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Professional Development and the Impact on Teacher Growth and Development

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Abstract

This study involved examining the beliefs of teachers at one urban elementary school regarding how professional development has helped them meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. The study included a series of in-depth interviews with three teacher leaders. The goal was to obtain consent from the teacher leaders to participate in this study at their school. The qualitative study included a narrative inquiry method to illuminate teachers' perceptions of whether professional development had a positive impact on their instruction. A series of in-depth one-on-one interviews further shed insight on which types of professional development teachers felt improved their practice for meeting the needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse population.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Questions

1. How do personal and teaching experiences shape teachers' approaches to incorporate culturally appropriate pedagogy into their diverse classrooms?

2. Taking teacher education and teaching experiences into account, what aspects of professional development do three teacher leaders perceive as most beneficial to cultivate teacher growth and development for meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners?

Improving the quality of instruction is an important topic in education (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Graham & Perin, 2007), particularly for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Education requires a commitment not only to a profession, but also to children and families. Teachers often leave universities with a fundamental understanding of how to make lesson plans and how to deliver instruction, but lack a deep knowledge of how to differentiate instruction for diverse populations (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Graham & Perin, 2007). Teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students can find themselves challenged with providing meaningful and appropriate learning opportunities for diverse learners (Gleason & Gerzon, 2013; Landsman & Lewis, 2011). For the purposes of this study, the term *culturally diverse students* refers to "students who may be distinguished [from the mainstream culture] by ethnicity, social class, and/or language" (Perez, 1998, p. 6). These students experience poorer educational

outcomes compared to their peers who are not culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Bennett, Casebeer, Kristofco, & Strasser, 2004; Conchas & Noguera, 2004; National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP], 2013). In addition, their place of origin or the culture they are accustomed to may be very different from those of most students (Perez, 1998). As indicated by an increase in drop-out rates among culturally and linguistically diverse learners in schools across the United States, there is currently a lack of adequate response to their learning needs (Chu, 2011; Yates, 2008).

Recently, there has been an even greater urgency as school district leaders create frameworks to assess teacher effectiveness (Kress, Zechmann, & Schmitten, 2011; Kupermintz, 2003). The increased emphasis on teacher accountability has caused school district leaders to incorporate various instructional supports, such as professional development programs that help teachers improve their skills through classroom coaching (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012; City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009). These skills include classroom management, student evaluation methods, and strategies to support students to become better communicators (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012; City et al., 2009). More importantly, these skills can also address the need of having teachers who are more prepared to handle students with learning disadvantages or problems (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012). Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds can benefit from teachers who are better trained to handle their unique needs, because these teachers know how to communicate and instruct effectively, especially when the vehicle for instruction (the English language) is not as fully developed (City et al., 2009).

Instructional supports include professional development opportunities that consist of instructional coaching by peers and evaluators, participation in professional learning

communities, professional book studies with peers, and job-embedded professional development at school sites (Gleason & Gerzon, 2013; Landsman & Lewis, 2011; Lindsey, Roberts, & Campbell Jones, 2013). The traditional model of professional development for teachers typically consists of teachers attending workshops and seminars where a facilitator provides information about new or innovative instructional strategies (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012; City et al., 2009; Desimone, 2009). Teachers are the most valuable resource in schools, as a direct relationship exists between student achievement and teacher knowledge and experience (Darling-Hammond, 1997). As such, it is important for schools to have educators who engage in professional development that develops their skills. After teachers become better trained, they have the knowledge and abilities to respond to students with specialized needs, such as culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and they are able to help such students perform better academically (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

The need to respond to students with specialized needs is a pressing priority for educators. Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds experience poorer educational outcomes than their peers do (Bennett et al., 2004; Conchas & Noguera, 2004; NAEP, 2013). Similarly, Mayer, Mullens, and Moore (2000) and Gleason and Gerzon (2013) confirmed that schools whose students live in poverty and that have a high percentages of culturally and linguistically diverse students are more likely to have less experienced teachers, which may be in part to blame for the poor academic performance of their students. According to Hart (2009), culturally and linguistically diverse learners also tend to read and write at slower rates compared to their counterparts, mainly due to the differences in background knowledge of the topics at

hand. These students also lack proficiency and familiarity with English, since they do not speak English at home or in their daily activities outside the academic setting (Hart, 2009).

Responding to the needs of students with specialized needs, such as those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, is also important because of what the students can contribute to the school. According to Moll and Ruiz (2002), having culturally and linguistically diverse students can benefit schools, as the students can serve as a catalyst to enriching the culture of their schools as well as their community. The presence of culturally and linguistically diverse learners can seem like a challenge for educators in terms of instruction, but it can also serve as an opportunity for schools to become a "primary agent of transformation" (Moll & Ruiz, 2002, p. 363). This means that educational leaders have a reason and are motivated to improve their academic strategies to benefit not only all students from all origins, but also the community.

Professional development has been a part of the teaching profession for many years and includes some form of instructional coaching from a peer or administrator (Casey, 2006; Fisher & Frey, 2007; Marsh et al., 2008; Puig & Froelich, 2007; Rainville, 2007; Toll, 2005). The importance of teachers having regular and consistent access to quality professional development opportunities has increased considerably in the current era of teacher accountability (Peters & Oliver, 2009; Yeh, 2006). Teacher effectiveness measures have also been implemented in schools across the country to evaluate teacher accountability effectively (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Graham & Perin, 2007). Additionally, targeted professional development is essential for teacher development and growth (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Joyce & Showers, 2002). For the purposes of this

study, professional development consisted of any professional learning opportunities provided to and experienced by teachers. The opportunities include graduate courses, facilitator- or administrator-led professional development in a building or district, post-observation meetings with administrators, book studies, and professional learning community participation.

Job-Embedded Professional Development

Joyce and Showers (1988) uncovered a promising approach to professional development when they studied the job-embedded model. The job-embedded model is instructional assistance that occurs at a teacher's school site on a continuing basis (Joyce & Showers, 1988). This approach to professional development promotes active learning for teachers within their school where they can more readily apply new information to their classrooms. In most cases, an individual with content and leadership expertise who works with teachers on an ongoing basis to improve instructional practices leads this approach (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Marsh et al., 2008; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Porter, Garet, Desimone, Yoon, & Birman, 2000). This type of professional development also includes courses or workshops on content-specific subject matter and methods, qualification programs (e.g., degree programs), participation in professional learning communities, mentoring or instructional coaching, professional development modules designed and provided by the school leadership team, and book studies with peers. The added benefit of the job-embedded model as an approach to professional development is that it presents active learning that educators can participate in and subsequently apply directly to their specific classroom environments (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Joyce & Showers, 1988). These instructional practices may also include professional learning

communities where teachers are able to disaggregate data, assess instructional practices, and plan lessons together (Hord, Roussin, & Sommers, 2009). A professional learning community is a network of teachers who continually work together, collaborate, and engage in critical thinking to develop the best practices in their field (Ying, 2013).

Job-embedded professional development has several advantages. It is relatively easy to integrate this type of professional development into the daily activities of teachers, because it takes place in their place of work in an ongoing process (Joyce & Showers, 1988). The continuing and constant nature of job-embedded professional development methods also allows for a more comprehensive way of learning (Marsh et al., 2008). Teachers undergoing this type of training can apply their learnings and evaluate them on a regular basis (Marsh et al., 2008), which allows them to be up to date with new techniques, while also giving them the opportunity to analyze its facets to investigate what is effective in their own classrooms. Another specific benefit of one of the facets of job-embedded professional development, namely professional learning communities, is that the focus is on sharing knowledge and promoting innovation to solve issues in the academe (Ying, 2013). The output of professional learning communities is often additional professional development for teachers (Ying, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

With the growing teacher accountability movement, teachers have an even greater responsibility for the academic development of all students. However, teachers are not receiving adequate training to work effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Culp & Schmidlein, 2012; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013; Payne, 2008; Reeves, 2006; C. L. Weber, Johnson, & Tripp, 2013). If teachers are not receiving quality

professional development to meet the needs of these students, they are not able to satisfy their professional and moral obligation to meet the needs of all learners (Payne, 2008; Reeves, 2006). Approximately 85% of teachers have less than seven professional development hours devoted to culturally and linguistically diverse students (Culp & Schmidlein, 2012). This can be a problem, as teachers may need proper training to work successfully with culturally and linguistically diverse students due to differences in their backgrounds (Culp & Schmidlein, 2012). The learning styles and the pace by which these students learn may also vary, because English is not their first language or they may not have been fully assimilated to the manner of learning in American public schools (Culp & Schmidlein, 2012).

The objective of professional development is to increase teachers' growth and development to meet the needs of all students, including culturally and linguistically diverse students (C. L. Weber et al., 2013). Education programs prepare teachers to address the academic needs of students, but often do not adequately prepare them to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of students who differ from their own (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013; C. L. Weber et al., 2013). This is an alarming problem because the majority of teachers in the United States are White (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Without adequate training in working with culturally and linguistically diverse students, teachers may have a tendency to unfairly evaluate them based on their perceived academic orientation that stems from racial stereotypes (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Examples include significantly higher negative perceptions of African American students compared to their White counterparts by White teachers.

Teachers often rely on school and school district leaders to provide the professional development needed to address the unique needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Thus, it was important to conduct a study to evaluate what aspects of professional development three teacher leaders perceive to be most beneficial to cultivate teacher growth and development for meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Joyce & Showers, 1988). The job-embedded model is an approach to professional development that includes a lot of active learning in which educators can participate and subsequently apply directly to their specific classroom environments. Individuals with content and leadership expertise, which may include other teachers, work with teachers to develop their methods of instruction consistently. The guidance provided by this model assists teachers in implementing new instructional practices and empowers them to do so independently or collaboratively with other teachers. This type of professional development can positively affect a teacher's instruction within the classroom (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Marsh et al., 2008; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Porter et al., 2000). Additionally, it was important to examine what aspects of job-embedded professional development teachers perceive were most beneficial to cultivate teacher growth and development for meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners to come up with the best and most effective ways of addressing these concerns. This research study involved isolating the specific facets of a professional development that were the most effective in addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

More than 3.5 million students in schools in the United States have limited English proficiency because they come from a different cultural background (Hart, 2009).

Students coming from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have poorer educational outcomes compared to their peers who are not culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Bennett et al., 2004; Conchas & Noguera, 2004; NAEP, 2013).

Professional development can be used to address the specialized learning needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students (C. L. Weber et al., 2013). These students may need assistance in their learning, including English tutoring, specialized lesson planning, and remedial classes for struggling students. Teachers may also develop and be trained in classroom teaching specialized for the learning needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students (C. L. Weber et al., 2013).

Culturally and linguistically diverse students may require extra academic help (Culp & Schmidlein, 2012). To meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners, teachers need ongoing, comprehensive, individualized professional development to help them differentiate instruction for students with diverse learning needs (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Instructional differentiation refers to the process of providing personalized education to different students to ensure they learn effectively, regardless of differences in culture, language, or ability (C. L. Weber et al., 2013). This process entails teachers developing specialized lessons, teaching materials, and evaluation tools to address the various learning needs of each student.

Background of the Study

Recruiting and retaining quality teachers is becoming more of a challenge for school leaders. According to Provasnik and Dorfman (2005), 50% of new teachers leave the profession within the first 5 years. According to researchers at the National Education Association (2005), teachers leave the profession because, among other

reasons, they feel overwhelmed and unprepared to teach a new generation of students who may differ from them culturally, linguistically, or often both. Researchers at the National Center for Education Statistics (2005) noted,

> Continuing with business as usual will mean failure or mediocrity for too many students. Data related to racial, cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity demonstrates achievement gaps. Rapidly changing demographics demand that educators engage in a vigorous, ongoing, and systematic process of professional development to prepare all educators in the school to function effectively in a highly diverse environment. (p. 16)

National Education Association (2005) researchers reported that a historic turnover has taken place in the teaching profession. With the aging population of teachers and with student enrollment increasing 19%, school leaders in the United States will need to employ more teachers in the coming years (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010). Teacher longevity and certification are often cited as having a significant impact on student achievement (Horowitz, 2005; Marzano, 2003). A study of high- versus low-achieving schools in New York City with demographically similar students determined that years of experience and levels of certification accounted for 90% of the variation in student achievement at the school level (Marzano, 2003). School district leaders should provide quality professional development to support certified teachers in meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students to retain the teachers. Aside from being able to handle the relatively more challenging task of helping students who need additional support, professional development programs also equip teachers with skills that make them more well-rounded educators. These skills include the ability to handle conflict management, collaborate effectively with fellow teachers, and engage in strategic academic planning (Horowitz, 2005). According to Horowitz (2005) and Marzano

(2003), these skills make teachers more competent and strengthen their resolve to commit to their jobs.

Significance

The findings of this study contribute to a better understanding of job-embedded professional development and how teachers feel about its role to improve instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse student populations, which could ultimately be applied nationally (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Joyce & Showers, 1988). These development opportunities were provided to educators at the school on a continuing basis to develop skills over time. The goals of this study were to analyze if an ongoing process of learning is effective and to observe which of these professional development methods which include instructional coaching by peers and evaluators, participation in professional learning communities, professional book studies with peers, and job-embedded professional development, they believed work effectively in serving a culturally and linguistically diverse population.

This study involved the narrative inquiry method. This research approach included field texts such as interviews, autobiographies, journals, stories, family backgrounds, photos, videos, meaningful artifacts, and other significant life accounts as data. The data were analyzed to uncover and explain how the participating teachers in this study constructed meaning in their lives or particular experiences with the use of narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Purpose of the Study

This study involved examining the beliefs of teachers at one urban elementary school regarding how professional development has helped them meet the needs of

culturally and linguistically diverse students. This study included a series of in-depth interviews with three teacher leaders. The goal was to obtain consent from them to participate in this study at their school. With a qualitative approach, this study included a narrative inquiry method to illuminate teachers' perceptions of whether professional development had a positive impact on their instruction. A series of in-depth one-on-one interviews further shed insight on which types of professional development teachers felt improved their practice for meeting the needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse population.

The stories of teachers and culturally and linguistically diverse learners are becoming increasingly important tools for investigating a wide range of issues, especially because these individuals may not have the power and influence to enact significant reforms (Clanindin & Connelly, 2000; Lantolf, 2000). The study also involved highlighting the voices of teachers, who are the unsung heroes in the academic field. When teachers share their personal career histories, it could help reform how other teachers and leaders in the education sector understand the purpose and value of the activity of instructional practice over time (Clanindin & Connelly, 2000). These accounts could also help recognize the specific things that need to be done to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population (Lantolf, 2000). The response to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners in schools across the United States is inadequate, as demonstrated by increased drop-out rates among these students (Chu, 2011; Yates, 2008). However, despite a lack of significant funding and attention, an increasing number of teachers and school leaders have voiced their concerns to policy makers regarding these omissions (Chu, 2011; Yates, 2008). Programs such as

specialized instruction and culturally responsive teaching practices have been implemented to fill the current gaps in the education system (Chu, 2011; Yates, 2008).

Personal Interest

Education is a field that I entered as a second career. I attended the University of Houston and earned a master of education and teaching license simultaneously. I attended classes for 2 years and completed my student teaching in an elementary school for one semester and at a middle school for one semester. I secured my first job at a Catholic school that educated children from 3 years old through eighth grade. The school had a very high family income base and students who were performing at a relatively high level. I taught sixth grade honors English and honors literature and was able to apply all my learning from graduate school directly to my classroom. I also had several years of very successful teaching that led to high achievement for my students.

Upon acceptance into a doctoral program, my advisor advised me that I needed to have urban teaching experience. As such, I applied to a large urban school district. During my first year of teaching in this environment, I used many instructional practices that I had used at my former place of employment. I noticed very quickly that I had to make a lot of the content more accessible for my students to be able to complete the tasks. I had taken two urban education classes, but had no courses specific to meeting the needs of linguistically diverse students. I had been teaching there for about 1 month when my principal told me that I would also become the humanities facilitator for the building. I had no idea what that meant. I was told to take an assessment at the main office. The test involved watching a video of a classroom and then writing a response about what I saw and how I thought it could be improved. I took the test and learned that

I passed. I am still not sure how I was assessed, who graded it, and what areas I should improve. But I was appointed as the humanities facilitator, which I later found out was an instructional coach.

I found myself reading every journal, book, and research study available to me because I thought if I was struggling to determine how best to serve my students, then everyone else was probably struggling as well. As I attended the literacy department meetings, I soon discovered I was correct; the other teachers were trying to determine how to improve student achievement. The role of humanities facilitators is to be an instructional coach for literacy as well as social studies. I did not receive any training, but I did attend a couple of meetings where other humanities facilitators were present. As a teacher in a new building with a new demographic, I felt overwhelmed and had some leadership responsibilities for which I was not prepared. At this time, I realized there should be some parameters for who is designated to be a coach and noted new teachers needed to have someone more knowledgeable than me available to them. The following year, I applied for and received the appointment as the humanities facilitator at a much larger building. My duties did not include classroom instruction but solely teacher education and support, which allowed me the time I needed to learn about adult learners, read current research about students similar to those at the school, and plan methods to disseminate the information to other faculty.

After being an instructional coach for 7 years, I had learned the value and importance of growth and development opportunities for all teachers, regardless of length of experience or level of education. I studied the aspects of professional development that the teachers at one urban elementary school experienced to determine which aspects

teachers find most useful in improving their ability to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. The intent was to find a simple yet significant approach to improving instructional growth and development in the school and in institutions similar to the one featured in this study. My experience as a teacher included very little professional development about serving culturally and linguistically diverse students. I was left to research methods and structures on my own, which I do not feel was the most effective way for me to learn. It is important to understand how teachers feel about professional development offered at the school level and the impact they feel it has on their ability to serve culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Literature Search Strategy

This literature review includes an examination of the research literature, guided by the following research questions:

1. How do personal and teaching experiences shape teachers' approaches to incorporate culturally appropriate pedagogy into their diverse classrooms?

2. Taking teacher education and teaching experiences into account, what aspects of professional development do three teacher leaders perceive as most beneficial to cultivate teacher growth and development for meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners?

The strategy of the review was to emphasize or explain the vital topics in this study, which included the definition of culturally and linguistically diverse learners as well as their special needs. The concept of professional development was also further defined, especially connected to addressing the needs of the aforementioned group of students.

The review also included other topics related to or classified under professional development programs for teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The first section of the literature review includes a discussion of the theoretical framework, specifically language through Vygotsky and sociocultural theory. Vygotsky sought to ground the research and contextualize it with the use of theory. After this, a definition of

culturally and linguistically diverse students is outlined, followed by a discussion of their needs as learners. Professional development for culturally and linguistically diverse learners is then explicated with related concepts that fall under the important umbrella topic that follows. These concepts included specialized instruction and differentiation for culturally and linguistically diverse students, content and language objectives, assessments aligned to content and language objectives, student communication and collaboration, teacher evaluation, job-embedded professional development, professional learning communities, and book study.

Theoretical Framework: Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky (1978, 1986) described language as a developmental tool that serves as a mediating factor between stimulus and response. Language serves as the bridge between an individual's thoughts and corresponding actions (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Vygotsky further explained that human thought and language are so interdependent that one is never found without the other. Even in isolation, the thinker uses language to contemplate the stimulus (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Individuals in collaborative environments reason through activities and find meaning with language. They use actions as concrete evidence and conversely use words to describe or contextualize them. Humans perceive their realities as structures and define this reality based on the manner in which the reality is described collaboratively with language (Vygotsky, 1978).

The primary concern of sociocultural theory is the development of humans as a society, human cultures over time, and the development of individuals during their lives. The focus of most current sociocultural theory research in applied linguistics is the development of mental functions and processes over relatively shorter periods of time

(Duff & McKinstry, 2007). The human mind is mediated in language and other culturally constructed symbol systems and tools, especially in speech, primarily because knowledge is not merely provided and accepted by another (Lantolf, 2000). Rather, knowledge is an individual's understanding of the world itself developed through discourse. Vygotsky (1978) noted that learners can be guided by the zone of proximal development into more expert practice by assimilating a more knowledgeable other into interdependent actions.

According to Gee (1990), language is a form of discourse used to develop understanding. Beyond this definition, language is also a culturally specific linguistic code that connects to one's social identity (Gee, 1990). Language is also a tool that links and helps build relationships between two individuals from the same cultural group. Discourse can also become a tool that incorporates sociocultural elements of cognitive development, in addition to a device used to determine social roles (Gee, 1992). Discourses are much more than the diction and syntax an individual uses, but rather define the social identities expected by the cultural group (Gee, 1990). Gee's interpretation thus elevates language as a way of communicating through words and through nonverbal communication such as actions, context, and inherent identities.

Sociocultural theory is a view of teaching and of the implications for second language learning conceived by Vygotsky in the years following the Russian Revolution (Lantolf, 2000). Vygotsky believed that parents, caregivers, and peers were all equally responsible for developing higher order functions. Sociocultural theory is an emerging theory that researchers use to look at the important contributions that society makes to each individual's development and well-being (Duff & McKinstry, 2007; Lantolf, 2000).

This theory emphasizes the interaction between developing people and the cultural environment in which they live. Another key focus of sociocultural theory is on how adults and peers influence individual learning and how cultural beliefs and attitudes affect the ways instruction and learning take place (Duff & McKinstry, 2007; Lantolf, 2000).

In this study, sociocultural theory served as the theoretical basis due to its applicability to the main research topic, not only in terms of job-embedded professional development but also in understanding the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. These concepts relate on a particular focus of sociocultural theory research in which applied linguistics can be used to develop mental functions and processes (Duff & McKinstry, 2007), which is a primary goal of professional development in response to addressing the learning requirements of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The human mind is mediated in language and other culturally constructed symbol systems and tools, which influences the value of finding ways to improve teacher instruction to help culturally and linguistically diverse students learn more effectively, especially in speech, because knowledge is not merely provided and accepted by another (Lantolf, 2000). The human mind being mediated in language and other culturally constructed symbol systems illustrates the complexity of the current issue of providing proper classroom instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse learners, which further justifies the need for this study to explore the topic of professional development for their teachers.

Another reason for using sociocultural theory as the basis for this study was to use the lived experiences or stories of teachers and learners, which are becoming increasingly important tools for investigating a wide range of issues. The narratives contributed to a deeper understanding of the complexity of teaching and learning in the context of

culturally and linguistically diverse learners and language acquisition (Lantolf, 2000).

Both language learners and language teachers change over time. Articulating their

personal history helps teachers shape how they understand the purpose of the activity of

instructional practice over time (Clanindin & Connelly, 2000). With the use of data such

as interviews, autobiographies, journals, stories, family backgrounds, photos, videos,

meaningful artifacts, and other significant life accounts as data, narratives elevate the

value of data to respondents by adding context and meaning to information (Clandinin &

Connelly, 2000). This data also allowed the study to capture the stories of teachers and

learners in complex situations and environments (Bignold & Su, 2013). Beyond

collecting and analyzing data, researchers use narratives to explore how the life

experiences of participants contribute to the topic at hand (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Thus, through the stories told in narratives, participants can lend their voices to speak out

and promote important educational issues. Instead of merely observing and investigating

subjects, researchers and their respondents form a collaborative partnership to undertake

pressing issues and challenges (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The impetus for such

would not be possible without the richness of the emotion and context explicated in the

narrative.

Teachers have tools at their disposal for constructing and sustaining professional

expertise and the satisfaction connected to doing so, especially under debilitating external

circumstances. When teachers revert to a state of novice competency due to challenging

conditions, it is not only embarrassing, but it impedes expert activity by fragmenting

cognitive functioning. Vygotsky felt that emotions deserved a theoretical status equal to

cognition (Wertsch, 1985).

Defining Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

According to Lund, Scheer, and Kozlenkova (2013), culture is the way of thinking, acting, and living by a group of individuals who may share a common trait such as age, race or ethnicity, and origin. The term is also a broad way of being that people learn throughout life as they participate in family and social networks (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006; Terry & Irving, 2010). Culture is an umbrella concept that includes values and behavioral styles, language and dialects, nonverbal communication, perspectives, worldviews, and frames of reference. These usually consist of cultural practices from community activities to customs and even laws or regulations (Terry & Irving, 2010). People share cultural practices within a specific group and may or may not share them across groups (Banks, 2006; Terry & Irving, 2010). Misunderstanding or conflict often comes from these differences and the way two or more different individuals or groups reconcile these disparities. In this study, the term culturally diverse students referred "to students who may be distinguished [from the mainstream culture] by ethnicity, social class, and/or language" (Perez, 1998, p. 6).

Language is a means of communication that shapes cultural and personal identity and socializes an individual into a cultural group (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006). These particular languages can be both verbal and nonverbal and have oral and written components (Terry & Irving, 2010). For the purposes of this study, linguistically diverse students will be referred to as "students whose first language is either a language other than English or a language other than the middle class, mainstream English used in schools" (Perez, 1998, p. 5).

Meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students requires a change of attitudes in educators regarding their need for further learning and development, as well as working toward changing the status quo (Huffman & Hipp, 2003). Huffman and Hipp (2003) noted that fulfilling this important objective entails a significant amount of learning for teachers. This is especially true, as the number of English language learners attending schools in the United States has increased dramatically over the past 25 years. Moreover, according to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, English language learners represent the fastest growing segment of the school-age population (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010; Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2010). Because of this growth, teaching English language skills to English language learners is a principal responsibility of all school staff (Hill & Flynn, 2006). However, programs that respond to this need were not developed recently, as communicative language teaching started in many English language development classrooms as early as the late 1980s (Lightbown, 2000).

The need to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students is critical. With Senate Bill 10-191 taking effect in Colorado, teachers are searching for methods to improve literacy instruction for this population (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Graham & Perin, 2007). Senate Bill 10-191, also known as Ensuring Quality Instruction Through Educator Effectiveness, aims to ensure all licensed personnel receive adequate feedback and professional development support to provide them a meaningful opportunity to improve their effectiveness and to ensure all licensed personnel have the means to share effective practices with other educators throughout the state (Colorado Senate Bill 10-

191, 2010, Section 5). The bill also mandated forming the State Council on Educator

Effectiveness, which reports to the State Board of Education. The State Council on

Educator Effectiveness is tasked with coming up with "recommendations and guidelines

for definitions and standards of teacher and principal effectiveness; guidelines for a fair,

rigorous, and transparent system; and recommendations for state policy changes

regarding evaluation" (Behrstock-Sherratt, Rizzolo, Laine, & Friedman, 2013, p. 105).

Quality instruction is at the forefront of education in part because of the

requirement in the No Child Left Behind [NCLB] Act of 2001 that students demonstrate

adequate yearly progress in reading and writing. The NCLB Act of 2001 mandates that

school leaders plan and execute methods of improving the academic proficiency of

students, especially in the areas of reading and mathematics. The enactment of this

legislation has placed a much-needed emphasis on individual students' progress, as

opposed to the general or aggregate achievement of an entire batch of students.

According to the NCLB Act, leaders of educational institutions must make sure that all

students, regardless of the classroom setting, master the standards mandated by the state.

As a result, school leaders are responsible for the total achievement of the entire student

body, including particular disadvantaged subgroups or minority groups (NCLB, 2001),

which is especially crucial for those deemed as underserved by these schools in previous

school years based on test scores of students belonging to these groups. Another

important facet of the NCLB Act is that any school that fails to meet a 100% proficiency

score for any particular subgroup may face strict penalties or sanctions.

Despite the passage of such a bill that aims to solve academic inequality in the

American school system, there are still some problems. The achievement gap between

minority and disadvantaged students and their White and Asian counterparts have persisted despite national mandates ensuring its removal (J. Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007; No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). Particularly in schools that serve relatively higher proportions of students from diverse backgrounds, this systemic failure limits the access of certain groups of students from educational opportunities in U.S. society (Delpit, 1995; Hooks, 1994; Lareau, 2003; C. D. Lee, 2007; Rogoff, 2003). Factors encountered by minority or disadvantaged students ranging from difficulty integrating socially to a lack of access to academic resources due to financial limitations exacerbate this worsening problem (Sedibe, Feldman, & Magano, 2014). The latter is a particular concern, as Brown and DiRanna (2012) noted that "equal access to content instruction is the foundation of educational equity – it reduces gaps that lead to achievement gaps" (p. 1).

Needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners

Approximately 3.5 million students in schools in the United States have limited English proficiency (Hart, 2009). A large majority of students who have limited English proficiency come from different cultural backgrounds (Hart, 2009). Researchers have indicated that students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds experience poorer educational outcomes compared to their peers (Bennett et al., 2004; Conchas & Noguera, 2004; NAEP, 2013). According to Hart (2009), culturally and linguistically diverse learners also tend to read and write at rates slower than their counterparts, primarily due to differences in background knowledge of the topics at hand. There is also a lack of proficiency and familiarity with the language, because it is not what these students use at home or in their daily activities outside the academic setting (Hart, 2009).

Figures 1-3 show a current problem that is a popular topic in educational research. Despite noticeably higher trends in national assessment scores for 9-year-old students as an entire population, an academic achievement gap persists between scores of White and non-White (Hispanics, in this example) students.
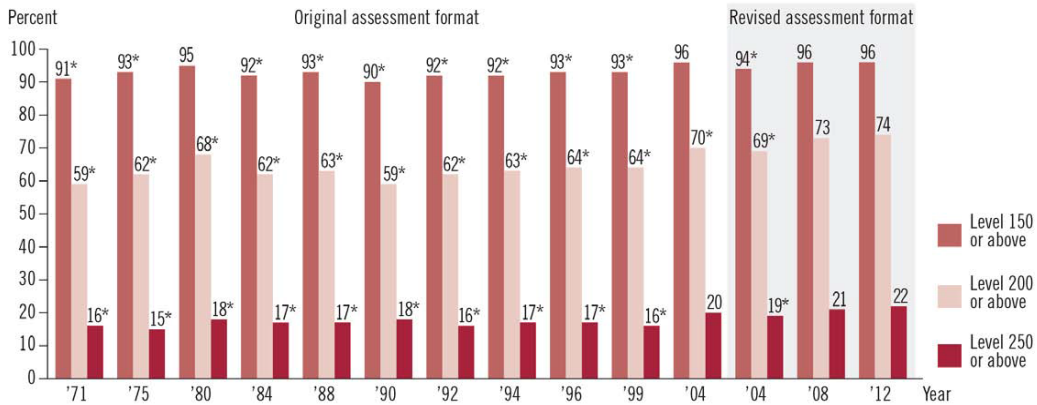
Figure 1. Trend in National Assessment of Educational Progress reading performance-level results for 9-year-old students.
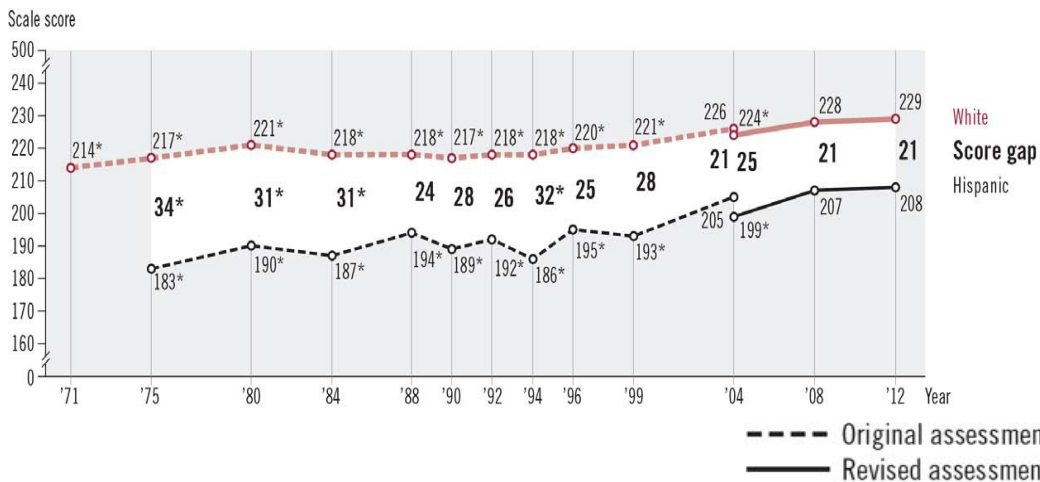
Figure 2. Trend in National Assessment of Educational Progress reading average scores and score gaps for White and Hispanic 9-year-old students. *Significantly different (*p* < .05) from 2012. White excludes students of Hispanic origin. Hispanic includes Latino.

Hispanic was not a separate category in 1971. Score gaps are calculated based on

differences between unrounded average scores.

Figures 1-3 are important because Hispanics are currently the largest group of

culturally and linguistically diverse learners in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau,

2012b). Furthermore, Hispanics will most probably comprise approximately 25% of the

total United States population by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012b). Projections also

indicate that one out of three children in the country will be from a culturally and

linguistically diverse background by the same year (Lineman & Miller, 2012; Rogers &

Lopez, 2002).
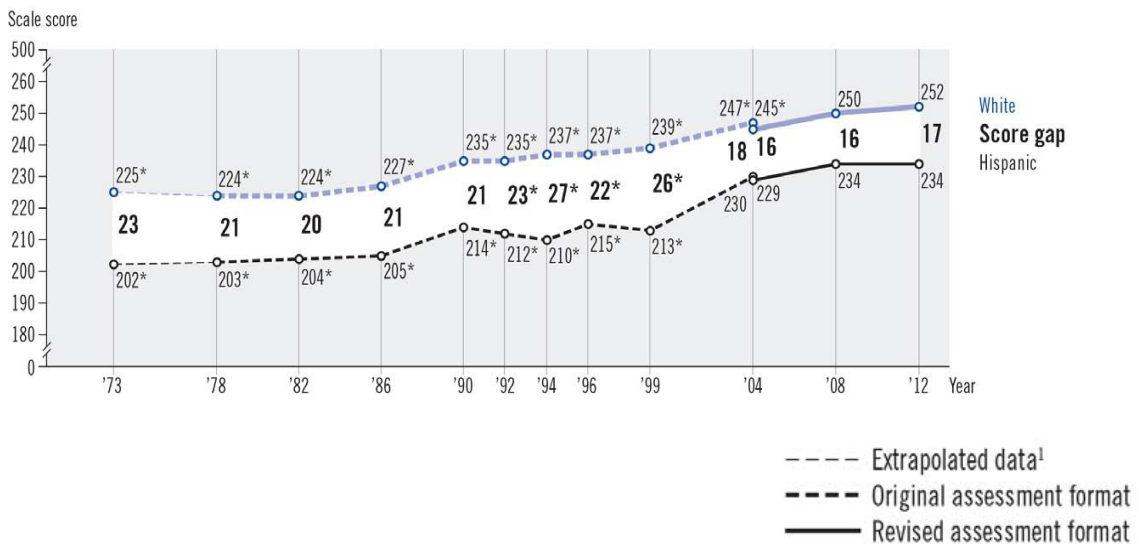
Figure 3. Trend in National Assessment of Educational Progress mathematics average

scores and score gaps for White and Hispanic 9-year-old students. *Significantly

different ($p < .05$) from 2012. Extrapolated data adjusting for the limited number of

questions from the 1973 mathematics assessment in common with the assessments that

followed White excludes students of Hispanic origin. Hispanic includes Latino. Score

gaps are calculated based on differences between unrounded average scores.

The 2012 NAEP study findings are a cause of concern, as some state departments do not typically gather data on the language proficiency of students, which makes researching and finding solutions to address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners even more difficult because the information collected is only relatively emerging (Hart, 2009). Therefore, it is essential to be able to address this concern proactively through teachers, who undoubtedly have the most significant impact on students. One of the most effective solutions to this issue is through initiatives that target the professional development of teachers (Hart, 2009), which include the need to respond to the specialized linguistic and cultural needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students such as English tutoring, specialized lesson planning, and remedial classes for struggling students. Culturally and linguistically diverse students may need additional academic assistance so they may eventually learn at the same level as their peers (Culp & Schmidlein, 2012). To fulfill the needs of these learners, teachers need ongoing, comprehensive, individualized professional development to help them differentiate for students with diverse learning needs (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2012; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

Another reason it is vital to provide academic assistance to culturally and linguistically diverse learners is that a bigger cause of the achievement gap observed among these students is the concept of racialization. According to Kozol (2012), the majority of inner-city schools that cater to ethnic minorities such as African Americans and Hispanics, many of whom face financial troubles, do not have the proper resources to educate these students effectively and efficiently. Aside from the lack of financial and material resources, the facilities and security in these schools are added problems for all stakeholders (Kozol, 2012). These problems reflect the socioeconomic inequalities

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present in the American education system (Kozol, 2012). Stone, Doherty, Jones, and Ross (2011), as well as Loveless (2011), observed the same. Schools that serve communities that are more affluent have better facilities, better educational programs, and more qualified instructors who received adequate training (Loveless, 2011; Stone et al., 2011). Loveless further noted that these advantages were not only a result of more funding but also because of the greater ability of those within the communities, most of whom are predominantly White, to achieve these benefits.

Also related to the topic of racialization is negative stereotyping by teachers who may not be equipped to handle students from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds, which includes significantly higher negative perceptions of African American or Hispanic students, especially compared to their White peers, by their White teachers, who comprise a large majority of U.S. educators (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Because teachers often do not have enough training in dealing with culturally and linguistically diverse learners, they may unfairly judge them based on their perceived academic orientation that stems from racial stereotypes (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013; C. L. Weber et al., 2013). These teachers may also easily give up on students from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds when they witness their difficulty in learning because of preconceived notions about their eventual lack of academic success (C. L. Weber et al., 2013). Thus, the objective of professional development is to increase teachers' growth and development to meet the needs of all students, including culturally and linguistically diverse students (C. L. Weber et al., 2013). Professional development programs prepare teachers to address the academic needs of students whose culture and linguistic origins differ from their own.

Professional Development for Teachers of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

In an attempt to rectify this situation, district leaders are currently offering professional development to teachers specific to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners at an unprecedented rate. Many culturally and linguistically diverse learners receive much of their instruction from content area teachers or aides who have not had appropriate teacher preparation or professional development opportunities to support improving instruction for such learners (Echevarria et al., 2004). As such, there is a gap in the skill sets of these teachers, particularly when it comes to fulfilling the supplementary needs of these disadvantaged students. School district leaders, administrators, and teachers across the United States are assessing strategies on how to respond to this problem effectively. Ensuring a revolutionary change in the practices of educators and teachers entails overcoming traditional teaching norms and redefining their social identities (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Out of all the resources accessible to educators, professional development should also play a role in equipping teachers with the tools to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. As both the subjects and the objects of change in education reform, teachers and their professional development have been the focus since the inception of teacher effectiveness (Ying, 2013), especially given the focus on teacher accountability (Peters & Oliver, 2009; Yeh, 2006). Relying on curriculum alone cannot meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students, as teachers must continually define and refine the curriculum. According to Richards and Renandya (2002), teachers make learning more manageable by interpreting and transforming the

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curriculum to suit the style and pace of their students' learning. The curriculum provides a general overview or map of the lesson plan, but the greater impact is on teachers' ability to apply the concepts to make them relevant to each student (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Targeted professional development is also essential for teacher development and growth (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Joyce & Showers, 2002), and it must be done over a relatively long period of time to observe enduring benefits (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). Thus, effective professional development changes instructional practice and has a lasting impact that perpetuates change in teaching practice (Horowitz, 2005). Professional development also has a positive effect on the expectations of students as well as on collaboration with colleagues (Horowitz, 2005).

Professional development is not the most important aspect of effective teaching. Education programs prepare teachers to address the academic needs of students but may not adequately prepare them to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of students who are different from them (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Bey (2013) interviewed teachers regarding their perception of professional development programs through a focus group discussion with six individuals and found that the negative feedback was more frequent than the positive feedback. Respondents reported low levels of satisfaction with regard to the duration of the professional development programs and to the assistance extended to the teachers following the actual program proper (Bey, 2013). Respondents also cited problems with the software used and the social networking skills to make learning easier for students (Bey, 2013). Nishimura (2014) echoed these findings and noted that negative feedback on professional development programs was often rooted in the lack of supplementary or follow-up sessions to build on the skills and lessons obtained by the

teachers. Webster-Wright (2009) also noted that the lack of a significant impact of professional development was due to the focus on content and the curriculum, as opposed to the actual process of professional learning. Guskey and Yoon (2009) also criticized professional development techniques such as workshops because of a lack of "genuine follow-up or sustained support" (p. 496). To be more effective, leaders of educational institutions must integrate these programs into long-term strategies for training teachers (Bey, 2013; Nishimura, 2014).

Despite its limitations, one of the positive impacts that professional development brings about, according to Horowitz (2005), is how it helps teachers improve their abilities in terms of both functional expertise and soft skills. For the former, professional development helps equip teachers with the necessary practical training to fulfill their responsibility as an instructor adequately (Berger, 2014). Examples of professional development include planning curriculum, crafting lesson plans, and appropriate testing or evaluation methods. However, another equally essential set of abilities that professional development addresses is the soft skills of each teacher. Soft skills refer to desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge ("Soft Skills," n.d.) but rather include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude ("Soft Skills," n.d.). Soft skills are important in teachers' classroom training because they serve as the foundation for effective teaching. According to Hart (2009), a key skill that teachers need to build is understanding their students so that they may pattern their manner of teaching to each pupil. It is essential to take the pace and style of learning of each individual into account to ensure no student is left behind. Targeting the functional expertise and soft skills of each teacher, through

professional development, also equips them with the confidence and self-assurance to fulfill their responsibilities (Berger, 2014).

Another positive impact of professional development, as previously mentioned by Horowitz (2005), is how it helps teachers collaborate more effectively with each other, which is particularly important in the field of education, where teamwork, exchange of ideas, and harmonious interpersonal relationships are essential to achieving goals (Berger, 2014). Guskey and Yoon (2009) echoed this and stated that the shared experiences as well as the joint knowledge of educators within an educational institution help solve problems and implement best practices for classroom instruction. Aside from working with teachers within the same school or educational institution, interactions and partnerships between different school systems are also some of the key benefits of collaboration stemming from professional development programs. This involvement exposes teachers to the process of developing and improving methods of instruction, which further hones their skills in their classrooms (Desimone, 2009). These relations also ensure schools and educators are constantly striving for the latest, most advanced, and most effective methods of handling students due to sharing best practices, as well as looking for opportunities for improvement (Berger, 2014), which can both be used by teachers to address the specific needs and nuances of their different classrooms (Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

The subsequent subsections define and detail the various aspects or types of professional development for teachers as a way to address the needs of their culturally and linguistically diverse students. These include specialized instruction and differentiation for culturally and linguistically diverse students, content and language

objectives, assessments aligned to content and language objectives, student communication and collaboration, teacher evaluation, job-embedded professional development, professional learning communities, and book study.

Specialized instruction and differentiation for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Instructional differentiation is the process of providing specialized education to different students to ensure they learn effectively, regardless of their culture, first language, or ability (C. L. Weber et al., 2013). Differentiation requires teachers to develop personalized lesson plans, teaching materials, and assessment tools to address the various learning needs of each individual student. According to Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010), effective instructional differentiation for culturally and linguistically diverse learners cannot occur to its fullest potential without a basic understanding of intercultural communication, the language acquisition process, and characteristics of the stages of language development. Intercultural communication is vital in being able to ensure actions, words, and ideas are effectively shared with individuals from different backgrounds (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010), which is especially important in a class or school where educators have students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Similarly, the language acquisition process and language development are also concepts that teachers need for effective differentiation (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010). Because students who learn English as a second language also have relatively low proficiency compared to their counterparts for whom English is their first language, it is important for teachers to be sensitive to their needs. The level of mastery of these students of the English language is at different levels, and they were most likely introduced to the language at different stages in their lives. To have the English language

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used as a primary medium of instruction requires teachers to have a differentiated way of addressing the academic needs of these students (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010).

Culturally and linguistically diverse students attend urban schools and districts, and increasingly attend small town schools (Herrera et al., 2010). Providing differentiated instruction that addresses students' cultural and linguistic diversity involves creating separate lesson plans for English language learners and native English speakers (Hill & Flynn, 2006; Walqui & Van Lier, 2010). Because the medium of instruction is crucial in adequately communicating the vital points of each lesson (Hill & Flynn, 2006), having separate lesson plans depending on the level of English allows teachers to modify their modules so the two sets of classes, both English and non-English speakers, can understand. An example of this is teaching mathematics, where the concepts of arithmetic are consistent in any language. The ability of teachers to differentiate their lesson rests in their ability to make it understandable in any language or at any level of English proficiency (Hill & Flynn, 2006; Walqui & Van Lier, 2010). These strategies include using simpler or clearer language, visual aids, or practical applications to ensure comprehension without using advance English.

However, secondary and postsecondary educators in the United States do not equitably educate students living in poverty, members of racial and ethnic minorities, those with a first language other than English, and those with learning disabilities (Schoenbach, Greenleaf, & Murphy, 2012). Many educational institutions lack funding and support from their local governments to address the increased academic needs of students who belong to minority groups or those with disabilities (Schoenbach et al., 2012). In response, local or grassroots programs exist in schools around the country to

address these gaps. A promising grassroots program is Title I schools studied by Gleason and Gerzon (2013) that showed an increase in student achievement for 5 to 10 years by attending to the individual needs of students. The first step to achieving this goal was identifying the specific obstacles that prevented the equitable treatment of students within the school (Gleason & Gerzon, 2013). Examples of these included establishing peer support groups for students struggling socially, as well as having an open-door policy or having teachers available for academic consultation (Gleason & Gerzon, 2013). These methods lowered the barriers between teachers and students, which led to increased levels of cooperation. The next step observed by Gleason and Gerzon was finding opportunities for personalized learning, which included modifications in tests or assignments, one-on-one tutoring sessions, and activities suited to the interests of each individual student. The third step was constant team-based learning for teachers, which allowed them to share their best practices with each other (Gleason & Gerzon, 2013). These enriching discussions helped strengthen the resolve of educators in successful schools in overcoming challenges and looking for opportunities for further educational improvement while empowering all teachers to do the same in their classrooms.

Content and language objectives. Content and language objectives are an important part of the study of professional development programs for teachers, because they are a commonly used method in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Echevarria et al., 2004). The technique is a common feature in professional development programs, especially in modules discussing how to craft specific and specialized lessons for different students with varying learning styles or speeds (Echevarria et al., 2004). Content and language objectives also address the necessity for

instructional differentiation in the classroom, especially for culturally and linguistically diverse learners (C. L. Weber et al., 2013).

Content objectives refer to the subject matter information teachers want students to know by the end of the lesson (Echevarria et al., 2004; Haynes & Zacarian, 2010). Language objectives refer to the language needed to think, speak, read, and write about the content (Walqui & Van Lier, 2010). Content and language objectives are vital in classroom instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students, because they highlight the "what" and "how" of their learning for the particular session. Setting learning objectives helps both teachers and students track the latter's progress, particularly with the specific subject matters they have already tackled and mastered (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Content objectives help identify the topics and their meanings, which allows students to evaluate what they have learned (Echevarria et al., 2004; Haynes & Zacarian, 2010), whereas language objectives act as the building blocks that help students gradually understand the content (Walqui & Van Lier, 2010). Because culturally and linguistically diverse students typically learn the content and the English language at the same time, they understand the topic at hand using English words or phrases that they have learned relatively recently (Walqui & Van Lier, 2010). This presents an opportunity for them to apply their learning of the English language on two separate occasions: in their actual English class and when they apply this in other classes (Walqui & Van Lier, 2010).

Assessments aligned to content and language objectives. When educators use formative assessment to monitor objective outcomes, descriptive feedback serves to inform and support students by assessing what they understand and identifying gaps in

their learning to achieve the intended outcome (Herrera et al., 2010). Descriptive

feedback supplements the classroom learning of each student by having the teacher

present opportunities for improvement. This type of assessment also serves to encourage

students to become independent and self-sufficient by seeking ways of learning beyond

the confines of the classroom (Herrera et al., 2010).

In addition to descriptive feedback from teachers, culturally and linguistically

diverse students need guidance and direction to understand the focus of the formative

assessment and if it will develop meaningful language or develop formal precision within

the content goals (Walqui & Van Lier, 2010). Students may provide peers with feedback

in pairs or small groups, which can be less intimidating for culturally and linguistically

diverse learners than feedback from an authority figure such as a teacher (Hill & Flynn,

2006). Specific examples in which these can be applied are peer support organizations or

after-school study groups (Hill & Flynn, 2006). Aside from a comparatively informal or

less authoritative approach, feedback from peers also encourages these students to have a

support system they can turn to in case they face academic or other problems.

Student communication and collaboration. Students benefit from opportunities

in the classroom to communicate and collaborate with peers. Aside from the academic

welfare of culturally and linguistically diverse learners, it is also essential for teachers of

culturally and linguistically diverse students to assist in building and maintaining social

rapport with their peers (Klingner, Hoover, & Baca, 2008). These professional networks

provide not only social support but also academic assistance for students who have the

biggest risk of facing difficulties in their studies (Klingner et al., 2008). Schoenbach et

al. (2012) noted that students need opportunities to practice exchanging ideas and sharing

knowledge, strategies, and problem-solving approaches that shape their cognitive habits. Structured, cooperative learning experiences are a logical, appropriate intervention to support culturally and linguistically diverse students (Klingner et al., 2008). Positive social and affective influences on learning improve when culturally and linguistically diverse students have opportunities to interact with each other to clarify a confusing point or solve a problem (Echevarria et al., 2004).

Aside from academic assistance, student collaboration can also provide social support to help ease the intimidation that comes with learning a new language or assimilating into new cultural environments (Hill & Flynn, 2006). According to Klingner et al. (2008), most students who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds tend to feel isolated in school settings because of a lack of peers who come from similar backgrounds. As a result, their academic achievement is hampered because they lack motivation and suffer from learned helplessness. Encouraging students to become more engaged in their academics as well as their community through their peers strengthens their resolve to strive hard in their studies despite difficulties with the language (Gleason & Gerzon, 2013).

Teacher evaluation. Practitioners, researchers, and policy makers agree that most current teacher evaluation systems do little to help teachers improve or to support personnel decision making. There is also a growing consensus that evidence of teacher contributions to student learning should be part of teacher evaluation systems, along with evidence about the quality of teacher practices (Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012). In addition, these evaluation methods can also shed light on whether professional development programs that teachers undergo are effective in

meeting the needs of their students, particularly culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2011). Constant evaluation by authorities or educational leaders can also shed light on the long-term efficacy of these programs (Bey, 2013; Nishimura, 2014).

Educators are familiar with the typical supervisory conference "three to glow on, three to grow on." This typically consists of three points a supervisor likes about a teacher's methods and three possible opportunities for improvement (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2011, p. 10). Currently, the typical teacher evaluation in public education consists of a series of fleeting classroom visits by a principal or other building administrator who does not have prior training in evaluation who wields a checklist of classroom conditions and teacher behaviors that often fail to focus directly on the quality of instruction. Therefore, it is easy for teachers to earn high marks under these drive-by rating systems. The evaluation system is often considered a formality instead of a tool to improve existing methods.

A study of the Chicago school system found that 87% of the city's 600 schools, including 69 schools that the city declared to be failing, did not issue a single unsatisfactory teacher rating between 2003 and 2006. In addition to rarely giving unsatisfactory ratings, principals rarely use the evaluations to help teachers improve instruction and student achievement. They frequently do not even discuss the results of their evaluations with the teachers involved (Toch & Harris, 2008). Supervisory conferences often reflect the blurring of the line between evaluation and professional development in schools. The evaluation reflects teachers' individual performance, and

supervisors hope the assessment will improve individuals' performance (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2011).

As a result of Colorado's Ensuring Quality Instruction Through Educator Effectiveness, also known as Senate Bill 10-191, teachers rely heavily on the professional development opportunities schools and districts provide to improve their instructional practices for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The goal of Senate Bill 10-191 is to ensure all licensed personnel receive adequate feedback and professional development support to provide a meaningful opportunity to improve their effectiveness and to ensure all licensed personnel receive the means to share effective practices with other educators throughout the state (Colorado Senate Bill 10-191, 2010, Section 5).

Differentiated professional development has been proposed as a viable approach to improving instruction for all students, including culturally and linguistically diverse students (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Multicultural education advocates have argued that diversity needs to be addressed throughout all aspects of teacher preparation rather than offered only as specialized courses. They believe it should be infused into all coursework offered in teacher education programs and professional development for practicing teachers (Lucas & Villegas, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). One of the most critical targets for school reform is improving teacher effectiveness, which means providing professional development to improve instruction. As a result, educational scholars and policy makers have identified a need for professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance knowledge and develop new instructional practices that support culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Borko, Whitcomb, & Liston, 2009; Desimone, 2009).

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Job-embedded professional development. An example of a successful approach to professional development is a job-embedded model of professional development for teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Joyce & Showers, 1988). The job-embedded model is an approach to professional development that includes a larger amount of active learning in which educators can participate and subsequently apply directly to their specific classroom environments. Job-embedded professional development refers to the professional development opportunities provided to educators at the school on a continuing basis to develop skills over time. Individuals with content and leadership expertise, which may include teachers or administrators, work with teachers to develop instruction consistently. The assistance provided by this model assists teachers in implementing new instructional practices. This type of professional development is capable of positively affecting a teacher's instruction within the classroom (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Marsh et al., 2008; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Porter et al., 2000).

An instructional coach is typically any on-site professional developer who collaborates with teachers to identify instructional needs, teaches educators how to use proven teaching methods, and supports the growth and development of teachers. Administrators often act as both instructional evaluators and coaches to support teachers' growth and development. Instructional leaders, who are often teacher peers, also help teachers implement strategies to make content accessible to culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Knight, 2005).

One of the key effects of job-embedded professional development is that professional development providers or individuals with content and leadership expertise, which may include administrators or other teachers, work with teachers to develop their

methods of instruction consistently. Job-embedded professional development includes a

significant amount of active learning in which educators can participate and subsequently

apply directly to their specific classroom environments (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Joyce

& Showers, 1988). These professional development providers actively and consistently

guide teachers as they implement new instructional practices, and they empower them to

do so independently or collaboratively with their fellow teachers (Joyce & Showers,

1988). This type of professional development is effective as it positively affects teachers'

instruction within the classroom because it is implemented steadily and immediately

evaluated at the classroom, where teachers can apply what they learn (Joyce & Showers,

2002; Marsh et al., 2008; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Porter et al., 2000).

Professional learning communities. Professional learning communities

originated in the business sector, and the basic belief is that organizations can continually

learn and improve on past performances (Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004). Staff

members must understand the relationship between learning with students in the

classroom and learning with colleagues (Hord et al., 2009). These two experiences are

interrelated and mutually develop each other. Sharing best practices with colleagues

helps teachers apply these techniques in the classroom. The opposite is also true, with

each person's unique experience eventually becoming an inspiration or example that

another teacher can use. Professional learning communities include staff members who

learn together to direct their efforts toward improved student achievement (Huffman &

Hipp, 2003). The goal of working toward the well-being of their students, combined with

sharing skills and resources among members of these professional learning communities,

makes this concept applicable as well as suitable to the school setting.

A learning organization includes five disciplines, and systems thinking is the cornerstone of a learning organization (Thompson et al., 2004). Hord et al. (2009) noted the five dimensions of professional learning communities are shared and supportive leadership, shared vision and values, collective learning and application, supportive conditions (collegial relationships and structures), and shared personal practice (Huffman & Hipp, 2003). Shared and supportive leadership ensures each person works alongside other members of an organization to meet objectives (Hord et al., 2009). Shared vision and values provide a common goal that the organization works to achieve or uses as motivation, while collective learning and application emphasize that members develop their skills together and act as one unit (Hord et al., 2009). Supportive conditions create a working environment that makes it easy, effective, and efficient for all to work, and shared personal practice encourages members to voice their ideas or suggestions (Hord et al., 2009).

After applying these concepts to the educational sector, areas in which students are not performing successfully should receive the majority of the staff's attention (Hord et al., 2009; Jacobs & Yendol-Hoppey, 2010). Professional learning communities can ideally identify patterns and facilitate making changes in programs and practices proactively (Thompson et al., 2004). Change must be collaborative and embedded within daily work to address the needs of students (Huffman & Hipp, 2003).

