomers could experience their job first-hand with the benefit of mentoring from an experienced trainer. Participant 6 also suggested a return to the practice of conducting staff assistance visits (SAVs) in an operational theater. He said SAVs allowed trainers to see whether MTO training resulted in behavioral changes in job performance and whether these changes improved the battle staff overall organizational performance. Participants 8 and 9 suggested MTO conduct the current Newcomers’ Orientation Course more frequently and develop a one-on-one capability to provide the basics of MTO’s functions and standards when newcomers arrive in between course offerings. Participant 6 recommended sustainment of murderboards for trainer quality control.

**Implications and recommendations from theme six.**

The participants’ solutions suggested in this theme offered potential considerations for MTO’s professional development program in addressing perceived gaps in trainer adult training knowledge and skills and ways and activities to achieve buy-in and participation in the program. I will address changing the perceived pedagogical, trainer-focused approach of adult training
prevalent in the research data by recommending adoption of Knowles’s adult learning principles in MTO’s professional development program. Stolovitch and Keeps (2011) noted their research indicated the inclusion of adult learning principles in organizations’ training programs precipitated a common paradigm shift from briefers transmitting information to trainers focused on transforming “learners in ways desirable both for them and for organizations” (p. 13). They highlighted modern organizations had transitioned from “training departments” to “learning and development” groups and “workplace learning and performance” teams” (p. 13).

The recommendations to add analysis skills, engage trainees in the training, improve trainee-centered collaboration skills and integrate, and linking skills, tools, and resources to customer needs all align with Knowles’s (2015) andragogical process model in which the trainer is a facilitator and resource provider for adult learning vice a transmitter of knowledge and skills. It was encouraging to see participants’ solutions unknowingly aligned with Knowles’s principles because it indicated acknowledgment and willingness by some trainers and leaders in MTO to address perceived training-related performance issues.

Although not suggested as a training solution in this theme, the instructional systems designer and I talked extensively about and decided to use the Instructional System Design (ISD or ADDIE model) as a theory and practicum-based solution to address MTO’s lack of a training framework and standards, and its trainers’ lack of skills in developing training materials. We also researched and selected Stolovitch and Keep’s (2011) Telling Ain’t Training book and workbook as the primary training materials for a new MTO trainer/observer development course. The book and workbook incorporate Knowles’s adult learning principles in its training approach. We will conduct mutual planning and vetting of the course design with MTO trainers in accordance with adult learning principles appreciating the experience and knowledge they have to offer.
The professional development approach solutions suggested aligned with Knowles’s adult learning principles. The approaches of selecting meaningful and challenging professional development topics addressed an adult’s orientation to learning. Adults prefer training topics relevant to addressing immediate, job-related problems or performance issues (Knowles, 1980). The approach to accommodate a wide variance of trainer skills and experience and assigning professional development activities to branch and cell leaders incorporate the adult learning principle of experience. Trainers should incorporate adult learners in training planning and execution because they bring a wide variety of experiences to a training activity and define themselves by their experiences (Knowles et al., 2015).

The professional development activities suggested also aligned with Knowles’s adult learning principles. The suggested continuance of the MTO professional reading programs supported the adult learning principle of self-directed learning and motivation to learn. Adults have a self-desire to control their own learning and avoid dependency on others to learn and are intrinsically motivated by self-esteem and the desire for continued growth (Knowles et al., 2015). The professional reading program and lunchtime brown-bag activities, which MTO trainers select topic, plan, and lead leverage the role of adult trainers’ experience and their preference for self-directed learning (Lawler & King, 2002).

There were many traditional and non-traditional professional development activities suggested in this theme for the MTO professional development program. The challenge was to avoid lack of cohesion and inconsistency in program offerings without sustained support, all indicators Baiocco and Waters’ (1998) discovered in their research of ineffective professional development programs. I will recommend reviewing all suggested training and professional development approaches and activities in this theme via the proposed Training Advisory Council
with an emphasis on developing a coherent program tied to the organization’s mission, purpose, and priorities. Since many of the suggested professional development activities were already in place, I will recommend establishing goals, objectives, and standards to evaluate their efficacy while entertaining the feasibility of adding the new proposed activities based on organizational priorities, resources, and most importantly continuous feedback from MTO trainers. The goal is to create a holistic MTO professional development program, which creates a culture of enthused individual and organizational learning and professional growth (Lawler & King, 2002).

**Researcher’s Reflections**

During the final stages of this dissertation, my Committee Chair told me the dissertation “is a contemplative journey toward your future” (personal communication, 1 May, 2019). This caused me to reflect on where I started in this research process, why I chose my research topic, and what I am going to do with the research findings in an immediate sense in my workplace and more importantly in my future. I began this contemplative journey by finding an appropriate doctoral program, which met my personal goals of simultaneous personal and organizational development and improvement. The doctoral program in Program Development with an emphasis on innovation I found at the College of Education at the University of South Florida met this dual purpose. The program’s purpose, “to prepare graduates to create, launch and evaluate promising, sustainable innovations in their own professional settings,” allowed me to explore potential new career paths and also addressed a perceived need in my organization for improvement through a trainer professional development program. ("Program Development," n.d.).

