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The Impact of the Gradual Release of Responsibility Professional Development on Teacher Self-Efficacy

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The Impact of the Gradual Release of Responsibility Professional Development on
Teacher Self-Efficacy

By
Elizabeth Head Danley

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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2018

Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Elizabeth Head Danley under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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Abstract

The Impact of the Gradual Release of Responsibility Professional Development on Teacher Self-Efficacy. Danley, Elizabeth Head, 2018: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Gradual Release of Responsibility/Professional Development/Teacher Self-Efficacy

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the Gradual Release of Responsibility instructional framework professional development on teacher self-efficacy and the perception of its impact on student achievement. The scope of this study was a qualitative study including focus group interviews and open-ended question responses of teachers and administrators who had participated in the professional development in a rural district in the foothills of North Carolina. The methodology included focus group interviews and coding the responses from the open-ended professional development questions. The findings include teacher quotes from the transcriptions of the interviews as supporting the research found in the literature on high-quality professional development and the components of the Gradual Release of Responsibility. The conclusion reached was that teacher self-efficacy was increased in implementing the framework, and many teachers believed the implementation has increased student achievement. Limitations of this study included the researcher acted as the interviewer; the researcher was the professional development developer and deliverer. This study contributes to the information which could be useful for district and school administrators when planning for high-quality professional development for continuous school improvement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

National, best-selling author Jim Collins (2001) made a simple but powerful statement about what it takes to be great: “Good is the enemy of great” (p. 1). Collins affirmed this as one of the main reasons so little in the world is great. “We don’t have great schools, principally because we have good schools” (Collins, 2001, p. 1). A critical question in schools today is whether today’s students should have good schools or great schools. To move education forward, we must have great educators. “Being a teacher is harder today than it has ever been. Today’s teachers instruct the most diverse group of students in America’s history and must lead them, sometimes against all odds, to graduation” (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2016, p. 1).

Elementary and secondary schooling are required in the United States, and children are placed into the keeping of teachers for a significant amount of time during their childhood. The quality of teachers and teaching are unquestionably among the important components molding the learning and growth of students (Ingersoll, 2004). The majority of the time, teachers receive less than 3 hours of training on specific strategies or they simply read an article about a strategy. Marzano (2017) stated, “The level of training probably represents the typical environment for a teacher, which involves minimal time for extensive training” (p. 4).

Education today calls for modifications in teaching and learning in an effort to improve student achievement and prepare students to be college and career ready. Schmoker (2016) stated, “A rich, rounded education has profound, life-altering effects on every stratum of society, from the poor to the privileged. It enlarges the intellect,

nourishes creativity, and makes us better citizens” (p. 3). A Brookings Institution study confirmed the effects of a quality education on individual incomes, social maneuverability, and quality of life. Most importantly, the study established a high-caliber education depended on the quality of teaching a student received (Greenstone, Patashnik, Looney, Li, & Harris, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

Student achievement data. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 2015, for the first time, the average mathematics scores for fourth- and eighth-grade students were lower than the average scores in the previous assessment year (The Nation’s Report Card, 2015). This is not only a national issue but a local issue as well. The 2015-2016 North Carolina School Report Card indicated end-of-grade (EOG) state assessments of students in Grades 3-8 were 57% proficient in reading and 54.7% proficient in mathematics. Moreover, high school student proficiencies in English II were 58.8%, Math I 60.1%, and Biology 55.6%. Studies suggested students within the United States continue to fall behind other developed countries on numerous measures of achievement. The American College Testing (ACT) reported 76% of high school graduates are not adequately prepared academically for first-year college courses. In an era consumed with high stakes testing and accountability, teachers are under great analysis and pressure to positively impact student achievement (Klein, 2011).

Teacher quality. *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) included a variety of studies reported teacher quality as one of the central problems facing schools. These reports resulted in a large number of initiatives and programs seeking to improve the quality of teachers. The National Council on

Teacher Quality (2016) reported 200,000 teacher candidates graduate from teacher preparation programs across the United States annually and believe they are ready to begin the demanding career of teaching, yet 46% of teacher preparation programs taught candidates about lesson planning and only one specific instructional strategy. Ingersoll (2004) determined,

The teaching force is inadequately trained and prepared. Pre-service preparation of teachers in college or university training programs and state certification standards all too often lack adequate rigor, breadth, and depth, especially in academic and substantive coursework, resulting in high levels of underqualified teachers. (p. 2)

Quality of teacher training and professional development. Teacher quality is often a product of quality teacher training. Feiman-Nemser (2001) asserted,

What students learn is directly related to what and how teachers teach; and what and how teachers teach depends on the knowledge, skills, and commitments they bring to their teaching and the opportunities they have to continue learning in and from their practice. (p. 1013)

Darling-Hammond (2005) found that professional development in most districts still consisted of all-for-one workshops rather than differentiated learning aligned with teachers' ongoing work with their peers. This resulted in many teachers across the United States having fewer opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills over the course of their careers. Furthermore, Darling-Hammond determined teachers in the United States have almost no in-school time for professional learning and nearly all professional development was held after school, on weekends, or on a small number of

professional development days. The Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching (2011) reported most professional development investments were limited and did not help teachers learn more appropriate teaching strategies to address the challenging learning goals with diverse populations of students. The commission called for school districts to support professional development toward a sustained and practical learning opportunity for all teachers (Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching, 2011). McGee (2017) stated, “We cannot purchase our way to student achievement through prepackaged programs. The only way to improve student learning is by investing in teacher learning” (p. 1).

Current models of professional development call for collaborative practices where teachers are actively engaged in their own learning. Furthermore, teachers need opportunities to provide feedback to other teachers, collaboration, and time for reflection to improve student learning and achievement. Additionally, professional development meetings should include opportunities to practice the components of instruction with guidance and feedback, until it is apparent that the essential practice is mastered (Archibald, Cogshall, Croft, & Goe, 2011). Brophy (1991) wrote while basic content knowledge is crucial for teachers to have, it is more important for teachers to understand how to teach the content to students, and this ability is fully developed with training and experience in the classroom. Moreover, Schmoker (2016) wrote, “We need to train and retrain in the most vital practices until teachers demonstrate mastery and then periodically retrain again to ensure against forgetfulness and drift” (p. 22). Learning is the process of acquiring knowledge through study, experience, or teaching. The experience brings permanent change in behavior. Furthermore, learning is the cognitive process of

acquiring skills or knowledge. Fisher and Frey (2014) stated, “Learning is the goal of schooling – this is a complex process” (p. 1). In order for students to learn, classrooms need teachers who are skilled facilitators of learning for their students. There is a growing agreement in the United States about the need for quality teachers, and it has led to reforms in teacher preparatory programs and ongoing professional development for current teachers. With the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), schools are required to hire only highly qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2005). Fisher, Frey, and Hattie (2016) wrote, “Every student deserves a great teacher, not by chance, but by design” (p. 2). Furthermore, a great teacher was defined as one who develops positive student-teacher relationships, understands the content, and has a full grasp of pedagogical practices that permeate the educational landscape for all students (Fisher et al., 2016). President Barrack Obama stated, “The single most important factor in determining student achievement is not the color of students’ skin or where they come from. It’s not who their parents are or how much money they have. It’s who their teacher is” (Klein, 2011, p. 5). Teachers are an invaluable resource. Teachers with high efficacy are needed in schools today. These teachers need shared experiences with other teachers as well as professional development experiences to broaden and sustain school and classroom improvement efforts, thus increasing student learning. Continuous improvement provides pathways to reflect and achieve these goals (Johnson, 2012).

Purpose of the Study

Hervey (2018) reported effective teachers used a spectrum of instructional practices to meet the diverse needs in classrooms. Furthermore, Hervey asserted these strategies were tools of effective practice that teachers used for whole class, small group,

and independent work. Moreover, teachers provided varying degrees of support that reflected the needs of the students through the gradual release of responsibility (GRR) (Hervey, 2018). The GRR is an instructional framework providing teachers with a structure to drive the thinking load from the teacher to a combined responsibility of the teacher and learner (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Additionally, the GRR scaffolds student learning leading to mastery of a skill. Research suggested one of the three specific areas on which to focus for strong school improvement is instruction. The GRR framework improves instruction and ultimately student learning (Schmoker, 2016). Fisher and Frey (2014) wrote using the GRR framework helped teachers understand how to respond when students make an error and stated, “Leading students to think through their own misunderstandings is a powerful way to teach” (p. 58).

The GRR was introduced in 1983 in the context of early literacy instruction in public schools of the United States (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The framework has been applied to K-12 education as well as adult basic education. Clark (2014) stated in her research,

An understanding of this model improves your teaching abilities in any instructional setting by providing you time to observe and assess your students’ understanding of any lesson, thereby deepening your connection to your students and increasing the efficacy of your teaching. (p. 29)

Fisher and Frey (2014) described the GRR as a process of instruction in which the educator models a skill, provides guided practice and the opportunity to practice the skill with peers, and independently applies the skill in a new context. Schmoker (2016) encouraged school leaders to embrace simplicity and ultimately reject anything that

distracts from the focus of the work to be accomplished. Peter Drucker (as cited in Schmoker, 2016) stated, “Efficiency is doing things right; effectiveness is doing the right things” (p. 31). Hattie (2012) stated teachers were the change agents for the students in classrooms across the world. Hattie also stated that teacher beliefs about how to teach and understand when students have learned the content were the differences between novice and expert teachers.

A positive association has been made between teacher efficacy and academic achievement in students (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Bandura (1997, as cited in Ware & Kitsantas, 2007) stated, “A growing body of research in educational psychology suggests that a teacher’s quality of performance and commitment to work is related to his or her level of motivation to influence student learning” (p. 303). Shidler (2009) claimed teachers with higher efficacy also have a higher belief in a student’s ability to be more successful, and they devote more time and effort to their teaching. She referenced Vartuli (2005) who stated, “Teachers with higher degrees of efficacy teach a subject more clearly and with more interesting delivery, and produce better outcomes” (p. 454). Vartuli stated teachers who believe in themselves expect more from themselves and are better able to analyze failures and to look first at their own performance to find the reason. In contrast, teachers with low self-efficacy often accredit student academic struggles to lack of motivation, lack of abilities, poor home conditions, and an inability to learn (Ashton & Webb, 1986).

Wong and Wong (2015) contended that professional development is a method to build capacity and put resources into the future maintainability of an association or school system. Wong and Wong also stated, “People are a type of capital. Invest in

people; they will improve their useful outputs over long periods of time” (p. 1). Wong and Wong advocated professional development was used as the tool to develop and strengthen skills, knowledge, and expertise for educators. Furthermore, they found when teachers are valued through this investment, their potential to produce student learning and positive outcomes increased (Wong & Wong, 2015). Smith (2010) stated, “Professional development practices and policies must support what teachers do and how students learn” (p. 70). Teachers need tools to assist them in meeting the demands of the rigorous accountability which is in place. Wenglinsky (2000) reported for the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the Milken Family Foundation (MFF) and found improving teacher quality was important for improving student performance; however, teachers need access to professional development that provides a structure to improve teaching practices. Smith (2010) reported the core features of effective professional development that improved teacher quality and student achievement included content focus, active learning, duration, and collective participation.

Coggshall (2012) noted in the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality Research-to-Practice Brief that teachers needed to teach in ways that were unmistakably different than how they had been teaching or how they were previously taught. Likewise, Coggshall declared with the implementation of new college- and career-ready standards, students needed more guided practice, collaborative learning opportunities, and practice for the application of the skill learned within the new context to master the standards (Coggshall, 2012). Coggshall stated, “To ensure that students have such teachers, in addition to high-quality aligned curricular resources, materials, and tools, high-quality opportunities for teachers to learn and meet the demands of college-

and career-ready standards are crucial” (p. 1). The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of the GRR professional development experience on teacher self-efficacy and teacher perceptions of the framework on student learning.

Research Questions

The following research questions provided data by which to measure the impact of the GRR Instructional Framework professional development on teacher self-efficacy:

1. What is the impact of the GRR Instructional Framework professional development on teacher self-efficacy?
2. What are the perceptions of the effectiveness of the GRR to enhance student learning?

Context of the Study

The setting of this study is a small sized rural district in the foothills of North Carolina. There are 19 schools in the system with a population of approximately 8,000 students in four high schools, four middle schools, and 11 prekindergarten through fifth grade elementary schools. One of the four high schools is an Early College High School, which is a nontraditional high school located on a community college campus. One middle school is a STEM Magnet school. All 11 of the elementary schools are Title I schools. The researcher serves as the Director of Elementary Education, K-8 Literacy, and AIG for the system and therefore had access and permission to use all data necessary to conduct this study.

All of the 19 school administrative teams have participated in professional development on the GRR Instructional Framework during monthly leadership team meetings during the past year. Some of the school leaders have delivered professional

development sessions within their schools. All beginning teachers and teachers new to the district have participated in additional professional development sessions to introduce them to the instructional framework. Additionally, school leaders selected teacher leaders to participate in a cohort group to receive further, more in-depth knowledge of the GRR. During the cohort training, teachers participated in five professional development sessions. The group of teachers answered open-ended evaluation questions to evaluate their level of efficacy and knowledge of the framework. The school district wants to implement a sustained and focused professional development experience to increase the quality of teaching in all classrooms. The researcher used focus group interviews and summary professional learning evaluation information to collect needed data.

Significance of the Study

The goal of this study was to explore the impact of the GRR professional development on teacher self-efficacy and perceptions of the effectiveness of the GRR to enhance student learning. The school system has used professional development funding to provide teachers with the opportunity to attend the GRR cohort professional development sessions from each school. The results of gathering the trained teachers' perspectives concerning the professional development sessions and their impact on their own self-efficacy provided data needed to conduct an analysis of the appropriateness of the expenditures. Moreover, the purpose of the professional development sessions is to provide teachers with a quality professional learning experience that enhances their classroom teaching practices. Most importantly, the professional learning time is designed to improve teacher quality across the district in hopes to increase student achievement.

It is expected that the outcomes of the study will be used to make suggestions for changes to the GRR Professional Learning Teacher cohort. These suggestions will be made to allow more opportunities for training to better assist and support all teachers within the school district. The focus of the training is to equip all teachers with the skills needed to implement the GRR in their classrooms to impact student achievement.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout the study:

Gradual Release of Responsibility. An instructional framework that purposefully shifts the cognitive load from the teacher-as-model, to joint responsibility of teacher and learner, to independent practice and application by the learner.

Focused instruction. The “I do” phase of the GRR. The teacher explicitly focuses the student on the content, strategies, or skills being by using the instructional strategies of establishing purpose, modeling or demonstrating, and think-alouds.

Guided instruction. The “We do it together” phase of the GRR. The teacher guides the learners through the task to begin shifting the cognitive load from the teacher to the student and provides support as needed through the use of questions, prompts, and cues. The teacher begins to follow the lead of the learner, who is challenged to apply the skill or strategy presented in a new situation.

Collaborative instruction. The “You do it together” phase of the GRR. The teacher provides the opportunity for group learning and guides, coaches, and clarifies student thinking. The students are expected to apply the skills and knowledge they have been taught and to turn to one another for support and enrichment.

Independent learning. The “You do it alone” phase of the GRR. The teacher

will conduct a formal assessment of the task as applied in a new context, setting, or situation.

Learning target. A learning target is a skill or concept to be learned during a single lesson. It is written for students in language that they can understand so they can use it to guide their own learning.

Feedback. The information loop between the teacher and the student that provides the student with an awareness of what they should be learning and how they are doing.

Modeling. The teacher role during focused instruction includes naming the task or strategy, explaining when it is used, and using analogies to link new learning to familiar information. The teacher demonstrates the task or strategy and alerts learners about errors to avoid and shows them how it is applied to check for accuracy. Modeling is often accompanied by a think-aloud procedure.

Scaffolding. The temporary supports in the form of questions, prompts, and cues the teacher offers learners as a bridge toward a skill or concept they cannot perform with mastery.

Professional development. Training received by educators to increase awareness of changes and new initiatives in education which can also be referred to as teacher training, staff development, workshops, and preservice instruction.

Teacher efficacy. Teacher beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions about their own abilities to impact instruction and affect student achievement

Professional learning communities. A group of educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to

achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators.

Summary

Education calls for change in many areas of teacher preparation, teacher practice, professional development, instruction, and student academic achievement. Educators need tools and assistance to find ways to continuously improve, while at the same time increasing their own self-efficacy. Professional development can help in providing such tools for teachers.

This qualitative study measured the impact of the GRR Framework professional development on teacher self-efficacy and the perception of its effect on student achievement in a rural school district in North Carolina.