Professional learning communities have a shared concern or area of interest that provides the community with a unique identity and involves engaging in collaborative activities, discussions, and a shared practice that includes developing strategies for solving problems (DuFour, 2004; Jacobs & Yendol-Hoppey, 2010). They support

educator learning through professional development that is collaborative, data driven, and peer facilitated. Having peers facilitate the process creates buy-in from the communities (DuFour, 2004). Professional learning communities are not an initiative but rather a school-wide philosophical framework (Gamble, 2008; Maliszewski, Tong, Chiu, & Huh, 2008).

Systems thinking is a body of knowledge and tools that helps school leaders identify patterns and look for ways to address those patterns (Thompson et al., 2004). Hord et al. (2009) described conditions for the success of professional learning communities as including at least weekly meetings of grade-level or subject matter teams whose members focus on their students' needs, content curriculum, and instructional practices to increase student achievement.

Book study. Educators are searching for methods to engage practicing teachers actively in professional development (Burbank, Kauchak, & Bates, 2010). Groups of teachers are increasingly participating in book studies to improve at their jobs, because it equips them with additional knowledge, especially during discussion periods. After reading a book, teachers reflect on its content and meaning and relate it to their practices (Grierson et al., 2012). The discussion and exchange of information allows teachers to pick up lessons or tips from one another, especially in terms of handling difficult situations or managing conflict, that they can then apply to both the classroom setting and the workplace. Book study groups are also avenues for exploring opportunities for collaboration, as ideas are thrown around and molded to enrich the experiences of the group members further (Grierson et al., 2012).

According to Grierson et al. (2012), the convenience of book study groups is also one of the reasons for their emergence. Teachers like them because they are easily localized, are easily organized, are inexpensive, and encourage socialization (Grierson et al., 2012). For many teachers, classroom obligations are time consuming and may limit outside teacher participation in professional development (Burbank et al., 2010). Book study groups are also more informal, flexible, and accessible compared to formal teacher trainings or seminars (Grierson et al., 2012).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Questions

1. How do personal and teaching experiences shape teachers' approaches to incorporate culturally appropriate pedagogy into their diverse classrooms?

2. Taking teacher education and teaching experiences into account, what aspects of professional development do three teacher leaders perceive as most beneficial to cultivate teacher growth and development for meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners?

In-depth Interviews

The goal of narrative inquiry research is to examine individuals' stories because they have worth (Seidman, 2006). In narrative inquiry research, researchers use in-depth interviews to understand others' experiences and to make meaning of their lived experiences. The most common form of interview is the person-to-person encounter in which one person elicits information from another. In qualitative research interviews, researchers attain knowledge socially in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees. In narrative inquiry, the interview goes beyond the mechanical aspects of a survey-type interview and incorporates an interviewer's skills and personal judgment in the questions posed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Through these interviews, the researcher begins the task of trying to understand what the respondents mean through the things they say. Researchers also use in-depth interviews as a data-gathering tool

because it can allow them to investigate the subjective experiences of individuals and their social world by simply listening to what they say and observing how they do so (Healey-Etten & Sharp, 2010).

In this study, the in-depth interview was guided by the two research questions. These questions served as the general guide for me as the moderator of the narrative inquiry, and these were also explicitly asked. In addition, I asked the research participants questions that helped narrate their answers with regards to professional development initiatives. These questions gave them an opportunity to describe, in as much detail as possible, their lived experience as teachers.

Semistructured interviews in the style of a narrative inquiry allowed me to cover all proposed topics connected to the professional development programs the participants had participated in (Creswell, 2003). The unstructured and informal orientation of the interview also allowed the respondents to be open, casual, and uninhibited with their responses and demeanor. Participants were also encouraged to share specific stories or experiences that may be significant to the discussion to add context to their responses. As the in-depth interviews were held at the school outside of contract time, the participants also had the opportunity to share materials such as reports, lesson plans, or journals and classroom setup, which further contributed to the richness of the discussion.

Aside from achieving a more comprehensive answer from each individual, nonverbal cues such as facial reactions or body language were also observed to add meaning to what was said (Fryer, Mackintosh, Stanley, & Crichton, 2012). Through the interviews, I was also able to observe any nonverbal communication during the interview process (Irvine, 2011).

Research Model

Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding individuals or groups involved in a particular social or human problem (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Clark & Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009). Qualitative modes of data provide ways of discerning, examining, comparing, contrasting, and interpreting important patterns or themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Qualitative research is "an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain, more or less naturally occurring, phenomena in the social world" (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 520). Researchers who conduct qualitative studies seek to make sense of the world and people's experience in the world (Merriam, 2009).

Within the constructs of qualitative data is narrative inquiry. According to Riessman (1993), this particular method of inquiry emerged from the much more general field of qualitative research during the early 20th century. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) noted that the narrative inquiry method makes use of field texts such as interviews, autobiographies, journals, stories, family backgrounds, photos, videos, meaningful artifacts, and other significant life accounts as data. Researchers analyze the data to discover and grasp how research subjects construct meaning in their lives with the use of narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Bignold and Su (2013) described the narrative inquiry method as "an effective means of capturing multiple identities of research participants in complex social environments" (p. 400). In other words,

researchers thoroughly explore the various emotions, thoughts, perspectives, and actions of individuals placed in different situations. Many of these identities are multifaceted and comprehensive (Bignold & Su, 2013).

This qualitative investigation included a narrative inquiry to explore the perceptions of teachers regarding the impact of professional development on their instructional practices to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The lived experiences of the teachers, particularly of teachers whose voices have previously been unheard from in the research literature, were explored through stories to explain the emotions, context, and motivations of the respondents, especially in relation to their perceptions regarding the topic at hand. The narratives obtained also set the direction of the research, with the respondents' answers producing the overall picture of the ways teachers work with culturally and linguistically diverse learners in their classrooms. The method served as a collaborative process between the researcher and the respondents.

The study also included an inquiry into what specific aspects of professional development educators were the most beneficial to cultivate teacher growth and development. This served to understand the most effective professional development approaches that teachers believe have helped them to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

Narratives are suitable for research that is wide-ranging, full of meaning, and rich in context (Hancock & Epston, 2013). Qualitative researchers generally rely on a few cases with many variables (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 2009). They generate hypotheses that result in building theory (Veit-Brause, 2006). Theory emerges from the data

collected by qualitative researchers (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Merriam, 2009). In a narrative inquiry, a researcher focuses on how individuals organize the knowledge they possess and how they understand such information, which places emphasis on the meaning or contextual significance behind the information, even if it is just from the perspective of a single respondent (Hancock & Epston, 2013). Beyond collecting and analyzing data, narrative inquiry involves exploring how the life experiences of subjects contribute to the topic at hand (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In this study, the focus was on the words, nonverbal communication (tone of voice, gestures, overall mood, etc.), and lived experiences of three teachers who taught a culturally and linguistically diverse population at the school site.

Theoretical Framework: Sociocultural Theory

The focus of this study was understanding three teachers' perspectives about the value of professional development by listening to and trying to make sense of their narratives. These perspectives included reflection, self-assessment, and narratives as part of the inquiry about how teachers perceive professional development (Lantolf, 2000). Sociocultural theory served as a framework through which to analyze the narratives of the participating teachers. The narratives can contribute to a much more in-depth understanding of the complexity of teaching and learning with culturally and linguistically diverse learners and language acquisition (Lantolf, 2000). Both language learners and language teachers change over time. When teachers articulate their personal histories, it helps shape how they understand the purpose of their instructional practices over time (Clanindin & Connelly, 2000).

The work of sociocultural theory is to explain how individual mental functioning relates to cultural, institutional, and historical context; the focus of the sociocultural perspective is on the roles that participation in social interactions and culturally organized activities plays in influencing psychological development (Vygotsky, 1978). The sociocultural framework is important because it allows insights into the lived experiences of the respondents as shaped by social and cultural experiences both before and throughout their careers as teachers. In this study, sociocultural theory served as the theoretical basis as a way to understand job-embedded professional development and the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. These concepts can relate on a particular focus of sociocultural theory research in which applied linguistics can be used to develop mental functions and processes (Duff & McKinstry, 2007). Seeing mental functioning generated from participation in social interaction brings up the issue of mediation and mediational means. The connection between the two planes is found in the mediating function of cultural tools. Vygotsky included a variety of sign-based tools that function as mediational means, including systems for counting, mnemonic techniques, algebraic symbol systems, works of art, writing, schemes, diagrams, and maps. However, language is undoubtedly considered the tool of tools, which means that language, through the use of narratives, can help people recall thoughts and memories that are rich with meaning and context for particular subjects (Vygotsky, 1986).

Improving student achievement is a primary goal of professional development in response to addressing the learning requirements of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The human mind is mediated in language and other culturally constructed symbol systems and tools that influence the value of finding ways to improve teacher

instructions to help culturally and linguistically diverse students learn more effectively, especially in speech because knowledge is not merely provided and accepted by another (Lantolf, 2000). The need to focus on language development illustrates the complexity of the current issue of providing proper classroom instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse learners, which further justifies the need for this study to explore the topic of professional development for their teachers.

Another reason for using sociocultural theory as the basis for this study is regarding the use of narratives, which contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexity of teaching and learning in the context of culturally and linguistically diverse learners and language acquisition (Lantolf, 2000). Through interviews, autobiographies, journals, stories, family backgrounds, photos, videos, meaningful artifacts, and other significant life accounts as data, narratives elevate the value of data to respondents by adding context and meaning to information (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The additional attention to content and meaning also allows the study to capture the stories of teachers and learners in complex situations and environments (Bignold & Su, 2013). Beyond collecting and analyzing data, narratives also involve exploring how the life experiences of the subjects contribute to the topic at hand (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Thus, through the stories told in the narratives, these individuals can lend their voices to speak out and promote important educational issues. Instead of merely observing and investigating subjects, researchers and respondents form a collaborative partnership that profoundly tackles pressing issues and challenges (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The impetus for such would not be possible without the richness of the emotion and context explicated in the narrative.

As academic and professional development programs generally require collaboration with other parties, consulting sociocultural theory helps to address the social nature of learning (Lantolf, 2000). According to Lantolf (2000), this social nature allows the exchange of ideas and information between two different parties, which is especially apparent in collaborative relationships between two parties who have different cultural or linguistic origins, and further emphasizes the sociocultural aspects of the academe.

Humans perceive their realities within structures such as the cultural practices of teaching in the United States and define their realities collaboratively through language (Vygotsky, 1978). Individuals in collaborative environments reason through activities and can find meaning with language. They also make use of actions as concrete evidence and conversely use words to describe or contextualize them (Lantolf, 2000). A focus on culturally and linguistically diverse learners made the perspective an appropriate approach because the research site has a high percentage of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Students who come from different backgrounds make use of their home language to make sense of the information they acquire from their new environment.

Research Context

The context for this study was an urban elementary school in Denver, Colorado. In the 2014-2015 school year, the school had 35 teachers who served a diverse ethnic or racial and socioeconomic population of 575 students. Among the students, 424 received free or reduced-price lunch. There were 267 Hispanics, 110 Caucasians, 123 African Americans, 58 Asians or Pacific Islanders, three American Indians, and 14 students of

mixed race. Of the 575 students, 290 (50.4%) were designated as English language acquisition students. The professional development opportunities offered to teachers at the school in 2014-2015 included instructional coaching from administrators, participation in data teams structured like professional learning communities, group book studies, district professional development opportunities, general professional development during district-designated professional development time, and any independent professional development in which teachers chose to participate.

This study included an in-depth interview of each of the three research participants. Each participant was interviewed over 4 weeks. There were three interview sessions, depending on each respondent's availability. Each interview lasted between 45 and 65 minutes. The interview sessions were done to analyze responses from previous interviews, as well as to help generate some follow-up questions to previous responses. The main reason for conducting in-depth interviews was to probe deeper into the topic or to help with its understanding using the narrative inquiry method to examine teachers' responses during the interviews (Bignold & Su, 2013). The intent of the study was to understand, taking teaching experiences into account, what aspects of professional development the three teacher leaders perceived as the most beneficial to cultivate teacher growth and development for meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The study also involved investigating what aspects of professional development teachers perceived as most beneficial to cultivate teacher growth and development to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

Research Participants

All prospective teacher leaders at the participating school were invited to participate in this study. The principal introduced me to the potential respondents as the researcher, and I explained the purpose of the study and distributed the letter of agreement to participate in the study. I chose the participants based on the breadth of their experience with professional development opportunities. The principal served as an advisor, as the principal knew who would be able to offer pertinent and comprehensive information for the study. Out of the seven teacher leaders asked to participate in the study, only three agreed. These three participating teachers signed the consent form and completed the interviews at the agreed upon dates and times.

The three teachers had similar background stories of having a desire to teach at a very young age. Two out of the three were told by family members to stop pursuing a career in teaching because it does not pay well. These same teachers took that advice and tried a different field. However, they still wanted very much to be a teacher; thus, they ended up in the same career they initially refused. Moreover, all three teachers had the following characteristics: (a) had a teacher-leader role in the school, (b) were teaching culturally and linguistically diverse student for at least 5 years, (c) taught either core or noncore subjects, and (d) had been exposed to at least five professional development trainings or opportunities related to teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students.

All hard-copy data specific to this research project were kept at my residence in a locked file cabinet. In addition, electronic data were stored in a document folder on my laptop that required a password as well as on a password-protected iCloud. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of the teachers, and interviews were held in private

locations. The participants' responses were strictly confidential but not anonymous. In

order to participate in this study, the participants gave their informed consent through a

letter that received Institutional Review Board approval (see Appendix A). Participation

in this study was strictly voluntary, and participants could withdraw from the study at any

time.

The researcher ensured the individuals were fully informed of the extent of their

participation in the study. They were also informed of the methods by which their

responses would be recorded. The researcher also assured them that their identities

would be withheld, and the information released would not be so exact or detailed that

their identities could be easily deciphered. In addition, after each interview had been

transcribed (see Appendix B), the corresponding written copy was sent to each

respondent. Their responses were used for the study only after they provided their

consent.

Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

I chose individual in-depth interviews as the means of collecting data for this

project. As such, it was essential to audio record the responses to provide a complete

picture of the interview so that I could focus on facial expressions and gestures as the

interviews occurred. Taking notes and having the audio recordings transcribed aided in

the subsequent steps of the study, such as the analysis of data. Through informed

consent, participants had a choice regarding whether they would agree to be audio tape-

recorded.

I used a computer to transcribe the in-depth interviews. The purpose in

transcribing was to put the responses into writing to serve as the primary data for the

study. In addition to writing what each participant said, I also recorded observations regarding the behavior the participants displayed. Nonverbal communication, which included but was not limited to body language, facial reactions, and changes in tone, was also essential in interpreting the data (Irvine, 2011). The nonverbal communication indicated the emotions that helped contextualize or emphasize certain parts of the subjects' answers. I recorded the interviews and used a computer program to transcribe them, so I could focus on documenting the nonverbal communications in the interviews. I color coded themes that emerged by category for each respondent to determine if it was an isolated event or a pattern.

Chapter 4: Research Study

Research Questions

1. How do personal and teaching experiences shape teachers' approaches to incorporate culturally appropriate pedagogy into their diverse classrooms?

2. Taking teacher education and teaching experiences into account, what aspects of professional development do three teacher leaders perceive as most beneficial to cultivate teacher growth and development for meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners?

My first experience meeting the participating teachers in this study was when I went to the school site to support a colleague and fellow principal obtain feedback from the faculty regarding the professional development offered at the school in 2013. I met with the instructional leadership team and each grade-level data team. Together, we formulated the questions for a survey, which all teachers answered. I was introduced as an outside person from another school district who was present to formulate an anonymous survey created by teachers. Through that process, I became intrigued by the conversations I had with the teachers. When I completed the survey for my colleague, I felt as though there were some very rich stories that had yet to be told, particularly from the instructional leadership team. That team was quite open to creating the survey and made many connections to their experiences as teachers. As I narrowed my qualitative

research methods, each time I remembered the teachers' stories and the importance of understanding their experiences.

I do not claim to be objective, as my life experiences have shaped my own lenses and interests. My lens includes 6 years as a teacher, 7 years as an instructional coach and dean of students, and 3 years as an administrator. These lenses coexisted as I gathered the data. I hear the stories of my fellow educators as all three are early in their educator journey. My interest came from a classroom teacher's perspective; an instructional coach's perspective; a dean of student's perspective; and as an administrator who recruits, hires, and wishes to retain quality teachers. This study was a result of those interests and my curiosity about other teachers' lenses that result from their lived experiences. Understanding how the participants' experiences shaped their journey may add insight about their approaches to incorporating culturally appropriate pedagogy and their growth and development in meeting the needs of culturally diverse learners in their classrooms. Studying the complexities of teachers' personal and teaching stories revealed how the three teachers consider the role culture played in their daily lives (Daiute, 2014; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000). All seven teachers selected by the administration as teacher leaders were invited to participate in the study. Three teachers contacted me and agreed to participate.

Mia

Mia invited me to meet her in her classroom after school for our initial interview. I interviewed Mia on May 8, 14, and 21, 2015. I had met her the previous year, but had never been to her classroom, which was located in a portable building. I arrived as she was releasing some students she had been tutoring. She walked them out and I waited for

her to return. I walked around her classroom and looked at what she had on the walls and the environment in general.

When Mia returned, she moved some items from her desk and invited me to sit down. I revisited the narrative inquiry method and reminded her of the purpose of my study. She said she was looking forward to the interview, and we began our series of inquiry-based conversations. We began with her telling me about her own educational experience. She acknowledged that she was always good in school and she loved to read. She shared that her third-grade teacher had told her she was not good at math, and as a result, she stopped liking math. Her facial expression and body language indicated that it was a hurtful event. She paused for a long time and then said it was funny because she is now a math teacher.

Mia attended a school that was not diverse, but rather mainly White and middle- or upper-middle class. We discussed her limited experience with other cultures growing up. Upon reflection, she expressed a desire to continue her education with an emphasis on culturally and linguistically diverse learners. She discussed the culturally and linguistically diverse education graduate program she is currently enrolled in and expressed an interest in earning an administrative license and possibly a PhD after she is done. I wanted to know more about what she finds most useful in her coursework. As an educator and a student myself, I wondered what she found to be most applicable. We discussed theory and its relevance in education.

> The most useful class I found so far was one I took this past semester and what it was called, foundations in language, literacy and culture. And also each week we would learn about a new cultural group and their history and their perspective on

basically the American experience. And the culminating project was to do a biography of a bilingual adult.

She shared that she wrote about a paraprofessional in the building whose first language was Arabic.

It just, gave me more of a lens in which to view my students because this is a very diverse school. And just knowing some of the history of these different cultural groups and it just kind of put things into perspective like oh I can kind of see why this might be a stereotype for this or this might, you know, come across in a particular way or I think I see why I offended this family now and I never understood before.

She found that to be very useful in her teaching, because it taught her how to work with her culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The exposure to the class for course of Foundations in Language, Literacy, and Culture was made up of culturally diverse students, with whom Mia had to interact. Hence, she got used to interacting, talking, and learning about other culture and language norms through the students from their class and from the lectures and discussions within the course.

We also covered working in a large urban school district and the professional development programs offered. Mia emphasized that professional development at the school level was the most useful, much like Darling-Hammond (1997) and Joyce and Showers (2002), who placed importance on school-specific professional development. She felt that pairing a little theory with concrete strategies for implementation in her classroom gave her the ability to apply her learning in a meaningful way.

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When I have professional development that comes at this school level I find it

most useful when there is a little bit of that theory piece but mostly like how am I

going to implement this in my actual classroom.

Planning with teammates to implement new strategies learned immediately was

extremely beneficial to her. According to Berger (2014), teamwork, exchanging ideas,

and harmonious interpersonal relationships are essential to achieving goals.

Mia admitted that not all professional development was disseminated in her

preferred manner and that the district required some courses. She did find value in

interviewing an adult English language learner from her work site: "I interviewed and

spent a lot of time with one of our peer professionals and that was very useful." She

described the English language development endorsement courses as all very similar.

All of those ELA classes that I've taken from the district have been they're very ,

very similar and it's almost like I could reuse the same product over and over and

over again even though they're supposed to be totally different classes.

She found this troubling and a waste of her time and effort. She felt that this wasn't

particularly helpful or supportive of supporting her culturally and linguistically diverse

learners.

Everyone that was either a new teacher or new to the district had to go like sit in

this room for 4 hours and this lady gave her spiel and she wasn't into it and no

one wanted to be there and it was just you could tell it was everyone thought it

was a total waste of time.

She described the use of World Class Instructional Design and Assessment

(WiDA), which supports academic language development and academic achievement for

linguistically diverse students, as a foundation of the courses, but felt as though she had already been using the model to drive instruction.

> I'm required to take all of the ELA classes and two of them were through UCD and they counted kind of as dual credits for the program and for my endorsement. But I mean those, all of the ELA classes that I've taken through DPS have been they're very, very similar and it's like it's almost like I could reuse the same product over and over and over again even though they're supposed to be totally different classes. And they talk a lot about the WiDA standards, which is great, but I mean I've already been using those to kind of drive my instruction especially with, you know, in this population so it's kind of just a lot of sit and get like read this article and regurgitate and they have these projects like, you know, study these kids but it's always the same outcome.

She felt that studying kids as an assignment for her English language development endorsement courses was simply another hoop to jump through. She felt as though there was no support in the next steps for improving instruction. She finds feedback from her peers to be useful.

> My Differentiated Role Partner has come in bi-weekly to, you know, she'll do and informal and I'll get feedback and then she'll do a scored observation and I'll get feedback and that's good. Especially since we share kids so she knows them even a little bit better than she would for other teachers. I've gotten a lot of good suggestions and feedback from her.

I inquired about peer observations and feedback and wondered if it was a part of teachers' professional development plan in the large urban school district. Mia described

a peer observer role called differentiated roles. She said she and her two teammates all served in differentiated roles, which means they divided their time between teaching and coaching. She alluded to the fact that she had never really considered observation and feedback a form of professional development. She had always considered professional development sitting in a class or at a district session and receiving information from someone considered knowledgeable about that particular skill. Her site-based differentiated-role peer visited her bi-weekly to observe her informally and give her feedback. She also described a district peer observer who visits twice a year.

> I really liked my peer observer this year but I only saw her three times. And one of the times I specifically requested her to come in. So, you know, if I hadn't requested her I'd only have seen her twice. And I mean she gave good feedback but it wasn't –I didn't feel as genuine as the feedback that I get from teachers here.

She described a time in another school.

> I mean at my old school district, I had to write my own evaluation in the third person because there was no one coming in and came in at the minimum amount of times that they had to and said good job and that was about it.

> Mia preferred site-based differentiated-role support and shared the district's plan to change district-based peer observers to an exclusively site-based model. She reiterated that the site-based differentiated role allows them to develop relationships with teachers and students and provide continual feedback.

> . . . because the teachers here know our students and they know the teachers and they know their personalities. So it's not like a stranger coming in and giving you

a score and then leaving and you don't see them again for 6 months. . . . And they

can give you suggestions and come back and see how you're doing and give you

like continual feedback on that one area that you've, you know, they've identified

as a need instead of, you know, and I really liked my peer observer this year but I

only saw her three times.

These responses and her experiences echoed the points of Darling-Hammond

(1997) and Joyce and Showers (2002) regarding the need for professional development to

be specifically targeted to the teacher and his or her environment to make it more

effective. The professional development must also be done over a relatively long time to

observe enduring benefits (Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

Mia felt as though the district peer observers, who are from a program where

peers or teachers from other district conduct observations, seemed like another initiative

she was forced to comply with. We briefly discussed observations and feedback from her

principal.

My differentiated role partner if giving me the same kinds of scores so I'm the

same, as my principal but it just you feel that kind of pressure because it's your

boss watching you instead of your colleague. I mean I have a good relationship

with my principal so I don't ever feel like super nervous but I know that people do

and it's different.

I asked her if she felt that her principal was an instructional leader and if

instruction was her area of expertise. Mia agreed that she sees the principal as an

instructional leader who knows quite a bit about curriculum and instruction.

My principal goes to all the conferences that the teachers go to. You know, I was just with her at a conference. I know she's going to the conference for this new kindergarten curriculum assessment things over the summer with the kindergarten team. She goes to phonics, you know. So she keeps herself up to date on these conferences that she doesn't have to go to. So I feel like she does have a good understanding of what good instruction looks like.

Previously we had discussed the types of support she had received and the ones that were most useful to her. During our next visit, we changed the conversation to what professional development elements she found the least useful when handling or teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. She described the least helpful professional development as the ones that were mandated. She believed most participants did not want to be there, including the presenters in most cases. She stated, "It was unfortunate because that [i.e., the English language development professional development] was important information. But things like that where it's just so mandated that everyone's attitudes about it are really negative."

I asked what the least helpful or supportive experiences participating in PD were: Probably the one where they are mandatory for everyone and like it's mandatory for everyone and then it's led by someone like in the district you know it's mandatory and, it's like nobody wants to be there and it's those ones that it seems like people that are presenting haven't really put much thought into it and so it's just like another hoop to jump through or another, you know, meeting to sit through instead of actual information.

She felt it was unfortunate that people thought it was a waste of time because the information was truly important at times. She believed that professional development presented about how to implement structures can be applied right away in the classroom. Such immediate application of professional development concepts is possible for about 33% of district trainings only; however, such application is possible for about 50% for graduate courses in her estimation. She felt the graduate work she was doing in her master's program with a culturally and linguistically diverse education emphasis was helpful in meeting the needs of her students.

Mia felt as though professional development presented by colleagues was more beneficial than when presented by people who are at central office because they actually teach in classrooms.

So I think it's better especially just district wise if it comes from a colleague. Someone who is kind of just like an expert or someone who has been identified as a really strong teacher just kind of share their experiences. And I think other, I think people respond to that better anyways.

This experience was an exemplification of Guskey and Yoon's (2009) statement that the shared experiences of educators in a school help solve problems and support implementation of best practices for classroom instruction. We discussed follow-up and what that looked like after professional development was provided: "Really the only follow up I've ever gotten is with like the differentiated roles because that's part of the process."

We talked about teacher turnover and teachers leaving the profession. We discussed the average length of a teaching career is about 5 years. "I think like making

sure that there is a strong mentorship kind of program for new teachers or like the differentiated roles has been really helpful because that's a lot coaching and a lot of feedback."

She pointed out that it is also a lack of resources that impedes teachers' abilities to serve students.

I think it's a lack of support within resources or like a manageable class size or, you know, like we're really lucky when we have all these really nice chrome book carts and my first year teaching we had four desk tops. Two maybe worked at a time.

Mia seemed very eager to learn and to enjoy teaching in general. Her personal experiences seemed to lead her to the teaching profession as they were very positive. Her teaching experiences seemed to be responsible for her awareness that she needed to incorporate culturally appropriate pedagogy into her diverse classrooms. She really seemed to perceive the differentiated role was the most helpful in her growth and development as a teacher. However, she did not credit it for helping her meet the needs of her culturally and linguistically diverse learners. She did not seem to believe that her district level ELA professional development coursework was very helpful in meeting the needs of her culturally and linguistically diverse learner population. Overall, she seemed to be a teacher who was continuing to try to serve her students and learn for her peers.

Dana

Dana was the first to respond to my invitation to participate in the study. She was waiting for me when I arrived and appeared to be anxious to discuss the profession of teaching and process of growing in the profession. I met with Dana on May 14, 20, and

27, 2015. We began by discussing her elementary school experience, which she described as homogenous and predominantly middle class. She said that some of the teachers cared but some did not care about what she was doing.

> In elementary school I went to this I want to say it was more it was all like really like the same kinds of people. It was just like really it was like a middle class kind of thing. And I feel like the—I enjoyed it. I felt like the teachers were very like—there were definitely some teachers, however I didn't feel like they cared about like what I was doing. In middle school I went to a school where they, like, bussed, like, people in to kind of like desegregate parts of . . .

I asked her if she remembered any teachers she had a particularly good experience with. She described her third-grade teacher as a free spirit who was kind of a hippie with pictures of Woodstock. She mentioned that it was peaceful and calm and that he focused on how smart students were and about what kind of people they wanted to be.