This qualitative exploratory research process gave me a deep appreciation of the effectiveness and validity of addressing learning problems grounded in Knowles’s adult learning
principles and process of valuing research participants’ experience in collaborative problem solving (Knowles, 1980; Knowles et al., 2015; Lawler & King, 2002). It reaffirmed and strengthened my contextualist epistemological view as an adult educator and trainer, which supports a transactional, student-centered, andragogical approach to instruction and training (Olafson & Schraw, 2006, p. 72). During the research process, I tried to find the right balance between my passion, experience, goals, and bias towards MTO as I listened, analyzed, and portrayed other MTO participants’ shared views and passions. I believe I achieved this goal by providing a fair and objective portrayal of MTO participants’ perceptions and experiences. I realized how powerful an hour-long personal interview could be on a subject, which participants were passionate about; improving their workplace.

The collaborative discussion and valuing participants’ experience and insights aligned with adult learning principles and Lawler and King’s (2002) call to incorporate adults’ felt interests and needs when developing a professional development program (Knowles et al., 2015). It all made perfect sense at the end of the qualitative research process and delivered deep and rich contextual data. I hope the research will inform a continued process to improve the professional development program in MTO and improve overall individual and organizational performance.

The use of a semi-structured interview with an interview guide served as a good guiderail, which kept the interviews consistent. As expected, there was a significant variation in responses to the prescribed questions due to varied participant experiences and interests. I was consistent with the questions and subsequent dialogue, which helped in the coding and analysis phases of the research. However, I thought I would get more specificity from participants on their perceived personal technical and adult training skills gaps, but experienced many responses
focused on organizational issues indirectly related to professional development. I learned through further research this was common when conducting a training needs assessment and important to address in findings, which I did (Guskey, 2000).

This two-and-a-half-year doctoral process in program development broadened my knowledge and experience in program development, evaluation, the adult learning process, and professional development. It reenergized my passion to innovate and seek improvement in whatever endeavor I engage in the future and gave me new tools and knowledge to do so. The next step is leveraging this doctoral degree in Program Development and Certificate in Program Evaluation to find a new professional path to improve a cause, organization, or something else worthy of effort.
Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to understand the individual and organizational training needs of a military training organization, which trains battle staffs to inform professional development program design. The first section in this chapter provides a summary of the study. Subsequent sections provide conclusions and implications of the study. In the final section, I provide recommendations for further research.

Summary of Study

While extant literature and research I reviewed suggested addressing adult learner needs was a characteristic which facilitated effective professional development (Croft et al., 2010; Houston, 2016; Lawler & King, 2002; Perrin, 2000); no studies explored the issue from the perspective of military battle staff trainers. I conducted exploratory research because there was minimal information known about the current training experience, needs and perceptions of military battle staff trainers regarding professional development. My exploratory study addressed the following research questions to facilitate an understanding of MTO adult participants’ training and professional development experiences and needs:

1. In what ways do participants in MTO perceive trainer and professional development experiences throughout their military and professional careers?

2. What are participants’ perceptions of training needs in MTO?

3. What are participants’ ideas for developing and implementing a trainer professional development program to meet these needs?
I used maximum variation sampling to select nine participants, which provided a diverse mix of trainer perceptions representing a wide cross-section of the organization. The participants included seven contractors, one active duty military, and one government civilian representing trainer, instructional systems design, and leadership functions within MTO. All participants solicited for interviews accepted invitations to participate in the research.

I developed interview questions based on an extant review of the literature and analysis of organizational documents related to MTO’s mission, procedures, and trainer development. I conducted a pilot study review with the MTO instructional designer to validate the research questions. I completed all interviews from December 2018 to February 2019. Interviews averaged one hour and took place at various locations on the military installation where MTO was located.

Nine participants shared their experiences and perceptions of training and professional development needs throughout their careers and within MTO. They described organizational challenges related to training performance and professional development in MTO. They also shared suggested solutions for addressing identified organizational issues related to training development, delivery, and evaluation as well as solutions for professional development approaches and activities. The participants’ recommended solutions to training needs and issues reflected congruence with Knowles’s adult learning principles and processes.

Conclusions

I drew the following conclusions from the research findings. All participants except one were retired or active military with 20+ years of experience in their respective technical fields. None expressed a significant weakness in the technical skills they were hired to train or observe in military battle staff training, but most had no formal training or understanding in adult
learning principles or the ADDIE model of instructional design. All retired military trainers associated professional development with their previous military Service career progression schools and had mostly positive experiences. There were varied experiences with organizational (unit) specific professional development with half not experiencing any unit-level professional development. Those who did described programs as sporadic and centered around reading lists and topical presentations.