The remaining chapters include important information for understanding this study. Chapter 2 provides a review of relevant literature. The study's methodology is described in Chapter 3. A summary of the results is presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 provides the implications of this study and areas for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gather teacher perceptions on how the GRR professional development sessions impact teacher self-efficacy and perceptions of the GRR on student learning. In a rural school district in North Carolina, K-12 teachers were selected by school administrators to participate in professional development sessions focused on implementing the GRR framework into instructional practice.

The GRR is an instructional framework that purposefully shifts the cognitive load from the teacher to the student (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The GRR professional development sessions consisted of reading the book, *Better Learning Through Structured Teaching* (Fisher & Frey, 2014), attending and participating in five half day training sessions and completing instructional rounds using the debriefing protocol to identify patterns and trends for the group as well as determining the next level of implementation. Additionally, teachers received seven 1-hour after school professional development sessions delivered by the school administrators on the GRR.

Overview

For decades, educators have known the proven foundation of effective instruction across subject areas is improving teacher quality (Schmoker, 2016). A host of researchers agree on the basic features of a good lesson and how positive it can be on student learning (Hattie, 2009; Marzano, 2017; Popham, 2008; William, 2007). Schmoker (2016) summarized this research as, “clear learning objectives, step-by-step teaching, focused practice, check for understanding, and adjusting of instruction are the most important elements of effective lesson delivery. These basic moves are

fundamental to all instruction” (p. 46). This approach comprises what is known as Pearson and Gallagher’s (1983) GRR. In this framework, the teacher assumes the primary responsibility for ensuring that all students understand each chunk of the lesson until they can assume full “responsibility” of the skill. Hattie (2012) stated, “Learning is not always pleasurable and easy; it requires over-learning at certain points, spiraling up and down the knowledge continuum, building a working relationship with others in grappling with challenging tasks” (p. 20). The basic moves in the GRR framework are fundamental to all instruction and support student learning (Schmoker, 2016).

The executive summary from Learning Forward’s (2017) State of Teacher Professional Learning report stated, “Effective teacher learning is vital to student success. Teachers who continually improve their practice by using data to inform instructional decisions see improved results for their students” (p. 3). Furthermore, it was reported that school and district leaders must be committed to the professional growth of their teachers. There is a need for increased support for continuous, job-embedded learning (Learning Forward, 2017).

Deliberate study of the existing literature affirmed several themes relating to the GRR. The underlying themes associated with the implementation of the GRR incorporated high-quality professional development as well as the following components of GRR: focused instruction, guided instruction, and collaborative learning.

Components of High-Quality Professional Development

As a result of recent standards-based reforms including NCLB legislation, a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2001, and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) signed by President Obama in 2015, an attention on

school reform has reemphasized the required professional development of educators to be of high caliber and meet particular criteria in endeavors to make strides in increasing student achievement. Professional development takes many different forms, with a range of quality and effectiveness (Tournaki, Lylubinskaya, & Carolan, 2011). Allen (2006) stated the following regarding high-quality professional development:

High-quality professional development prepares teachers for the specific challenges when it is of sufficient length, frequency, and intensity; revolves around helping teachers move their students toward their state's content and performance standards; gives teachers a central role in planning their own professional development; and provides teachers with ample opportunity to practice skills and activities. (p. 100)

According to the literature with respect to high-quality professional development, the guidelines and models of effective professional development have developed and changed over time. Fundamentally, the common goal of professional development, regardless of the model, is to produce more effective teachers (Tournaki et al., 2011).

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality's research and policy brief specified, "to be considered high-quality, professional development must be delivered in a way that yields direct impact on teacher practice" (Archibald et al., 2011, p. 3). The same policy brief listed dispositions of high-quality professional development based on a review of the literature, which included "Alignment with school goals, state and district standards and assessments, and other professional learning activities ... inclusion of opportunities for active learning ... provision for opportunities for collaboration among teachers, inclusion of embedded follow-up and continuous

feedback” (Archibald et al., 2011, p. 3).

Gibbs’s (2011) study affirmed common components of best practices in professional development include “active learning opportunities; collective participation; coherence and duration” (p. 11). This section of the literature review discusses the guiding standards, components of time, and structure for professional development.

Guiding standards. A study on teacher perceptions of the impact of professional development on instructional practices in a dissertation by Gibbs (2011) at the California State University cited research which specified that most professional development in the United States today is ineffective. There were several resources available in the literature which provided the characteristics or components of high-quality professional development and identified the standards as such. Gibbs also cited NCLB which stated, “High-quality professional development programs should be developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators of schools” (p. 41).

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC), now Learning Forward, published standards for high-quality professional development. The guiding standards are organized into three categories: context, content, and process (Roy, 2010). All of the context, process, and content standards were designed to improve student learning, which affirmed the belief that schools and districts should invest in effective professional development to ensure improvement in student academic achievement (Roy, 2010). Furthermore, Roy (2010) defined context as, “the organizational culture and climate that support learning, leadership that builds collaboration and a support system that provides time and resources” (p. 3). Additionally, Roy reported the process standards included planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating the professional development process

(2010). The content standards are composed of the knowledge and skills staff members need to learn and use in their classrooms. The standards emphasized the importance of “results-oriented, collaborative, job-embedded professional development” (Roy, 2010, p. 3).

In 2016, Corwin Press initiated a nationwide survey in partnership with Learning Forward and the National Education Association (NEA) to ascertain the state of teacher professional learning and how to best support educators. More than 6,300 teachers from across the United States responded to a 60-item survey measuring their professional learning experiences. The data from the survey indicated school and district leaders are committed to professional learning but do not always include teachers in the decision-making process. Furthermore, teachers reported a lack of adequate time for job-embedded professional learning (Learning Forward, 2017). Learning Forward has committed to a vision of ensuring that every educator engages in the kinds of learning that improve their practice and contribute to better learning outcomes for students (Crow, 2017). When professional learning incorporates the indicators defined in the standards, educator effectiveness and student learning increase. The conclusions and recommendations from the survey included providing opportunities for job-embedded professional learning, using a variety of data to plan and assess the professional learning, and including teachers in the decision-making process about their own professional learning (Learning Forward, 2017).

Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning were developed in 2011 in collaboration with more than 40 other organizations that were committed to establishing high expectations for professional learning. The standards outline the

research-based conditions and elements necessary for professional learning that lead changes in educator practice and improvements in student results. The standards clarify what a system of effective professional learning includes and provide directions for policy and system shifts that can make professional learning accessible to all educators (Crow, 2017).

Figure 1 shows the seven Standards for Professional Learning and describes the most important characteristics of professional learning that lead to effective teaching practices, support leadership, and improve student results (Learning Forward, 2017).

STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING			
<i>Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students ...</i>	LEARNING COMMUNITIES: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.	LEADERSHIP: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.	RESOURCES: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.
	DATA: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.	LEARNING DESIGNS: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.	IMPLEMENTATION: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

Figure 1. Standards for Professional Learning. Retrieved from <https://learningforward.org/docs/default-source/pdf/standardsreferenceguide.pdf>

Standard 1–Learning Communities defines the collective work of teacher teams. Learning Communities come together consistently and frequently during the workday and work week to engage in collaborative, professional learning time to strengthen their practice. Learning Communities engage in continuous improvement, develop collective responsibility, create alignment, and accountability.

Standard 2–Leadership supports developing the capacity for learning and leading. Leaders hold learning among their top priorities for students, staff, and themselves. Leaders notice that universal high expectations for all students require improvements in curriculum, instruction, assessment, leadership practice and systems of support.

Standard 3–Focuses on the importance of resource management. Effective professional learning requires human, fiscal, material, technology, and time resources to achieve learning goals. Understanding the assets accessible and related to proficient learning and effectively and precisely checking them encourages better basic leadership about the quality and aftereffects of professional learning. Additionally, the standards focus on managing time and coordinating of available resources.

The effective use of data is the focus of Standard 4. Data from numerous sources enhance decisions about professional learning that lead to increased results for every student. Numerous sources incorporate both quantitative and qualitative data, such as common formative and summative assessments, performance assessments, observations, work samples, performance metrics, portfolios, and self-reports. The utilization of various sources of data offers an adjusted and more exhaustive analysis of student, educator, and system performance than any single type or source of data can. Notwithstanding, information alone does little to advise basic leadership and increment

viability.

Standard 5–Learning Design concentrates on applying learning theories, research, and models. Incorporating theories, research, and models of human learning into the planning and outline of professional learning contributes to its viability. A few variables impact decisions about learning designs, including the goals of the learning, characteristics of the learners, their comfort with the learning process and one another, their familiarity with the content, the magnitude of the expected change, educators' work environment, and resources available to support learning. The plan of expert learning influences its quality and adequacy.

Implementation is the center of Standard 6. The essential objectives for professional learning are changes in educator practice and increases in student learning. This is a procedure that happens over time and requires support for implementation to embed the new learning into practices. Those in charge of professional learning apply discoveries from change process research to support long-term change in practice by expanding learning over time. They coordinate an assortment of supports for individuals, teams, and schools. At last, they incorporate helpful criticism and reflection to support a constant change in practice that enables educators to move along a continuum from novice to expert through the application of their professional learning.

Standard 7 focuses on outcomes of professional learning. For all students to learn, instructors and professional learning must be held to elevated standards. Professional learning that expands, improves learning outcomes for students, and improves teacher performance is the goal for all teacher learning sessions. At the point when the content of professional learning coordinates student curriculum and educator

performance standards, the connection between educator learning and student learning becomes unequivocal, improving the probability that professional learning contributes to increased student learning.

These standards highlight the importance of educators taking an active role in their continuous improvement. The standards place an emphasis on learning. Professional development aligned with these professional standards will help teachers grow professionally and is the core of school improvement. When professional learning is standards based, it has a greater potential to change what educators know and are able to do and believe, which leads to changes in educator practice (Learning Forward, 2017).

Time. Professional development is a critical element of education. According to the research article in *The Teacher Educator*, “professional development has been cited as a key mechanism for improving schools” (Tournaki et al., 2011, p. 239). Learning Forward (2017) asserted that when professional learning incorporates the indicators of effectiveness as defined in the standards, educator effectiveness and student learning increase. Researchers have found it can take 50 or more hours of sustained professional learning to realize results for students (Crow, 2017). Studies over the last several years have given observational proof that the best proficient advancement professional development programs whose goal is to increase teacher knowledge and skills and improve teaching practice are ongoing and sustained over time. Tournaki et al. (2011) examined ongoing professional development through classroom observations in a sample of 153 teachers. Half of the teachers participated in the professional development program, and the other half did not. The activities embedded in the curriculum development professional development sessions were explicitly designed to “enhance

teachers' ability to interact with students through effective questioning, targeted discussion, and precise feedback" (Tournaki et al., 2011, p. 309). The study reported fortified proof that professional development should be continuous and last as long as 2-3 years in order to begin getting returns on its investment (Tournaki et al., 2011).

Gibbs (2011) quoted Darling-Hammond: "The intensity and duration of professional development offered to U.S. teachers are not at the level that research suggests is necessary to have noticeable impacts on instruction and student learning" (p. 11). Moreover, Loveless (2013) cited the National Academy of Education and noted features of effective professional development included "ample time (more than 40 hours per program) with a year or more of follow-up, clear linkages to teachers' existing knowledge and skills, training that actively engages teachers, and training teams of teachers from the same school" (p. 60).

Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2001) studied a national sample of 1,027 mathematics and science teachers to provide a large scale empirical comparison of effects of the different components of professional development on teacher learning. The study was constructed to analyze the relationship between features of professional development that have been identified in the literature and self-reported change in teacher knowledge, skills, and classroom teaching practices. Garet et al. analyzed data from a Teacher Activity Survey as a part of the national evaluation of the professional development program. The program allowed support for activities that included workshops, conferences, study groups, professional networks, task force work, and peer coaching. The study reported two measures of duration (time span and contact hours) applied impact on the core features of professional development. Time span and contact

hours had a positive impact on opportunities for active learning at .30 and .31 effect size. Longer exercises had a tendency to incorporate significantly more opportunities for active learning, such as time to plan for classroom implementation, observations, and review of student work as well as giving presentations and demonstrations. Furthermore, longer activities also tended to elevate coherence including connections to a teacher's goals and experiences, alignment with standards, and expert correspondence with other teachers. Time span and contact hours likewise made a respectable positive impact on the emphasis given to content knowledge (Garet et al., 2001).

A national survey conducted by Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (1993) polled over 1,000 educators and found that 79% of the teachers took part in staff development that lasted a week or less; and only 20% participated where collective participation with colleagues in the same school, grade level, or department took place. Only 51% of the teachers engaged in staff development that was focused on content, and 16% of the surveyed teachers reported that staff development practices involved active learning (Birman et al., 1993). Lind's (2007) research suggested high-quality professional development programs are those that "provide adequate time for practices that involve inquiry, reflection and mentoring; are subject centered; and are rigorous, leading to long-term change" (p. 3).

The issue brief published by NGA Center for Best Practices, *State Policies to Improve Teacher Professional Development*, identified common elements in research of professional development which impact teacher practice and affect student improvement (Grossman & Hirsch, 2009). Those elements included

Professional development that lasts for a minimum of 14 hours shows a positive

and significant impact on student achievement; high-quality professional development is ongoing and affords teachers time to practice what they have learned and receive feedback on how well they are implementing what they have learned; high-quality professional development that is connected to school and district goals for student learning is more likely to improve student achievement; and professional development decisions should be driven by data to determine the needs of teachers and determine the effects of the training on student learning (Grossman & Hirsch, 2009, p. 2).

Structural components. The continual deepening of knowledge and skills is an integral part of any profession. The National Research Council completed a review of recent research on the cognitive sciences, teaching, and learning and stated,

More research studies are needed to determine the efficacy of various types of professional development activities, including pre-service and in-service seminars, workshops, and summer institutes. Studies should include professional development activities that are extended over time and across broad teacher learning communities in order to identify the processes and mechanisms that contribute to the development of teachers' learning opportunities. (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999, p. 240)

The structure of professional development is known to affect teacher learning. The most common type of structure for professional development is a workshop format where teachers sit and listen to learn new content and skills. This has been shown to have little to no impact on the ultimate goal of professional development: improving student achievement (Garet et al., 2001). Teachers report that workshops often have no influence

on classroom practices because the workshop information was not useful to them (Gulamhussein, 2013). Institutes, courses, and conferences are other traditional forms of professional development that share many of the features of workshops, in that they tend to take place outside of the teacher's school or classroom; and they involve a leader or leaders with special expertise and participants who attend at scheduled times (Garet et al., 2001).

Roy (2010) reported the effective components of professional development included the characteristics of being collaborative, sustained, job-embedded (occurring during the workday or work week), aligned student needs, to be based on data, aligned with rigorous curriculum, and continually supported in the classroom. Moreover, Roy reported that the workshop format resulted in little classroom implementation of the new practices (5-10%) unless teachers experience classroom-based coaching or follow-up (2010). Another research study examined the impact of online professional development courses on fifth-grade teacher pedagogical content knowledge and practices and student mathematical achievement. The results showed significant gains in teacher overall pedagogical content knowledge and practices. This confirms other research that intensive, sustained, and content-focused professional development can affect positive change in teacher practice (Marzano & Toth, 2013).

Tournaki et al. (2011) used Danielson's Observation Scale and measured teacher effectiveness based on the Framework for Professional Practice developed by Danielson (1996). The instrument captured information about a teacher's performance in the three domains which included planning and preparation, classroom environment, and instruction. Each participant was observed three times for 45-50 minutes each by the

same observer. Tournaki et al. studied the relationship between teacher participation in the professional development program and the three domains of teacher effectiveness. This study confirmed the fact that there is no quick and easy way to administer professional development, and it takes time for changes in teaching to occur as a result of professional development. Additionally, the study confirmed that professional development needs to be ongoing and last as long as 2-3 years in order to begin getting returns on its investment. Furthermore, 1-day models of workshops are inadequate, and teachers need coaching and feedback after sessions (Tournaki et al., 2011).

Learning Forward prepared a report identifying what various school and governmental bodies can do to assist educators to become instructional leaders (Easton, 2004). The report recommended that federal and state government and local districts adopt professional development policies targeted at upgrading the leadership capabilities of principals and teachers. Learning Forward also recommended that the state include increased funding for professional development opportunities, leadership networks or academies to provide coaching, improvement of the selection of principals, incorporation of professional development into school evaluations, and advancement of teacher leadership initiatives. Teacher professional development within a school is an area in which principals are expected to assist teachers to develop skills to become more effective in the classroom to increase student learning (Easton, 2004).

