A Qualitative Case Study of the Influence of Student Presence in Teacher Professional Development

Katharine Roche
Duquesne University

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A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF STUDENT PRESENCE IN TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation
Submitted to the School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

By
Katharine Rose (McClelland) Roche

August 2021
A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF STUDENT PRESENCE IN
TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By

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Approved May 25, 2021

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ABSTRACT

A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF STUDENT PRESENCE IN TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By

Katharine Rose (McClelland) Roche

May 2021

Dissertation supervised by Dr. Jason Margolis

Although research exists on many of the various types of teacher professional development, it lacks in the area of teacher professional development in the presence of students (Durbin, 2018; Margolis et al., 2016). This exploratory case study of a suburban school district in southeast United States will contribute to the field by examining teacher and teacher leader perception of professional development in the presence of students. According to Margolis et al. (2016), teaching or learning changes cannot occur without simultaneous adjustments in the structure and culture of teacher professional development. Schools must adjust teacher professional development to better support teachers in the 21st century, forgoing the traditional one-size-fits-all workshop-style professional development (Collins & Halverson, 2018; Gulamhussein, 2013; Houston, 2008; Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019; Patton et al., 2015). Schools must engage teachers in professional development that is non-linear, continuous, and filled with
significant lifelong and experiential learning, supported by adult learning theory and research-based best pedagogical practices (Zuljan, 2018). The purpose of this study is to examine teacher and teacher leader perception of professional development in the presence of students. Specifically, this study will analyze teachers’ and teacher leaders’ perceptions of effective practice and motivation and how they improve teaching and learning. Informed by Margolis et al.’s (2016) Student Presence and Learning Theory Model, this study will focus on learning that occurs at the highest level of student presence in teacher professional development.
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my loving and supportive husband, Johnny. Without whom I would not have had the strength or courage to finish. Thank you for always being my rock, for always supporting and encouraging me, for always loving me, and for blessing me with our beautiful daughter and baby to be.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My dissertation phase of my doctorate has been a journey, as most major life events often are. As such, I would like to thank and acknowledge those along the way that have helped me become the person I am today. First and foremost, thank you to my family and friends. To my loving husband, daughter, and baby to be. You are my constant inspiration to become a better person each day of my life. To my Mother and Father who have always believed in me and supported me. I appreciate everything you each have done for me throughout my life. To my dearest friend Dr. Cheryl McHone, who has proofread the many drafts of this dissertation and provided constant support and encouragement. To my in-laws, who have supported me since day one with words of encouragement and continuous prayers. I would also like to thank my dissertation committee, Dr. Jason Margolis, Dr. Sandra Quiñones, and Dr. Amy Olson whose high expectations and continued support was most appreciated. Additionally, I would like to thank the West Allegheny School District under the leadership of Dr. Jerri Lynn Lippert. Thank you for supporting me on this journey and encouraging me to see it through!
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background

Although the world continues to evolve at hyper-speed in the Information Age, the American education system has changed little over the past century (Couch & Towne, 2018; Marx, 2014). Developed initially for the Agricultural Age, the American school system transformed to meet the needs of the Industrial Age (Marx, 2014). Similar to the way that the American education system shifted during the Industrial Revolution to support the influx of blue-collar jobs in American factories (Couch & Towne, 2018), a transition must once again occur to meet the needs of the 21st-century jobs during the current Information Age (Collins & Halverson, 2018). Huitt (1999) identifies the shift in education for the Information Age to be the "most significant change ever experienced in human history" (p. 2).

America requires a strong and effective education system that supports 21st century learning that is meaningful and integrated into real-life scenarios (Iucu & Marin, 2014). Therefore, the American school system as a whole, and the related teaching methods and teacher professional development, must evolve to meet the changing needs of today's learners (Collins & Halverson, 2018; Houston, 2008). In this Information Age, students are very different from those the American education system was designed for, living in a very different world (Collins & Halverson, 2018; Couch & Towne, 2018; Marx, 2014). This belief does not represent a recent revelation or sentiment. In fact, in 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education released the A Nation At Risk report declaring the need for significant reform in the American education system. 28 years later, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) shares a vision of reform for professional learning that school systems continue to work towards in the 21st century;
a reform that requires a reconstruction of America's education system and a change in the way educators approach their practice.

The focus on improving America's education system ultimately led to an increased investment and concentration on effective teacher professional development (Jaquith et al., 2010). Teacher professional development is defined as structured events that combine job-embedded and externally provided activities that impact or increase teachers' knowledge, refine skills, change practices and beliefs, or enhance overall teacher effectiveness to support student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Zepeda et al., 2014). For teacher professional development to be effective, it must be structured to improve student outcomes by changing teachers' practices. Specifically, research recommends that instructional leaders incorporate the following characteristics in the design of teacher professional development:

- focus on content,
- incorporate active learning,
- support collaboration,
- model effective practices,
- provide coaching support,
- offer feedback and reflection,
- ongoing,
- sustain duration,
- a clear vision aligned with policy and practice,
- align to standards,
- teacher-driven, and
- student performance data-driven (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Ekinci & Acar, 2019; Jao & McDougall, 2015; Jaquith et al., 2010; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004; Patton et al., 2015).

Figure 1 provides a visual of these characteristics.

**Figure 1**

*Characteristics of Effective Teacher Professional Development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Ekinci & Acar, 2019; Jao & McDougall, 2015; Jaquith et al., 2010; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004; Patton et al., 2015)*
Teacher professional development grounded in research empowers teachers to engage in active learning experiences, sharing what they know and want to learn with like-minded colleagues over a sustained period of time (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Rodman, 2019). However, it is not rare to find schools that still hold one-size-fits-all workshop-style professional development, removed from both schools and students, focusing on topics that do not closely align to the goal of improving student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Timperley et al., 2007; Patton et al., 2015).

Teacher professional development is intended to help teachers grow professionally by refining their teaching practice and expanding their instructional techniques (Mahmoudi & Ozkan, 2015). However, Mahmoudi & Ozkan's (2015) study shows that the majority of experienced teachers felt as though teacher professional development in the form of courses/workshops, degree programs, participation in a network of teachers, and engaging in formal dialogue with colleagues had no impact on the development of their teaching practice. Likewise, Colognesi et al. (2020) establish that teacher professional development is generally not used effectively, resulting in little to no impact on teacher practice and professional perseverance. An analysis of the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Study (TALIS) shows a significant negative impact on teacher knowledge and practice as well as teachers' beliefs of preparedness, self-efficacy, and constructivist beliefs associated with non-school embedded teacher professional development (Opfer, 2016). Cordingley et al.'s (2015) study shows that 'sit-and-get' teacher professional development where teachers are not given opportunities to develop skills or focus on improving teacher practice for the benefit of student learning is ineffective. Participants in Bayar's (2014) study express that it was impossible to learn effective teaching strategies without active participation. Teachers need structured, ongoing
opportunities to interact with and reflect on new knowledge and practices for substantial changes in practice to occur (Cordingley et al., 2015).

Rather than traditional one-size-fits-all workshop-style teacher professional development, providing teachers with authentic, active learning experiences that are personalized, including project-based and community-based learning, bridges learning theory to teacher practice (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Iucu & Marin, 2014; Margolis et al., 2016). Bridging theory to practice through effective teacher professional development improves student learning and achievement, providing evidence that teacher professional development must be grounded in theory with practical examples. Doing so will ensure that all educators can deliver instruction effectively aligned to contemporary standards and high expectations (Durbin, 2018). Teachers must be presented with learning experiences that apply to them and can further develop their practice. Nooruddin & Bhamani (2019) argue that one of the most crucial factors in changing teacher practice is a school culture that embraces a collaborative learning environment with access to teaching and learning research and techniques.

However, due to schools' structure, teaching is historically an isolated profession (Lortie, 2002; Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikahmadi, 2016). As such, teachers often report feeling isolated or disconnected from their peers on a day-to-day basis (Hadar & Brody, 2010; Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikahmadi, 2016; Stone-Johnson, 2016). To combat this feeling, the culture of schools must shift to allow for teacher growth; teachers should be provided with structure, time, and opportunities to collaborate with their peers and discuss their practice (Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikahmadi, 2016; Stone-Johnson, 2016). Teacher professional development that provides a collaborative environment produces professional growth and combats professional burnout that is often a result of isolation (Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikahmadi, 2016). Karlberg & Bezzina
(2020) found that teacher professional development and learning of a collaborative and collegial form positively impacts teachers' practice. However, Cordingley et al. (2015) explains that although collaboration is now integrated into most teacher professional development, schools need to provide an atmosphere where improvements in practice result from genuine collaboration. The culture of teacher professional development must engage teachers and school leaders in a collaborative and ongoing way that is directly connected to the classroom, breaking away from the isolated nature of the teaching profession (Hadar & Brody, 2010; OECD, 2020).

Teacher professional development becomes more effective when teachers act as both teachers and learners (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Reeves, 2010; Rodman, 2019). Similar to student learning, teacher learning is enhanced through collaborative and reflective experiences. Norms and habits of mind need to be challenged and shifted to allow for a collaborative, problem-solving culture where collegiality is a valued asset (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Likewise, reflecting on practice is an essential part of quality teacher professional development that can provide solutions to the problems faced by teachers in their practice, filling the gap between theory and practice (Bozkuş & Bayrak, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). When done in a collaborative setting, reflective exercises lead to changes in teacher practices (Casey, 2018). After all, teachers' engagement and practice improve when surrounded by others who work effectively (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013).

Since the Industrial Age, changes, although small, have been made in teacher professional development (Lawless & Pellegrino, 2007). However, the American education system still needs considerable change to support teachers as they prepare students for the 21st century (Couch & Towne, 2016; Lawless & Pellegrino, 2007). Teacher professional development must evolve, aligning with the way teachers learn, facilitating a shift in teachers'
beliefs, applying knowledge, and pedagogical approaches to enhance student learning and achievement (Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019).

**Statement of the Problem**

According to Margolis et al. (2016), changes in teaching and learning cannot occur without simultaneous adjustments in the structure and culture of teacher professional development. Schools must adjust teacher professional development to better support teachers in the 21st century, forgoing the traditional one-size-fits-all workshop-style professional development (Collins & Halverson, 2018; Gulamhussein, 2013; Houston, 2008; Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019; Patton et al., 2015). Schools must engage teachers in professional development that is non-linear, continuous, and filled with significant lifelong and experiential learning, supported by adult learning theory and research-based best pedagogical practices (Zuljan, 2018). One recommended change that may influence both the structure and culture is the presence of students during teacher professional development (Margolis et al., 2016). Patton et al. (2015) support this notion, saying “teacher learning is most relevant when it focuses on teachers’ real work in schools with young people and addresses the unique context of their schools” (p. 29). Providing teachers with professional learning opportunities in classrooms, with students present, has yet to be a focus of much research but may significantly impact teachers’ practice.

**Significance of the Study**

Although research exists on many of the various types of teacher professional development, it lacks in the area of teacher professional development in the presence of students (Durbin, 2018; Margolis et al., 2016). Researchers and practitioners would benefit from more research on teacher professional development grounded in educational theories to support change in teacher practice (Margolis et al., 2016). This exploratory case study of a suburban school
district in southeast United States will contribute to the field by examining teacher and teacher leader perception of professional development in the presence of students.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine teacher and teacher leader perception of professional development in the presence of students. Specifically, this study will analyze teachers’ and teacher leaders’ perception of effective practice and motivation and how they improve teaching and learning. Informed by Margolis et al.’s (2016) Student Presence and Learning Theory Model, this study will focus on learning that occurs at the highest level of student presence in teacher professional development.

**Researcher Personality**

Education is more than a profession; it is a passion. As educators, we help others learn, grow, and develop into better versions of themselves. I have served as an educator since 2005 with nine years as a high school mathematics teacher, three years as a high school assistant principal, and am currently in my fourth year as a high school academic principal. Throughout each stage of my career, I have been involved in teacher professional development. First, as a participant, during my early years as a teacher. Next, as a presenter, when I took on more of a teacher leadership role and while serving as an assistant principal. Now, as a designer and supervisor, as an academic principal. I have engaged in professional development of many different forms with different levels of connection to the classroom and student presence. These include:

- Conferences, workshops, and continuing education courses that were one-size-fits-all sit-and-get style learning experiences, disconnected from the classroom with no student presence.
• Webinars, online synchronous professional development courses, and online asynchronous professional development courses that incorporated technology to allow for an expansion of learning beyond the constraints of a physical environment, but were one-size-fits-all approaches disconnected from the classroom with no student presence.

• Professional development sessions where the facilitator used pre-recorded video lessons and written lessons with completed student work to allow the participants to analyze the effectiveness of the planning process, delivery method, and student learning. This professional development style included student voice and work, but was still disconnected from the classroom and student presence.

• Learning walks with incorporated lesson studies where a small group of teachers discussed a planned lesson, observed the lesson being taught by one of the group members, then debriefed on the lesson. The key learning that occurred through this style of professional development happened during the debriefing sessions and was therefore disconnected from the classroom, although it did include a level of student presence.

• Professional learning communities where teachers who taught similar courses worked together to design lessons, review student work and data, and plan how to best support student learning using data from their classrooms. Although this style of professional development was connected to the real work of teaching and included student work, it lacked student presence and a direct connection to the classroom.

Throughout all of the professional development opportunities I have participated in, the critical learning moments have been mostly disconnected from the classroom. Additionally, they were not always supported by learning theories or research-based best practices. For instance, most of the teacher professional development opportunities I have engaged in have been detached from
the real work of teaching, with limited to no follow-up, and deprived of a clear connection to the district’s vision. After reflecting on these experiences, I recognized a need for change in the professional development we are providing our teachers. This need for change and my passion for teaching and learning has led me to this area of research.

Nooruddin & Bhamani (2019) explain that the most impactful teacher professional development bridges the connection between theory and practice. Teachers should be provided with opportunities to take ownership of their learning through relevant learning experiences aligned to their work, developing their pedagogy to align with research-based best practices and the high expectations established (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Durbin, 2018; Grissom et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2017; Patton et al., 2015). This study focuses on bridging this divide by providing teachers with job-embedded professional development in a culture that supports collaboration and high expectations. The research questions investigated through this study will help to highlight the potential impact of job-embedded teacher professional development (teacher professional development in the presence of students) on teachers’ beliefs and practices as well as on student learning. It is the intent that this study will enrich the research available to school leaders, myself included, who are looking to support teachers with professional development opportunities supported by research.

**Links to Leadership Theory**

It is the role of the school leader to establish a culture that fosters collaboration and continuous learning, setting high expectations for the school, and holding the teachers accountable for the quality of learning that occurs in their classrooms (Johnson et al., 2017). Serving in the capacity of a school leader for the past seven years, I have strived to establish a positive culture throughout my school, fostering collaboration and holding teachers and students
to high expectations. After studying the different theories that support high-quality school leadership, I have adopted a leadership style that allows me to best support my school, staff, and students. Figure 2 shows the foundational leadership theories most often implemented in educational leadership roles; however, it is common for school leaders to intermingle two or more styles when forming their personal leadership style.

Figure 2

*Leadership Theories and Descriptions*

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<td>Distributive</td>
<td>Acknowledges the dynamic interactions and work of the multiple individuals who contribute to leadership practice in an organization, formally or informally designated as leaders; the process of effectively sharing the responsibility and work of enhancing the academic achievement of every student with a shared vision for instructional change (Green, 2013; Harris &amp; Spillane, 2008; Timperly, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional</td>
<td>Emphasizes a culture that supports teaching and learning, focusing on individual teachers and students, classroom observations, teacher professional development, and feedback to teachers (Alvy, 2017; Marzano et al., 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>Places the leader at the center of the organization in contact with all individuals and aspects of the organization with high regard for those with which they work; servant leaders wish to serve first, listening and helping, making sure that other’s highest priority needs are being met before their own (Green, 2013; Greenleaf, 1970; Marzano et al., 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>Exists when the leader adapts their style—telling (the leader directs the followers’ actions without concern for personal relationships), participating (the leader provides concrete directions and guidance to complete the task), selling (the leader persuades the followers to engage in the task) or delegating (the leader leaves the followers to complete the task with little or no interference)—to allow for the best case of success and to align with their followers’ maturity, ability, or willingness to perform (Hersey et al., 1979; Marzano et al., 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>Leadership that functions under the premise of an exchange of valued things—economic, political, or psychological; in education,transactional leadership involves an exchange of satisfactory job performance for economic and social benefits (Burns, 1978; Green, 2013; Marzano et al., 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>Raises the followers up through morality levels through reform and revolutionary movements concerned with liberty, justice, and equality; transforming leaders engage with their followers so that the behaviors of both the followers and leader are elevated to a new level of morality and motivation; in education, this includes emphasizing the district vision and goals (Alvy, 2017; Burns, 1978; Green, 2013).</td>
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My leadership style interweaves two of these leadership theories, instructional leadership and transformational leadership. With this hybrid leadership style, I work to support my staff, students, and school community with a positive school culture focused on teaching and learning that engages and motivates all members to strive for their best (Alvy, 2017; Burns, 1978, Green, 2013; Marzano et al., 2005).

In Grissom et al.’s (2021) review of principals’ impact on students and schools, they uncovered four leadership behaviors that produce positive school outcomes: Engaging in instructionally focused interactions with teachers; Building a positive school climate; Facilitating productive collaboration and professional learning communities; Managing personnel and resources. A strong school leader creates a positive school climate in which to motivate both the teachers and the students to give their best every day, setting high, yet achievable expectations while focusing on the human element within the school organization (Green, 2013; Hattie, 2012). School leaders must embody these behaviors to be truly impactful; practicing transparency with teachers and the school community, sharing a clear vision for the school that fosters collaboration and thoughtful risk taking (Schleicher, 2020). This is especially important when supporting the professional development of the teachers to improve student learning as “the chance of any reform improving student learning is remote unless the district and school leaders agree with its purposes and appreciate what is required to make it work” (Liethwood et al., 2004, p. 4).

This study considers the influence teacher professional development in the presence of students has on teachers, teacher leaders, and the district as a whole. Leithwood et al. (2004) explains that the impact school leadership has on student achievement and school outcomes is second only to that of the teacher. Therefore, including the building level and district level
administrators in this study is necessary. As discussed earlier, America’s education system must shift to meet the needs of our students in the 21st century (Lucu & Marin, 2014). Likewise, the very nature of leadership is changing to align with the complexity of the school environment in the 21st century (Fullan & Kirtman, 2019). By shifting the practice of school leaders to support teacher professional development in the presence of students, managing the logistics of this style of professional learning and supporting the necessary collaborative culture, school leaders can encourage the growth of teachers and students (Schleicher, 2020). They can inspire innovation and the identification and sharing of best practices. Leadership is the critical bridge to make reform initiatives come to life and make a difference for students (Leithwood et al., 2004). This study will identify if a shift in school leadership to support changes in teacher practice through teacher professional development in the presence in students has an impact on teacher perception of effective practice, motivation to change, and change efforts in a district.

**Research Questions**

Informed by Margolis et al.’s (2016) Student Presence and Learning Theory Model, the following research questions will be investigated through a secondary data analysis.

1. How are teacher and teacher leader’s perception of effective practice and motivation to change practice impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?

2. How does student presence during teacher professional development contribute to the district’s efforts to improve teaching and learning?

3. What organizational challenges arise as result of implementing teacher professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?
These research questions will explore the effects of teacher professional development in the presence of students at the different levels of a school system, including teacher, teacher leader, and district level considering individual as well as organizational perspectives. Through these questions, this study will evaluate teacher motivation from student presence during professional development to change their practice and how teachers’ and teacher leaders’ perception of effective practices are influenced by experiencing a teaching practice in action. This study will explore the stated research questions in a study of teacher learning found in the top tier (Level 7) of student presence as informed by Margolis et al.’s (2016) Student Presence and Learning Theory Model (Figure 3).

**Figure 3**

*Student Presence and Learning Theory Model (Margolis et al., 2016, p. 7).*
Student presence in teacher professional development represents an area of research that is lacking. The results from this study may benefit those who design and implement teacher professional development intended to change teacher practice and therefore improve student achievement.