All participants suggested a need for professional development in MTO for a variety of reasons: maintain technical currency, train younger trainers with less experience, accommodate a dynamic military environment, level the bubbles among a diverse range of MTO trainer experience and skills, and ensure relevancy to training audiences. Data indicated a concern with newcomer professional development for trainers with little joint or special operations knowledge or experience. Participants emphasized the importance of personal initiative in professional development but described those who did not participate or update their training materials and training methods.

Participants described organizational issues related to training in leadership, mission and purpose, standards, personnel, and resistance to change. They discussed MTO leadership’s inability to get military personnel to conduct the trainer function, and lack of engagement and communications before, during, and after training events. Participants also described low or no MTO leaders’ expectations and supervision, and a need for clarity in MTO’s mission and purpose. Many expressed shortfalls in MTO standards and quality control for training processes, which affected trainer preparation and hindered unity of effort on training approaches among the training teams. Some participants described ambiguity in the required job duties and roles of an MTO trainer, and highlighted MTO’s difficulty in getting qualified military and contractor
trainers with adult training skills. Many participants discussed various aspects of resistance to change among trainers, which affected trainer performance and professional development implementation.

Participants shared needs and issues related to training analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation. Their overall assessment of trainer performance was average noting improvements required in adult training and technical skills. Many identified gaps in MTO trainers’ ability to provide relevant training through analysis of the training audience needs and attributed it to lack of analysis skills; laziness; and lack of training audience access, diversity, and apathy issues. Participants described MTO trainers who do not analyze training audience needs, update their training materials for relevancy, or change their trainer techniques. They also described trainers with poor facilitation skills whose dominant mode of training is PowerPoint presentations delivered in a trainer-centered versus trainee-centered manner.

Participants supported the use of murderboards as a good trainer rehearsal technique but noted a lack of objective standards for training materials and presentation techniques. Data showed an overall lack of formal and consistent evaluation processes for trainer and trainee performance and a general trend of dissatisfaction with the use of surveys for training audience feedback.

Participants provided recommended solutions to organizational issues related to training in leadership, mission and purpose, standards, and personnel. Some participants suggested leadership provide direction, mission clarity, motivation, and engagement to address resistance to change issues and promote professional development. Most participants suggested establishing training standards to assure trainer performance and professionalism and achieve unity of efforts among training practices and resources within the various training teams.
Participants recommended a clear professional development program definition, process, and alignment with the organizational mission once clarified. Some participants suggested a focus on treating trainers as adults in the professional development process ensuring integration of relevant and challenging topics to address a wide range of needs for experienced and inexperienced trainers. Participants suggested a flexible professional development program design with both compulsory activities for newcomers and voluntary activities for more experienced trainers. Some participants suggested inclusion of adult learning principles in formal training to address trainer knowledge and skills gaps in adult learning, training needs analysis, material development, training technique selection, and evaluation.

Participants recommended a variety of professional development activities and actions: brown-bag lunch discussions, faculty development and other professional courses, right-seat-ride program for newcomers, staff assistance visits, reading program, collegial training discussions, improved use of the instructional systems designer, and increased internal and external communication with appropriate technical organizations. MTO leadership recommended individual professional development plans and assigning development and implementation of activities to branch and cell leaders per adult learning principles. Overall, I discovered all the MTO participants had a desire to improve organizational performance and thought a professional development program was a viable means of addressing some, but not all organizational issues identified in the study.

**Implications**

In this section, I discuss implications from the research for trainers, MTO leadership, and professional development program developers.
Trainers.

The trainers in this study indicated a gap in adult training skills and other organizational issues affecting training performance and motivation. The results, if shared by MTO’s leadership with the organization, might encourage MTO trainers and support personnel to share their felt needs, experiences, good and bad, and recommend solutions with MTO’s leadership to foster a learning organizational culture. Either compulsory or voluntary attendance in formal adult training education and training might give trainers the confidence and skills to change to a trainee-centered orientation of training and result in improved trainee and organizational performance.

MTO leadership.

In this study, the in-depth description of MTO participants’ challenges, frustrations, and solutions to MTO issues affecting individual and organizational performance might prompt MTO’s leadership to conduct their own exploration to validate the findings. The implications from this research make a strong case for clarity of mission and purpose, training in adult training skills, and increased leadership engagement. The recommended solutions involve more participatory and collaborative professional development activities, which will require MTO leadership to promote, resource, and prioritize them based on its current busy schedule of training activities. Stepping back and conducting a systematic review of MTO’s issues related to the study findings might be the extrinsic catalyst to drive cultural changes in the way MTO approaches battle staff training.
Professional development program developers.

