Educator perceptions of blended teacher professional development: A case study of a vertically aligned virtual professional learning community.

Aslean White
University of Louisville

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EDUCATOR PERCEPTIONS OF BLENDED TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF A VERTICALLY ALIGNED VIRTUAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

Aslean White
B.S., University of the Cumberlands, 2003
M.Ed., Georgetown College, 2012
M.Ed., Campbellsville University, 2017

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University of Louisville
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EDUCATOR PERCEPTIONS OF BLENDED TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF A VERTICALLY ALIGNED VIRTUAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

By

Aslean White
B.S., University of the Cumberlands, 2003
M.Ed., Georgetown College, 2012
M.Ed., Campbellsville University, 2017

A Dissertation Approved on

April 17, 2024

By the following Dissertation Committee:

__________________________
Dissertation Chair
Dr. W. Kyle Ingle, Ph.D.

__________________________
Dr. Kathy House, Ed.D.

__________________________
Dr. Douglas Stevens, Ph.D.

__________________________
Dr. Rachel Yarbrough, Ed.D.
DEDICATION

To my hero, Dr. Ernest Ray White II. It does now, officially, skip a generation.
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I would like to thank my committee, which includes Dr. Kyle Ingle, Dr. Kathy House, Dr. Doug Stevens, and Dr. Rachel Yarbrough. I am also indebted to Dr. Deborah Powers, Dr. Rachel Baker, and Sandy Owens for their relentless and forceful encouragement.

My most sincere admiration and gracious gratitude goes out to the behavior coaches, interventionists, and support specialists working with our most behaviorally at-risk youth, as well as to the active participants of professional learning communities engaged in the work of continuously improving public education.

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATOR PERCEPTIONS OF BLENDED TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF A VERTICALLY ALIGNED VIRTUAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

Aslean White

April 17, 2024

This case study describes the design and enactment of a job-embedded, blended learning professional development plan for teachers to facilitate the collaborative inquiry of a vertically aligned virtual professional learning community. The study is of relevance because it seeks to implement recommendations from recent research on online teacher professional development (Barnett, 2020; Lockee, 2020; Powell & Bodur, 2019) using a framework for support structures designed to engage learners in blended and online learning environments (Philipsen et al., 2019). This qualitative multi-case study examined individual teacher cases using a within-case analysis to create teachers’ profiles to illuminate contextual traits and elucidate the subtleties of teachers’ responses (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Further, a cross-case analysis of the participants’ interview transcripts framed the common themes and differences in the teachers’ collective perceptions of blended learning and motivating factors influencing teachers' professional learning completion, including job satisfaction and willingness to participate.
Keywords: blended learning, online teacher professional development, collaborative inquiry, job-embedded professional development, virtual professional learning communities
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Teachers can have a significant and long-lasting impact on students’ learning (Chetty et al., 2014; Hattie, 2003; Opper, 2019). At present, the thriving international teacher professional development market is worth billions of dollars (Birman et al., 2000; Bowe & Gore, 2017; Garet et al., 2018). However, despite the significant expenditure involved, impact evaluations of professional development programs reveal that they frequently fall short of producing meaningful, long-lasting improvements in teacher practices or student outcomes, particularly in scenarios involving scaled-up implementation (Borko, 2004; Garet et al., 2008; Garet et al., 2011; Garet et al., 2016; Glazerman et al., 2010). Thus, improvement of student achievement through professional development remains “both highly sought-after and elusive” (Gore et al., 2021, p. 2).

Archibald et al. (2011), in their definition of high-quality professional development, went as far as to stress the need for a change in student outcomes; moreover, according to Bonk and Cummings (1998), the same measures for high-quality face-to-face professional development apply to online learning modalities as well. If that is the case, the core features of professional development, which include a content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation (Desimone, 2009) integrated into blended learning (BL), can facilitate impactful opportunities for the development of teacher knowledge and skills. Vanderbilt’s Center for Teaching delineated the difference between online teacher professional development (OTPD) and BL or hybrid instruction thus:
Online courses are those in which at least 80 percent of course content is delivered online. Blended (sometimes called hybrid) instruction has between 30 and 80 percent of the course content delivered online with some face-to-face interaction. Blended and online courses change how content is delivered, redefine traditional educational roles, and provide different opportunities for learning. (Smith & Brame, 2014, p. 1)

Conversely, others view a blended approach as a pedagogical strategy that combines the efficiency and opportunities for participant socialization provided by a face-to-face classroom with the technologically improved active learning opportunities provided by the online environment rather than a strict ratio of delivery modalities.

Educational research has long called for a transformation of teacher professional development from a one-time workshop format to one that is more embedded, long-term, reflective, and collaborative (U.S. Department of Education, 1996). However, despite recommendations that practitioners should have been preparing for the delivery of online and blended instruction (Ferdig & Kennedy, 2014), many educators and teacher educators found themselves unequipped to handle the several issues they encountered in planning and delivering instruction during the school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These difficulties centered on deploying various pedagogical strategies to address synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning, using new instructional delivery tools, and reading online pedagogy (Hartshorn et al., 2020).

An online approach to job-embedded professional learning allows for professional development during the workday, creating flexible opportunities for collaboration,
teacher research, appraisal, and feedback (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Ford et al., 2008). Research on face-to-face or in-person teacher professional development supports the incorporation of these types of activities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; National Staff Development Council, 2010). However, researchers appear to know little about effective teacher professional development in the online learning environment (Dede et al., 2009).

**Purpose of the Study**

In this qualitative study, I examined teacher perceptions of BL to facilitate their collaborative inquiry in the context of a virtual professional learning community. The participants were members of an existing professional learning community, engaged as a virtual professional learning community since April of the 2019–2020 academic year. This highly specialized educator group represents a gap in the existing literature on OTPD. By using a comprehensive and established framework comprising essential components of OTPD (Philipsen et al., 2019) within a blended learning plan, the study aims to produce findings that may be useful to (a) practitioners as evidence of their professional growth, and (b) teacher educators designing professional development for specialists.

The research questions that guide this study are as follows:

RQ1: What are the participating educators’ perceptions of the BL design and implementation?

RQ2: How do the participants perceive the impact of BL on their practice?

**Definitions of Terms**

I used the following terms in the context of the study:
• Blended learning: This refers to any time a student learns at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home and through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace. It is alternatively known as hybrid learning (Horn & Staker, 2011).

• Behavior Specialist: This refers to a special education teacher who works collaboratively to develop and implement intervention strategies (positive behavior supports) within the school setting, allowing the student to participate successfully in their least restrictive environment.

• Continuous Improvement: Continuous (quality) improvement integrates quality improvement into the daily work of individuals in the system (Park et al., 2001).

• Education system: This refers to a set of vertically aligned education professionals working as parts of a collaborative team or an interconnected network. This context describes the cross-functioning professional learning structures established by Fayette County Public Schools’ Special Education High School Support Team.

• Face-to-face learning: Face-to-face learning refers to the traditional, classroom-based learning method.

• Job Embedded Professional Development: Job-embedded professional development (JEPD) refers to teacher learning that is grounded in day-to-day teaching practice and designed to enhance teachers’ content-specific instructional practices to improve student learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Hirsh, 2009).
• Positive Approach to Student Success (PASS) Program: The PASS program is a framework for the delivery of individualized support that serves both general education students whose behavioral problems have marked them as at-risk and special education students who have been identified as emotionally/behaviorally disordered. PASS is a comprehensive, multi-level program that incorporates practices that are consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 and 2004 and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (Poole & Caperton Brown, 2009).

• Professional Development: This deepens teachers’ understanding of the teaching/learning process and the students they teach (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2006).

• Professional Learning Community (PLC): This is an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities (PLCs) operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators (DuFour et al., 2010).

• Online Teacher Professional Development (OTPD): This refers to professional development workshops, courses, and programs primarily delivered online.

• Singletons: In the context of a professional learning community, singletons are teachers who do not have grade-level or course-alike peers (Hansen, 2015; Leane & Yost, 2022).
- Teacher Educators: These are instructors preparing preservice or practicing teachers for their professional role as teachers and reflective practitioners.

- Virtual Professional Learning Community (vPLC): An online PLC (see Professional Learning Community)

**Significance of the Study**

Educational research conducted before and after the COVID-19 pandemic acknowledges the value of contextualizing the findings of studies on OTPD in their discussion and proposes further studies across different contexts to expand upon the findings (Barnett, 2020; Lockee, 2020; Philipsen et al., 2019; Powell & Bodur, 2019). The case study sought to contribute to this research base by applying Philipsen’s framework to the design and implementation of OTPD for a vertically aligned vPLC of highly specialized professionals in education (Lockee, 2020). Each element in the framework has demonstrated significance as determined by teachers, trainers, or researchers across a meta-aggregative study expressed in six findings synthesized from the research (Philipsen et al., 2019). These findings are as follows:

1. Design and develop a supportive teacher professional development (TPD) program and environment for online BL (OBL).

2. Determine the overall goals and relevance of TPD for OBL.

3. Acknowledge TPD strategies associated with the transition to OBL.

4. Acknowledge the existing context concerning OBL.

5. Address teacher change associated with the transition to OBL.

6. Disseminate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes concerning OBL and evaluate TPD.
In this study, I seek to challenge the research and practices of specialized or niche educators, such as behavior specialists and teacher educators tasked with supporting their learning. Based on the findings, teacher educators interested in meeting the needs of singleton, vertically aligned vPLCs comprised of teachers with under-examined contents or certification areas may explore different structural and educational approaches to encourage more effective TPD and further development of vPLCs.

**Theoretical Underpinnings and the Selection of Methodology**

Adult learning theory serves as this study’s theoretical foundation. Adult learning theory, alternatively known as andragogy, is rooted in the following five assumptions (Knowles, 1984):

1. **Self-concept:** Adult learners are independent and self-directed.
2. **Adult Learner Experience:** Adult learners contribute their own experiences in the classroom.
3. **Readiness to Learn:** Adult learners are motivated by learning that addresses social roles.
4. **Orientation to Learning:** Adult learners seek immediate application for problem-based concerns.
5. **Motivation to Learn:** Adult learners are motivated by intrinsic rather than intrinsic factors.

Based on the idea that teachers are adult learners with particular and special learning needs, this study used adult learning theory to examine teacher perceptions of a BL professional development experience. This framework offers a lens through which researchers can investigate the level of operationalization of those learning needs, which
has the potential to influence BL design and implementation (Powell & Bodur, 2019). The design of the blended learning plan is grounded in a constructivist paradigm, which recognizes truth as relative based on one’s perspective (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018) and is framed by Vygotsky’s social constructivist learning theory. These theories guide this study and allow for a comprehensive exploration of the participants’ perspectives on the development and implementation of online and blended learning.

This case study explored teachers’ pre- and post-implementation perceptions concerning a job-embedded OBL. This collaborative inquiry provided a process for individuals to come together to examine a self-identified problem of practice (Donohoo, 2013) while the BL design provided flexibility to the participants (Bell et al., 2010). I selected an exploratory case study design to investigate how participants construct meaning from their professional development process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). This approach facilitated participants sharing their experiences and personal reflections, as well as deriving meaning constructed from their professional development experience.

**Organization of the Study**

I organized my study as follows: Chapter 1 presents the introduction, purpose, research questions, rationale for the study, scope of the study, definition of terms, methods, data sources, and organizational summary of the study. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature. Chapter 3 provides an in-depth description of the qualitative case study methodology for the collection and analysis of the data. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 summarizes the findings of the study and offers implications for policy, practice, and future research.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature to provide some historical context for teacher professional development and the need to develop models to facilitate job-embedded OBL activities to support it. The literature review begins with an overview of learning theories, which is followed by a review of the extant literature on professional development that explores (1) both the broad context of the profession and the district of study as well as (2) high-quality job-embedded professional development activities (Archibald et al., 2011) and recommendations for the design and implementation of OBL and OTPD (Philipsen et al., 2019). Finally, a summary of the chapter details the predominant themes that emerged from the extant research, the methods used to arrive at these findings, the evidence from the literature, calling for and justifying the need for this study.

A Brief Historical Primer on Learning Theory

This section focuses on the theoretical perspectives of behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism. Although several other learning theories exist as well, these three categories were most closely examined because of their prevalence in instructional design literature (Ermer & Newby, 2013), making them most applicable to my study. I examined each of these learning theories using the following five questions listed by Schunk (1991) to distinguish each theory:

1. How does learning occur?
2. Which factors influence learning?
3. What is the role of memory?
4. How does transfer occur?
5. What types of learning are best explained by the theory?

**Behaviorism**

The behaviorist methodology depends on its central tenet that reinforced behavior is most likely to continue while rebuffed conduct eventually stops (Rostami & Khadjooi, 2010). Concepts such as Pavlov’s classical conditioning and Skinner’s operant conditioning have influenced behaviorist theory and programmed learning since the early 20th century (Schunk, 2012). Although more modern models and approaches dominate contemporary classrooms, many competency-based curricula based on a behaviorist approach have produced reproducible results (Rostami & Khadjooi, 2010). Moreover, operant conditioning methods remain popular in teaching classroom behavior expectations.

B. F. Skinner (1904–1990) built on behavioral psychologist Thorndike’s ideas to develop a comprehensive set of principles to explain operant conditioning. The most basic of Skinner’s studies involved a rat that, when placed in a chamber, behaved as expected and scurried around the box, sniffing and clawing at the contents. Eventually, the rat reached a lever and pressed it to release food pellets. The rat took less time pressing the lever during the next attempt, and on subsequent attempts, the time required to press the lever became shorter and shorter. Shortly after, the rat became obsessed with pressing the lever as quickly as possible so it could eat the food that emerged in response (Kassin, 2003).

Behaviorism equates learning with changes in the form or frequency of observable performance and proposes that learning will lead to changes in an individual’s behavior. Transfer of learning occurs once the antecedent signals the exhibited behavior.
The resulting consequences either strengthen the likelihood of the behavior occurring again or reduce future behavior. Teaching strategies incorporating behaviorist approaches to learning include direct instruction (Joyce et al., 2004; Rosenshine, 1979), opportunities for learner response (Delguardi et al., 1979; Hall et al., 1982; Lindsley, 1992b), least to most prompting (Cooper et al., 1987), and informational feedback (Cooper et al., 1987). According to behavioral theorists, it is the responsibility of the teacher or instructional designer to (1) identify the cues that can elicit the desired responses, (2) plan practice scenarios in which prompts are paired with the target stimuli that initially have no eliciting power but which will be expected to elicit the responses in the “natural” (performance) setting, and (3) set up the environment so that learners can respond correctly in the presence of those target stimuli (Gropper, 1987). In the late 1950s, learning theory began moving away from the use of behavioral models and toward an approach that depended on learning theories and models from the cognitive sciences (Ertmer & Newby, 2013).

Cognitivism

Cognitive learning theory proposes that learning involves the active development of new knowledge. A significant concept in cognitive theory is meaningful learning, which entails (1) the selection of relevant information, (2) the organization of the information into a coherent structure, and (3) the integration of information with relevant prior knowledge (Mayer, 2003). A prerequisite for cognitive learning is adequate prior knowledge (Alferi et al., 2011; Bruner, 1961; Fletcher, 2009), without which the learners may either not have the ability to integrate the new information into their memory or make connections to inappropriate knowledge (Klahr & Nigam, 2004). Transfer of
learning occurs when teachers emphasize the relevance of the new content to the learners’ prior knowledge and real-life experiences (Bates, 2019). Teaching strategies incorporating cognitive approaches to learning include discovery learning (Bruner, 1961), guided discovery (Alfieri et al., 2011; Mayer, 2004), and expository teaching (Ausubel, 1963, 2000). Eventually, the cognitivist approach to learning and processing information gave way to its offshoot, constructivism theory (Ertmer & Newby, 2013).

**Constructivism**

In contrast to cognitivism, in which the instructor creates an environment where thinking activities and processes take place, a constructive approach positions the instructor as a facilitator of learning (Ertmer & Newby, 2013). Constructivism proposes that knowledge is a product of reflection and active mental construction (Mascolo & Fischer, 2005); therefore, it directly opposes conceptions of truth with those of viability, considering their relativity to the observer (Glassersfeld, 1995). The term constructivism concerning an approach to learning refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves—that is, each learner individually or socially constructs meaning from what they learn (Dewey, 1938).

As constructivism prioritizes individual meaning making and the learner’s construction of knowledge (Crotty, 1998; Fosnot, 1996; Phillips, 1995), it posits that learning depends on internal concepts rather than environmental influences (Torre et al., 2006). According to cognitive theories, the transfer of learning results from how one maintains information in memory (Schunk, 1991) and occurs when a learner knows how to apply knowledge in multiple circumstances. Prior knowledge provides learners with limits for identifying the similarities and differences within new information.
Constructivists believe that although learning experiences elicit specific responses, the learner must also think that the knowledge is applicable in a given context before using it. Through this lens, understanding comprises a knowledge foundation of rules, concepts, and distinctions (Duffy & Jonassen, 1991). Classroom components indicative of the constructivist approach include pre-tests, informal interviews, and small group warm-up activities that require recall of prior knowledge, application of knowledge with feedback, cooperative learning approaches, and opportunities for students to demonstrate what they have learned (Baviskar et al., 2009).