Limitations of the Study

This exploratory case study will be completed using previously collected data from a larger-scale study to examine the experiences and impacts of teacher leadership programs conducted by Berg et al. (2019) as part of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation (NMEF). The population was limited to teachers and teacher leaders who chose to participate from a suburban school district in southeast United States during the 2018-2019 school year. Additionally, the results of this study may not be applicable outside of the elementary setting. The data collected during this study included transcriptions from qualitative interviews and observational descriptive field notes primarily from elementary schools. As such, researchers and practitioners should consider the demographics of this study prior to generalizing.
Teacher Professional Development

Teacher professional development is defined as structured events that combine job-embedded and externally provided activities that impact or increase teachers’ knowledge, refine skills, change practices and beliefs, or enhance overall teacher effectiveness to support student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Zepeda et al., 2014). Teacher professional development fosters improvements in teacher practice by helping teachers learn and refine pedagogies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Kennedy, 2016). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) shares that an increasing number of studies have been completed that show teacher practice and student outcomes improve as a result of well-designed professional development. Therefore, teacher professional development should be designed according to teachers’ needs as professional learning activities are more effective when they capture and maintain teachers’ attention while simultaneously connecting to their daily classroom needs (Bozkuş & Bayrak, 2019; Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019).

Teacher professional development should provide teachers with the skills to adjust to an ever-changing educational system (Crawford & Jenkins, 2018). Additionally, teacher professional development should provide teachers with learning opportunities centered on pedagogical practices that inform teachers of strategies and shift teacher practice (Moore et al., 2017). By fostering skillful teaching through organized, continuous professional development, schools can truly develop high-achieving students (Darling-Hammond, 1998). However, most teaching professionals have an unclear understanding of how to link the learning they experience during professional development to their teaching practice (Daley, 2003; Gulamhussein, 2013).
School districts must alter how they approach teacher professional development to keep up with the changes in the world (Lawless & Pellegrino, 2007). Ultimately, teacher professional development must align with the research dedicated to transforming the education system to best meet the needs of the 21st century learners (Cordingley et al., 2015; Lawless & Pellegrino, 2007).

The key to identifying the effectiveness of teacher professional development lies in measuring its influence on teaching practices, beliefs, attitudes, and motivation to change, which directly impacts student learning (Labone & Long, 2016). According to Casey (2018), effective teacher professional development “engages educators’ motivation and will to integrate new strategies and approaches to their instruction” (p. 36). Likewise, Hattie (2012) recognizes the importance of teachers’ beliefs and commitment to student learning when considering factors that impact student achievement levels. Teachers that commit to common beliefs about student success and embrace their decision-making capacity are more effective, accept feedback, have pride in their work, engage in and encourage conversations about teaching, and are not afraid of making mistakes and therefore experience heightened levels of student success (Patton et al., 2015). Teacher professional development that is committed to the whole learner intrinsically motivates the learner in their practice, beliefs, and profession as a whole (Casey, 2018).

Jao and McDougall (2015) advocate for teacher professional development opportunities that provide teachers with models of effective teaching, demonstrate quality instructional strategies, and provide adequate time for teachers to plan collaboratively and share resources. Changes in teacher practice, beliefs, and attitudes have been shown to occur after engaging in collaborative teacher professional development (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Providing teachers with professional development that is collaborative improves classroom instruction quality because they learn more and improve their confidence in their practice (Cooper, 2014). By engaging
teachers in active learning, collaborative approaches to teacher professional development grow
teacher practices and leadership through their learner-centered approach (Casey, 2018; Meijs et
al., 2016; Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019).

When teacher professional development is implemented effectively, the participants feel
supported and guided rather than directed (Casey, 2018; Patton et al., 2015) They are able to
actively engage in a learning atmosphere where the facilitator is not solely focused on telling or
lecturing but rather listens to the participants while learning with them. This aligns with
Hargreaves and Fullan’s (2013) research that shows “the best way to support and motivate
teachers is to create conditions where they can be effective day after day, together” (p. 37).
Implementing effective teacher professional development requires responsiveness to educators’
needs and appropriate instructional support, considering the learning and teaching contexts
(Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Krasnoff, 2014). Effective implementation leads to desirable
changes in teachers’ practice and, therefore, student outcomes.

**Policy Reform in Teacher Professional Development**

Even in the world of education, specifically teacher professional development, policy
shapes practice (Jaquith et al., 2010). According to Gazda (2017), changes in our public
education system are inhibited by the bureaucracy that overburdens our system; educational
reform has yet to evolve from the Industrial Revolution. The American education system
requires a reform that will transform the current education system, society, and culture to meet
students’ needs, preparing them for the evolving 21st century workforce (Darling-Hammond &
McLaughlin, 2011). Schools can support this much-needed change by encouraging, facilitating,
and providing oversight for the collective work of teachers through professional development
initiatives in a growth-promotive and positive environment with a shared responsibility of
meeting the established goals (Krasnoff, 2014; Patton et al., 2015). Nevertheless, the
organization, structures, policies, and practices found in American schools during the 21st
century are outdated, acting as barriers by limiting opportunities within schools to revise
teaching practice (Gazda, 2017). The constraints caused by outdated policies leave many teacher
professional development initiatives failing to meet the goals of growing teacher knowledge and
teacher practice (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Jao & McDougall, 2015).

What is lacking among the research on teacher professional development is the
examination of the links between teacher learning and classroom practice (Borko et al., 2010;
Tooley & Connally, 2016). Levin (2008), as cited by Hattie (2012, p. 170), shares “the heart of
school improvement rests in improving daily teaching and learning practices in schools” with all
members of the school collaborating to ensure the focus of the school is on teaching and
learning. Professional development that provides teachers with a clear vision of the goal of the
learning helps support what they are trying to achieve in their learning; integrating the goals into
school change efforts proves to be successful in changing teacher practice (Bates & Morgan,
2018; Borko et al., 2010). For schools to excel, criteria must be developed to meet the high
standards for student learning outcomes and applied to essential processes, especially teacher
professional development (Reed, 2000).

Adult Learning Theory in Teacher Professional Development

Teacher professional development grounded in learning theories and principles of adult
learning is shown to have a positive outcome, beginning with the goals and considering the
learner's past experiences (Lauer et al., 2014). Learning theories explain how individuals or
groups of learners acquire, retain, and recall knowledge (Knowles, 1973; Şahin & Doğantay,
2018). They guide how new skills and knowledge are learned by providing the foundation for
instructional strategies and a framework for appealing, consistent, reliable, and effective instruction (Khalil & Elkider, 2016; Knowles et al., 2012; Wang, 2012). Although there is no one-size-fits-all approach or recommended learning theory, they are typically simple, easy to implement, and best coupled with practice (Stead, 2012; Wang, 2012). Adults learn differently than children, and therefore effective teacher professional development should be based on Adult Learning Theory (Khalil & Elkider, 2016; Knowles et al., 2012; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Şahin & Doğantay, 2018). Malcolm Knowles's work with Adult Learning Theory and Andragogy has laid much of the groundwork for current day teacher professional development (Henschke, 2010; Martin et al., 2014; Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy (TEAL) Center Staff, 2011).

Designing teacher professional development based on Adult Learning Theory encompasses the teacher's knowledge, problems, routines, and aspirations (Khalil & Elkider, 2016; Knowles et al., 2012; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Şahin & Doğantay, 2018). Adult Learning Theory emphasizes the importance of recognizing that teachers bring past experiences and beliefs into not only their teaching but also their learning.

Adult Learning Theory is based in Andragogy, defined as the art and science of how adults learn (Knowles, 1973; Khalil & Elkider, 2016; Lauer et al., 2014; Kidd, 2010; Şahin & Doğantay, 2018). Identifying core principles for adult learning, Andragogy provides a practical, dependable, and adaptable model to guide the design of adult learning (Knowles et al., 2012). Knowles et al.’s (2012) principles—(1) the learner's need to know, (2) self-concept of the learner, (3) prior experience of the learner, (4) readiness to learn, (5) orientation to learning, and (6) motivation to learn—are at the core of the model often used when integrating Andragogy in practice.
Learning designed for adults should capitalize on the learner's experiences and be designed to positively influence skills, behaviors, beliefs, and knowledge (Khalil & Elkider, 2016; Knowles et al., 2012; Lauer et al., 2014; Kidd, 2010; Şahin & Doğantay, 2018). Andragogy differs from Pedagogy which is defined as the art and science of how children learn (Khalil & Elkider, 2016; Knowles et al., 2012; Kidd, 2010; Malik, 2016). Andragogy takes into consideration that adults approach learning in a more self-directed manner than children, taking responsibility for their learning using their knowledge base and problem-solving skills (Khalil & Elkider, 2016; Kidd, 2010; Knowles, 1973; Knowles et al., 2012; Malik, 2016; TEAL Center Staff, 2011). Adults must find immediate value in the learning and see the relevance to their lives, whereas children typically do not. Therefore, when developing effective professional development, the teacher's local knowledge, problems, routines, and aspirations must be considered (Khalil & Elkider, 2016; Kidd, 2010; Malik, 2016; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Trotter, 2006).

Providing a foundation for how adults learn, Adult Learning Theory supports teacher professional development with the consideration of their practical knowledge, experiences, and reflections (Khalil & Elkider, 2016; Kidd, 2010; Knowles, 1973; Knowles et al., 2012; Trotter, 2006). Teachers teach in ways that relate to their views of learning and, when given a choice, choose subjects or concepts that can be directly applied to their classrooms (Annan et al., 2011; Kidd, 2010; Trotter, 2006). Khalil and Elkider (2016) explain that adult learners identify with several learning qualities, including independence in their learning direction, which incorporates their rich life experiences, and are problem-centered while working towards established professional and personal goals that motivate them intrinsically.
Although teachers naturally seek out learning activities that orient with their learning style or preference, it is essential to recognize that any changes in knowledge, belief, or practice will change a teacher's orientation to learning as it is the interaction and intersection of these pieces that determines their orientation to learning (Kidd, 2010; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). As shown in Figure 4, the change is a cyclical process that can be entered into at any phase.

**Figure 4**

*Cycle of Teacher Change*

A change in a teacher's beliefs will lead to changes in the teacher's practice and a change in a teacher's practice will lead to changes in student learning; resulting in a change in the teacher's beliefs (Desimone, 2009; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Teachers naturally teach the way they prefer to learn. Therefore, for teacher professional development to be effective, it must be designed to bridge the way teachers are currently teaching to the research-based best practices that are the focus of the teacher professional development (Kidd, 2010; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Bridging the
current pedagogical style with the new learning will reinforce the necessary changes to transform practice.

Teacher professional development aligned to Adult Learning Theory motivates teachers to improve and provides a safe and supportive space where teachers can confront new challenges and refine their current practices (Bozkuş & Bayrak, 2019; Knowles et al., 2012; Krasnoff, 2014). Adult Learning Theory supports the notion that providing teacher professional development in the teacher's natural habitat, in the classroom with students present, will strengthen or improve the teacher's practice by capitalizing on the teacher's knowledge base and experience during the critical implementation phase of the learning (Gulamhussein, 2013; Khalil & Elkhider, 2016; Knowles et al., 2012). However, teacher professional development in this setting—in the classroom with students physically present—is still not common in American schools (Margolis et al., 2016). Redesigning teacher professional development to meet 21st century needs by embedding the learning in the classroom with the students present may be the missing piece to the puzzle of changing teacher practice (Durbin, 2018; Margolis et al., 2016). Likewise, providing teacher professional development in this format will provide teachers with a safe space to try new strategies (Bozkuş & Bayrak, 2019; Krasnoff, 2014).

Behaviorism in Teacher Professional Development

Behaviorism is a teacher-centered learning theory that focuses on measurable changes that result from interactions within the environment (Kay & Kibble, 2016). As the first learning theory to scientifically explain human learning, Behaviorism is credited with many contributions in education (Kay & Kibble, 2016). Specifically, Behaviorism is credited with the development of incentive and reward systems within behavior management strategies, contingency contracts, direct teaching/lecturing, and repetition and feedback practices (Kay & Kibble, 2016).
Behaviorism, in the teacher professional development setting, is a lecture-style approach to instruction where the learners “sit-and-get” information through a one-size-fits-all workshop-style event (Boghassian, 2006; Gulamhussein, 2013; Patton et al., 2015). In the past, schools used teacher professional development funds to send individual teachers to conferences or workshops with the intent of the participating teacher passing his/her new learning to colleagues using a ‘train-the-trainer model’ (Venables, 2018). Unfortunately, such attempts to improve the human capital by investing in an individual teacher’s knowledge, skill sets, and overall quality often fell flat (Gulamhussein, 2013; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013; Wei et al., 2009).

Traditional teacher professional development that followed Behavioristic methods, including workshops, conferences, courses taught away from the classroom, and other one-stop-shop events, are rarely connected to classroom practices and school reform efforts (Borko et al., 2010; Margolis et al., 2016). In Wei et al.’s 2010 review of professional development in the United States, it was found that providing teachers with short-term or truncated professional development disconnected from the classroom environment and effective pedagogical practices yields poor results in both teacher learning and student achievement. Teacher professional development of a truncated format, regardless of the content, merely introduces content or techniques to the learners (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Gulamhussein, 2013; National Research Council, 2000; Venables, 2018). As a result of this disconnect, the goal of teacher professional development is often not accomplished (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Gulamhussein, 2013; National Research Council, 2000; Venables, 2018). Authentic learning connected with the goals of advancing teachers’ knowledge, changing teachers’ beliefs, and growing teachers’ pedagogical skills set is not accomplished, resulting in little improvement in pedagogy (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Gulamhussein, 2013; National Research Council,
Teacher professional development aligned to Behaviorist Learning Theory, specifically lecture-based or workshop-style events, is not effective (Borko et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Gulamhussein, 2013; Wei et al., 2010). Therefore, school leaders should move away from behavioristic teacher professional development and provide teachers with opportunities to learn aligned with learning theories proven to change teacher practice.

**Constructivism in Teacher Professional Development**

A general philosophy of education, Constructivism encompasses several learning theories, including Connectivism, Social Learning Theory, Situated Learning Theory, Sociocultural Learning Theory, and Social Presence Theory, all of which share the common belief that learning is active and the learning environment should be learner-focused (Mattar, 2018). Prior to Constructivism, it was believed that learning came from a single point of view or reality rather than the result of assimilation of new experiences and accommodation to new information (Kay & Kibble, 2016). During the shift to Constructivism, instructional strategies transformed from experiences where the facilitator was the most active participant in the lesson to a learner-centered atmosphere where the learner is actively engaged in constructing new knowledge (Kay & Kibble, 2016; Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikahmadi, 2016). With a focus on active learning, the Constructivist approach to teacher professional development dramatically varies from the traditional sit-and-get approach of Behaviorism, as the learner is provided the opportunity to engage in learning using authentic artifacts and interactive activities that connect to the teacher’s classroom and students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

When following a Constructivist approach to teacher professional development, participating teachers actively engage in learning instead of receiving development (Labone & Long, 2016; Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikahmadi, 2016). Teachers have shown improvement in
overall engagement and the ability to implement new learning in the classroom. A Constructivist approach to teacher professional development prepares learners for problem-solving in a complex environment where each learner interprets knowledge based on their individual socially mediated constructs (Crawford & Jenkins, 2018). This model often incorporates modeling, collaboration, coaching, reflection, and feedback (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Teacher professional development designed using Constructivism principles encourages ownership of the learning process through active engagement and connections to the learners’ life experiences and foreknowledge (Crawford & Jenkins, 2018; Kay & Kibble, 2016; Şahin & Doğantay, 2018).

Learning theories that fall within the sphere of Constructivism, specifically Connectivism, Social Learning Theory, Situated Learning Theory, Sociocultural Learning Theory, and Social Presence Theory, are responsible for the instructional strategies commonly used in teacher professional development in the United States (Mattar, 2018). In the following sections, each of these learning theories will be discussed along with the common strategies for teacher professional development guided by each learning theory.

**Connectivism in Teacher Professional Development**

Connectivism is a new learning theory that supports learning in the Information Age by providing insight into learning skills and tasks needed to succeed (Goldin, 1999; Siemens, 2005). Connectivism reformats Vygotsky’s concept of Zone of Proximal Development (what the learner can do with guidance from someone more knowledgeable) to include learning beyond the learner such as networks and technology (Kools & Stoll, 2016; Mattar, 2018; McHone, 2020; Şahin & Doğantay, 2018). Connectivism supports the complex learning processes of our rapidly changing world. Referred to as a learning theory for the 21st century, Connectivism is positioned as a
branch of Constructivism in response to the increased and intense incorporation of technology in education (Mattar, 2018; Şahin & Doğantay, 2018).

Technology can only improve education if it is paired with proven methods of learning, empowering facilitators to enhance their delivery methods to meet the learners’ needs (Couch & Towne, 2018). Serving as a change agent, technology helps schools, teachers, and students shift educational practices by challenging the way things are done; amplifying, reorganizing, reinventing, and rebuilding routines, pedagogical practices, and thinking (Girod & Cavanaugh, 2001; Siemens, 2005). Couch and Towne (2018) suggest that education be rewired by integrating learning research and technology to personalize learning experiences for the learner. However, doing so requires educators to think differently to unlock the learner’s potential to truly succeed, changing with the times (Bozkuş & Bayrak, 2019; Couch & Towne, 2018).

Teacher professional development based in evidence about what works and incorporates technology in alignment with Connectivism learning theory can revolutionize how teachers learn and, therefore, how their students achieve (Gates, 2016; Kools & Stoll, 2016; Mattar, 2018). Learning in the Information Age is not linear; rather, it incorporates outside factors, including other individuals, organizations, databases, and external connections that execute many cognitive operations previously performed solely by the learner (Mattar, 2018). Teacher professional development guided by Connectivism learning theory draws upon resources that may not be available locally to provide just-in-time support for busy teachers (Borko et al., 2010).

Synchronous, asynchronous, and blended virtual teacher professional development aligns with the Connectivism learning theory, and supports changes in teacher practice through online or digital platforms (McHone, 2020; National Research Council, 2007). Synchronous virtual teacher professional development occurs when participants interact in real-time but in different
locations (Kidd, 2010; Kowalski, 2017; McHone, 2020). Teacher professional development in a virtual synchronous format is intended to foster socialization, discussion, and collaborative remote experiences through video or web conferencing, discussion boards, or chat rooms (Kidd, 2010; Kowalski, 2017; McHone, 2020). Asynchronous virtual teacher professional development allows learners to access the learning information from any location at any time (Chaeruman et al., 2018; Kidd, 2010; McHone, 2020). However, the asynchronous format is a delayed approach to learning that lacks live collaboration between participants (Kidd, 2010; McHone, 2020). A virtual blended format for teacher professional development is a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous learning, which provides the participants access to the content any time from any location with scheduled times to interact with each other virtually (Kidd, 2010). Blended learning may include online tutorials, documents, interactive tests, presentations (recorded or live), live support sessions, and other interactive media forms, overcoming the hurdle of time and space (Kidd, 2010; McHone, 2020). Although there are benefits to virtual synchronous, asynchronous, and blended teacher professional development, there are also limitations. For example, virtual teacher professional development, whether in the synchronous, asynchronous, or blended format, may be disconnected from the classroom setting, lacking the presence of students (National Research Council, 2007). Additionally, teacher professional development in a virtual atmosphere adds to the challenge of motivating and sustaining teachers’ engagement in the learning (Kowalski, 2017; National Research Council, 2007). All challenges aside, virtual teacher professional development is an emerging style of professional development that is aligned to Connectivism learning theory and provides anytime access to learning necessary in the Information Age (Kowalski; Rabbitt et al., 2019; Siemens, 2005).
Social Learning Theory in Teacher Professional Development

Social Learning Theory asserts that individuals learn from one another through observation, imitation, or modeling, recognizing that environment plays a crucial role in shaping an individual’s behavior (Learning Theories, 2020; Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). Aligned with Adult Learning Theory, Social Learning Theory acknowledges that behavioral changes are induced through observational learning, modeling behaviors, and engaging in active learning (Kay & Kibble, 2016; Kidd, 2010; Watson, 2013). Social learning, as a whole, is a relatively new approach to teacher professional development, which has led to innovative and active learning opportunities (Meijs et al., 2016).

Teacher professional development that is grounded in Social Learning Theory engages teachers in active learning, making a strong connection to the classroom while providing opportunities for collaboration (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Casey, 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Gulamhussein, 2013; Karlberg & Bezzina, 2020; Mahmoudi & Ozkan, 2015; Wei et al., 2009). This type of teacher professional development may include observations of peer teachers through video-recorded lessons or written case studies of teaching. Peer observations and modeling are preferred methods of teacher professional development by teachers and have positively impacted student learning (Boston Consulting Group, 2014; Karlberg & Bezzina, 2020; Mahmoudi & Ozkan, 2015). Modeling behaviors of effective practice through examinations of peer teaching increases teachers’ access to collaboration with colleagues, helping to develop a mindset of togetherness along with a collective knowledge of experiences across classrooms (Bates & Morgan, 2018). Teacher professional development that includes collaborative inquiry through modeling enhances professional learning, providing teachers with a
forum to articulate thoughts, understand each other, and openly approach changes to practice (Bates & Morgan, 2018).