Professional development program developers in various fields outside the military might see the value of using an exploratory case study approach used in this study to conduct a training needs analysis in their organizations. They might realize the approach could find larger organizational issues, which need resolution before they can develop and implement an effective professional development program. My methodology insights in this study might also shed light on the utility of using semi-structured interviews versus surveys to gain a broad and deeper understanding of the contextual factors, which influence individual and organizational performance. Applying adult learning principles in the design and development of professional development programs could facilitate designers capturing the rich experience and needs of employees, which is attributable to professional development program success (Lawler & King, 2002).

Recommendations for Further Research

The recommendations for further research for this study are:

1. A study on the implementation of the professional development program for military training organization (MTO) utilizing Lawler and King’s (2002) Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development is the next logical follow-on research project to this exploratory effort. The study might include action research or a program evaluation to determine what worked or did not work using the full model to design and implement professional development in MTO to achieve improvements in trainer and training audience performance. Research might determine the measures of performance and effectiveness for professional development programs in this context?
2. A study of military staff training and education culture could reveal what methods instructors use and why. Research might explore the efficacy of instructor training programs and activities and the extent they integrate formal adult learning and instructional systems design principles.

3. A meta-analysis of professional development studies to date could determine under what conditions (contextual characteristics, types of formats, content) a professional development program might achieve positive results (Guskey, 2000). Study results could yield valuable planning information for professional development program practitioners.

4. A qualitative study might determine the factors, which influence and motivate (or demotivate) trainers or instructors to develop, implement, and evaluate military training and education. A researcher might conduct mixed-methods research in a variety of military training and educational venues to determine universal and contextual conditions, which influence military trainer and instructor professional development efforts.

5. Additional mixed-methods research might be conducted on other military Service battle staff training organizations. Comparing results might yield useful information and best and worst practices, which could benefit all military training organizations participating in the research.

6. Further research might determine trainee-perceived differences between training behavior of andragogically and pedagogically oriented trainers, differences between andragogical and pedagogical orientations to education, and conditions in the classroom using Kerwin’s (1979) Educational Description Questionnaire (EDQ) for students and Hadley’s (1975) Educational Orientation Questionnaire (EOQ) for trainers. Results might impact an andragogical teaching orientation for trainers upon awareness of their current orientation. Researchers could also
use other instruments to achieve the same purposes: Perrin Instrument (2000); Holton, Wilson, & Bate’s (2009) Andragogical Practices Inventory (API) instrument.

7. A researcher might study the onboarding experiences for newcomers in joint military staffs to help facilitate assimilation into their functional roles and organizations’ missions. Often, military personnel are assigned to four-star, combatant command joint staffs with no previous joint experience. In the case of MTO, many military trainers had no joint or special operations experience. A qualitative study could determine the concerns, fears, and coping mechanisms used as newcomers transition into performance of their jobs with or without any formal newcomer’s training or education programs.

8. Further empirically based research might show correlational effects of the application of professional development programs integrating andragogical design on positive training outcomes.

9. Fifteen empirically based andragogical measurement instruments named in this study supply ample opportunity to substantiate or refute the usefulness of adopting an andragogical approach in professional development design and implementation. There were few studies associated with andragogy and professional development design to inform professional development design practice.

**Recommendations for MTO Professional Development Program Design**

The recommendations from this study might lead to an improved trainer professional development program design in MTO, which fully supports the organization’s and trainers’ efforts to deliver effective adult training. I categorized the recommendations in two lines of effort; (a) organizational solutions and (b) professional development program solutions. The recommendations address organizational gaps in leadership, professional development policy,
training standards, and training and trainer performance evaluation. The recommendations are listed in Appendix H.
References


227


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Appendices
Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

December 3, 2018

George Young
College of Education
Tampa, FL 33612

RE: Expedited Approval for Initial Review
IRB#: Pro00037699
Title: Training Staff’s Experiences, Perceived Needs, and Suggestions for Professional Development in a Military Training Organization

Study Approval Period: 12/3/2018 to 12/3/2019

Dear Mr. Young:

On 12/3/2018, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and APPROVED the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
Protocol_Version#1_27 Nov 2018

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:
Adult Consent_Version#1_27 Nov 2018.pdf
Appendix B: Interview Protocol Invitation Letter

Interview Protocol Invitation Letter

Trainer and Organizational Needs for Professional Development in a Military Training Organization

Principal Researcher: George R. Young II

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Janet C. Richards

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE You are invited to participate in research about training and organizational needs for professional development in USSOCOM J7-Joint Collective Training. Your participation is solicited because you are a trainer, organizational leader, or member of staff directly involved with developing policy, providing resources or expertise, or developing, facilitating, and evaluating Special Operations battle staff training. You are qualified to answer questions regarding your perceptions, experience, and ideas regarding professional development and your current and future training needs required to refine the current professional development program in USSOCOM J7-JCT. You will be asked to participate in an interview and a follow-up interview if required.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Who is the Principal Researcher?  Who is the Faculty Advisor?