Teachers want high-quality professional learning that is meaningfully connected to their daily work and to the students they serve. Professional development should be informed by teacher self-assessments and evaluations. High-quality professional development focuses on improved student learning; is peer-reviewed; is job-embedded;

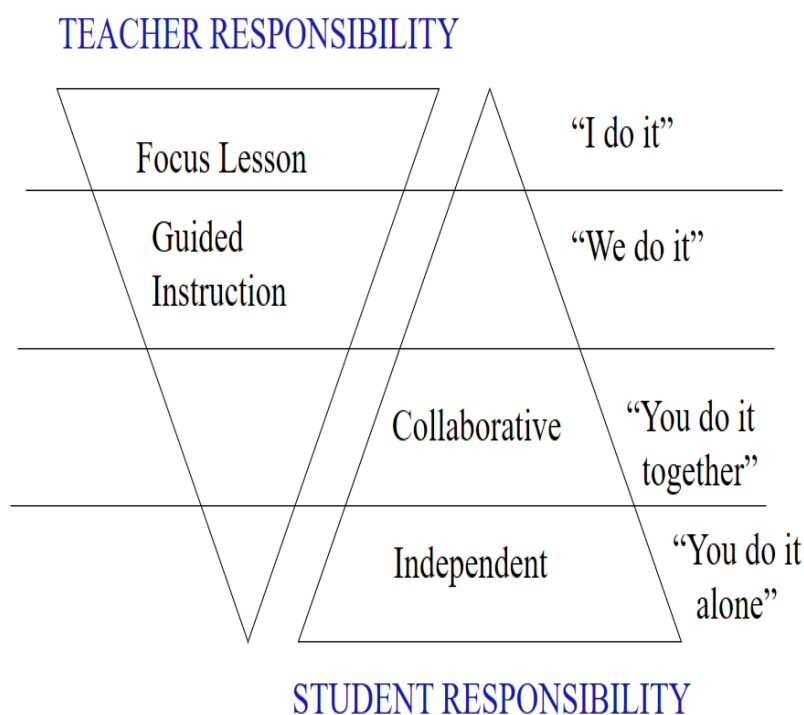
and is differentiated by career state, expertise, and other criteria (Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching, 2011).

In summary, professional development, sometimes referred to as staff development, in-service training, or training, and now transitioning to the term professional learning, remains a critical component in education. In decades past, professional development consisted of attendance at a conference, workshop, or meeting where the participant was expected to receive information and then apply it when returning to the classroom. Research reveals a myriad of standards to be considered in providing high-quality professional development; however, the most current research moves professional development into a new realm which includes a paradigm shift recognizing teachers as learners (Hirsh, 2013).

Gradual Release of Responsibility

The optimal outcome of the GRR for instruction is that students can independently apply what they have learned in unique situations. In order for this to happen, classrooms must be organized to purposefully and intentionally guide students toward mastery of a skill. Along these lines, educators must be intensely mindful of the instructional moves that assemble student tenacity and expertise. The rationale behind GRR is that teachers plan to move from providing extensive support to peer support to no support. Duke and Pearson (2002) suggested teachers have to move from assuming “all the responsibility for performing a task ... to a situation in which the students assume all of the responsibility” (p. 211). The GRR was originally developed for reading instruction and reflects the integration of several learning theories including Piaget’s (1952) cognitive structures and schemata; Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development;

Bandura's (1965) research on attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation; and Wood, Bruner, and Ross's (1976) work on scaffolded instruction. When put together, these theories commend learning occurs through intentional and specific interaction with others. As shown in Figure 2, a complete implementation of this model for GRR recognizes the recursive nature of learning and has teachers cycle purposefully through focused instruction, guided instruction, collaborative learning, and independent learning experiences (Fisher & Frey, 2014).



A Structure for Instruction that Works

Figure 2. A Structure for Instruction that Works. Retrieved from <https://www.fisherandfrey.com/resources/>

Focused instruction. The GRR has four components including focused

instruction. Focused instruction is the “I do” phase of the GRR. This phase includes establishing a clear lesson purpose and provides students with information about the ways in which a skilled thinker processes the information under discussion. The teacher explicitly focuses the student on the content, strategies, or skills by using the instructional strategies of direct explanation, modeling or demonstrating, and think-aloud. The teacher carries the demand of the cognitive load during this phase of the GRR. Focused instruction is typically completed with the whole class and lasts long enough to clearly establish the purpose and ensure that students have a model from which to work. Focused instruction does not have to occur at the beginning of the lesson; the GRR is cyclical as a teacher might assume the responsibility several times during the lesson to reestablish its purpose and provide more examples of expert thinking. Focused instruction is not the time when a teacher simply tells students facts. The key to focused instruction is the teacher explaining and modeling metacognitive thinking (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

Fisher and Frey (2014) stated, “Identifying a goal or target for a learner increases the likelihood that the student is set up for success” (p. 3). A learning target serves as the means for keeping students on track of their learning. The learning target clearly establishes the purpose for the lesson. Typically, the learning target is accomplished both verbally and visually through a discussion of the statement posted on the board. Teachers return to the learning target during the lesson and use it at the end of the lesson to see if the task was accomplished (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Marzano (2013) claimed that learning targets helped teachers and students see a task more clearly. Marzano stated, “Any system that organizes statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do

enhances student learning because it provides clarity to students and teachers alike” (p. 83).

Moss and Brookhart (2012) explained how learning targets were useful for both students and teachers:

Learning targets are student-friendly descriptors-via words, pictures, actions, or some combination of the three – of what you intend students to learn or accomplish in a given lesson. When shared meaningfully, they become actual targets that students can see and direct their efforts toward. They also serve as targets for the adults in the school whose responsibility it is to plan, monitor, assess, and improve the quality of learning opportunities. (p. 9)

Learning targets clarify for both teachers and students the surplus of curricular components, which hinders, at times, effective instruction and thorough coverage (Moss & Brookhart, 2012).

Wyers (2015) investigated the effectiveness of using learning targets throughout the curriculum by teachers as they promote instructional alignment to ensure student learning. Additionally, the study attempted to determine the teachers’ understanding of learning targets in the curriculum and their perceptions of the effectiveness of these as learning strategies to assist students in improving their academic achievement. The study implemented the use of a survey questionnaire and recorded interviews with grade-level chairs and the building administrator to elicit teacher perceptions about the use of learning targets in curriculum planning and instruction as well as perceptions of their effectiveness towards advancing student achievement. Through teacher perceptions and feedback about the usage and effectiveness of learning targets, future decisions about

curriculum and instruction may be better informed and professional development further advanced. The staff members participated in three 45-minute workshops during the first quarter of the school year to support the implementation of learning targets. Before and after all three workshops, attendees were asked to complete three self-assessments and answer open-ended questions. Additionally, the researcher held interviews with participants from Grades K-5 and the building principal about their grade-level efforts toward implementation and the overall effectiveness of the use of learning targets (Wyers, 2015).

Wyers (2015) concluded that teachers perceived a significant difference in student classroom engagement, comprehension, and achievement following the use of learning targets in their curriculum and instructional strategies. Ninety-three percent of the teachers confirmed that learning targets had a meaningful impact on student learning in the classroom; 100% of the teachers believed that learning targets helped to increase student understanding of knowledge and skills; and 93% of the teachers believed that learning targets enhance student learning in the classroom (Wyers, 2015).

Moreover, Wyers (2015) revealed that teachers understood the purpose of learning targets in their lesson planning and instructional delivery. The participant responses on the open-ended survey expressed teacher plans to increase usage and implementation of learning targets following the study. Most teachers stated they displayed learning targets regularly and felt learning targets clarified and increased focus on learning goals. Teachers acknowledge the importance of providing students a meaningful performance of understanding. Teachers reported students' increased interest and engagement in the learning goal motivated by reaching the target. Teachers

described increase collaboration and partnership with their students (Wyers, 2015).

Fisher and Frey (2010) stated, “Students learn more when they have the opportunity to listen to how the teacher thinks and solves problems” (p. 58). Teachers expose their thinking to demonstrate how they use their own background knowledge, consolidate knowledge, and notice the phenomenon of learning. The teacher’s use of think-alouds procedure is an example of how expertise is shared in the classroom. Students deserve to experience the curriculum from an expert’s perspective. This provides students with an opportunity to imitate the expert thinking similar to an apprentice when learning a new skill. Additionally, Fisher and Frey (2010) stated, “Teachers regularly use modeling and demonstration to show students how a skill, a strategy, or a concept is used” (p. 58). High-quality modeling and think-alouds include naming a strategy or skill, stating the purpose of the strategy or skill, using “I” statements, demonstrating how the strategy or skill is used, alerting the learner to errors, and assessing the usefulness of the strategy or skill. Harvey and Goudvis (2007) stated the modeling of the teacher should be brief and clear; and instructional time should be given for students to practice the strategies as the teacher provides assistance, assesses the progress, and modifies instruction. The focus of the GRR is to shift the metacognition from focused, teacher directed to student directed (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007).

Fisher, Frey, and Lapp (2010) worked with a large county in the western United States to identify 25 expert teachers representing 25 different schools within the school district. The observers additionally observed other classroom teachers to establish interobserver reliability among the researchers. Each expert teacher was observed three times by two researchers. The teachers were observed while they conducted a shared

reading and think-aloud with their students. The researchers collected field notes in order to identify the components of a shared reading and think-aloud lesson. After the observations were complete, a random stratified sample of six teachers was invited to participate in either individual or group interviews by the researchers in an attempt to better understand the teacher's planning and practice. The sample included one teacher from each of Grades 3-8. Each interview focused on the components and frequency of shared reading lessons and the process used to determine the focus of the lesson. The researchers used a comparative method and identified the major areas of instruction and coded the data for subtypes. The interview data were used to extend the observed findings by providing teacher examples and rationale for specific behaviors. The findings of the study included teachers using modeling through shared reading should be based on an identified purpose. Teachers knew why they had selected the particular piece of text and what it could be used for. Oftentimes, the modeling included reading comprehension strategies such as building background knowledge, making inferences, summarizing, predicting, and evaluating the text.

Maynes, Julien-Schultz, and Dunn (2010) conducted a study to examine the relationship between theory and classroom practice in the use of modeling as an instructional strategy. The purpose for the examination was to decide whether modeling, trailed by structured and scaffold practice and the GRR approach, was being utilized as a part of classrooms and in the rate of the utilization of demonstrating as an instructional strategy. Furthermore, the focus of the study was examining the actual practice of the use of modeling in classrooms (Maynes et al., 2010).

The methodology of the study included working with teachers in one mid-

northern Ontario school to review the use of an observation tool in the in-service context. Three teachers were observed for 5 days over 3 weeks by two researchers. The focus of the classroom observation included: How much time are teachers spending modeling? What are they modeling? How are they managing the GRR? During the observations, the researchers recorded anecdotal field notes in a chart headed by the three questions. The amount of time each teacher spent on modeling was recorded in minutes. The observations were then analyzed to determine the trends and patterns to form generalizations (Maynes et al., 2010).

The study found that teachers had spent an average of 20.4% of their classroom time modeling new learning for students. Modeling was used in a variety of subject areas. It was noted teachers modeled processes, products, or values. Additionally, incidences of modeling were highly energized and supported with technology and visual aids. Maynes et al. (2010) noted that although modeling was observed as an intentional instructional practice, the instructional time following modeling was not always related to the modeling. The analysis revealed the majority of modeling was of process skills or specific products. Teachers used modeling to show students how to do something. The purpose of the modeling was often not explicitly stated, nor clear. Teachers did not consistently tell students that they would be responsible for using what was modeled in upcoming work. Not all modeling led to practice opportunities of what was modeled. Some practice activities were directly connected to modeling, yet they often provided severely limited amounts of time before summative evaluation. It was noted that the conceptualized GRR was often not observed (Maynes et al., 2010).

The conclusions of the study were stated as teachers were using modeling as an

instructional approach; however, it was noted that modeling should be followed by scaffolded practice. This practice should then be followed by GRR so the student can practice independently in new contexts. The observations revealed that in actual implementation, teachers may be unclear about the nature of the practice that needs to follow modeling and how they should support this practice. It was evident that teachers need more professional learning and support with implementing the GRR in their classroom practice. Maynes et al. (2010) concluded,

There appears to be a significant gap between teachers' conceptual understanding of the role of modeling their understanding and the role of structured, scaffolded practice that is followed by a gradual release of responsibility after modeling.

Although teachers may articulate the sequential relationship between the phases of instruction, they do not consistently follow these phases in lessons. (pp. 73-74)

Guided instruction. Guided instruction is the phase in GRR where the cognitive load begins to shift from the teacher to the student. During this phase, teachers use questions, prompts, and cues to provide a scaffold of support when needed, so students can show mastery of a skill (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Teachers strategically use questions, prompts, and cues to guide students to increasingly complex thinking and facilitate students' increased responsibility for task completion. Guided instruction can be done whole class, with small groups, or with individual students. Guided instruction is not a classroom structure or routine but a set of teacher behaviors that ensure student learning. Guided instruction requires necessary moves by the expert teacher based on student responses of the questions that are asked. It is the teacher expertise that matters, as the teacher has to know when to use questions, prompts, or cues or go back to direct

explanation to get the learner to learn (Frey & Fisher, 2010b).

Frey and Fisher (2010a) conducted a study in an urban school district of 1,400 teachers. Eighteen classrooms had at least 50% of the students qualified for free lunch, and 35% of the students were English learners. Over a 9-week period, 67 observations were completed where teachers were observed at least three times. Data included field notes on small group guided instruction, teacher and student verbal and nonverbal communication, and the use of leveled books for guided reading. The school district identified this structure as their balanced literacy curriculum based on the GRR. The study revealed four distinct teacher moves to scaffold student understanding: questioning, prompting cognitive and metacognitive work, cues to focus the learner's attention, and direct explanations or modeling when the learner continued to struggle (Frey & Fisher, 2010a). Recommendations from this study included breaking down the process into phases. First steps included noticing when the teacher was asking appropriate questions, offering cues, and providing prompts. Other suggestions included recording one of the lessons learned from the professional development and capturing the teacher taking it one step at a time to engage students in the ownership of their learning (Frey & Fisher, 2010a).

Frey and Fisher (2010b) developed a categorical system based on their own teaching, thousands of hours observing classroom teachers, and reviews of published research on quality teaching. The system has four parts including questioning to check for understanding; prompting to facilitate students' cognitive processing; cueing to shift the students' attention to focus on specific information, errors, or partial understandings; and direct explanation when students do not have sufficient knowledge to complete the

task. This system became known as the Instructional Decision-Making Tree as seen in Figure 3 (Frey & Fisher, 2010b).