Modeling through peer observations, whether in real-time, through a video recorded lesson, or written case study, fall under the category of school embedded professional development (Opfer, 2016; Schleicher, 2016, Schleicher, 2020). School-embedded professional development is shown to have a positive impact on teacher practice while significantly reducing costs (Opfer, 2016; Schleicher, 2020). Temperley et al. (2007) found that teacher professional development that uses videotapes of expert teachers or model classrooms, where teachers would observe and discuss model teaching situations to see effective teaching strategies in action, are able to bridge the theory-practice divide. Killion (2013) shares that structuring ongoing teacher professional development within a teacher’s school day increases collaboration and provides a space for coaching. However, teacher professional development in this format may result in a gap in teacher practice as the teacher is an observer instead of the actor (Gulamhussein, 2013; Killion, 2013). Likewise, the time dedicated to teacher professional development outside of the teacher’s classroom during the traditional school day may result in students having time without their teacher, potentially cause a negative impact on student learning.

**Situated Learning Theory in Teacher Professional Development**

Situated Learning Theory is the unintentional process in which a learner’s exposure to an activity, context, or culture is responsible for the learning (Minter, 2011). Situated Learning Theory explains the role of learning as the act of one creating meaning from an activity; specifically, when knowledge is acquired in the realm of practice by placing thought and action in a place and time involving learners, the environment, and the activities (Korthagen, 2010; Stein, 1998). Situated Learning Theory, in addition to other forms of collaborative peer learning,
includes instructional strategies based on Constructivist principles (Kay & Kibble, 2016; Mattar, 2018). Constructivist principles are embedded in situated learning which relies on the context and interaction in knowledge construction, emphasizing the social system surrounding the learning (Kay & Kibble, 2016; Mattar, 2018). For adult learners, such as teachers, learning should be situated by creating conditions where participants experience the complexity of learning through real-world situations that integrate content, context, community, and participation (Stein, 1998).

Highly effective professional development ensures that teachers’ learning is relevant and situated to classroom practice by engaging the teacher in the learning task, assessment, observation, and reflection to reinforce connections (Borko et al., 2010; Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). Elmore (1996) shares that teachers, like children, learn more from trial and error or direct observation than abstract descriptions. Teacher professional development that exposes the learner to high-quality instruction through lesson studies or learning walks is aligned to Situated Learning Theory principles (Casey, 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Gulamhussein, 2013; Margolis et al., 2016; Wei et al., 2009). Lesson studies consist of a small group of teachers immersed in the activity of co-planning a lesson or series of lessons followed by one of the teachers teaching the lesson in their classroom while the other teachers actively observe the learning (Hooker, 2008; Kools & Stoll, 2016; Murphy et al., 2017). Lesson studies typically end with a debriefing session where discussion and constructive feedback are used to improve the lesson(s). Learning Walks are planned informal observations of approximately five to ten minutes in length where participants visit a set of classrooms focusing on teaching and learning (Anderson & Togneri, 2003; Hooker, 2008; Marsh et al., 2005). The observers talk with the students about their learning and examine their work. Learning Walks are followed up with a
debriefing session with the participants to discuss what was observed. Both Lesson Studies and Learning Walks are intended to be ongoing events that are used to inform teachers and schools of current practices and areas of need for future professional development (Anderson & Togneri, 2003; Hooker, 2008; Kools & Stolls, 2016; Marsh et al., 2005; Murphy et al., 2017). By aligning to Situated Learning Theory principles, teacher professional development in the form of Learning Walks or Lesson Studies situates the learning in classroom practice.

However, in the case of Lesson Studies and Learning Walks, most of the learning comes to fruition during the debriefing sessions after the lesson is finished and the students are no longer present (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hooker, 2008; Margolis et al., 2016). By disconnecting the learning from the live classroom with the students present, teachers are forced to make assumptions about how changes in a lesson or their teaching practice will be received by or impact the students (Blanchet, 2018; Margolis et al., 2016). The missing piece of a student’s voice is a critical component for making teacher learning authentic and improving student learning.

**Sociocultural Learning Theory in Teacher Professional Development**

Sociocultural Learning Theory is based on the idea that learners learn best in social settings through learning communities where they are given a space to share, challenge, and create ideas (Borko, 2004; Wang, 2007). In a sociocultural learning environment, learners are part of a community of learners where they engage in activities with others to solve problems, complete tasks, share their thinking, and explore solutions while the facilitator acts as a motivator encouraging critical thinking (Wang, 2007). Examples of learning activities based in Sociocultural Learning Theory practices include Collaborative Peer Groups, the Jigsaw Model, and Model Classrooms (Wang, 2007). Teacher professional development that uses Collaborative
Peer Groups creates a space for learners to share experiences, perspectives, and ideas while exploring different approaches to learning and problem solving (Smallwood & Brunner, 2017; Wang, 2007). Collaborative Peer Groups have been shown to help adult learners with retention and mastery of new learning. Teacher professional development that uses the Jigsaw Model involves the learner in learning new content then teaching their new learning to others (Malik, 2016; Wang, 2007). Participants first work in homogeneous groups to learn their assigned part, then they are reassigned to a heterogeneous group where they teach the other group members what they learned. Model classrooms allow teachers to observe effective teaching in real-time with the goal of the observer being able to successfully implement the teaching strategy in their classroom (Sweeney, 2016). Modeling behaviors of effective practice through model classrooms increases teachers’ access to collaboration and collective knowledge of experiences (Bates & Morgan, 2018). Teacher professional development based in principles of Sociocultural Learning Theory has been shown to deepen learning through engagement in learner-centered activities where participants interact with each other, growing from shared experiences (Wang, 2007).

During the 21st century, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) represent one of the most common approaches to teacher professional development and is based in Sociocultural Learning Theory (Margolis et al., 2016). PLCs have been at the forefront of new professional development structures over the past two decades, emerging when teachers come together to develop a community focused on understanding and improving teacher practice and student learning (Margolis et al., 2016). Working with other teachers to review, study, and analyze student work, whether through a PLC or as part of a larger professional development setting, provides teachers with the opportunity to develop a shared understanding and change teachers’ beliefs and practices as a result (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). According to Opfer & Pedder
(2011), teachers who willingly choose to join PLCs are more likely to discuss problems and strategies to solve the problems. However, teacher professional development using PLCs, Collaborative Peer Groups, the Jigsaw Model, and Model Classrooms, although grounded in Sociocultural Learning Theory, lacks a direct connection to the classroom (Margolis et al., 2016; Patton et al., 2015; Wang, 2007).

**Social Presence Theory in Teacher Professional Development**

Social Presence Theory is the most popular model used to understand how learners interact in digital learning environments (Cui et al., 2013; Lowenthal, 2010). Social Presence Theory evolved from social psychological theories when telecommunications and other online technologies developed in education (Cui et al., 2013; Lowenthal, 2010). Social Presence Theory is defined as the level at which someone is perceived as present in a virtual environment (Bickle et al., 2019). However, Margolis et al. (2016) argue that Social Presence Theory may also help clarify why teacher professional development in the presence of students is more impactful than teacher professional development in isolation. Teacher professional development should be a balance between theory and examination of practice (Bates & Morgan, 2018). Effective teacher professional development encompasses studying pedagogical strategies and providing an opportunity for teachers to see or experience teaching with the strategies through classroom observations or recorded lessons. This is supported by Patton et al. (2015), who expresses “teacher learning is most relevant when it focuses on teachers’ real work in schools with young people and addresses the unique context of their schools” (p.29).

Under the umbrella of Social Presence Theory, the concept of providing job-embedded teacher professional development, specifically in the presence of students, has the potential to enhance the culture and structure of teacher professional development. Job-embedded
professional development in the presence of students benefits teachers by allowing them to see instructional practices in action. Such work could be completed through recorded lessons, demonstration lessons, peer observations, coaching sessions, or case studies of teaching and student work (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Borko et al., 2010; Margolis et al., 2016). Often designed as a cyclical approach to professional learning, job-embedded teacher professional development is continuous, which provides the learner with ongoing support and engagement (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Borko et al., 2010). Situated in teacher’s classrooms with their students, professional development of this nature has impacted student achievement, providing teachers with opportunities to try out new curriculum or pedagogical approaches with their students or studying student work (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In fact, Margolis et al.’s (2016) research shows that without having students physically present, the teacher professional development is decontextualized and abstracted in terms of content and structure. With the limited literature available on this topic, this study aims to help fill the gap.

**Conclusion**

Since the turn of the 21st century, researchers in the field of education have recognized a need for more valid methods of studying teacher professional development (Desimone, 2009; Kedzior et al., 2004). Most often, the professional development offered to teachers fails to bridge the connection between educational theories and teachers’ everyday practices (Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019). This is a cause for concern as it impacts more than just a teacher’s classroom; teachers are responsible for students’ learning which can determine the ultimate success of the nation (Bozkuş & Bayrak, 2019; Gulamhussein, 2013). Teacher professional development should be designed to ensure teachers receive high-quality development that fosters change in teacher practice and closes the theory-practice gap (Desimone, 2009; Gulamhussein, 2013;
Korthagen, 2010). According to Margolis et al. (2016), the presence of students in teacher professional development may be the key to changing the culture in schools, as student presence shifts the norms, processes, and procedures of teacher professional development.

Teacher learning should be active and occur within an environment that fosters the sharing and exchanging of ideas, drawing connections to the bigger picture for both the school and the students (Krasnoff, 2014). Schools should provide an environment where teachers are encouraged to engage in continuous learning with their colleagues in a non-threatening manner; where they can observe and be observed by their peers, provide and receive feedback, and work to grow together to benefit students (Bozkuş & Bayrak, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019). Teacher professional development derived from research-based practices provides schools with more effective teacher professional development that improves student achievement (Desimone, 2009). Understandably, if schools improve the quality of teaching practices and teaching behaviors through effective teacher professional development, student achievement will increase as well (Bozkuş & Bayrak, 2019).

Unfortunately, most teacher professional development “misses the mark” (Gulamhussein, 2013, p. 2). Although the field of education is flooded with research showing that episodic workshop-style approaches to teacher professional development disconnected from the needs of the classroom teacher are not effective, they are still the most prevalent style used (Gulamhussein, 2013; Krasnoff, 2014; Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019). For teacher professional development to be effective, teachers must first internalize the learning, which will result in a change in their beliefs, behaviors, and/or practice (Krasnoff, 2014). One way to bring the necessary change in teacher practice and beliefs may be to embed the teacher professional development in the classroom, including the physical presence of students using a model
classroom (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Blanchet (2018) argues that adding student presence or minimally student voice to teacher professional development positively changes the dynamic of teacher professional development and thus its impact. This study will examine teacher professional development that engages teachers directly in contextualized professional learning connected to teachers’ classrooms and students. This will help fill the gap that currently exists in the literature around teacher professional development in the presence of students.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this study is to examine teacher and teacher leader perception of professional development in the presence of students. Specifically, analyzing teachers’ and teacher leaders’ perception of effective practice and motivation to change. As demonstrated in the literature review, there is much research on teacher professional development overall, but little research exists specifically on teacher professional development in the presence of students. This chapter describes the research methods, design, and analysis used in this study.

Research Method & Design

This research study is a qualitative exploratory case study using a subset of existing data. As a secondary data analysis, this study will reanalyze non-naturalistic data inclusive of transcribed interviews and observational field notes collected as part of a national study of teacher leadership (Heaton, 2004, 2008; Johnston, 2014; O’Rielly & Kiyimba, 2015). This study is classified as qualitative given that the reanalyzed data set is nonnumerical and investigates teachers in their natural environment to develop a better understanding of teachers’ perception of teacher professional development in the presence of students (Christensen et al., 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leavy, 2017; Terrell, 2016; Yin, 2018). Specifically, using qualitative case study methodology, this study allows for an examination of the bounded system (see Figure 5) using data collected through multiple qualitative techniques (Christensen et al., 2015; Creswell, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018).
Since teacher professional development in the presence of students represents an area where research is lacking, this exploratory case study will help fill the gap in research by exploring possible links that would be difficult to assign quantitative values (Leavy, 2017; Yin, 2018). This research study explores the social situation (teacher professional development in the presence of students) without a single or clear outcome making exploratory case study methodology an appropriate tool (Christensen et al., 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leavy, 2017; Terrell, 2016; Yin, 2018). The other types of case study methodology—explanatory (used to explain presumed links), comparative (used to compare multiple cases), intrinsic (used to understand a specific case), and instrumental (used to refine a theory)—were less appropriate for this study as the goal was to explore the social situation of teacher professional development in the presence of students to provide a better understanding of this under-researched topic.
(Christensen et al., 2015; Dutton, 2013; Leavy, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018). The results from this study may benefit those who design and implement teacher professional development intended to change teacher practice and improve student achievement.

This study reexamines a subset of an existing archived data set of teachers’ personal experiences regarding teacher professional development as a secondary data analysis. The researcher was granted permission to use the data directly from one of the original researchers that conducted the national study on teacher leadership. Establishing a professional connection with one of the original researchers benefits the researcher and this study by making available inside information about the data collection process, study environment, and study participants (Johnston, 2014). The data used for this study, collected by Berg et al. (2019) as part of a national study of teacher leadership, consists of extensive interview data and observational field notes collected over three site visits during the 2018-2019 academic school year. Within the qualitative research paradigm, case study methodology is most suitable for this research study as it focuses on detailed descriptions from a particular group of teachers participating in teacher professional development over an academic school year, with an emphasis on the environment of the professional development (Christensen et al., 2015; Leavy, 2017; Terrell, 2016; Yin, 2018).

This study extends the original study by diving deeper into the data collected at one of the school districts; looking specifically at how student presence in teacher professional development affects teacher practice. The original study, funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation (NMEF) and conducted by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), examined four school districts across three states in the United States of America. The purpose of the larger-scale study was to better understand teacher leadership as a strategy to improve instruction in American schools and measure its impact on students, teachers, schools,
and districts (Berg et al., 2019). This study acts as an extension of the larger study by reanalyzing a subset of its data to investigate how teachers’ and teacher leaders’ perception of effective practice and motivation to change practice is influenced by teacher professional development in the presence of students. Additionally, this study investigates how teacher professional development in the presence of students contributes to school district efforts to improve teaching and learning while considering the organizational challenges that arise as a result.

As shared in the literature review, many learning theories have been developed and studied in the field of education. Figure 6 shows the learning theories and examples of teacher professional development discussed in the literature review.
Incorporates the teacher’s past experiences and beliefs into the learning process, recognizing the need for the teacher to find immediate value in the learning, bridging the way the teacher is currently teaching to the research-based best practices that are the focus of the teacher professional development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructivist Learning Theories</th>
<th>Adult Learning Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Presence Theory</td>
<td>Allows the teacher to see instructional practices in action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural Learning Theory</td>
<td>A community of learners where the teacher engages in activities to deepen learning through learner-centered activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situated Learning Theory</td>
<td>Engages the teacher in a learning task, assessment, observation, and reflection to reinforce connections and exposes the teacher to high-quality instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Learning Theory</td>
<td>Engages teachers in active learning, making a solid connection to the classroom while providing opportunities for collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectivism</td>
<td>Incorporation of technology to include learning beyond the learner such as networks and technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviorist Learning Theory</td>
<td>Teacher-centered and focused on measurable changes that result from interactions within the environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As informed by Margolis et al.’s (2016) Student Presence and Learning Theory Model (Figure 3 on page 14), this study will investigate teacher learning in the presence of students, which is guided by the Constructivist Learning Theory of Social Presence Theory. The conceptual framework found in Figure 7 has been developed to provide a visual of what is being investigated (Miles et al., 2014).

**Figure 7**

*Understanding the Impact of Student Presence in Teacher Professional Development*

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**Research Questions**

This research study will reanalyze a subset of existing data to evaluate three research questions:

1. How are teacher and teacher leader’s perception of effective practice and motivation to change practice impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?
2. How does student presence during teacher professional development contribute to the district’s efforts to improve teaching and learning?

3. What organizational challenges arise as result of implementing teacher professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?

Using these research questions, this study will investigate the effects of teacher professional development in the presence of students at the different levels of a school system including teacher, teacher leader, and district level. Furthermore, both individual and organizational perspectives will be considered. As a secondary data analysis, this study will apply theoretical and conceptional knowledge and skills to address the above research questions supported by the conceptual framework shown in Figure 7 (Johnston, 2014; Miles et al., 2014).

**Researcher Perspective**

The data used for this research study is a subset of an existing data set collected by Berg et al. (2019) for a national study of teacher leadership. This existing data set consists of extensive interview data and observational field notes collected over three site visits during the 2018-2019 academic school year.

**Setting**

The subset of data used for this research study comes from a suburban school district in the southeast United States during the 2018-2019 school year. The research team chose this school district to be part of the national study of teacher leadership due to its involvement with a state level teacher leadership initiative, which began in the 2016-2017 school year (Berg et al., 2019). The School District is located in a suburban area of the southeast United States and is comprised of 20 schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). During the 2018-2019 academic school year, the district served 11,386 students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth
grade and employed 742 classroom teachers with a student-to-teacher ratio of 15:1. State test scores showed that 29% of students demonstrated proficiency in both mathematics and reading. The community that feeds the School District is comprised primarily of middle-class families reporting a median household income of $61,774, with 18.6% of families receiving food stamp benefits and 86% of the district’s population earning income above the poverty level. Throughout the total community population of 69,344, 84% of the population was white, 7% of the population was black, 7% of the population was Hispanic, 1% of the population was Asian, and 2% of the population was multiracial. Approximately 14% of the student population received special education services, and 6% received English Language Learners services. The School District was reported as spending approximately $8,000 per student annually.

**Study Participants**

Participants in this study consisted of 65 volunteers from the School District inclusive of 22 classroom teachers from kindergarten through fifth grade, 13 literacy leaders from kindergarten through sixth grade, 11 instructional coaches that worked within the elementary level (K-6), ten building level administrators (K-12), and nine district-level administrators.

**Classroom Teachers**

The 22 classroom teachers that participated in this study ranged from first-year teachers to veteran teachers with 18 years of experience. One participant was working with a transitional license granted by the state and therefore had yet to officially earn her teaching license or complete a semester student teaching.

**Literacy Leaders**

Classroom teachers hold the literacy leader role in the School District. Successful applicants have made it through the rigorous hiring process, including an application, interview,
written essay, and reference check. Literacy leaders maintain a full teaching schedule within their classrooms, serving as models for other teachers. In addition to hosting a model classroom, the literacy leader is responsible for providing turnaround training to their colleagues on the state literacy initiative Read to Be Ready. This initiative focuses on grade-level reading models, foundational literacy skills, vocabulary, and writing instruction. To ensure preparedness for the turnaround training, all literacy leaders attend additional trainings, practice the newly acquired skills in their model classrooms, create professional development presentations, and co-present the material to their colleagues during built-in teacher professional development days. The 13 literacy leaders who participated in this study ranged in experience from 2.5 – 22 years in education and 1-3 years serving in literacy leaders’ capacity.

**Instructional Coaches**

Teachers who served in the instructional coach’s role in the School District are relieved of a traditional teaching schedule to better serve in a coaching capacity. These individuals are charged with providing classroom teachers with targeted literacy support. Instructional coaches are trained at the state level on reading models, foundational literacy skills, vocabulary, and writing instruction. In turn, instructional coaches are responsible for training the literacy leaders and supporting them as the literacy leaders train the classroom teachers. The 11 instructional coaches who participated in this study ranged in experience from 10-36 years in education and 1-11 years serving in the instructional coach’s capacity.

**Administrators**

A total of 19 administrators participated in the study: ten building-level administrators and nine district-level administrators. Of the ten building level administrators, eight served as building leaders of elementary schools (K-6), one served as a building leader of a middle school
(6-8), and one served as a building leader of a high school (9-12). The range of experience of the administrator who participated in this study was 10-37 years in education. It was unclear how long each administrator had served in their current leadership capacity.