> My favorite teacher was in third grade and he was like just really like free spirit. He was definitely like a hippie. Like, he, like, had like pictures of like, kind of like, Woodstock kind of thing. And after lunch every day, we'd all have pillows we'd sit on the carpet and he plays guitar and he'd light a candle and we would sing like "Puff the Magic Dragon." I remember just my fourth grade teacher was someone I particular that I remember like I didn't mesh well with and don't have good memories of that.

She went on to describe her middle and school experiences, which were quite different.

> It was like a really diverse cool middle school and I had really awesome teachers there and the in school I loved high school. I went to as brand new high school

my freshman year. The high school everything was like really, really new. It was super disorganized. And then my parents switched me to a like a different high school that has been like more established because my freshman year of high school was kind of crazy but I still liked it. I never had like a negative attitude toward school.

Dana shared that she always knew she wanted to be a teacher and I asked how. She shared her home experience as being part of the reason.

So I have two younger siblings that when I was 12 and 15 they were born. And so I always babysat them and they were like the loves of my life and I ended up up as soon as they started going to daycare I got a job at their daycare when I was 16. And I loved that I just like the 5 year old stuff. So we did kind of like little lessons and I loved doing that and I always nannied and I would to summer camps.

She went away to college and initially wanted to be a teacher but her father told her she needed to find a career that would yield more professional success. She settled on interior design program, but became extremely disengaged her sophomore year. When her Dad saw how unhappy she was, he encouraged her to do whatever would make her happy, so she changed her major. She majored in psychology with a minor in special education and then did a teacher-in-residency program while she got her teaching license.

When I started college I went to Las Vegas and I did like their interior design program. I knew I wanted to be a teacher but my dad was like no you need do something that makes more money, you need to be more successful and like always drilled that in my head. So I like never even considered doing it even

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though I loved it. I loved kids during my whole time I was like working for that design program and I nannied. But it wasn't until my second year my sophomore year when I had already taken a bunch of like architecture classes and I was so unhappy. And finally I think my dad was kind of like you just need to do something that makes you happy so I switched into education.

We discussed theory and its importance in understanding teaching, but Dana really felt the practical application of the theory in the teacher-in-residency program helped her grow the most.

[Through Denver Teacher in Residency program] you know, learn best and they [students] need to be in like in a calm environment or based on like some of the stuff I like learned. So it's good for me to kind of like reflect on that and be okay go back to like what everything was like built on and so that's like what helps. But I don't know if I would have felt as like confident and prepared if I hadn't gone through a program that requires so much work in the classroom every day.

She explained that the program entailed spending a year with a teacher, implementing the strategies learned in coursework, and getting feedback from that teacher. The program uses a gradual release process so teacher candidates assume responsibility as they grow and develop from their coursework. She says she felt confident and prepared because of that experience and doubts she would have if she did not have so much guidance and support throughout the process. She said the combination of theory with the ability to apply it right away was instrumental in her development. We discussed the district professional developments that she was also required to attend while in her program. She felt that she learned a great deal about the

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evaluation process, as well as Colorado State Standards and the adopted curriculum. Dana's experience was an example of job-embedded professional development, which presents a greater amount of active learning in which educators can participate and subsequently apply directly to their specific classroom environments on a continuing basis to develop skills over time (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Joyce & Showers, 1988).

We reminisced about teaching and the first week, month, and year with students. Dana described it as a situation there is no way to fully prepare for without being exposed in smaller increments, which she credits the teacher-in-residency program for providing. She joined the school's instructional leadership team because she wanted to meet with her peers regularly.

> I was looking for grad programs in maybe like in Reno but then I just looked all around like the country and I knew that like maybe I wanted to move and I found DTR here, Denver Teacher Residency and so I did that. And so I did like back in Reno it was more like traditional kind of more theoretical base where I did a couple practicum's but it was only like 6 weeks long where it was like an hour or something two times a week versus here at DTR I spent my whole year at school with a teacher the whole entire year. And they have like a progression of like how much responsibility you take on. So it was so much implementation of everything I was learning through the program and immediately applying it the next day in class or in my class. So I like all the theoretical part of it. It's kind of what grounds me every day.

The team met every other Wednesday and included a book study, which she particularly enjoyed. According to Grierson et al. (2012), aside from encouraging

socialization, book study groups are also more informal, flexible, and accessible compared to formal teacher trainings or seminars. She also pointed out the benefits of meeting with her grade-level team once a week.

> They're trying to make it [grade-level team meetings] more formalized. So we do have like a set schedule that we have to like follow and like everything that we do during that time. So like we bring like our data with us.

> It benefited her instruction and students at a higher level. Her team plans to add some structures that they are hoping yield better results for the following school year: "So the ones [grade-level teams] that will follow like the protocol like really closely with like a timer and make sure that they come like prepared for everything.." The team has a teacher leader designated to facilitate the team planning time. She also said the meetings allow everyone to have a voice, which she appreciates.

We discussed being observed and how frequently it occurs in teacher education programs but drastically dissipates when you become a teacher. I asked about instructional rounds and Elizabeth City's work, but Dana said they do not do them at her school. She also shared that some teachers who have been there for many years may not be particularly receptive to the idea. She admitted that she would feel uncomfortable giving veteran teachers feedback. We discussed how the coaching roles have evolved over the last decade in the district. At the time of the interviews, teachers had in-building differentiated-role observation and feedback in addition to off-site peer observers scoring them according to their evaluation rubric. She found the on-site feedback much more frequent and very helpful in improving her instructional practices.

So I think like more opportunities for that and I think like more co-teaching, more observations like more observations of the principal with like I had at the beginning of the year our differentiated roles coach. I think so one of the other teachers here came into observe me but it was for our behavior management thing because it was just the beginning of the year but she didn't go through DTR.

We discussed administrative feedback, and I sensed that Dana felt nervous about discussing it. However, she said that she felt good about feedback from her administrator and that when they are in her classroom, she felt as though knowing the students' behavior plans is helpful when they are throwing things. She also said there were a couple of times when she really did not know where some of the feedback was coming from and it was not helpful. We discussed evaluation and whether it is beneficial or helpful. She shared that the assistant principal and the principal rotate evaluation duties biannually. She also felt that they gave different feedback. She felt as though they collaboratively came up with next steps and she felt supported in that process. I asked if she identified her administrators as instructional leaders. She did not seem sure, and ultimately decided that she could not answer the question. She said there is a lot that administrators do, so she did not necessarily feel like it was a big missing piece. She believed when she asked for help, she got it. She then referred back to the support she received from her differentiated role observer and reiterated how helpful that was.

We moved to a discussion about what constitutes ineffective professional development. Dana identified large district-wide professional development as the least effective professional development she had experienced. She felt as though being required to go and having such large groups made it less engaging. The sessions were

held at large stadiums and centers and were so large that it was difficult to get deep with anything. She did find the breakout sessions to be better than the whole-group sessions. She felt as though it was more motivating and relevant when people were able to select the session they wanted to attend. She also identified smaller groups as being much more effective and engaging. Teachers facilitated the sessions, and she felt that was much better than when district people do it because they make it relevant and immediately applicable.

> The breakout sessions and then the whole group ones were I mean they weren't whole group they're just really big groups in the classroom . . . and then breakout sessions were really small. There were some teachers that were teaching like the whole group ones but I think just anything that's a PD I think that's just so big and like so broad and like mandated and required are just the least effective or just like the least engaging therefore I learn the least. I think it's the same like when you're in college and you have to take like your core classes, you know, they're huge and like required for like all of that stuff.

> She said 100% of everything she did in her teacher-in-residency program was immediately applicable. She also felt as though any professional development was immediately applicable because she was highly motivated. She admitted that she sat through professional developments and worked on her computer and did not listen to anything.

> I mean I think from my grad school experience was amazing. I would say 100% of everything I did in DTR is applied in the classroom immediately. Like you just have to jump right in and literally you're learning something the day before and

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the next day you go apply it and everything was I just felt really effective. I felt

really confident and I still do or I'm like I don't really feel like it's my first year I

feel like I haven't really struggled that much as much as like my friends told me

that I would.

She also felt professional developments that added to her base salary were not

helpful, but she sat through them to increase her salary. She noted that negative people

poison the climate for the people who are there to learn. She found professional

development facilitators who demonstrated classroom strategies were helpful to her, but

that people who did not want to be there were annoyed by the structure.

We talked about the culturally and linguistically diverse learners in her class and

the relevance of professional development to reach those students. She did not feel as

though most professional development was applicable to her English language learners.

She also pointed out that she has a lot of students who are not English language learners

who struggle with language that is native to them. She felt that she needed much more

support than what she had received.

I have this amazing student from India and his mom is an amazing volunteer so

she's here all the time helping me. And she was asking, you know, about the

classes that they offer and if she is able to like opt in if he can like take the classes

and, you know, he's not allowed to.

She also felt that when the district did address languages, it was typically Spanish

speakers, and many other languages were spoken at her site. She believed having

teachers who know what it is like to teach students with many different cultural

backgrounds were the most helpful professional development supports for her.

. . . she was like they offer a lot of support for just Spanish speakers and she was like it's not really fair. I'm like it's not fair I mean that's just the majority that we have to like do. So we can make a difference with that big group.

Dana went into teaching after trying the interior design route. She enjoyed school and identified one teacher that wasn't a great fit for her. She also went through the Teacher in Residency program and felt it was significantly useful in her growth and development as a teacher. She did not feel that the district provided professional was significant in her growth and development in serving her culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

Reba

I met with Reba on May 8, 14, and 21, 2015. Reba described her school experience as great. We sat together and reminisced about wanting to be a teacher. She shared that she had wanted to be a teacher since she was in elementary school and played school in her basement for hours. We shared our early teacher play experiences. She shared that she made teaching and re-teaching lesson plans and taught her imaginary class. She was in a gifted and talented program as a child and loved doing homework. She also said that her love of homework caused her to do her friends' homework in addition to her own.

I definitely was one of those kids who had a great experience in school. I wanted to be a teacher when I was in elementary school and played school in my basement for hours on end and would re-teach what we learned that day and had an imaginary class and such. I was in like GT in elementary school so I was

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doing really well. I loved doing homework I helped all my friends with their

homework.

She described loving school so much that she would attend even when she was

sick and had to be sent home because she was too sick to be there. She enjoyed middle

and high school as well and worked hard, even when it was not cool. She seemed to

know at a very young age that she wanted to be a teacher and yet she went to college to

become an interior decorator in part because of the show *Trading Spaces*. She admitted

that the interior design program, which was a part of the college of architecture at the

university she attended, was nothing like the show she based her decision on. She

graduated from her program and moved to Denver.

> I didn't I decided my senior year of high school that I would try something
>
> different and I was like I'm going to go to college I can try whatever you want.
>
> *Trading Spaces* was like big the TV show in interior design and so I decided to go
>
> into the College of Architecture and do interior design which was nothing like
>
> *Trading Spaces*. But around my junior year I decided I didn't like it and I -- but
>
> I'm one of those people that wouldn't quit until I was done and I come from a
>
> family where it wouldn't have been okay to like switch my major after being
>
> almost three quarters of the way done with college. So I finished interior design
>
> and I moved out to Denver from Nebraska where I'm from and was an interior
>
> designer for 5 years at a firm.

She worked on several interesting projects but lost a lot of hours when

construction slowed down in 2008. She used some of her time off to volunteer at an

elementary school once a week, and realized that was the best part of her week every

week. She decided to look into a teacher-in-residency program and found one. She

joined and told the design firm leaders she was leaving on the last day of her

employment. The program had an option to earn a master's degree, and she completed it.

We discussed how Reba liked the program and its usefulness.

> . . . so it's a yearlong program, super intense in a classroom four days a week
>
> from the first day of school to the last day. So what I felt was very strong about
>
> the program is that you knew what every day of school was going to be like and
>
> you knew what testing was going to be like.

She said she loved it.

> And I also had a really good mentor who I was placed with and she also a career
>
> change, also went through the program. I know that when you're matched, if
>
> you're not matched with a great personality it can be really hard. I was lucky
>
> because I didn't have that.

She described it as intense, but felt she had a really good handle on what was expected

and the observation and evaluation process. She felt as though it was very useful.

We moved on to discuss district or school-mandated professional development

and the impact of it on Reba's professional growth: "Like our professional development

like around data and planning that we did in like our extended planning I thought was

really good."

She indicated that the school-based team planning professional development is

helpful because it was disseminated in part during their extended planning time. She

enjoyed collaborating with colleagues but admitted that the effectiveness was contingent

on how collaborative the team was.

I think one of my own problems with it was that when you're working on a team and maybe, you know, it's confidential like not all of the teammates are willing to collaborate or we can have a conversation about what we're going to teach but then I'm really teaching that and this person is doing their own thing like that's really hard.

Guskey and Yoon (2009) similarly stated the shared experiences as well as the joint knowledge of educators within an educational institution help solve problems and implement best practices for classroom instruction.

I think it needs to be like more cohesive. I think it's challenging in this school district because the school district doesn't have a strong curriculum. You know, these literacy—because I was teaching literacy for two grades. The literacy curriculum is a lot of things that need to be like supplemented. It's not rigorous, it's not tied to the common core. So I would say for the most part I was writing lessons from scratch the whole year I mean using it a resource but not as like a crutch. And it's hard to plan and be in planning with people who are not going to change what they are doing because it takes a lot of work. It's a ton of work.

Reba shared that she is on two teams and each has team planning time. She felt as though the teams used the time very differently, but both consult data and sort students. She was familiar with looking at student data due to her experience in her residency program. She also determined through the process of participating in data teams that a large part of the issue they were having was that they were not looking at cohesive data. Tracking growth was difficult because they were not looking at the same things:

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It's really difficult to see growth because they grow with all standards. Like how

can you just choose one I don't know? And so I felt like that whole process was

kind of like checking boxes where it wasn't really like meaningful. It could have

been.

They were not assessing them in the same way or consulting the data in the same way,

which she felt led to a lack of quality in the analysis phase. She stated that she believed

having common rubrics would be very helpful.

When we discussed observing Reba's peers, she described a learning lab at the

beginning of the year.

We had a learning lab which was the beginning of the year my team did and then

we looked at all of like through the lens of like [evaluation] another school to kind

of look through their lens of how they were doing it but beyond that like not

really. And then after January, no February, in February I visited in which they

observed through the lens of an evaluator according to the district's frameworks

for effective teaching.

The two times were the only peer observations she did. She did not feel it was beneficial

to try to keep up with 14 indicators, but did feel that observing a peer was informative

and useful.

I think there's opportunity but if you're not like seeking it and for me I can't go

and observe someone in 14 different indicators. I need to look at them through

like let's look at management or let's look at checks for understanding. And

because when you're looking for everything it's too much. So I think it would be

great for the district to have like support in place for teachers who let's say my

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goal is rigor. Well then let me go visit the teacher who has like a rigor under like she knows exactly you're here, she knows what she's doing so I can like learn from that. Because when you're in your own world it's really hard to like grow and change if you don't have a model. Like I'm someone who wants to see something so that I can change. I'll change but it's hard when you're like okay read this or do this and the observations that they give are wonderful. Like I found the feedback to be great.

She also indicated that observing a peer who excels in an area she designated as a goal would have been very useful to her. She believed the isolation that teaching lends itself to can be professionally stagnating if there is no one modeling what a classroom should look like. She commented that having the differentiated-role peer was extremely helpful in her growth and development as a teacher. She felt it gave her an opportunity to reflect and apply suggestions as well as receive feedback on an ongoing basis. She shared her struggle with questioning and incorporating high-level questions into her lessons.

The only thing I think was missing is one of my things I was struggling with was questioning so like those higher-level questions. But it's hard if you don't ever see someone do that. Like I want to see an experienced teacher who can reach all levels of blooms in her questioning so that all of her kids can be engaged because I still like it's hard it's like read it. It's hard to like put in place naturally, you know.

She suggested that seeing someone who is good at that would have really helped her understand how to do it. Putting it into place did not come naturally and seeing

someone do it would have helped her navigate putting it into practice. Reba's response is an attestation to Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran's (2011) statement that feedback from a peer or someone who a teacher works closely with is a more effective method of improving instruction compared to comments from an individual such as a superintendent who just comes in occasionally and is not well-acquainted with the teacher.

We briefly discussed book studies and Reba's experience participating in a group that studied guided math. "We started guided math as a book study which was helpful but I am only teaching literacy right now. I read it and went and participated but I think I'll re-read it this summer. . . ." She found the discussions with colleagues to be the most useful part of the book study, and according to Grierson et al. (2012), teachers are drawn to them because they are easily localized, easily organized, inexpensive, and encourage socialization. We then discussed another book study she had participated in recently. "We did a book study for ILT like the instructional leadership team. I did not read the whole thing. But it's like about conflict resolution in schools and how teachers deal with that and having hard conversations."

I asked her if she believed there was conflict at the school and she shared there is but that no one talks about it.

> . . . it's just like kind of like brushed under the rug but it does feel like there's different groups of teachers but I think that's the politics of like when you have been working a long time and then new people come in and things are changing.

She described the book as a how-to for educators to resolve conflict and have difficult conversations. She believed it was applicable because teachers in the building did have conflict and there were definitely various cliques of teachers.

Reba had been to a guided reading conference locally. She completed the first course and planned on completing the second and third courses of the guided reading series. She found the material extremely useful and applied the strategies immediately. She also completed a program to earn an early literacy certificate. Those two were the only ones she attended. She did not feel she had received adequate support or professional development around meeting the needs of her culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

> I didn't have any like newcomers in either of my classes so I didn't have that but there is, you know, struggling readers of any language trying to like bridge that gap. But I think I had experience with WiDA in my courses that I took but I really believe it could be like implemented stronger in the schools because that's kind of like the domains and then why are you really needing those, are you doing questioning for all levels. But it's a lot, it's a lot on top of the district evaluation process, it's a lot on top of curriculum, it's a lot on top of standards. So I think it's one of the things that kind of gets pushed to the side.

She credited her teacher-in-residency program for her knowledge of WiDA standards. She felt that it could have been implemented in schools much better. She believed with teacher effectiveness frameworks, curriculum implementation, and Common Core State Standards, it is something that gets pushed to the side. She felt

hopeful that the plan moving forward was going to be much better, and they would learn more about culturally and linguistically diverse learners during their data team time.

Reba reiterated that she needed support to meet the needs of students who sometimes speak two or more languages. She did not feel prepared to meet their needs as effectively as she needed to.

> We're doing like Words Their Way and sorting and then their intervention time our grade level will focus on that like doing a true skills block which I think when in place with like a true program of like what's happening to support all language learnings, you like struggling readers and the ELLs [English language learners].

She struggled with how to communicate the importance of students continuing to read and communicate in their native language and did not feel capable of supporting that development.

> Yes, I have a student is like—he goes to a school on the weekends to learn to read and write in Farsi. He can speak it his mom is like well I feel like this is slowing him down and I was like it's not, it's not, it's not I was like I promise you.

> Because she was so worried about him being significantly below grade level.

Reba's experience exemplified that culturally and linguistically diverse learners indeed need additional and consistent academic assistance so that they may eventually learn at the same level as their peers (Culp & Schmidlein, 2012).

We revisited data teams and discussed some areas of improvement that would help them moving forward.

> I think it [data team time] could be better utilized. I think if it was consistent . . . because like I said last time, when we were looking at random data it's harder

whereas we might be looking at the same standard but if we're not assessing in the same way. . . .

Reba noted consistency and looking at comparable data would improve the use of data team time. She also found meeting to articulate with multiple grades vertically had been very helpful at her prior school. She described a method of consulting data that sounded like Paul Bambrick-Sontoyo's driven-by-data model, but she did not use those words to describe it. She felt it was a very well defined process and that many of the teachers at her current school site were not versed in looking at students' data and felt it would improve with time.

As we moved to a conversation about the difference in demographics from Reba's first school to the second, she reminded me that both had a very high population of culturally and linguistically diverse learners but her current location was much more diverse in the number of countries represented and languages spoken. She felt as though learning about the various cultures would have been very helpful to her. She was not familiar with all the cultures and languages of students that attended her site school.

I don't, I think there is different ways to address it. I took a like culturally responsive [0:17:31] class in my masters and it was like so eye opening because especially in the super diverse population I think there are people that have like you have biases and if you don't like look at yourself and like really look at those you project them and then you say things . . .

She felt that the professional development she received that was very useful and applicable was anything around teacher effectiveness evaluations. She felt that having a visitor observe her and give her feedback specific to the frameworks used to evaluate

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teachers, while also having time to implement the suggestions, helped her grow as a teacher. She thought that immediate feedback and follow-up were also critical to the effectiveness of the instructional coaching ("I found the feedback to be great").

> . . . real time feedback of like okay this is what you did, try this instead and then I'm going to be back in 2 weeks and let's see if it's like working. That to me is the most beneficial because I want to know you come from like learning underneath someone but I'm a different person and I want to teach differently, you know, we're not robots the kids are different. So I like that real like that feedback.

She also felt as though a lot of the district people who provide professional development never follow up or teach again, so there is no real way to know if the implementation is effective. Reba's negative experiences supported Nishimura's (2014) statement that negative feedback on professional development programs was often rooted in the lack of supplementary or follow-up sessions to build on the skills and lessons obtained by the teachers.

> So, that's a problem there's like always new people so no one can give you like last time we did his because the people change almost every time. Because that's what happened last year is we had two people and then they switched and then it was like you're doing that wrong. And it's like well that person told us this is how we're supposed to do it because…they're not people in classrooms they're just people that work for the school district.

Reba also stated most of them are currently not teachers and do not have suggestions that are current or support the culturally and linguistically diverse learners

she had in her class. She appreciated the observations and feedback her district peer observer gave her, but felt two times a year was not frequent enough to yield results. However, she felt her site-based differentiated-role peer observer based was supportive to growing in her practice.

Reba decided her senior year of high school to try something other than teaching, which she had always wanted to do. She went to the College of Architecture but determined her junior year that she didn't particularly like it.

> . . . but I'm one of those people that wouldn't quit until I was done and I come from a family where it wouldn't have been okay to like switch my major after being almost three quarters of the way done with college. So I finished interior design and I moved out to Denver from Nebraska where I'm from and was an interior designer for five years at a firm.

She felt that the Denver Teaching in Residency program was very beneficial. She did express concern that she did not feel prepared to teach her culturally and linguistically diverse learners. She felt that much of the professional development disseminated by the district was a waste of time. She also got a master of education degree from University of Denver as a result of the Teacher in Residency program.

Conclusion

All three teachers had a positive or mostly positive experience in school in the K-12 system. Two felt they did not relate well with one of their teachers. One in particular was told by one teacher she was not good at math, but the other experiences shared were all positive. Two of the three participants participated in a teacher residency program and found it to be very effective in preparing them to be teachers. All three participants

found peer feedback to be very useful. They all found district-mandated professional development to be a waste of time. They all preferred professional development led by teachers rather than central office personnel. They found value in teachers providing professional development when they learned strategies that they could implement in the classroom right away. All three participants found that the district they worked for did not provide adequate professional development to support them meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The participants had opportunities through English language development endorsement courses offered by the district, professional development seminars, and school site professional development but felt they were not quality opportunities and were not frequent enough. All three also mentioned there was a lack of follow-up to the new information they received.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

1. How do personal and teaching experiences shape teachers' approaches to incorporate culturally appropriate pedagogy into their diverse classrooms?

2. Taking teacher education and teaching experiences into account, what aspects of professional development do three teacher leaders perceive as most beneficial to cultivate teacher growth and development for meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners?

One of my fondest childhood memories is playing school with the kids in my neighborhood. I spent a lot of time making lesson plans and creating the perfect classroom environment. I had piles of books from my space in the garage, which I regularly turned into a classroom. I found that all three teachers had a similar story about a desire to teach at a very young age. In the fourth chapter, I discussed the narrative findings I established through my qualitative analysis in the interviews with the three participants. Two of the three were told by family members not to pursue a teaching career because it does not pay well. Both teachers took that advice and tried a different field, only to realize that they still wanted very much to be a teacher. The experiences of each teacher who participated in the study were unique to each individual. I learned from their stories. I focused my attention in this study and in these teachers' stories on insights that may support the growth and development of all teachers.

In this chapter, I address the findings in relation to the literature available, as well as include recommendations, limitations, and implications of this research. I consider myself incredibly fortunate that these three teachers welcomed me into their lives, and I am honored that they were willing to share themselves and their time with me. They told stories of their daily lives, their pasts, and their hopes for their futures. However, any picture of their lives is just a slice of who they are as educators and as people. Several levels of editing occurred in our time together. For example, each participant made decisions to share a particular story or perspective. Additionally, I molded the research in numerous ways, including the questions I asked, the data I collected, the observations I made, the choice of which stories to tell, and which aspects of the stories I decided to attend to. Each layer included another opportunity to reframe the focus.

Summary of Findings

Mia. Mia seemed very eager to learn and to enjoy teaching in general. Her personal experiences seemed to lead her to the teaching profession as they were very positive. Her teaching experiences seemed to be responsible for her awareness that she needed to incorporate culturally appropriate pedagogy into her diverse classrooms. She really seemed to perceive the differentiated role was the most helpful in her growth and development as a teacher. However, she did not credit it for helping her meet the needs of her culturally and linguistically diverse learners. She did not seem to believe that her district level ELA professional development coursework was very helpful in meeting the needs of her culturally and linguistically diverse learner population. Overall, she seemed to be a teacher who was continuing to try to serve her students and learn for her peers.

Dana. Dana went into teaching after trying the interior design route. She enjoyed school and identified one teacher that wasn't a great fit for her. She also went through the Teacher in Residency program and felt it was significantly useful in her growth and development as a teacher. She did not feel that the district provided professional was significant in her growth and development in serving her culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

Reba. Reba experienced a dad who talked her out of the teaching profession because it was not lucrative. When he saw how unhappy she was he let her go into teaching. She generally had a good experience in school growing up and remembered her favorite teacher in fourth grade. She felt that the Denver Teaching in Residency program was very beneficial. She did express concern that she did not feel prepared to teach her culturally and linguistically diverse learners. She felt that much of the professional development disseminated by the district was a waste of time.

Several themes emerged from the analysis of the interviews. The participants shared that personal and teaching experiences formed their beliefs and practices about the culture in diverse classrooms through their positive childhood experiences that shaped their passion for teaching. The other significant finding was that each of the participants had experienced one negative experience at school. As revealed in the interviews, the participants noted several aspects of professional development that they believed were constructive and valuable for their growth. For the first research question, the theme that emerged was that both positive and negative experiences during childhood shaped the teachers' approaches and perceptions of teaching, including educating culturally diverse students. One participant's negative experience was based on performing poorly in a

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subject during childhood, which pushed her to become a teacher of the subject in which she performed poorly. Her positive experiences were based on positive relationships with people in the educational sector, such as teachers and friends, which led her to enjoy the idea of learning and teaching. Also included in the theme was that regardless of their experiences of professional development, they still feel they lack necessary skills when teaching students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.

From the second research question, five themes emerged as beneficial aspects of professional development that promote teachers' skills in addressing the diverse cultural and linguistic needs of students. These five themes were (a) theory and practical application, (b) collaborating with teammates and colleagues, (c) peers' observation and feedback, (d) gradual release process, and (e) data consultation and comparison. The three teachers mainly believed that collaborating with teammates and colleagues to develop the best strategies, as well as conducting peer role observations and feedback, were the most beneficial. Two of the three teachers stated that theory and actual practice were helpful as well. Having some theoretical foundation knowledge can be helpful to teachers in such a way that theory can enable a team of teachers to develop an effective program for culturally and linguistically diverse students. One teacher stated that the gradual release process and a data consultation and comparison worked for her. This process involves teachers, especially new ones, assuming greater responsibility as they grow and develop from their coursework.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1. Research Question 1 was as follows: How do personal and teaching experiences shape teachers' approaches to incorporate culturally appropriate

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pedagogy into their diverse classrooms? Based on the qualitative narrative analysis, I found that the positive experiences of the participants during their childhood shaped their approaches to culture in diverse classrooms. All three teachers had a relatively positive school experience. All three teachers played school and considered being a teacher since childhood. When they considered the teaching profession initially, meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners had no impact, but became increasingly important as they pursued the profession. Moreover, all three participants shared the following characteristics: (a) had a teacher-leader role in the school, (b) had been teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students for at least 3 years, (c) taught core subjects, and (d) had been exposed to at least five professional development trainings or opportunities related to teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Two teachers initially chose a career path other than teaching due to family pressure for a higher paying career. However, both were unhappy and went into teaching despite the major they chose in college.