As regards their implications on the professional development of educators, the choice of which model to use and its effects are influenced by a variety of factors, including the goals of the professional development, the characteristics of the participating teachers, the available resources, and the allotted time (Eun, 2019). Further, it can sometimes be more effective to combine two or more models (Guskey, 2000), and adjustments are often made to fit the demands of local conditions. Therefore, no theory will ever be able to fully explain and predict all the processes and mechanisms involved in the outcomes of teacher professional development (Eun, 2019).

Professional Development of Educators

Participation in professional development is vital for expanding teacher knowledge and improving practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Thurlings & den Brok, 2017; Gheyssens et al., 2020) to close teacher quality gaps (Goldhaber et al., 2019; Haycook & Crawford, 2008). Professional development is a comprehensive, long-term, and rigorous strategy for increasing the efficacy of teachers and principals in promoting student achievement (The National Staff Development Council [NSDC], 2009). “In-
service,” “training,” “continuing education,” “staff development,” and “self-improvement” are all terms frequently used interchangeably with the term “professional development” (Bredeson, 2002). Lectures, action research, workshops, reflective journals, and collaborative planning all constitute examples of professional development activities. Despite the criticisms it attracts (Lieberman & Miller, 2014; Little, 1993), a conventional in-service training model is still the most common type of professional development offered in many school districts (Tooley & White, 2018; Wei et al., 2010). Stein et al. (1999) contrasted traditional in-service staff development approaches and what they called a new professional development model (See Figure 1). These forms of professional development support a paradigm of teaching and learning in which students' roles consist of practicing and memorizing straightforward facts and skills, while teachers’ roles include demonstrating procedures, assigning tasks, and grading students. The “new model” presented a polar opposite to this approach, using “multiple professional development strategies to build teacher capacity to understand the subject matter, pedagogy, and student thinking” (Stein et al., 1999, p. 263).

ESEA section 8101(42) defines “professional development” as activities that are sustained, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused (S. 1177, Section 8002, page 295, paragraph 42). Academics and researchers define professional development in education as a systematic gathering and combining of factual data to validate knowledge, skills, attitudes, and classroom practice to promote programs and student learning (Cannon et al., 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2015; Latina, 2015). According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), professional development refers to
learning that leads to changes in teacher classroom practices and improvements in student learning outcomes.
A substantial body of research is aimed at establishing a clear distinction between the terms “professional development” and “professional learning,” according to which the latter aims to bring system-wide changes in student outcomes (Archibald et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017; Labone & Long, 2016). Many researchers in the field understand professional development as something that happens to teachers, associating it with activities such as one-off seminars, workshops, or lectures, often under a one-size-fits-all approach. In contrast, when well-designed, professional learning is interactive, maintained over time, and customized according to the teacher’s needs (Archibald et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Labone & Long, 2016). Therefore, many prefer “professional learning” over “professional development” because
it provides a broader, more accurate description. However, in this study, the term “professional development” describes these activities to maintain consistency with the terminology used in the district of the study (Archibald et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Labone & Long, 2016). Professionals have an implicit duty to maintain high-quality practice supported by the explicit obligations of professional standards (Friedman & Phillips, 2004). Therefore, high quality, professional development must be delivered to impact practice. Furthermore, for professional development to influence student achievement, the teacher practice designated for change must relate to student learning so that more students may learn at higher levels (Archibald et al., 2011). The following characteristics of high-quality professional development are consistent with those identified by researchers: (a) alignment with school goals, state and district standards, assessments, and other professional learning activities, including formative teacher evaluation; (b) a focus on core content and modeling of teaching strategies for the content; (c) inclusion of opportunities for active learning of new teaching strategies; (d) provision of opportunities for collaboration among teachers; and (e) inclusion of embedded follow-up and continuous feedback (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone et al., 2002; Garet et al., 2001).

Evidence suggests that high-quality professional development experiences should facilitate opportunities for teachers to engage as learners, build pedagogical and disciplinary knowledge, and co-construct and enact new visions of practice in context (Linn et al., 1999; Loucks-Horsley et al., 1998; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Radinsky et al., 2001). One approach to professional development that is inclusive of all the aforementioned is job-embedded professional development (JEPD) (Croft et al., 2010),
which refers to teacher learning grounded in day-to-day teaching practice and designed to improve instructors’ content-specific instructional techniques to boost student learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Hirsh, 2009). Moreover, JEPD is predominantly school- or classroom-based, and once it is integrated into the workday, instructors analyze and solve real-world challenges of practice as part of a cycle of continuous improvement (Hawley & Valli, 1999; NSDC, 2010). This collaborative and continuous process emerges from the school community and establishes a direct link between learning and application in everyday practice, thereby necessitating active teacher participation in inquiry-type work (Hawley & Valli, 1999). Further, high-quality JEPD aligns with the state’s academic achievement requirements, local educational agencies, and school development goals (Hirsh, 2009).

The necessary conditions to support high-quality job-embedded professional development include (a) providing teachers with opportunities to learn, (b) developing their collaborative skills through professional learning in a community and as a community; and (c) enhancing the skills of JEPD facilitators (Archibald et al., 2011). Furthermore, NSDC (2001) has created a comprehensive set of guidelines to aid teachers and administrators in creating professional development that improves all students’ learning. Figure 2 presents the guiding questions for the development of effective professional development adapted from NSDC’s context, process, and content requirements (William & Mary Training & Technical Assistance Center [T/TAC W&M] & Sulzberger, 2003).
Administrators and teacher educators who plan professional development experiences for their school or district should explore the critical professional development models before selecting the most appropriate approach after reviewing the standards for effective professional development. There are many professional development models, including training, observations/assessments, development (or improvement) projects, study groups, inquiry (action research), and individually guided activities.
Training is the type of professional development with which educators are most familiar. Training can refer to a workshop, seminar, or other large-group presentation. Presenters and those responsible for planning and facilitating the training should collaborate to define the training objectives that will guide the content of the training to provide a relevant presentation.

Observation/assessment refers to a professional development model that provides educators with the knowledge of a specific practice or skill through collegial observation and feedback. Peer observations of course design, instructional practices, or classroom management are typical examples of such activities. Here, both the observer and the observed benefit from the observation and subsequent analysis of strengths and areas for possible improvement.

Teachers frequently receive invitations to join a curriculum committee or a school improvement team. As they work with various people on development or improvement projects, they obtain new expertise and learn to accept varied perspectives (e.g., those belonging to administrators, parents, and community members). Educators who work on growth or improvement initiatives are interested in these committees or teams because the work directly links to their professional obligations.

Colleagues who regularly gather to discuss how their instruction influences students’ learning constitute teacher study groups (TSGs) (Firestone et al., 2020), which differ from PLCs and lesson studies in that their content is preplanned using a scope and sequence as well as empirical research (Firestone et al., 2020). Educators in small groups concentrate on different parts of a subject or issue.
Professional development participants involved in an inquiry or action research process utilize a systematic strategy to study how a change in a specific practice affects teaching and learning. The five stages of the inquiry/action research model are as follows:

- Identifying a problem or question that all participants are interested in; addressing the requirements of all learners (e.g., by differentiating instruction)
- Gathering and analyzing data relevant to the problem or question, such as student performance data in the classroom
- Reviewing relevant professional literature and research findings for the problem or topic
- Choosing a course of action, putting the plan into action, and assessing the results (Cohen et al., 2017)

Educators who participate in individually guided activities set their professional learning objectives and choose activities they believe will help them achieve those objectives. This professional development approach offers several flexible options that allow facilitators to tailor participants’ professional development experiences. Individually guided activities include professional portfolios, reflective journaling, and video/audio self-assessments. In addition, this method includes the following steps:

- Identifying a specific need or interest
- Developing a strategy to address the indicated need or interest
- Completing learning activities
- Evaluation of whether the learning met the identified needs or not
- Mentoring to pair effective educators with less experienced colleagues
One should note that to affect a specific professional development outcome, certain delivery modalities are more appropriate than others are (Collins, 2000). For example, when providing professional development for a particular teaching skill or instructional strategy, the mastery of new classroom management techniques is the targeted outcome, and in this context, training with follow-up activities has the highest efficacy. On the other hand, inquiry methods are most effective when tackling challenging issues related to raising student achievement or addressing complex problems dealing with improvement (Collins, 2000). Table 3 outlines a variety of outcomes for professional learning and their estimated effectiveness. As the table shows, Sulzberger (2003) synthesized the research on professional development and teacher change, revealing that when the desired outcome of professional development is gaining insight into how students learn and improve student achievement, inquiry methods yield the highest effectiveness estimates.

Figure 3. Sulzberger’s (2003) Effectiveness Estimate for Five Models of Professional Development
Professional development models and outcomes are only two of a variety of variables to consider when designing BL initiatives (Garone et al., 2020). In 2019, an analysis of qualitative data from 15 articles on teacher professional development utilizing OBL generated six synthesized findings pertaining to (a) the design and development of a supportive teacher professional development program and environment, (b) the determination of the overall goals and relevance, (c) the acknowledgment of strategies associated with the transition to BL, (d) the acknowledgment of the existing context, (e) the need to address the teacher change associated with the transition to BL, and (f) the
dissemination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding BL and evaluating professional development (Philipsen et al., 2019).

Given the rising popularity of online and blended courses (Redmond, 2011) and the significant changes that BL has undergone (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Means et al., 2013), their necessity—and in high quality at that—is obvious. To that end, researchers (Philipsen et al., 2019; Tschida et al., 2016) contend that in-service teachers transitioning from in-person to online instruction need to engage in activities beyond merely posting a course online. The next step in developing effective BL professional development is to concentrate on evaluation and accountability for their design. This is especially important now that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a dramatic change in the use and integration of digital teaching tools in higher education (Garone et al., 2020).

**Metrics for Measuring Outcomes of Professional Development**

Evaluations of professional development programs are rare and frustrating for decision-makers as they attempt to figure out which methods, approaches, and programs to use to fulfill their specific goals (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2011). However, these evaluations are necessary as they (1) provide evidence of effectiveness and efficiency to decision-makers and funders, whether it is a foundation or taxpayers (via the school board, county or state legislature, or the federal government); (2) facilitate program improvements or decisions to scale up or discontinue; (3) ensure that teachers’ time and investment were not (and will not be) wasted; and (4) advance the field (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2011).

A frequently applied approach to evaluating professional development is the Kirkpatrick model of 1959, which comprises five essential stages or degrees of
information to consider when evaluating professional progress in supervisory training programs in business and industry. However, Kirkpatrick’s model has seen limited use in education due to its lack of explanatory power. For example, it helps answer a variety of “what” queries, but it falls short when it comes to discussing the “why” questions (Alliger & Janak, 1989; Holton, 1996).

As Figure 4 demonstrates, Guskey’s adaptation of Kirkpatrick’s model includes five stages that range from simple to more sophisticated evaluation levels. The critical questions at each level focus on how to acquire that information, what to measure, and how to use that information.
In the literature, there is a dearth of studies focused on identifying evaluative components applied to BL (Garone et al., 2022). However, previous studies have applied the aforementioned five levels of evaluation to provide a simple evaluation framework through which online learning communities may begin to establish best practices (Burns, 2011; Douglas & Merzdorf, 2020; Quinn et al., 2019). Research exploring teachers’ responses to the characteristics and practices of the online program could potentially improve the efficacy of the oTRP in meeting the outcomes set for the program (Lay et al., 2020).
Summary of the Literature Review

This chapter provided an overview of learning theories and the history of teacher professional development. Moreover, it also explored JEPD activities and recommendations for current online teacher professional development and BL. The literature review revealed significant contextual gaps in the research because hitherto it had mainly concentrated on face-to-face learning; elementary and middle school levels; and mathematics, science, and English language arts using quantitative methods. Thus, this review revealed a dearth of research that is inclusive of teachers’ voices and, accordingly, called for the investigation of other underexplored areas (Dede et al., 2009; Borko et al., 2010) necessary for the development of a practical design as well as the implementation framework and informing practice (Ketelhut et al., 2006). The use of PLCs is a strategy that transcends professional development modalities. Simultaneously, there is a wealth of research on the connection between effective PLCs and increased student achievement and teacher job satisfaction, although the literature on the impact of vertically aligned vPLCs, BL, and teachers’ perceptions of participation in this context is limited.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this study, I explored OTPD in the context of a vertically aligned vPLC to understand teachers’ perceptions of professional development design and their impact on practice.

This chapter describes and justifies the research methodology used for this qualitative case study. In particular, it delineates the research process involved in answering the research questions regarding teachers’ perceptions of professional development delivered in a BL modality.

Structurally, I organized Chapter 3 as follows. First, I rationalize the choice of a qualitative case study research design and explain the strengths and limitations of this analytical strategy. Then, I describe the context of the qualitative case study. I follow this with a discussion of the various sources and the corresponding collection procedures used to obtain the data and analyze them. Afterward, I discuss my process for exploring my positionality as a practitioner-scholar undertaking research in the school district that employs me. Finally, I describe the strategies by which I ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings this study generated were identified.

Research Methods and Design: A Qualitative Case Study

I employed a qualitative research approach to facilitate a comprehensive view of the diverse data collected. This is because the present study aimed to examine behavior specialists’ perspectives, experiences, and interactions, and qualitative research provides
an understanding of the inquiry process—in this case, the design and implementation of a BL cycle and its associated social or human problems (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Further, this approach provides a more comprehensive picture of the participants’ experience participating in professional learning using various data acquired in the online learning context (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Case studies are also an appropriate methodological choice when the investigator has little control over the occurrences, when they want to examine a current phenomenon in a real-life setting, and when the lines between the two are blurred (Yin, 2018). In this study, each behavior specialist generated unique data reflective of the diverse participation, distinctive program climates, cultures, and student needs.

In this case study, I explored the construction of an OBL cycle facilitating the collaborative inquiry of a vertically aligned vPLC. Yin (2018) defined a case study in terms of two attributes: scope and features. Concerning the scope, this case study is an in-depth examination of an approach to providing JEPD to secondary, public school behavior specialists, which considered all the environmental conditions or context-specific circumstances that validate the need for such an approach. Concerning the features, this case study coped with a diverse group of learners, with varied professional conditions and in multiple school climates, servicing multiple students with highly individualized instructional plans, which rely on numerous sources of evidence and support the approaches to the design of the learning.

When designing a case study, researchers must make two decisions: the first is choosing between conducting a single-case study and a series of case studies, and the second is choosing between a holistic and an embedded design (Oyelami & Olivier,
A researcher may study the case as a whole with a holistic design but may look at the subunits of a case separately with an embedded design. Thus, the choice between holistic and embedded designs depends on the case’s scope. A basic situation that necessitates the careful examination of a single occurrence is best suited to a holistic approach. Hence, the present study employed a multiple-case holistic design (Oyelami & Olivier, 2015).

According to Creswell (2018), the methods used to analyze social or human problems emerge from philosophical presumptions through an interpretive lens. Data collected in a natural environment are sensitive to the subjects and the environment and are inductive to identifying trends and themes. I used a single-case holistic research approach for this qualitative case study (see Figure 4). According to Yin (2018), a focus on “how” and “why” inquiries tends to be more explanatory and calls for the utilization of a case study. My data in this case study consist of interviews, work products, and direct observation of the events under study, as I sought to explain the rationale behind a decision or decisions, the method of execution, and the outcomes, which directly corresponds to the goal of the present study. Thus, I approached the phenomena in this study through an interpretive lens that is relativist in nature. The constructivist methodology and relativism are complementary, as a relativist approach seeks to illuminate the subject of research by incorporating diverse viewpoints. In this study, I intended to capture the perceptions of a cross-section of highly specialized educators to understand how participation in this BL has the potential to either change or not change their professional practice.

**Strengths and Limitations of Qualitative Case Studies**
Case study methods have significant advantages compared to quantitative or statistical models, which involve measuring and operationalizing qualitative variables (constructs), identifying new variables or hypotheses, and examining plausible causative mechanisms in specific cases that may incorporate complex data and provide historical context (Collier & Mahoney, 1996). A case study aids an examiner in comprehending a phenomenon while simultaneously considering all circumstances surrounding it. Such a circumstance distinguishes a case study from an experiment, which commonly takes place in a controlled setting with random assignment of participants to either a treatment or control group. An experiment may be best suited for an environment with the complexities posed by educating students with behavioral disabilities in their least restrictive environments (Yin, 2018).