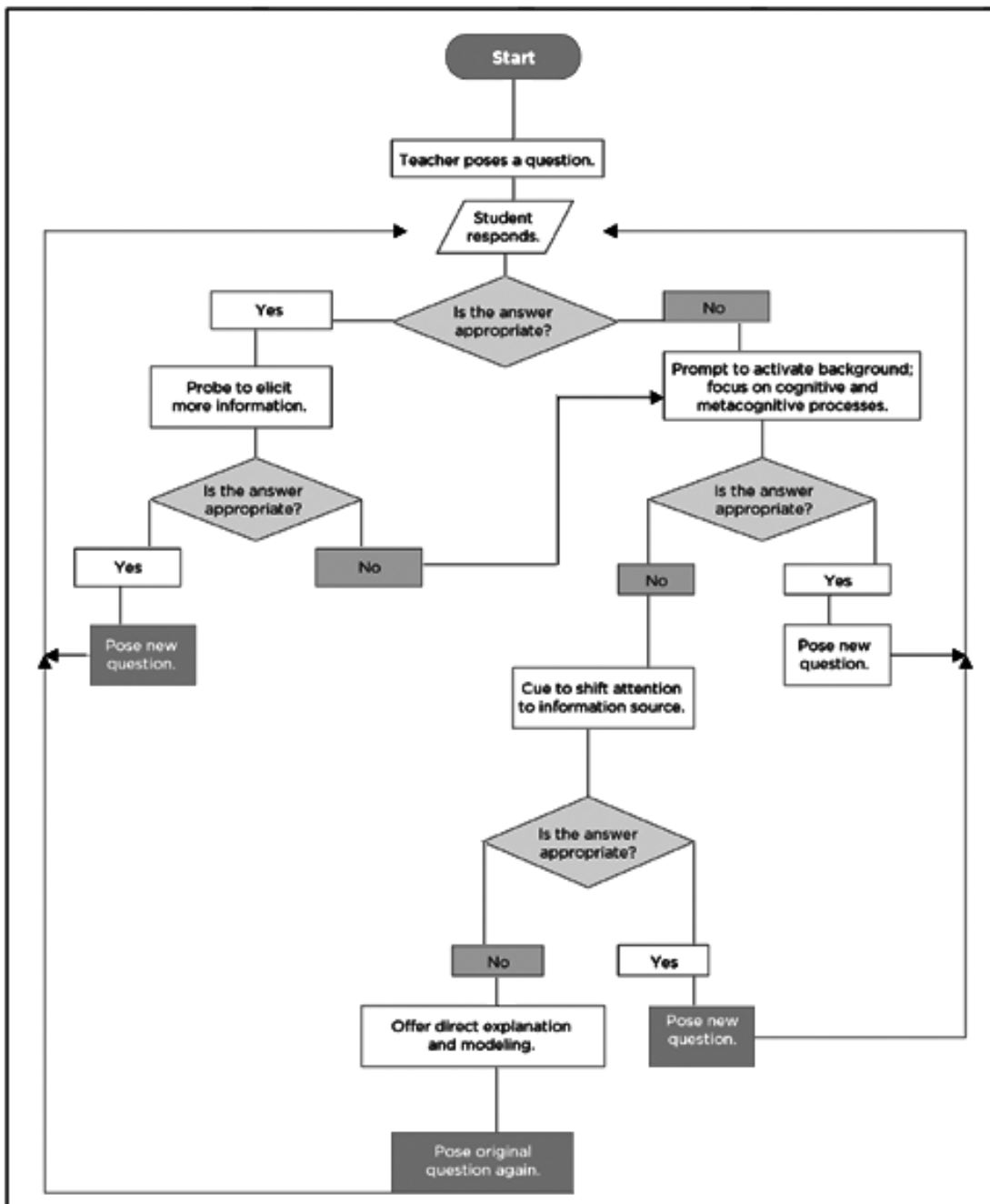


Figure 3. Instructional Decision-Making Tree. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/111017/chapters/Questioning-to-Check-for-Understanding.aspx>

Checking for understanding is the foundation of guided instruction. A teacher's instructional decision-making is pivotal in providing the appropriate scaffold of support at just the right instructional time. Figure 3 shows the decision-making flowchart for making instructional moves during guided instruction based on how students respond to a question. Questions during guided instruction are the starting point for further questions, prompts, and cues. Instructional decision-making is the art and science of teaching that combines the knowledge that comes from closely observed learning events with the technical tools and research used in classrooms (Frey & Fisher, 2010b). Much of this information teachers gather happens during guided instruction in the form of questioning. Teachers pose questions for the purpose of figuring out what students know and do not know (Fisher et al., 2010).

During guided instruction, the teacher and student discourse begins with the element of questioning. There is great importance on the quality of the question that is posed (Frey & Fisher, 2010b). Cazden (1988) reported that many teachers use the common classroom pattern known as Initiate-Respond-Evaluate (I-R-E). In the I-R-E questioning cycle, the teacher asks a question, elicits a response, evaluates the quality of the answer, and moves on to the next cycle. The I-R-E cycle does not always uncover a misconception in learning and most questions are the lower level that leads to only a recall of facts. The I-R-E routine does not allow for interactive classroom discussions, student-generated questions, or even teacher-guided supports for student mastery learning (Durkin, 1978). In order to support teachers with questioning, Fisher and Frey (2014) developed a matrix of the 6 Types of Questions to Determine Student Knowledge, found in Figure 4.

Types of Questions to Determine Student Knowledge

Type of Question	Purpose	Examples
Elicitation	To unearth misconceptions and check for factual knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who...? • What...? • When...? • Where...? • Why...? • How...?
Divergent	To discover how the student uses existing knowledge to formulate new understandings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does water look blue in a lake, but clear in a glass? • Do good governments and bad governments have anything in common?
Elaboration	To extend the length and complexity of the response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me more about that?
Clarification	To gain further details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you show me where you found that information? • Why did you choose that answer?
Heuristic	To determine the learner's ability to problem solve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you set up this word problem? • If I were looking for information about spring in this book, where could I look? • How do you know when you have run out of ways to answer this question?
Inventive	To stimulate imaginative thought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you could, what advice would you give to Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo? • Who would you recommend this book to?
<p>Frey, N., & Fisher, D. (2010b). Identifying instructional moves during guided learning. <i>The Reading Teacher</i>, 64(2). © 2010 by the International Reading Association. Adapted with permission.</p>		

Figure 4. Types of Questions to Determine Student Knowledge. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/111017/chapters/Questioning-to-Check-for-Understanding.asp>

Frey and Fisher (2010b) developed Figure 4 to ensure robust questions were being asked during guided instruction.

A robust question is one that is crafted to find out more about what students know, how they use information, and why any confusion may lie. A robust question sets up subsequent instruction because it provides information needed to further prompt, cue, or explain and model. (Frey & Fisher, 2010b, p. 23)

In keeping with the GRR model, the intention is that students are still at the beginning stage of learning and have not mastered the skill. If students can answer robust questions, they are ready to refine their understanding during collaborative learning assignments (Frey & Fisher, 2010b). Teacher questioning is used to probe for deeper understanding and can be used in the metacognitive process as students check in and monitor their understanding of a text or concept (Miller, 2002).

Flippone (1998) examined the types of questions teachers were asking in their classroom to promote critical thinking. During this study, 12 kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers recorded three reading lessons in 4 weeks. The lessons were examined and data were taken on the types of questions the teachers asked. The results indicated that teachers used varying types of questions to support students with their thinking. The study resulted in teachers asking a higher percentage of higher level questions during instruction.

Jones (2012) studied the questioning practices used by general education teachers during small group reading comprehension instruction where students with learning disabilities were included. More specifically, the study sought to determine how often teachers used reading comprehension questions, what types of questions are asked, and

how teachers follow up to students' incorrect or incomplete responses to reading comprehension questions. The participants included general educators who taught small group reading instruction to fourth or fifth graders. The qualitative study involved audiotaping each teacher's small group reading instruction on two separate occasions. Additionally, Jones directly observed and took field notes on instruction and contextual factors. The study resulted in teachers asking a high rate of questions during instruction. Approximately two thirds of the questions focused on reading comprehension. The types of questions asked depended on the teacher and varied considerably. The most frequent types of question asked were literal questions; and the next two most common types were inferential questions and divergent, formulating questions. The results indicated teachers using a variety of scaffolding strategies including prompts, cues, models, and explanations.

Frey and Fisher (2010b) defined prompts as, "statements made by the teacher to focus students on the cognitive and metacognitive processes needed to complete a learning task" (p. 38). Prompts are focused on getting the student to do the cognitive and metacognitive work required to complete the test. Frey and Fisher (2010b) stated, "Questioning is about assessment; prompting is about doing" (p. 38). Prompts belong in two categories: cognitive and metacognitive. A cognitive prompt is intended to trigger academic, factual, and procedural information to complete a task. A metacognitive prompt requires students to consider ways to problem solve and reflect on their learning (Frey & Fisher, 2010b).

Rodgers (2004) used a qualitative case study approach and observed two teachers over a 12-week period during literacy tutoring sessions. The findings revealed the

effective use of scaffolding used by two literacy teachers. For this study, scaffolding was described as the instructional decisions teachers must make on a moment-by-moment basis about the kind of help and the amount of help to provide students during instruction. The study revealed the complexity of the teacher's role during guided instruction and the ability to scaffold the learning process for students learning to read. The study reported the teacher's role in deciding which errors to attend to and the level of help (questions, prompts, or cues) to provide. Furthermore, the study concluded that multilevel decision-making is complicated because students make various types of errors. Rodgers's data suggested that teachers should provide students with opportunities to make errors. Provoking or noticing these errors provides the teacher with the opportunity to prompt, cue, or explain. Rodgers also noted the errors must be balanced, because too few errors suggest the task is too easy and scaffolds are not needed; and too many errors can be "counterproductive to the learning process because the student's engagement and contribution to the problem solving would likely diminish" (p. 526). Furthermore, the data reflected real-time teaching and the difficulty in making split-second decisions about which actions to take from questions to direct explanation. The teachers in the study were able to make decisions because they had developed an expertise that allowed them to recognize the struggles and draw from a variety of instructional strategies that would help students be successful. Effective teachers must make many decisions almost instantaneously during guided instruction with students to ensure mastery of a skill (Rodgers 2004).

Frey and Fisher (2010b) defined cues as, "the means we use to shift the learners' attention to a source of information that will increase their understanding, or highlight an

error or a misunderstanding” (p. 72). Cues used during instruction can include visual, verbal, gestural, physical, and environmental. Cues differ from prompts, in that they are more direct and specific. Cues oftentimes follow prompts, especially if the prompt has not been strong enough for the learner to locate a correct or complete response.

Conderman and Hedin (2015) studied the use of cue cards in a middle school inclusion classroom setting to support all learners. For this study, cue cards provided support for all students. The information on the cards included no more than seven reminders or written steps for instructional procedures. The cue cards were used as reminders when students needed support. The teachers differentiated their use for students by adjusting the number of steps, vocabulary, amount of detail, and types of visuals used on the cards. The cue cards provided a structure to support a student’s deficit skill area or areas. The cards provided structure for students who were unorganized, needed memory cues, or reminders for self-monitoring systems. Additionally, use of the cue cards supported students with self-monitoring and self-regulation while learning. The study concluded the flexible instructional tool offered various supports to students. As a part of a teacher’s instructional routines, the cue cards are one tool used that helped students meet rigorous academic standards.

The use of cues in learning shows that they have a positive effect on retention and transfer of information. Teachers can use a number of cues to focus student attention. Oftentimes, cues are paired with prompts to ensure students have the scaffolds they need to master a skill (deKoning, Tabbers, Rikers, & Paas, 2009).

Collaborative learning. During the collaborative instruction phase of the GRR, students are expected to apply the skills and knowledge they have been taught and work

with their peers for support and enrichment. The interaction between peers moves the learning forward and students begin to develop and use personal skills to strengthen communication and leadership skills (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Regardless of the subject matter, students learn more and retain information longer when they work collaboratively. Students who work in collaborative groups appear more satisfied with their classes, complete more assignments, and generally like school better (Summers, 2006).

Theorist Lev Vygotsky (1978) stated that all learning is the product of sociocultural phenomena mediated by interactions with others. These social interactions form the learners' view of the world. Therefore, collaboration with peers becomes a fundamental part of the learning process of students. Vygotsky identified both the teacher and peers as important in the learning process (Cain, 2012). Vygotsky contributed to education the concept of the *zone of proximal development* which described tasks a learner can complete successfully with nominal assistance. Students who assist one another in completing a task that otherwise may be too difficult for either to complete alone are considered to be working within their zone of proximal development. The power of peer-to-peer learning has been documented in the research on effective instruction and lies at the heart of all academic discussions. According to Frey, Fisher, and Everlove (2009), when students are provided the opportunity to work collaboratively on a task, they are able to clarify one another's understanding, explore possible solutions, analyze concepts, and create new products. Additionally, collaborative learning is an ideal opportunity for the teacher to observe learning as it takes place through listening to the problem-solving strategies students use as they

wrestle with concepts, skills, and ideas (Frey et al., 2009).

Cooperative learning has been used in the elementary, secondary, and graduate level with positive learning results. Slavin (1980) stated, “Cooperative learning refers to classroom techniques in which students work on learning activities in small groups and receive recognition based on their group’s performance” (p. 315). Cooperative learning is not to be confused with traditional group work. It has specific components with outcome goals, and every member of the group has a unique role within the group to fulfill. There is no competition within the group; rather, a cohesiveness which forms as the group produces work together. The group working together is just as important in the learning process, as the group shares the workload and begins to work as one team. Motivation builds for all students as they succeed or fail together. The motivation strengthens the bonds within the group and among team members regardless of personality and cultural differences (Slavin, 1980).

Hancock (2004) found that cooperative learning groups performed significantly higher than control groups in 29 classrooms. The study involved graduate students during a semester course which was investigating the effects of peer orientation on achievement and motivation. The students were exposed to cooperative learning practices that involved “face-to-face positive interaction, positive interdependence, individual accountability enforced by group members, collaborative skills, and group processing” (Hancock, 2004, p. 159). The students were also observed to value the cooperative learning process more than they valued the learning. The relationships between students were enhanced as well as the relationship with the teacher. Engagement of both the instructor and the learner was achieved and students who worked

in groups appeared to be more motivated than students who worked alone (Hancock, 2004).

Peterson and Miller (2004) completed a study with 113 undergraduate education majors who worked in cooperative learning groups while learning content material for a project in a psychology class. Different instructors used the same syllabus, and the students were placed in groups of five to seven students each. The cooperative learning structure Jigsaw was used to allow for the face-to-face interaction. The Jigsaw cooperative learning structure helps students create their own learning. Teachers arrange students in groups. Each group member is assigned a different piece of information. Group members then join with members of other groups assigned the same piece of information to complete an assigned task. Eventually, students return to their original groups and put the “pieces together” in a clear picture of the topic assigned. Student experiences and perceptions during this study were measured while in the cooperative learning group and again in the large, whole-class group. In their study, Peterson and Miller (2004) found that the overall quality of experience was greater during cooperative learning; benefits occurred specifically for thinking on the task, student engagement, perception of tasks importance, and optimal levels of challenge and skill. The researchers discovered that students were more engaged during cooperative learning and perceived that their learning task during cooperative learning was more important than during large group instruction. The implication for teachers is that carefully designed and monitored cooperative learning tasks that help students achieve future goals help students engage more actively in their learning experiences (Peterson & Miller, 2004).

Robinson (2012) completed a qualitative phenomenological design, including a

sample of experienced teachers, to explore their perceptions regarding cooperative learning training and use in the classroom. Experienced teachers (those who had taught 5 or more years) participated in multiple cooperative learning trainings and then implemented the structures in their classrooms. Additionally, the study explored individual's definitions of cooperative learning, prior trainings, use, and experience with cooperative learning, the frequency of use, and perceived impact on students. Data collection for the study included cooperative learning training sessions, 6 weeks of classroom observations of each participant, and participant interviews. The study found participants perceived the use of cooperative learning structures in the classroom as a positive experience. Furthermore, the teachers felt the use of cooperative learning in their classrooms had positive effects on their students. It was noted that student engagement increased, students took greater ownership of their learning, and students increased in their communication skills (Robinson, 2012).

Heath (2010) completed a quantitative study on 10 kindergarten through ninth grade teachers' perceptions of cooperative learning before and after a training session. The teacher participants participated in a 1-day, 60-minute training session on cooperative learning. The training session included information on how to implement cooperative learning using the 3-part lesson plan. The participants completed a pre and postsurvey called the Cooperative Learning Implementation Questionnaire. Three main components were examined including worth, perceived costs, and whether or not teachers felt they would successfully accomplish the goal of implementing cooperative learning in their classrooms. The study resulted in no significant evidence that professional development focusing on cooperative learning changed teacher perceptions of

cooperative learning instructional strategy. The study recommended that teachers may need exposure to different ways of implementing cooperative learning in the classroom. Additionally, it was noted that longer and targeted training was needed to increase teacher efficacy with the cooperative learning strategies.

In a study conducted by Vaughn et al. (2011), the reading and understanding of difficult texts was the assertion for analyzing seventh- and eighth-grade students enrolled in a collaborative English/language arts class in three school districts in Texas and Colorado. Students were randomly assigned to classes. Eight hundred sixty-six students comprised the 27 comparison and 34 treatment classes. Students were given a pretest resulting with no significant differences. Teachers were trained on how to teach students in cooperative learning groups using the collaborative strategic model. Students in the treatment classes received the intervention strategy for 50 minutes, 2 days a week, for 18 weeks. Students were given assessments four times during the study. The students in the treatment group scored notably higher on the reading comprehension test than did students in classes where cooperative learning structures were not implemented (Vaughn et al., 2011).

In a study of fourth graders using computers to complete an assigned project (Chen & Chuang, 2011), students were placed in groups that were divided evenly among three different learning formats: individual, groups with open-ended discussion, and groups with a cooperative problem-based discussion format. The collaborative problem-based groups were required to work together. Half of each team consisted of students who were proficient in the content and the other half of the team was not proficient. The knowledge levels were based on a 30-minute pretest given in a regular classroom before

the study. Each group received the same unit of instructional materials and the same unit test. The unit test consisted of questions based on the students' understanding of the subject matter and the learning environment. Students in the cooperative problem-based discussion format preferred that format and excelled in comparison to students using computers individually and to students working with an open-ended discussion task (Chen & Chuang, 2011). The researchers affirmed that the outcome supported the assumption that through cooperative problem-based discussion strategies, student learning skills are promoted, especially problem-solving skills, because students are exposed to multiple solutions for difficult problems (Chen & Chuang, 2011).