Mia, the first participant, was the only one who had an unpleasant experience in school while she was young. The negative experience was limited to one teacher and one comment. She shared that her third-grade teacher told her she was not good at math, and as a result, she stopped liking math. In the interview, I observed that her facial expressions and body language indicated that it was a very hurtful event as a child. Most of her school experience was positive. She then added how the occurrence turned out to be "funny" because she became a math teacher. The second participant, Dana, shared that she loved high school and college and never had a negative attitude toward school. She has always wanted to be a teacher but had a different career before deciding to shift

her path. Things changed when her father saw how discontent she was; he encouraged

her to do whatever would make her happy, so she changed her major. After this, she

completed a teacher-in-residency program while she attained her teaching license.

Reba added that her love of homework led her to do her friends' homework in

addition to her own. She noted that she loved school so much that she would attend even

when she was unwell and was sent home because she was too sick to be in school. In the

interview, she seemed to know at a very young age that she wanted to be a teacher.

S. Weber and Mitchell (2003) noted that many of the aspects of being a teacher

"are rooted in childhood experiences and culture" (p. 109). Childhood experiences linger

in the orientations and dispositions of the individuals who decide to become educators

and infuse and form in unidentified ways within "teachers' professional identity and

work" (S. Weber & Mitchell, p. 110). S. Weber and Mitchell provided claims that served

as strong support for the findings regarding the experiences common to the participants

during their childhood. The teachers' childhood experiences mentioned were related in

this study through the environment that the teachers grew up in and the lessons instilled

in them through the process. The teachers indicated how their experiences, whether

positive or negative, led them to where they are today. For example, Mia realized she did

not like math as a child but is now teaching it; Dana realized that although she had

negative experiences with teachers as a child, it was her happy and positive recollection

of her teacher that pushed her to pursue teaching; and Reba showed how her enthusiasm

for doing homework affected her fondness for teaching.

In terms of their perceptions about cultural diversity, the three participants

discussed their experiences related to cultural diversity and teaching culturally diverse

students. Mia was not exposed to a culturally diverse school when she was studying. However, she expressed the desire to pursue her education and especially to work with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Dana had English language learners in class, but she believed that these students did not benefit much from the professional development programs she was exposed to. Moreover, she had many non-English language learners who struggled with language as well. Dana also believed that teachers who know what it is like to teach students with many different cultural backgrounds were the most helpful professional development supports for her. Lastly, Reba talked about her need for support to meet the needs of multilingual students. She confessed to having not enough skills and preparation to meet their needs as effectively as she needed to. The teachers all shared that their most notable experience was their passion and desire for learning and teaching ever since childhood. Moreover, when attempting to answer the first research question, I discovered that the teachers pursued their profession by applying their experiences from childhood to teaching, which included very few thoughts about diversity. As they gained classroom experience, the need to understand culturally and linguistically diverse learners became increasingly important. In addition, the teachers used their passion for teaching to pursue and overcome the challenge of a lack of understanding the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners that they face as educators and to seek opportunities to grow and develop their craft. The need to teach culturally and linguistically diverse learners is critical. The aim of Senate Bill 10-191 is to ensure all licensed personnel receive adequate feedback and professional development support to provide them a meaningful opportunity to improve their effectiveness and to

ensure all licensed personnel have the means to share effective practices with other educators throughout the state (Colorado Senate Bill 10-191, 2010, Section 5).

Research Question 2. Research Question 2 was as follows: Taking teacher education and teaching experiences into account, what aspects of professional development do three teacher leaders perceive as most beneficial to cultivate teacher growth and development for meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners? The teachers shared many aspects of professional development experiences that they believed were beneficial to them as educators and as professionals. The two most notable experiences related to teachers' professional development were the methods of collaborating with teammates and colleagues to develop the best strategies for addressing the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners and conducting peer role observations and feedbacks. All three participants shared these two techniques for development that helped them address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. I also found that the participants believed that a required professional development is typically not beneficial and that the presenters for required professional development do not seem to be passionate about what they are presenting, which was honest feedback. They added that it also felt forced on them. Forcing teachers to undergo professional development steps or programs may do more harm than good to their effectiveness in teaching (Allen, 2014; Briegel, 2013). Briegel (2013) highlighted that forcing teachers toward professional development may result in undesirable outcomes for teachers because of the stress and burden they perceive they experience from such developmental programs. Allen (2014) further claimed that widening the scope of required professional development among teachers has not necessarily resulted

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in a significant or proportional increase in the effectiveness of the teachers. Allen (2014) also discovered that smaller group sizes for professional development sessions were more effective. In addition, book studies are beneficial because they allow deep conversations between peers. Professional learning communities are much more effective when they have structure; otherwise, they can simply become a time for teachers to complain.

Mia felt that planning with teammates to implement new strategies learned immediately (e.g., lessons about the learning processes for culturally and linguistically diverse students) was tremendously valuable to her. She shared how she and her two teammates all served in differentiated roles, where they divided their time between both teaching and coaching. By doing so, they were able to collaborate and learn from the expertise and knowledge of one another. Shared vision and values provide a common goal that the organization works to achieve or uses as motivation, while collective learning and application emphasizes that members develop their skills together and act as one unit. Supportive conditions create a working environment that makes it easy, effective, and efficient for all to work (Hord et al., 2009). Dana joined and attended the school's instructional leadership team because she wanted to meet with her peers regularly. The team had a teacher leader designated to make the team planning time possible and to ensure everyone in the meetings have a voice. Through this, the teachers can join and incorporate their ideas on teaching and on how they can improve as educators. Staff members must understand the relationship between learning with students in the classroom and learning with colleagues (Hord et al., 2009). Sharing best practices with colleagues helps teachers apply these techniques in the classroom. Professional learning communities include staff members who learn together to direct

their efforts toward improved student achievement (Huffman & Hipp, 2003). Finally, Reba shared that she enjoyed collaborating with colleagues, although she admitted that the effectiveness depended how collaborative the team was. The technique of teamwork and collaboration with colleagues that was common for the three participants was also critical according to Berger (2014). Berger indicated that teamwork, exchange of ideas, and harmonious interpersonal relationships are crucial to achieving goals in an organization, which in this case was a school. Interactions, collaborations, and involvement aid teachers in developing and improving their methods of instruction, which then hones their skills in their classrooms (Desimone, 2009). Collaborations can result in an assurance for the schools that their educators are continually striving for the newest, most advanced, and most successful methods, especially when handling their culturally and linguistically diverse students.

The three participants also agreed on the effectiveness of peer role observations and feedback. Mia reiterated that the site-based differentiated role allows teachers to expand and build relationships with teachers and students to offer frequent feedback; thus, there is always room for growth and development. She also highlighted that the comments and feedback from peers or colleagues on professional development were more helpful than those from the central office, because her peers actually teach in classrooms. Dana also had an in-building differentiated role observation and feedback, in addition to off-site peer observers. In-building differentiated role observations and feedback was a strategy wherein colleagues from the same building or department were the ones who evaluated the teachers. Off-site peer observation was a strategy in which colleagues who were not in the same department or building as the teachers (but who had

worked with them) evaluated the teachers and provided them feedback. In the context of

this study, the evaluation and feedback based on the observations of their peers regarding

their professional development was focused on how the teachers dealt with culturally and

linguistically diverse students based on the observations of peers from inside and outside

their buildings and departments. Dana believed that these practices were helpful in

improving her instructional practices. Reba indicated that having the differentiated role

peer was useful in her growth and development as an educator. She observed that the

method gave her a chance to reflect and relate suggestions, as well as get feedback

regarding her teaching practices and effectiveness. The participants believed that there is

an added layer of effectiveness when they share students with the person they support

with coaching. They believed that district coaches are not very effective, as they visit

only a couple of times a year. Administrators are somewhat helpful, but there is an

element of stress associated with their observations and feedback.

Zepeda (2014) reported that observations, as well as feedback, allow the teachers

to reflect on their methods of teaching, to distinguish their effective methods, and to

change those that are not working. The participants' experiences apply to Senate Bill 10-

191, which aims to ensure all licensed personnel receive ample feedback and professional

development support to offer a meaningful opportunity to improve their effectiveness, as

well as to ensure all licensed personnel have the means to share effective practices with

other educators throughout the state (Colorado Senate Bill 10-191, 2010, Section 5).

Tschannen-Moran and Tschannen-Moran (2011) suggested that feedback from a peer or

someone that a teacher works with directly is a more successful method of improving

teaching compared to remarks from an individual such as a superintendent who comes in irregularly and is not as well-acquainted with the teacher.

Other significant aspects that the teachers shared were that theory and actual practice were helpful and that the gradual release process and data consultation and comparison worked for them as well. Theory and practice were helpful in developing and implementing effective strategies for culturally and linguistically diverse students in the sense that teachers with relevant theoretical foundation and knowledge regarding the needs and behaviors of different cultures with different languages are more likely to implement appropriate activities and learning processes for their culturally and linguistically diverse students. However, theory alone will not be enough; the teachers must have knowledge on how to use these theories appropriately for the tasks and processes of actual classroom education. The gradual release process refers to the manner of responsibility phasing wherein teacher candidates assume responsibility as they grow and develop from their coursework. Data consultation and comparison involves having to look between different data sets and vertically articulate with multiple grades. These processes have helped the research participants in gathering relevant information that they needed to address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students effectively. Examples of professional development include planning curriculum, crafting lesson plans, and appropriate testing or evaluation methods. It is essential to take the pace and style of learning of each individual into account to ensure no student is left behind (Berger, 2014). Differentiation requires teachers to develop personalized lesson plans, teaching materials, and assessment tools to address the various learning needs of each individual student (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010).

In conclusion, I discovered that all three teachers have experienced how collaboration and observation with feedback were effectual for them. The teachers were open to improving their craft for the benefit of the students under their care. The teachers also shared how observations could be more effective if implemented in the long term by having those familiar to them provide relevant feedback and comments on the observations made regarding the performance and behavior of the teachers, which are commonly used to develop and improve practices that will cater to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Moreover, using this feedback as a basis for process or program improvements may have long-term implications, because these changes will be the basis of future outcomes for teachers' handling of culturally and linguistically diverse students. If the initial changes are effective, future programs will be based on the effective changes made in the long term. However, if the changes are not effective, there will be a need for a new or better feedback mechanism to gather more relevant information. This new information may be more effective in guiding future programs for teachers' professional development, especially with regard to handling culturally and linguistically diverse students. Effective instructional differentiation for culturally and linguistically diverse learners cannot occur to its fullest potential without a basic understanding of intercultural communication, the language acquisition process, and characteristics of the stages of language development (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010). One step may be having peer support groups for students struggling socially and having teachers available for academic consultation. Another step should include opportunities for personalized learning, which include modifications in tests and assignments, one-on-one tutoring sessions, and activities suited to the interests of individual students. Finally,

constant team-based learning for teachers allows them to share their best practices with each other and strengthens the resolve of educators in overcoming challenges (Gleason & Gerzon, 2013).

Limitations

In this research study, I gave my best effort to produce the best output possible so that the findings could be helpful to the field of teaching and beneficial to the children who will receive quality education from their instructors. However, it was inevitable that I would encounter inadequacies and limitations along the way given how studies can always be improved and maximized. Upon careful review, I believe that the current research study involved several limitations.

I could have increased the number of participants so that more themes could have emerged from the interviews. However, only three of the seven participants who were invited accepted the invitation to participate. In qualitative narrative inquiry analysis, the stories and meanings shared are rich and significant. Moreover, as long as the participants were from the demographic group that comprises the majority of teachers at the site, the experiences and knowledge would be impactful, even as a small focused sample group. Moreover, most of the themes that emerged were common to all three participants. This means that the small sample was enough to generate the relevant themes needed to address the research questions of the study. As a qualitative study, the narrative inquiry research did not require a large sample. I could then ensure that the answers and responses from the interviews were maximized by asking follow-up and related questions whenever needed to gather the in-depth data required for each research question.

I also could have added the perceptions and experiences of other stakeholders, such as other school staff and leaders, to track and follow the responses of the teachers. The inclusion could have supported the experiences shared by the teacher participants, and whether they have really been effective using the strategies shared, and I could have gathered more observations and information on their professional development over time.

Finally, I considered the possibility that the teachers did not divulge complete and absolute information about certain topics and experiences given that they had to protect the names of their schools, their professional career, and the stakeholders connected to them. The teachers may have been hesitant to share private and confidential experiences about the subject, as they were afraid that their names or identities could be traced by the leaders of the schools for which they worked. To structure and minimize the effect of the limitation, I constantly reminded the teacher participants that the informed consent they signed before the interviews commenced was honored and in effect at all times. I also reminded them that their real names would not be used and that all data used in collecting their responses would be kept safe inside a vault for a minimum of 3 years, as required by most universities in the United States, and shall be destroyed after that, leaving no trace of their participation in the study.

Recommendations

Given the limitations noted above, I suggest several improvements that other scholars can consider for inclusion in their own research studies. First, future scholars should try to incorporate data and records from the schools about the feedback on the experiences of the students under the interviewed teachers. By doing so, their background as educators will be clearly examined and can then be evaluated with the

personal experiences shared by the teachers themselves. The inclusion of the additional data shall improve and advance the evidence of the study and thus strengthen the findings further.

Second, future scholars can add the resources and data noted above and then have additional data so they can triangulate their findings. The triangulations shall add to the trustworthiness and credibility of their findings, as their sources will be validated accordingly.

Future researchers should also consider developing a model for relevant and significant factors that will promote the professional development that teachers need to enable effective methods of educating culturally and linguistically diverse learners. By incorporating this stage in their research, other educators and schools shall benefit given that those who gathered the content have experienced and have experiences in teaching and have seen great development in following the said methods over time.

Implications

I believe that the content and data presented in my research could be a great help and contribution to the literature and can be applied by school leaders and teachers as well. The current study will expand the literature on the subject and shall use the narratives of the teachers as a basis of possible policy and program improvement or development to enable teachers to address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students, thus presenting a positive implication of the study. Future scholars can then refer to the narratives to strengthen their content and support their findings. Meanwhile, in practice, schools and educators can refer to the study as well, in order for the school and administrators to have a better understanding and knowledge of the

perceptions of their teachers and for the teachers to gather suggestions and improvement methods to hone their skills more. The current study shall open the doors for both the school organizations and teachers to have a better understanding of how to achieve teacher growth and development.

Conclusion

The narratives that people decide to tell and retell and the dynamics of the actual telling of stories play a role in constructing their identities (Singer, Blagov, Berry, & Oost, 2013). In this study, the narratives were vehicles to extrapolate how the teachers viewed themselves in their experiences as students and their journey to becoming classroom teachers. The stories highlighted the role their own education played in their lives and the role professional development played in their professional growth and development. Additionally, the narratives were an avenue for the teachers to reflect on their teaching practices and explore queries they had about their professional decisions.

The construct of identity can be depicted through processes such as internalization or authoring of selves. Vygotsky (1978) described internalization as "the internal reconstruction of an external operation" (p. 56). As such, internalization involves a transformation of adopting and adapting meaning, from a social level, to an individual level; the process of internalization to develop personal voice as emerging teachers through discussions, and reflections and experiences to facilitate changes in their practice. The goal of this study was to understand, through the interviews, that the K-12 experiences of teachers did not have a significant impact on shaping their approaches to culture in diverse classrooms. However, it was very evident that they did not receive adequate opportunities through the school district to grow and develop in their capacity to

meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Furthermore, the goal

was also to explore what aspects of professional development the teachers perceive as

most beneficial to cultivate teacher growth and development for meeting the needs of

culturally and linguistically diverse learners. They believed the coursework they

experienced in their teacher education programs was much more useful in helping them

grow and develop as educators in meeting the needs of their culturally and linguistically

diverse learners than district-led professional development. They did find value in job-

embedded professional development.

Conducting the study was very beneficial for me. I learned a lot from the stories

and experiences shared by the educators that I interacted with and interviewed. I

explored and discovered that there are still educators who have a strong passion for their

profession that began in childhood; that continues to affect them, and that led them to

become educators and models to their students. Beyond their personal experiences, their

professional experiences were also worth highlighting in the study. The interviewed

teachers were generous enough to share the strategies they use and the models they

employ to continue to improve and develop professionally. From the analysis, I found

that the teachers appreciated collaboration and teamwork so they can share and learn

from one another. I was also able to determine that teachers were open to accepting

criticisms and suggestions for improvement through the different observation and

evaluation methods. There were four types of professional development they found

useful: university coursework led by professors, peers with differentiated roles, district

instructional coaches to a small degree, and administrative feedback to a small degree.

In my capacity as an educator, I learned that in-depth interviews identify teacher experiences that reveal strengths and areas where growth is needed. In this study, it was evident that the three participants needed more support to meet the needs of their culturally and linguistically diverse learners. All three participants felt they did not receive adequate support to meet the needs of their culturally and linguistically diverse learners. They believed it was important and did not feel that the district made it a priority. It is essential to understand teachers' voices to provide them with appropriate opportunities to grow and develop as educators. The narrative inquiry method facilitated my understanding of the value in teacher voices and solidified the need to understand their experiences at a deep level. The method was crucial for understanding that a lack of experience and opportunities to learn about meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners may happen over the course of an educator's lifetime, including their college and career experiences.

The experience of this study has positively affected my hiring practices and the methods I use to provide professional development to teachers so they may have a rich understanding of culturally and linguistically diverse learners and specific strategies to support them in classrooms, as well as follow up as they incorporate new learning into their teaching. I have a series of interviews for longer periods of time before hiring. I incorporate questions about the applicants' own experiences in the K-12 school system. I dig deeper into their teacher education and professional development experiences to determine their needs for growth and development.

This study has also encouraged me to start a teacher cadet program for students in Grades 3-5 who already show an interest in exploring the field of education. It is offered

as an enrichment class and affords students leadership opportunities to learn to create lessons, provide small group lessons, buddy read, and support students who struggle, as well as students who need to be challenged. I believe that when teachers have the opportunity to share their life experiences in a meaningful and deep way, educators at all levels have a better indication of how to support them in growing and developing in their practice in general, but specifically to meet the needs of the often marginalized but large group of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Ultimately, all educators want children to have accelerated growth and become college and career ready. The top indicator of student success is a quality teacher, and there is no close second. Administrators need to solicit teacher insight to provide high quality, differentiated, meaningful opportunities for teachers to grow and develop in their capacity to serve culturally and linguistically diverse learners that will support the ultimate goal of improving academic achievement for all students. Teachers must have a strong voice in professional development opportunities offered based on they populations they serve as well as their own life experiences as well as professional experiences.

<div align="center">**References**</div>

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Appendix A: Informed Consent

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The researcher will describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part.

Invitation to participate in a research study

You are invited to participate in a research study about the impacts of professional development on your teaching practice.

You are being asked to be in this research study because it will help administrators and teacher leaders provide quality professional development to meet the needs of teachers who serve culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Description of subject involvement

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to grant the researcher 3 interviews and at least 1 classroom visit.

This will take about sixty minutes for each interview on 3 different days. The classroom visit(s) will be no more than thirty minutes.

Possible risks and discomforts

The researcher has taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. Even so, you may still experience some risks related to your participation, even when the researchers are careful to avoid them. These risks may include a question you don't feel comfortable answering, lack of familiarity with the researcher, or nervousness associated with being observed in your classroom.

Possible benefits of the study

This study is designed for the researcher to learn more about the impact teachers believe job-embedded professional development has on the growth and development of their instructional practices. Furthermore, how those practices meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. It will also provide insight as to which

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Appendix B: Transcribed Notes

Reba 1

MODERATOR: Okay, so tell me your personal experience with school just kind of your—whatever you're willing to share either elementary, middle, high, or whatever you feel comfortable with.

RESPONDENT: Okay, I definitely was one of those kids who had a great experience in school. I wanted to be teacher when I was in elementary school and played school in my basement for hours on end and would re-teach what we learned that day and had an imaginary class and such. I was in like GT in elementary school so I was doing really well. I loved doing homework I helped all my friends with their homework. Even in high school one of my best friends was not into school it was really hard for her and I would do her stuff for her because I just loved doing it and so I've always had a really good experience with school. And then in high school and middle school the same I mean I got everything done, worked really hard. I mean it was less cool to be smart, you know, there was some of that influence but for the most part I always enjoyed going to school. I didn't want to stay home if I was sick I would go to school
And be sent home from school because I was sick and at school. So always loved it. Is that okay?

MODERATOR: Yes, yes, no that's great. So you knew early on it sounds like that you wanted to be a teacher. Did you go automatically right into becoming a teacher in college?

RESPONDENT: I didn't I decided my senior year of high school that I would try something different and I was like I'm going to college I can try whatever I want. Trading spaces was like big the TV show in interior design and so I decided to go into the College of Architecture and do interior design which was nothing like Trading Spaces. But around my junior year I decided I didn't like it and I—but I'm one of those people wouldn't quit until I was done and I come from a family where it wouldn't have been okay to like switch my major after being almost three quarters of the way done with college. So I finished interior design and I moved out to Denver from Nebraska where I'm from and was an interior designer for five years at a firm. A great firm, worked on some cool projects and then we in 2008 had with the economy in construction we had a reduction in hours. I was really lucky to keep my job but I decided to volunteer at an elementary school once a week and that was the best part of my week. You know, I was sitting in a desk by myself all day long I was bored. It was I mean I could do it it was sometimes fun but it was monumentous and like at the same and very, you know, a lot of

time by myself which I didn't love. What I loved were those mornings That I would volunteer. So then I volunteered with I can't think of what it is. An organization with the summer reading program continued after school is done. And then I decided to look into The Denver teacher residency. So I joined the Denver teacher residency after and had—I wasn't going to tell anyone until like it was official, official and waited until like the very last day I possibly could and told the firm that I was leaving. And they had like no idea so it was hard, it's bittersweet but I love what I'm doing now. So then I got my masters at DU with the Denver Residency.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: So not like I want to be a teacher and then I was like I'll try something new and then I was like no I still want to be a teacher and I'm stuck doing something else.

MODERATOR: And I think that happens a lot. I think a lot of us, you know, used to line our little stuffed animals up and we just knew that's what we wanted, tried something else first because a lot of people do that that, you know, that it doesn't pay well and they kind of almost talk you out of it.

RESPONDENT: Right and mine wasn't—I mean and then I loved art and I was like I could be an art teacher or something and then it was like I was just doing it because I felt like it was the right thing to do. So it would have been frowned on to like change my major or like follow my like what I wanted to do because you don't know what working is like until you get out of college anyways. So you think it won't be like this and it wasn't like that.it wasn't like school but it also wasn't awesome.

MODERATOR: What did you--how did you feel about your Teacher in Residency program?

RESPONDENT: I Loved it, it was really…

MODERATOR: You're getting your license simultaneously to the program correct?

RESPONDENT: …yes so you have like you have not an initial license you have a –what comes before that? I can't think of what it—so we have like basically a sun-license so we could sub technically so yes so it's a year long program, super intense in a classroom four days a week from the first day of school to the last day of school. So what I felt was really strong about the program is that you knew what every day of school was going to be like and you knew what testing was going to be like. You knew what the first, the last day, the rituals or routines. It wasn't like my friends' experience with studen teaching and under grad where it was like maybe like Monday, Wednesday, Friday morning and it wasn't like truly the nitty gritty of what teaching was. And I also had a really great mentor who I was placed with and she was also a career change, also went through the

program. I know that when you're matched if you're not matched with a great personality match it can be really hard. I was lucky because I didn't have that.

MODERATOR: Where did you do your student teaching?

RESPONDENT: She named another elementary in the district she worked in.

MODERATOR: Okay, okay.

RESPONDENT: So and she was also in third grade so it was really nice and then I was able to use like a lot of the things I learned and planned this year which was great and it's, you know, it was like a really intense a lot of things to do but I mean, I felt like I knew our teacher effectiveness framework like how we're being evaluated like forwards, backwards, and upside down because that's how we were evaluated in our program.

MODERATOR: Great, yes.

RESPONDENT: So it wasn't new, you know, like new teacher orientation for this district was here's the book and this is how You're going to be evaluated and then watching over other teachers come to this district and not be familiar with it. I can't imagine how overwhelming it would have been whereas like the program we were in was so intense and intentional about knowing the indicators that you just do it naturally. It's not I don't have to think like how am I going to have like high expectations I've never done it differently because that's how it was modeled and that's what I knew.

MODERATOR: That's interesting. So in that program the practical application stuff sounds like it was most useful. Is this your first year outside of that program?

RESPONDENT: No.

MODERATOR: Okay. So when you think about like the district curriculum, just things that are—not curriculum necessarily but just kind of the district mandated teacher professional development. So, you know when the principal or whoever is, you know, principals in general have to disseminate information from the district how is that? Is it helpful, is it—you would agree with that?

RESPONDENT: I think it's helpful. Like our professional like around data and planning that we did in like our extended planning I thought was really good. I think one of my problems with it was it was that when you're teammates are willing to collaborate or we can have a conversation about what we're going to teach but then I'm really teaching that and this person is doing their own thing like it's really hard. I think it needs to be like more cohesive. I think it's challenging because this school district doesn't have a strong curriculum. You know, these literacy—because I was teaching literacy for two grades. The literacy curriculum has a lot of things that need to be supplemented. It's not rigorous, it's not tied to the common core. So I would say for the most part I was writing

lessons from scratch the whole year I mean using it as a resource but not as like a crutch. And it's hard to plan and be in planning with people who are not going to change what they're doing because it takes a lot of work.

MODERATOR: Yes.

RESPONDENT: So I think in theory it will be really strong I think having ANAC will help because it will be more like no this is what you're teaching, this is how you're doing it this is the standard. But I've never taught from just like a scope and sequence I've taught from the standards that's how I was trained. So I can't read a lesson plan because that's not how I teach. I need to like know it or they're not—if I don't know it there's no way they're going to know it.

MODERATOR: Right.

RSEPONDENT: If I don't have ownership I can't expect them to either.

MODERATOR: Do you have like a certain protocol that you're supposed to use during that time?

RESPONDENT: We do we have and since I sit on two different teams, two grade level teams they plan quite differently. But for the most part it's like assessment, it's sorting data, assessment, planning and then like resources.

MODERATOR: So you're using kind of that Driven by Data model?

RESPONDENT: Yes absolutely and I read that book for DTR last year so it was like a great book. What I found challenging with the data cycle was that we weren't looking at cohesive data. So it was hard to track growth if you're not looking at the same the same things. If you're looking at like the standard in isolation and then we're looking in another standard well like these kids got it but then a different group of kids we're not tracking like their real growth. We're not assessing them in the same way.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: So that was—but I think again like common rubrics, common things around making up just to do it would be helpful. I mean I learned a ton from it and I wouldn't be like yes let's just look at this character's traits but then next week let's look at adding dialogue to our writing and this week let's do like we were just doing it to do it.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: Instead of like having it be like intentional or aligned to standards where we can track their growth.

MODERATOR: Was last year kind of—you were here for the first time last year? Okay, so I'm wondering…

RESPONDENT: This is my first year and I think this is their first year too.

MODERATOR: …okay. It does develop over time.

RESPONDENT: Right.

MODERATOR: Do you have—so you have like common planning time where you kind of follow that Driven by Data model. Do you have anything like instructional rounds or where you go and see other teachers teach?

RESPONDENT: We had a learning lab which was the beginning of the year my team did and then we looked at all of like through the lens of like the entire teacher effectiveness frameworks. So like all the indicators. And then after January no February, in February I visited another school to kind of look through their lens of how they were doing it but beyond that like not really. I think there's opportunity but if you're not like seeking it and for me I can't go and observe someone in 14 different indicators. I need to look at them through like let's look at management or let's look at checks for understanding. And because when you're looking like support in place for teachers who let's say my goal is rigor. Well then let me go visit the teacher who has like rigor under like she knows exactly you're here, she knows what she's doing so I can like grow and change if you don't have a model. Like I'm someone who wants to see something so I can change. I'll change but it's hard when you're like okay read this or do this and the observations that they give are wonderful. Like I found the feedback to be great.