This study was limited to no more than six subjects in one urban public school district because of district-specific requirements for the professional development of all participating certified staff and job duty constraints. The reduced emphasis on statistical analysis means qualitative researchers cannot generalize their findings beyond the bounds of the case (Yin, 2018). Moreover, qualitative researchers are less concerned with the representativeness of a sample or the specific strategies used to draw a probability sample (Neuman, 2009). As a result, many authors who promote the qualitative approach as a research methodology never go into depth about sampling procedures, much less the particular strategy for selecting research participants or informants (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Advocates of the case study methodology suggest that one of the benefits of its use is that while it typically investigates small populations, it does allow for deep exploration (Yin, 2018).
Case study methodology can be complicated because “case study strategies and techniques are not as well-defined when compared to other forms of qualitative research” (Yin, 2018, p. 109). To address this difficulty, I created “well-defined case study analytic strategies to define priorities for what is being analyzed and why” (Yin, 2018, p. 109). Yin went on to suggest that the researcher should primarily determine the quality of the research. As regards interpretations, my experiences have the potential to influence the results of the study—that is, the interviews I conducted with my colleagues, my familiarity with the district resources, and my current role supporting the program could have affected the outcome of the research. In addition, some participants might have had misconceptions about my research position or my district responsibilities, which could have affected their degree of participation or candor. Therefore, I used an inquiry-based approach to designing JEPD. Our learning community deconstructed the learning through a joint reflection and analysis via collaborative inquiry (Stoll, 2010).

**Context of the Study**

In this study, I sought to contribute to an existing professional development research base devoid of the voices of special education teachers. Fayette County Public Schools is an urban school district in Lexington, Kentucky that provides services to approximately 40,000 students, over 4,000 of whom have disabilities. In this district, six high schools and five program schools meet the needs of approximately 1,300 (26%) students with identified disabilities and employ 90 special education teachers, including three resource specialists supporting grades 9–14.

*Table 1. High School Enrollment of Students with Disabilities in Fayette County Public Schools*
The Local Special Educational System

In the academic year 2015–2016, the Department of Special Education began implementing the Co-Teach for Learning (CT4L) initiative, along with promoting intensive professional development, coaching, and support through the Continuous Classroom Improvement (CCI) model, which involved taking a “Plan, Do, Study, Act” (PDSA) approach to continuous improvement. The continued use of an integrated systems approach by the education system seeks to advance the quality of special education services by providing an ever-improving educational value to students with disabilities by enhancing overall school effectiveness, use of resources, and capabilities (Shipley, 2022).

By the summer of 2018, 100% of high and program schools’ special education leadership teams received ongoing professional learning to support CCI. In addition, the academic year 2017–2018 marked the adoption of PDSA by high school special education PLCs, which comprised vertically aligned special education leaders from high and program schools across the district, teaching strategies by content focus area. Learning Strategies, Literacy Strategies, and Math Strategies PLCs have been functioning successfully since 2016, with the addition of the Behavior Specialist PLC in 2018.

The Department of Special Education's High School Support Team’s work (see Appendix A) and support model (see Appendix B) is driven by a mission, vision, and theory of action to ensure that 100% of students with disabilities graduate and achieve
positive post-secondary outcomes. This education system’s work utilizes a continuous improvement plan, which was in its third 30-, 60-, and 90-day plan cycle at the time of this study. Strategic priorities for all school-based teams align with the National Dropout Prevention Center’s effective strategies for dropout prevention (Appendix C). Previous years’ improvement cycles focused on developing district-level capacity (2020–2021) and a systemic approach to planning professional development for special educators (2021–2022).

The PLC

The PLC participating in this study has been functioning as such since the 2018–2019 academic year. Representation in this group included one behavior specialist from each of the six Fayette County District high schools who collectively make a vertically aligned district PLC of otherwise “singleton” staff members. As per a strategy developed to combat the singleton conundrum, this team of educators considered how standards, curriculum, assessment, and instruction align across the six high schools and established a vertically aligned PLC (Leane & Yost, 2022). This strategy addressed the shortage of teachers who share the same subject areas, common goals, and interests as barriers to effective participation in a PLC experienced by many special educators (DuFour, 2006).

Following the establishment of such a team, the next step guiding the implementation of a singleton collaborative team model involved identifying the target skills worthy of the PLC’s shared attention (Leane & Yost, 2022). An obvious challenge experienced by behavior specialists is that by providing highly individualized behavioral interventions and specially designed instruction, the student performance levels on each teacher’s caseload are intrinsically different. In Fayette County Public Schools, each high school
behavior specialist shares the implementation of the PASS program, a guiding framework for the delivery of services (see Appendix D). The framework establishes targeted practices that, if improved, will make an essential difference in the interventions and supports provided to students (Poole & Caperton-Brown, 2009). To implement this collaborative team approach, one needs an evaluative tool to generate the data needed to engage in the work of an actual PLC, using it to improve professional practice and student learning (DuFour, 2006). Furthermore, recommendations for vertical teaming in PLCs suggest focusing on a common essential skill the improvement of which is a priority for each participant (Hansen, 2015).

Like many, the high school behavior specialists’ PLC began functioning as a vPLC in the academic year 2019–2020 due to the COVID-19-related school closures. The district continues to implement the vPLC model as a strategy to address an additional barrier to PLC implementation, which is the lack of shared meeting time among its participants across campuses (DeFour, 2006).

**Data Sources**

In this study, I drew upon data from three sources: document analysis, one-on-one semi-structured interviews, and a group-level assessment (GLA). Qualitative document analysis (QDA) is a comprehensive, reflective process that makes it possible to derive meaning from documentary evidence.

Methods employed in natural settings, such as this field research, rarely have predetermined sample sizes. Thus, the sample size will depend on how many people in those environments volunteer as participants (Levy, 2017).
I selected a purposive sample of six behavior specialists derived from each of the high schools in the district. The participation criteria included employment as a certified special education teacher, assignment to the role of behavior specialist in one of six high schools in the district, and current implementation of the PASS program to provide interventions and support to students with emotional and behavioral disorders or those otherwise identified as behaviorally at-risk. The sample also included six teachers—one from each high school—with anywhere from zero to 8 years of experience as a behavior specialist. Although this sample size is rather small, the research design illuminated the viewpoints of a highly specialized group of professionals among a subsystem of special educators, the types of perspectives that Opfer and Pedder (2011) considered vital to conceptualizing teacher professional learning.

I used the school district email to send an initial introduction and consent letter to all six high school behavior specialists. This informed consent explained the purpose of the study, the methodology, and the voluntary nature of the participation (See Appendix E). I preserved the anonymity of the participants by using pseudonyms for the teachers and their schools. Moreover, I utilized a private space for conducting the interviews. Before their use, I submitted all correspondence and forms for review and approval by both the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Louisville and the participating school district.

In qualitative research, purposeful or judgmental sampling is appropriate, especially when selecting participants for specific conditions. Purposive sampling is useful for case studies in three situations. The first is when a researcher wants to select unique cases that are particularly instructive, such as vertically aligned or singleton PLCs.
The second is when a researcher wants to select members of a hard-to-reach, specialized population, such as high school behavior specialists. The third is when a researcher wants to identify specific types of cases for in-depth investigation, such as a specific aspect of district-wide special education programming. Here, the goal is to understand those specific circumstances (Neuman, 2009) and not generalize the results.

For this study, I drew upon three data sources: one-on-one semi-structured interviews, a document review, and GLA. Upon completing the professional learning plan, I asked the participants to review it and provide feedback through a semi-structured interview. The design changes emerged from the participant feedback, and a revised plan implemented soon after. The collection of the document review data occurred using an online learning platform. The design of the classroom followed a framework (Figure 5) for TPD, incorporating ideas on how to educate adult learners in an online or BL environment and identifying crucial elements of TPD methods (Philipsen et al., 2019). After the learning, I collected the data regarding perceived impact using the GLA.

Figure 5. Philipsen et al.'s (2019) Comprehensive Framework for Important Components of TPD That Targets OBL
Semi-Structured Interviews

The foundation of a semi-structured interview is human interaction, as it allows the interviewer to modify questions to obtain information most beneficial to the study from the participant flexibly (Qu & Dumay, 2011). In this study, I undertook semi-structured interviews to assess the participants’ opinions, statements, and convictions, allowing me to elicit narratives about their personal experiences as specialists (Nohl, 2009). The participants provided feedback on the plan’s design by answering a combination of “how” and “why” questions (see Appendix F) framed by the protocols selected for use in the learning cycle and derived from a professional development evaluation model (Guskey, 2000). The recorded interview sessions did not exceed a 90-minute planning period, and the discussion took place in a single session. I used two recording devices to ensure the reliability of the recording in case one device malfunctioned.

Qualitative Document Analysis

Participants generated QDA data via artifact submission during the BL collaborative inquiry. QDA is a comprehensive, reflective process that allows a
researcher to derive meaning from documented evidence. Applied in a natural setting, as in this research, the methods employed in QDA rarely include predetermined sample sizes. Thus, the sample size depends on how many people in those environments choose to participate (Levy, 2017).

Collaborative inquiry is a professional learning model that entails a practical approach to improving and sustaining meaningful changes in practice (Katz, 2010). In this study, a four-step model developed for facilitators leading school teams through an official inquiry process was applied (Donahoo, 2013). The four stages of collaborative inquiry—namely, framing the problem, examining evidence, documenting, and sharing—are the same as those of an action research model; however, a collaborative inquiry is uniquely interested in collaborative work conducted by a group of educators driven by improving student outcomes (Donahoo, 2013). An online learning platform generated and housed the data produced by the collaborative inquiry process.

**Group Level Assessment**

GLA is a qualitative and participatory large-group method in which the relevant stakeholders collaboratively generate and evaluate timely and valid data, resulting in the development of participant-driven data and relevant action plans. Vaughn and Lohmueller (1998) identified numerous benefits of using GLA. First, GLA facilitates the identification of hidden agendas and problematic issues. Second, in GLA, stakeholders are responsible for honesty in the presentation and validity of data. Third, the interaction of multiple purposes and agendas shape the phenomena under investigation. Finally, stakeholders are more likely to *buy into* data they generate and evaluate; therefore, they are more prepared to act on the outcomes of the process.
Analysis of artifacts, field notes, and work products derived from participation in the BL using a group discussion protocol generated additional perception data collected during the GLA. I provided the participants with the details of the learning cycle before obtaining formal consent. Guskey’s five critical levels of professional development evaluation, as well as the emerging themes established in the analysis of previously generated interview data, framed the questions generated for the GLA. I did not conduct the group discussion protocol until I obtained each participant’s written and verbal consent. I discussed risks, benefits, and collected signed informed consents in the recruitment phase before the fieldwork and data collection began (Gallagher et al., 2010).

**Data Analysis**

Over the course of the study, data collection and analysis occurred concurrently (Miles et al., 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The influence of constructivism, including the core tenets of andragogy and social cognitive theory, guided the choice of conducting semi-structured interviews, as they allowed the participants to discuss the professional learning plan’s design and implementation. Later, I coded the participants’ interview transcriptions to assign meaning to descriptors (Miles et al., 2014). The use of an inductive process promoted themes concerning the participants’ perceptions to emerge (Saldana, 2016). According to Saldana (2016), the methodical analysis of transcripts at the elemental level occurs first. I assigned descriptive labels to chunks of data in order to summarize the findings. This inductive approach resulted in words or brief phrases derived from the participants that guided the development of the GLA prompts.

In addition to the coding of transcripts, a critical examination of associated work products produced themes and categories for interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
These included but were not limited to transcriptions of synchronous discussions, shared
documents, and collaborative feedback. In addition, the coding process established
emerging themes and patterns (Creswell, 2018) to create open-ended questions for the
GLA process. To analyze the GLA data sets in this study, I employed a deductive coding
approach. Deductive coding is a strategy used in qualitative research that is based on an
organizing framework, which provides the themes that lead to the coding (Bradley et al.,
2007; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Burnard et al., 2008). In this study, I used the five critical
levels of professional development evaluation described by Guskey (1999) to develop an
a priori codebook.

**Ethical Considerations**

Gathering data from individuals and about people is an integral part of social
science research. As a result, moral standards demand that the researcher safeguard the
research participants and provide them with all relevant information about the risks and
benefits of their participation (Creswell, 2011). All the participants in this study were
adults, and the study operated within a pre-existing framework of professional norms
established by the vPLC (see Appendix G).

**The Process for Exploring Researcher Positionality**

As Milner (2007) warned, the prospects may be hindered when practitioners fail
to consider their students’ racial and cultural backgrounds in their P–12 work and instead
adopt color- and culture-blind beliefs, ideologies, and practices (Johnson, 2002; Milner,
2007). With the potential to influence the practice of professionals meeting a very diverse
group of students, the questions guiding this exploration of my positionality followed
Millner’s (2007) framework for researching the self, the self in relation to others,
engaged reflection and representation, and shift from the self to the system. As my positionality could influence my perception, learning, and potential next steps related to the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018), I attempted to refrain from drawing conclusions from my own experiences and opinions, which could have influenced a participant’s perspective (Homes, 2020). Furthermore, Kennedy (2016) raised concerns regarding the function of motivation in professional development in terms of research design, the selection of facilitators, and their level of expertise. Being aware of my indoctrination into a continuous classroom improvement model due to the prioritization of this work by the district of study and my current employment, I understand that I am motivated by and most comfortable with inquiries aimed at improving student-learning opportunities.

Strategies for ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability present a more persuasive case by demonstrating their trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba expanded the idea of trustworthiness by adding the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability to complement the traditional criteria of validity and reliability. I applied strategies such as ensuring methodological coherence, sampling sufficiency, developing a dynamic relationship between sampling, collecting and analyzing data, thinking theoretically, and engaging in theory development to ensure both the reliability and validity of the data (Morse et al., 2002).

I ensured the credibility of this study by utilizing the following strategies: (1) engaging in prolonged engagement with behavior specialists, persistent programming observations, data collection triangulation, and researcher triangulation; (2) utilizing thick descriptions so that those who seek to transfer the findings to their site can judge
transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985); and (3) ensuring that the research process is logical, traceable, and documented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Methodological coherence guarantees alignment between the method’s components and the research questions. The interconnectedness of qualitative research necessitates that the method, data, and analytical techniques all complement the question. As the study progressed, the methodological coherence of the study (Appendix G) was adapted to modified research questions, data collection, or analysis techniques. The sample consisted of practitioners who are knowledgeable about and specialized to the degree necessitated by the research topic, was considered suitable. This approach guaranteed efficient and effective category saturation, with the best possible data and the least amount of dross.

According to Morse (1991), saturation and replication are signs of sampling adequacy. The concurrent collection and analysis of data established a mutual interaction between what is known and what one needs to know (Morse et al., 2002). This pacing was an intentional strategy to ensure validity and reliability.

Furthermore, confirmability is concerned with ensuring that the researcher’s interpretations and findings emerge from the data and require the researcher to demonstrate how the researcher arrives at their conclusions and interpretations (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Confirmability is established when credibility, transferability, and dependability are all met (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). For this reason, I communicated my theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices (see Appendix H) so that others could understand the rationale behind the decision making (Koch, 2004).
Summary

In this chapter, I explained the research methodology used in this study and the procedures I followed to explore the perceptions of an OTPD developed to be implemented in the BL format with a previously existing vertically aligned vPLC in Fayette County Public Schools. Furthermore, I discussed the research design, data sources, data collection, and data analysis methods in the context of the study. Finally, I concluded this chapter with a discussion on how I explored my positionality as a researcher and the ethical considerations of my study.
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The purpose of my exploratory case study was to investigate teachers’ perceptions of the design and enactment of a job-embedded, BL TPD plan to facilitate the collaborative inquiry of a vPLC. Six teachers from each of Fayette County Public Schools provided their opinions of the BL professional development plan and shared what they believed would be the impact of the plan on their practice.

The data collected comprised semi-structured interviews with the participants, professional learning work products, and synchronous learning transcripts. An initial analysis generated inductively coded themes I utilized to guide the development of questions for a culminating modified GLA (mGLA). The following two research questions guided the study:

RQ1: What are the participating educators’ perceptions of the BL design and implementation?

RQ2: How do the participants perceive the impact of blended learning on their practice?

The first section discusses research positionality briefly. Then, the second section, Data Collection and Analysis Overview, introduces the BL plan design, along with the participants, patterns, commonalities, and discrepancies found in the study. Finally, the third section, Findings, organizes the patterns and themes according to pre- and post-
learning views of the corresponding research questions. The chapter concludes with a summary of the results.

**Research Positionality**

Before beginning the analysis, I made sure to review my own positionality concerning the research topic and the context of the study. For this, I used the Structured Ethical Reflection tool (SER; see Appendix I), along with the framework created by Milner (2007; see Appendix J) to explore my professional, racial, and cultural awareness. The SER tool, developed by Stevens et al. (2016), helped me consider the power dynamics and potential ethical issues among the participants, while Milner’s framework prompted me to reflect on my own position in relation to others, the system, and myself.

At the time the research project began, my relationship with the participants was that of a colleague and fellow behavior specialist in the field. Although we were already familiar with each other due to the previous facilitation of the vPLC, I still worked to maintain the existing supportive and trusting relationship with all the participants. As a behavior specialist and former teacher educator, it was important for me to apply continuous improvement approaches to professional learning that other behavior specialists would consider useful and a valuable use of their teaching time.