Data Collection

The data set used for this study, collected by Berg et al. (2019), consists of extensive transcribed interview data (18 group interviews and seven individual interviews) and observational field notes collected over three site visits during the 2018-2019 academic school year. The research team ensured the credibility of the study by developing a rapport through prolonged engagement with the participants (Terrell, 2016; Yin, 2018). Arranged by district administrators, each site visit spanned two to three days and included several school buildings and central office buildings within the district. Most of the school buildings visited were at the elementary level, with at least one teacher leader who hosted a model classroom. The researchers spent time interviewing and observing study participants during each visit to triangulate the collected data (Terrell, 2016; Yin, 2018). Each site visit had a specific focus which is explained below. Desimone (2009) expresses that, when collected and appropriately analyzed, interview and observational data provide an objective and comprehensive picture of what is being studied.

Visit 1 – The Beginning of the School Year

The research team visited the School District in September of 2018. The visit lasted three days. During this visit, the primary focus was the experiences of teacher leaders and administrators. The researchers completed five group interviews and collected observational field notes from a district-wide teacher professional development day and multiple model classroom observations. Table 1 shows the details of the visit.
Table 1

Beginning of the School Year Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit Date</th>
<th>Type of Data</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type of Participant</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/17/18</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>District Level Admin Instructional Coach</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/17/18</td>
<td>Field Notes – Teacher Professional Development</td>
<td>2 Elementary Schools 1 Middle School 1 High School</td>
<td>Literacy Leader Instructional Coach Teachers Teacher Leaders (MS/HS)</td>
<td>All teachers participating in the Teacher Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/17/18</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Instructional Coaches District Level Admin Building Level Admin</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18/18</td>
<td>Field Notes – Observing Model Classrooms</td>
<td>2 Elementary Schools</td>
<td>Literacy Leader Instructional Coach Teacher</td>
<td>2 Model Classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19/18</td>
<td>Field Notes – Observing Model Classrooms</td>
<td>Elementary School Middle School</td>
<td>Literacy Leader Instructional Coach Teacher</td>
<td>3 Model Classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19/18</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Literacy Leader Instructional Coach</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19/18</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Building Level Admin</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visit 2 – The Middle of the School Year

The research team visited the School District in January of 2019. The visit lasted two days. During this visit, the primary focus was the experiences of elementary classroom teachers. The researchers completed seven group interviews and collected observational field notes from a professional learning community (PLC) meeting and multiple model classroom observations. Table 2 shows the details of the visit.
### Table 2

**Middle of the School Year Data Collection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit Date</th>
<th>Type of Data</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type of Participant</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/7/19</td>
<td>Field Notes – Observing Model Classrooms</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Literacy Leader Instructional Coach Teacher</td>
<td>5 Model Classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/7/19</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Literacy Leaders</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/7/19</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/7/19</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/7/19</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>District Level Admin Instructional Coach Building Level Admin</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/7/19</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/8/19</td>
<td>Field Notes – PLC Meeting</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>PLC participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/8/19</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/8/19</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Visit 3 – The End of the School Year**

The research team visited the School District in May of 2019. The visit lasted two days. During this visit, the primary focus was on the teacher leaders’ and administrators’ reflections and their thoughts moving forward. The researchers completed six group interviews and seven individual interviews. Table 3 shows the details of the visit.
### Table 3

*End of the School Year Data Collection*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit Date</th>
<th>Type of Data</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type of Participant</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/13/19</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Literacy Leaders</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/13/19</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Building Level Admin</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/13/19</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Building Level Admin</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/13/19</td>
<td>Individual Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Instructional Coach</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/13/19</td>
<td>Individual Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Literacy Leader</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/13/19</td>
<td>Individual Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Literacy Leader</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/13/19</td>
<td>Individual Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Instructional Coach</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/14/19</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Building Level Admin</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/14/19</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Instructional Coach</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/14/19</td>
<td>Group Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>District Level Admin</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/14/19</td>
<td>Individual Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Instructional Coach</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/14/19</td>
<td>Individual Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Building Level Admin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/14/19</td>
<td>Individual Interview</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Literacy Leader</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Analysis**

Data collected as part of a national study of teacher leadership was reanalyzed through a secondary data analysis to determine the effects of teacher professional development in the presence of students. This study considers the effects at the different levels of a school system, including teacher, teacher leader, and district level. A Constructivist approach has been used to analyze and interpret this case on both the individual and organizational levels (Yin, 2013, 2018). It is the objective to present the interpretation of the case free from bias to provide the readers with the opportunity to conclude their own opinion of the findings (Yin, 2013).
Qualitative data analysis is an inductive and comparative process that requires the researcher to become immersed in the data to reach an understanding (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2018). According to Yin (2018), there are four general strategies with which to analyze case studies: 1) Relying on theoretical propositions or research questions, 2) Letting the data lead the study by working the data from the ground up, 3) Developing a case description using a descriptive framework, 4) Examining rival explanations.

As this study was designed around the identified research questions and the literature review found in chapter two, this study employs the first of these strategies (Yin, 2018). This case study was a secondary data analysis. Therefore, the interview data and field notes were transcribed by the original researchers. Erikson (1986) explains that using recorded interviews or events helps to eliminate the problem of premature typification (the tendency to leap to conclusions inductively early in the research process) as it provides the researcher with the opportunity to revisit the conversations and events as many times as needed. Qualitative research aims to make sense of text and image data by taking apart the data and putting it back together (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, the researcher followed the five-step process identified by Creswell & Creswell (2018) for analyzing qualitative data: 1) Organize the data for analysis; 2) Read at all the data; 3) Code the data; 4) Generate a description and themes; 5) Represent the descriptions and themes. The data analysis process began with a general review of the data so that it could be organized by the site visit (beginning of the year, middle of the year, end of the year) and type (group interview, individual interview, observational field notes). After organizing the data, the researcher completed an initial read of all of the data recording ideas, thoughts, and promising concepts that developed (Taylor et al., 2016). The researcher was able to use these notes, along
with the research questions, to develop the framework shown in Figure 8 (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).
Figure 8

Conceptual Framework to Understand the Impact of Student Presence in Teacher Professional Development

Research Topic

Teacher and teacher leader's perception of effective practice & motivation to change practice

Success
Culture and Collaboration
Challenges

District efforts to improve teaching and learning

Success
Culture and Collaboration
Challenges

Organizational challenges

Success
Culture and Collaboration
Challenges

Challenges

Success
Benefit
Accomplishment
Positive
Culture
Collaboration
Engaging
Share
Challenge Negative
Growth
Difficulty
Hard
Success
Benefit
Accomplishment
Positive
Culture
Collaboration
Engaging
Share
Challenge Negative
Growth
Difficulty
Hard
Challenge Negative
Growth
Difficulty
Hard
Challenge Negative
Growth
Difficulty
Hard
Next, the researcher coded the data using themes and corresponding keywords identified in the framework (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Terrell, 2016; Yin, 2013, 2018). The coding was done primarily by hand using the general tools available in Microsoft Word. The researcher analyzed the data for meaning, looking for overall patterns as well as disconfirming evidence or contrary interpretations (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Erikson, 1986). Since the data included written field notes and transcribed interviews recorded during the original study, the researcher could compare the responses of all of the participants, cross-checking for behaviors and comments that contradicted each other or the assertions made (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Erikson, 1986). Reviewing the data multiple times and completing multiple levels of analysis gave the researcher the opportunity to develop an explanation for the occurrences in the case (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Erikson, 1986; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2013, 2018). After coding, the researcher grouped the excerpts based on the codes and arranged the data in a systematic order to identify the existing themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saldaña, 2013). Appendix B provides an example of a data analysis process specifically connecting excerpts from the data to the identified themes and organizational level. Table 4 shows the alignment of the themes to the research questions that ground this study.
### Table 4

*Themes Aligned to Research Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theme 1: Success</strong></th>
<th><strong>Keywords/phrases:</strong> Success, Benefit, Accomplishment, Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ1:</strong> How are teacher and teacher leader’s perception of effective practice and motivation to change practice impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ2:</strong> How does student presence during teacher professional development contribute to the district’s efforts to improve teaching and learning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theme 2: Culture and Collaboration</strong></th>
<th><strong>Keywords/phrases:</strong> Culture, Collaboration, Engaging, Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ1:</strong> How are teacher and teacher leader’s perception of effective practice and motivation to change practice impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ2:</strong> How does student presence during teacher professional development contribute to the district’s efforts to improve teaching and learning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theme 3: Challenges</strong></th>
<th><strong>Keywords/phrases:</strong> Challenge, Negative, Growth, Difficulty, Hard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ1:</strong> How are teacher and teacher leader’s perception of effective practice and motivation to change practice impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ2:</strong> How does student presence during teacher professional development contribute to the district’s efforts to improve teaching and learning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ3:</strong> What organizational challenges arise as a result of implementing teacher professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In chapter four, the researcher applies the themes to the research questions and provides a detailed interpretation of the data with a holistic understanding of the case (Terrell, 2016; Yin, 2013).
CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine teachers’ and teacher leaders’ perception of professional development in the presence of students. Specifically, this study analyzed teacher and teacher leader perception of effective practice and motivation to change practice, how learning with students present in the model classroom improves teaching and learning, and identifying organizational challenges that arose from teacher professional development in the presence of students. Informed by Margolis et al.’s (2016) Student Presence and Learning Theory Model, this study focused on the teacher learning that occurs at the highest level of student presence in teacher professional development. As a qualitative case study using a secondary data set, the researcher considered the different themes that emerged and any disconfirming evidence while analyzing interview data and observational field notes while (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Erikson, 1986; Saldaña, 2013; Terrell, 2016; Yin, 2013). In this chapter, the researcher will provide a narrative of the findings based on each theme as it corresponds to the research questions that guided the study. Overall, the research questions focused on exploring the effects of teacher professional development in the presence of students at the different levels of a school system, including teacher, teacher leader, and district level; considering the individual as well as organizational perspectives (Terrell, 2016; Yin, 2013). The chapter will conclude with a summary of the results as they aligned to each of the research questions.

Theme 1: Success of the Teacher Leadership Model

The first theme that emerged from the data was the success of the teacher leadership model in the School District. For the purpose of this study, any excerpts that contained the keywords of success, benefit, accomplishment, and positive were coded with the success theme
as well as other phrases that inferred these keywords. The theme of success was evident at all levels of the district—teacher, teacher leader, and district. The theme of success of the teacher leadership model aligns to the first two research questions posed in this study:

1. How are teachers and teacher leader’s perception of effective practice and motivation to change impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?

2. How does student presence during teacher professional development contribute to the district’s efforts to improve teaching and learning?

This section will discuss the findings from this study that align the theme of success of the teacher leadership model with the corresponding research question.

**Research Question 1: How are teacher and teacher leader’s perception of effective practice and motivation to change practice impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?**

The teacher leadership model in the School District has been a source of teacher change, both personally and professionally, and has expanded teacher interest in improving professional practice by embedding teacher professional development into everyday life. Constant access to literacy leaders and instructional coaches provided teachers with supports to implement new skills in their practice. Teachers explained, “Instead of just going to the training and thinking ‘Oh this is good,’ and then forgetting about it, it’s like a constant for us anyway. A daily, this is just how we do it now.” During a group interview with members of the district-level administration, positive feedback received through a district-wide survey was shared. The feedback included positive comments from teachers, literacy leaders, and building-level administrators (see Figure 9).
Figure 9

Positive Survey Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Positive Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Thank you for allowing our own to teach us</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Thank you for doing it that way so now we know who our go-to person is in the district if we have questions about the new standards</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy Leader Positive Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· I’m a better teacher because of my literacy leader experience.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Building Level Administrator Positive Comments</th>
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<tr>
<td>· Literacy leaders have been able to model for teachers, speaking from experience rather than simply knowledge, helps teachers trust and present the leaders so they’re having that relationship that they can go to somebody in their building.</td>
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At all levels, but especially at the teacher level, the teacher leadership model has inspired motivation to transform teaching and learning in the classroom.

The teachers’ visits to the model classroom have restored the teachers’ passion for learning and teaching and have provided momentum for change in practice. In a group interview, a teacher expressed her appreciation for the model classroom, explaining that she came away with new ideas and strategies for her classroom each time she visited the model classroom. Another teacher contributed that she took away multiple teaching strategies from her observations of the literacy leader that she now implements in her classroom, changing her practice. Even veteran teachers have highlighted positive things about the teacher leadership model claiming it “is the best initiative they’ve brought in the state.” Additionally, several teachers discussed that they talk with their respective literacy leaders and instructional coaches almost every day to gain support in implementing new strategies. Referring to the changes in their practice as a “massive paradigm shift” from how they were trained in college and how they
learned to read. Expectations have been raised by the teachers in this study as a result of the work they have done through the teacher leadership model. A district administrator explained that the continuous focus of teacher practice through the model classroom and teacher leadership model has raised expectations. She stated,

> From my perspective, it's more a shift in the culture of the district, and it affects some very key principles of operation like communication, and collaboration, accountability, and I think it's raised the level of all of those things, expectations, because it's a continuous focus on them. It's expected.

Not only have teacher expectations been raised, but expectations for their students have also increased which has resulted in the bar being raised across the board. One literacy leader explained,

> I think we’ve raised our expectations, too, of not only ourselves as teachers, but of our students. What do we expect our students to do, so that when they move up in that grade level, teachers in the higher grades can see those changes as well. We’re raising the bar all across the board.

This shift has produced students achieving higher when they enter into the next grade level, which will cause a ripple effect over the years to come. Teachers have recognized that their students can do more if they teach them more, and the teachers in the higher grades are seeing the changes in students’ abilities and skill sets. The teacher leadership model, specifically the model classroom, has given momentum to change practice that positively affects student learning and teacher practice.

> These positive changes were also witnessed by building-level administrators and instructional coaches. One building-level administrator shared that she has witnessed teaching
practices that were modeled by the literacy leader implemented in other teachers’ classrooms shortly after the teacher observed the literacy leader. Likewise, an instructional coach told a story of a teacher that returned from a year off. The teacher, concerned about the changes adopted for teaching reading, completed multiple observations in the model classroom to learn the new teaching strategies covered during teacher professional development sessions during her leave. She then followed up with a coaching cycle with the instructional coach in her classroom to effectively implement the strategy. According to the instructional coach, “she just takes it [her new learning] and runs with it. So she’s one in particular in kindergarten that, I mean, the whole process has just been great with her.” Her students’ test scores validated her effective implementation of the new strategies. All but one of her students scored “low risk” on the Easy CBM, including fluency testing, providing evidence that the model classroom and coaching support was working. Another instructional coach shared a success story of a new third-grade team. All of the teachers on this team were new to third grade and new to the reading instruction that the district had been focusing on, specifically guided reading. The teacher leadership model set the stage for the instructional coach to work with the team, getting them up to date with the current strategies. Likewise, a story was shared about a teacher who recently moved from a middle school teaching position to fourth grade. Working with the instructional coach and observing the literacy leader helped the teacher transform into a “really good guided reading teacher.” Teachers in the School District have developed a strong understanding of effective practice, as well as a motivation to improve their practice to become more effective as a result of the teacher leadership model, specifically the model classroom.

Within the teacher leadership model in the School District, the model classroom hosted by the literacy leader provided teachers with a live experience to see the learning in action with
the goal of motivating teachers to shift their practices to benefit student learning. One of the literacy leaders provided an example of the teacher leadership model’s impact on the teachers. She expressed,

Just being able to work with them and sit down and show them how we created the units and how to do the interactive read alouds and how to integrate the social studies and writing and the language standards all together and just really being able to see their eyes open to a new way of teaching than what they were traditionally doing or what they were expecting has been, probably, the biggest success this year.

She explained that she believed she was able to open the teachers’ eyes to this new way of teaching and motivate them to transform their practice. Another literacy leader described that her goal was to help the teachers that came to visit her “grow in the best way that she can in the 30 minutes they are in there.” She recognized that the teacher would not get to see everything, so showing them the strengths of what they have requested to see while they were there was the best way to help them grow. Another literacy leader recounted that a teacher that was struggling with how to teach reading observed her model classroom three times. Following these visits, it “clicked” for this teacher, and she was proud to share that her kids were now writing. She excitedly explained all of the things she pulled from her visits to the model classroom. Reflecting on this event, the literacy leader stated, “that’s my favorite…the reason we are doing this,” in response to the teachers’ growth. Experiencing the learning live and observing effective practice in action has motivated teachers to shift their practice to shadow what they have experienced in the model classroom.

In addition to motivating the teachers to improve their practice and grow as educators, the teacher leadership model also grew the teacher leaders’ practice. A literacy leader divulged that
hosting a model classroom kept her on her toes and pushed her to become better. She explained that it has allowed her "to come together more with the people in the building and feel like a family." There was a mutual understanding that she was not an expert per se but rather opened her door for other teachers to grow with her. Another literacy leader communicated that it was vital for her to be successful in this role to benefit the observing teacher, the students, and the district. She described that what the teachers observed in her classroom should be something that they could take back to their classroom to improve their practice. The role of hosting a model classroom provided motivation to the literacy leaders to do the best job they can do, growing as teachers and sharing the excitement of their classrooms.

The model classrooms in the teacher leadership model provided a space where the teacher learning was brought to life. A literacy leader explained that as a host of a model classroom, she could further develop the professional learning she provided her colleagues with during a professional development day by demonstrating what it looked like in her room with her students. She was able to demonstrate how to implement the new learning, going beyond what she was able to explain with a PowerPoint presentation by actually applying the strategies. Having access to the professional development trainers (the literacy leaders and instructional coaches) provided the teachers more immediate answers and feedback. A teacher shared,

I think it makes us a better teacher to have access to all this information. As she said, it's more efficient, it's quicker, you don't have to wait for professional development to get the information. Your teacher leader can go ahead and tell you tomorrow, if there's something new. So, I think to me, that's the overall effect. It just makes us more effective. When a teacher was planning, teaching, or reflecting, any questions that arose could be answered almost immediately by the literacy leader or instructional coach, eliminating the wait time.
Additionally, the teacher leadership model, specifically the literacy leader’s role, was continuously evolving and improving. A participant mentioned that each year the district hones-in a little more on the shared challenges to improve the support available to and offered by the literacy leaders. Although some literacy leaders were somewhat apprehensive in different areas, as a whole, their doors were open, and they were ready to support the teachers, which has shifted the relationships between the literacy leaders and the other teachers in the building. It was a process, and the literacy leaders were improving and getting much stronger consistently. Some of the literacy leaders had been a part of the teacher leadership model since the onset, have been selected from the applicant pool every year to continue doing the work, and therefore have become excellent presenters. A teacher described that when interacting with the literacy leaders, their passion and dedication was evident saying,

I feel like they have a passion for it, too. They live it and breathe it. I mean, they're on fire about it, so, you know, it's inspiring in a lot of ways. Yeah, I mean, I have admiration there. I know they're gonna help me, but it's something to look up to also.

The excitement and fire that the literacy leaders emulated was inspiring to her and her fellow teachers.

Research Question 2: How does student presence during teacher professional development contribute to the district’s efforts to improve teaching and learning?

The teacher leadership model has increased teacher buy-in resulting in changes in teacher practice and improved student learning. The teachers trusted the teacher leaders, both the literacy leaders and instructional coaches, more than they trusted outside providers of teacher professional development. A building level administrator stated, “So I think that there's more buy-in and willingness to try. Because they trust their teacher leaders more.” In alignment with
this explanation, a teacher shared that she felt very comfortable going to her instructional coach for support. In her first year, the instructional coach did a lot of modeling for her in her classroom around the guided reading process. She communicated, "I could go to her. She came in and did a lot of modeling of guided reading [in my classroom], things I now I still use, seven years later, I'm still using things that she taught me and modeled to me." Another teacher described that the teacher leadership model has helped her “strive to be better” during her first year. Allowing her space and supports to grasp the new learning through continuous access to the literacy leaders and instructional coach. Similarly, another teacher expressed that she truly appreciated having the option to go to the resident expert, the literacy leader, and honestly share where she was struggling and instantly receive support. When she felt like she was lost or had too many things “thrown at” her, the literacy leader was always available to walk her through her concerns and bounce ideas around. The teacher explained,

So like for the literacy leaders, it's nice to know that like they are experts, where I can go and be honest and be like, 'hey I'm struggling with this, like can you help me?' And they're always there to like walk me through it, because there's so many times I feel like I've no idea what I'm doing or I get so many things thrown at me. But to also to bounce ideas off of someone, because as teachers we can't do it by ourselves, but to know that there's someone who... okay this is all that they focus on, they know more, and just to be able to trust them, and believe what they're saying.