MODERATOR: From everybody because there's peer observers and then…

RESPONDENT: So I had peer, admin and like my differentiated role person and like I liked that and I love having—I want to reflect, I want to change. This is my first year I don't know anything let alone everything.

MODERATOR: …right.

RESPONDENT: The only thing I think was missing is one of my things I was struggling with was questioning so like those higher level questions. But it's hard if you don't ever see someone do that. Like I want to see experienced teacher who can reach all levels of Bloom's in her questioning so that all of her kids can be engaged because I still like it's hard it's like read it. It's hard to like put into place naturally, you know.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: So that would be my only thing.

MODERATOR: How about… I know some people here who have done book studies. Do you find that helpful?

RESPONDENT: Yes I think we started guided math as a book study which was only teaching literacy right now. So it's—I read it and I went and participated but I think I'll re-read it this summer and then my plan when I teach math…

MODERATOR: You're teaching math next year?
RESPONDENT: …yes it will be like self-contained just one grade level. So I won't have the splits but I mean I still wanted to learn and there's things you can implement from guided math that I do in guided reading, you know, it was like a good conversation.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: And then we did a book study for ILT like the instructional leadership team.

MODERATOR: I saw that is that the book?

RESPONDENT: And being transparent, I did not read the whole thing.

MODERATOR: I'm sure you're not the only one.

RESPONDENT: But it's like about like conflict resolution in schools and how teachers deal with that and having hard conversations.

MODERATOR: Do you feel like the school has conflict? I mean like amongst the teachers. Like the old and the new and that kind of thing?

RESPONDENT: I do I think it's more no one talks about it though. It's just kind of like brushed under the rug bit it does feel like there's different groups of teachers but I think the politics of like when you people who have been working a long time and then new people come in and things are changing.

MODERATOR: Yes and it's different and yes you have to tread lightly because you have to make sure you honor the past but also look to the future.

RESPONDENT: You absolutely right, yes.

MODERATOR: Yes, it's a balance for sure.

RESPONDENT: Totally

MODERATOR: So I just want to make sure I don't take too much of your time here.

RESPONDENT: No you're fine.

MODERATOR: So have you gone to any conferences?

RESPONDENT: Yes so I did guided reading plus so that was my professional development outside of this school. So I did an early literacy certificate. This is the first year we finished. So I have been doing that like every Thursday at a high school and then next year I'll have class two and three. So then I'll have that which is 100% focused on guided reading and implementing like the guided reading plus template. So like reading and writing. It was an amazing class and then went to like the literacy conference that we had in the summer which was five days of like the like genre study and then like little breakouts like the guided reading plus and things like that but beyond that I have not had.

MODERATOR: This is a really diverse school that has a really high percentage of English language learners. So, you know, people acquiring English with different, various languages spoken. Do you feel like you've had a lot of professional development opportunities around that?

RESPONDENT: No.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: No I think there could be more honestly. I didn't have any like newcomers in either of my classes so I didn't have that but there is, you know, struggling readers of any language trying to like bridge that gap. But I think I had experience with WiDA in my courses that I took but I really believe it could be like implemented stronger in the schools because that's kind of like the domains and then why are you really needing those, are you doing questioning for all levels? But it's a lot on top of the evaluation frameworks, it's a lot on top of curriculum, it's a lot on top of standards. So I think it's one of the things that gets pushed aside.

MODERATOR: Right and there's X amount of time. I mean, you know, all administrators have to sit there and carve out like what are the things we say are most important, what do we have on our Unified Improvement Plan, what does the district say is really important and how do we make sure we get all those things in?

RESPONDENT: yes absolutely. And next year we're doing like words their way and sorting and then during their intervention time our grade level will focus on that like program of like what's happening to support all language learnings, you know, like struggling readers and the ELLs. So I think that will be a nice bridge to that because then I'll know how to teach the skills that they need or like the skills that someone who is, you know, like bridging in reading too.

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MODERATOR: Yes that's you know, serving culturally and linguistically diverse students is very complex and there's a lot of theory behind it that you really have to have a foundation and understanding of theory and then you really need to think about practical application, how you progress monitor, how do you sort all of the WiDA pieces.

RESPONDENT: Righ, it's a lot. It seems like a lot more when like we were in school and it was…

MODERATOR: Yes.

RESPONDENT: …here's a book, read it, and fill out a worksheet.
MODERATOR: Right, well when you look at data in general through research I mean you can really look up pretty much any research but, you know, kids who are learning English as a second language, everybody acquires languages at a different time. And so , but once they do it can take, you know, we want them to hurry up and do it in three years in education and it's five to seven. But once they acquire enough to be exited, they outperform their monolingual counterparts and I think that's a really untapped resource for us.

RESPONDENT: Yes absolutely. And I have had conferences with parents who are, you know, bilingual or even have more like exposure to different languages. But they're reading behind and I'm like do not worry like I promise you like their development, their brains are wired differently but like once there it will take off. We just have to like weather the storm of like we're struggling but when it's there it will be there they will be brilliant because they know two, three more languages.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: I wish I knew two languages.

MODERATOR: I know, it's making sure a lot of them just have their kids stop reading in their native language and if they continue to keep that cognitive prowess you know, high level of reading while they acquire the other language, their comprehension goes through the roof. But a lot of students abandon it and they're struggling because they're not being supported by their native language.

RESPONDENT: Right.

MODERATOR: So it's an interesting thing.

RESPONDENT: And like it's hard because often I feel parents want to abandon that because they want like English so they have to know English and it's like it's really detrimental to their learning if you're just like we're not going to talk to you in Spanish but you are on your own. It's like hard.

MODERATOR: It's probably hard to find farsi material too.

RESPONDENT: Yes I have a student who is like—goes to school on the weekends to learn to read and write in Farsi. He can speak it but his mom is like well I feel like this is slowing him down and I was like it's not, it's not, it's not I was like I promise you. Because she is so worried about him being like significantly below grade level. Because she is so worried about him being like significantly below grade level. I'm like but you don't understand like he's like he's learning these two things at the same time like continue to support that. A lot of parents wouldn't do that, you know, and so it's amazing.

MODERATOR: His brain is working twice as hard.
RESPONDENT: Yes, exactly.

MODERATOR: So he is building tons of stamina right now.

RESPONDENT: Yes, it's amazing.

MODERATOR: Yes, I know.

RESPONDENT: I'm like that's amazing, that's amazing and he's so sweet he's just like shy about it. I was like no.

MODERATOR: Because it's embarrassing sometimes when you come to school, you know?

RESPONDENT: I was like no that's amazing. So, it's really, really cool.

MODERATOR: And that's what we definitely want them to continue to build in their native language it helps them cognitively and they will so outperform their monolingiual peers. It's crazy to see the statistics about that.

RESPONDENT: It's amazing.

MODERATOR: Okay so we will figure out a time when you can meet. Next week I'm here on Wednesday…

Reba 2
MODERATOR: …but I wanted to, you know, just follow up with a couple of things. It's interesting because there are so many similarities and just generally between the three of you.

RESPONDENT: Yes well I'm [0:00:15] similar personalities in general.

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MODERATOR: Yes, but your data team time is that beneficial do you think?

RESPONDENT: I think it could be better utilized. I think if it was consistent and it would be better with ANAC (ph). Because like I said last time when we were looking at random data it's harder whereas we might be looking at the same standard but if we're not assessing it in the same way…

BECKY: A Nebraska fan?

RESPONDENT: …yes go Big Red.

BECKY: Go Big Red, I'm Becky I used to teach in this room here.

RESPONDENT: Hi I'm Becky I'm a Nebraska fan.

BECKY: And I moved to Lincoln my senior year of high school. That was traumatic from Chicago. That was like -- so when I see that -- my husband was born and raised in Scott's Block. We live there.

RESPONDENT: I was born and raised in Lincoln.

BECKY: In Lincoln yes I went to East.

RESPONDENT: Nice I went to Southeast.

BECKY: Were you, yes my senior year and I drove that drive ten times. I used to bring my dad from Chicago back here and but I see that go Big Red.

RESPONDENT: Go Big Red.

BECKY: No I was a Hastings -- we went to Hastings, I went to Hastings because I didn't want to stay at home in Lincoln.

RESPONDENT: Yes I did.

BECKY: But yes, so you were raised in Lincoln.

RESPONDENT: Yes. Well thanks for saying hi.

BECKY: Twenty eight years in this building. So now I come back because I was waiting for you and now I come back [0:01:44].

RESPONDENT: So I sat on data teams that were more structure and intentional and able to like track growth when I was at a different school last year their data team and how

they meet and they meet vertically. So primary meets and then intermediate meets and it's every other. And it's I mean they have a process and it's they are really tracking data. They're like looking through the interims how are they going to do which questions, which things do we need to hit on and then like going back and like looking at the results like were we right.

MODERATOR: The school is in what part of Denver?

RESPONDENT: Southwest.

MODERATOR: …Southwest Denver?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: So it was just different because in ours we were just like our grade level team whereas I came from vertically looking at data and it's just different. It's a different approach.

MODERATOR: Did they use the driven by data process?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: Yes that's what we use too, yes.

RESPONDENT: So I think it will get stronger it's just not there yet you can't fix it overnight when people aren't used to like collecting data or using…

MODERATOR: Do you know if your teammates are leaving? Like do you know what I mean because that helps too when you have like some of those, you know, we've always done it this other way people.

RESPONDENT: The team I'm going to be on next year I think there's one teacher who has been here a long time and then me and then I'm not sure of the third person.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: But yes that's a really hard, it's hard to be like no we can't do it we need to like change it and we're using standards let's assess them. But when you're a first year teacher you have to like tread lightly with…

MODERATOR: Well and that was in fact I don't have the one that I wrote on yesterday but so your first year?

RESPONDENT: Yes and Taylor (ph) and I were in the same program. So we…

MODERATOR: It's the DTR?

RESPONDENT: …yes and we both were DTR's.   She was at another school, which is like far Northeast and then I was in the far Southwest.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: So like totally different and then this is our first year.

MODERATOR: Okay yes and this is totally different than Southwest. Now that's where I came from I taught middle school and I was an instructional coach in Southwest Denver.

RESPONDENT: Okay yes I've heard of it.

MODERATOR: It's like Federal and Mississippi.

RESPONDENT: Mississippi okay.

MODERATOR: Yes it's like right there, you know, so it's down in that same area but this demographic is very different.

RESPONDENT: So different yes. And the demographics I love the demographics at the last school but here is so much more diverse it's like people from all over the world and it's just really cool to see like and hear family stories and see the different kids. It's hard because they don't stay here necessarily because they're moving around I think much more than in that region where they're kind of more put but yes.

MODERATOR: Did you get a master degree is it an MA also?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: Because I know and what about any endorsements?

RESPONDENT: I have well I'm working on my literacy, my early literacy and then I have like the endorsement for like linguistically diverse learners.

MODERATOR: Okay that is the one I asked about I was wondering about.

RESPONDENT: And then some of the people in our program did take the employee's so they were like endorsed with special ed but I did not take that I had too much on my plate.

MODERATOR: Well and you can do it any time.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: I mean if you…

RESPONDENT: And I feel like I would know more now than I did like coming out of -- I knew the facts but not practice.

MODERATOR: …well and I don't remember who I was talking to yesterday but they were talking about the, you know, what did you need to get in the doctoral program and did you take, you know, which test did you take and that kind of stuff and I was like, you know, just take it. I don't want to waste my time studying because if you're teaching some of that stuff is so like that's what I do every day. So I just when I went to apply I said can I just take it when is the next one. She was like Saturday but don't you want to study. And I said well I want to see if I pass it first and then if I don't then I'll study. And it was fine but you're -- you can't replace this so I could see that it would be hard for people that haven't worked yet but…

RESPONDENT: Because it's so different.

MODERATOR: …right because a lot of it is common sense.

RESPONDENT: Yes and some of it is like tricky but you wouldn't know unless you were like in that position where you're sitting on like a SIT (ph) team or you're like writing an IEP.

MODERATOR: The same goes with place, nobody gets your scores until you tell them to send them. So like if you don't care if you don't well I'll just take it again and I'll send those cards. So what would you say is the least helpful or the least applicable kinds of professional development that you've had? So PD like, you know, we talked about last time is so broad. I mean it can mean data team time, it can mean course work at university, it can be just PD that you got from the district, it could be in house PD, instructional coaching, instructional rounds any of that. That's all considered professional development.

RESPONDENT: The least I don't know I'm like a creature that like thrives on like learning I'm like a sponge. We definitely took courses that were not beneficial in DTR. Like we took a transitioning class for like transitioning to middle schooler's to high school. Well if I knew I was going to be in an elementary like K5 endorsement why would I take a class about transitioning. So it was like writing those like the transition IEP's and things, which I mean is interesting but I was like this isn't like we had to do it with our students because like they don't really need to transition to fourth grade they're just they're going to do it.

MODERATOR: Right yes.

RESPONDENT: So that was like the least like the least good course it was so boring too. I don't know I mean I think data would be better. I think it will be better. Right now I don't think it's really great. The SOL process I did not like so the student learning…

MODERATOR: They've been doing that for the 10 years I was here.

RESPONDENT: …yes.

MODERATOR: It's literal and it's different every time but it's like…

CROSSTALK

RESPONDENT: It's different every time and I was part of like the pilot last year and I came here and like kind of like with lessons learned because we did it all wrong last year because it was like evolving and changing and so like our data wasn't working and then at the end it's just like you just put stuff together to put stuff together. It's not meaningful data. It's not I mean I'm tracking the student but you know all your students. So when you have to pick one standard it like pigeon holed then. It's really difficult to see growth because they grow with all standards. Like how can you just choose one I don't know? And so I felt like that whole process was kind of like checking boxes where it wasn't really like meaningful. It could have been.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: But that would be like the big ones.

MODERATOR: And so on the other side of that what kinds of [0:09:04] feel like you can just apply it right away.

RESPONDENT: Definitely anything around LEAP. So like any observation cycles that I was in where I would have a visitor and then immediately have a conversation and then put something into practice. But then also looking at it through like a specific lens not all the indicators. Like I really want to focus on my questioning. So come in and watch like the questions I'm asking the questions they're asking each other and then like that real time feedback of like okay this is what you did, try this instead and then I'm going to be back in two weeks and let's see if it's like working. That to me is the most beneficial because I want to know you come from like learning underneath someone but I'm a different person and I want to teach differently, you know, we're not robots the kids are different. So I like that real like that feedback.

MODERATOR: Are there still 11 frameworks, you know?

RESPONDENT: [0:10:00].

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MODERATOR: That's okay.

RESPONDENT: No I have it right here.

MODERATOR: I just know that when they first rolled it out it was 19.

RESPONDENT: I know that they've condensed it. So it's 4 and then 8 so 12.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: And then professional indicators.

MODERATOR: What about like PD sessions that you said. Does anyone followup with those? Did the you know what I mean like if you…

RESPONDENT: I mean we did our SLO as like our PD for the year. So I did it but it wasn't like…

MODERATOR: Did anyone follow-up like to see are you using them, was it helpful, do you need more help?

RESPONDENT: We had someone come and like coach us but he was new to it too.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: So that's a problem there's like always new people so no one can give you like last time we did this because the people change almost every time. Because that's what happened last year is we had two people and then they switched and then it was like you're doing that wrong. And it's like well that person told us this is how we're supposed to do it because they're like and they're not people in classroom's they're just people that work for DPS. So it's like hard too and I'm like what do you want me to give you like if you're not -- you're looking for something in an office.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: I'm in a classroom like what do you need.

MODERATOR: So they're not teachers anymore like the teacher peer observer?

RESPONDENT: I think they're older like they're no longer teachers.

MODERATOR: They used to be teachers?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: Okay because I think the peer observer thing was supposed to but the intention was for them to be out of the classroom for two years and then they go back in so that it's constantly there. They're out but not so long that they don't get it anymore.

RESPONDENT: And I loved my peer observer. She was really, really, really great. I don't know if I'll opt in because I'm going to have so much observation here next year.

MODERATOR: Because you have an in house coach right?

RESPONDENT: Yes. So like a different [0:11:48] of roles and then admin. So it's every week feedback.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: Which is awesome but sometimes it's hard when you have so many people giving you different perspectives and then you have someone come in and like why did you do that. And I'm like well I did it because this person said to do it and they're like don't do it that way do it this way.

MODERATOR: Yes I bet that is confusing.

RESPONDENT: So I feel like if I limit and I'm consistent with who is observing me then I can like really grow without like kind of like the spider web effect of all different people giving me different ideas.

MODERATOR: Right and even building to building it's interesting to see -- have you guys got to observe other people in other buildings at all?

RESPONDENT: I mean I have because of my program but not I wish that DPS I would put that in. I wish that they would have more time for that because that's how you learn is from seeing other people not reading books.

MODERATOR: Right that's why well in my particular building we do instructional rounds as part of professional development because it's good to be in other people's classrooms and get feedback from peers that's, you know, not evaluative but just sort of like, you know, you can see the application of stuff that we've done.

RESPONDENT: Totally.

MODERATOR: You know, it is.

RESPONDENT: That's great but it's hard to when some people don't want their peers in their classrooms or they don't want feedback they want to do it how they've been doing it.

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MODERATOR: You guys have yes you guys have a little bit more of that here because you have a lot of older teachers. My whole building is young they're all like so -- I think they love coming to work they're just super collaborative they're great like I couldn't ask for a better situation at all.

RESPONDENT: That's awesome.

MODERATOR: There is I think three that are like older teachers and one of them is leaving. There's like two in the whole building.

RESPONDENT: And at my former school there were a lot of older, there were older like experienced teachers but they were on board they were changing. They were getting rid of what, you know, the packets and like the things that like it's not how kids like the 21st Century learn anymore. It needs to be fast and it needs to be engaging and it's not just sit and get or sit and do independently. So, you know, but that comes with time too.

MODERATOR: Yes and there are some I have, you know, a couple of really seasoned teachers with like 20 years and stuff that love it. They're the same, you know, it just depends what your mindset really is if it's a growth kind of thing. I think it was you that was telling me that you knew you wanted to be a teacher very young. I was -- I recently read something it's -- because I'm hiring teachers in the summer and I read it was the gallop questioning and indicators for a really great teacher. So when you go to interview you kind of have these list of questions. And I thought about it and I thought it was you I couldn't remember but it was the strongest indicators for a really great teacher is how like your age when you knew that's what you wanted to do.

RESPONDENT: Really.

MODERATOR: So the younger it is it's a great, a really great predictor for how effective you'll be as a teacher.

RESPONDENT: Cool, that's awesome.

MODERATOR: Isn't that cool? I used to do the same thing I talked to my stuffed animals, I talked to whoever would listen.

RESPONDENT: And it's interesting because I changed even like went back to my old firm like last week and they're like we want you to come back and it's like there's a financial like investment there and it's well I can make a lot more money, you know. But I was like no but that's not why I do this like I do it -- my hear told me to change and like I love every day. Even when they use the whole stinking think of sprinkles and they're mad and they're everywhere. It's like I love you guys. So that's really cool that's an interesting study.

MODERATOR: I know I happened to just come across that and I thought it was you who just had that conversation. I thought -- so I did the same thing I think a lot of us do we do something different because we think everyone tells you it doesn't pay well, it's horrible and so you do something else. And I worked for Estee Lauder Corporation for years and that's very lucrative and then you go to teaching and you're like I have to look at this differently. But there's opportunities so like as you move up in that scale and then all the stipends and things. I offer stipends for people so that you can, you know, supplant that.

RESPONDENT: Yes and for me it was like well it's not -- I did for five years like I'm working for a paycheck. I got up every day and I was like I don't want to go to work. And once I'm here I'm like I'm here. Yes there are days I wake up and I'm like I'm tired I don't want to go do something else again like they come back every day. You never have a day you just sit at your desk and like…

CROSSTALK

MODERATOR: The spiciest ones never are absent ever.

RESPONDENT: …pretend to work like in an office. But no it's like just so great so I know it's the right thing. I don't know if I'll forever be like a classroom teacher.

MODERATOR: There's other stuff to do.

RESPONDENT: But it's like…

CROSSTALK

MODERATOR: There's coaching and there's admin and there's lots of stuff. So once you get your feet wet here I always tell the thing that will pay for itself for you is your admin license. It's worth the money and investment and you'll make it up whatever you spend getting your admin license you'll make up your first year in admin.

RESPONDENT: Wow that's great.

MODERATOR: Because there's lots of people go and they get like a second master and, you know, get all these different things. The admin one is the one that will pay for itself. All the other ones you don't bump up that much right. So but with your culturally and linguistically diverse students how do you feel like, do you feel like the district and school PD really addresses that population? Because yours is very diverse it's different than Spanish.

RESPONDENT: I don't, I think there is different ways to address it. I took a like culturally responsive [0:17:31] class in my masters and it was like so eye opening because especially in the super diverse population I think there are people that have like

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you have biases and if you don't like look at yourself and like really look at those you project them and then you say things. And even I mean I have worked with teammates and they say things and I'm like we don't know like me like you don't know that that's like a bias that you have. So like overall I think like really even taking that I don't think people would want to do it because they would be like I don't need that I don't but like you do like everyone does. Like even in this like transgender world that we live in now like I read a thing about like a little first grader who like wanted to be a boy and was a girl and it's like people have bias like you don't realize you do until you're like make everyone line up in a girls line and a boys line. I'll never do that because like I don't because of that one person you know what I mean? And so I wish that that would be more like but you have to be willing to learn and willing to like who am I inside like do I feel safe when I walk down the trail, why don't I, who do I not feel safe around? Like those are biases that people have. So like the students that we have I don't think it's as much the students but it's like the families. Like people kind of put these families in boxes and it's not how it should be.

MODERATOR: People say parents a lot and it should be families.

RESPONDENT: Yes and I don't…

CROSSTALK

MODERATOR: Because you don't know.

RESPONDENT: …yes I like had one mistake in the beginning of the year and I was like I'm going to call your mom or your dad and I didn't know him it was like the second week of school and he was like I don't have a dad. And I was like, you know, I'm like see that's like me making a total assumption about like your life and so now I'm like very sensitive. We have kids who live with their grandparents, kids who live with their aunties, like kids who live with their neighbors because they have to. And it's, you know, I always say like give this to an adult at home, you know, like because I don't want to assume like if someone hears like parents, parents, parents, parents, parents they don't have that and…

MODERATOR: And it makes them feel bad.

RESPONDENT: …yes.

MODERATOR: I get that a lot. Kids will come to my office because I'm the principal and say, you know, Miss whoever always says parents and I don't have parents and can you tell her to stop saying that.

RESPONDENT: Yes and you don't realize it, it like really hurts them. And people make assumptions well it doesn't matter they know like a parent is a parent. So if it's their auntie or whatever and I'm like no that really hurts if you're like give this to your mom

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and they're like well I haven't seen my mom or why isn't this paper signed and my mom works every night I don't see her ever, you know. Like those things. So I wish that that would be like more addressed as a whole. Just like you don't know where these families come from.

MODERATOR: Yes and just assumptions about, you know, they don't care that's why they're not here.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: It's like well no they actually just work when you're asking them to be here.

RESPONDENT: Yes totally.

MODERATOR: You know and like for us we can take days off and we still we don't lose salary. A lot of the jobs that they hold if they don't come in they don't get paid and that's a huge thing to lose a whole day of pay for a half hour thing or like how about conferences ten minutes.

RESPONDENT: Right.

MODERATOR: You're going to like miss a whole day of work for a ten minute conference?

RESPONDENT: I know I just got my like final re-planned conferences and I put on there like you could check like I would prefer a phone conference. And I had four families who like one of them wrote we don't have transportation like we thank you for offering like a phone conference because for them it's a lot to even get here.

MODERATOR: Yes like the two buses then they have a stroller and it's a lot.

RESPONDENT: So it's like being responsive to that which isn't about like being different races it's just about being different humans.

MODERATOR: Right yes and coming to the table with totally different experiences. Yes there is if you ever get a chance there is a -- his name is Glen Singleton (ph) and his book is called "Courageous Conversations" but he has written other things. But it talks about race…

RESPONDENT: I think I've heard of him.

MODERATOR: …yes he has really interesting -- we sent a lot of people in our district to the trainings and we have like a group of people that just train, just do the trainings.

So because we do talk about that a lot which most places don't, DPS is so huge I don't know that they would take that on.

RESPONDENT: And I know it's not, you know, like people are quick to like I'm not racist I don't need it. I'm like I'm not saying you're a racist but like maybe you have a bias against single dads because that's like, you know, like not the norm. So like then you're making an assumption about when he's not around, you know, it's just like those things that you don't realize and I know that I'm younger and have a lot of friends who are single mothers and have their kids are with their dads or their kids are with -- and it's different than when…

MODERATOR: Or even the word broken home people use that all the time. I didn't even realize, you know, because I've raised my daughters like for the last ten years as a single mom but even in interviews like when we -- I've heard teachers in interviews say broken home. And like to a single parent it's really like my home is not broken just because they don't, we don't both live under the same roof.

RESPONDENT: Right my goodness.

MODERATOR: Yes, well thank you so, so, so much and I told…

Dana 1
MODERATOR: So tell me about your personal educational experience. So you can start in grade school, you can start in middle school wherever you feel comfortable and whatever you feel comfortable sharing.

RESPONDENT: In elementary school I went to this I want to say it was more it was all like really like the same kinds of people. It was just like really it was like and middle class kind of thing. And I feel like the -- I enjoyed it. I felt like the teachers were very like -- there was definitely some teachers however I didn't feel like they cared about like what I was doing. In middle school I went to a school where they like bused like people in to kind of like desegregate parts of…

MODERATOR: Were you here in Denver?

RESPONDENT: No I was in Reno, Nevada.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: And it was like a really diverse cool middle school and I had really awesome teachers there and then in high school I loved high school. I went to a brand new high school my freshman year. The high school everything was like really, really new. It was super disorganized. And then my parents switched me to like a different high school that had been like more established because my freshman year of high school

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was kind of crazy but I still liked it. I never had like a negative attitude towards school. I remember just my fourth grade teacher was someone in particular that I remember like I didn't mesh well with and don't have good memories of that. But other than that like everything was a really good experience. I always liked school. All through college I always enjoyed it and did well.

MODERATOR: Do you remember any of your other teachers as well as you remember the one that you had the bad experience with?

RESPONDENT: I do yes my favorite teacher was in third grade and he was like just really like free spirit. He was definitely like a hippie like he like had like pictures of like kind of like Woodstock kind of thing. And after lunch everyday we'd all have pillows we'd sit on the carpet and he plays guitar and he'd light a candle and we would sing like Puff the Magic Dragon. I remember that so yes. It was just like really peaceful and calm and just everything was all about like there was never anything about like shaping like how smart you are but it was all about just like developing like I remember it was like who are you, what kind of person are you. And so I like try to really do that like in here. Like I remember him like Mr. Rinop (ph) he like stands out in my mind.

MODERATOR: Do you know what he's doing now?

RESPONDENT: I don't, I don't know he was older back then but I know he's not at that school anymore because I have some friends that teach at that school back in Reno now. So I don't know I'd like to look him up. I found my favorite high school teacher on Face Book and he was awesome too.

MODERATOR: I have a lot of friends of my, you know, my Face Book friends that I taught in sixth grade and they're like lawyers and I mean they're grownups.

RESPONDENT: That's so cool.

MODERATOR: It's so neat I mean I have Face Book mainly for that but, you know, you have these little ones but eventually they'll be adults and it's really cool.

RESPONDENT: Be able to see like what they're doing. Yes I know that would be really cool.

MODERATOR: Because that's different now. I mean you figure back in the day they never kind of knew what anyone was doing there was no way to really know.

RESPONDENT: I know I had a mom the other day like give me like a book she wanted me to sign that she was going to give to her daughter on her high school graduation. And I wrote in the note like please come find me.

MODERATOR: Gosh what an organized mom.

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RESPONDENT: I know.

MODERATOR: That she's already thinking about that.

RESPONDENT: I know I thought that was awesome and she said she saw it on Pinterest.

MODERATOR: That is neat. Yes. So go ahead you can eat. I am curious how I guess the part that's really interesting for me and, you know, talking to teachers is how did you always know you wanted to be a teacher or did you decide, you know, while you were in college that you wanted to be a teacher? How did that come to be?