I provided copies of the participants’ responses for their review, which is an integral part of creating trustworthiness in qualitative research (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Stake, 1995). Researchers refer to this procedure as member checking, among other names such as informant feedback or respondent validation. I undertook member checking to increase the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability of the study. In this study, the member-checking processes included
narrative validity checks of raw interview transcriptions, coded interview data before their use in the GLA, and individual post-GLA correctness checks that utilize interview transcriptions. The continual member checking throughout the process led to opportunities for the researcher to reflect and make corrections to any misinterpretations or misunderstandings, thereby ensuring the authenticity and accurate representation of the participants’ voices. Further, collecting participant feedback in multiple settings and across 16 weeks of participation enabled triangulation and provided clarity regarding the perceptions of the teachers on the BL plan presented to them.

**Overview of the Development and Delivery of a vPLC**

The professional learning plan for the vPLC employed a comprehensive framework for the important components of teacher professional development, specifically targeting OBL (Philipsen et al., 2019) and incorporating the characteristics of effective professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). To promote transferability, the plan closely followed the collaborative inquiry process and Donahoo’s (2013) *Collaborative Inquiry for Educators: A Facilitator's Guide to School Improvement*. This guide provided a replicable process replicable in other contexts, situations, times, and with other groups of professionals (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Further, I structured the BL plan design process (Appendix K) according to Philipsen et al.’s (2019) recommendations for OBL.

**Designing and Developing a Supportive Teacher Professional Development Program and Environment for OBL**

As a certified special education teacher responsible for providing services to students with learning and behavior disorders, I designed and supported the learning
experience. I implemented PASS in a high school setting for seven of my 12 years in the field of education. Later, I supported and evaluated secondary PASS programs as a teacher leader, special education consultant, and resource specialist. As the learning developed and the product of the collaborative inquiry was established, the examples of existing program entry criteria (Appendix L), citations of existing texts, example student data tables (see Figure 6), and sample student narratives were provided to support participant learning.

Figure 6. Support and Feedback from Week 7 of Learning: Example Student Data Profile

A systematic approach for the design of the professional learning plan involved teaching the participants about the collaborative inquiry process step by step through mini-demonstration videos (Donahoo, 2013) while focusing on their learning (Nihuka & Voogt, 2012). Moreover, a continuous-use design (Gregory & Salmon, 2011) was integrated by recording all synchronous learning sessions, using the platform’s chat features, and uploading all associated work products. This ensured that the teachers who
participated in the learning process could at any point of the cycle still log in to see existing and future teachers, questions, discussions, and work.

The plan entailed multiple provisions for regular and just-in-time support, the first of which was a flexible plan presented in a draft form with feedback welcome from all. Oliver, the behavior specialist at Lake View, provided this feedback. Hannah, the behavior specialist at Crescent Heights, made recommendations for the explicit inclusion and modification of start and end times to better support their learning needs.

Additionally, I modified the plan to provide additional time with content and facilitate increased participation in synchronous learning, as needed. Further, considerations were made for teacher perceptions of lack of time (Cornas-Quinn, 2011, Nihuka & Voogt, 2012, Phillips et al., 2019) concerning the scheduling of the synchronous learning sessions. The strategy of spreading out the training days across a 16-week learning cycle sought to increase the teachers’ perceptions of personal feasibility (Gregory & Salmon, 2013). The release of asynchronous learning modules on Thursday mornings provided participants one week to engage with the learning and support materials before the release of additional modules. Synchronous learning events held the following Wednesday (i.e., six days later) reviewed the learning, provided support to the group, and offered the opportunity for feedback.

**Acknowledgment of the Existing Context Regarding OBL**

To enhance the overall acceptance, the learning plan sought to support the existing context of the behavior specialists by taking institutional and personal planning, institutional characteristics, existing programs for TPD, and the financial component into account (Phillipsen et al., 2019). I conducted the study in the 2022–2023 academic year,
which marked the district’s second post-COVID-19 return to the classroom and the current superintendent’s second year on the job. For the district, this was a time of great change at the central office and in Fayette County Public Schools, as the high school support team was in flux and four out of the six high schools either began or ended the school year with announcements of changes in head principals. The position responsible for planning the professional development of this group of educators remained vacant for the entire school year. As regards other learning and support means for this group of professionals, there were none, despite the district-wide need for improved school climates and cultures on account of their ability to significantly enhance students’ academic, behavioral, and mental health outcomes (Thapa et al., 2013).

Following Philipsen et al.’s (2019) recommendations, considerable thought went into teacher workload and the time required for participation. The plan described the expected activities and outcomes to promote the teachers’ ability to adequately plan and estimate the workload (Ernest et al., 2013). An OBL approach offered learners convenience and control over when and where they engage, course materials, and activities while also being highly structured and efficient for both instructors and learners (Fadde & Vu, 2014). Teacher learning outcomes aligned the planning of possible tasks with the current teacher evaluation system’s professional capacities to make teachers feel more connected to the learning process (Gregory & Salmon 2013). Per Donahoo’s (2017) Collaborative Inquiry Guide, framed module design decisions were carefully considered and finally selected because of the existing theoretical support available in the literature (van den Akker, 2000) and alignment with the local context and district-wide expectations for PLCs. Additional benefits of this approach included reducing the costs
associated with professional development and increasing sustainability (Gregory & Salmon, 2013).

The financial planning component played a role as well. All the participants and I, the facilitator/researcher, were certified teachers employed by Fayette County Public Schools. As such, the teachers spread across seven buildings had seven different student support schedules and seven different planning periods. It was considered that the OBL design may increase engagement across environments (Fadde & Vu, 2014), and it was selected to accommodate the aforementioned scheduling barriers. Therefore, no teachers were asked or expected to participate in the learning process outside of their regularly scheduled workday. Consequently, no costs were accrued while replacing the planning of the learning process, procuring space, or replacing participating teachers.

Addressing the Teacher Change Associated with the Transition to OBL

Out of the six members of this vPLC, five had been participating in online learning since the 2019–2020 academic year. Although no concessions were planned and the question was not directly asked to the participants, concerns regarding their proficiency in using online learning tools were shared by three out of the six participants. Teachers who had more recently completed their master’s program online were less likely than those who had completed their last schooling synchronously and in person to report a hesitancy in participating or experiencing an impact on their participation rate. Hesitancy was determined due to comments such as “I’ll try,” “We will see,” and “I’m not great at….” Further, in none of the six instances was there ever a refusal to participate by this means expressed.
Determining the Overall Goals and Relevance of Teacher Professional Development for OBL

One of the overarching goals of the learning process was an increase in the implementation fidelity of the PASS program (Poole & Caperton-Brown, 2009), as it was designed (Appendix D) in alignment with the NDPC’s *Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention* (Appendix E). The topic listed in the posting of the professional development and the actual learning plan was “Collaborative Inquiry into PASS Programming: Exploring a Practitioner Identified Problem of Practice.” The professional development program offered an opportunity to engage in a collaborative inquiry into PASS program implementation aimed at strengthening the quality of programs and improving outcomes for students. The learning outcome was for the participants to gain knowledge of collaborative inquiry methods and skills through an examination of current practice. Educators were asked to work together to ask questions, develop theories of action, determine action steps, and assess the impact of their actions. Furthermore, the plan sought to address and provide evidence of relevant professional development indicators required for educators’ professional growth plans.

Acknowledgment of the Teacher Professional Development Strategies Associated with the Transition to OBL

In my study, no specific professional development strategies were associated with the transition to OBL, as it was implemented with a pre-existing vPLC. Nevertheless, the plan incorporated several characteristics of effective professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), including active learning, collaboration, use of models and modeling, coaching and expert support, feedback and reflection, and sustained duration.
Dissemination of Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes about OBL and Evaluating the Teacher Professional Development

The professional learning plan did not explicitly address pre-existing knowledge and skills related to OBL. However, there is evidence of their consideration in terms of planning in pre-existing vPLC support documents, such as the “Work of High School SPED Team” infographic (Appendix A), the “High School SPED Supports” infographic (Appendix B), and the “vPLC Guidance Document” (Appendix F). Participants had access to all of these documents in the online learning environment and reflected support systems, shared goals, and professional norms established before the implementation of this plan. The platform used for the experiment was the same online learning platform used to facilitate the vPLC during the COVID-19-related school closures.

I made all of these aforementioned documents and generated work products available to all members of the vPLC. They also had access to anonymous semi-structured interview transcripts and perception data framed by the five critical levels of professional development evaluation as described by Guskey (2000), following the recommendations for evaluating online teacher professional development (Garone et al., 2020). Member checking for narrative accuracy took place after the completion of these interviews, and I coded the data inductively for later use in the GLA. The professional development cycle occurred for 16 consecutive weeks, and the data collection and qualitative document analysis of artifacts generated by the participants during the professional development took place concurrently (Miles et al., 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These data were member checked for interpretive validity and presented during
the GLA. Moreover, I coded the GLA data deductively using the themes from the five critical levels of professional development evaluation (Guskey, 2000).

**Data Collection**

I provided the teachers with copies of the professional learning plan (see Appendix K) and interview questions (see Appendix E for the interview protocol) in advance of the scheduled interview and encouraged to prepare any feedback and or questions that they might have. With the educator participants, I attempted to engage in a meaningful and honest conversation about the plan so that the responses could be genuine and inform my investigation of their perspectives and concerns regarding the plan. As the behavior resource specialist serving high schools at the time of the plan’s design, I developed a BL plan that promoted the development of collective teacher efficacy and increased their access to instructional resources such as digital tools, content, and training to best support student success (Berry et al., 2021).

I collected these initial data through one-on-one semi-structured interviews. I transcribed and coded the data using deductive, a priori codes generated before the data analysis began (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022; Crabtree & Miller, 1999). The deductive analysis in this study used start codes derived from the research questions to first organize and sort data into the following predetermined categories: design, implementation, and impact. Once these organizational categories were established, I completed another round of coding based on professional learning effectiveness research, which addressed the design, implementation, and impact of teacher professional learning as well. The recurring themes were aligned to each category derived from the five critical levels of professional development evaluation (Guskey, 2000), providing descriptive
phrases to summarize the findings. Moreover, to ensure credibility, I engaged in constant reflection, acknowledging personal biases and ensuring clarity in my coding process. Further, I member checked coded semi-formal interview transcripts and analyzed work product data collected in the second round of data collection.

While engaging in the professional learning cycle, I provided the participants with the inductively coded synchronous learning transcripts as they became available, usually before the next scheduled synchronous learning session. Inductive analysis was used during the professional development plan to identify codes, categories, patterns, and themes as they emerged (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017; Miles et al., 2020). These codes and categories were not predetermined but rather identified and named as they emerged. Initial coding, including the identification and naming of essential concepts, was member checked weekly, compiled, and shared with participants before they participated in the mGLA. This process allowed for confirmation and ensured consistent interpretation while requiring constant reflection on my core values and research questions to prevent misinterpretation or lack of authenticity in the participants’ voices. All member checking and reviewing of coded transcripts occurred simultaneously during the project and completed before conducting the mGLA.

I analyzed all the previously collected data to guide the final round of data collection and analysis (Yin, 2014). I provided data tables to the participants for identification of data points and comparison points between the semi-structured interview data, the synchronous learning transcript data, and their own experiences. I concluded the study with the participants engaging in an online adaption of a traditional GLA (Vaughn, 2014; Vaughn & Lohmueller, 1998); referred to as mGLA. Like a traditional GLA, I
based the mGLA method on community and participant-centric principles, which I highlighted in Table 4.

**Table 2. Comparison of Traditional GLA with Modified GLA (mGLA)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional GLA Phases</th>
<th>mGLA Phases Including: Pre-, Online, and Post-session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Setting Climate: Consent gathered, overview, appreciate and set tone, introductions, and possible icebreaker</td>
<td>m1. Pre-Session - Generating Data: Participants respond to prompts on a Google slideshow sent by email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Generating Data: Participants respond to colorful, inviting prompts placed throughout the room</td>
<td>m2. Pre-session - Appreciating Responses: Participants review and process the responses of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Appreciating Responses: Participants review and process the responses of others</td>
<td>m3. Online Session - Setting Climate: Verbal consent, welcome and appreciative tone set, chat feature introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reflecting Individually: Participants identify themes on assigned prompts</td>
<td>m4. Online Session - Reflecting Individually: Participants identify themes on assigned prompts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Understanding Together: Small groups discuss data and themes, report out to large group</td>
<td>m5. Online Session - Understanding Together: Small groups discuss data and themes, report out to large group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Selecting Priorities: Large group discusses themes and decide on priority themes</td>
<td>m6. Online Session - Priorities and Actions: Large group discusses themes and decides on 3 actionable items from large group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Action Items: Large groups decide on actionable plans</td>
<td>m7. Post-session - Follow-Up: Each member receives an email to thank them for their time and participation; final transcripts and Google slideshow sent by email for member-checking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Participants**

Before the start of the study, I purposively selected seven teachers who comprised 100% of Fayette County Public Schools’ PASS behavior specialists for grades 9–12 to provide their feedback on the blended professional learning plan through their participation in semi-structured interviews. Out of the seven teachers, six chose to
participate in the study, and out of the teachers participating in the study, five were actively involved in the previously existing vPLC for a minimum of two years.

Behavior specialists in Fayette County Public Schools carry a caseload of 5–18 students at any given time. These teachers, certified in learning and behavior disorders, were expected to implement the PASS framework, which entails a series of research- and evidence-based positive behavior interventions and supports designed to provide services to students with disabilities who demonstrate intensive and chronic emotional-behavioral difficulties in the school setting (Poole & Caperton-Brown, 2009). According to Fayette County Public Schools’ guidance documents, the students on these specialists’ caseloads demonstrate two or more of the following behaviors across different settings (Appendix L): (1) a history of chronic misbehavior, (2) an increased risk of school failure because of misbehavior, and (3) participation in previous less intensive interventions without success.

Behavior specialists reported regular and frequent management of maladaptive behaviors, including failure to follow, skipping, disruptive behavior, verbal aggression toward staff, physical aggression, and regular collaboration with wraparound service providers to meet student needs. Collaborative work most often occurs with guidance counselors, previous case managers, mental health service providers, intake and treatment program representatives, social workers, and probation officers. These needs include but are not limited to housing and utilities, clothing, personal hygiene/self-care, legal services, and mental health services. As such, teachers in the role of PASS behavior specialists may demonstrate a higher rate of burnout than teachers serving students with intellectual disabilities (Banks & Necco, 1990; Hastings & Brown, 2002; Nicholas &
Sosnowsky, 2002; Ruble & McGrew, 2013). All the participants met the requisite criteria of the current assignment in the role of PASS behavior specialists. I collected information regarding their demographic backgrounds (see Table 3) and years of experience (see Table 4).

**Table 3. Demographic Data for High School Behavior Specialists**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants*</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pseudonyms

The diversity of this sample is not representative of district-wide educator diversity, and it is presented comparatively in Figures 7, 8, and 9. Behavior specialists in Fayette County Public Schools have varied backgrounds and years of experience in education and providing direct services for students with behavioral support needs, with years of experience in a behavioral support role across the participants ranging from 8 months to 12 years (See Table 9). Out of the teachers participating in the focus groups, 33% had 20–30 years of teaching experience, 33% had 10–19 years of experience, and 33% had 0–9 years of experience teaching. Furthermore, 16% of them had 10–20 years of behavioral support experience, while 83% had 0–9 years of behavioral support experience. Figures 7- 10 compare the sample group to all educators in Fayette County Public Schools.

**Table 4. Experiences of High School Behavior Specialists**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants*</th>
<th>PASS Program Site*</th>
<th>Site Lead Since</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Behavioral Support Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>Southwell High</td>
<td>2019–2020 SY</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Start - End SY</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah</td>
<td>Forest High</td>
<td>2020–2021 SY</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>Valley High</td>
<td>2015–2016 SY</td>
<td>30 years</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver</td>
<td>Lakeview High</td>
<td>2019–2020 SY</td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Westwood High</td>
<td>2022–2023 SY</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>Crescent Heights</td>
<td>2017–2018 SY</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pseudonyms*

Figure 7. Gender-based Comparison of High School Behavior Specialists with Fayette County Public Schools

Figure 8. Racial Comparison of High School Behavior Specialists with Fayette County Public Schools
Figure 9. Age-based Comparison of High School Behavior Specialists with Fayette County Public Schools

Figure 10. Years of Experience Comparison of High School Behavior Specialists with Fayette County Public Schools
**Liam.** Liam did not provide any elaborative information while answering many of the questions regarding the initial design of the professional learning plan. When presented with the opportunity to reflect on teacher learning opportunities in general, he indicated that he would prefer not to. He did not elaborate any further. However, he was more forthcoming when asked about the barriers to the success of professional learning in general. When asked whether the implementation of the BL plan could be successfully advocated, facilitated, and supported, he raised the issues of participant “buy-ins” and engagement rates and seemed skeptical regarding the BL plan, framing it as another professional development fad that is “going to be like everything else we do in education.” Further, he identified time as a lacking resource and despite the BL format, Liam indicated that he felt that due to the needs of his caseload students he did not have time for this and that the learning would have to occur after the regular school day.