Likewise, a literacy leader recounted that she often spoke with her colleagues about the exciting things she was doing in her classroom. This sparked interest among her peers, which resulted in them approaching the instructional coach to schedule a visit to her model classroom to see the
teaching strategies in action. When asked about the teacher leadership model, another teacher stated,

I think it's making better teachers. I think it makes us a better teacher to have access to all this information. As she said, it's more efficient, it's quicker, you don't have to wait for professional development to get the information. Your teacher leader can go ahead and tell you tomorrow, if there's something new. So, I think to me, that's the overall effect. It just makes us more effective.

She made a point to explain that having the literacy leaders available was more efficient and timely because there was no wait time to get the information, resulting in higher levels of teacher effectiveness.

The teacher leadership model strengthened the teachers’ ability to reach students in a way they had not, involving kids at a different level than in the past. A literacy leader described that one could see the impact the teacher leadership model was having on students. It was apparent in the model classroom as well as the classrooms of the teachers that had learned from the model classroom. Specifically, this literacy leader spoke to the evolution of the first-grade team in her building when incorporating more of the writing and culminating tasks that they had begun the previous school year. She expressed that the second-grade team was delighted with the students’ writing abilities at the beginning of the year, making comments like, “Wow, these kids can write, really write, and they know the content!” She expressed that the success in student learning started with the ability to model the initiatives for the teachers, which “caused a ripple effect across the school, across the district, and teachers talk.” Student engagement was much better as well as student growth; it was evident that the teacher leadership model was helping the students in addition to the teachers. There was a “pretty significant” improvement in students’ test scores.
in third through eighth grade as scores rose from 29.9% to 33.9%. Additionally, teachers were excited to share that their students showed growth on their universal screeners from the fall to spring. An instructional coach referred to this as “kind of proof of the pudding.” The data shared throughout this study provided evidence of changes in student learning.

The teacher leadership model, specifically the model classroom, prompted the teachers to reflect deeper on their practice, routines, and classrooms. In a group interview with teacher participants, there was a discussion on the newness of the teaching strategies they had been learning. For example, centers were a new strategy for most of the teachers. They explained that being able to observe the literacy leaders as they used centers, watching them model how to run centers, and transition between teaching strategies, had been very helpful. One teacher affirmed,

She [the instructional coach] was able to pull some resources, and get some together and make suggestions, and give me ideas, and I loved it, because it helped me by, it saved me a lot of time, because she already had access to all that information, and I wasn't starting from ground zero, trying to dig through and find it. I had a resource that could just tell me stuff quickly.

It really helped them to see it in action. After observing the literacy leader, one teacher told a story of an “ah-ha” moment she had, where the teaching strategy clicked, and she realized why and how to adjust her practice. According to another teacher, visiting a model classroom helped solidify what the literacy leaders said during the professional development sessions, seeing how it was supposed to transpire with students in the classroom. She explained, “when they have all this information, in just all of these parts, it’s hard, it’s a puzzle,” but the model classroom showed what the puzzle was supposed to look like in the end. Additionally, the researcher described an observation that the “model classroom visits prompt deeper reflection on what is
going on in one’s own classroom, not just borrowing from the potential of what is going on in someone else’s classroom.” The observing teacher was recorded in the field notes making reflective comments including:

- “I want to do that…”;
- “I would like to do something like this in my class…”;
- “My challenge in my room is…”

In support of this, a literacy leader explained that she had teachers come to visit her model classroom then, shortly after their visit, change their teaching practice to mirror what they had observed in the model classroom. The literacy leader further explained, “They see it in action, and they understand what I have been talking about. And so now, okay, we are going to do that.” Through access to the model classroom, teachers were observing, reflecting, and shifting their practice to align to the model of best practice.

Although hard to gauge quantitatively, there was an unmistakable shift in the classroom of the literacy leaders as a result of the teacher leadership model. Specifically, the literacy leaders were exuding confidence, and this showed in their presentations (both to students and teachers), and the way instruction was provided to their students. An instructional coach shared that one of her literacy leaders “has become a stronger teacher and more confident in herself and in her abilities” as a result of her work as a literacy leader. Likewise, a literacy leader who reflected on the teacher leadership model accounted that it was a way for teachers to see the new strategies in action and gain new ideas for their classroom instead of just going to training. The teacher leadership model increased collaboration across grade bands, opening the conversation portal. As revealed by a literacy leader, “It [the teacher leadership model] really opens up a lot of conversation, too, and it allows you to collaborate with people across grade bands versus just
your team.” Having access to the trainers (the literacy leaders and instructional coaches) to
discuss how to integrate the skills into the classroom and being able to see them in action helped
improve the confidence of the teachers, taking away their feelings of uncertainty. When asked if
they felt the professional development sessions or the model classroom impacted teachers more,
a literacy leader responded without hesitation, “model classroom.” She went on to explain that
providing the opportunity for teachers to see the skills in action was most beneficial, stating:

It’s one thing to talk about how to turn and talk or how questioning impacts student’s
understanding of whatever content you’re trying to teach. It’s another thing to see the
students actually in it and doing it in a real setting. Because yes, my students, if
somebody’s in there, some of them might be on their best behavior. Some of them might
be on their worst behavior, but knowing that that is possible, the things that we’re trying
to deliver to them are possible to do within a classroom with students, I think is more
powerful than just telling them.

Through the model classroom, both teachers and teacher leaders have grown their practice by
bringing to life the learning discussed at teacher professional development sessions.

The teacher leadership model, specifically the model classroom, helped literacy leaders
grow as teachers and improve student learning. One literacy leader described that the teachers
who had visited her classroom pointed out how much she had grown and improved as a teacher
since becoming a literacy leader. She reflected,

I think through the three years, being in this position has changed me as a teacher in so
many ways that some days I'm like, really, I do that? Like, I have people come to me and
say, ‘I can't, I just, I observed your room today and I'm just amazed at how you've
changed and grown as a teacher.’ I think sometimes maybe we forget that, that hey, we
have really changed over the past couple of years. In a great way, I think. It's helped us change for ourselves, but also change for our kids.

These changes helped her, but more importantly, they helped her students. She revealed that she would only continue to improve as a teacher and as a teacher leader by continuing in this process. According to the instructional coaches, having literacy leaders in the building helped strengthen literacy across the building by demonstrating best practices and teacher observations. An instructional coach told a story about how the teacher leadership model reignited the passion in one of her literacy leaders. The instructional coach expressed an instance where the literacy leader was “on fire” after attending the summer training, and her fire spread to her colleagues like wildfire, which has transformed her grade level team. Another instructional coach reported, “I’ve seen it from the conception and how it’s really working day in and day out within the schools, so I’m really pleased with what we’ve done and how it’s growing,” explaining that the program changed slightly from year-to-year. Additionally, a literacy leader shared that she has been able to help her grade level understand the expectations much better than in years past since she was on the ground floor co-planning with the teachers. Likewise, an instructional coach described a recent experience with a literacy leader where she had observed her model classroom and followed up with a debrief conversation. She spoke to the literacy leader’s passion for the teacher leadership model as she talked about her personal growth as a teacher and a leader, explaining that she “had to really own it [the new strategies] to present it to others.” She also talked about what she had seen in her students, how the changes to her practice had improved their learning. Similarly, an instructional coach shared that even after 23 years in education, she had gained much from watching the literacy leader put into motion the training they both recently received. She recalled thinking, as she observed the literacy leader, “That does work. It
is possible to get those students to do that, or we need to look at that again. That’s probably the best approach.” After each observation of the literacy leader in the model classroom, she felt better equipped to work with the other teachers. She explained that she was now able to share with the teacher what she had seen in the model classroom. Along the same lines, a district-level administrator recounted an experience she had during a model classroom visit. She had dropped in unannounced and was delighted with the level of engagement of the students. She referenced that both the students and the teacher seemed to have been really enjoying the learning and teaching process. She credited the training when sharing,

And I think some of the training that they've had has really brought that along, and we've kind of shifted to a focus of, I'll call it "building content." I'm not sure if that's what I wanna say. But they have really learned how to integrate more into the reading time from their science and social studies. And the students were just really enjoying learning the content that they were learning that day. It was on volcanoes, and it was very animated, and they were having fun. And for me, that's where the best part of it is.

Providing teachers the ability to observe the model classroom and learn how to shift their practice caused similar changes throughout other classrooms.

The teacher leadership model was designed to empower teachers, helping them become stronger, more effective professionals through increased support and confidence, which benefits the whole school community. A building-level administrator shared that throughout the year of this study, the teacher leadership model had made teacher learning seamless. In her building, the existence of the teacher leadership model helped to facilitate a sense of community, consistency in instructional practices, a common language, and established clear expectations, which ultimately trickled down to the students. She explained,
We [The instructional coach, literacy leader, and her] had a huge opportunity to really set the tone for what we wanted the year to look like. We were very transparent right up front. We really want everybody to get on the same page with what we expect, not just guided reading to look like, but also what our center rotations and just overall management piece. The literacy leader’s room and the instructional coach’s facilitation of that have made that really a very seamless process. Our teachers have loved it.

Another building-level administrator expressed that the teacher leadership model shifted the morale from one of defeat to one of success. She described that when the teacher leadership model was implemented, the teachers were of the attitude that “this is something new that I can actually do right now, I don’t have to wait until the end to feel the impact.” She went on to say that teachers were more willing to ask for help in this model because they felt comfortable; the teachers were more open to change. Another building-level administrator shared that the teacher leadership model was “working really well” in supporting their teachers. In fact, through the teacher leadership model, the teachers were receiving more support than ever before. They participated in professional development days, had access to the model classroom, collaborated with the literacy leader and the instructional coach, could participate in coaching cycles with the instructional coach, and engaged in regular PLC meetings with their grade-level teams. Likewise, a district-level administrator shared that the survey data supported that the teacher leadership model was working. She relayed that the teachers’ comments were “very positive” and that the teachers preferred having a colleague that was “working elbow to elbow” with them rather than a specialist provide the training. They appreciated the “support system in place” through the teacher leadership model, both the ability to observe a literacy leader in the model classroom and having access to an instructional coach. Similarly, a building-level administrator
expressed that the teacher leadership model was one of the best things the School District had implemented, recognizing that teacher leadership supported exponential professional growth.

One of the goals of the teacher leadership model was to improve student learning. The teacher leadership model was fluid, as support moved between the areas of greatest need that were identified by assessment data. One of the district-level administrators pointed out that “you always have to be data-driven in your decision making,” which was an established practice across the district. At the time of the study, the district was focused on literacy, starting at the foundation, which resulted in improved literacy scores. Teachers were doing things differently; they were having ah-ha moments that translated to student growth. According to a building-level administrator, the teacher leadership model had made a difference in the achievement level of the highest performing (but not gifted) students in her school. Historically, this population of students was not a focus of their work, and the students in this subgroup were not pushed academically to achieve higher. The building’s literacy leaders provided more differentiation and personalized their instruction to better support and advance this student subgroup. She explained,

My two literacy leaders are very good at differentiation and individualizing both ways. They are great in both ways, they're great inclusion teachers but they're also wonderful with my higher-level students and I have seen that transfer into other classrooms as well. When they think, “I can't differentiate, that takes too much,” or “I don't know how to reach those kids. They’ve already got what they need for me, I'm just gonna kind of put them in a simmer.” No, you're not just gonna put them in a simmer, they may have been able to provide some specific strategies and books and lessons for those students who already know what they need to know, now how can we move them further.”
This practice helped change the mindset of other teachers as they were able to demonstrate, through their model classroom, specific strategies to differentiate and personalize the learning for students on different levels to grow all students. During an observation of a PLC meeting, the researcher recorded in the field notes that the building-level administrator expressed her amazement at the content that the kindergarten students were able to master. This was in direct alignment with the training the teachers had undergone earlier in the year and was continuously supported through the model classroom and instructional coaching. Using student data to drive the teacher learning focus, the teacher leadership model has provided teachers the opportunity to see effective teaching in action in the model classroom.

**Theme 2: Culture and Collaboration**

The second theme that emerged from the data was culture and collaboration. The teacher leadership model increased collaboration among the teachers, teacher leaders, and administration. It also shifted the culture of the organization. The theme of culture and collaboration aligns to the first two research questions posed in this study:

1. How are teacher and teacher leader's perception of effective practice and motivation to change impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?

2. How does student presence during teacher professional development contribute to the district's efforts to improve teaching and learning?

The researcher used the keywords culture, collaboration, environment, shift, climate, change, and engaging and phrases with similar meanings to identify excerpts from the available data. This section will discuss the findings from this study that align to the theme of culture and collaboration.
Research Question 1: How are teacher and teacher leader’s perception of effective practice and motivation to change practice impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?

The teacher leadership model has created a culture across the district where teachers feel comfortable asking for help, even during times of change. A district-level administrator clarified that the teacher leadership model has established a collaborative environment where it is acceptable to learn something new from a coworker. Teachers spend time observing the effective practices of their colleagues (the literacy leader) to see how to implement the effective practices in their classrooms. This is contrary to the environment that preceded the teacher leadership model; in the past, teachers isolated themselves by keeping their doors closed and their ideas to themselves. However, after the shift to the teacher leadership model, teachers were "involved in the doing of things" and “in the decision making”, which improved school culture. In a group interview with teachers, they all agreed that they felt more involved through this collaborative approach to teacher learning. One teacher described,

I think it is very different. Watching how it's unfolded throughout the years. You feel more involved. You feel more a part of the process, not just, you know, the person who's told what to do and you do it.

The positive impact on teacher learning through the teacher leadership model has caused a ripple effect of change as more teachers embraced the opportunity to experience new teaching strategies through the model classroom. A literacy leader expressed that she believed that the changes were occurring because teachers have had a glimpse of the increased student performance which inspired a change in practice. This culture of learning and collaboration has
extended to all parts of the teacher leadership model and has further developed an atmosphere of engagement and learning.

The culture within the model classroom was one of support and collaboration; there was ‘no fear.’ An instructional coach recounted, “I think it's a huge success in this building. It's changed the atmosphere in this building.” The literacy leader was a large part of the change in the teachers' attitudes and overall school climate. They established a supportive, welcoming, and growth-focused relationship with the other teachers. Within the teacher leadership model, both the instructional coaches and literacy leaders had more of a messenger role than an evaluator role, removing the pressure, stress, and anxiety from the interactions between the teachers and the teacher leaders. One teacher explained that it just makes sense for teachers to be the ones leading other teachers, guiding them as they figure out how to implement the new strategies. A literacy leader shared when asked about the model,

I think the teachers really enjoy the fact that, like I said before, I try things out. So, there are many times when you're sitting in professional development that you just can't picture how this is going to work in your classroom and you are overwhelmed with the information, and you just can't wrap your mind around how is this really going to work in an everyday classroom. And, I think by having teachers leading the professional development that are in the trenches, so to speak, with them, they're experiencing the same things. I have the same behavior issues, we have to deal with, you know, students that are sick in the middle of the lesson. Or, you know, we're there with them, and to see us being able to do that, when we work in the same building as they do, I think that's pretty powerful. I think they see that and they think, ‘well, if they can do that down the hall, I can try this too.’ And, just being able to give them stories, ‘yes, this worked really
well, but here's how I tweaked this.’ ‘This has worked with this kid, but I had to do this for this kid’, and just being able to give them those examples is huge. I know that's what I would learn better from. I love going over and any time I can talk with the other teacher leaders and learn about things that they're doing in their classrooms, that's probably one of my favorite parts of the program. Just being able to sit with teachers from other schools in our district and compare notes and compare activities and compare ways of presenting this and compare what's going on, I think that's huge.

By having a teacher model the best practices, being able to observe how the teaching strategies worked with students present, the teachers were motivated to implement the new strategies in their own classroom. The change became real and achievable.

Teacher leadership is strengthened by building relationships, maintaining respect, and investing in people. A building-level administrator expressed that "one of the best things you can invest in is people." This School District embraced this concept. The building-level administrator explained that in the past, there was a missing piece. Teachers were trained at the state level, but there was no follow-up, no connection to the classroom, and no meaningful feedback. Through the teacher leadership model, the roles of the literacy leader and instructional coach filled the gap, and these roles were evolving to meet the needs of the school. The literacy leaders and instructional coaches began the year building strong relationships and mutual trust by expressing to their colleagues that they were there with them, growing with them, and excited for their learning. As the year continued, the teachers could see the skills shared during the professional development day put into action. This changed teacher perspective and enhanced the relationships between the teachers and the literacy leaders. When asked about collaboration across the district, a literacy leader explained:
So as leaders, we're collaborating with people in the district, we're collaborating with our team, we're collaborating with other grade levels, and it just really builds that sense of teamwork to where we're working together, because these are all our kids. They're not just my kids, your kids.

This collaboration that was sparked as a result of the teacher leadership model continued to spread. Teachers engaged in academic discourse with other teachers beyond those in their building; they discussed what they were doing and how great it was going. According to one of the instructional coaches, there existed a culture of support across the district. Specifically, she articulated, "Teachers build those leaders, leaders can go to coaches, coaches can go to the District and we just have that scaffolding of support." A literacy leader explained that this school year, there was a lot of forward movement. Change takes time, but teachers adapted to the new way of doing things.

Part of the success of the teacher leadership model came from making sure that the literacy leaders felt confident and ready to support the teachers before opening up their classrooms for others to observe. A building-level administrator shared that the literacy leaders' excitement translated to the rest of her grade-level team in her building. She described,

We're very fortunate because we have two literacy leaders in our building and I see that those teams are really growing because in second grade, with the literacy leader being in there, she brings back the information, but then she's also a leader in her group. And I'm seeing the excitement that she sees just translate to her team members and then that goes to the students. So I just really think that the drive where it's someone who's doing it on a daily basis driving the team has been very, very... it's awesome, it's awesome to see that.
The team level excitement was then transferred to the students, which improved student achievement and positively impacted school culture. According to one of the instructional coaches, having a literacy leader in as many buildings and grade levels as possible was a good start to improving teaching and learning across the district. In her building, working side-by-side with the literacy leader had made the support of the teachers and the classrooms stronger. An instructional coach revealed that the model classroom worked so well in the School District because it had become a part of the school culture and district-level expectations. The model classroom made the professional development appear attainable, as shortly after teachers learned a new technique, they were able to see it in action. This took away the "it won't work in my classroom" mindset of the teachers. A district-level administrator shared that one of the biggest strengths of the teacher leadership model was that it was an excellent way to build leaders in the district, not just good teachers.

According to a district-level administrator, collaboration represents a core belief of the School District, alongside the understanding that "this job is too important to do by yourself." The model classroom fosters this sense of collaboration as it zeros in on what teachers are supposed to be doing every day, teaching and taking care of their students. A district-level administrator explained that in some buildings within the district, the model classroom was “a well-oiled machine; it was routine, a regular occurrence.” She explained, “there is support from the coaches, the follow up, and then an expectation to see those things in the classroom, in the classroom of the teacher who came to observe.” The main difference between traditional professional development and this form of professional development was that teacher learning occurred on-site instead of utilizing a sit-and-get approach. An instructional coach explained,
I think we're trying to build capacity with teachers and letting them feel confident and combing their crafts so that will work towards students, and our work is a lot, working with teachers and learning something, and then they go apply it in their classroom. Through the teacher leadership model, the district was building the confidence and capacity of the teachers and teacher leaders for the benefit of the students. A district-level administrator explained that from her perspective, the teacher leadership model was a cultural shift across the district that impacted vital principles of operation, including communication, collaboration, accountability, and expectations. A district-level administrator explained that there had been a shift in the culture of the district in how the adults (teachers) learn, and in turn, how they present instruction. There was transparency, communication, collaboration, and respect in the current school environment. The collaboration and communication extended beyond grade-level teams across the school and the district, which helped build relationships among teachers and teacher leaders. The teacher leadership model removed the ability for teachers to make excuses regarding the application of techniques saying,

It gives the teachers a practical model, to see the instruction. It's one thing for me to tell you how to do it and if they say to me, 'Well did you do it that way?' Well, I taught special ed so I can tell you one thing but do another, and I think this way they're seeing, at least in my building, the best teachers in my building, there's no more excuses. They're doing it, you can do it too.

They had access to see the literacy leader enact the teaching strategy in the model classroom, and they had access to an instructional coach to bounce ideas and questions off of or request in-classroom support. There was no more "I can't do that with my kids" or "That won't work in my room." In her first year in a new building, a building-level administrator described how she
shifted the culture surrounding visits to the model classroom. She shifted the scheduling and communication responsibility for visits to the model classroom to the instructional coach to take away the negative or punitive spin. Separating this took away the top-down evaluator approach and helped increase buy-in and relieve teacher anxiety. This embraced the goal of the model classroom, which was teacher growth.