Teacher beliefs and attitudes towards collaborative learning can influence the success of their students. Third- and fourth-grade students, along with their teachers, were observed during a study conducted in a private primary school in Thailand (Nuntrakune & Nason, 2009). Thirty-six girls and 28 boys from mid to high socioeconomic backgrounds with mixed academic ability were participants in the study. The third-grade teacher had 9 years of experience and was open to using cooperative learning. The fourth-grade teacher had 6 years of experience and did not believe her competitive students would be successful in working in groups. The two teachers participated for 1.5 weeks in professional development that consisted of five different cooperative learning sessions based on theory, application, and implementation. Before the beginning of the study, the students were trained for 2 weeks in social skills needed to participate in cooperative groups. The students then participated in learning experiences including three cooperative learning lessons a week for 6 weeks. During the lessons, the students and teachers were observed. At the completion of the study, interviews were

used to survey teacher and student attitudes toward cooperative learning groups. All third-grade students stated the group had facilitated their learning. Only the academically low and middle achieving fourth-grade students had the same belief. The observer suspected their belief aligned with the observation that the third-grade teacher was better at encouraging her students to use their newly attained social skills and at modeling appropriate behavior, though most all students appeared to understand and were able to make evident the concept of interdependence among group members (Nuntrakune & Nason, 2009).

Research on cooperative learning shows that “in general, then, organizing students in cooperative learning groups has a powerful effect on learning, regardless of whether groups compete with one another” (Marzano, Pickering & Pollock, 2001, p. 87). The collaborative learning environment, rather than competitive by-product, may promote social growth as well as academic gains among all students, therefore producing a positive outcome for both teacher and student. Researchers and educators continue to validate cooperative learning as an effective instructional strategy in educating our students (Hattie, 2009). Marzano and Brown (2009) discovered that the more connected and engaged students are in their own learning, the deeper their understanding of concepts. Furthermore, when teachers utilize cooperative learning groups and shared experiences to increase student engagement, it results in dynamic learning environments (Marzano & Brown, 2009). Fisher and Frey (2014) stated, “Collaborative learning provides a critical bridge in student learning because it allows novice learners to refine their thinking about new concepts and skills” (p. 95).

Independent learning. Independent learning is the critical part in the GRR

where the student focuses on the application of the skill taught. The cognitive load now shifts to the student. Fisher and Frey (2014) stated, “A common misconception about independent learning is that the ultimate goal is for the student to replicate what has been taught” (p. 97). Key features of independent learning include metacognition and self-regulation. Furthermore, it is important to recognize the teacher’s role during independent learning. The teacher should notice ongoing student performance and provide feedback. Feedback occurs during independent learning, not solely at the end of it (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

Fisher et al. (2016) stated, “The first question to pose of an independent task is whether or not it promotes metacognition” (p. 160). The awareness of one’s own learning evolves over a lifetime, and the habit is developed through opportunities to think about one’s own thinking. The National Research Council’s (2000) committee on developments in the science of learning found that metacognitive approaches to instruction help people take control of their own learning, recognize when they need more information, use strategies they need to assess their own learning, and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Hattie and Temperley (2007) stated, “Self-regulation involves an interplay between commitment, control, and confidence. It addresses the way students monitor, direct, and regulate actions toward the learning goal” (p. 93). Self-regulation involves “Self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals” (Zimmerman, 2000, p. 14).

Fisher and Frey (2014) stated, “Ability is built on skill, and students need to be taught how to think about their own thinking (metacognition) and how to act upon their

learning (self-regulation)” (p. 98). Students work through four questions to encourage self-talk to regulate their learning. These questions include the following: What am I trying to accomplish? What strategies am I using? How well do I use these strategies? and What else could I do? Students need to learn how to plan, prepare, determine a strategy, and monitor the execution of their plan during the independent phase (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

Hattie (2009) reported a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses, involving 450,000 effect sizes from 180,000 studies on student achievement. The analysis included more than 100 factors influencing student achievement. The average effect of schooling was .40. The average effect size for feedback was .79. Feedback fell in Hattie’s (2009) top five of the highest 10 influences on student achievement. The effect sizes reported in the feedback meta-analyses, however, showed variability indicating some types of feedback are more powerful than others. The studies showing the highest effect sizes involved students receiving information feedback about a task and how to do it more effectively. Through this research, Hattie and Timperley (2007) identified three phases of a comprehensive formative assessment system: feed up, feedback, and feed forward, as shown in Figure 5.

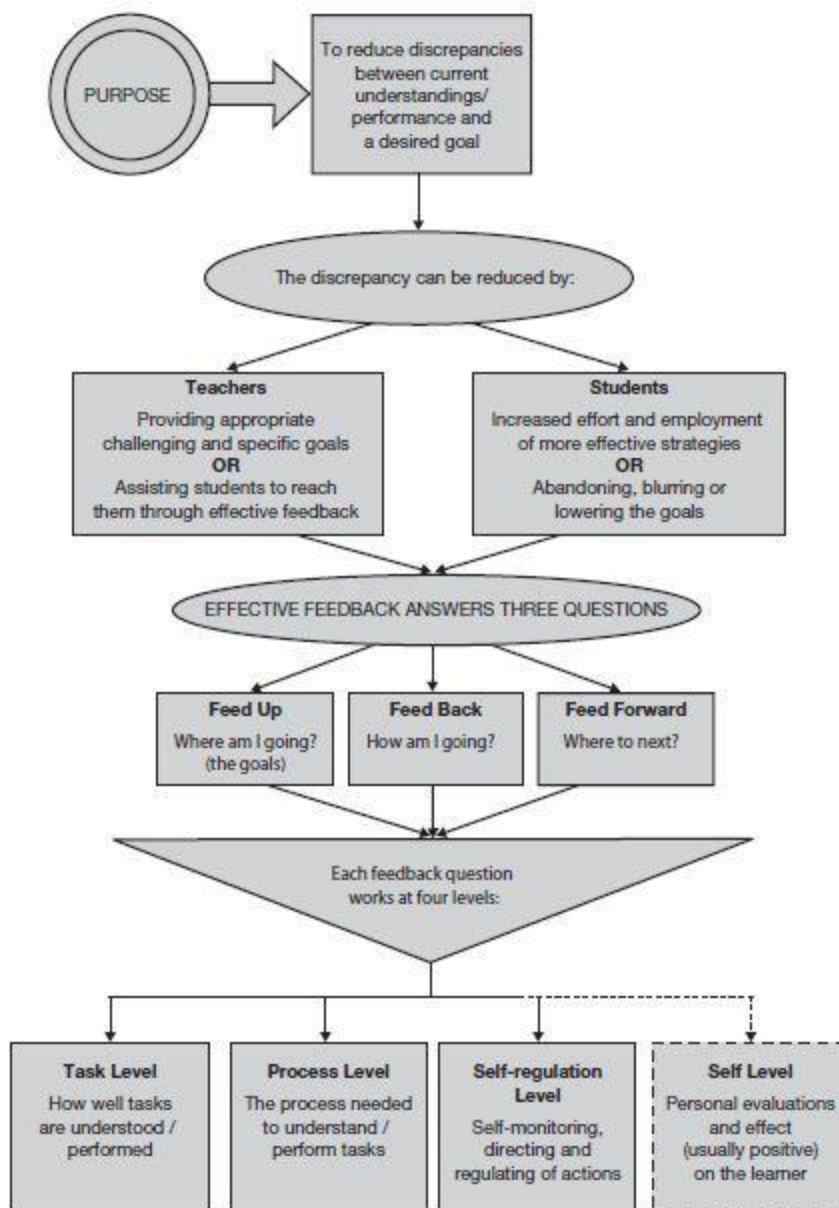


Figure 5. A Model of Feedback. Retrieved from <https://www.slideserve.com/macon/john-hattie-s-visible-learning>

The model in Figure 5 illustrates providing feedback to students and gaining feedback from them. The students' work, their understanding, questions, misconceptions, and errors on a topic are all feedback the teacher receives from students. The feed up involves establishing a learning target. Feedback relates to the individual

responses students receive from teachers. The best feedback provides students with information about their progress or success and what course of action they can take to improve their learning to meet the expected standard. Feed forward uses student data to plan instruction. Teachers examine student work from a common formative assessment and use the information to plan instruction and intervention. The main purpose of feedback is to reduce the discrepancies between current understandings and performance of a goal (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Fisher et al. (2016) reported that feedback “should remain constant-to progressively close the gap between present and desired performance” (p. 80). Harvey and Goudvis (2007) noted that receiving feedback from the teacher and other students is an important part of independent practice. Furthermore, it was noted that students need multiple opportunities to engage in a variety of texts such as independent reading time, book clubs, literature circles, and written response journals to strengthen their own learning strategies.

Jitendra, Hoppes, and Xin (2000) described the GRR in their study of main idea comprehension for students with learning difficulties. Specifically, students in the experimental group received instruction which included focused instruction, small group guided instruction, and independent practice. The students in a control group received traditional reading instruction emphasizing decoding and comprehension activities. The researchers found in this study that the GRR of the main idea strategy enhanced student performance of students with reading difficulties with a pretest mean score of 10.06 to a mean posttest score of 16.94 on a researcher-created main idea assessment. In comparison, the control group had a mean score of 8.47 and a posttest score of 6.20,

actually decreasing their score. This study concluded that with the full implementation of all phases of the GRR, students read and comprehend independently with higher success rates. The study also reported that after the experimental conditions ended, the students in the experimental group continued to grow in their independent reading levels (Jitendra et al., 2000).

Grootenhuis (2007) explored the effects of using the GRR method to improve the synthesis abilities of 14 second-grade students during specific instruction involving modeled, shared, guided, and independent practice of the synthesis strategy using authentic children's literature. The teacher specifically addressed synthesizing and interpreting the author's message using the GRR. After students had multiple opportunities to engage with various text types, they began to apply the strategy during independent reading by completing a graphic organizer to demonstrate their understanding. The Diagnostic Reading Assessment was the tool used to gather pre and postinstruction data. At the beginning of the study, only five students were at the independent or advanced level of interpreting the author's message of a given text. After 8 weeks of explicit instruction, the results confirmed that 12 students scored within the independent or advanced level after the instruction (Grootenhuis 2007).

The independent learning phase of the GRR provides teachers with opportunities to notice and check student progress. It also ensures students receive feedback to refine and deepen their own understanding (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

Summary

A fundamental part of instruction and student learning is certifying that teachers focus on processes and procedures that facilitate effective learning from varied

instructional strategies. Not one instructional strategy can guarantee effectiveness in every classroom situation; however, where research has identified effective practices, most professionals agree that educators should apply those practices and assess their effectiveness on student learning in their classroom. The GRR includes four recursive phases: focused instruction, guided instruction, collaborative learning, and independent learning. The GRR provides a scaffold of support to help students master the skills necessary in schools today.

Chapter 3 describes and discusses the methodology used in this study to investigate the impact on teacher self-efficacy and the perceptions to enhance student learning of the GRR Instructional Framework professional development sessions. Chapter 4 presents the findings, while Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings in relation to the related literature. Additionally, Chapter 5 includes implications for future research and practice.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Improvements in teaching and learning are necessary to meet the current expectations of preparing students for college and career readiness (Johnson, 2009). Education in the United States requires more improvement than ever. According to research, a major component of continuous improvement is to promote continued professional learning experiences for teachers in an effort to refine their practice and design of instruction to increase student achievement (Hirsh, 2013; Learning Forward, 2017).

With the high demands in teaching, along with the utmost accountability in place, teachers have a need for tools to assist them in meeting these expectations. Research shows current models of professional development involve collaborative practices which allow teachers to be actively engaged in their own learning (Archibald et al., 2001; Gibbs, 2011; Learning Forward, 2017; Loveless, 2013; Tournaki et al., 2011).

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher perceptions on how the GRR professional development sessions impacted teacher self-efficacy and perceptions of the GRR on student learning. In a rural school district in North Carolina, K-12 teachers were selected by school administrators to participate in professional development sessions focused on implementing the GRR framework into instructional practice.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to determine the impact of the GRR Instructional Framework professional development on teacher self-efficacy:

1. What is the impact of the GRR Instructional Framework professional

development on teacher self-efficacy?

2. What are perceptions of the effectiveness of the GRR Instructional Framework to enhance student learning?

Research Design

There are three approaches to research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. According to Creswell (2014),

Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. (p. 4)

This type of research is usually conducted in face-to-face interviews, focus groups, or surveys, through open-ended questions designed to encourage the participants to share their views. It relies on human interactions and is conducted by the researcher visiting the participants to conduct the inquiry (Creswell, 2014).

The researcher was investigating to understand the impact of the GRR Framework professional development on teacher self-efficacy as well as their perceptions of the framework on student achievement. This study was qualitative in nature based on the social constructivist worldview theory (Creswell, 2014) where "meaning is constructed through individual and social process" (Lind, 2007, p. 4). Social constructivists strive to understand the world where they live and work, developing meaning from their experiences, and asking open-ended questions to determine how situations occur as they

do (Creswell, 2014). This qualitative study encompassed the open-ended questioning technique where participants in the professional development completed evaluations at the end of each session to measure the impact on self-efficacy. Additionally, participants were interviewed during focus group interviews by the researcher to gather the data needed to further measure impacts on self-efficacy and perceptions of student achievement.

Participants

School leaders from 19 schools selected two teachers to participate in six different cohort groups to receive in-depth professional learning about how to implement the GRR in their classroom practices. Overall, the participants represented over 20 years of teaching experience, and all 19 schools in the district were represented. Specific criteria were shared with the principals to assist in determining the appropriate teachers to participate in the professional development sessions. For each school, those criteria included a teacher who was willing to learn and improve their craft of teaching, read the book *Better Learning Through Structured Teaching*, and commit to being on time and present at all sessions. As a result, 188 teachers were selected to participate in the professional learning that occurred. These teachers were offered the opportunity to participate in the study. During the cohort training, teachers participated in five, half day professional development sessions. The group of teachers completed open-ended questions at the end of each professional development session to evaluate their level of efficacy and knowledge of the framework. The researcher used focus group interviews and summary professional learning evaluations to collect needed data.

Data Collection Procedures

The study was conducted in two parts in order to best address the two research questions. As a part of the professional development delivery process in the county, all teacher participants completed open-ended evaluation questions at the end of each professional development session. Data were collected from 181 teacher participants while they were enrolled in the GRR Framework Professional Development sessions. The purpose was to determine the self-efficacy teachers have with implementing the GRR in their classroom.

Upon proposal and Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Appendix A), the researcher drafted and sent a letter to the superintendent of the district to obtain permission to conduct the study within the school system (Appendix B). Once permission was granted, the researcher composed a letter to the participants which included a description of the proposed study, a request for their agreement to participate, an informed consent form (Creswell, 2014), and an inquiry for times to conduct focus group interviews. Pseudonyms were used to protect the confidentiality of the participants, thus allowing them to be candid and share honestly. The letter was sent to each participant via email. After the participants submitted their responses, the researcher used a random name generator to select participants for the focus group interviews, ensuring there were representatives from each grade span of K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The researcher organized six focus groups, two from each district within the county for equal distribution throughout the entire school system. Each focus group was limited to six to eight participants. The researcher developed a schedule for interview dates and times. Each participant received a second email with their scheduled interview times and

dates. Each participant received an additional reminder email with their scheduled interview information.

After all the focus group interviews were scheduled, the researcher traveled to various schools across the district and conducted the interviews and collected the data. Additionally, school administrators who completed the professional learning sessions were invited to participate in an administrator focus group. Participants were placed into focus groups consisting of various grade span teachers.

Instrumentation

Staying focused on the qualitative style of inquiry, the researcher used the professional development open-ended evaluation responses from the participants to evaluate the level of self-efficacy of the GRR. Additionally, the researcher conducted focus group interviews with all participants who agreed to participate in the study. A list of interview questions was developed by the researcher.

Data Collection

Qualitative studies incorporate multiple strategies for the data collection portion of the process of inquiry. Qualitative data are meaningful and include “any form of human communication—written, audio, or visual—behavior, symbolism or cultural artifacts” (Gibbs, 2011, p. 2). This type of inquiry is “useful when the participants cannot be directly observed” (Creswell, 2014, p. 186). Since this qualitative study measured the impact of GRR professional development on self-efficacy, the open-ended evaluation questions and focus group interviews were an appropriate type of data collection strategy.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the focus group participants who agreed to be in the study. This less-structured format acknowledges that

each individual defines his or her experience in a unique way (Merriam, 1998), and the open-ended approach allowed the informants to answer from their own frame of reference rather than from one structured by prearranged questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 3; Gibbs, 2011, p. 62). A semi-structured format allowed the interviewer to gather background information such as teaching experience. It also allowed for the interviewer to probe for clarifications or explanations that would be needed during the interviews.