Liam saw the potential benefits of the BL plan as an increase in communication between behavior specialists. In terms of potential impact, he pointed out the need for a program model that can be consistently implemented K-12 and the need for K-12 alignment. However, he did not have an opinion regarding this professional development plan’s ability to impact culture or procedures. Liam also did not have any feedback to offer on how the BL plan may be improved.

**Noah.** When it comes to professional learning, Noah believes that “the way to get the maximum amount of productivity out of educators is to limit after-school activity.” Much of what Noah contributed included general positive feelings about the plan design, the potential implementation, and potential impacts; however, everything else that Noah discussed I categorized as “other” and “off-topic.” Noah was passionate about adequate
pay for their time and did not believe it was fair for teachers to work outside of their contracted day. Moreover, he also thought that collaborative work time was extremely important, but it should happen during school. According to Noah, professional learning that takes place during the workday promotes “the right mindset” and engagement because it is not going to be a productive exercise if no one wants to be there. Noah discussed other potential hindrances to positive participation such as teacher satisfaction levels, concerns regarding efficient and effective use of teacher time, and lack of administrative support. He also seemed unsure if participation in this learning plan would lead to any problems of practice currently occurring in his program. Furthermore, Noah indicated an inability to find and retain quality classified staff in the program as his main concern and spoke about the impact of understaffing on his social-emotional well-being. Additionally, he described his current workload as “too much” to support an hour of dedicated collaborative work time.

Emma. Emma has 30 years of teaching experience and spent eight years in the role of a PASS behavior specialist. Concerning her participation in the professional development plan, Emma suggested that she believed it would be time well spent and spoke excitedly about beginning soon as she had “missed talking to [us] about this stuff.” She expressed her belief that knowledge would be acquired through the plan because as a professional, she learns so much by collaborating with her peers. Moreover, Emma stated, “No matter how much knowledge we have, we can always learn something from other people.” Emma spoke about other professional development plans she has been a part of and what she believed was most useful to her in her role. Emma expressed a preference for attending learning sessions that enable her to better cater to her students'
unique needs. Most professional development plans offered by the district require learning or academic initiatives that may even pertain to a specific curriculum. Thus, she asserted her belief that the administrative team supports her and that they will support her participation in this learning plan. Emma expressed her hope in the notion that this BL may help address concerns regarding a post-pandemic student population that is in high need of social-emotional and behavioral support. She also expressed concerns over the current guidance documents describing the kind of student the program may benefit, and many others students in classrooms exhibit similar chronic misbehavior. Emma did not seem certain that as one person in one building, she could keep up. Throughout her interview, she made connections back to students and predicted potential outcomes, such as coherence in programming, opportunities to recognize and share in each other’s successes, and increased opportunities for collaboration.

**Oliver.** Oliver has been the PASS behavior specialist at Lake View for the past three academic years and has a combined 12 years of experience supporting students with a severe degree of behavioral needs. Oliver admittedly did not understand the BL plan, saying, “I didn’t understand it exactly. I looked at it.” Despite this, he remained open-minded about the learning process, assuring me that he would have better feedback once he could see the plan in action. When specifically asked if he liked the plan, he said that although nothing seemed immediately off-putting, the plan did seem somewhat overwhelming. More specifically, Oliver said that, overall, “it seemed like a lot.” Oliver was not sure if his participation would be a good use of his time or if the learning would be useful to him. He went on to say that many of the training sessions he has been to have not been useful, but he was hopeful that he would gain some knowledge through his
participation in the plan. He also expressed a level of skepticism about the effectiveness of professional learning in general, describing his numerous experiences with “sit, and get one and done” type of learning events and his frustration with not giving things “a chance to really develop.” Oliver said, “A lot of my trainings have felt useless in the past just because we jump from something, to a new thing, to a new thing, to a new thing all the time in education.” Oliver has worked in at least one other school district and, in his opinion, most districts do not provide what he would consider adequate time to implement teacher learning or let learning develop. He went on to say unrealistic expectations or unattainable standards for implementation often accompany this inadequate time.

Furthermore, Oliver shared that he gets more out of the professional development that he is interested in learning about as opposed to required learning. He estimated that if he had to go to five professional development sessions, he “probably got something from one of them and like the other 4 [he] didn’t really care for.” Oliver went into detail describing some support needs, including valid program evaluation methods, opportunities for meaningful stakeholder engagement, and strategies for increasing student engagement. When asked about the learning it seeks to support, Oliver spoke about his desire to collaborate with peers and his appreciation of the collaborative inquiry–related aspects of the BL plan, as it presented an opportunity for him to learn from others and reflect on his own practice.

James. James is new to his role and the previously existing vPLC. When asked if he liked the plan, he revealed that he was most excited about the collaborative inquiry components. More specifically, James was excited about the opportunity to learn more
about data and data collection. James spoke in detail about his previous learning experiences and components of professional development that he did not particularly care for, including learning sessions where you are “watching a lot. Listening to someone just speak the entire time,” which often causes him to daydream and lose focus. He said that he prefers a form of learning that forces him to be “actively involved.” James expressed his belief that the BL plan would be adequately supported by our current online learning platforms and encourage collaboration.

Concerning potential impact, James was excited about the opportunity to collaborate and share with others. According to him, if we all had “more tools,” the implementation of the program would increase, and we would experience improved student outcomes. James described the development of a sort of “coalition” and the development of a sense of togetherness that may develop among the participants because of the learning as one potential impact on culture. Simultaneously, James shared his feelings of isolation and concern regarding the current level of communication among PASS behavior specialists across the district.

**Hannah.** Hannah is the PASS behavior specialist at Crescent Heights, and all of her LBD teaching experience has come from her role as a behavior specialist. Hannah had many questions regarding the details of the plan, many of which were not unique to the BL design. Through her questions and subsequent discussion, Hannah provided valuable feedback regarding the suggested start and end dates of the synchronous learning sessions. Many of the questions that she asked highlighted previous learning experiences and indicated that she possessed a background knowledge of PLC, vPLC, and online learning structures. She also spoke positively about her experience in the pre-
existing vPLC and its benefit to her as the only behavior specialist in her building. Having “no one to bounce ideas off of,” Hannah expressed her belief that participation in the learning plan would be a good use of her time and particularly beneficial to her as a professional. Moreover, she was also optimistic about the opportunity to participate in improvement-focused work and the flexibility of the BL design.

The decision to follow this mGLA process was a modification made because of the habitually low synchronous attendance rates throughout the professional learning cycle. This final data collection phase allowed the participants to discuss their perceptions of OBL and their perceived impact on practice through the mGLA process (Dorhout, 2023).

The mGLA began five days before the online session, with participants receiving an email containing an overview of the study, a shared editable slideshow with open-ended prompts, and a link for the live online session. I asked the participants to respond to 14 open-ended prompts on the shared slides within 72 hours. I introduced the prompts with a “welcome” slide, and numbered tables were on slides 2–15 as seen in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Example of Numbered Table in mGLA
During the “appreciating responses” phase, the teachers spent time reviewing each other’s responses before the synchronous online meeting. The mGLA process allowed the participants to reflect on their answers and identify relevant themes. Then, the members considered and appreciated the responses, and the facilitator immediately checked for accuracy in recording their thoughts. After each participant agreed with the statements, the study proceeded with equitable opportunities for input, thus contributing to participant empowerment and community building. In the last phase of the mGLA process, the participants discussed their strengths and weaknesses as learners and PLC members, identifying perceived weaknesses and barriers to blended learning. However, they also identified potential paths for overcoming these weaknesses and barriers, along with new areas for growth for themselves and the institution. Following this, the group chose three actionable steps that may guide the work of future sessions, focusing on prioritizing and addressing strengths and weaknesses revealed in the process.
Overview of Data Analysis

All participants provided their perceptions of the BL plan in their interviews, throughout their participation in the learning, and during the focus group interactions.
Moreover, the participants discussed the benefits and challenges of both in-person and BL formats while also discussing previous learning opportunities that they had received through their school, district, or local educational cooperative. Figure 12 illustrates how I organized data for analysis and discussion. For example, Figure 12 shows that individual interviews yielded data on the design of the plan, initial implementation concerns, and the predicted impact.

I categorized the data collected during participation in the professional learning plan similarly; however, the generation of the design and implementation data happened in real time, indicating that these data were generated by putting the drafted plan into practice. Notably, the addition of the actual impact data was different as teachers engaged in learning. Before the mGLA process, I presented the themes emerging from the previous two settings to the participants and guided the development of the focus group questions.

**Analysis Semi-Structured Interviews**

Table 5 presents the interview questions organized according to the research questions or, in the case of RQ1, the part of the question with which the data corresponded. I derived educator feedback on this OBL TPD plan from the transcripts of the semi-structured interview, which I first organized by the research question they corresponded to and then inductively coded to assign meaning to descriptors, thus promoting themes regarding participant perceptions to emerge (Saldana, 2016). Figure 13 presents the frequency counts of each code generated during this process for the obtained data on the design and implementation of the plan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semi-Structured Interview Question</th>
<th>BL Design (RQ1)</th>
<th>BL Implementation (RQ1)</th>
<th>Perceived Impact (RQ2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q.9 Did you like the proposed learning plan?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.10 Do you believe that participation in this learning will be time well spent?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.11 Will this learning be useful?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.12 Do you believe you will acquire knowledge through participation in this PD?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.13 What additional reflections around teacher learning might you have?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.14 Do you believe implementing this plan could be successfully advocated, facilitated, and supported?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.15 Do you perceive this work will be or could be supported? If so, on what level and by whom?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.16 What problems, if any, might this learning help to address?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.17 Do you believe sufficient resources are available to implement this learning?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.18 Does the professional development adequately provide opportunities to recognize and share successes?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.19 How might this professional development impact the organization?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.20 Does this professional development have the potential to affect the organization’s climate and or procedures?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.21 Are there changes you might make to improve the effectiveness of the professional development?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 13. Frequency Counts for Design and Implementation Codes
At this point in the study, participant feedback emerged solely from reading the professional learning plan. I then coded the data to identify patterns across and within the data sets and to condense the codes created during open coding into fewer analytic concepts (See Table 6).

**Table 6. First versus Second Cycle Codes for RQ1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Round: Open Codes</th>
<th>Second Round: Pattern Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liked the plan</td>
<td>Positive perception of plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan will/could be supported by participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan could be supported by district</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan could be supported by the state (KDE)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan could be supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan could be facilitated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning will be useful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient resources exist to implement plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan would be supported by teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan limits required time outside of workday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan could be successfully advocated for Plan could be successfully facilitated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan promotes flexibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan reflects sufficient time allotted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning is relevant to me in my role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning will be beneficial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan would be better supported by adequately appropriating time</td>
<td>Implementation concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan would be better implemented face to face Plan may impact personal time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan requires everyone working together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan requires time commitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential for implementation to be impacted by lack of participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan lacks clarity</td>
<td>Negative perception of the plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan was overwhelming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first theme that emerged discusses a generally positive perception of the BL plan, which involves liking the plan, believing that the plan promotes participant learning, and thinking that the learning will be useful to the participants. The second theme to emerge related
to implementation concerns, which include a lack of adequate time provided for participation, a lack of time in the workday to participate, and predictions regarding a lack of educator participation. The third pattern code was a negative perception of the plan, and it was the least prominent of the themes.

Deductive coding of the transcripts began with the generation of a codebook based on the research questions. By reading the transcripts and assigning excerpts to codes, I organized the findings by one of the following three indicators: design, implementation, and impact (See Figure 14).

*Figure 14. Start Codes from the Transcripts of the Semi-structured Interviews*

Out of the 98 excerpts coded, 65.9% were used to generate an answer to RQ1. I organized these responses by start codes in Tables 7, 8, and 9. I then developed the next level of code using evidence-based effectiveness measures of professional learning. The recurring concepts included participants’ reactions and satisfaction levels, opportunities for organizational support and change, the sharing of work experiences, and participant learning.
As per the excerpts addressing RQ1 and the design of the proposed learning, the teachers unanimously liked the design of the OBL plan. In response to the interview question about support for the plan, 66% of the participants indicated that the plan may be supported by other behavior specialists, building- and district-level administrators, and the Kentucky Department of Education. Further, 66% of the teachers expressed that they considered the learning as potentially useful; however, two out of five of those teachers reported that the plan lacked clarity. In the follow-up questions regarding this lack of clarity, the teachers stated that they would like more information on the focus of the collaborative inquiry before beginning the collaborative inquiry.
## Table 8. Coded Interview Excerpts Specific to Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Codes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sufficient resources exist to implement the plan</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential for implementation to be impacted by lack of participation</td>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The plan could be facilitated</td>
<td>X X X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The plan would require everyone to work together</td>
<td>Organizational support/change</td>
<td>X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Requires significant time commitment</td>
<td>Sharing of work experiences</td>
<td>X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participant reaction/satisfaction</td>
<td>X X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the excerpts addressing RQ1 and the implementation of the proposed learning, 66% indicated a potential for the OBL plan to be affected by lack of participation. In response to the interview question about facilitating the proposed plan, 50% of the participants indicated the plan may be facilitated effectively, while 33% stated that they needed a significant time requirement for their participation. Further, half of these respondents participated in the learning at any time during the learning cycle.
### Table 9. Coded Interview Excerpts Specific to Perceived Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Start Code</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Impact</td>
<td>Plan could/may promote the acquisition of knowledge</td>
<td>Participants learning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will/may not promote the acquisition of knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plan promotes the celebration of peers and success</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plan promotes collaborative work</td>
<td>Organizational Support/Change</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes acquisition of knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For RQ2 and the perceived impact of the proposed learning, 66% of the respondents pointed to the potential of knowledge acquisition and or learning. Moreover, 33% of the participants indicated that learning either would not or may not promote the acquisition of knowledge. In response to the interview question about the opportunity to celebrate the work of their colleagues, all respondents unanimously identified this as a perceived impact of this plan. Moreover, 66% of participants indicated that the plan promoted collaborative work.

### Analysis of Documents

The teachers’ participation in the professional learning resulted in transcripts from eight synchronous learning sessions and two teacher portfolios containing student data and generative case studies. During the 16-week learning cycle, the participation rates ranged from 16% to 83%, and the project included group chats as a means for documentation of asynchronous participation. However, the participants did not utilize these during any point of the 12-week professional learning. That said, the participation rates could only be determined by either
participation in the synchronous learning or submission of asynchronous work products for the designated week. Table 10 presents the participation per the week of learning.

*Table 10. Teacher Participation Rates in Online Blended Learning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Rate</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>6%</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>19%</th>
<th>19%</th>
<th>94%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Learning Session 5 occurred during spring break and subsequently structured as an asynchronous learning session. Weeks 7 and 8 were designed to be conducted synchronously; however, no participant was present for the live learning. I recorded the sessions and provided
the recordings to the participants to guide them through the asynchronous data collection and analysis process. Both Participants 3 and 6 submitted data templates documenting their participation in this week’s learning activities. I conducted Weeks 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, and 14 synchronously and coded the transcripts. From these 8 transcribed learning sessions, I coded 1,536 lines of text.

Figure 15. Frequency Counts for Coded Themes from Qualitative Document Analysis

I present the most frequently occurring codes in Figure 15 and Table 11, which show that 20% of all coded lines of the transcribed learning sessions were coded as an occurrence of educators reflecting on their current practice. Other items of interest included 98 instances of affirming behaviors among colleagues and 67 instances of expressed frustration. Moreover, work products were inductively coded. The inductive coding allowed me to glean their alignment or misalignment with the pre-participation priori codes upon comparing teacher input from professional learning transcripts to provide a picture of their perceptions during their participation (see Table 11). To capture the process thoroughly for research, I coded the transcripts and then provided them back to the participants to engage them in member checking after each recorded learning session. The purpose of examining the synchronous learning
transcripts was to guide the development of follow-up questions and enrich the mGLA process with data from the professional learning process.