**Research Question 2: How does student presence during teacher professional development contribute to the district’s efforts to improve teaching and learning?**

The teacher leadership model created a culture where there was a mutual understanding that learning is a process. Teachers are continuously growing and constantly refining their practice. A literacy leader explained that a growth mindset is necessary in the field of education; it is natural to make mistakes and being able to persevere past the mistake and grow is what is important. Being comfortable with making a mistake in front of a peer observer was essential in the model classroom. Seeing that mistakes are okay, that “we're not in this perfect bubble”, helps the teachers to grow and be more confident. It was real life; everyone had off days, no one was perfect all the time. An instructional coach explained that her work drastically improved since they added a literacy leader in their building. Before the literacy leader role, there was a lack of authenticity. Before, she was able to train the teachers and tell them what they needed to do to improve their practice, but there was no one to demonstrate the new strategies in an authentic way. The instructional coach modeling a lesson in a teacher's classroom was not quite the same; she did not have the relationships and routines established with the students. With the new approach, she now works with the literacy leader to train and then support the teachers during and after a model classroom visit. She shared her experience saying,
I think between the coaches and Literacy Leaders together, I think that's one of the big pieces. Like I said, they provide that opportunity for the coaching to be even more powerful, I really feel like because of that model classroom. When I go in, and I do a model lesson in a classroom it's hard for it to be a hundred percent authentic. Those aren't my students, I don't have that relationship with them, with everybody in the building. You know, with all of the kids. So it's very different than if it they were my kids, and it's my classroom to do that with. So going in to a Literacy Leader where it is her classroom, it is her students that she works with continually, you can see that authenticity in the lesson. When I go in it's going to be a little stretched because I don't know the kids as well, but I can help the teacher with her own students. And I think my doing the co-teaching with the teacher where I'm prompting her and coaching her along, when she's working with her students, I think that's really where it helps out. I think the two together make for the perfect blend of coaching and Literacy Leaders together.

Often, after visiting the model classroom, teachers became more open and honest about their struggles and where they needed support, which gave the instructional coach a solid starting point. The instructional coach was then able to continue helping the teacher develop professionally through more observations of the model classroom, co-planning, co-teaching, or simply providing resources. After all, the teacher leadership model provided teachers with the opportunity to engage in continuous learning and support.

The teacher leadership model helped build up the school community positively with a "we're all in this together" attitude and a feeling of mutual respect and helpfulness. There has been massive growth across the teams with a literacy leader; their collaborative work as a team has been positive. The instructional coaches worked closely with teachers that request their help
or were observed to be struggling by an administrator. Through the coaching cycle—modeling/co-teaching/co-planning, debrief, review of student performance, revise, repeat—the instructional coach helped the teachers improve their practice with the student performance at the heart of measuring success. A literacy leader conveyed that the instructional coaches worked with the teachers to guide them. They did not tell the teachers what to do but rather acted as a growth partner, guiding them as they developed into reflective practitioners and problem-solvers. One example of this was recorded in the field notes during an observation of a model classroom. The researcher captured the excitement of an observing teacher as she communicated with the instructional coach:

- "I would love to be able to do all this…,
- "I should be able to do all this…," and
- "Can I come watch her teach every morning before I teach?"

Throughout the lesson, the observing teacher was able to ask the instructional coach questions about differentiation, managing students, and her concerns about how to recreate a similar lesson in her classroom. In real-time, the instructional coach was able to break down the teacher's actions to help the observing teacher better understand the teaching strategy. After the lesson, the literacy leader explained that she always tried to showcase as much of the new strategies, in this case the reading model, as possible when she was observed. She recognized that this was what the teachers were most often coming in to see. An instructional coach revealed that the “biggest takeaway is time and pacing, I have heard it from several teacher, but I think this was a perfect lay out.” Similarly, a literacy leader who was observed by all 17 of the teachers in her building recounted that teachers have told her the quick takeaways are timing and differentiation. Teachers were able to see the learning in action through modeling. When accompanied by the
instructional coach on a visit, they could discuss how to translate what they were observing into their practice in real-time.

The teacher leadership model raised the expectations within the classroom and increased the level of rigor. Even in the primary grades, the bar had been raised, and the students were able to achieve at a higher level. This sparked new excitement across the district and pride in the students and schools. To build a positive culture across the school and develop a shared dialogue, a building-level administrator explained that she requires all teachers—strong, weak, new, veteran—to visit the model classroom at least once. She strategically scheduled the teachers who were doing well to attend first to remove the stigma and then integrated teachers in need of support and change in practice after the excitement of what could be learned began to spread. She described,

"It's really been a powerful thing this year. I'm not naïve enough to think that every year it's going to be that easy. It has really been a cool thing. It's kind of spread not like a wild fire necessarily, but it's definitely, it took away that feeling of stigma for going to a classroom by making everybody go, no matter your strong, or weak, or new, or old, or seasoned they like you to say, everybody went. That's so we could have that common dialogue. It's just set a tone that we're going to learn from each other, and we know that's how you guys want to learn. We use the state, the Tennessee State Teacher's Survey, to gather some of that data that supported that decision too. I could put up in front of them, ‘Hey, when you guys completed the survey last year ...’, similar to what you said, ‘you guys are telling me you'd rather learn from each other than some Sage on the Stage I bring in from wherever.’"
This process helped set the tone which was evident in the data from the most recent teacher's survey. One literacy leader expressed that the teacher leadership model helped the teachers enhance their craft and improve the school and, therefore, the district. The consistency across the schools in the district had been great, especially for students that transferred schools within the district. An instructional coach stated:

It's really powerful to see teachers learning from teachers and the buy-in that they get because one of their coworkers is delivering the message. It's not just central office or instructional coaches. It's somebody in the field with them doing the same thing. Living the exact same struggles that they are, and they can buy into it.

The teacher leadership model, specifically the model classroom, eliminated the teacher's ability to use the "I can't do that" excuse. Now they had access to observe the new teaching strategies in action in the literacy leader's classroom. If, after observing the strategies in the model classroom, they were struggling with implementing the new practice, the teacher could invite the instructional coach into their classroom to model the strategy for them. This access has strengthened the teachers' instruction across the building.

A result of the teacher leadership model may be the ability to retain teachers that were interested in holding leadership roles. With the teacher leadership model in place, a teacher that was interested in advancing themself may elect to remain in the district and apply for a literacy leader role, then possibly later, an instructional coach role. Whereas, without this opportunity, a teacher seeking a leadership role may have looked to other districts. Another building-level administrator described that she also used the model classroom and peer observations to build relationships among teachers, increase collaboration, and improve school culture. She expressed that as a result, there had been powerful conversations about the flow of the curriculum, both
horizontally and vertically. During a group interview with the instructional coaches, it was uncovered that the literacy leader role in the teacher leadership model was one of the utmost importance. They served as the connection between what we believe should happen and what was actually happening concerning classroom instruction. A district-level administrator felt the most valuable support to the literacy leader was the instructional coach. The instructional coach helped the literacy leader "make sure the model classroom is to the level it needs to be."

Additionally, the instructional coach provided the literacy leaders with the new training and supported them as they trained the rest of the teachers. One literacy leader expressed that the teacher leadership model was very authentic, and she hoped it would continue to grow.

**Theme 3: Challenges of the Teacher Leadership Model**

The third theme that emerged from the data was the challenges of the teacher leadership model across the School District. As with any initiative, small or big, challenges are always to be expected. The challenge theme aligns to all three research questions posed in this study:

1. How are teacher and teacher leader's perception of effective practice and motivation to change impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?

2. How does student presence during teacher professional development contribute to the district's efforts to improve teaching and learning?

3. What organizational challenges arise as a result of implementing teacher professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?

Excerpts that contained the keywords challenge, negative, growth, difficulty, and hard were coded with the challenge theme and other phrases that inferred these keywords. This section will
discuss the findings from this study that align to the theme of challenges with the related research question.

*Research Question 1: How are teacher and teacher leader’s perception of effective practice and motivation to change practice impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?*

The teacher leadership model motivated many teachers to change practice as they were able to experience effective teaching in real-time. However, other teachers had not yet bought into the benefits of the model. Even after observing a model classroom, some teachers continued to maintain the mindset that it "won't work in my classroom with my students." An instructional coach explained that when they had teachers that react like this, they offered to model or co-teach with their students in their classroom. This even occurred in schools where literacy leaders were present in the grade level they taught. Such teachers' skepticism regarding their inability to incorporate the techniques observed in the model classroom into their practice presented a difficult hurdle for the teacher leaders and school leadership team to overcome.

*Research Question 2: How does student presence during teacher professional development contribute to the district’s efforts to improve teaching and learning?*

In an ideal world, all teachers would be able to visit a model classroom in their grade level to observe a model lesson on the topics and skills they need support with at that time. This would then translate into the teacher being able to modify their practice to align with what they just observed, which would result in improved student learning. However, this is not always the case. One of the challenges for the teacher leadership that was uncovered during this study was the ability to support the necessary resources to sustain the model. Even with this model, some
teachers still used the excuse that they were not as far along as their peers because they did not have a literacy leader in their grade level. An instructional coach shared,

I know in one of my grade levels they'll always use that as their excuse, so we're not as far because we don't have a literacy leader. So it's like they're holding out a little bit or they left that be their reason. I think they're like, "We want one too," so where it's in bands, I would like to see grow.

A participant expressed disappointment that she was not able to observe a model classroom for her grade level in her building. She shared,

And I think it's probably about logistics and timing. You've got one literacy leader for x number of teachers and you've gotta get them all so they schedule it for one day. So they slam it all in. And you have these time slots. I have not, and this is my third observation, because I've seen a second grade and a kindergarten teacher. And again, there's just such a difference. And first grade is very hard to kind of find a balance between observing kindergarten at first and a second grade teacher because first grade is its own little entity. It's just its own set of standards and it's very rigorous, like we said earlier, from what they came from kindergarten and that's one of the things I had specifically requested is to go to another school in Robertson County to see a first grade teacher literacy leader. Hasn't happened yet and I'm hoping that does soon. But I've signed up to see specific things.

Although she had been in to the available literacy leaders, there was a distinct difference across the grade levels to first grade. Not having a literacy leader in every grade level in every building added a challenge for teachers to access the valued support that was directly aligned to the best practices they learned during their teacher professional development and were expected to implement.
Unfortunately, resources are not endless, especially human resources. The lack of human resources impacted the school district through an inability to staff all buildings with a full-time instructional coach and adequate grade-level literacy leaders. Although the district was working to support and increase available resources, this took time and funding. When a resource was available for addition to a school, there was a slight delay in getting up-to-speed. Specifically, in schools where an instructional coach role had not been established for some time, it took longer for the instructional coach to build relationships with the teachers. The instructional coach expressed,

The school had not had a literacy coach for a while before I got there so there was a lot of relationship building that had to go into my work there at the first couple of years. It's been a slower process just to get the trust built, that I'm not someone evaluating them. I'm not a spy for administration. Coming in watching you to go tell on you, they got to be comfortable with that and if that takes a little bit of time and an investment in them understanding I'm truly there for you. I'm not there to go behind your back.

The instructional coach explained that she needed to help the teachers feel comfortable with her and trust her before she could impact change. In some cases, she had to overcome the teachers' hesitancy to trust that she was there only to support them, not to spy for administration or to evaluate them. Additionally, some schools had a part-time instructional coach. This added a layer of difficulty in supporting teachers during the model classroom visits and the follow-up coaching conversations as the instructional coach was not always available. The field notes showed that the level of guidance during the model classroom visits varied by instructional coach. The original researcher included in the notes the comment, “I am wondering if these visits are different if the instructional coach is there or not – both for accountability, and to help them
focus what to look at/for” after recording the repeated off-task behavior of the observing teacher. Some instructional coaches interacted with the observing teacher frequently—coaching as they observed, while others stayed on the other side of the classroom with no interaction between themselves and the observing teacher. Still, other instructional coaches did not accompany the observing teacher at all. During an observation of a model classroom where the instructional coach did not accompany the observing teacher, the field notes described the observing teacher as being less attentive than other observing teachers. The field notes referenced the teacher used his phone six times during the model classroom visit, questioning if the observing teacher behaved in this manner because there was no instructional coach to hold him accountable or if he would have behaved this way with them present. This was evidence that not all observing teachers take the model classroom visits as seriously as intended. In fact, the researcher commented in the field notes that "just because teachers visit other teacher's classrooms, doesn't mean their professional learning is being enhanced."

Research Question 3: What organizational challenges arise as result of implementing teacher professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?

Three main organizational challenges were uncovered in the teacher leadership model: Scheduling, Resources, and Curriculum.

Scheduling. Scheduling teachers to observe the model classroom was difficult. In some cases, teachers were scheduled to observe, but the lesson that the literacy leader was implementing was not what the teacher was hoping to observe. One case described by a teacher was that neither of her observations of the model classroom was of what she was hoping to see in practice—centers and the transition to work with small groups while centers are taking place. Another teacher recounted that she has been in to observe the model classroom twice, and during
both observations, the literacy leader was doing a whole group lesson, yet she needed to see a small group lesson. She expressed disappointment in this, as each time she visited the model classroom, it was time out of her class where her students lost her as their instructor. She commented,

Yeah I've seen the same thing twice. I've seen whole group twice. I've seen whole group, I want to see small group. And I lose my whole group instruction, that's okay. But I've wasted all day. I had done nothing of what I was supposed to do.

Likewise, a fourth grade teacher participant expressed similar disappointment in her visits. She shared,

I'm just saying when we signed up for it, especially the first one, I specifically wrote small group. But then I saw a whole group and maybe like five minutes of small group, and I was like ‘I need more help on small group than whole group.’ Whole group, I can kinda figure out. Small group, I'm like... and then I saw whole group today, which, when I signed up, because I'm pretty sure we signed up for this one too, I can't remember what other time, because in my head, I went at this point I wanna see it all.

Although she did get to see approximately five minutes of a small group lesson, however since that was the area where she was looking for support and modeling, this felt inadequate.

From an administrator's perspective, it was a challenge to cover teachers so that they could visit the model classroom. An administrator explained,

I think that the biggest challenge I thought was making sure that we were able to get coverage, so that the other teachers could come in and see the model classroom because of the way we have 7 in each grade level, and they all have common planning, so it was really hard to make sure that all those pieces fit together, so that they can get in there. But
the district did help us there and provided us someone that could be in the building to try to help.

In each building, there was a limited number of literacy leaders (at most one per grade level), and there were at least three times as many teachers in each grade level. Although some schools were doing an adequate job scheduling their teachers and providing the follow-up with the instructional coach, there were other schools that struggled to figure out the coverage; not all buildings had building substitutes to help alleviate the strain caused by this coverage or were able to use the counselors to help with coverage. A participant explained,

I think the model classroom continues to be a challenge. I think there are some schools who are doing a really effective job at scheduling that and following up and there is a coach in the building, but number one if you don't have a full time coach in your building to provide that support, maybe the administrator might be new or maybe just doesn't completely understand the importance of this model, that might not be a top priority for them to schedule coverage for classrooms.

The administrators expressed that they "would love to have [each teacher observe] once every nine weeks, but the challenge is coverage."

**Resources.** As with all great things in education, one needs to have adequate resources to make the school run. In the case of teacher leadership, one resource that was tight was funding. Since the program had become successful, there were constant requests to expand the program to position a literacy leader in each grade level in every building at the elementary level and expand the program to the middle and high school level. In the current model, each literacy leader received a modest stipend of $2,000 for their work throughout the year. Increasing the number of literacy leaders at this price raised concerns regarding sustainment. Furthermore, an
an administrator expressed another challenge was the absence of a full-time instructional coach. This limited their ability to fully utilize the teacher leadership model as the follow-up piece must occur with the instructional coach, who was not in the building every day. On the flip side, even for schools with a full-time coach, the ability to support all teachers can be trying for larger buildings.

**Curriculum.** A challenge for district-level administration was keeping the program "fresh" to maintain interest from current and potential teacher leaders. At this time, the content came top-down from the state department. They set goals for the year through the Read to Be Ready initiative, and they provided the initial training. If the state shifts gears, changing the focus away from literacy at the elementary level may become a challenge to determine the curriculum and focus.

**Summary of Results**

*Research Question 1: How are teacher and teacher leader's perception of effective practice and motivation to change practice impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?*

Teachers and teacher leaders who participated in this study showed an overall positive change in their understanding of effective practices and their motivation to shift their practice to align with more effective practices. Through the use of the model classroom, the School District transformed the culture of the district with increased collaboration, ongoing professional learning, and continuous access to the resident experts (the literacy leaders and instructional coaches). With the learning embedded in their daily lives, teachers showed a greater interest in improving their professional practice and expressed an overall appreciation for the support available to them. This support increased teacher motivation resulting in positive changes in
teacher practice, increased expectations for both themselves as teachers and their students, and
improved student learning and achievement. The model classroom provided a safe space for the
learner to experience the new teaching strategies in a classroom full of students. This ultimately
made the changes realistic and achievable while restoring the teachers' passion for learning and
teaching. By investing in the teachers, the teacher leadership model established a more robust
culture of learning and collaboration, which inspired change and improved teaching and learning.

Additionally, the model classroom helped build the literacy leaders' and instructional
coaches' capacity and confidence, growing their practice. The literacy leaders were motivated to
do their best each day to help the other teachers, guiding them as they observed how to
implement the new strategies in their own classroom. Likewise, the teacher leadership model set
the stage for the instructional coaches to work with the teachers, working side-by-side with the
literacy leader to support them as they worked to improve their classroom practices. This shared
motivation to achieve excellence shifted the school culture and climate better with supportive
relationships, a welcoming environment, and growth-focused collaborations. Working together,
the teacher, literacy leader, and instructional coach added to the family feel recognizing that
educating children is too important to carry out in isolation. The excitement and passion that the
teacher leaders exhibited inspired the rest of the teachers, causing a ripple effect of change in
practice which showed in the students' level of achievement.

Although the district worked each year to improve the teacher leadership model using the
feedback collected from teachers, teacher leaders, and administration, the model is still not
perfected. Resistance from some teachers still exists as they have not yet bought into the benefits
of the model classroom. Those who are resistant still employ the mindset that what they observe
in practice in the model classroom will not work in their classroom with their students. This is a
difficult hurdle for the teacher leaders and administration to overcome. However, the district reports that each year they adjust the model based on feedback they received which should support continued growth.

Research Question 2: How does student presence during teacher professional development contribute to the district's efforts to improve teaching and learning?

Throughout this study, it was evident that bringing to life the best practices from the teacher professional development through the model classroom resulted in positive shifts in both teachers' and teacher leaders' practice. Student presence during teacher professional development positively contributed to the district's efforts to improve teaching, which directly influence student learning. Providing teachers with daily access to see effective teaching in action with students present created a safe place for teachers to reflect and grow their practice which resulted in higher levels of teacher effectiveness. This constant access strengthened the instructional practices across the district. The model classroom helped grow students as well as teachers and teacher leaders. By changing the teachers' practice, their ability to reach the students and personalize learning through differentiation was also strengthened. Student engagement was higher, causing a ripple effect in student achievement across the district. The School District empowered their teachers through increased support and confidence-raising interactions, which resulted in a stronger school community composed of more effective teaching professionals. With the mutual understanding that learning is a process, the teachers became more transparent with the instructional coaches and literacy leaders about their struggles, opening the door for professional growth. The district's efforts to improve teaching and learning with the teacher leadership model supported the exponential growth of the teachers and teacher leaders, student learning, and the culture of the district.
There is still some room for improvement, however. There were fewer literacy leaders in some buildings than others, which caused some teachers to feel as though they were further behind their colleagues in terms of professional growth. Without regular access to observe a literacy leader in their grade level, teachers are without continuous access to the valued support directly aligned to the learning from teacher professional development days. Although the district did have options for teachers without an in-building literacy leader within their grade level to visit another building, this process took time to schedule. Likewise, not every building has a full-time instructional coach. This added a layer of difficulty in supporting all teachers during their visits. Some teachers needed to be held accountable while visiting a model classroom and without the support of an instructional coach in some scenarios these teachers were less attentive or even off-task. As the district works to improve its teacher leadership model, increasing the human resources available to support teacher learning will help strengthen the model and continue to increase changes in practice and learning.

Research Question 3: What organizational challenges arise as result of implementing teacher professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?