George R. Young, M.A., M.P.A  Dr. Janet C. Richards

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this exploratory case study research is to understand the individual and organizational training needs of a military training organization, which trains battle staffs to inform professional development program design. The research findings should lead to an improved trainer professional development program design that fully supports trainer efforts to deliver effective adult training.

Who will participate in this project?

Trainers, organizational leaders, and staff directly involved with training and training support for battle staff training.

Who authorized this research?
Appendix B: Interview Protocol Invitation Letter (continued)

The University of South Florida Institutional Review Board approved this research on (xxx November 2018).

What are participant requirements?
You are asked to participate in an interview lasting approximately one hour with the potential for a follow-up interview of approximately 30 minutes. The researcher will give the participant the opportunity to review all data and transcripts to ensure accuracy and acceptability. The interview contains questions regarding demographic information, professional development and trainer needs.

What are the possible risks or discomforts?
There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research.

What are the possible benefits of this research?
Possible benefits to participants may be an opportunity to reflect upon individual and organizational current training needs to inform professional development program design. The study may provide critical information to provide adequate resources, training and education opportunities, and staff support through a tailored redesign of its professional development program. The improved professional development program is intended to enhance trainer functional and instructor currency. Research results may help other military battle staff training organizations develop or improve trainer professional development programs. Individuals will not receive any compensation for participation in the study.

How long will the study last?
Research completion is expected within approximately 90 days. The researcher will schedule interview times at the convenience of the participant.

Will participants receive compensation for time and inconvenience?
No compensation will be given for voluntary participation.

What are the options if I do not want to be in the research?
Participation in this research is completely voluntary with ZERO repercussions for non-participation. A participant can cease participation at any time during the research and request his/her data be returned and not used in the research.

How will my confidentiality be protected?
The researcher is legally and ethically obligated to protect the confidentiality of the participants and to protect and secure data in accordance with University of South Florida IRB rules. The researcher will ensure anonymity in all data collection and transcription by using generic names for the respondents so no answers to questions will be recognizable or attributable to any one participant. The researcher will afford the participant an opportunity to review all data and transcripts for accuracy and will delete or change any erroneous data at the request of the
Appendix B: Interview Protocol Invitation Letter (continued)

participant. Any additions or deletions of the transcribed text will be at the request of the respondent. The researcher will keep digital and hardcopies of data, transcripts, and recordings until the end of the research and then will destroy them.

Will I know the results of the research?

The researcher will provide participants feedback on the research results upon request at the end of the research. You may contact the Faculty Advisor, Dr. Janet C. Richards or the Researcher, George R. Young II at any time during the project. You will receive a copy of this informed consent form for your files.

What do I do if I have questions about the research study?

You can contact the Researcher or Faculty Advisor listed below for any concerns you may have. You may also contact the University of South Florida Research Integrity and Compliance Office listed below if you have questions about your participant rights, or to discuss any concerns about, or problems with the research.

George Weldon, IRB Manager

I have read the above statement and have been able to ask questions and express concerns, which have been satisfactorily answered by the researcher. I understand: the purpose of this research, the potential benefits and risks involved, and significant new findings developed during this research will be shared with me. I also understand participation is voluntary, and no rights have been waived by signing the consent form. The researcher has given me a copy of the consent form.

________________________________________  ________________
Signature of Participant                                      Date
Appendix C: Participant Consent Form Approved by Institutional Review Board

Informed Consent to Participate in Research Involving Minimal Risk

Pro # 00037699

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. Ask the researcher or study staff to discuss this consent form with you, please ask him/her to explain any words or information you do not clearly understand. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.

We are asking you to take part in a research study called:

Training Staff’s Experiences, Perceived Needs, and Suggestions for Professional Development

The person in charge of this research study is George R. (Rich) Young II. This person is called the Principal Investigator. However, other research staff may be involved and can act on behalf of the person in charge. He is being guided in this research by Dr. Janet Richards.

The research will be conducted at a location convenient to the participant.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this exploratory case study research is to understand the individual and organizational training needs of a military training organization that trains battle staffs to inform professional development program design. The research findings should lead to an improved trainer professional development program design that fully supports trainer efforts to deliver effective adult training.

Why are you being asked to take part?

Your participation is solicited because you are a trainer, organizational leader, or member of staff directly involved with developing policy, providing resources or expertise, or developing, facilitating, and evaluating Special Operations battle staff training. You are qualified to answer questions regarding your perceptions, experience, and ideas regarding professional development and your current and future training needs required to refine the current professional development program in USSOCOM J7-JCT.