Table 11. Most Frequently Occurring Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflecting on Professional Practice</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Focus on Student Outcomes</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilizing Data</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirming</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Problems of Practice</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture of Inquiry</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Needs</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of Modified Group-Level Assessment Data

I made arrangements for teachers to participate in either a traditional in-person GLA or an mGLA. Five out of six teachers from the vPLC chose to participate in the mGLA, while zero out of six participated in the traditional GLA. I presented the participants of the mGLA with the teacher interview data, original coded transcripts, all work products, Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, and Figures 13, 14, and 15. Additionally, I asked the participants to review these data and respond to the prompts (Table 12). A complete copy of the information gathered during the mGLA is available in Appendix M.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question Alignment</th>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When using blended learning approaches we need to do more…</td>
<td>Scheduling of learning to occur during the educator workday</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To increase educator accountability</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When using blended learning approaches we need to do less…</td>
<td>Scheduling learning outside of the school day</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educators Perceptions of Blended Learning Plan Design &amp; Implementation</td>
<td>This approach to PL was all about…</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The best part of the BL approach was…</td>
<td>Opportunity to collaborate</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BL could have been improved by…</td>
<td>Increased participation</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential barriers to BL plans…</td>
<td>Time to participate</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Impact</td>
<td>The impact of this learning has been or will be…</td>
<td>Improved services provided to students</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased understanding of programming</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve services provided to students</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I will use the skills I have learned to…</td>
<td>Advocate for students</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educate other professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Design and Implementation.** In response to the prompts provided above, collaboration and the opportunity to collaborate were identified in the responses of a majority of participants (i.e., five out of five and four out of five, respectively), indicating that collaboration in the BL model was “the best part.” However, perspectives differed among participants when discussing the BL design as an advantage or disadvantage concerning authentic and useful collaboration. Specifically, they stated that low participation rates affected the quality of collaboration and were a barrier to BL implementation. Participants noted that learning would have been improved by increased participation rates (i.e., if all five participated). Further, participants cited inadequate time to implement the BL plan as a barrier to implementation. Three out of five participants identified the need to schedule synchronous learning sessions during the scheduled workday. The majority of participants (i.e., four out of five) suggested less scheduling of synchronous learning outside of the school day. This led to further discussions around the need for a common planning time. The participants also indicated that the work and time spent together may be more meaningful if they are allowed to engage synchronously more often during a proposed common plan.

**Perceived Impact.** Participants cited improved services provided to students (40%) and an increased understanding of PASS programming (60%) as the perceived impact of their participation in this OBL. Additionally, the participants identified opportunities for them to use newly acquired learning to improve services provided to students (100%), advocate for students (40%), and educate other educational professionals (40%). Furthermore, the behavior specialists identified the OBL approach as potentially beneficial in facilitating student-specific learning opportunities in the future.
Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results of a case study involving six behavioral specialists each a member of a previously existing virtual professional learning community (vPLC). Each participant had a minimum of four years of experience in the special education field. The study aimed to understand the specialists' perceptions of Blended Teacher Professional Development. There were three levels of analysis, including analysis of the interview data, the associated work products, and the closing Modified Group Level Analysis. Open coding, deductive coding, and inductive coding processes were used during the course of the analysis. The inductively coded interview data resulted in 24 codes. Themes regarding initial participant perceptions included (a) a general liking of the proposed learning plan (b) the potential for it to be impacted by a lack of participation (c) usefulness of the learning and (d) an expressed lack of clarity around the plan.

Fifteen themes were generated from start codes organized by the part of the research question they addressed. These included: (a) Design of the plan (b) Implementation of the plan and (c) Perceived impact. This analysis drove the development of the questions provided to the participants of the Modified Group Level Analysis. Additional perception analysis through participation transcripts was used to discover themes derived from participant experiences during participation. Forty-nine open codes resulted in the generation of the following themes: (a) Reflecting on professional practice (b) A focus on student outcomes (c) Utilizing data (d) Affirming (e) Collaboration (f) Identifying problems of practice (g) Frustration (h) Culture of Inquiry (i) Unique Needs. Finally, when presented with the analysis of the participation data and prompts generated by the document analysis participants indicated their perceptions of the design and implementation increased opportunities to collaborate but would have been improved by more synchronous participation amongst group members. The perceived impact
of the participating educators was and increased understanding of programming and improved services to students.
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the participating educators’ perceptions of the BL design and implementation?

RQ2: How do the participants perceive the impact of BL on their practice?

The present chapter provides a summary of the findings related to both questions and discusses their implications for policy, practice, and future research.

Participating Educators’ Perceptions of the BL Design and Implementation

The BL design of this professional development plan followed recommendations from recently published studies on OTPD (Barnett, 2020; Lockee, 2020; Powell & Bodur, 2019), along with using a framework for support structures designed to engage learners in blended and online learning environments (Philipsen et al., 2019) and best practices in the professional development of educators (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Nearly all participants reported an initial liking of the plan and expressed their belief that the learning would have an impact on their practice. While participating in the BL design, this group of specialists engaged in reflective practice with a focus on student outcomes and utilized student data to address the problem of practice. Although these outcomes are not unique to BL and perhaps a result of the collaborative inquiry component, they would not have been reached without the use of this BL approach.

That said, a BL model was selected as a strategy for coordinating professionals across many campuses with many different planning times and other scheduling demands. Despite providing opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous learning, the participation rates
remained low. Moreover, the barriers to success before as well as after the conclusion of the cycle were most often related to time. The participants were either initially put off by or concerned about the amount required. Further, the participants also reported having a lack of time for participation. After several weeks, the initial plan was modified to meet the needs of teachers and accommodate other after-school responsibilities.

**Participants Perceptions of the Impact of BL on Practice**

The feedback in general was overwhelmingly positive, and the participants perceived an increased opportunity for collaboration as an impact of participation. Figure 16 demonstrates the most impactful themes as determined by participants.

*Figure 16. Participants’ Perception of Impact on Practice*

According to five out of the six participants, themes such as prompting reflection/reflecting on practice, affirmation of practitioners, collaboration, a focus on student outcomes, and utilization
of data were all considered to be either moderately or highly impactful by five out of the six participants.

**Implications for Policy**

Recent state legislation requires that by August 1, 2024, The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) will create a comprehensive training schedule for certified personnel, covering both state and federal requirements. KDE is set to establish and manage a statewide program of professional development to enhance the quality of its public school system's instruction. In order to best meet state and federal guidelines districts may look to expand their use of blended online learning models. Although several existing district professional development policies delineate the number of hours that educators are required to spend doing related activities, they do not clearly communicate the types of professional development activities that they must engage in. However, many district and school-level improvement plans do identify PLCs as an improvement strategy. Expectations for participation in PLC may be better met, especially in the case of singleton educators, by incorporating the use of BL opportunities.

**Implications for Practice**

Within professional learning communities, researchers (Hansen, 2015; Leane & Yost, 2022) have defined *singletons* as teachers who do not have grade-level or course-alike peers. Singletons’ participation in PLCs is much more difficult to monitor, as they are often the only ones in their building participating. This is especially so in the case of highly specialized educators where administrators may feel inept in either facilitating or participating as their level of knowledge may be nowhere near that of those participating, as in this case of providing direct services to students with severe behavioral deficits. In the case of this study, there was no accountability with regard to participation. Furthermore, professional
development that is readily available, useful, focused on practice, aligned with school improvement, and collaborative promotes a healthy work environment and teacher retention (Berry et al., 2021). Over the past decade, the turnover rates of LBD-certified teachers serving the role of a behavior specialist within the district have outpaced those of an LBD-certified teacher whose caseload does not include the most behaviorally at-risk 1% of school enrollment. Table 13 provides further insight into the average tenure of high school behavior specialists in Fayette County Public Schools.

Table 13. Behavior Specialists and the Average Tenure (2013-2023)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number of Behavior Specialists Employed from 2013-2023</th>
<th>Average Tenure of High School Behavior Specialist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southwell*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake View</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westwood</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescent Heights</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All District High Schools</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Southwell opened in the academic year 2017–2018*

A 2022 National Education Association poll revealed that 55% of teachers plan to leave their current education roles earlier than they initially intended (Jotkoff, 2022). As a retention strategy, school districts need to explore creative ways to keep educators including offering flexibility in leaning modalities, such as virtual and blended online learning (Loewus, 2021).
Implications for Future Research

The exploration of motivating factors in teachers’ completion of professional learning using a case study model may provide insights into the type of learner most likely to participate in OBL. This may include but not be limited to levels of job satisfaction and willingness to participate in professional learning. Although this was not explored in this study, many participants did cite family commitments as a reason for session absences. Thus, further research may investigate the impact of family commitments on teacher efficacy.

My study faced limitations such as subjectivity, data source reliability, small sample size, response bias, as well as a broad application of findings. Despite this, I remained diligently aware of the potential for manipulation to prevent misinterpretation or unintentional skewing of teacher responses. The PASS Program as delineated within district specific guidelines is exclusively implemented within Fayette County Public Schools. Program implementers and professional learning participants are only representative of those implementing at the high school level. The group altered both the form and function of the professional learning. As a result, information did not exist to establish validity and reliability of this professional learning plan. The sample size was limited due to the criteria for teachers to be included in the study.
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teaching and learning conditions: Influences on Teacher retention and school

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Our Mission: 100% of Students with disabilities will graduate prepared to achieve positive postsecondary outcomes
Vision of the HS SPED Team

Collaboration

Support Teacher Learning

Support Student Learning

Coaching

Support SPED Teams & Systems

Feedback
15 Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention

Since 1986, the National Dropout Prevention Center (NDPC) has conducted and analyzed research; sponsored workshops and national conferences; and collaborated with researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to further the mission of reducing America’s dropout rate by meeting the needs of youth in at-risk situations, including students with disabilities.

Students report a variety of reasons for dropping out of school; therefore, the solutions are multidimensional. The NDPC has identified 15 Effective Strategies that have the most positive impact on reducing school dropout. These strategies appear to be independent, but actually work well together and frequently overlap. Although they can be implemented as stand-alone strategies, positive outcomes will result when school districts or other agencies develop program improvement plans that encompass most or all of these strategies. These strategies have been successful at all school levels from PK-12 and in rural, suburban, and urban settings. The strategies are grouped into four general categories: Foundational strategies (school-community perspective), early interventions, basic core strategies, and managing and improving instruction.

**Foundational Strategies**
- Systemic Approach
- School-Community Collaboration
- Safe Learning Environments

**Early Interventions**
- Family Engagement
- Early Childhood Education
- Early Literacy Development

**Basic Core Strategies**
- Mentoring/Tutoring
- Service-Learning
- Alternative Schooling
- After-School/Out-of-School Opportunities

**Managing and Improving Instruction**
- Professional Development
- Active Learning
- Educational Technology
- Individualized Instruction
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
APPENDIX D: OVERVIEW OF THE POSITIVE APPROACH TO STUDENT SUCCESS

The PASS Program: A Positive Approach to Student Success

PASS (Positive Approach to Student Success) provides behavior education services to students with emotional and behavioral issues. The primary setting in which these services are provided is the mainstream classroom. PASS is founded on the belief that youth benefit behaviorally from educational experiences with their appropriately behaved peers and academically from participation in the general curriculum.

With the ongoing support of a PASS specialist, each student in PASS learns, practices, and implements individualized strategies that address targeted behaviors of concern. The program is implemented in four phases:

1. Preplacement
2. Orientation
3. Maintenance and Inclusion
4. Aftercare

Phase 1 incorporates activities prior to PASS placement, such as ensuring that less intensive and restrictive interventions have occurred, developing a behavior plan that targets the two or three behaviors that interfere most with the student's academic and behavioral progress, and formal placement in PASS by either an IEP committee or school behavior team.

In Phase 2, the primary PASS focus is on behavior education. Instruction is provided on PASS classroom expectations, the PASS monitoring and reinforcement systems, and social skills in the area(s) targeted by the student's behavior plan. In this phase, students complete a modified amount of academic work provided by mainstream teachers. Orientation is brief and individualized. The setting for these services is the PASS classroom.

Phase 3 moves the student from the PASS classroom into mainstream settings. Monitoring and coaching of student behavior occurs on a schedule designed to meet the needs of individual students. Reinforcement of behavioral success is a key component of this phase, and social skills instruction/coaching continues. After a period of behavioral success with PASS personnel providing monitoring, students move on to self-monitoring.

Movement by the student through the second and third phases of PASS is not linear. Rather, the level of services students receive is fluid and dependent on their current behavioral needs. Students may, therefore, move from PASS monitoring back to the PASS classroom for a period of Reorientation and/or from PASS monitoring to self-monitoring. Data gathered during monitoring is analyzed and informs the level of service provided throughout these phases.

Phase 4 of PASS is an Aftercare experience. Students who have successfully "graduated" from PASS are offered opportunities to serve as PASS sponsors and work with other students currently in Phase 2 or 3 of PASS.

PASS is a collaborative effort by all key stakeholders in a student's school life. Parents, administrators, the PASS specialist, mainstream teachers, and others partner in their efforts to effectively support behavior change.
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of Research</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Reactions</td>
<td>Did you like the proposed learning plan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you believe participation in this learning will be time well spent?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will this learning be useful?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you believe knowledge will be acquired through participation in this PD?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What additional reflections around teacher learning might you have?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you believe implementing this plan could be successfully advocated, facilitated, and supported?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you perceive this work will be or could be supported? On what level?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What problems, if any, might this learning help to address?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you believe sufficient resources are available to implement this learning?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the PD adequately provide opportunities to recognize and share successes?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How might this PD impact the organization?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does this PD have the potential to affect the organization’s climate and or procedures?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there changes you might make to improve the effectiveness of the PD?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High School. PASS Learning Strategies PLC Participation Guidance Document

6 Essential Characteristics of the High School PASS PLC (adapted from Learning by Doing)

1. **Shared mission, vision, values, goals** Educa.itors: in our PLC benefit from clarity of a din_. their shared purpo. e, a common under. tandin of the pro· rams they are trying to create, collec . Vle ronmurriri.e.' to help move the program in the de'ifled direction, ands •ecirfi½ mea.:iiurable, attainable results-oriented, and timcl mund (SMART) goals to mark their progre.' .

PASS PLC MISSION STATEMENT: PASS Behavior Specialists grades 9-12 ,nil collaborate to plan prepare and implement a cohesive model for systemic program improvement which integrates evidence-furu ed practi.cesto p omote larrrin , iti e proacti e beha ·or management, raduation, and , t-. eoondary readline£ s.

**VISIO** : 100% of Students ,virli msablfifies "ril graduate and achieve positive po. t-seoondary outcomes throu h the strategj.c w e of:

Q increased student practice and feedfluack
Q Organi.7.ed and sequential explicit in. truction \v·'th modelin& gu1ded practice-th feedback and independent practice
Q Explid and embedded oca.bu]a instruction
Q implementation of interventionru
Q incorporation of metaoo nifiv:e in.truotion
Q implementation of effective positive beha• oral support .y. tetru
Q Team Teaching, Altemate Teaching Siltation Teaching and Pa!!'a el Co-Teaching Modelc;;

**VALUES: Inclusion. PASS helps school. taff serve students \fi.th. eriolli emotional dis-turban · n tlite genera ] education . etting using individualized pro amming that incorporate.' best practices. Programmin combines tar eted, intensi e instruction with belila ior monito ·ng and coacflfis sl! lppor for the student and the teacher. The program aiiu to a. 1st. tudents at an ele ated r's.k of dropping out in the development of . odal emotional skiI and reare.' on data to dri deci.ions F"egarding. tudent programming.
HIGH SCHOOL PLC LEARN | G GOAL: By the end of the 21-22 school year, 100% of high school special education teachers participating in High School SPED Learning Communities provide rigorous instruction, guided by Performance Standards (Kentucky Academic Standards), using research-based interventions, and as evidenced by continuous improvement in instructional practice as assessed by:

- 100% of participants demonstrating improvement in instructional practice as evidenced by U1 rewrite Instructional Framework;
- 100% of participants performing at or above "Proficiency level" as measured by the CKEC Behavior Program rubric.

2. Collaborative teams focused on learning In our PLC, educators work together interdependently in collaborative teams to reach common goals for which they are mutually accountable. The structure of the PLC is aligned to ensure that teams are provided the time and support to adult learning. "Collaboration is a system in which we work together interdependently to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results."

3. Collective inquiry Teams in a PLC relentlessly question the status quo, so they seek new methods of teaching and learning, test the methods, and then reflect on the outcomes. Building on shared models of both current reality and best practice is an essential part of each team's decision-making process.

4. Action orientation and experimentation Members of our PLC constantly turn their learning and insights into action. They recognize the importance of engagement and experience in learning and in testing new ideas. They learn by doing.

5. Commitment to Continuous improvement Members of our PLC constantly seek better ways to achieve mutual goals and accomplish their fundamental purpose of learning for all. All teams engage in an ongoing cycle of:

- Gathering evidence of current levels of student learning
- Developing strategies and ideas to build on strengths and address weaknesses in that learning
- Implementing the strategies and ideas
- Analyzing the impact of those changes to discover what worked and what did not
- Applying the knowledge in the next cycle of continuous improvement
6. Results orientation  Educators need to focus on the best of their PLCs and base their efforts on tangible evidence. The aftelearning and use that evidence to inform and improve their practice. "The success of the PLC concept depends not on the merits of the concept itself, but on the most important element in the movement of any school (program)—the commitment and persistence of the educators."