Three organizational challenges arose in the implementation of teacher professional development in the presence of students: Scheduling, Resources, and Curriculum. All three of these challenges caused strain in different ways. Scheduling was the challenge most discussed by teachers, teacher leaders, and all levels of administration. From the teacher's perspective, it was frustrating to be scheduled to observe a lesson in the model classroom that did not align with what they had requested to observe. The teachers seemed to understand that the scheduling process was complex and that those responsible for creating the schedule (the building level administration and instructional coaches) were doing the best they could, but nevertheless, not
being able to observe a lesson on something they needed support with was viewed by the teachers as "a waste" of their time and a loss to their students learning. The challenge from the administrative perspective was more logistical. It was like a giant puzzle, trying to cover the teachers to visit the model classroom with limited or no substitutes. Some buildings were able to be creative with their human resources, using their school counselors or other staff members to help, but not all had the same availability within their staff to support this work. Beyond human resources, another challenge uncovered during this study was financial resources. Although the literacy leaders received a modest stipend of $2,000 per year, the sustainability and expansion of this model may not be possible. The most common request when asked how to improve the model was to increase the number of literacy leaders and instructional coaches across the district. However, increasing the number of individuals that receive this stipend may not be sustainable. Lastly, keeping the curriculum fresh and relevant was a challenge expressed by the district-level administration. Currently, the curriculum is developed at the state level. However, this is not expected to last forever. The challenge then lies in determining a new focus and curriculum after the state concludes the Read to Be Ready initiative.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of the Study

In the current Information Age, there is a need for a shift in how schools prepare and support their teachers (Collins & Halverson, 2018; Huitt, 1999; Jaquith et al., 2010). Teachers are expected to provide students with learning that is meaningful and connected to real-life, yet they themselves are rarely offered this sort of support (Iucu & Marin, 2014). Most teacher professional development opportunities occur outside of the regular school day, disconnected from the classroom (Gulamhussein, 2013; Krasnoff, 2014; Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019). This removed approach to teacher professional development often yields poor results in changing teacher practice to align with effective pedagogical strategies and improve student learning (Wei et al., 2010). Adults, specifically teachers, learn best when there is a balance between theory and examination of practice; when they are afforded opportunities to focus on the actual work with students in their classroom in an ongoing fashion (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Borko et al., 2010; Patton et al., 2015; Zuljan, 2018).

As an extension of a national study on teacher leadership, this qualitative case study reanalyzes a subset of the original data to examine how student presence in teacher professional development influences teachers, teacher leaders, and the school organization (Berg et al., 2019). This study specifically hones-in on teacher perception of effective practice, motivation to change practice, and the school district’s efforts to improve teaching and learning. As a foundation for this study, the researcher considered the different learning theories that exist and how these learning theories support different styles of teacher professional development (Figure 10).
**Adult Learning Theory**

Incorporates the teacher’s past experiences and beliefs into the learning process, recognizing the need for the teacher to find immediate value in the learning, bridging the way the teacher is currently teaching to the research-based best practices that are the focus of the teacher professional development.

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<td>Learner-centered with a focus on active learning</td>
<td>Allows the teacher to see instructional practices in action</td>
<td>A community of learners where the teacher engages in activities to deepen learning through learner-centered activities</td>
<td>Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), Collaborative Peer Groups, the Jigsaw Model, and Model Classrooms</td>
<td>Engages the teacher in a learning task, assessment, observation, and reflection to reinforce connections and exposes the teacher to high-quality instruction</td>
<td>Lesson studies and learning walks</td>
<td>Teacher-centered and focused on measurable changes that result from interactions within the environment</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Workshops, conferences, courses disconnected from the classroom, lecture-style, one-stop-one-size-fits-all events</td>
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By extending the Constructivist Learning Theory of Social Presence Theory and the ideas shared by Margolis et al. (2016), this study provides insight into the influence student presence in teacher professional development has on changing teacher practice (Bickle et al., 2019; Cui et al., 2013; Lowenthal, 2010; Margolis et al., 2016). The researcher focuses on the top tier of Margolis et al.’s (2016) Student Presence and Learning Theory Model (highlighted in Figure 11) to determine if embedding the teachers learning in the classroom with the students present influences change efforts.

**Figure 11**

*Highlighted Focus Area of the Student Presence and Learning Theory Model (Margolis et al., 2016, p. 7).*
Teacher professional development aligned to Social Presence Theory, with students present in the classroom while the teachers are learning, is not a common research topic to date. This study adds to the limited research on teacher professional development in the presence of students, providing qualitative evidence of its influence on teachers, teacher leaders, and the district. The results from this study will support school leaders and designers of teacher professional development as they create effective teacher professional development intended to change teacher practice and improve student learning. District leaders will also find the results helpful when grounding recommendations for change initiatives and teacher professional development decisions in research. This chapter will describe the influence teacher professional development in the presence of students had on teachers, teacher leaders, and the district in this study and make recommendations for practice and future research.

**Conclusion of the Study**

In light of the literature, this study looks across the themes of success, culture and collaboration, and challenges to answer three research questions:

1) How are teacher and teacher leader’s perception of effective practice and motivation to change practice impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?

2) How does student presence during teacher professional development contribute to the district’s efforts to improve teaching and learning?

3) What organizational challenges arise as result of implementing teacher professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom?

The answers to each of these research questions adds to the literature on effective teacher professional development as little exists on teacher professional development in the presence of
students. The conceptual framework developed for this study was guided by Margolis et al.’s (2016) Student Presence and Learning Theory Model, the research questions, and the themes identified during the data analysis phase. In the following sections, the researcher will discuss the findings and implications aligned with each research question while also considering the study’s limitations.

**How teacher and teacher leader’s perception of effective practice and motivation to change practice are impacted by professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom.**

Embedding teacher professional learning in the day-to-day lives of the teachers provides them with the opportunity to observe effective practice in action, reinforcing effective teaching practices. The district’s approach to involve teachers at every level of professional learning (design, implementation, and ongoing support) positively influenced the teachers’ self-belief of the ability to perform the new styles of teaching (Canli & Karadağ, 2021; Han & Yin, 2016; Thoonen et al., 2011). In fact, most of the teachers and teacher leaders who participated in this study expressed a motivation to change their practice to align with more effective practices. Teacher motivation is one of the most important factors that affect the quality of education and can be thought of as the lifeline of teaching practice and growth (Gobena, 2020; Yildiz et al., 2021). This supports the notion that effective teacher professional development should engage a teacher’s motivation and determination to integrate new strategies, strengthening the professional as a whole (Casey, 2018). For most of the participants, change became attainable and practical through the model classroom as the vision and goals of teacher learning became clearer after seeing it in action (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Borko et al., 2010). The overall culture of the district shifted to embrace collaboration, raise expectations shared by the school community, and extend
an atmosphere of continuous learning. This shift is arguably one of the most crucial factors necessary to change teacher practice (Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019). Teachers were provided with learning opportunities centered on pedagogical practices connected to their daily classroom needs.

The collaborative and supportive culture along with the constant access to the literacy leaders and instructional coaches prompted a change in most teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, motivation, and, ultimately, practices. According to Katz & Shahar (2015), motivation is directly impacted by emotions and beliefs; one’s emotions and beliefs effect one’s attitude. Therefore, it is understandable that some participants may have had a different perception of the model if they did not share the same beliefs or have the same emotional connection to the work. Research participants shared that not all of their colleagues perceived the same advantages of the teacher professional development model. Participants expressed that some teachers, none that elected to participate in the study, still expressed a fixed mindset with skepticism towards the model. Although it was reported by participants that these individuals were in the minority, it is appropriate to point out that there is still work to do in supporting teachers, shifting mindsets, and improving the culture.

Implications for Practice. Providing teachers with a supportive environment where they can see effective teaching practices in action has been shown, through this study, to improve teachers’ perception and understanding of effective teaching. Likewise, providing teachers with access to this daily has revealed an increase in the teachers’ motivation to change practice to align with effective teaching practices. Therefore, school leaders should increase teachers’ access to observe effective teaching with students present. As shown in this study, this is likely to
increase the teachers’ understanding and perception of effective practices and intensify their motivation to shift their practice to align.

Limitations. It is important to point out that the participants in this study were volunteers and did not include all staff members. Therefore, there is no way to determine if the individuals who chose not to participate in the study experienced the same positive effects as reported by the study’s participants. When considering the results of this study, one must consider that individuals that did not find this method of teacher professional development valuable may have elected not to participate.

How student presence during teacher professional development contributes to the district’s efforts to improve teaching and learning.

Overall, this study shows that student presence during teacher professional development positively contributes to the district’s efforts to improve teaching, directly correlating to student learning. By bringing to life the teacher professional development through the model classroom, a shift in teacher practice occurs. Teachers are provided with live examples of how to refine pedagogical approaches in alignment with best practices. The increase in student achievement growth in this study is credited to the change in teacher practice. The change in teacher practice resulted from access to the model classroom as it fostered skillful teaching through continuous professional learning. Taking the unknown out of how to implement new teaching strategies, the model classroom allows teachers to link their learning to their practice. These results further support the existing research that teacher practice and student outcomes improve through well-designed collaborative teacher professional development aligned to the skills necessary to be successful in an ever-changing educational system (Casey, 2018; Crawford & Jenkins, 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Meijs et al., 2016; Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019).
Even though the participants expressed mostly positive results themselves, some participants explained that not all experiences with the teacher professional development model were consistent. It was described that the variance of human resources across buildings resulted in a variance in the level of improvement in teacher practices. Specifically, the teachers within schools that did not have a literacy leader in each grade level and at least one full-time instructional coach expressed that they were not as far along as their colleagues in schools that did have these resources. In alignment with this thought, the field notes showed that schools that did not have the highest levels of resources contained some teachers that may not have taken the experience of the model classroom as seriously as it was intended to be taken. This lack of buy-in from the teachers may be responsible for the less significant improvements in practice. However, without full participation of the staff in the study it is not possible to confirm this conjecture.

**Implications for Practice.** This study shows that providing teachers with ongoing, collaborative, teacher professional development in the presence of students and aligned to the vision of the district improves teaching and learning, when given the appropriate resources. School leaders should provide teachers with professional learning that empowers the teachers to change practice to align with effective teaching practices and improve student learning. Providing teachers with job-embedded professional learning, like the model classroom format used in this study, is likely to result in a stronger community of learners.

**Limitations.** Once again, it must be clarified that not all members of the district participated in the study. Rather, the participants were teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators that volunteered to participate. Therefore, it is not possible to say how those who elected not to participate were influenced by teacher professional development in the presence of
students. Additionally, not all schools had the same level of resources. Some schools had a literacy leader in each grade level with a full-time instructional coach, whereas others did not. This resulted in some variation when considering the level of support around the model classroom visits and the effectiveness of the model.

The organizational challenges that arise as result of implementing teacher professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom.

This study uncovered three organizational challenges that arose as a result of implementing teacher professional development in the presence of students through a model classroom: Scheduling, Resources, and Curriculum. Although these challenges are not uncommon across most school initiatives, those looking to implement student presence-based teacher professional development should attend to these challenges in the development phase. A suggestion to overcome these challenges in future studies is discussed in the limitations section.

In this study, scheduling caused the most significant strain across the organization, impacting teachers, teacher leaders, and administration. The study revealed that it was challenging to develop a schedule where the teacher’s observation time aligned with the requested type of lesson in the model classroom. When requesting a visit to the model classroom, teachers expressed specific strategies or techniques that they needed support with or would like to observe. Unfortunately, the observation schedule did not always ensure the literacy leader was implementing the requested technique when the teacher was scheduled to observe.

Likewise, due to a lack of human resources, finding coverage for the teachers observing the model classroom was a challenge. Although there were 25 literacy leaders in the district at the time of this study, there were multiple requests for the district to expand this human resource to include a literacy leader in every grade level in each elementary building. However, if the
district were to expand in this manner, there would need to be 53 literacy leaders. Since the literacy leaders were selected from a pool of applicants, this expansion would require that more teachers apply. Additionally, it would increase the cost to the district by $56,000 (a $2,000 stipend for each additional literacy leader), which would be a financial challenge.

There was also the matter of keeping the content and curriculum relevant. The current focus across the district came from the state’s Read to Be Ready initiative. However, when this initiative concludes, the state will no longer be supplying curriculum and training. The district will need to develop the curricular materials, opening a new challenge. However, this new challenge may inspire the district leaders to personalize the teacher learning.

Implications for Practice. Teacher professional development in the presence of students has been shown, through this study, to be impactful to teachers, teacher leaders, and district change efforts. However, this model of teacher professional development is not without challenges. School leaders should provide teachers with access to teacher professional development embedded in the school day. This study has shown that using a model classroom to support teacher learning results in positive outcomes. In planning for teacher professional development in the presence of students, school leaders must account for the challenge of scheduling. One way to do this is to ensure sufficient human resources needed to implement the model classroom appropriately. With adequate human resources, the challenging and important task of creating the schedule for the model classroom could be overcome. With enough human resources, the scheduler could thoughtfully align the time of each observation with the teacher’s desired content. Likewise, school leaders should also ensure adequate financial resources are available to fund the initiative. This includes supporting the staffing model as well as the
curriculum for the duration of the model. One way to overcome these challenges is to obtain grant funding and support as shared in the limitations.

Limitations. As identified, Scheduling, Resources, and Curriculum are the three challenges uncovered in this study. One avenue to pursue if trying to prevent these challenges is to obtain grant funding. Grant funding could allow for an increase in human resources, alleviating the scheduling concerns. Additionally, grant funding could allow for the literacy leader stipend to be increased to a more competitive rate, motivating additional staff members to apply for literacy leader positions. Lastly, grant funding could provide funds for advanced planning of curriculum.

Conclusions Summary

Overall, the outcomes of this study show that effective teacher professional development in the presence of students positively influences teachers’ perception of effective teaching practices and their motivation to change practice to align with effective teaching practices. Additionally, having students present during teacher professional development supports the district’s efforts to improve teaching and learning. Connecting the learning to the classroom with students present increased the participating teachers motivation to adjust their practices, as they could see the strategies in action.

However, implementing this style of teacher professional development requires a shift in both the structure and culture of the school. In this study, the shift benefited the school community by increasing the collaborative nature of the teaching staff including the teacher leaders. This shift also allowed all teachers have access to on-going support through the model classroom with access to the literacy leaders and instructional coaches. As shown in Figure 12 below, the teacher leadership model implemented throughout this study provides a concrete
example of effective teacher professional development as it meets the outlined characteristics described in Chapter 1.
Teacher Professional Development in this Study Aligned to the Characteristics of Effective Teacher Professional Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus on content</th>
<th>• The focus of teacher professional development was literacy (supported by the state's Read to Be Ready initiative).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate active learning</td>
<td>• The teacher professional development included model classroom observations, engaging in optional coaching cycles with the instructional coach, and collaborate PLC meetings and professional learning days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support collaboration</td>
<td>• Observing the model classroom with the instructional coach supported collaboration between the observer, the literacy leader, and the instructional coach. Teachers also engaged in collaborative PLC meetings and professional learning days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model effective practices</td>
<td>• Teachers observed the literacy leaders as they modeled effective practices in the model classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide coaching support</td>
<td>• The instructional coaches provided coaching support to any teacher that requested or was identified as needing additional support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer feedback and reflection</td>
<td>• The instructional coach attended most model classroom observations with the teacher and engaged in reflective conversations and provided feedback. The form completed by the teacher during the model classroom visits also required self-reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing and of a sustained duration</td>
<td>• The teachers had the opportunity to engage in the teacher professional development through the model classroom all school year. The PLC meetings and professional development days were scheduled through the school year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear vision aligned with policy and practice</td>
<td>• The vision for the teacher professional development was established and supported at the district level and aligned to the state and district policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Align to standards</td>
<td>• The teacher professional development was aligned at the state level to the literacy standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-driven</td>
<td>• Teacher leaders (instructional coaches and literacy leaders) developed and implemented the teacher professional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student performance data driven</td>
<td>• During PLC meetings, the teachers reviewed student data to determine courses of action and necessary changes. Additionally, the instructional coaches were responsible for submitting student achievement data to the district throughout the course of the year.</td>
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</table>
This study serves as an example of how providing teachers with professional development supported by Adult Learning Theory and aligned to the Constructivist Learning Theory of Social Presence Theory can influence change in teacher practice. Using the principles of Adult Learning Theory to accentuate the teacher’s past experiences, knowledge, beliefs, routines, and aspirations helped bridge the current perception of effective teaching and research-based effective teaching (Khalil & Elkider, 2016; Kidd, 2010; Knowles et al., 2012; Malik, 2016; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Şahin & Doğantay, 2018; Trotter, 2006). At the same time, in aligning to the Constructivist Learning Theory of Social Presence Theory, this study brings to light the importance of student presence in teacher professional development (Bates & Morgan, 2018; Borko et al., 2010; Margolis et al., 2016). The use of the model classroom in this study actively connected the teachers to the learning (Crawford & Jenkins, 2018; Kay & Kibble, 2016; Labone & Long, 2016; Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikhamadi, 2016; Şahin & Doğantay, 2018). Thus, this study shows that teacher professional development in the presence of students can help to close the theory-practice gap by connecting Adult Learning Theory and Social Presence Theory with classroom practices, fostering change in teacher practice (Desimone, 2009; Gulamhussein, 2013; Korthagen, 2010; Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019).

**Recommendation for Practice**

Before significant change can occur in student achievement, a change must occur in how teachers are supported. Specifically, a change needs to occur in the professional development provided to teachers. As discussed in the literature review, change is a cyclical process; in order to change student outcomes schools must focus on changing teacher beliefs which will change teacher practice. Transforming teacher professional development to align with effective practices will establish a bridge from the current pedagogical styles to more effective teaching practices.
(Kidd, 2010; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). This transformation must come with a simultaneous transformation of the culture and the structure of teacher professional development (Margolis et al., 2016). Effective teacher professional development should deliberately optimize positive changes in teacher practice while aligning to Adult Learning Theory and Constructivist Learning Theories.

To bring this to fruition, school leaders should begin with an audit of their current teacher professional development model. In some cases, the model in place may only need minor tweaks to ensure teachers are provided with effective teacher professional development. In other cases, a major overhaul of the current model may be necessary. This research study has shown that providing a collaborative culture where teachers can see the research-based pedagogical practices in action sets the stage for change in teacher practice. It is recommended that teachers be provided with effective teacher professional development connected to the classroom as much as possible. Providing teachers with the experiences of observing effective teaching strategies in action, with the students present, has been shown through this study to make the learning more relevant, which may result in an evolution of teacher practice and beliefs culminating in a rise in student achievement.

Connection to the Researcher’s Practice

A focus of my work as the Academic Principal is to support my teachers through professional learning and curriculum development. In the coming school year, I will be working closely with different departments as we complete a curriculum audit. During this process, I intend to use the research from this study to connect the curriculum work to the teachers professional learning in the classroom. Specifically, as we review and redesign curricular materials I intent to provide teachers the opportunity to complete peer observations. Although I
will not be able to replicate the model classroom experience as described throughout this study, I will do my best to provide my teachers with a positive learning experience as similar as possible. In this case, the content specific consultant that is working with the department will serve in the role of instructional coach. The consultant will accompany the teacher during the observation of their peer. The teacher being observe will be one that demonstrates mastery in the teaching strategy to be observed. It is my intent that during the observation, the observer and consultant will be able to share in-the-moment-learning that will be reinforced during a debrief session with the teaching teacher. To avoid any unwanted stress or worry of evaluation, I will remove myself from the observation and debrief with the teachers. The consultant and I will have a separate debrief session so that I can better understand the space my teachers are in and the additional supports I need to provide them.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study examined the influence of student presence during teacher professional development at the elementary level in a suburban school district in the Southeast United States. The participants in this study were volunteers. Since not all teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators participated in the study, the results leave researchers wondering how full participation of the school community may have impacted findings. A recommendation for future research is to replicate this study will 100% participation of the school community. A second recommendation for future research is a replication of this study in other elementary schools with varying demographics. Repeating this study in other elementary schools will allow comparisons to be drawn through cross-case analyses. Cross-case analyses will allow generalizations to be drawn, which could then be applied to other elementary schools in the country (Yin, 2018).
Another recommendation for future research is to replicate this study at both the middle and secondary levels. The elementary level results were positive, but this is not a study where the results can be generalized due to the case’s specifics (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Throughout this study, expansion to the middle schools and high schools within the district were often requested by participating administration. Therefore, if this model were to be expanded across this district, or if a school district were to have a similar program in place at the middle and secondary level, completing a similar case study would prove valuable to the educational community by allowing for generalizations to be made.