An interview protocol was used during the interviews for note taking and consistency in conducting the focus group interviews. The protocol began with a “heading (date, place, interviewer, interviewees) ... instructions to follow so that standard procedure is used from one focus group interview to another, questions with space to record responses and a final thank you statement” (Creswell, 2014, p. 194). Using this protocol ensured each focus group would be conducted with fidelity so that all were as consistent as possible.

Most qualitative data are produced as written text developed from transcriptions of the actual recorded conversations that have occurred (Gibbs, 2011). The data were collected by recording the focus group interviews. The interviews were transcribed using www.rev.com.

Data Analysis Procedures

The final section of the methodology was the process of data analysis. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative data analysis is often referred to by some researchers as similar to “peeling back the layers of an onion” (p. 195), as this is the process where the data are analyzed looking deeper and deeper to gain an understanding of them and make

interpretations. Gibbs (2011) suggested that “data analysis involves working with the data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns” (p. 65). Essentially, one must make sense of the data and their meaning. All data were collected before analysis began. The open-ended question evaluation answers were compiled and the focus interview groups were completed, then the process of analysis began through coding. The researcher read through all the professional development evaluations and focus group transcripts to completely get a feel for the responses. This process allowed the researcher to “get a general sense of the information and reflect on the overall meaning of it” (Creswell, 2014, p. 200).

Next, a coding process was applied to the raw data that were collected. The coding process involved searching the data to determine the trends and patterns that emerged by chunking or categorizing phrases, words, thoughts, and ideas to make meaning of the information (Creswell, 2014).

The final phase in the data analysis process was that of interpretation, or as Creswell (2014) stated, “making meaning of the data” (p. 199). Determinations were made by the researcher as to what story the data told or what could be learned from the information gathered. As themes emerged, the researcher captured their principle in narratives and representations which included supporting statements from the open-ended evaluation responses and from respondent interviews. Additionally, quotes from the participants were used to support the themes found in the data. The data were categorized and presented in narrative form by research questions and themes.

Summary

Chapter 4 presents the accumulation of the emerging themes to tell the story of the impact of the GRR professional development on teacher self-efficacy and the perceptions of student achievement. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings in relation to the related literature. Additionally, Chapter 5 includes implications for future research and practice.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to measure the impact of the GRR professional development on teacher self-efficacy and the perceptions of the effectiveness of the GRR to enhance student learning. In a small, rural district located in the foothills of North Carolina, professional development sessions had been offered to teachers and school administrators across the school district. School administrators and teachers who had participated in the professional development were offered the opportunity to be a part of the study.

This chapter presents the results of the data collected through the evaluations after each professional development session and focus group interviews. The data gathered from the professional development evaluations served as qualitative data collected to help answer the research question, “What is the impact of the GRR Instructional Framework professional development on teacher self-efficacy?” The data collected from the focus group interviews served as qualitative data collected to help answer the second research question, “What are the perceptions of the effectiveness of the GRR Instructional Framework to enhance student learning?”

Research Question 1: What is the Impact of the GRR Instructional Framework Professional Development on Teacher Self-Efficacy?

Teachers completed evaluations after each professional development session on the GRR. A total of 181 responses were coded. All responses were anonymous and were labeled with an alphabetic identifier. As described in Chapter 3, a coding process was applied to the data that were gathered through the professional development evaluations and the transcribed focus group interviews. As expected with qualitative research, three

types of coding—open, axial, and selective—were applied to the raw data to identify categories of information (Creswell, 2014; Gibbs, 2011). Throughout the coding process, the themes of the characteristics of professional development and the four components of the GRR emerged.

High-Quality Professional Development

Teacher sense of self-efficacy is an important component of effective teaching. The participants completed five half day professional development sessions on the GRR instructional framework. The professional learning time was designed in order for teachers to feel confident to implement the framework in their classroom. Many teachers commented that the information learned from the presenter and their colleagues was applicable to their teaching practice and classroom instruction. Teacher W stated, “The examples given were explained very well and I think I can take the information back to my peers.” Teacher D affirmed, “I think I can use the information I learned today to make sure that I am planning with a purpose and continue to make lessons engaging and meaningful for my students.” Furthermore, Teacher F stated, “I have my notes and the resources from today that will allow me to plan and model what the GRR is supposed to look like in the classroom.” Teacher RRR noted, “I felt that there were perhaps too many activities in too little time. Sometimes I felt rushed.” Teacher MM concluded,

The framework truly impacts students learning because students need the focused and guided instruction and it builds to the collaborative learning section of the framework. Students then apply what has been learned during independent practice. For students to be successful, they have to be exposed to each part of the framework.

Furthermore, Teacher L expressed, “I would model myself after the presentation today, use the framework the way it has been presented and experienced. I can use the notes and book given for my resources.” Teacher SSS noted, “For visual learners please consider providing note pages for the google slides. It would have helped me while taking notes.” Teacher M stated, “I understand the components of the framework I feel we have been taught and given the resources to regularly incorporate this into my classroom practice.” Various teachers wrote in their evaluations about taking notes, reading the chapters in the assigned book, and listening during the session. Moreover, there were many comments made about how they learned from the constant spiral review at the beginning of each session. Teacher N referred to her personal opportunity to complete instructional rounds at her school and affirmed,

I have seen other model teachers implement the framework. I will use that experience, the tools you have given me, and the ideas from these sessions to plan for using the framework in my lesson planning. I am also a part of a wonderful PLC that will help me implement the framework as well.

Teacher DD asserted, “I would have liked to be able to visit more schools and do more classroom visits. I didn’t feel like the instructional rounds were long enough.” Teacher K noted, “When we visited classrooms, I would have liked to have observed a class that shared my content.” Additionally, Teacher UUU expressed, “I liked the classroom visits and seeing the progression between grade levels, however, I really wish I could have seen a class in the grade level I teach.” Teacher J commented. “I learned more about using the instructional framework and planning. This will increase engagement in my classroom and thus increase student achievement.” Teacher P remarked, “I have gained a better

understanding of the framework and why it is important to implement in the classroom and why it is important for students.” Teacher O asserted, “I can be a model for others because of the reading in the text, repeatedly revisiting the professional development, I am equipped.” Similarly, Teacher X commented, “I feel that I have a much deeper understanding of the framework and what is expected in the classroom.” Teacher Q commented, “I think the modeling and engaging activities we have done during this professional learning time, it will be easy to replicate in my own classroom.” Teacher PPP noted,

I liked being able to complete this professional development during the school hours and have a substitute teacher cover my class. I can actually focus on what we are learning rather than being so tired and unfocused with doing this after school.

On the contrary Teacher XX expressed, “I enjoyed the sessions but struggled with missing my instructional time with students. I missed my reading, math, and science block during this professional learning session and felt it put me behind my teammate.” Teacher TTT stated, “I didn’t like missing the same class for every professional learning meeting. On a semester schedule, absences from class really add up.”

Focused Instruction

The first GRR professional development session was on focused instruction. The teachers were asked about their level of confidence in being a model teacher for the focused instruction phase of the GRR for their school. Of 181 total responses, 117 of the teachers stated they felt they could be a model teacher for this phase of the framework. Additionally, of the 181 responses, 124 listed the specific components of the framework

in their evaluations on the professional development sessions. Teacher A commented,

The framework works in any content area, in any grade. There is a great benefit to planning with the bigger goal in mind and expressing this to students. I will make a more concerted effort to express to students the reasons they are going to learn what I am teaching.

When commenting on the focused instruction session, Teacher B commented, “I feel I can be a model teacher in my school because we have trained with all the necessary tools to do so today.” Teacher E stated, “I understand the relevance of the framework and how it is designed to better reach students.” Teacher K asserted,

I do feel like I need more experience in implementing the framework in my classroom before I could model for other teachers, but I do feel more knowledgeable about the framework and can implement it better to help my students.

Teacher II noted, “I now understand the meaning of focused instruction.” Teacher OO mentioned, “I understand that Focused Instruction includes Learning Targets, Modeling, Think-Aloud, and Noticing.” The goal of the professional learning sessions was to make an impact on teachers in order for them to make the necessary changes to their instructional delivery and implement the GRR in their classrooms. Teacher C commented on the focus instruction session,

I feel like I am already using many of these practices in my classroom. I am also comfortable sharing ideas with my PLC (Professional Learning Community) and colleagues. Throughout this meeting, I have made many connections between these research-based ideas and my actual teaching. I am aware of the many ways

I can begin to implement more of these strategies into my classroom instructional practices.

Additionally, when referring to focused instruction, Teacher G stated,

I think I could be a model for this framework because I already use Learning Targets in my classroom. I reference those targets as I teach because I want to make certain students are learning what I need for them to learn. I am analyzing my teaching during the Better Learning Cohort and I am fine tuning my instruction so it provides a greater impact on student learning.

Teacher I claimed, “I learned the importance of discussing and explaining the Learning Target so students know the learning outcomes.” Teacher QQ remarked, “I plan to follow the model from Focused Instruction today and break down my Learning Targets to better help my students understand them.” Likewise, Teacher WW commented, “I learned different ways to break down the Learning Targets. I want to do this with my students.” Teacher RR affirmed, “I am going to be more intentional in using specific Learning Targets and I am also going to start with the end in mind when planning.” Teacher SS stated, “I am going to make my Learning Targets more student friendly. I want to begin using pictures and simplified vocabulary.” Additionally, Teacher TT noted, “I plan to be more intentional with my Learning Targets and in planning my think-aloud.” Teacher UU concluded, “After today, I feel I will be able to write better Learning Targets for my students.” Moreover, Teacher VV expressed, “I am going to begin making my Learning Targets relatable to students and in their language. I want to be more intentional with student learning.” Teacher CCC, confirmed, “I learned about using Learning Targets as part of instruction. I am going to add pictures and essentially

use targets as a mini-lesson.” Teacher EEE also stated, “I am going to add movement and pictures to clarify vocabulary in my Learning Targets.” Teacher XX commented on “I am going to use ‘I’ more when modeling and doing think-aloud to show students how sometimes I struggle and have to think through problems using various strategies.”

Teacher YY also commented, “I learned how important modeling and using think-aloud strategies are during Focused Instruction.” Likewise, Teacher ZZ affirmed, “I am going to use ‘I’ more intentionally when completing think-aloud part of Focused Instruction.”

Teacher AAA expressed, “I believe I can effectively write a clear Learning Target, use modeling in my instruction and complete a think-aloud.” Additionally, Teacher BBB noted, “I am not going to underestimate the power of using modeling and think-aloud for my students. I am going to begin to discuss my thought process while I demonstrate a task.” Teacher DDD claimed, “My goal is to demonstrate and use think-aloud more often with my students.” Teacher PP noted, “I feel confident in implementing the focused instruction phase in my classroom.” Teacher F confirmed, “I feel that I have a good grasp on the Focused Instruction portion of the framework after today’s professional learning session.”

Of 181 total responses on focused instruction, 64 of the teachers felt they were not ready to be a model teacher for this phase of the framework. Teacher OOO noted, “I don’t feel confident being a model for this to other teachers yet, I need to implement this in my own classroom first.” Additionally, Teacher V noted, “I can’t be a model yet. I struggle with modeling and think-aloud. I need improvement in this area.” Teacher XXX commented, “I am not a model yet. I need more practice with think-aloud and noticing. I feel I don’t have the confidence to model for my peers.” Similarly, Teacher K

stated, “I do feel like I need more experience with Focused Instruction before I can be a model, however, I do feel more knowledgeable about this section of the framework.”

Teacher XX commented, “I don’t feel confident in being a model but I am willing to try and get feedback to improve my instruction.” Likewise, Teacher WWW stated, “I don’t feel I am ready at this point. I still need to work on making sure I am using Learning Targets.” Teacher J noted, “At this point, I don’t feel like I could be a model. Hopefully, after this cohort is finished I will feel more confident.” Teacher BBB commented, “I am not a model yet. I need a chance to practice the strategies we learned today.” Teacher CCC agreed, “Perhaps I could be a model after more time to process the information learned from today.” Teacher YYY concluded, “I feel like I am still learning and working on this phase of the framework.”

Guided Instruction

Guided instruction was the focus of the second the professional development session. Of the 153 teachers who completed the evaluations, 92 stated they felt confident enough to be a model teacher for the guided instruction phase of the framework. Teacher Q commented,

I feel confident that at the end of these sessions I will be able to go back and model for my colleagues the many practices I have learned. I think the modeling and engaging activities we are doing will be easy to replicate at my own school in my own classroom.

When evaluating the guided instruction session, Teacher Q expressed,

I enjoyed the questioning activities we completed today. I have learned how to ask questions effectively and how to shift the cognitive load to students. I feel

confident that after this session I can go back into my classroom and implement guided instruction in an effective way.

Furthermore, Teacher R stated,

I feel comfortable because I feel we have developed some good questions, prompts, and cues today. This helped me to clarify what I am doing in my classroom and gives me a guide when I am planning. It will also help me to know how to help my students when they are struggling.

Teacher MMM commented, “I learned about the differences between questions, prompts, and cues.” Teacher S concluded, “I now have the tools I need to make adjustments in my lessons. I love the types of questions and the decision-making chart. It will help me implement in my classroom.” Teacher V stated, “I found the chart we created with our colleagues in the same subject area for questions to be very helpful. I now have questions I can ask my students and a plan for my Middle Ages Unit.” Additionally, Teacher GGG commented on the questioning chart, “I will remember to use the question decision-making chart to help with all levels of students in my classroom. It will help me guide them further when struggling students need more help.” Teacher T made the following statement about the guided instruction session:

After the session today, I better understand the difference between prompts and cues. I understand that the guided instruction phase offers questions, prompts, and cues to provide a scaffold for students. I get that a teacher should “guide” the learning before just giving an answer or correcting their misconception.

Furthermore, Teacher U commented about guided instruction,

One thing I learned from today’s session was the time we reflected on our

classroom. I realized my in my classroom I need to work on visual cues on the walls. The majority of my posters in my class are words. I need more images so that students will remember them.

Teacher H explained their learning:

Questioning takes longer than directly giving students the answer, but it's worth taking the time. The metacognitive load is shifted from the teacher to student and the students work through the learning process with questioning, prompts, and cues from the teacher.

Furthermore, Teacher FFF stated, "The session on Guided Instruction has helped me understand how to implement questions, prompts, and cues in the classroom." Teacher HHH stated, "I know I need to learn more about guided instruction but I feel more confident that I did when I walked into the session." Additionally, Teacher III stated, "I learned today a teacher can become a part of a small group to guide instruction or pull students to create an opportunity to guide instruction." Teacher JJJ affirmed, "I have reflected right now on my own teaching and I am going to be more conscious about the types of questions and prompts I use to shift the cognitive load to my students." Teacher KKK professed,

I always thought guided practice happened in the large group setting for "we" do it together, but it seems that it should happen more during collaborative learning or independent learning. Knowing this now, I will try to implement more small group guided practice during these times verses during only during independent or whole group teaching.

Teacher LLL remarked, "I learned 2 new ways to display a picture to help students better

understand Main Idea. I also learned that when questioning students, don't go straight to the answer. Guide students through their learning through questions, prompts, and cues."

On the contrary, Teacher QQQ noted, "I would have liked to have more information on prompts and cues. I would like more examples of cues and prompts to ensure I am using those correctly."

Of the 153 teachers who completed the evaluation on guided instruction, 61 stated they did not feel confident enough to be a model teacher for the guided instruction phase of the GRR. Teacher A noted, "I am not a model yet. I am getting there but need more time perfecting my questioning techniques and uses of prompts and cues." Teacher B noted, "No I am not a model yet. I would like more training to become more confident in my own implementation of guided instruction before sharing it with other adults."

Teacher GGG commented, "I feel I need more practice in my classroom first. I absolutely believe in the importance of it. I do find I am quick to give the answer to students who don't know and not guide the instruction." Teacher FFF confirmed, "I feel I need more practice with guided instruction before I model to colleagues. I would need to feel more comfortable knowing I was questioning, prompting, and cueing correctly."

Teacher V noted, "I am not a model yet. I struggle with asking quality questions to my students and not just giving them the answer." Furthermore, Teacher WWW expressed, "I have areas that still need tweaking and strengthening. I need to work on releasing control to students. I still do a lot of the work and I need the practice to guide them."