RESPONDENT: So I have two younger siblings that when I was 12 and 15 they were born. And so I always babysat them and they were like the loves of my life and I ended up as soon as they started going to a daycare I got a job at their daycare when I was 16. And I loved that I just did like the 5 year old stuff. So we did like kind of like little lessons and I loved doing that and I always nannied and I would do summer camps. All through college my under grad I worked for like this autism program and did that. When I started college I went to Las Vegas and I did like their interior autism program. I knew I wanted to be a teacher but my dad was like no you need do something that makes more money, you need to be more successful and like always drilled that in my head. So I like never even considered doing it even though I loved it. I loved kids during my whole time I was like working for that autism program and I nannied. But it wasn't until my second year my sophomore year when I had already taken a bunch of like architecture classes and I was so unhappy. And finally I think my dad was kind of like you just need to do something that makes you happy so I switched into education.

MODERATOR: Yes that's a big switch, that's totally different classes.

RESPONDENT: Yes so then it took me 5-1/2 years to graduate.

MODERATOR: So you kind of always knew you just kind of didn't follow it and then…

RESPONDENT: Yes I wanted to and I was trying something else and it just like wasn't it was like this doesn't feel right. And I would like go and work for like someone the interior architects like during internships and I was like you guys are being miserable. And I grew up like just going to like part of like my high school we had a program where you could go into a school and do like a reading buddies program. I did that. I was always like involved with kids somehow. So I mean I did I always -- I don't know if like as young as I was if I always wanted to be a teacher. I don't know if I was one of those kinds of students but I think that my family like having my like younger siblings is kind of what helped like shape that like love for kids and learning.

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MODERATOR: So tell me about your -- the university experience of teacher ed because that's kind of my area as teacher education and teacher support and what does that look like even in my -- I mean I'm a principal but I, you know, I also do things with the university. So what do you find most useful because, you know, university work to me even when I went through my admin program was very much theory.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: And there's a lot in practical application that we do when we're actually in a school. So this is all really interesting.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: But what do you find the most useful from the university? Do you like the research part and the theory part or?

RESPONDENT: I do. So I have a unique experience because so back in Reno so I was in Vegas and then when I switched and moved back up to Reno and to UNR. So I was doing their education program but it was going to take me -- it's a long story but pretty much I couldn't. I had to like double I have to major in psychology and minor in education. And I could have gone longer and started my major in education but it would have taken me just as long to graduate and then get my master's in education. So I was like I'll do a grad program for education. So psychology with a minor in special ed. It's really complicated. And then I was looking for grad programs in maybe like in Reno but then I just looked all around like the country and I knew that like maybe I wanted to move and I found DTR here, Denver Teacher Residency and so I did that [0:01:44]. And so I did like back in Reno it was more like traditional kind of more theoretical base where I did a couple practicum's but it was only like six weeks long where it was like an hour or something two times a week versus here at DTR I spent my whole year at school with a teacher the whole entire year. And they have like a progression of like how much responsibility you take on. So it was so much implementation of everything I was learning through the program and immediately applying it the next day in class or in my class. So I like all the theoretical part of it. It's kind of what grounds me every day. [0:02:32], you know, learn best and they need to be in like a calm environment or based on like some of the stuff I like learned. So it's good for me to kind of like reflect on that and be okay go back to like what everything was like built on and so that's like what helps. But I don't know if I would have felt as like confident and prepared if I hadn't gone through a program that requires so much work in the classroom every day.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: So I had like it combined.

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MODERATOR: So you had that program that you were navigating and then you also had like district PD right? District professional development. Did you have that simultaneously like the building stuff?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: Yes I was required to do all that stuff.

MODERATOR: So that's a lot in addition to…

RESPONDENT: Yes I would have had to do…

CROSSTALK

MODERATOR: …how do you feel about those opportunities? I know that I mean you gave a little information about your university experience but and I worked for Denver for 10 years before I went to Adams. So how do you feel about those professional development opportunities at the building?

RESPONDENT: I thought that that was huge. I mean I learned so much from it and I think like we were really prepared to go to like every meeting and I learned so much just about like planning and data and like standards and different kinds of curriculum and our teacher effectiveness frameworks and all the kind of technology parts of everything like implementing grades and putting things in and putting campus like behavior stuff. I learned so much of that because I was required to go to all the meetings and then even where I went to a professional development for guided reading plus and I learned so much just from that. And which made me -- I'm doing the actual class this year just finishing up.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: Or I guess I'm done with my first year of it but it just there was so much that I think that that stuff is important because it's like this is what you're required to do like even someone -- I was required to like go to everything I just still didn't even know like how much [0:04:53] as a teacher. Like I didn't have to stay after school every day and do tons of planning and I was like I have my one lesson I have to do and I would just plan that. And then I mean there were some times where I had to teach for like three weeks in a row but I mean it still wasn't like every day. I don't think that there's anything really that can prepare you as just jumping in.

MODERATOR: Right, it is it's a lot in your first year that you have to do. So not everyone always thinks about all the different PD because they typically think about the one [0:05:28] professional learning community here? Like PLC or a data team or they

call them different things and it depends on how they're structured but do you meet with your team regularly?

RESPONDENT: It's just ILT and maybe I -- this is just my first year here so I'm not sure and I just joined ILT like because it's my first year of teaching. And then I was like I am interested in like joining it so we just joined like a couple weeks before you -- Jamie and I and then and other teachers.

MODERATOR: Okay that's the instructional leadership team?

RESPONDENT: Yes where we had like a book study. But I mean within like our team we don't -- are you saying like…

MODERATOR: You don't have like designated scheduled time to meet?

RESPONDENT: …we do every Wednesday, every other Wednesday at 7:00.

MODERATOR: Okay and what do you call those meetings?

RESPONDENT: ILT.

MODERATOR: Those are too?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: Or do you just meet with the group that I saw you with?

RESPONDENT: That's ILT.

MODERATOR: Okay all right because I know last year here grade levels met. It was like first was on Monday, second was on Tuesday.

RESPONDENT: Sorry yes, that's our grade level planning we do.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: So yes we do that every Wednesday. No, sorry.

MODERATOR: Okay but it's plan time but it's not like a formal kind of guided time?

REPSONDENT: They're trying to make it more formalized. So we do have like a set schedule that we have to like follow and like everything that we do during that time. So like we'll bring like our data with us.

MODERATOR: Do you -- see when it's sort of carved out like that and there's certain things that you do and you're supposed to be there at a certain time then that's kind of part of a professional development plan. Do you find that time useful?

RESPONDENT: I do.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: Yes I really do.

MODERATOR: Do you find it more useful when it's more managed or when it's loose and you guys get to kind of…

RESPONDENT: More managed.

MODERATOR: …more managed.

RESPONDENT: Yes, yes. I would say that it's just like it is useful. I think that it depends like there's more success like on probably like different it depends on like the team.

MODERATOR: Yes.

RESPONDENT: So the ones that will probably follow like the protocol like really closely with like a timer and make sure that they come like prepared for everything. I think that time is really useful and like I really love my team like they're great but I would say that a lot of times [0:07:58]. Sometimes it's like better than others but we were just talking about today like how do I tidy it up for next year and I'm excited about it.

MODERATOR: Yes.

RESPONDENT: So I think like coming prepared like everything already presorted, coming prepared with all resources you could just focus together and bounce ideas off of each other like on how to like just like focus on the standard like how you're going to meet it, have everything already ready lesson plan.

MODERATOR: Who -- does anyone facilitate that?

RESPONDENT: The teacher leader and I'm actually not like the first grade teacher leader it's a cooleague on who is on ILT. I just joined just because I wanted to be a part of it. So she facilitates it but I would say that it kind of feels like everyone kind of has a voice during that time.

MODERATOR: That's good.

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RESPONDENT: And then also you have kind of the -- do you guys do instructional rounds or where you observe each other?

MODERATOR: No but I wish we did.

RESPONDENT: I really, really wish we did.

MODERATOR: Because that, you know, in my building that's just a really huge source of professional development is instructional rounds and observing each other and giving each other feedback.

RESPONDENT: It's amazing. I think that everyone could become [0:09:12].

MODERATOR: Yes see and that's what we do we go through the different [0:09:17]. We use the state one but it's, you know, similar.

RESPONDENT: Some of the things similar yes. No we don't do that but I would love that idea. So and but I mean we're coming from a program where that's like all we ever did was get observed and observe each other and script and put it into categories, find evidence.

MODERATOR: Yes and some of the teachers that have been here for a really long time are used to that they didn't have that in their program.

RESPONDENT: Yes so and I would feel uncomfortable like observing them and trying to give them feedback.

MODERATOR: Well there are some -- there's Elizabeth City's (ph) work is very well known for instructional rounds and there's protocol's for that. So that it's really like what I saw, heard and noticed so it's not evaluative in any way.

RESPONDENT: Right.

MODERATOR: You don't actually score them. There's like a process but if you're interested it's Elizabeth City. She's I believe -- she does a lot of stuff with Stanford University and Harvard. But her work is very it, you know, it comes from medical rounds is how it took place and how that's how they're -- that's how they learn.

RESPONDENT: [0:10:17]. This would be so helpful.

MODERATOR: Yes, what about feedback because I know in this district, you guys well not as much I just heard because there used to be teacher effectiveness coaches and then there were peer observers which were two different functions.

RESPONDENT: Yes right.

MODERATOR: So I guess you don't have teacher effectiveness coaches anymore you just have peer observers?

RESPONDENT: No but I feel like my [0:10:49].

MODERATOR: No but she kind of explained what it was.

RESPONDENT: I feel like that is like my teacher effectiveness coach like I mean she LEAP's me she is a teacher here at the school. She's out on maternity leave right now. [0:11:02] the instructional leadership team too she's just not here. Actually she probably was here when you came by but I feel like she has done I mean her job is really just too like observe and then take notes and then present like evidence and then score you. But I think for people that want more out of her like she'll do anything that you really want. So she's -- her and I plan together, kind of we co-taught.

MODERATOR: And you feel like that's helpful her being here in the school?

RESPONDENT: It's huge, my gosh it was huge.

MODERATOR: Because peer observers are outside of the building.

RESPONDENT: Right.

MODERATOR: You do have those also?

RESPONDENT: Yes but I had a really good relationship with my peer observer.

MODERATOR: Okay that's good.

RESPONDENT: She's met with me like so many other -- I saw her way more than the two times that I saw her all the time. So she was always -- she tried really hard to like build a relationship with all of us though. She has like six teachers here and we all love her.

MODERATOR: That's good.

RESPONDENT: She was great, she really was great and she will come and do informal's and then kind of co-teach a little bit too and provide resources and just so I feel like…

MODERATOR: Wow that's good.

RESPONDENT: …for me everything has been really positive but I think it's because I don't know if I would feel differently is I was like more of a veteran teacher. I'm just new and I'm just like so excited to like learn…

MODERATOR: Yes.

RESPONDENT: …everything I can and I just want to like continue getting better.

MODERATOR: Yes and it's really, you know, there's teachers I have one of my most veteran teachers in my building is always the one that wants to learn all the time.

RESPONDENT: Right.

MODERATOR: Then I have others that are like why are you in here.

RESPONDENT: Yes sorry that's kind of like me like stereotyping all the veteran teachers that they're like not…

MODERATOR: Well no it just depends I think on just learners in general.

RESPONDENT: Yes growth mindset.

MODERATOR: Yes.

RESPONDENT: Yes so and I mean like my peer or my differentiated role, she's going to teach forever and she's so like that too and the teacher leader for first grade has been a teacher for like four or five years and she's like I mean like she listens to like my feedback I have or ideas all the time and does them in her classroom when I wasn't expecting that at all because I'm like this is my first year no one is probably going to listen to me. But I feel like I have like some influence here which is nice.

MODERATOR: That's good yes I mean that's really everybody has areas of strength, you know, to share with each other.

RESPONDENT: Right yes.

MODERATOR: And in teams it's really great if you guys are a good balance like if someone is really good with, you know, community relationships and someone else is really good at organization and, you know, collaborative structures for teaching. Because then you just become really good at all of those things together which is great.

RESPONDENT: Right, right.

MODERATOR: Yes, how about administration feedback. I mean as a principal I, you know, I wonder that too because when I walk in it always feels different and I hate that

because I went from a coach to that. So and when you're a coach people are very receptive and open and, you know, they share like I'm struggling with this but then when it's your supervisor though opts in it's different. So how do you feel about that since I can't ask my own teachers that I'm just interested how do you feel about the admin feedback?

RESPONDENT: I like feel good about the admin feedback too. I feel like it's more of like a discussion and like they know like all the kids so well that, you know, I have there's four that are on behavior plans and like throwing stuff in here and that's happening like while I'm teaching pretty much like every day. So maybe you'll see some of that in a little bit. But I feel like it's been fine. I only feel like there's been a couple of times where like the feedback has kind of been like a little bit like where is that coming from I thought I did that but then like I talked to them about it and then we fixed it.

MODERATOR: Yes and that's fine they don't, this isn't part of what they get.

RESPONDENT: Okay. Yes there's just been like a few times I would say where it's I don't know and I think it was because it was like during the time of year it was really stressful with like having my grade teachers and I just it was really only like one time that I had like a negative kind of experience with it but then like we talked about it and everything was fine. So I think everything has been like really positive and like I've always, she always [my principal] always has like me identify my steps and what I want to get better at and she's given me supports.

MODERATOR: Yes do you feel like your administration and so your principal is your supervisor or I mean your direct…

RESPONDENT: The principal.

MODERATOR: …yes is she the one that evaluates…

RESPONDENT: We switch…the assistant principal was at first. So everyone had like half and half and then the other half of the year they switch. So you're not with the same person like all year which is good because I got like really different feedback from both of them.

MODERATOR: Okay but do you feel like your administration is or instructional leaders like their instruction is their expertise?

RESPONDENT: I think that I mean I'm not really -- I don't really think I can answer that. I think that I'm not really sure. I ask for like ideas and I get ideas. I don't know I wouldn't say like yes but I wouldn't say yes that is the case but maybe I just don't know.

MODERATOR: Yes is that important to you like do you think that a principal should be an instructional leader? Should they really know classroom instruction, you know,

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because they come from different areas. I mean I have -- I know principals that taught for like two years and then they were only a Dean you know what I mean. So they don't really know instruction at all that's just kind of not an area.

RESPONDENT: I think it is important but I also think like being able to manage and get everything done and feel supported with other things is important. So I haven't really like noticed that as something that's like a huge like thing that's missing. She's done like a lot of stuff that's given me like ideas, great ideas but I think that there's other supports in the building that are for that purpose that like for like my differentiated role as coach is a huge like she's amazing. I've gotten so many ideas from her that I've never felt like that missing piece this year.

MODERATOR: I observed your principal as a teacher.

RESPONDENT: You did?

MODERATOR: Which is interesting. Way back when she was a teacher.

RESPONDENT: How funny.

MODERATOR: I was an instructional coach and we did all the coaches went to like different schools over the course of the year. So I actually have observed her when she was a teacher.

RESPONDENT: How funny.

MODERATOR: I know isn't that funny?

RESPONDENT: That's crazy.

MODERATOR: Yes. So anyway that's how I kind of met her is through that.

RESPONDENT: Through that.

MODERATOR: Right and then when I just submitted -- your IRB department in the district you can submit kind of what you want to do and principals can say that's what I would like to have that, you know, somebody study that in my building. And for the principal it was, she wanted to know more about professional development and what it was like in the building. So I was like -- and then when I saw her I went I remember watching her teach.

RESPONDENT: How funny.

MODERATOR: Isn't that funny?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: So education is very small so yes. Well I want to honor your time because I'll be here again and yes so really what I want to get a little -- so start thinking about this because the narrative inquiry method is really conversation. It's not like here is a bunch of questions it's kind of more like tell me more about what you see or perceive or what you, you know, feel like is important. Be thinking professional development like what have been your opportunities, what did you learn the most from, what things have you implemented that you feel like came directly from that. So it's really like kind of the narrative piece.

RESPONDENT: Just here at school?

MODERATOR: No they can be outside because really what my area is and in fact I'm speaking at CEA, Colorado Education Association which principals rarely ever even get invited there but I'm actually speaking there over the summer during their summer conference because of the collaborative piece…

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RESPONDENT: No but I mean the peer that I have is, I used to have I think it was just for me but she quit so.

MODERATOR: And they didn't re-hire that job? Was it too late in the year or they just kind of…

RESPONDENT: I guess so. For a little while it was okay but she was so horrible that I was like hoping that she like wouldn't come. It was so bad and then she like wasn't here so I didn't want to complain because I was like complaining when she was here.

MODERATOR: Yes.

RESPONDENT: And then I was like my gosh I got like four more kids because I only had like 24, 25 and then I got 29. Yes it's been…

MODERATOR: Yes it is I was guilty too in Denver the year that I started in this district is the year they piloted the [0:01:10] pushin (ph) thing and so I got midyear four kids who were like barely verbal in a regular class in eighth grade. And I had a SpEd (ph) teacher. I literally was like you just go because it was worse. I was like you can go do whatever you want to do if you want coffee or just go ahead and go.

RESPONDENT: Yes it's too much sometimes and there are too many people.

MODERATOR: Or they're talking while you're talking and then the kids are all task and yes I know. I struggled with that too. Now I know that there's a much better way but there's a lot of communication and planning that has to take place.

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RESPONDENT: Yes totally.

MODERATOR: Yes and a lot of kind of [0:01:51] I mean but okay so we talked a little bit like your background, your experience with professional development, you know, some of it's district mandated those kind of things. What would you say is really kind of the least helpful professional development which can be grad school, it can be, you know, instructional rounds, it can be data time or planning time. What's kind of or what makes, what's the least effective and then kind of what makes it least effective?

RESPONDENT: The literacy PD that like we're all required to go to in the summers, I went to last summer.

MODERATOR: Is it letters or what one are they doing now?

RESPONDENT: No it was just like it was supposed to be like introducing like genre study to the whole district. I just feel like I mean like huge like district wide PD's are I just feel like for me those are the least effective. They're so big they're really not engaging.

MODERATOR: Are they still at the convention center is that where you have them?

RESPONDENT: Yes, where did we have it? We had it at like some kind of big stadium center or something I don't remember where it was. But or like I've gone to like I went to a PD last summer before I went to I did like summer school and it was like introducing our curriculum. I just feel like a lot of those huge like mass quantities of people kind of things are just really they don't get, you don't get to like dig deep into it because it's only like a couple days long and there are so many people in the classroom. And so those I didn't really get anything out of that at all and you got to like choose your classes like which breakout sessions you wanted to go to. And those were good because I think there was like choice was involved like you're more like motivated to like go to like -- you had to choose out of like 50 classes, breakout sessions what you want to go to. And then smaller class sizes.

MODERATOR: Who taught those?

RESPONDENT: Tons they're like teachers that were teaching them.

MODERATOR: The whole group one or just the breakout sessions?

RESPONDENT: The breakout sessions and then the whole group ones were I mean they weren't whole group they're just really big groups in the classroom.

MODERATOR: Yes, yes.

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RESPONDENT: And then breakout sessions were really small. There were some teachers that were teaching like the whole group ones but I think just anything that's a PD I think that's just so big and like so broad and like mandated and required are just the least effective or just like the least engaging therefore I learn the least. I think it's the same like when you're in college and you have to take like your core classes, you know, they're huge and like required for like all of that stuff.

MODERATOR: Hey how are you?

WOMAN: Good how are you?

MODERATOR: Good.

RESPONDENT: Thank you.

WOMAN: You're welcome.

MODERATOR: So mainly like just mandated whole group type are…

RESPONDENT: Yes because I think like on the contrary when I think of like PD that I love to go to like it's been all like a choice like things like there was a PD we had here at Samuels like that was like we were all, we all could do it and it was just like around data. I know it was just I don't really want to do that and then but it's like nice when you have choices on like what to go to.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: Or just like small group kind of things like our planning and stuff. I don't know if that's even considered.

MODERATOR: Yes it is, it's a forum because anytime you collaborate with other people you learn from other people. So yes.

RESPONDENT: Yes I think -- and I do enjoy that a lot I just think that the more structure that it is then the better.

MODERATOR: How many do you like just if you could probably even just like a percentage of any of those PD's that you go to and you can include grad school if you want. What percentage do you feel like you leave having structures that they modeled or modeling what they're asking you to do? What percentage would you say that was when you leave like that you have an actual like a collaborative structure or a small group structure, something that you can apply right away?

RESPONDENT: With kids in the classroom?

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MODERATOR: Yes to take away from…

RESPONDENT: I mean I think from my grad school experience was amazing. I would say 100% of everything I did in DTR is applied in the classroom immediately. Like you just have to jump right in and literally you're learning something the day before and the next day you go apply it and everything was I just felt really effective. I felt really confident and I still do or I'm like I don't really feel like it's my first year I feel like I haven't really struggled that much as much as like my friends told me that I would.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: But I think for like PD I don't know and I'm also in guided reading class and that's like amazing and…

MODERATOR: And it's really like you can apply it right away?

RESPONDENT: …yes my gosh immediately. I always like brought like a lesson plan with me and a book so that like after class if we were learning about some kind of new word work strategy I'd like put it in my lesson plan right away and use it with kids the next day. So but I mean I was passionate about it because I like wanted to like work with struggling readers and I wanted to like keep going to classes and learning. And but then I think of like other kinds of PD's what else have I done. I've sat through PD's and been on my computer and have not listened to a single thing. PD's or PDU's they're just…

MODERATOR: PD or PDU's I know PD yes I mean when I was an instructional coach I always used to have, try to get PDU's for people so they could, you know, increase their base salary.

RESPONDENT: Right I just feel like it's such a wide range like you can just your principal can be like next week have PD all next week and it's just about things we're doing next year.

MODERATOR: So the kids are gone on Friday and then you're here for another week after?

RESPONDENT: Or be at home because they're just like knocking everything out like as soon as we leave. So we're going to be at home like discussing the next year, we're going to be actually doing -- we have a ton of set time planned like we have planned time for planning next week.

MODERATOR: Good.

RESPONDENT: So I think that that's really helpful but I mean I'm sure that there is going to be things that are just like around like new curriculum or new things we're going

to be doing that are -- I feel like it's more of just like you sit and listen kind of thing but I mean those things are necessary.

MODERATOR: Right. Do you prefer when presenter's incorporate structure that you can use in a classroom like Kagan structures or, you know, that kind of stuff in when they're doing it or is it because I know giving PD for so many years like some people are like I don't want to do this. And some are like I love this because I can apply it so what do you think about that?

RESPONDENT: I don't mind it at all I know that there's always like -- it's uncomfortable because you have those people in your group that are like and they're like isn't this horrible and you're like well it's not that bad but I don't mind it. I feel like the same way like it's like when you're doing it like you have to -- I'm one that has to learn by doing. And I can learn by listening but I'll probably forget so like doing a jigsaw like myself or like remind me like I can do some kind of jigsawish kind of thing with my kids or something but first grade but there's tons of strategies I feel like I've learned by doing. So I think it's like half and half there's always like you're in a group of four and do a number like negative Nancy's. So I don't mind it.

MODERATOR: Yes and yes I always wonder if you already go and you just are like I'm not I just don't want to do this how much you get out of it probably I guess not much.

RESPONDENT: I know I think it's like all comes down to just like what connections you have to the PD and unless like or even like once like sometimes I have to try really hard to like take some notes like you're here.

MODERATOR: To learn something.

RESPONDENT: Try to figure out…

MODERATOR: And then it ends up in a stack somewhere that you like when you're cleaning stuff out you're like I forgot about this right?

RESPONDENT: Yes, yes so.

MODERATOR: I was reading something recently I was going to say I was thinking of you because like you I used to like teach to my stuffed animals and I would like make all the kids and, you know, in our cul-de-sac and do school and stuff, you know. It was a Gallup, it's a Gallup study and they actually one of the predictors for how good of a teacher will be is how young they were when they decided or thought that's what I want to do.

RESPONDENT: Really.

MODERATOR: And I thought that's so interesting because I just talked to you about that and that it is that's a predictor of the effectiveness for a teacher.

RESPONDENT: Interesting.

MODERATOR: Is like when -- like there's a higher correlation to being a really effective teacher when you knew, you know, young versus going into it later. There's just a much bigger correlation which I thought that's cool.

RESPONDENT: That's so interesting.

MODERATOR: Yes but I just came across that and I thought we were just talking about that.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: So yes anyway I just thought that's interesting. So a lot of kids know.

RESPONDENT: I mean it makes sense though yes.

MODERATOR: Yes you just kind of know.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: What about your CLDL's here like those culturally and linguistically diverse learners here in the building? Do you feel like you, do you feel like it's like front and center with DPS and sort of like what they're doing in the professional development opportunities that they offer or any of those mandated kind of things curriculum. Any of it does it tie do you think to that population at all or do you…

RESPONDENT: I'm not really sure because I'm not like aware. I mean I'm not aware of too many opportunities for that. I feel like there's a lot of opportunities for like any ELS students but there are so many kids in my classroom that need so much more support. I have kids that are not even English language learners that have worse vocabulary and grammar than my students that get pull out ESL. Like they talk, their English is so perfect and I have Shadiman (ph) who doesn't -- she can't hear like that the diagraph and everything is dis, dat, day, don't like and just the way that she talks is like she needs that English language development. But anyway sorry going off on a tangent. I don't really know I haven't heard of any opportunities for that.

MODERATOR: Because cultural here is different so like you were talking about ELS well that's a culture but you're really impacted by a lot of different cultures and really Farsi is a big one here which does I mean when I was in Denver we didn't address it.

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RESPONDENT: Yes I know it's really like not -- I have this amazing student from India and his mom is an amazing volunteer so she's here all the time helping me. And she was asking, you know, about the classes that they offer and if she is able to like opt in if he can like take the classes and, you know, he's not allowed to. And she was like they offer a lot of support for just Spanish speakers and she was like it's not really fair. I'm like it's not fair I mean that's just the majority that we have to like do. So we can make a difference with that big group.

MODERATOR: You have a lot of Farsi speaking though too don't you?

RESPONDENT: I don't have any in my class but I know that there are.

MODERATOR: Yes just when I was looking at like your school demographics it looked…

RESPONDENT: I don't have any in here but I know other classes have quite a few so.

MODERATOR: …interesting. So when people present do you feel like who are the people that you appreciate presenting most? Is it your peers, is it like instructional coaches? Do you feel like it's, you know, people that sort of do that for a living even vendors people like that. I mean who do you feel like you get the most from?

RESPONDENT: I think when I'm like going to a PD and it's something around like I'm thinking of like breakout sessions where I was in this like it was for like a pre-A intervention kind of class. So it's like a breakout thing. And it was a teacher and she just was so knowledgeable about -- there was just a million different kinds of questions that everyone in the classroom asked like what about this and this and just I think a teacher has so much more, not more experience but they just are front and center like in the battleground where they -- I just feel like you connect more with them. So I think probably a peer but also like, you know, recently I went to something here where it was another teacher presenting and it wasn't like it was just things weren't very structured and things like because we're just, you know, we're peers so it went off like we're like kind of going what's it called like bird walking where you're just going off on tangents the whole time and not like sticking to a schedule. So I mean I think that there is like pros and cons to any of them but personally I do like it when it's a peer that or another fellow teacher just because I feel like they understand like the -- sometimes, you know, a presenter can come and just be like this is what you're doing, this is the curriculum and not have like any empathy for like how is this going to address, like how are we going to support like this group of students and this group of students. Whereas a teacher could maybe frontload that before and then already give strategies and like this is what I'm doing so.

MODERATOR: Yes, is there anything that you would say like being a new teacher because, you know, we have a lot of new teachers that leave the profession. What do you think would have been or could be more supportive for new teachers that maybe isn't

addressed? Like you had the DTR program which not everybody has and so if you just went to a university somewhere, did a little bit of student teaching, taught your lessons, came in and now you're a new teacher you didn't have that hands on. What could administrators do different to make sure that they're supported?