Study Procedures:
Appendix C: Participant Consent Form Approved by Institutional Review Board (continued)

Study ID:Pro0037690 Date Approved: 12/3/2018

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview lasting approximately one hour with the potential for a follow-up interview of approximately 30 minutes at a location convenient to you. With your permission, the session will be recorded by a primary and secondary recording device to facilitate accurate translation of the interview into text for analysis. The interview recording and subsequent transcription will be conducted in a manner ensuring anonymity for you and any co-workers or leaders. You will have the opportunity to review all data and transcripts to ensure accuracy and acceptability and the ability to withdraw any or all your data at any time during the research. The research team (Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator, Dissertation Committee Members) will have access to your data during this research. Research completion is expected within approximately 90 days. The primary investigator will store your data for five years as required by University of South Florida Institutional Review Board policy at the College of Education Main Office. At the five-year mark, the investigator will shred hardcopy data and delete all recording and data files electronically.

The following are initial questions for the interview:

1. In what ways do participants in MTO perceive their experiences in professional development programs throughout their military and professional careers?
   - Describe your trainer experience
   - How do you define professional development?
   - Describe your experiences with organizational professional development related to your trainer tasks.
   - What role do you play in professional development for training?
   - What role does MTO play in professional development for training?
   - Describe your most memorable professional development experience as a trainer. Why does it stand out? (Follow-on with remembrance of either positive or negative based answer)
   - Do you perceive a need for an improved ProDev Pgm in our organization? Explain

2. What are participants’ perceptions of their current and future, performance-based training needs to develop, conduct, and evaluate effective adult military training?
   - Are you familiar with Adult Learning Principles? (If Yes, tell me how you incorporate them into your training development, delivery, and assessment)
   - What is your perception of your role as a trainer of adults?
   - What is your perception of the trainee’s role in training?
   - What drives what you teach / train?
   - When and how do you change what you teach / train?
   - How do you develop training materials?
   - How do you conduct training?
Appendix C: Participant Consent Form Approved by Institutional Review Board (continued)

Study ID: Pro00037699 Date Approved: 12/3/2018

- How do you evaluate training?
- What are your perceived training needs in technical proficiency?
- What are your perceived training needs in adult training skills (assessment, material development, presenting, evaluation)?

3. What are participants’ ideas for developing and implementing a trainer professional development program to meet these needs?
- How can MTO facilitate improving your technical knowledge and skills?
- How can MTO improve your adult education-training-learning knowledge and skills?
- How can you improve your technical & adult training knowledge skills
- How does MTO include trainer ideas into its ProDev program? Explain.
- How would you design MTO’s ProDev program?

4. What are the participants’ perceptions of strengths, challenges, and barriers to trainer professional development in MTO?
- What does MTO need to sustain in its current ProDev program?
- What are your perceptions of personal and organizational challenges in planning and conducting ProDev in MTO?
- What are current barriers to ProDev in MTO?

5. How do participants perceive MTO might overcome challenges and obstacles to trainer professional development?
- How can MTO overcome these barriers?

Total Number of Participants
About nine individuals will take part in this study at USF.

Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal
You do not have to participate in this research study. You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your job status, employment record, employee evaluations, or advancement opportunities.

Benefits
The potential benefits of participating in this research study may include an opportunity to reflect upon individual and organizational current training needs to inform professional development program design. The study may provide critical information to provide adequate resources, training and
Appendix C: Participant Consent Form Approved by Institutional Review Board (continued)

Study ID: Pro00037699 Date Approved: 12/3/2018

education opportunities, and staff support through a tailored redesign of USSOCOM J7-JCT’s professional development program. The improved professional development program is intended to enhance trainers’ functional and instructor currency. Research results may help other military battle staff training organizations develop or improve trainer professional development programs.

Risks or Discomfort
This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

Compensation
You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Costs
It will not cost you anything to take part in the study.

Conflict of Interest Statement
There is no conflict of interest with this research.

Privacy and Confidentiality
We will do our best to keep your records private and confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Certain people may need to see your study records. These individuals include:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator and Dissertation Committee Members.
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study, and individuals who provide oversight to ensure that we are doing the study in the right way.
- The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, including staff in USF Research Integrity and Compliance.

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints
If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, or experience an unanticipated problem, call George R. (Rich) Young [redacted].

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at RSCH-IRB@usf.edu.

Consent to Take Part in this Research Study
I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing...
Appendix C: Participant Consent Form Approved by Institutional Review Board (continued)

Study ID: Proc00037699 Date Approved: 12/3/2018

to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

Signature of Person Taking Part in Study ___________________________ Date ____________

Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study ____________________________

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in their primary language. This research subject has provided legally effective informed consent.