Teacher ZZZ remarked, "I need to practice questioning, prompting, and using cues in my classroom. I need to work on less focused instruction and moving into more guided instruction." Teacher AAAA commented, "With more practice with my students I think I

might could become a model.” Teacher II noted, “I am not fully confident in being a model. I would like to see it in action first.” Teacher BBBB affirmed, “I do not feel like I can be a model. I need additional practice in creating questions. It will be a major focus in the upcoming school year.”

Collaborative Learning

The third session focused on collaborative learning; and the evaluation question was, “What did you learn today that you can implement immediately into your lesson plans?” Of the 159 responses to this question, 69 teachers commented specifically on the Jigsaw method, 27 on reciprocal teaching strategy, 12 on collaborative posters activity, and 23 made note of the difference between basic and productive group work routines.

Teacher AA noted, “I will try to be more purposeful in using cooperative learning strategies in my lesson planning and lesson delivery.” Teacher DD stated, “Without the collaborative learning phase, the framework would not flow.” Teacher GG expressed,

Collaborative learning is vital because it is a constant movement in and out of guided instruction to help the students collaborate and for the teacher to notice and see how the students are learning and if they are mastering the skill.

Teacher II commented on the importance of collaborative learning as, “this is where ‘noticing’ takes place and lets the teacher know when guided instruction is needed. Also, it gives the student the opportunity to produce academic language with their peers.”

Teacher HH commented on the instructional materials provided to implement reciprocal teaching strategy in her classroom stating,

I plan to use the cards with explanations of the roles for Reciprocal Teaching instead of simply having them displayed on my SMART board. I liked having the

questions and sentence frames on the cards as a scaffold for my students.

However, Teacher EEEE commented, “I think it would be hard for K-2 students to complete reciprocal teaching. Teacher CC commented on the collaborative learning session and stated,

I learned some new collaborative learning strategies that I can implement into my lesson plans. I am going to try Jigsaw and Discussion Roundtable. You have given us the materials and the opportunity to experience it as a student. I am ready.

Teacher FF confirmed the case of collaborative learning phase of the instructional framework,

Collaborative learning supports deeper learning and transfer knowledge which is essential in math instruction. Students are more engaged and take ownership of their learning. Collaborative learning helps develop “soft skills.” The additional benefits are the development of higher-level thinking, oral communication, and leadership skills. Collaborative learning helps support positive relationships between peers and students to teachers. This prepares them for real life, social and employment situations.

Additionally, Teacher P stated, “I learned that it’s important to implement a variety of collaborative learning strategies that can be used to shift the cognitive load to the students.”

Teacher Y commented about the relevance of the collaborative learning session and stated, “Collaborative Learning is how the real world works today. Very few companies/employers expect people to work in a bubble.” Teacher Z stated,

I feel that collaborative learning phase in the framework is very important.

Collaborative learning is essential to teach children those soft skills that are essential in the workplace. Students need to learn to negotiate and communicate effectively so they are career and college ready.

Teacher BB claimed,

Collaborative learning is the real world. Students must learn to collaborate and share ideas when they get into the real world. The classroom is their “training gym” where teachers lead, guide, direct, and get them ready with the skills they need to survive in the real world.

Teacher JJ affirmed the importance of the collaborative learning phase: “Without collaborative learning, students are not able to struggle through their understanding, nor do they get the opportunity to have the academic discussions vital to mastery learning and correcting misconceptions.” However, Teacher X, noted, “I am still a little cloudy on the benefits and pitfalls of collaborative versus cooperative learning.” Likewise, Teacher NNN stated,

I would have liked to have a list of the strategies we talked about all in one place. They were not on every slide and it requires a lot of time to search for them. A quick strategy reference sheet with the name and a brief description of how it works would have helped.

In reference to practicing the collaborative learning structures, Teacher K stated, “At times the group work was lengthy and could have been cut down because the task didn’t take as long as the time given.”

Teacher AA noted, “It takes a lot of time to carefully plan cooperative learning

activities so that students are successful. It is a lot of work on the front end for teachers.” Furthermore, Teacher CCCC asked, “What are some time efficient ways to incorporate these structures into our lessons without adding hours to our planning?” Teacher FFFF remarked,

Having the time to plan has been an obstacle for me. I spend so much time outside of class planning the lesson that I do not focus on the how of why of teaching a lesson. I don’t know how to fit collaborative learning in.

Similarly, Teacher III expressed, “Collaborative Learning is engaging but it is difficult to plan.” Many teachers asked questions about implementing cooperative learning in their classroom. Teacher B asked, “What is the best way to get other teachers in your PLC to get on board with using collaborative learning consistently and effectively?”

Teacher C asked, “How do you group students effectively?” Teacher GGG asked, “What do you do when you have 1 or 2 students who refuse to participate in groups?” Teacher III noted, “The reality is that some students are unmotivated to do anything in class or are absent on a frequent basis. How do we hold these students accountable?” Teacher JJJ wanted to know more about teacher involvement during collaborative learning and asked, “How do you not spend too much time with a needy group in order to get around to all the other groups?” Teacher RRR declared,

There are many students, not in theory, but in actual classes on the ground that are either disinclined to or incapable of collaborating productively, Of course, these students can be disciplined but how do I ensure of their learning through these structures?

Teacher OOO commented, “I really didn’t understand reciprocal teaching. I would need

to learn more about it before using it in the classroom.” Additionally, Teacher DDDD stated, “I have no idea how to make students do this in a manner that wouldn’t be chaotic.” Teacher GGGG noted, “I don’t know the best way to use this in a high school math classroom and keep students on task and everyone doing something.” Teacher HHHH noted, “I don’t feel like I have time for collaborative learning and accomplish all of my curriculum in half of a year.”

Independent Learning

The fourth professional development session focused on the independent learning stage of the GRR. Teacher MM commented,

I feel comfortable using the framework and modeling to my peers because I have had an opportunity to engage with the framework from this cohort experience. I am more comfortable with planning lessons that include all components of the framework with putting an emphasis on shifting the cognitive load.

Teacher II stated, “I think implementing all the components of the framework students are more engaged and are more knowledgeable about the content” after the independent learning session. Teacher MM further commented about independent learning,

I have seen the effectiveness of incorporating the instructional framework in my classroom this year because students are able to be more aware of my expectations. I have also seen the advantages of this framework positively impacting my students through the use of more collaborative structures that lead to independent practice.

Teacher II commented on feeling equipped after the independent learning session: “By participating in this teacher cohort you learn all the parts of the instructional framework

step by step. You also get a lot of amazing tools and resources inside you materials to use in your classroom.” Teacher C stated in the final professional development session,

“These were the best Professional Development sessions I have ever attended.

Everything was clear and easy to understand. I appreciate all of the activities we participated in because they could be carried directly into my own classroom.”

Furthermore, Teacher KK stated, “I am trying to plan more purposefully; therefore, student engagement has increased because students are collaborating more carefully. I am more strategic and selective in the activities my students participate in.” Teacher LL commented,

I liked being able to do activities involving all phases of the framework, so I could experience first-hand the things that our students see on a daily basis in our classrooms. We learn how to become better teachers when we can put ourselves in the student’s shoes.

Teacher MM claimed,

I like how this professional development was based on a text with research about student learning. This helps to see the value in what we do and why we do it. I felt that this was a very safe environment to share our ideas and ask questions.

Teacher NNN, noted,

I do feel more comfortable than I did before using the framework, but I am still shaky in using it daily in my classroom. I think it will take time for me to implement the framework after teaching differently for so long. The fear of failing at the framework causes anxiety so I stick to more of what works for me.

Teacher OOO expressed, “There has been so much new terminology to me that this

session has been overwhelming to me.” Teacher VVV noted, “There was no downtime to process the new concepts discussed. I needed time to process all I was learning.”

Research Question 2: What are Teacher Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the GRR to Enhance Student Learning?

Focus group interviews were conducted during September 2018 with appropriate permissions acquired from the school district in the study. Of the 179 possible participants, 37 volunteered to participate in the focus group interviews. Each participant completed an informed consent to participate in the study. The research questions guided the development of the interview questions (Appendix C) and were used in reporting and analysis findings. All of the focus group interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder and transcribed. Transcriptions of the focus group interviews can be found in Appendix D. Each group of teachers was asked four questions about the GRR professional development sessions with a focus on the impact of the framework on student achievement. There were six focus groups with six to eight teachers in each group. In discussing the findings of the study, excerpts were used from the focus group interviews to support the researcher’s findings in relation to the relevant literature as well as new emergent findings.

Overview of the Participants

Each participant, identified by interview participant number, has worked in a rural school district in North Carolina for the past 3 academic years. All the teachers have participated in the GRR professional development sessions. All teachers have a minimum of 3 years teaching experience and teach in K-12 classrooms as listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Grade Level Taught and Years of Experience for Teachers Interviewed

Teacher	Grade Level	Years of Experience
Interview Participant 1	3	20
Interview Participant 2	3	13
Interview Participant 3	10	14
Interview Participant 4	5	3
Interview Participant 5	3-5	23
Interview Participant 6	3	17
Interview Participant 7	2	5
Interview Participant 8	3	7
Interview Participant 9	9-12	14
Interview Participant 10	11	25
Interview Participant 11	2	13
Interview Participant 12	K-3	27
Interview Participant 13	5	7
Interview Participant 14	1	9
Interview Participant 15	2	15
Interview Participant 16	3	23
Interview Participant 17	2	18
Interview Participant 18	4	13
Interview Participant 19	4	17
Interview Participant 20	1	10
Interview Participant 21	5	5
Interview Participant 22	1	16
Interview Participant 23	9	5
Interview Participant 24	5	14
Interview Participant 25	6	29
Interview Participant 26	5	18
Interview Participant 27	2	14
Interview Participant 28	5	11
Interview Participant 29	4	13
Interview Participant 30	4	17
Interview Participant 31	9-12	8
Interview Participant 32	7	5
Interview Participant 33	7	28
Interview Participant 34	8	5
Interview Participant 35	8	28
Interview Participant 36	4	13
Interview Participant 37	5	18

Student Engagement

Study participants in the focus group interviews claimed there was an increase in

student engagement in their classrooms when implementing the GRR. Interview Participant 1 articulated,

My students are more excited about learning now. They want to come to school because they know it's going be more of them working and less of having to listen to me do all the teaching. They (the students) like it better.

This same belief was articulated by Interview Participant 3: "I think student engagement increases with the framework because there is so much more than they're expected to do either independently, with the teacher, or with peers. The engagement level in the classroom has increased." Interview Participant 16 further asserted on the level of student engagement,

During the collaborative part of the framework where students are working together, I love that everybody's engaged all at once and when I started teaching I was always using "ping-pong." I would ask questions, the student would know the answer, I went for someone else to raise their hand. I like that everybody's working at once. It frees me up to go to my students who needs my help and I can guide instruction to support their learning. I can spend a little extra time with them while others are working in groups. I can give additional prompts, questions, and cues, to help them so they are successful too.

Interview Participant 14 claimed, "I like to hear the excitement in the collaborative groups. Students are already taking on leadership roles. They are encouraging one another." Interview Participant 12 commented, "During (writing) students are working together to assess each other's writing. They (the students) knew what to look for, they knew the rubric and were excited to own their learning." Furthermore, Interview

Participant 22 stated,

The framework is making a difference in my classroom. I have been using it. I took it from my fifth-grade classroom and now I am teaching first grade and using it. Even though the standards and vocabulary have changed, I am still explaining Learning Targets etc. But my students' faces light up when they figure out what it is they are supposed to be learning that day. It makes a difference in the classroom, no matter what grade you teach.

Interview Participant 19 commented on the level of student engagement during EOG testing reviews as, "You know how mundane it can be when reviewing for EOG. My team teacher and I worked together and included collaborative learning activities and everybody was excited there was a buzz in the room." The theme of increased student engagement was reiterated by Interview Participant 22:

It's (GRR) is the whole active learning piece. There has been a district-wide and school-wide shift from a quiet classroom to active learning. Student are retaining and learning information. The student engagement has increased because we as teachers are not facilitators of learning rather than just being an instructor and delivering information.

Furthermore, Interview Participant 22 concluded, "I think not only has student engagement increased but teacher engagement as well. I am more excited to teach my lessons now. Students are excited. It is not boring to sit there and just do all teacher directed instruction." Consequently, Interview Participant 22 noted,

My biggest challenge is transferring the workload. Focused Instruction with teacher directed is easier to plan and doesn't require much thought for

questioning. It was difficult to let go of that control, however, I have loved watching my students interact and become more engaged in their learning.

School Administrator 3 noted, “I am seeing a lot of situations where teachers are doing some of the focused instruction but then jumping right into the independent practice. We are skipping the guided and collaborative parts.” School Administrator 4 confirmed,

I just don’t see any cooperative learning. I don’t see any students working between each other. I know the framework has been introduced and discussed but for whatever reason, the teachers aren’t buying into it. I don’t know if they just don’t understand how to do it or if they haven’t seen that it’s going to impact the kids in a positive way.

Independent Learners

Interview Participant 3 commented, “The framework makes them more independent.” Interview Participant 12 commented, “My example is with modeling. We used the Four Star Writing process and gradually releasing step-by-step students could begin to take over (their) writing process. Students are in charge of their own learning, being more responsible for themselves.” Interview Participant 21 commented about students being more independent:

I think that the framework has really helped students be more accountable. I think it has enhanced their learning because they are more accountable. It is easy if I am standing up there doing the teacher directed the whole time, for them to be thinking or doing something else and me not know. But with the framework they know they are going to be accountable when we get to guided, collaborative, and independent phase. They know in order for them to be successful they are going

to have to pay attention and know what they are doing. So, it makes them more independent and more accountable for their learning.

Interview Participant 18 shared similar thoughts by stating, “I think with students knowing we are going to do collaborative learning activities they know they are going to have a responsibility for their work and a role for their team.” Interview Participant 22 confirmed this idea:

I completely agree. We are releasing the responsibility over to the students and letting them do the learning. No longer are students just memorizing information, they are applying what they have learned. The students are involved in discussions and engagement has increased as well as their responsibility to own their learning.

Interview Participant 16 shared similar thoughts and stated, “It holds them (the students) accountable for their learning and I like it.” Interview Participant 18 concluded, “Students know what they are learning. There is a transfer in their learning and they are applying it to various situations.” Additionally, Interview Participant 4 commented, “During extended reading projects or book studies I was able to hold my students accountable for their roles and learning. They were able to figure out answers themselves since I had implemented the framework.”

Student Achievement

Interview participants were asked to share about their perception of the GRR effect on student achievement. Interview Participant 1 commented,

I think my success story would be a math lesson I was doing. I was introducing the new skill to them, and then we worked some together. Then I paired the

students with a partner, and they continued to work problems out and once I felt they were getting the hang of it, I put them into independent learning. I found out when the test came around, doing this, that one they did way better than some of the previous skills I had not taught using the framework.

Interview Participant 7 commented,

What I took away from the professional learning session was the Learning Target part and being able to break it down. Before I would just have students say the Learning Target and I would think okay, they learned it. But they didn't learn. Now I can draw pictures, write it out, discuss the Learning Target with more meaning I feel like students know their purpose. Students are more willing to do the work and do their part in their learning. Students take that responsibility because they know their why.

Likewise, Interview Participant 13 stated,

I think the biggest thing that I hear in the workroom at schools or when I am talking to other teachers in the hallway were "I taught it, I did it, and I don't know what happened." I am thinking, well if you taught it and you don't know what happened when you were not noticing. It's not on the students anymore, it's on you. Yes, students are doing the work and you are trying to shift the cognitive load, but if you are not noticing and paying attention, you won't realize what students are doing. That was the biggest thing the professional development session showed me, how to notice, how I need to pay attention.

Interview Participant 11 affirmed,

I like that they (students) are willing to question. One of the things I have noticed

about the GRR is how much better prepared my children feel when getting to apply their learning to a task. I think it is because we have modeled and practiced and we have gone through it together. Students know what to do when test time comes. They are not nearly as nervous about it. I feel better prepared and I know they are more prepared.

Interview Participant 16 stated,

I think students have more opportunities to practice the skill. They are not just sitting and listening to me talk. Not all students are auditory learners. So the framework applies to different learning styles. We give students the opportunity to see if they can master the skill or need more guided practice with either the teacher or peers.

Interview Participant 2 mentioned,

It (GRR) enhanced learning in my classroom, too. I felt like it wasn't another thing I had to do. It (GRR) goes hand in hand with good and effective teaching. It helps us get organized and meet our kids' needs in the classroom.

Additionally, Interview Participant 11 commented,

I love that over time, my children don't say, "But I can't." They know they can and they are willing to step out in front. I don't see students shutting down and before they begin an assessment. They know they are prepared.