RESPONDENT: I think maybe like more co-teaching. I think like the biggest challenge I mean I think it's all like behavior management. That's like really the only thing I kind of just focused on this year was just making sure that I have them under control. So I think that and I just know that that's like a big reason of why teachers leave. I have a couple friends that are in DTR that left this year because of that same reason because of like behavior management. So I think like more opportunities for that and I think like more co-teaching, more observations like more observations of the principal with like I had at the beginning of the year our differentiated roles coach. I think so one of the other teachers here came into observe me but it was for our behavior management thing because it was just the beginning of the year but she didn't go through DTR. And she was having a hard time with her classroom so our DR took here in here and they observed me together. And I mean she said it was really powerful like she got a lot of good strategies. So doing like not just observing like by yourself but with someone who is facilitating what you're seeing. And we do that in DTR a lot.

MODERATOR: Like instructional rounds kind of thing?

RESPONDENT: Yes with a couple…

MODERATOR: Or a learning lab or something?

RESPONDENT: …yes and you'd have a note catcher like things specifically you're looking for like go in like debrief. So it was like a really structured observation where you're doing it with like a team.

MODERATOR: What did you think you learned more from the classrooms or did they only pick really fabulous teachers because sometimes when you do those kinds of rounds you kind of see what you don't want to do.

RESPONDENT: I just did rounds at my school I was at. So I saw all different teachers.

MODERATOR: All different ones. Which one do you think there is value in both seeing someone who is like not as strong or only seeing strong? What did you say did you learn from both?

RESPONDENT: I did but that was like never discussed because you're always just supposed to just capture the positive just so it's not like a bashing kind of thing on like what would you have done otherwise like no one wants to offer their classroom up.

MODERATOR: Right if it's sort of…

RESPONDENT: So but I think like I would see that and be oh man okay like in my head I'd be like how could -- this is going to happen in my classroom next year like what could I have done.

MODERATOR: …or what could I do different kind of thing yes.

RESPONDENT: And I think we just through the program there was so much self-observation. So we had got like a little camera thing that would record us and we got an iPod and we had to record ourselves and go after and score ourselves and we'd score with other people and look at ourselves.

MODERATOR: And that was helpful?

RESPONDENT: We had to do that a lot yes. And then we do it with each other like peer-to-peer so I would score my peers. So I just think like the biggest thing is like being able to observe. I was lucky through DTR at the end of the program I went and observed it's like a case-by-case basis but I just asked if I could go. I was like this is my last opportunity can I go like do a whole week of observations like morning one school, afternoon a different school. But I mean they let us do that all year and we even like spend two weeks in another classroom in another school for a little bit with a different teacher. So I think just observing and scoring and reflecting and then learning from it and applying it like the whole circle. That was the most effective. I think that's the best part of my grad school experience.

MODERATOR: Okay good, interesting. I so, so appreciate your time. I can't even tell you how much I really appreciate it I think it's really super important for…

Mia 1
RESPONDENT: That's impressive.

MODERATOR: Okay so just tell me about your own personal education experience whatever you want to share.

RESPONDENT: I was always pretty good in school growing up. I liked to read a lot. I like math too until my third grade teacher told me I wasn't good at math and then I didn't like math anymore, which is funny because I'm a math teacher now. But I went through high school and then I went to Indiana University and got my Bachelor's in education. So I did a dual certificate program so I'm certified for elementary education and special education.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: And now I am in grad school. I've got one year left and I'm getting my Master's in special education with a CLDL or ELA (ph) or culturally linguistically

diverse -- you have to throw it away in the cafeteria though. You're not eating that sandwich?

STUDENT: It don't taste good.

RESPONDENT: Not even the meat you're not going to pick the meat off. You're going to be hungry later. Okay, you have to throw that away in the cafeteria otherwise it will stink in the trash can. But if you want to go out to recess you totally can or if you want to come back in here and hang out that's fine too. Okay I'll let you get on the computers if you want. Sorry.

MODERATOR: That's okay.

RESPONDENT: Yes so culturally and linguistically diverse education is second with the endorsement.

MODERATOR: Where are you going?

RESPONDENT: UCD.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: So I'm finished for this semester but I've got three summer classes coming up.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: So it will be a busy summer but I'm not working so it will be hopefully manageable.

MODERATOR: Yes.

RESPONDENT: And I've always like school, you know, like I hope to get a PhD one day myself like that's the, you know, ultimate goal or maybe I thought about maybe the Ritchie (ph) program but I don't think I'm done after this.

MODERATOR: Right. So I think this really is really the purpose of this is really to put some context to kind of your professional development in general because, you know, school wide we kind of got some feedback around professional development. How do you like so far I know you've been in school and your grad classes are I mean you do a lot of theory, you do a lot of ground yourself in research that kind of thing. What do you find most useful in your university course work first?

RESPONDENT: The most useful class I found so far was one I took this past semester and what was it called, foundations in language, literacy and culture. And so each week

we would learn about a new cultural group and their history and their perspective on basically the American experience. And the cumulating project was to do a biography of a bilingual adult. So I interviewed and spent a lot of time with one of our peer professionals our Arabic tutor and that was really useful. It just, it gave me more of a lens in which to view my students because this s is a very diverse school. And just knowing some of the history of these different cultural groups and it just kind of put things into perspective like oh I can kind of see why this might be a stereotype for this or this might, you know, come across in a particular way or I think I see why I offended this family now and I never understood before. So that has been the most useful class I think I've taken so far to me. I did take one in the summer cognition and instruction which talked a lot about how memory works and how the brain learns to do things and we learned a lot about like schema and how that impacts learning. So that was a really good course and we tied it in with a bunch of disabilities like dyslexia like how the brain looks different there. And so that was, those were probably the best ones that I've taken at the university.

MODERATOR: They sound really interesting.

RESPONDENT: They were and they both had really good professors.

MODERATOR: What about professional development? I worked for Denver public schools for ten years.

RESPONDENT: You can get on the computers if you'd like.

MODERATOR: I know some of what they do professional development wise. What do you find most useful?

RESPONDENT: When I have professional development that comes at this school level I find it most useful when there is a little bit of that like that theory piece but mostly like how am I going to implement this in my actual classroom. How does it look in classrooms across America like maybe there's a little bit of that for some context but when I actually have time to work or plan or to bounce ideas off of my teammates and actually plan something to use like immediately or, you know, within the next month or so.

MODERATOR: How is it usually mostly disseminated would you say? Is it in that kind of method or what kinds of professional development do you use here like do you do professional learning communities, do you do instructional rounds, do you like what are -- what kind do you do here or opportunities do you have?

RESPONDENT: I mean I've taken, you know, I'm required to take all of the ELA classes and two of them were through UCD and they counted kind of as dual credits for the program and for my endorsement. But I mean those, all of the ELA classes that I've taken through the district have been they're very, very similar and it's like it's almost like

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I could reuse the same product over and over and over again even though they're supposed to be totally different classes. And they talk a lot about the WiDA (ph) standards which is great but I mean I've already been using those to kind of drive my instruction especially with, you know, in this population so it's kind of just a lot of sit and get like read this article and regurgitate and they have these projects like, you know, study these kids but it's always the same outcome. You know, I think I studied this little girl for two semesters for two different classes basically doing the same things but it wasn't anything that I wasn't already doing. I just had it seemed like another hoop to jump through instead of like actually learning something. So it's more just like prove that you're doing this instead of okay you're doing this, this is what the next step is and what you could be doing to make that better. Does that make sense?

MODERATOR: Yes it does. Do you have opportunities here to do any kind of peer feedback? I know in Denver you guys have peer observations and those sort of things but do you do instructional rounds with each other here?

RESPONDENT: Yes so my teammate is one of our differentiated well both my teammates are differentiated roles. That's why I have the split classes the way that I do because I do half time teaching half time coaching.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: And so that's funny because when you say professional development that's what I think of as like sitting in the class and like listening and I wasn't even thinking about that as a form of professional development even though I mean it is but that has been really, really helpful. My differentiated role peer has come in bi-weekly to, you know, she'll do an informal and I'll get feedback and then she'll do a scored observation and then I'll get feedback and that's good. Especially since we share kids so she knows them even a little bit better than she would for other teachers. I've gotten a lot of good suggestions and feedback from her and from my, the peer observer through the teacher effectiveness frameworks program. My principal does observations like that as well. So the feedback that I've gotten here has been really useful. I mean at my old district I had to write my own evaluation in the third person because there was no one coming in and came in at the minimum amount of times that they had to and said good job and that was about it. So this is new to me this year in the district and it's been really, I've really enjoyed it.

MODERATOR: So in this district they have the two different groups. So they have, you know, your peer observer and they have teacher effectiveness coaches. Is it still separate like that now because I've been out of there for two years?

RESPONDENT: I think what they have is peer observers in differentiated roles. I don't know if they have the teacher effectiveness coach somewhere. They might but we don't have them here.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: I know that they're getting rid of the peer observers or most of them for next year and moving into more of the differentiated roles.

MODERATOR: Yes so more of the site based?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: And do you find that more useful?

RESPONDENT: Yes because the teachers here know our students and they know the teachers and they know their personalities. So it's not like a stranger coming in and giving you a score and then leaving and you don't see them again for six months.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: And they can give you suggestions and come back and see how you're doing and give you like continual feedback on that one area that you've, you know, they've identified as a need instead of, you know, and I really liked my peer observer this year but I only saw her three times. And one of the times I specifically requested her to come in. So, you know, if I hadn't requested her I'd only have seen her twice.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: And I mean she gave good feedback but it wasn't -- I didn't feel as genuine as the feedback that I get from the teachers here.

MODERATOR: Right and then twice did you -- so she kind of didn't really followup once she gave you suggestions she didn't come in to see if you're implementing them necessarily?

RESPONDENT: Yes because you have your -- I mean and that's their job is they have the one announced and one unannounced unless you ask them to come in more. And I'm sure they've got a million people on their caseload to even get to two is probably a lot. I mean had I asked her to come in more she would have I'm sure but I had Lisa here so I didn't feel like I needed -- if I didn't have my differentiated role peer, I probably would have maybe asked her to come in a few more times informally but I had someone in here every other week. So again that was the peer observer part was kind of just like another hoop too. But it was nice to have multiple people giving me feedback.

MODERATOR: And frequently. How many times do you think you were observed this year total? Where you got feedback because I know people pop in and out but where you actually got feedback.

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RESPONDENT: Okay so there's twice for my peer observer. I think five times that were scored from Lisa and then there was every other week that wasn't scored so say five more times that weren't scored. So, you know, we're up to 12 now and then like twice from my principal. So maybe like anywhere from 12 to 15 times I would say.

MODERATOR: Do you think that's about a good number or would you have liked to been observed more or less?

RESPONDENT: I don't think I needed to be observed more. I mean it did feel like people were coming in pretty frequently. We got a little bit later of a start. I don't think anyone came in until October so that we could kind of get, you know, get everything set up…

MODERATOR: I don't either I let them kind of settle in first.

RESPONDENT: …but when they started coming or when Lisa started coming it was pretty regularly. So it felt, yes I don't think I needed more I think it was a good amount.

MODERATOR: Good, how does say I mean you gave me your how you feel about your peer kind of observing giving feedback. What does it feel like from administrators? Does it feel, you know, different in any way?

RESPONDENT: It's a little more, it feels a little more high stakes. I mean Lisa is giving me the same kinds of scores so I'm the same [0:12:23] as Erin is but it just you feel that kind of pressure because it's your boss watching you instead of your colleague. I mean I have a good relationship with my principal so I don't ever feel like super nervous about it but I know that people do and it is different. And even, you know, when Erin walks in with her laptop I have a little more of a kind of nervous feeling than when, you know, my differentiated role peer walks in with her laptop. I'm like okay she is here today. She's more comfortable.

MODERATOR: Right, do you feel like your administration is an instructional leader like instructionally they're as that's an area of expertise?

RESPONDENT: I would say so. I mean my principal goes to all the conferences that the teacher's go to. You know, I was just with her at the ANAC (ph) conference. I know she's going to the conference for the new kindergarten curriculum assessment things over the summer with the kindergarten team. She goes to phonics, you know. So she keeps herself up to date on these conferences that she doesn't have to go to. So I feel like she does have a good understanding of what good instruction looks like. But I have been with a different school that I wouldn't say that about. So I would say so yes.

MODERATOR: And you feel like that's helpful?

RESPONDENT: Yes, so I mean I value her feedback because I really think she knows what she's doing.

MODERATOR: Okay, well I know it's about time. So I just need to schedule one more and it's just only because there is a certain amount of minutes that you have to fulfill for it to be an interview. But I'll bring your paperwork tomorrow when I come by. I just literally I had the signature stuff in a manila envelope and two kids got in a fist fight so I was like walking out the door and I'm trying to do this really quickly and I just set them down. Do you want to schedule one right now or do you want to just email me?

RESPONDENT: Sure we can schedule now might as well since we're both here.

MODERATOR: I know it's just easier because it's the end -- we get out earlier than you. So we're out next week on Wednesday.

RESPONDENT: Yes we're out I mean our last day with the kids is next Friday but then we've got a week after that for…

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: …because we're supposed to go the week after that but we can't because of the construction that they're doing.

MODERATOR: Thank you so much for doing this and I…

RESPONDENT: You're so welcome.

MODERATOR: …if you are ever interested in a PhD program I would strongly recommend DU. It's a very good…

RESPONDENT: Yes that's kind of where I was looking.

MODERATOR: …well and I looked a lot at different places. I went through their administration program too. But I looked at a lot of different places but when you look at just a lot of professional articles and research and, you know, different organizations a lot of them are there. And so it's kind of like that's your last one and they have a lot of networking pieces that are really helpful.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: So, do you have any time at all that works out best for you? I know it's so bad at this time of year.

RESPONDENT: Honestly if you don't mind the multi-tasking on next Wednesday.

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MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: So I do fifth grade in the morning and fourth grade in the afternoon and for both grade levels we're doing like our class picnic where we're just like hanging out outside and eating.

MODERATOR: No, not at all.

RESPONDENT: I kind of have to supervise. So it can happen literally any time on Wednesday, you know, we could chat while I'm just making sure they don't kill each other.

MODERATOR: Yes no worries. At what time the same?

RESPONDENT: Yes the same time would be fine.

MODERATOR: Eleven, okay. All right thank you so much.

RESPONDENT: You're welcome.

MODERATOR: I will be here and is there a certain class you ever want me to watch or I mean does it matter? Honestly I'm not like turning in notes about it or anything.

RESPONDENT: Well the only teaching you're going to see is going to happen this week. Like next week we've got the picnic, fifth graders continuation is on Thursday so there's really nothing to see for fifth grade.

MODERATOR: So I'm doing an interview until 12:00 so I can either do something today or tomorrow. I have -- I'm interviewing somebody at 11:00.

RESPONDENT: You're welcome to come in today if you want. The teacher that is taking my spot because I'm moving to the stem lab is coming so she'll be here to do observations anyway so.

MODERATOR: Okay at noon or what time?

RESPONDENT: Let's see, 11:50 I take them to specials and then 12:30 they'll be back.

MODERATOR: Okay 12:30 I might just stay it will be easier to just do this and get it done.

RESPONDENT: Yes that will be easier for me too because to make sure that it's something of quality.

MODERATOR: And it's here in this classroom?

RESPONDENT: I'm so tired at the end of the year.

MODERATOR: My goodness I know, well when I had to do that investigation I had the teacher come out and give a statement. And I went in and taught and it's wild right now.

RESPONDENT: I mean [0:17:09].

MODERATOR: So in this classroom?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: Okay great thank you so much for your time I appreciate it.

RESPONDENT: You're welcome and if we're not here right at 12:30 I'm just walking them back from specials.

MODERATOR: Okay, all right thank you.

RESPONDENT: These are cool math games.

MODERATOR: Math games are cool.

RESPONDENT: The world's hardest games.

MODERATOR: Is that door open or do I go is there a different way?

RESPONDENT: If you buzz, it will still buzz you in.

MODERATOR: All right thank you I'll see you in a little while.

Mia 2
MODERATOR: So last time we talked about, you know, professional development and your experience like going to school and those sort of things. What are your least helpful or supportive professional development experiences?

RESPONDENT: Probably the one where it is -- probably the one where they are mandatory for everyone and like it's mandatory for everyone and then it's led by someone like within the district you know it's mandatory and, you know, it's like nobody wants to be there and like it's those ones that it seems like the people that are presenting haven't really put much thought into it and so it's just like another hoop to jump through or another, you know, meeting to sit through instead of actual information. Sorry.

MODERATOR: Like the ones that they have at the convention center for DBS?

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RESPONDENT: Yes I mean like the -- yes like we had like it was more of a pep rally when everyone had to be there but I'm thinking more of like back when I worked in another district there are like mandatory e-lab (ph) classes. Everyone that was either a new teacher or new to the district had to go like sit in this room for four hours and this lady gave her spiel and she wasn't into it and no one wanted to be there and it was just you could tell it was everyone thought it was a total waste of time. It was unfortunate because that was important information. But things like that where it's just so mandated that everyone's attitudes about it are really negative.

MODERATOR: Kind of like not differentiated at all so they don't like there's no levels?

RESPONDENT: Hey I got it, I got it. Some of them went to recess. Okay so positive [0:02:33] okay.

MODERATOR: It's crazy during this week. What do you think about the presenters themselves? Like how they present, the way in which they present to adults? Is that when they're doing recess?

RESPONDENT: Probably. It depends I mean I've had some where they're really trying to get people engaged and then some where it's like I know that you have to be here just kind of like a sit and get like here's my power point here's your slides like we're really just sitting and listening to people.

MODERATOR: How often do you like leave a professional development with some like classroom structures or collaborative kind of ideas to implement you can use?

RESPONDENT: Are we including…

MODERATOR: And do they model that ever?

RESPONDENT: …graduate school or like district professional?

MODERATOR: Either, both.

RESPONDENT: I'd say if you're just thinking about freshman [0:03:41] in the district I'd say maybe a third of the time but if you include like graduate school courses then I would say half the time.

MODERATOR: Yes.

RESPONDENT: And sometimes the grad school classes just aren't conducive to like bringing that, you know, like an idea it's more like bringing this knowledge into the way that you set up a classroom but.

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MODERATOR: And do you think the best presenters are who would you say that is like people that are sort of dedicated to that profession, other teachers who are currently in the field? Would you say…

RESPONDENT: You cannot open that door. I'm sorry we'll continue that.

MODERATOR: Do you want any of your stuff?

RESPONDENT: No I got my phone.

MODERATOR: Okay.

Mia 3
RESPONDENT: Before like you could have the best professional development from like a highly effective teacher and they have great ideas and it was fantastic but the staff is going into it with this negative attitude like why do you just sit here through this meeting and I want to be doing stuff in my classroom. It's going to go in one ear and out the other anyways. So I have seen that, you know.

MODERATOR: Where they just don't want to be there so they're already like they're pre-disposed to…

RESPONDENT: Yes already decided it was useless. So that's unfortunate I try to catch myself from doing that.

MODERATOR: …yes because it does kind of leads through like and permeates everything it really can.

RESPONDENT: Yes it's infectious.

MODERATOR: I was just going to ask you, you have a master right?

RESPONDENT: I'm getting my masters.

MODERATOR: Okay getting MED, master of ed?

RESPONDENT: No it will be an MA in special education and a CLDL endorsement.

MODERATOR: Okay. And that's -- I'm not going to put all this in there it's just for me to remember because I don't put identifying info.

RESPONDENT: Okay.

MODERATOR: Okay and how many years teaching?

RESPONDENT: This is my third year so wrapping up on my third year.

MODERATOR: Okay and you're fourth grade?

RESPONDENT: Yes fourth and fifth.

MODERATOR: Fourth and fifth okay and is that hard? Are they combined in your classroom?

RESPONDENT: No fifth in the morning, fourth in the afternoon.

MODERATOR: Okay, that's a couple different preps?

RESPONDENT: No.

MODERATOR: Third year okay I think that was it. Okay, thank you I appreciate it.

RESPONDENT: You are welcome.

MODERATOR: Taylor (ph).

Mia 4
MODERATOR: We were talking about the least beneficial sort of the set role sort of the sit and get kind of thing and then just kind of asked about how many like what percentage of, you know, professional development [0:00:19] but you gave me those. So really the whole purpose of really even talking to teachers versus just, you know, the data that I collected was it's really just to get your perspective because it can say that it's not helpful or it is helpful but there's really no context to it. So like what is and who do you prefer when you listen? I mean do you feel like you get a lot more out of colleagues like other teachers?

RESPONDENT: Most of the time yes because that's generally if it's like district led when you get ideas that you can bring back into the classroom because those are the people that are actually doing it. Whereas if it's, you know, someone that sits in central office all day and then they give this presentation it's a lot of times it's like all right well that sounds great in theory how am I actually supposed to implement this with 33 fourth graders and, you know.

MODERATOR: Right.

RESPONDENT: So I think it's better especially just district wise if it comes from a colleague. Someone who is kind of just like expert or someone who has been identified as a really strong teacher just kind of share their experiences. And I think other, I think people respond to that better anyways.

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MODERATOR: How do you feel like about the follow-up? Do you get -- is there a follow-up ever like you know what I mean you go, you get professional development. How does -- is there any method or any way that anyone follows up to see like was that helpful?

RESPONDENT: Really the only follow-up I've ever gotten is with like the differentiated roles because that's part of the process.

MODERATOR: The coaching piece.

RESPONDENT: But like with let's say like the mandatory [0:01:58] classes or any other like professional development that I might go to within the district it's pretty much done when the session is done unless there is like a scheduled follow-up session like there's two or three sessions. But I wouldn't say there is very much follow-up. That would be helpful I think.

MODERATOR: Yes and I think that just from different teachers I've heard that.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: And then what do you feel like, you know, as a teacher who, you know, is fairly new I'm not saying like brand new but, you know, who is fairly new in the field of teaching. What do you feel like would have been more beneficial to you in supporting you? I mean we all know that the average lifetime of a teacher is about five years and we all know that, you know, when you look at data across the country even that there is really a high percentage of teachers that leave right away. And so is that, you know, lack of support, is there something that would be better or more helpful to newer teachers?

RESPONDENT: I think like making sure that there is a strong mentorship kind of program for new teachers or like the differentiated roles has been really helpful because that's a lot of coaching and a lot of feedback. But I don't when I think about why, you know, people leave after five years or so I don't know that it's for lack of support but it's, you know, they have this idea like I want to go into teaching and I want to help these kids. And then you get there and you have a class of 30 plus kids and you don't have enough desks and you're spending like hundreds of dollars out of your pocket and it's just not what people envisioned, you know. It's not lack of support within professional development I think it's lack of support within resources or like a manageable class size or, you know, like we're really lucky when we have all these really nice chrome book carts and my first hear of teaching we had four desk tops. Two of them maybe worked at a time and then…

MODERATOR: In 50?

RESPONDENT: …yes. And then we got some more chrome books we ended up with like five chrome books in each class and that was nice. But it's just there's all these really, really high stakes and then a lot of times you're at a school and you just don't have the tools to really provide the students that you have with a really well rounded 21st Century education and that's really hard. So…

MODERATOR: Do you feel like it's better here in like a larger school district or this just particular school?

RESPONDENT: I don't know how it is in other schools in this district so I couldn't say but I mean I think we're really lucky here. I think my principal really tries to push for more technology and more support for her teachers like when I have my larger class in the afternoon I have, you know, one or two parents in the room for a majority of the time. So that's helpful and that's supportive. And but I think it's really good here and I don't know if that is just specific to this school or this region. I would imagine it's such a large district that it's probably not the same everywhere. I mean I don't know what it's like out in the far Northeast part of Denver or, you know, in like out by DU it's probably different it just depends on the population too.

MODERATOR: Yes and this district is so big there's so many different areas. It goes all the way down to where I live in Littleton.

RESPONDENT: Yes it's crazy it's huge.

MODERATOR: So it's like half of my subdivision which is near Columbine there are three school districts in one subdivision.

RESPONDENT: That's crazy.

MODERATOR: Yes so it goes all the way down to like Bowles Ave. So it's a huge area.

RESPONDENT: Yes and that's hard to when it's like we're going to adopt a district curriculum. The district is so big and the populations are so different the needs of the schools are so different so it's hard when they try and adopt like one curriculum to use for the whole district when the whole district is so diverse and big and…

MODERATOR: How do you feel, you know, as far as like your efficacy for culturally and linguistically diverse students. I know you had grad experience in that. But as far as the district goes do you think that they are sort of like that is front and center of what they do when they provide either curriculum that's mandated or professional development? Do you think that that is sort of at the front and center of what they do is meeting the needs of those kiddos because you're highly impacted here?

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RESPONDENT: I don't think so no I think, you know, we have the mandated e-lab (ph) of course that we have to go to. But even then I feel like they're more geared towards your Spanish speaking students. So when they talk about, you know, your multi-cultural they're talking about your Caucasian kids and your Hispanic kids and they're not necessarily thinking about all of these different cultures like we have here at Samuels. Probably the only truly beneficial culturally and linguistically diverse classes I've had are through grad school from my own choosing not from…

MODERATOR: Where are those e-lab classes where do you take them now?

RESPONDENT: For this district?

MODERATOR: Yes.

RESPONDENT: Different schools.

MODERATOR: Okay.

RESPONDENT: The last one I took was at a nearby Elementary we had to go to and then some of them are at a Southwest school.

MODERATOR: Who teaches them just district teachers?

RESPONDENT: Teachers.

MODERATOR: Teachers do okay.

RESPONDENT: Which is good because they've got good ideas but also everyone gets 100% in class because they don't have time to grade papers. You're writing a college level paper they don't read it. I'm like 99% sure that everything I wrote for both of the classes that were like at a graduate school level through this district no one read anything I wrote.

MODERATOR: Yes is still through CU?

RESPONDENT: Yes it's through CU but it's DPS teachers and it's for the, you know, it counts for your district classes here and you'll get like graduate school credit for it.

MODERATOR: Counts for hours and things?

RESPONDENT: Yes but no I mean I think I'm a pretty good student but you can't tell me I didn't make like one mistake on anything like, you know, literally 100% in both of those classes.

MODERATOR: And they used to actually teach those UCD classes on campus, you know, different schools but they were taught by people that had a PhD or were like almost done with their PhD that kind of thing. But then there was a little bit of pushback too for grading too hard so.

RESPONDENT: Yes I mean it was nice because…

MODERATOR: We're almost done.

RESPONDENT: That's weird I don't know why my kids are in specialist now because they aren't even normally supposed to be in specialist so I don't know what time to pick them up.

MODERATOR: Yes, no it's fine we're almost done anyway.

RESPONDENT: They just go there so but I'm looking like normally they wouldn't even be in specialist yet because we don't go until 11:50 it's so weird.

MODERATOR: I think they were trying to figure it out too and they didn't really know what was going on.

RESPONDENT: Well it was nice in a way because, you know, I got to talk with other colleagues about their experience and I knew that I was going to get an A in the class so there wasn't a lot of like pressure. You know, I was taking that on top of an actual grad school course and teaching so it was nice to be able to do all of that and not feel like super overwhelmed.

MODERATOR: Did any of that count towards your actual program?

RESPONDENT: Yes those two classes counted towards two classes I needed for my endorsement. That was a big part of why I decided to get it because I had to take these classes anyway. So why not just take, you know, I think it was like three more to get an endorsement.

MODERATOR: Just curious because sometimes things don't count across different -- because you went to CU is that correct?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: And then it was UCD.

RESPONDENT: No, sorry I went to UCD I'm in UCD right now.

MODERATOR: Okay so they did count because it's in school.

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RESPONDENT: Yes because, you know, I was already…

MODERATOR: I'm curious if those count if you're in a different program.

RESPONDENT: I don't know.

MODERATOR: Because like CU Bueno Center does a lot of CLDL stuff. I wonder if they count UCD's I don't know interesting. Well I just thank you for your feedback I know you're super busy it's the last week I so appreciate it.

RESPONDENT: I don't know if it was useful.

MODERATOR: No it was totally useful because it's really important to get more than just checking a box when you listen to, you know, teachers. If something is not helpful then help me learn like what is. Because I think it's important for administrators to really think about PD instead of checking a box that we had someone come in and do this. If it's not applicable it's really not a good use of anyone's time.

RESPONDENT: Yes.

MODERATOR: You know, so I appreciate it so much and I'll leave those with the secretary on Friday and yes so you know what I did not get from you is -- I just need to write it down really quickly.