Signature of Person obtaining Informed Consent ___________________________ Date ____________

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent ____________________________
Appendix E: Themes Discovered

Table 12. Themes Discovered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Major Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ 1: Trainer and ProDev Experiences</td>
<td>Theme 1: Training Experiences</td>
<td>Military Service</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Trainer Experience</td>
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<td>Formal Trainer Training</td>
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<td>Theme 2: ProDev Experiences</td>
<td>PD Purposes</td>
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<td>PD Need</td>
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<td>PD Experiences</td>
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<td>RQ 4: Barriers to Professional Development</td>
<td>Theme 3: Organizational Issues</td>
<td>Leadership Issues</td>
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<td>Mission &amp; Purpose Issues</td>
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<td>Personnel Issues</td>
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<td>Resistance to Change Issues</td>
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<td>RQ 2: Trainer Needs</td>
<td>Theme 4: Training Issues</td>
<td>General Adult Learning Skills Issues</td>
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<td>Analysis Issues</td>
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<td>Development &amp; Implementation Issues</td>
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<td>Evaluation Issues</td>
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<td>RQ 5: Overcoming Barriers to Professional Development</td>
<td>Theme 5: Organizational Solutions</td>
<td>Leadership Solutions</td>
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<td>Mission &amp; Purpose Solutions</td>
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<td>Personnel Solutions</td>
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<td>PD Approaches</td>
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<td>PD Activities</td>
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Appendix F: Semi-Structured Interview Questions Related to Research Questions

Note: The following semi-structured interview questions were based on the five research questions listed below approved by my doctoral committee during the proposal defense. My committee chair directed me to combine some of the research questions which reflects the three research questions listed in the dissertation. The reductions did not fundamentally change any of the subsequent interview sub-questions for the data collected.

The following were the initial questions for the interviews:

1. In what ways do participants in MTO perceive their experiences in professional development programs throughout their military and professional careers?
   - Describe your trainer experience.
   - How do you define professional development?
   - Describe your experiences with organizational professional development related to your trainer tasks.
   - What role do you play in professional development for training?
   - What role does MTO play in professional development for training?
   - Describe your most memorable professional development experience as a trainer. Why does it stand out? (Follow-on with remembrance of either positive or negative based answer)
   - Do you perceive a need for an improved Prodev Pgm in our organization? Explain.

2. What are participants’ perceptions of their current and future, performance-based training needs to develop, conduct, and evaluate effective adult military training?
   - Are you familiar with Adult Learning Principles? (If Yes, tell me how you incorporate them into your training development, delivery, and assessment)
   - What is your perception of your role as a trainer of adults?
   - What is your perception of the trainee’s role in training?
   - What drives what you teach/train?
   - When and how do you change what you teach/train?
   - How do you develop training materials?
   - How do you conduct training?
   - How do you evaluate training?
   - What are your perceived training needs in technical proficiency?
Appendix F: Semi-Structured Interview Questions Related to Research Questions (continued)

➢ What are your perceived training needs in adult training skills (assessment, material development, presenting, evaluation)?

3. What are participants’ ideas for developing and implementing a trainer professional development program to meet these needs?

➢ How can MTO facilitate improving your technical knowledge and skills?
➢ How can MTO improve your adult education-training-learning knowledge and skills?
➢ How can you improve your technical & adult training knowledge/skills?
➢ How does MTO include trainer ideas into its ProDev program? Explain.
➢ How would you design MTO’s ProDev program?

4. What are the participants’ perceptions of strengths, challenges, and barriers to trainer professional development in MTO?

➢ What does MTO need to sustain in its current ProDev program?
➢ What are your perceptions of personal and organizational challenges in planning and conducting ProDev in MTO?
➢ What are current barriers to ProDev in MTO?

5. How do participants perceive MTO might overcome challenges and obstacles to trainer professional development?

➢ How can MTO overcome these barriers?
Appendix G: Member Check Invitation

A. Transcript Validation Request

As promised, I'm giving you an opportunity to review the transcript of our interview. This process is called "member checking" and is done in research help ensure the validity and integrity of the data.

You DO NOT have to review it if you don't want to or are too busy. If you do, just let me know if anything is misspoken or if you care to add any clarifications, changes, or deletions.

I chuckled reading my questions. I didn't know I had ADHD when it came to speaking and asking questions. Some of them didn't make sense to me, so thank you for your patience during the interview process.

My plan is to finish the analysis/conclusions/recommendations by the end of April. I hope to be able to provide a copy of the writeup for your review and approval to submit to the committee prior to 30 Apr.

Thanks.
Rich Young

B. Transcript Synopsis Validation Request

Attached you'll find my synopsis and interpretation of your interview responses. If you have time, I'd ask you to review and validate my summary ensuring it represents a fair and unbiased depiction of your responses to the research questions. I also told you I'd create a degree of anonymity for you in the paper. If you feel what I've included is too descriptive in personally identifying you, I will make adjustments until you are satisfied. Please return as soon as possible.