-Richard DuFour

**HIGH SCHOOL PASS PLC Norms:**

1. Take an inquiry stance
2. Ground statements in evidence
3. Assume positive intentions & take responsibility for impact
4. Stick to prototype & hear all voices
5. Start & end on time
6. Be here now

**HIGH SCHOOL PASS PLC Roles:**

1. **Facilitator** - The Facilitator is the Traffic Cop. Their role helps the group move forward. The facilitator makes sure that everyone is participating and understands where the group is in the process. They are sure that everyone understands what the group is working to accomplish at each point of the meeting.

2. **Recorder/Note-Taker (2)**
   - This role documents the group’s work. It is essential that the group’s thoughts and concerns are recorded in writing. The note taker should be documenting the group’s big ideas, stopping the group to further clarify ideas or that they are not in a form that may be exchanged in writing. If the recorder struggles to capture an idea, “then there is still more clarification and work to be done to create a mutual understanding that may be exchanged in writing” (Sparks, 2008, p. 38). It is often helpful to do this on a computer. The notes may be typed directly into the agenda. The al.o helps to keep the group on track.

3. **Agenda Keeper or Timekeeper** - This is a great role for the control freak in the group. At the beginning of the meeting, the person will review the agenda and ask the group to set approximate times for each agenda item. Remember that times are goals, not rules. If part of the meeting takes longer than agreed on, the timekeeper alerts the group to this and, if necessary, keeps the group on time for the next item. Always remind the group of the goal/outcome they set and keep the group moving at a pace that will allow the group to reach that outcome. PLCs work when the group is productive.
This role can be an essential accountability piece that helps the group reach its commitments. This person makes sure the meeting starts and stops on time and that it moves ahead. Each meeting ends by creating the agenda for the next meeting. Remember to plan the agenda backwards - start with the end in mind.

4. **Norms Manager/Process Checker** - Everyone in the group is responsible for maintaining the norms (accountability). The Norms Manager reminds the group of the norms at the beginning, asks if there is a focus norm, reminds the group during the work of the norms (if needed), and helps the group to reflect at the end on their adherence to the norms. They also help the group to reflect on the process they have selected to do the work and its effectiveness.

5. **Materials Organizer** - This is a great job to share. This person makes sure the group has markers and chart paper, copies of anything they need (such as agendas), and other items necessary to the meeting.

**We will all participate as Encourager(s)** - The Encourager role come from Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR). This person encourages the group with positive statements and names and notices positive behaviors that benefited the group. “That was a great idea.” “Wonderful job of adding onto Juan’s idea.” “Super connection.” “Great work today team!” “I notice you were really focused in today’s meeting. You were nodding and added several ideas to the action plan” “Great meeting everyone! High-five each person before you leave.” This is a fun role. Everyone loves a compliment and it can bring a lot of energy to the group.

**And as Effective Group Member(s)** - It is important that each member is conscious of their actions. An Effective Group Member arrives on time prepared, contributes ideas, keeps the meeting focused on the purpose, and holds group members accountable to the norms
INFORMED CONSENT

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: Educator Perceptions of Blended Teacher Professional Development: A Case Study of a Vertically Aligned Professional Learning Community

Summary
The purpose of this study is to explore the design and enactment of a job-embedded, blended learning (BL) professional development plan for teachers to facilitate the collaborative inquiry of a vertically aligned virtual professional learning community (vPLC).

The participants in this study will provide demographic information for the creation of teacher profiles, which would be representative of a niche group of educators. The participant data will be collected by carrying out one-on-one interviews, as well as through an analysis of the work products collected during participation in the professional development and facilitated group analysis.

The interviews and synchronous learning sessions will be conducted after school hours. The interviews and live professional learning will be facilitated via an online meeting platform, and the sessions will be recorded and made accessible asynchronously via a cloud-based learning platform.

There are no foreseeable risks for the participants other than possible discomfort in answering personal questions and the potential for being identified by other teachers in Fayette County Public Schools who may read the study.
You might want to participate in this study because the information may be useful to other educators. Conversely, you may not want to participate in this study because of the time commitment or other professional development obligations/requirements.

If you are interested in learning more about this study, please continue reading.

Moreover, if you have questions at any time, please reach out to us.

**Introduction and Background Information**

You are invited to participate in this study because you are a special education teacher currently serving in the role of behavior specialist, implementing the Positive Approach to Student Success (PASS) program in a Fayette County high school. The study is being conducted under the direction of William Kyle Ingle, PhD, the College of Education and Human Development, the University of Louisville. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, so you may take your time to decide.

**Why is This Study Being Conducted?**

The purpose of this study is to examine teacher perceptions of BL, thus facilitating a collaborative inquiry in the context of a virtual professional learning community. The participants will be members of an existing professional learning community who have been engaging as a virtual professional learning community since April of the 2019–2020 academic year. This highly specialized educator group represents a gap in the existing literature on online teacher professional development (OTPD). By using a comprehensive and established framework of the essential components of OTPD (Philipsen et al., 2019) within a BL plan, this study will aim to produce findings that may be useful to (a) practitioners as evidence of their professional growth and (b) teacher educators designing professional development for specialists.
What Will Happen If I Participate in the Study?

If you consent to participate in this study, you will be involved in a collaborative inquiry into the improvement of current practice(s). An initial interview will be conducted soliciting your feedback on the learning plan. The interview will include demographic questions as well as questions regarding your experience in education to promote the development of anonymous participant profiles. These interviews will be recorded; however, the participants may decline to answer any questions that may make them uncomfortable. Moreover, the participants will be provided with copies of their responses for review.

A member check, also known as informant feedback or respondent validation, is a technique used by researchers to help improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability of a study. In this study, member-checking procedures will entail narrative accuracy checks conducted individually post-interview using interview transcriptions and an interpretive validity check of coded interview data conducted before the data’s use in the Group Level Assessment (GLA). A GLA is a qualitative research method that involves co-identifying relevant needs, priorities, and action plans.

The investigators will access existing data (i.e., program guidance documents, procedures, and protocols) as well as other evidence of professional development participation through the cloud-based learning management system. Once completed, the results of the overall research study will be shared with you.

What are the Possible Risks or Discomforts Associated with Participating in This Study?
There are no foreseeable risks associated with participating in this study other than possible discomfort in answering personal questions and the potential for being identified by other teachers in Fayette County who may read this study. Additionally, there may also be unforeseen risks involved in your participation.

**Alternatives**

You can choose not to participate in this study.

**Payment**

You will not be entitled to be paid for your time, inconvenience, or expenses while you are participating in this study.

**What are the Benefits of Participating in the Study?**

You may or may not benefit personally by participating in this study. The possible benefits of this study include being able to share your story and personal recommendations on how to provide effective BL for the professional development of highly specialized educators. The information collected may not benefit you directly; however, it may be of help to other educators and teacher educators.

**How Will My Information Be Protected?**

Although total privacy cannot be guaranteed, we will protect your privacy to the extent permitted by law. If the results from this study are published, your name will not be made public.

**Security**

The data collected about you will be kept private and secure by a password-protected computer and secured server with limited access.
By signing this form, you permit the research team to share your information with others outside of the University of Louisville. This may include the sponsor of the study and its agents or contractors, those who provide funding to the study, outside providers, study safety monitors, government agencies, other sites in the study, data managers, and other agents and contractors used by the study team. If applicable, your information may also be shared as required by law (e.g., to collect or receive information for reporting child abuse or neglect; prevent or control disease, injury, or disability; and conduct public health surveillance, investigations, or interventions).

We will attempt to ensure that everyone who views your information keeps it confidential, but we cannot guarantee this. It should be noted that those who receive your information may not be required by federal or state privacy laws to protect it and, therefore, may share your information with others without your permission.

**Will My Information be Used for Future Research?**

Your data will be stored and shared for future research without additional informed consent if identifiable private information, such as your name, is removed.

**Can I Stop Participating in the Study at Any Time?**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; therefore, you may choose not to take part at all. Moreover, if you decide to be in this study and later change your mind, you may withdraw your participation at any point, and you will not be penalized or lose any benefits for which you qualify. You will also be told about any new information learned during the study that could affect your decision to continue your participation.

**Who Can I Contact Regarding Any Questions, Concerns, and Complaints?**
If you have any questions about the study, please contact William Kyle Ingle, PhD, Department of Educational Leadership, Evaluation and Organizational Development Room 333, University of Louisville College of Education and Human Development, (502) 852-6097.

Furthermore, if you have concerns or complaints about the research or research staff and you do not wish to reveal your name, you may call the following toll-free number: 1-877-852-1167. This is a 24-hour hotline answered by people who do not work at the University of Louisville.

Additionally, if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Program Office at (502) 852-5188. Besides, you may discuss any questions about your rights as a research participant in private with a member of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

**Acknowledgment and Signatures**

This document informs you of what will happen during the study if you choose to participate in it. Your signature and date of signature indicate that this study has been explained to you, your questions have been answered, and you agree to take part in the study. You are not giving up any legal rights to which you are entitled by signing this informed consent document. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.
Printed Name of Participant  Signature of Participant

Date Signed

________________________  ________________________

________________________

Printed Name of Investigator (PI, Sub-I, or Co-I)  Signature of Investigator (PI, Sub-I, or Co-I)  Date Signed

Phone Number for Participants to Call for Questions

William Kyle Ingle, PhD, Department of Educational Leadership, Evaluation and Organizational Development Room 333, University of Louisville College of Education and Human Development, (502) 852-6097.

Aslean White, MAED/MASI, Fayette County Public Schools, (859) 608-9285.

Site(S) Where the Study Is To Be Conducted

201 Eastin Rd, Lexington KY 40505, 2000 Winchester Rd, Lexington, KY 40509, 2100 Fontaine Rd, Lexington, KY 40502, 1111 Centre Pkway, Lexington, KY 20517, 401 Reed Ln, Lexington, KY 40503, 1600 Man O War Blvd, Lexington KY 40513
APPENDIX H: CONFIRMABILITY CONCEPT MAP
**APPENDIX I: STRUCTURED ETHICAL REFLECTION**

“Educator Perceptions of Blended Teacher Professional Development: A Case Study of a Vertically Aligned Virtual Professional Learning Community” - SER Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Developing Partnerships</th>
<th>Constructing research questions</th>
<th>Planning project/action</th>
<th>Recruiting participants</th>
<th>Collecting data/taking action</th>
<th>Analyzing data/evaluating action</th>
<th>Member checking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conviction</td>
<td>Identification of internal and external stakeholders interested in participating</td>
<td>Development of questions that explore all stages of a professional learning cycle</td>
<td>Identification of best practices in teacher development</td>
<td>Bringing all stakeholder groups together in a democratic participation process</td>
<td>Use of validated intervention evaluation methods</td>
<td>Increasing graduation rates</td>
<td>Focus on determining criteria of merit for programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Explore existing allies and advocates of continuous improvement in regional educational co-ops and/or DOE</td>
<td>Use of existing tools may be the most efficient method: common language use</td>
<td>Recommendations should include evaluation windows as they impact many program stakeholders</td>
<td>Propose a more effective resolution for the existing problems</td>
<td>The use of the Fayette County Public Schools Data dashboard is most efficient for current Fayette County Public Schools employees; however, it must be accessible by external stakeholders as well</td>
<td>Employing efficient processes repeatable by busy classroom teachers and external support(s)</td>
<td>Existing (Evidence-based) strategies are considered models potentially adaptable to the local context and environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher Efficacy**

Exploring community engagement opportunities

Including stakeholder voices prioritizing

Understanding the impact of committing 12 hours+ to

Common commitment to continuous improvement

The data collected to illuminate the effectiveness

Facilitating a data-driven process that yield

“Goal-free” action research to explore the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Efficacy</th>
<th>Exploring community engagement opportunities to promote positive outcomes for educators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including stakeholder voices prioritizing participants’ perception in the development of questions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding the impact of committing 12 hours+ to professional learning and expectations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Common commitment to continuous improvement is placed in the forefront</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The data collected to illuminate the effectiveness of the program is contributing to the larger social/district-wide good</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitating a data-driven process that yields actionable next steps</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Goal-free” action research to explore the concerns of a highly specialized group of educators</td>
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<tr>
<th>Self-awareness</th>
<th>The impact of differing perspectives in evaluation; such methods, uses, and purposes can result in different roles for evaluators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of questions from a “program facilitator” lens.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>An improvement orientation influences evaluation design.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helping people learn how to use evaluation concepts and tools to plan, implement, and evaluate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is up to the policymakers and stakeholders to decide how to interpret, disseminate, and use the evaluation results</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The evaluator’s role is defined by the things an evaluator does during the evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making space for stakeholders and assisting them in the discovery of ideas, answers, and solutions</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>Identification of program investors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction of questions for stakeholders who view the current tool as a means to enhance the probability that the investment will pay off.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducting a responsive evaluation that will allow for evaluation questions and methods to emerge from observing the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitate organizational learning by recruiting a community of learners and engaging them in transparent decision-making,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use of data that will empower leaders to improve their PASS programs through evaluation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Analyzing in a visible group context allows participants to see connections that are not always apparent on the “ground” level of daily practice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment to capacity-building in using evaluation concepts and tools to plan, implement, and evaluate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX J: EXPLORATION OF RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

Positionality refers to the stance of the researcher concerning the community, organization, or participant group in the study’s social and political context. In other words, a researcher’s positionality reflects the position they have chosen to adopt for a study, which affects the methods used in the research as well as the conclusions drawn from it. Throughout this research process, Milner’s (2007) methodological framework gave my efforts a direction, prompting my research of self and then the shift from myself to system research.

Researching the Self

I explored my personal and research goals using the framework of a structured ethical reflection. Accordingly, the investigation of my perceptions, experiences, and expectations of myself throughout my childhood informed both the decisions I made in my career and as a new researcher. I grew up in a working-class family where my parents’ educational experiences were difficult and truncated. As they were one generation removed from the poverty of Appalachia, they regarded public education highly as a means to socio-economic prosperity, which fueled their view of schooling. Generally, education was viewed positively in our home. Throughout my education, academic achievement was highly valued, and completing post-secondary education was considered essential. Therefore, I devoted considerable effort both in and outside of the classroom to reach this goal. Not only was my academic performance commendable but
my athletic prowess also allowed me to have various social and cultural experiences typical of the middle-class public schools that I attended for most of my education. My mother, who was one of the first people in her family to graduate, understood the significance of such opportunities and worked relentlessly—and often single-handedly—to provide them for us. Meanwhile, our father put in extra hours on second and third shifts in the printing industry to support us. Although Mom was not the head of our household, she was the one who ran it, and despite her qualifications and job, she never made as much money as my father did.

My mother’s career in early childcare education started with her watching children at home. Then, she went on to work for Head Start, a Federal program that aims to enhance the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children ranging from newborns to five-year-olds belonging to low-income families and promote their school readiness. From a young age, I have been enraptured by her unwavering commitment to establishing a nurturing educational setting that encourages children’s literacy skills, as well as their social and emotional growth.

Over the last seven years, I have spent my own teaching career as a resource specialist and instructional coach in Fayette County Public Schools, working as what I describe to my eight-year-old daughter as “a teacher teacher.” After witnessing a pandemic exacerbate pre-existing trends such as declining retention and teacher preparatory program enrollment to the point of leading to hundreds of daily unfilled vacancies in our district, I went back into the classroom out of my love for teachers. Thus, this study is about linking arms with practitioners, doing the work, and leading together.

As a white woman in education, I understand that most teachers in our school district as well as on a national level look like me. The 2020 census revealed that 14.3% of people in Lexington, Kentucky—which is where I was born and raised—identified as black; even so, only
7% of our teachers are black, which demonstrates that we are not doing justice to our children’s needs. Students need to see individuals who resemble them succeeding in all facets of life as positive role models. This is emphasized most overtly in the selection of my research topic, as blended and online learning modalities may be used as a strategy for the diversification of the workforce.

My experience as a classroom teacher of mostly young black individuals makes my approach to teaching and learning while engaging with youth-focused experiences the focal point of instruction. Each student who enters the classroom has experienced life differently compared to the teacher, particularly if the teacher comes from a different ethnic, racial, cultural, or socioeconomic background. In my practice, teaching to understand the learner’s experience comes before teaching the content and helps you deliver the content more skillfully. This approach is reflected in my methodology and the selection of the qualitative case study and the action research project. While I believe understanding the perspectives of the participants in this study will help me deliver the information more persuasively, I do want to facilitate the action research with a high level of neutrality. A higher degree of impartiality will likely have a more favorable effect on team trust.

**Researching the Self in Relation to Others**

Out of all the participants in this study, 87% are white and 28% are female, making this niche group of educators more diverse than the district average. The average years of experience for educators in this role is 11.7. However, the position is characterized by high burnout, and the median for the years of experience as a PASS coach is 4. In this district, many PASS coaches, having been trained in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), and behavior management, go on to occupy positions of leadership in student
support or administration. This was also my experience, and I can speak to the impact of this role on the job offers and leadership opportunities that I have been presented with. When I was stepping away from this position and being asked for recommendations to fill the vacancy, I confidently informed the hiring manager that any of these seven behavioral specialists would be more than qualified for the role of secondary resource specialist. That being said, this will be my first experience with providing professional learning to this group from the position of a classroom teacher rather than someone responsible for the evaluation of their programming.