It would also be valuable to the educational community to study how student presence influences teacher professional development in a setting where students have access to one-to-one technology. Since today’s students are growing up in a technology-rich world, technology is a part of their daily environment (Couch & Towne, 2018). If this study would have occurred in a school district with one-to-one technology, would the students’ presence have added to the teacher learning, or would it have caused a divide between the teachers and the students? This would be an interesting area of study at all levels of the K-12 school system and would allow connections to the Connectivism Learning Theory.
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APPENDIX A: DETAILED STEPS OF THE DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

The following is a detailed description of the steps followed by the researcher during the data analysis process:

1. Upon IRB approval, the researcher gained access to the data in an electronic format (Microsoft Word).

2. The researcher printed all of the data.

3. The researcher organized the documents based on date and data type. The data was collected over three site visits which spanned two to three days each. The type of data available included group interviews, individual interviews, and observational field notes.

4. A Microsoft Excel document was developed to track file name, date, types of data, location, type of participants, and the number of participants. Tables 1, 2, and 3 are from this document.

5. All of the data was read and annotated with notes made in the margins of promising concepts and possible themes.

6. A sheet was added to the Microsoft Excel document to track the study participants. This sheet included the code for the study participant, his/her role, the building(s) he/she worked in, the number of years in education, and the number of years in the role. This information was used to complete the study participants section of this chapter.

7. The data was coded by hand. This was done by organizing the excerpts that aligned with each code.

8. The data was then reviewed again looking for disconfirming evidence and contrary interpretations.

9. These codes and excerpts were then grouped to form the themes.
10. The themes were aligned to the research questions (Table 4).

11. A narrative was written for each theme to answer the research questions and a summary of results organized by the research question (Chapter 4).

12. The conclusions and implications were written (Chapter 5) based on the discussion found in Chapter 4.
APPENDIX B: AN EXAMPLE OF THE DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS – EXCERPTS BY THEME AND LEVEL

Theme 1: Success of the Teacher Leadership Model

Keywords/Phrases: Successes, Positives, Benefits, Accomplishment

Level of the Organization: Teacher

- I think student engagement is much better.
- Improvement in scores: in '17, we were 29.9% and last year we were 33.9% for third through eighth grade on track and mastery - pretty significant
- It [having Literacy Leaders] has changed people's attitudes
- It [having Literacy Leaders] has changed the atmosphere in this building.
- one of the teachers just this past week just wanting to share a praise with me on her universal screener that they just completed and that 12 of our 15 kids showed growth in reading on their universal screener from the fall to the spring and that's huge.
- That I have seen the LL do that I'm now seeing in that other teachers. So, in her classroom and so I would really say that I would think it's connected because I've never seen her do some of the things that I saw her do.
- We see more growth in our students from their running records this year: and we're seeing a lot more of that.
- I think of one of our kindergarten teachers, she had taken a year off from teaching and then she came back in... Actually we came back at the same time. She came in in October and she said, "I'm just not familiar with anything really in guided reading that's going on." And so she probably has been to one of our literacy leaders four times probably just seeing different pieces and then I've modeled in her classroom as well and she is just phenomenal because she will go and observe and then she wants a few days to try it out and then she'll say, "Please come watch me and see if this is, you know, working how I think it's working." And then we'll have our conversations. She'll try a few more days. I'll go back in and follow up with her and then she's ready to go see something else. So for her, it's been amazing and even people in the distinct that have been through her room, they just say she's great. I mean she's a great teacher. (IC speaking)
- Like she (K teacher that was using supports of LL & IC) had low risk on all, I think, but one on her Easy CBM. And all of her kids yesterday on their fluency testing, all of them but one, scored in the low risk.
- Yes, two cases. One is our overall third grade team. Three of them are brand new teachers. Let me make sure that's, yeah. Three of them are, of course, new to reading instruction, guided reading or anything, so that has paved the way for my work with them. But outside of that, there is a fourth grade teacher that came to us from the middle school level, who never did guided reading. I even wondered at the onset of the year, if she would be able to tailor her instruction to fit fourth graders. That seemed like it was going to be a struggle, but observing the literacy leader and working many hours with her, she has morphed into a really good guided reading teacher. Taking notes, really
focusing in on the students' reading development level, what she needs to meet the needs for her EL students. Just everything is considered when she's planning now.

- And then it [the teacher leadership model] is helping students.
- I think for us, and it's a little different cause we're, you know, with her every day, but it's, a lot of times when you go to training you think, "Oh, this'll be great." And then when you get into the year you just kind of forget about it, and it just kind of goes to the wayside. It doesn't actually change the way that you've taught. But when they wanted us to start changing they way that we teach, you know, don't use the [inaudible 00:16:27] anymore, we want you to do interactive read alouds. And every year they've kind of piled a little bit, and the word pile is probably not the best word. They've added a little bit more. It's like layering it, I guess you could say. Instead of just going to the training and thinking, "Oh this is good," and then forgetting about it, it's like a constant for us anyway. A daily, this is just how we do it now. And I think having her with us and planning, the way that we're planning has totally changed. Cause we plan as a team. And most schools. And that didn't used to be the case. I mean, I don't think I ever had the opportunity to plan as a team my first few years of teaching. That just wasn't a thing.
- I think the biggest accomplishments, last year, was our first year for the unit starters. And, it was very difficult just getting them on board with trying it one time, just giving it a try. Second grade said, after T and ready, they would do it. They would try it. Well, I knew, once they tried it, it would speak for itself, you know. Kids are really, they're in to it, you know.
- [[Model classroom visits prompt deeper reflection on what is going on in one’s own classroom, not just borrowing from the potential of what is going on in someone else’s classroom]
- The literacy, the coaches, probably like four times a week, like almost everyday I talk to them. Especially a lot the first half because my centers were a hot mess. I just cannot[inaudible 00:12:09] for some reason. I feel the same way. I am badly getting there, but when I was a kid we didn't do centers so like it's new to me, like even when I was in the classroom, I was like, "what is centers, what is that." That's exactly what I'm talking about. It's a massive paradigm shift, you know. Because what's interesting y'all are also pretty close to being freshly out of school. So was this part of your instructional development at a college level, learning how to teach this way. They didn't teach how to do centers at all. They never once spoke of these centers, whenever I got, I mean I see it in the classrooms that I visited, but my professors have never mentioned the word of centers so when I was like "why are these kids all grouped off doing something different?" I was like that makes no sense. We both came from the same institution. We're both in the same program too, except you're not Master's level, you're a... are you undergrad?
- During our shared time, I was reading it to them, I wasn't supposed to. But I didn't know why I was reading it to them, it makes it shared. But I took that away from Lorraine, and I realized "oh I was supposed to split into groups, and she gives her kids certain partners and they sit in certain spots in the rug." And I figured if they were great, they'd be able to handle it themselves, take their partners and sit and they cannot. If I would've never saw, I would've kept reading it to them. And kept going on. It clicked and I was like "oh"
- I observed the same teacher I saw today, I saw her the first time and I took away two things. I took away how when she is at her table with her guided group, it's almost like a
song and dance, she is very like one flows right after the other, her language that she uses, what she does, I took that away, because I would stop and I would listen to them read and then I would answer, instead she just, she's so good at multitasking, she'll talk to this one over here while she's over at this one, and so I took that away is to be less attentive. I was paying too much attention to one student and then it took away from my instructional time with two other students over here. So I took that from her as to sit back and address everybody together, hone in on your lower students that really need your guidance. The rest of them, they can figure it out. I took that away from her and then I took my center quality.

• If I can jump in, how did their, because one of the things it all seems I'm going back to why we're doing all of this, because this is a new way of teaching. So when you keyed in on the fact, wow they can't go do centers, which is what is somewhat privileged in and of itself, until the daily task, which is part of the whole group instruction is completed, how did you feel like watching your literacy leader, how did you feel like watching them manage all of that. Did that, was that a light bulb going off for you because again, you got them back doing their guided group, they've got kids doing the daily tasks, plus those doing centers. How are they doing that. Is that helping you by seeing that?

• I could go to my coach, and I went to her my first year, from my first year, I could go to her. She came in and did a lot of modeling of guided reading, things I now I still use, seven years later, I'm still using things that she taught me and modeled to me.

• Well, I think it solidified, because they're pushing the reading model down, and it's new. So, you go to the PDs, they're talking, and they're shoving so much information in these small amounts. I think going into, especially last year because last year was my first year teaching reading, it really solidified what they have been saying at PDs. It wasn't just, you need to do this, but you go to see it and you're like, "That's the resource they're talking about when they say that you have an IRA with the shared, that's how that's supposed to happen." Because, when they have all this information, in just all of these parts, it's hard, it's a puzzle. Yeah, because you have this much amount of time, your schedule is getting you here, your transitions are here, how you put centers into here, and how many get all these kids in these groups, but you still have to have this text, this text at this level, reaching these kids, there's just so much. When you go in and it's just like it flows, and you're like, "What?" They do certain things with them where you're like, "That's what that meant when they said, use the resource for language, that's how you use it." So, it was beneficial.

• I think it's making better teachers. I think it makes us a better teacher to have access to all this information. As she said, it's more efficient, it's quicker, you don't have to wait for professional development to get the information. Your teacher leader can go ahead and tell you tomorrow, if there's something new. So, I think to me, that's the overall effect. It just makes us more effective.

• Like that personal problem solving as opposed to like when she was talking earlier, I'm like, "It's faster thank you, cool." It's more personable that Google. When people are coming into my classroom, because we always have that thing, no kid is like another kid. They're similar, but it's different. Every year, I've had a kid where I'm like, "Dang! I've never had one like that." When they're coming into your room and they're working with that kid, versus me going into their room and seeing that kid I haven't had yet, but it's going to be similar to, it's just reaching us on that level, and it's very personable. I think it
does make all of us, like them, as well as us. I think it benefits them, I hope, I mean, from listening to them, I think it benefits them in the same way that it does us, just at different places.

**Level of the Organization:** Teacher Leader

- change in the teachers who have been involved in this in their personal professionalism and their interest in what they're doing.
- Some of our literacy leaders that have been doing it for two and now maybe this'll be the third year
- I think this has really strengthened their ability to reach kids in a way they had not ...
- I think they have found ways to involve kids at a different level than they have in the past.
- The literacy leaders themselves have grown tremendously, they have changed.
- Their [Literacy Leader’s] doors are open, they are ready to go, they are still a little apprehensive in some areas but they have become really good presenters. It's a process but they are getting much, much better. Much stronger. Even their relationships with the other teachers in the building has changed.
- just being able to work with them and sit down and show them how we created the units and how to do the interactive read alouds and how to integrate the social studies and writing and the language standards all together and just really being able to see their eyes open to a new way of teaching than what they were traditionally doing or what they were expecting has been, probably, the biggest success this year. (LL speaking)
- I think in our school, and I don't know if you'd agree, it just builds up the community. It's a very positive role and it's never one that you feel like, "Oh, I'm the literacy leader and I'm better than you." It's, "We're all in this together. I want to help you. That's my goal, too." And they're just like me, you know? They have a classroom with 18 to 20 challenging students who are, you know, they have behaviors in there, too. And they're really helpful. That's a big word. Helpful and respectful. (teacher speaking)
- I'd say that the positive for me is that the person is present in the building, because so often while you're working through the planning process and then teaching things and reflecting, questions arise that if you had to wait months until you had another PD, that question is going to disappear into the ether. It's just going to be gone. But because that person is on my hallway, I can find an opportunity during that day to come to her and ask her about it, and get immediate feedback on what I'm trying to do. So I think it's that immediacy of feedback.
- We've shared some of the bright spots already with you, I think some of the benefits of what we're seeing with this process or program whatever you want to call it, is going to be hard to gage by data, I think just, as I said before, walking into a teacher's classroom before they were a leader and walking into their classroom and seeing the difference in their confidence, in their presentation, the way that they instruct kids, sometimes its hard to put a number to that-
- I feel like it just really helps strengthen literacy in my building having those leaders that are really, just every day in the classroom, practicing and putting out what we're talking about. It's not just I'm telling them things to do but they're actually doing it and then I'm a part of that with them. (IC speaking)
• I've seen it from the conception of it and how it's really working day in and day out within the schools so I'm really pleased with what we've done and how it's growing. It has changed. I think as we talk, we'll hear more about that but I think we've really made it better from year to year. This being our third year, I'm really excited about that part.
• I think we have multiple reasons for doing this. For me, personally, the first will be to get these literacy scores up. I'm sorry, you know, we're struggling. We just feel like building teacher capacity around that learning, getting down to the foundational level is where we need to be and I think we're doing a pretty good job at that. Then, secondly, it's just empowering our teachers and helping them to be a stronger professional. I think those go hand in hand and that's just for me. I don't know what you all would add.
• We'd go through the coaching cycle with them, and it just continues to be a practice of modeling, or co-teaching or co-planning, that when we look at what the students do, they always goes back to students work to say did we hit that right or do we need to refine it and try again, and it's just like that constant cycle that we go through with our teachers.
• I think we're trying to build capacity with teachers and letting them feel confident and combing their crafts so that will work towards students, and our work is a lot, working with teachers and learning something, and then they go apply it in their classroom.
• Right along with what you said, those monthly meetings where we get to practice our craft in a safe way, where I feel comfortable learning how to have this coaching conversations and the things that I'm going to need as a coach in my building I get to practice with these ladies and with my district leaders and feel comfortable with it as I bring it back into my building. That's helped me a lot as a newer coach.
• Absolutely. We've seen a change just in the last couple years of what literacy leader looks like. And they have already tried to hone in on what the challenges were and try to fix those, or have a way to support it, so-

Level of the Organization: District

• Change in some of our administrators too. The expectation from the district is that they're involved in the training, that they're attending and participating, and it's made a difference just in the overall ... developing them as an instructional leader in their building.
• I think the connections between the literacy leaders from building to building has strengthened the teacher themselves, they learn from each other so they become a cohort of people that they can depend and rely on each other to further their practice. That is giving them that support and even confidence, like today, stand up in front of their peers and to present because that's a challenge and so I think it's strengthened them at that level as well. It just benefits the schools because the connections that are there across from one school to the other and that we're talking the same things and we're working on the same goals.
• I think there's a greater willingness amongst teachers to try it. You know, we're fortunate that our teacher leaders are in the building, leading the PD's to their peers.
• Because they trust their teacher leaders more.
• A lot of our PD this year I think has caught on with teachers more so because of the Literacy Leaders, with our small groups, with everything. We've been doing guided reading and small group reading instruction for years. I can remember even before I came into the coaching model, I've taught with it, I've been an administrator with teachers who
have done guided reading. So guided reading's been around longer than I've been in coaching. But I really have seen through what the Literacy Leaders have rolled out that the teachers are doing things a little bit differently: they're having some 'a ha' moments. And I think it comes from one of their peers sharing that piece to it.

- So when you have school initiatives and you get the Literacy Leader to buy-in, and you can get that part going and then teachers can come and see how it works. I just think it feeds out to all parts to that.
- Morale is a big piece. And if they feel defeated then it's kind of like why even try? I think this year they felt like this something new that I can actually do it right now and I don't have to wait til the end to feel the impact. Does that make sense?
- I think they [teachers] are not afraid to ask for help now. Right. I think they feel comfortable. And I think anytime we have change, I think they receive it better. Of course, once you get your ones that are gonna buy in and letting them sometimes, like she said, to deliver the information, helps us to get buy in. So I think it changes your culture and it's not a conversation of, "Hey, did you see what Ms. So and so was doing, I need to try to do that. And I need to go see what she's doing." And when they get to a point where they start asking you, then you know you've done your job.
- So teacher leadership has helped your staff be more open to change.
- So it's [the teacher leadership model] helping some of these bigger but positive changes actually take hold.
- Absolutely. We think it's working really well because they are getting that knowledge from the state firsthand and being able to come back and re-deliver to their peers and so that has really helped to support the curriculum. We can come in and be the other type of support that they need. Ms. Betty, our instructional coach, is the other support, so I feel like it's just kind of tri-fold now. We are really giving more support than we've been ever able to give in the past.
- Right. Which I've heard positive things. I've heard teachers who've been teaching a long time say this [the teacher leadership model] is the best initiative they've brought in the state.
- I believe our survey data supports what we're doing, in looking through the comments they were very positive, they made reference to being able to see their colleagues do the work and actually, you know they're working elbow to elbow and it's not a specialist or someone coming in that they don't know until telling them how to do it and leaving, I think they like the fact that they have someone who's in the next room to them actually doing it and its working for them and I think they recognize that, we're not asking them to do something that is not possible that is not possible and there supported, there is a support system in place, whether its through the peer that they're observing in the model classroom or the coach that's coming in to follow up-
- I would just say that a final thought of a positive is that the team, the collaborative work that I see on teams where we have literacy leaders in many cases they really brought their team along with them and so its not just the literacy leaders that's making this huge growth but the people around her that she works with every day.
- The other thing that I wanted to add is, it's awesome when I'm doing interviews and... For new teachers, when I say to them... You know, when they ask me, "What kind of support will I have?" And when I am able to say, "There are two model classrooms in the building for you to go actually watch." Their eyes light up and you don't... I mean, that's
not everywhere. So I feel like that makes them more comfortable because they know not only do they have two literacy coaches that can coach them, but to go in and actually see it in action, it's like their eyes light up. It's like, "Thank you." Because first year teachers, you know, the experience is what they lack and so to be able to see that is, I think, beneficial.

- But I will say, I feel like one of the benefits of having our literacy leaders and instructional coaches is that I feel like across the county, we're all kind of on the same page. Because our instructional coaches are always in meetings with instructional coaches from other schools. Our literacy leaders are always at trainings with the literacy leaders from the county, and so I feel like even though we may not be doing the exact same things in our classes, we're still all kind of on the same page of what the expectations are for us and for our grade level. And I think, too, when we have countywide PDs like we did this past Friday, they're led by the teaching literacy leaders. And I really like that because though every school in the county is a little bit different, some integrate science, some integrate history and different things, it's a really cool thing to see other classroom teachers and what they're currently doing in their classrooms. 'Cause I love our instructional coaches, but it sometimes carries a different tone when it's someone who's doing this every day and they're like, "I'm doing this and it's working."

- I know that. My grade level or whatever because they're planning with me, and I'm kind of in on exactly what the expectations are. They have all said that they understand it so much better than they have in the past. We did not have a second to third-grade support person before I did it this year specifically for us.
CURRICULUM VITAE

Katharine Rose (McClelland) Roche

I. Professional Preparation and Experience

A. Certifications & Education

Educational Doctorate, Instructional Technology and Leadership  
Duquesne University—Pittsburgh, PA  
GPA: 3.96  
August 2021

National Board Teaching Certification  
Adolescent and Young Adult Mathematics  
Nov. 2013

Principal Certification, K-12 (Level II)  
Gannon University—Erie, PA  
GPA: 4.0  
Aug. 2013

Supervisor of Curriculum Certification, K-12  
Gannon University—Erie, PA  
GPA: 4.0  
Aug. 2013

Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction  
Gannon University—Erie, PA  
GPA: 3.97  
May 2008

Bachelor of Science-Secondary Education, Mathematics and Physics  
California University of PA—California, PA  
GPA: 3.64 Dean’s List: Fall 2001 – Spring 2005  
Certifications: PA State Certification, Instructional II, Mathematics 7-12  
May 2005

B. Professional Experience

Academic Principal  
West Allegheny High School, Imperial, PA  
July 2017-Present

Assistant Principal  
West Allegheny High School, Imperial, PA  
July 2014-June 2017

Adjunct Professor  
Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA  
Fall 2017-Present

Principal Internship  
Elizabeth Forward School District, Elizabeth, PA  
March-August 2013

Under the supervision of Dr. Randal Sydeski
Supervisor of Curriculum Internship
Elizabeth Forward School District, Elizabeth, PA
May-August 2012
Under the supervision of Dr. Todd Keruskin

High School Math Teacher
Elizabeth Forward High School, Elizabeth, PA
Aug. 2007-July 2014

Elizabeth Forward Cyber School Math Instructor
Elizabeth Forward School District, Elizabeth, PA
Aug. 2011-July 2014

Adjunct Professor
Community College of Allegheny County
June 2006-July 2014

Elizabeth Forward Alternative Education Math Instructor
Elizabeth Forward School District, Elizabeth, PA
Sept. 2011-June 2012

High School Math Teacher
Woodland Hills High School, Pittsburgh, PA

II. Scholarship

A. Published Articles