Thanks.
Rich Young
Appendix G: Member Check Invitation (continued)

My next step is to conduct an analysis of the combined results achieved through the nine interviews highlighting common themes, which emerge from the data and then write a final conclusions/recommendations section. I will share the final draft with all nine interviewees once I get it approved by my dissertation committee.
### Appendix H: Study Recommendations

Table 13. Study Recommendations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations by Themes</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1</strong> (Trainer Experiences)</td>
<td>R1: Recommend addressing MTO trainers’ habits and biases towards trainer-focused training by including sensitivity training in a new MTO trainer/observer course.</td>
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<td>R2: Recommend MTO dedicate an initial period of time for professional development activities and create an evaluation plan to ensure a new trainer is technically prepared and demonstrates acceptable performance of pre-determined trainer skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2</strong> (PD Experiences)</td>
<td>R3: Through further research, I found two models on human performance I will recommend MTO uses to address the non-training related organizational issues identified in this research. Jones’ (1993) Performance Analysis Quadrant Harmon’s (2003) Iceberg Model.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R4: Recommend MTO hire a human performance technology consulting team to help address the organizational issues related to leadership, mission and purpose, standards, and resistance.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R5: Recommend MTO establish working groups to review and address: (a) mission, purpose, standards, policy, expectations, personnel roles; (b) performance accountability issues (military and contractor company), (c) military knowledge, skills, attributes in the joint table of distribution (JTD); (d) creation of a government service (GS) training manager position; (e) counseling (military and contractor).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 3</strong> (Organizational Issues)</td>
<td>R6: Recommend MTO establish a Trainer Council to review and address the training issues and needs related to adult and instructional design skills and standards, and continue work on developing a MTO trainer course which covers the various functions of a MTO trainer: training, observing, coaching, and mentoring.</td>
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<td>R7: Recommend a review or establishment of evaluation processes for: (a) training tasks, (b) training audience performance, (c) training team performance, (d) professional development program, (e) contract company performance.</td>
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<td><strong>Theme 4</strong> (Training Issues)</td>
<td>R8: Recommend MTO addresses the issues and solutions presented in themes three and five at an upcoming organizational off-site meeting in June 2017. Specifically, I will ask to lead a session to explore the level of understanding and agreement of MTO trainers with the current MTO vision, mission, and purpose, and standards. I will also seek to clarify the role of the military personnel as trainers and discuss the status of standards within the organization.</td>
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<td><strong>Theme 5</strong> (Organizational Solutions)</td>
<td>R9: Recommend conducting session with the MTO Division Chief and Deputy to discuss sensitive leadership concerns of expectations, direction, supervision, and engagement.</td>
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<td>R10: Recommend adopting Knowles’s adult learning principles in MTO’s professional development program.</td>
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<td>R11: Recommend using the Instructional System Design (ISD or ADDIE model) as a theory and practicum-based solution to address MTO’s lack of a training framework or standards and its trainers’ lack of skills in developing training materials.</td>
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<td><strong>Theme 6</strong> (PD Approaches &amp; Activities)</td>
<td>R12: Recommend using Stolovitch and Keep’s (2011) Telling Ain’t Training book and workbook as the primary training material for a new trainer/observer development course in MTO.</td>
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<td>R13: Recommend conducting mutual planning and vetting of the trainer/observer development course design with MTO trainers in accordance with adult learning principles.</td>
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<td>R14: Recommend reviewing all suggested training and professional development approaches and activities in this theme via the proposed Training Advisory Council with an emphasis on developing a coherent program tied to the organization’s mission, purpose, and priorities.</td>
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<td>R15: Recommend establishing goals, objectives, and standards to evaluate their efficacy while entertaining the feasibility of adding the new proposed activities based on organizational priorities, resources, and most importantly continuous feedback from MTO trainers.</td>
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Page 32: Table 1: A Comparison of the Assumptions of Pedagogy and Andragogy

Note. Adapted from Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy Versus Pedagogy (2nd Ed.) by Malcolm S. Knowles © 1988 by Pearson K12 Learning LLC, or its affiliates. Used by permission. All Rights Reserved.

Page 62: Figure 1. The stages and tasks of the Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development


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Page 81: Figure 2. Data collection circle


Pages 82-83: Table 3: Attending to Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research

Page 95: Table 4: *Different Steps of the Constant Comparative Analysis Procedure*

*Note.* Adapted from Table 1 from, “A Purposeful Approach to the Constant Comparative Method in the Analysis of Qualitative Interview,” by Hennie Boeije, 2002, *Quality and Quantity*, 36(4), p. 396. Copyright 2002 by Springer Nature. Adapted with permission.
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Page 181: Figure 12. Four Factor Performance Analysis Quadrant Model


Page 182: Figure 13. The Iceberg Model

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