**Shifting From the Self to the System**

The final component in Milner’s framework is the shifting from self to system. Admittedly, being part of the system will challenge my ability to be open to the weaknesses and strengths of the system. The current system of professional learning within the Department of Special Education is rooted in a belief that face-to-face training is what is ideal for special educators. The expectations outlined in this system regarding the number of professional development hours required, the content of the learning, and the delivery modalities do not always align with the priorities of special educators, school-wide staff, or other district initiatives within the school system, which then challenges the outcomes of this system.

Meanwhile, the current teacher shortage continues to disproportionately affect pre-pandemic high-needs areas, such as special education. On a daily basis, teachers in the district are teaching during planning periods to fill in when their colleagues are out, accepting additional duties to cover vacant positions, and working longer hours to get everything done. The vacancy left by my return to the classroom remains unfilled. This likely impacts the workload and demands placed on the school-based behavior specialists. The likelihood of participation in non-required professional development may be lessened in the case that teachers are feeling
overwhelmed or if my departure was at all taken personally. Historically, teacher-led
professional development has not been promoted by the Department of Special Education—and
without an accountability system and given the leadership void, it may not be at all.
APPENDIX K: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PLAN

PASS Grades 9-12 vPLC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACILITATOR</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asleen White</td>
<td>9-2</td>
<td>March 2nd - 15h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

0veFMEW
The purpose is to PASS program evaluation aimed at determining outcomes for students. Participants will gain knowledge of on-going group and live meetings held on a video conference platform. This work will address the professional development indicators:

3D - Using Assessment in Instruction
Professional Responsibilities

4A - Reflecting on Teaching
4D - Participating in a Professional Community
4E - Growing and Developing Professionally
4F - Demonstrating Professionalism

SA - Student Growth

St uent Growth

Council. 2010) All sync the weekly live session are encouraged to do so. Synchronous sessions will be recorded and will post on the following Thursday. New content will post each Thursday and participants are encouraged to participate in that week’s activity. Individual coach and feedback sessions will be scheduled upon request. Professional development hours will be awarded to reflect teacher participation.

Audience
The target audience for this learning is LBD-certificated spec. Ed. in an FCPS High School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Focus*</th>
<th>Activity*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WkOf 2127/2023</td>
<td>Introduction to Collaborative Inquiry</td>
<td>Classroom modules post. Asynchronous evi ew of available content and resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/212023-3/8/2023</td>
<td>Introduction to Collaborative Inquiry</td>
<td>Conduct a briefing to provide information on CL and group discussion of learnings and what distinguishes CL from other professional learning. Facilitated Q&amp;A and investigations of resources and develop questions to guide further exploration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus*</td>
<td>Activity*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>319.12023-311 ISJ 2623</td>
<td><strong>Frant11iO IM Problem</strong> ut'ilii Si'il ell mt.HI **Hllaborativa i'iQiili'Y llfferceSiS to pr.e pare a pr'i.iiile.Jn..ffam:iin99 te:ffnci iile-nffiy:ifi.g Mi&quot;ffilio:n i'ea:mer ne.ei:s and ga_ps in educ.amr la,arni ng</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/2Y2023-Y29 12023</td>
<td><strong>Collecting Evidence</strong> Ongi'iiiiiiiiii of program data and pm.paralii.in of program evidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>41612023-41121 2023</td>
<td><strong>Collecting Evidence</strong> Ongi'iiiiiiiiii of program data and pm.paralii.in of program evidence.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4MY202-3-411Sf/20Z3</td>
<td><strong>Collecting Evidence</strong> Ongoing oom.i:111alio of program data and pr.e.parati.im of program evidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>412Elf20Z3-4126f20Z3</td>
<td><strong>Collecting Evidence</strong> Ongi'iiiiiiiiii of program data and pm.paralii.in of program evidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;21fZOZ3-513J2023</td>
<td><strong>Analyzing Evidence</strong> Ongoing analysis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>514/2023-511Ol 2623</td>
<td><strong>Analyzing Evidence</strong> Ongoing analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus*</td>
<td>Activity*</td>
<td></td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>51112023-51172023</td>
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<td>Developmnt Cycle AmendMl on :517.</td>
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**REQUIREMENTS**
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- Link lo 'iPLC G.oo, glie
  C.11:ssroom

**RIGID U.RCE**

**NmBS**
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APPENDIX L: STRUCTURED POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

PARTICIPANT CONSIDERATION PACKET

Structured Positive Behavioral Support Program
Participant Consideration Packet

Public Schools implements a Structured, Positive, Behavioral Support Program to serve students with disabilities who demonstrate intensive and chronic emotional-behavioral difficulties in the school setting. These students are served in a specialized resource program.

To refer a student to this program, his/her general education teacher and/or special education Teacher of Record (Case Manager) will complete the Consideration Packet and submit it to the building-level behavioral support person (PASS Coach). The Screening Committee (School Team) for the Structured, Positive, Behavioral Support Program will then consider the student for the program.

It is expected that appropriate candidates for the program will demonstrate two or more of the following across settings:

- A history of chronic misbehavior
- An increased risk of school failure as a result of misbehavior
- Participation in previous less intensive interventions without success

PASS Participants will have:

- Met eligibility for Special Education Services OR have a 504 (in IDEA referral process).
- Primary disability categories may include however are not limited to: Emotional-Behavioral Disability, Other Health Impaired, Developmental Delay, Multiple Disabilities.
- Demonstrated a pattern of behavior which impedes his/her learning or that of others
- Demonstrated significant social skills deficits and need for specially designed instruction to develop social skills for successfully interacting within school/community.
- Demonstrated lack of academic or behavioral success with a Functional Behavioral Analysis (FBA) and/or Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), as well as revisions to the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

And additionally may have:

- Been identified as chronically absent.
- Demonstrated a significant loss of instructional minutes due to behavioral concerns.
- Demonstrated failure in one or more academic areas
- One or more diagnoses from a clinical psychologist/doctor/social worker or psychiatrist indicating mental illness and/or social maladjustment and a current and/or past pharmacological treatment for his/her diagnosis.
- Demonstrated an ongoing need for mental health treatment/services/involvement in community resources (social services, IMPACT, etc).
- Been receiving similar interventions and supports in an IEP when entering FCPS from another school/district/state.
PASS Student Review Process Form

To be completed by referring staff member in collaboration with the current case manager and submitted to PASS Behavioral Support Specialist.

1. Is the student receiving Special Ed Services? _____Yes _____No
2. Is there a current Behavior Intervention Plan? _____Yes _____No
3. Has the BIP been implemented for at least 4 weeks? _____Yes _____No
4. Is there a current Functional Behavioral Assessment/Analysis? _____Yes _____No
5. Have the parents/guardians been updated and involved in the behavioral progress? _____Yes _____No
6. Is the student failing any classes? _____Yes (please attach report cards) _____No
7. Is the student chronically absent? _____Yes (please attach attendance record) _____No
8. Have there been Office Referrals? _____Yes _____No
9. Have there been any physical management interventions? _____Yes _____No
10. Does the student have Behavioral/Vocational goals on the IEP? _____Yes _____No
11. Does the current IEP provide for participation in the behavioral support program? _____Yes _____No
12. Does the current IEP have social skills listed as a service time? _____Yes _____No
13. Is the student involved in any outside agencies (court, DJJ, Foster Care, Comp Care, Residential Treatment, etc.)? _____Yes, (if yes, attach names and numbers for invitations to meetings) _____No
14. Have you completed the Student Review Process Form? _____Yes _____No
15. Have you scheduled a time to meet with your PASS Leadership/Behavioral Support Team? _____Yes _____No

_____Yes Date: _______________ _____No (Please contact your Team Lead)
Request for Consideration of PASS Supports

To be completed by referring staff member in collaboration with the current case manager and reviewed with the PASS Leadership or Behavioral Support Team

Student’s Name: ___________________________ Date Submitted: ________________

School: ___________________________ Date of Birth: ________________ Age: ____________

Disability: ___________________________ Grade: ____________

Special Ed. Teacher: ___________________________ General Ed Teacher: ___________________________

Referring Person: ___________________________

Referral Need: ___ Mild ___ Moderate ___ Severe

Is the student currently participating in any district Special Education Program? ___ Yes ___ No

Is the student currently receiving 504 services and currently in referral for Special Education? ___ Yes ___ No

Has the parent been notified of this request? ___ Yes (if yes, please provide documentation) ___ No (please stop the referral and notify the parent)

The ____ school and/or the ____ parent/guardian(s) have reviewed this student’s documentation of progress and would like to request that he/she be considered for participation in the Structured Behavior Support Program.

A Team Member has been notified and conducted at least one student observation.

___ Yes (if yes, please attach) ___ No (please schedule)

Triangulated data analysis (analysis of data from multiple sources):

Please summarize the student's current social/behavioral functioning (include information regarding any dangerous, disciplinary actions, etc. and please attach at least 4-6 weeks of behavioral data (ie charts)).

Describe the interventions (behavioral and/or academic) and summarize the lack of effectiveness:

Provide a brief overview of current academic status as well as any integration into resource, co-teaching, and/or general education:
Describe any physical/medical information relevant to the student’s behavioral competence:

Document/attach attendance record for the past 4-9 weeks: (Note any special circumstances)

Summarize how the student’s current Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) targets appropriate behavior concerns and provides appropriate intervention strategies to address those concerns and describe any revisions made to the BIP within the last year:

Analyze the student’s IEP and BIP progress monitoring data and provide evidence that the IEP and BIP have been implemented appropriately: (attach IEP, BIP, FBA, and progress monitoring)

Attachments: (Check those that apply)

___ Student’s most recent Discipline report
___ FBA (if applicable)
___ Most current IEP (if applicable)
___ Attendance Report
___ IEP progress monitoring
___ Current grades
___ BIP
___ Referral to court (not truancy)
___ Loss of instructional minutes
___ Graphs related to behaviors of concern
___ Other

___ Yes, this student meets the criterion to be an appropriate candidate for the Structured Positive Behavioral Support Program at _________________.

___ No, this student does NOT meet the criterion to be an appropriate candidate for the Structured Positive Behavioral Support Program at this time. Please review the findings and/or suggestions below.

Additional comments from the Committee:
APPENDIX L: DATA COLLECTED DURING mGLA

mGLA Phase 1
Generating Data

Example: My weekend plans include...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Typical Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Taking my child to a birthday party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When using blended learning professional development approaches, we need to do more...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Typical Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Time during the school day to meet and explore new ideas together. If meetings are after hours, everyone has outside responsibilities which cause major conflicts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Have more accountability. We lack (lack) consistency. Then we ourselves have to be more consistent in collaborating with one another and showing up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Online professional development sessions can be added to traditional sessions and may help ease some of the demand. But not always having them after school hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Synchronous learning and collaboration between PASS Program staff during school hours would be better. I would be more likely to participate if we were given allotted time during school hours to be involved in a project such as this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>We need more accountability for showing up for synchronous meetings. When together on a video platform, we problem-solve and find common ground with PASS students across the district.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When using blended learning professional development approaches, we need to do less...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Typical Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>After school meetings. The best results will come from professionals working together while they are contracted to be at work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I fall short with being over scheduled after school hours, so it is hard to give it my all with “after hours” PC. I feel short with completing the lesson requirements in a timely manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I fall short with being able to attend after school meetings. I wish we could all have common planning rest sure this is possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>After school tasks and meetings are more during school hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I fall short with completing asynchronous lessons or time. If we continue to do blended learning professional development, there should be more accountability for turning in or completing asynchronous modules.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

131
### The impact of this blended learning on our practice has been or will be...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Typed Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The impact of this blended learning practice to identify PASS students and how to better educate them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To create a profile of what a PASS student looks like and share that information with everyone in the identification and referral process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To create a profile of what a PASS student looks like in and out of the school setting. To help teachers and administrators understand contributing factors about the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Beneficial in finding better solutions to difficult program components.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The impact of this blended learning was to create a profile of what a PASS student looks like. The profile could be a guide given to case managers or administrators about the type of students PASS is designed to serve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### This approach to professional learning is really about...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Typed Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To identify problems and strategies together on how to solve the problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Using data to collaboratively identify inconsistencies in PASS programs across the district and how to begin to attack the problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To look at the data and practices of other PASS programs for areas for improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Working together as professionals with common goals, objectives, and struggles to share each of our experiences through collaboration and find solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Using the collaborative process to look at data and current practices to identify a problem. Once a problem has been identified, the group looks at the next steps to help solve the problem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The best part of our blended learning collaborative inquiry process was...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Typed Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The flexibility of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Working with other PASS coaches is very uplifting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Working with other PASS coaches and sharing ways to improve your program for you and your students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Listening to PASS colleagues from other schools share their knowledge and struggles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Collaborating with other PASS coaches, finding common problems, and working together to find solutions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The blended learning could have been improved by...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Typed Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Better participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Everyone participating and sharing information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Better participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Getting together in a way that promotes participation by alleviating some of the stress and workload that we already have on our plates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Consistent participation from all involved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A barrier to the success of this professional development plan or others like it in the future was or might be...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Typified Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>After school hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Not having ALL PASS coaches participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A lack of buy-in from everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Was the time of day after school that took place. For one was exhausted emotionally and physically at the end while still having the overwhelming thoughts of all of my personal responsibilities I still had ahead of me at home with family after school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lack of buy-in from all coaches and low participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I will use skills I learned in this professional development to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Typified Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Help PASS programs identify and help the correct students in a building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Become a better PASS program advocate through educating teachers and administrators which student(s) would benefit the most from PASS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To help identify a PASS student in and out of the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Become a better at helping students like the ones in our PASS program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Advocate for my program and use the guide to educate leadership and teachers on the students' PASS was designed for.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students may/may not benefit from my participation because...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Typified Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The correct students should be identified now which should improve school climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students may benefit from my participation because I can help teachers and administrators better identify the TRUE PASS participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I was not able to participate like I would have liked to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Students will benefit from my participation because I can serve the students with higher behavioral needs as a first priority.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using a 1 (Not Important) to 5 (Most Important) to rate the occurring themes based on how your participation impact your practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>Participant 2</th>
<th>Participant 3</th>
<th>Participant 4</th>
<th>Participant 5</th>
<th>Participant 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prompting Reflection/Reflecting on Practice</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmation of Practitioners</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Focus on Student Outcomes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilization of Data</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through our participation, we were able to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Typified Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Determine true PASS students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Determine what a PASS student should and should not look like using data and in-depth campus evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To help our administrators understand what a typical PASS student looks like and how we can help improve our programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Better understand the students who are placed in PASS programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Start formulating a guide through data collection that we can pass to teachers and administrators about what a typical PASS student looks like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## In order to make this model more impactful in practice we should...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Types of Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Meet during the school day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Work together so that ALL district PASS programs are consistent in every aspect of the process from referral to dismissal from the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>So PASS programs can be more universal across Fayette County Schools. Being able to identify students earlier in the process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>...meet frequently together as PASS teams from each school to share, support, and learn from each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Continue to work together to finish and create a universal guide that can be used across all the high schools in the district.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CURRICULUM VITA

Aslean M. White
748 Emmett Creek Lane (859) 608-9285
dr.asleanwhite@gmail.com

Leadership Purpose: The continuous improvement of educational programming aimed at increasing equitable educational opportunities, academic achievement, progression/transition readiness, and graduation rates in our public schools.

Educational Endeavors

University of Louisville/ Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership and Organizational Development (Educational Leadership Program & DOSE Level 2)
August 2020- May 2024

Campbellsville University / M.A. School Improvement (Rank 1)
DOSE Certificate Level 1
Aug 2014 - May 2017

Georgetown College/ Learning and Behavior Disorders (K-12)
August 2010 -August 2012

University of the Cumberlands/ B.S. Communications
August 2003- May 2007

Professional Experience

Fayette County Public Schools / Assistant Principal
July 2023- Present
- Set attainable comprehensive improvement goals to ensure all students achieve at high levels and present school performance data to board members
- Coordinate teacher supervision and evaluation processes with the principal, ensuring that all instructional process elements are properly implemented
- Established a safe learning environment to promote student education and social-emotional learning
- Focus on new teacher development and a school culture that supports positive student-teacher relationships in and outside of the classroom

Fayette County Public Schools / Behavior Specialist (RISE STEM Academy for Girls)
September 2022- July 2023
- Development of behavioral support program for scholars with disabilities
- Implementing departmental objectives, standards, and policies; evaluate program performance against objectives to update improvement plans
- Maintains a strong knowledge base in positive behavior interventions and supports, special education law, due process, programs, services, best practices in behavior management, and other related areas.
- Provides leadership and assistance to staff with special education programming for scholars, tiered interventions, and classroom management

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Fayette County Public Schools / Behavioral Resource Specialist (Secondary Schools)
June 2018- August 2023

- Collaborate and support secondary schools with behavioral interventions and supports for students with learning and behavioral disabilities