Interview Participant 12 commented on student success:

My children now are more successful than the children I had years ago, and I hate that for those children. But that's just how far we've come. I also think including the collaborative piece in our instruction we are getting these students prepared

for the workplace. We are teaching our students so they know how to work collaboratively and to communicate with people that they are working with. We are preparing these students for more than tests, we are preparing them for their future.

Additionally, Interview Participant 15 commented, “There are lots of little successes with them (the students) being able to take on leadership roles when we followed the gradual release.” Interview Participant 16 commented on her data,

When I taught first grade we did TRC and now in third grade, we do TRC I can compare my data. My kids are reading better, the numbers are better, they (the students) are reading at higher levels, they are able to answer the questions better, so I actually have some data to back it up. I certainly see a difference.

Interview Participant 17 commented on her data,

My growth last year in reading particularly was amazing. I have been able to implement the four parts of the framework in my classroom. I found myself noticing what students were learning more and they were able to work together with partners more, they took ownership of their learning. My data for reading at the end of the year was very, very good for me and I was excited about that.

Interview Participant 11 remarked,

We (teachers) are getting them (students) ready for real-world application of the academics that they’re learning. We are not just rolling into the next grade level, we are growing productive adult citizens of our society. This is one step that we are making happen by the way they are working together and taking care of their own learning situations.

School Administrator 1 noted,

I am going to talk about my reading. My reading data went down last year and in reflecting the collaborative, we do it together piece is lacking. They are trying to be collaborative but it is not purposeful or it is not intentional. I have had to go back and tell my staff everything we do has to be very intentional and very purposeful.

School Administrator 2 added,

I think what happens at times is that we are making sure that we have collaborative learning and a plan for those structures but accountability is missing. Teachers need to be in and amongst those children, noticing what those groups are doing, because that can be a piece of formative assessment just as the independent piece. I worry that teachers are not noticing enough and some students are getting misconceptions even within a collaborative group because the teacher is not as focused during that block of the framework.

School Administrator 3 confirmed,

I would like to see PLCs discussing what they noticed with my students today and see if that is what you are noticing. Therefore, we need to go back and reteach this part. I think some of the missing parts of the framework we can build and strengthen through PLCs.

Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework

Interview Participants shared about their thoughts about how the professional development sessions on the GRR impacted their lesson planning. Interview Participant 11 stated, “I think my students are more prepared because I have methodically planned

my lessons. I have intentionally put in specific research-based strategies in place.

Deliberate planning; it makes for successful children.” Interview Participant 15 commented,

I think this had made me more deliberate about planning my instruction by the framework. I intentionally plan the “I do” the “we do” and the “you do” sections. I make sure all the pieces of the framework are covered and it keeps me from just being the only worker in the classroom.

Interview Participant 17 also discussed purposeful planning:

The framework has definitely helped me as I have worked on lesson plans. In fact, I’ve been very intentional about the guiding questions that I ask for every single piece of teaching that I do. I am not only seeing a difference in my students but a difference in myself.

Additionally, Interview Participant 19 commented,

I really think the training on the framework has helped me to be more thoughtful when I’m doing my planning because I really want to put all the pieces in my plans. I feel like it has helped me as a teacher to think of that while I’m doing my planning and implementing in my classroom.

Interview Participant 4 shared similar thoughts about planning and stated, “It (the framework) helped me with my planning and working with my PLC to get more ideas. It helped me plan better questions.” Likewise, Interview Participant 18 noted,

I think it was a great reflection for me as a teacher when planning my lessons to understand the importance of the Learning Target. At the end (of the lesson) making sure everybody (the students) we on the same page and had mastered the

skill.

Interview Participant 3 noted, “A challenge I’ve encountered was learning to adapt the framework to my lesson planning. With purposeful planning, I have to think about how I’m incorporating the framework while also meeting my lesson plan goal.” School Administrator 2 commented,

I would say I have definitely seen improvement in lesson plans. I see the framework in the lesson plans but then I go into the classroom and it’s not being implemented. I wonder how much of this is compliance in the lesson plan, and are teachers really following through each piece of the framework. There are times when I think teachers are stuck in the focused instruction phase.

Several interview participants articulated the concept of the framework not being linear.

Interview Participant 22 stated,

The framework is not linear, it allows me as the teacher to move in and out of the phases. I don’t have to be the one doing all the talking and thinking, I shift the cognitive load to my students. When students are struggling you can go back to guided instruction or teacher directed to help them.

Interview Participant 14 indicated,

It (the GRR) helps me to know it is okay to come back in (Focused Instruction) and take over if needed, I don’t have to wait until flex groups or any other time. I have the opportunity right then to fix it (student misconception) the framework is not linear.

Interview Participant 2 claimed, “I see success and I like that it (the framework) is not linear, it is not a step process. I can introduce a topic or idea and work through the

framework in various ways.” Interview Participant 3 added to the conversation and stated,

I will springboard on that Number 2, I felt reassured because I learned I didn't have to flow my lesson in a certain order. You gave us the lesson plan templates and gave examples. I was able to use the examples in my classroom. It was very reassuring to see that there were some things that I didn't consider fitting into a certain piece of the framework and it did. It was very reassuring.

Likewise, Interview Participant 4 asserted,

I think it (the framework) helps with confidence. It is not linear, you are able to fit into their (the students) perspective and what works best for them. They may need more teacher directed time, and as a teacher, we are able to pull them and do a small group while the others are working independently. When in the past, it was I have got to try and deliver to all twenty-five (students) and hope they get it and if I have time, I'll pull these students. Now, you have that time in the framework.

Interview Participant 3 noted, “Another struggle for me was learning the framework was not linear. Learning that I don't have to start with focused instruction each lesson helped me. I had to learn how to move in and out of the framework.” Interview Participant 13 noted,

Before taking the course, part of the problem with implementing the instructional framework was ignorance. Not knowing that it was okay to bounce around the stages as the student learning dictated. I thought it was a straight through process that had to be completed daily.

Interview Participant 37 stated,

A challenge I face is to remember the framework is not linear. I have to wrap my head around with starting with a pre-assessment or collaborative activity.

Sometimes I feel like I have to have all four parts of the framework in one lesson when maybe it could be a carryover to the next day.

School Administrator 1 noted, "I think many teachers see the framework as linear and it's not linear. So I am having to keep focusing back to the framework and showing them you can move in and out of the four parts of the framework." School Administrator 2 confirmed,

I think we have some misconceptions that teachers think they do all of the framework in one block of time. I am trying to help them understand it's okay to do focused instruction and then get to the collaborative or independent tomorrow. I feel like sometimes they're trying to get in every piece of the framework and it might not be as quality as it would be if they spread that out for two days.

Interview Participant 15 concluded,

One of the best things I took away from the training is the use of gestures and visual cues to scaffold student learning. I have done some research with whole brain learning and now with my learning target we break it apart and add movement. When I break apart the unfamiliar vocabulary and putting gestures with it helps my lower-level students.

Consequently, Interview Participant 7 stated,

The challenge to implementing the framework is finding enough time to do all you plan to do within a class period. It is hard to find time to go back to more

guided practice or teacher directed when you feel pressured to complete the lesson and be on your daily schedule.

Interview Participant 20 agreed, “The challenge I have seen in implementing the framework is implementing it in each subject daily.” Interview Participant 5 stated, “I have shorter blocks of time to teach than regular classrooms. It is difficult to fit all the components into a shorter block of time.” Interview Participant 33 noted, “Time has been a challenge for me. I have caught myself using a digital stopwatch for nearly every single thing we do. It makes me more accountable and aware of time and the kids too.”

Interview Participant 32 remarked, “Time is always a challenge. I am struggling internally thinking did I do enough today? Did I get it all in? Should I have gotten more in? I just have to believe it’s going to happen.” Interview Participant 35 mentioned,

It can be intimidating implementing the framework because yes, we participated in the activities during the Better Learning Cohort but we’re all adults and we’re all learners and we were motivated. That’s not always the case with the students that we may be dealing with on that particular day. Somedays I may implement an activity and it’s just muddy. I am thinking I have to clean this up somehow.

Moreover, Interview Participant 21 reported, “I think the professional development I received helped to clarify how to implement the framework in my classroom, and it was helpful for me to see it modeled and participate in the activities that aligned with the instructional framework.”

School Administrator 1 commented, “Teachers believe in the framework, but it’s the implementation of the framework that is so difficult. Going through the building on curriculum walks I see a lot of focused instruction; the collaborative pieces are not there.”

Summary

Substantial data were collected from the open-ended responses and focus group interviews with the teachers and school administrators who had the opportunity to participate in the GRR professional development series. The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of the GRR professional development on teacher self-efficacy and the perception of its effectiveness to enhance student learning. Teachers shared their thoughts and opinions on each of the four components of the GRR which served as a larger portion of the content described in this chapter.

Generally, teachers felt the professional development was high quality and useful to their instructional practices which had a positive effect on their own self-efficacy. Furthermore, there was indication from teachers that the implementation of the GRR was impacting student learning. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings in relation to the related literature. Additionally, Chapter 5 includes implications for future research and practice.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview

The purpose of this study was to measure the impact of the GRR professional development on teacher self-efficacy and the perception of the effectiveness of the GRR to enhance student learning. In a small, rural district located in the foothills of North Carolina, professional development sessions were offered to school administrators and teachers across the school district. School administrators and teachers who participated in the professional development were offered the opportunity to be a part of the study.

A discussion of the findings from this process is provided in this chapter. During the analysis of the findings, themes emerged and served as the guiding framework for the organization of the data in Chapter 4. The analysis of the data collected through this qualitative study supported the findings in the literature related to high-quality professional development and the components of the GRR Instructional Framework. A brief overview of the findings as they related to current research is presented as well as implications and limitations to the study. This chapter continues with suggestions for further study and a conclusion.

Analysis of Research Question 1: What is the Impact of the GRR Instructional Framework Professional Development on Teacher Self-Efficacy?

According to research, a major component in continuous improvement is improving teacher quality, thus improving and increasing ongoing professional learning for teachers (Commission on Effective Teachers and Teaching, 2011; Darling-Hammond 2005; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Ingersoll, 2004). A rural school district in the foothills of North Carolina offered professional development sessions on the theory and instructional practices of the GRR framework to teachers and school administrators across the district.

The GRR professional development sessions consisted of reading the book *Better Learning Through Structured Teaching*, attending and participating in five half day training sessions, and completing instructional rounds using a debriefing protocol. Additionally, teachers received seven 1-hour after school professional development sessions delivered by the school administrators. This job-embedded, professional learning occurred during the school day. These professional learning sessions met the most current standards and principles of high-quality professional development (Allen, 2006; Archibald et al., 2011 Learning Forward, 2017).

School administrators and teachers who completed the professional learning answered open-ended response evaluation questions after each session. These responses were used to determine the impact of the professional learning on teacher self-efficacy. Information from those responses did support the professional learning time as positively impacting teacher self-efficacy by using the GRR in their classrooms. As noted in the research,

An understanding of this model improves your teaching abilities in any instructional setting by providing you the opportunity to observe and assess your students' understanding of any lesson, thereby deepening your connection to your students and increasing the efficacy of your teaching. (Clark, 2014, p. 29)

Participant statements attested to the types of learning activities and responses that indicated a higher level of self-efficacy from participating in the professional learning session. Teacher C stated, "These were the best Professional Development sessions I have ever attended. Everything was clear and easy to understand. I appreciate all of the activities we participated in because they could be carried directly into my own

classroom.” Additionally, Teacher II asserted, “By participating in this teacher cohort you learn all the parts of the instructional framework step by step. You also get a lot of amazing tools and resources inside your materials to use in your classroom.”

High-Quality Professional Development

A search in the literature revealed standards for professional learning included “Alignment with school goals, state and district standards and assessments, and other professional learning activities ... inclusion of opportunities for active learning ... provision for opportunities for collaboration among teachers, inclusion of embedded follow-up and continuous feedback” (Archibald et al., 2011, p. 3). Learning Forward’s State of Teacher Professional Learning report stated, school and district leaders must be committed to the professional growth of their teachers. There is a need for increased support for continuous, job-embedded learning (Learning Forward, 2017). Teacher Q commented on the professional development evaluation, “I think the modeling and engaging activities we have done during this professional learning time, it will be easy to replicate in my own classroom.” Furthermore, Teacher O asserted, “I can be a model for others because of the reading in the text, repeatedly revisiting the professional development, I am equipped.” Allen (2006) stated the following regarding high-quality professional development:

High-quality professional development prepares teachers for the specific challenges when it is of sufficient length, frequency, and intensity; revolves around helping teachers move their students toward their state’s content and performance standards; gives teachers a central role in planning their own professional development; and provides teachers with ample opportunity to

practice skills and activities. (p. 100)

Comments which supported positive impacts on teaching practice included “The examples given today were explained very well and I think I can take the information back to my peers” (Teacher W). Teacher D affirmed, “I think I can use the information I learned today to make sure that I am planning with a purpose and continue to make lessons engaging and meaningful for my students.” The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality’s research and policy brief specified, “to be considered high-quality, professional development must be delivered in a way that yields direct impact on teacher practice” (Archibald et al., 2011, p. 3), as was evidenced by the following comment: “I have my notes and the resources from today that will allow me to plan and model what the GRR is supposed to look like in the classroom” (Teacher F). Teacher L asserted, “I would model myself after the presentation today, use the framework the way it has been presented and experienced. I can use the notes and the book given for my resources.” Additionally, Teacher M stated, “I understand the components of the framework, I feel we have been taught and given resources to regularly incorporate this into my classroom practice.” Gibbs’s (2011) study affirmed common components of best practices in professional development included “active learning opportunities; collective participation; coherence and duration” (p. 11). Teacher Q indicated, “I think the modeling and engaging activities we have done during this professional learning time, it will be easy to replicate in my own classroom.”

Roy (2010) reported the effective components of professional development included the characteristics of being collaborative, sustained, job-embedded (occurring during the workday or work week), aligned student needs based on data, aligned with

rigorous curriculum, and continually supported in the classroom. A teacher noted in the evaluation,

I liked being able to complete this professional development during the school hours and have a substitute teacher cover my class. I can actually focus on what we are learning rather than being so tired and unfocused with doing this after school. (Teacher PPP)

Gradual Release of Responsibility

A host of researchers agree on the basic features of a good lesson and how positive it can be on student learning (Hattie, 2009; Marzano, 2017; Popham 2008; William, 2007). Schmoker (2016) summarized this research as, “clear learning objectives, step-by-step teaching, focused practice, check for understanding, and adjusting of instruction are the most important elements of effective lesson delivery” (p. 53). Overwhelmingly, teachers shared thoughts similar to Teacher MM:

The framework truly impacts students learning because students need the focused and guided instruction and it builds to the collaborative learning section of the framework. Students then apply what has been learned during independent practice. For students to be successful, they have to be exposed to each part of the framework.

After each professional learning session on the GRR, teachers were asked if they felt confident being a model for their school on the component taught and to explain why. The responses are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Teacher Responses

Framework Component	Total Responses	Yes Responses	No Responses
Focused Instruction	181	117 (64%)	64 (35%)
Guided Instruction	153	92 (60%)	61 (39%)
Collaborative Learning	159	131 (82%)	28 (17%)
Independent Learning	140	104 (75%)	36 (25%)

All of the teacher responses were at or above 60%. The determination was made by the researcher based on the percentages and the specific comments made by teachers in the open-ended evaluation responses that the professional development did have a positive impact on teacher self-efficacy. For example, Teacher B commented, “I feel I can be a model teacher in my school because we have been trained with all the necessary tools to do so today.” After the guided instruction professional development session Teacher Q noted, “I feel confident that at the end of all the sessions I will be able to go back and model for my colleagues the many practices I have learned.” Teachers listed the specific components of the phases of the GRR in their comments such as, “I understand that Focused Instruction includes Learning Targets, modeling, think-aloud, and noticing” (Teacher O). Teacher FFF commented, “The session on Guided Instruction has helped me understand how to implement questions, prompts, and cues in my classroom. I feel more confident.”

The professional development evaluations revealed some teachers were not as efficacious in being a model for other teachers in implementing the framework. Many teachers commented they wanted more time to practice. This is supported by the following comments: “I don’t feel confident being a model for this to other teachers yet, I need to implement this in my own classroom first” (Teacher OOO); “I can’t be a model

yet” (Teacher V); “I am not a model yet. I need more practice” (Teacher XXX); “I don’t feel I am ready at this point” (Teacher WWW); “At this point, I don’t feel like I could be a model. Hopefully, after this cohort is finished I will feel more confident” (Teacher J); “I am not a model yet. I need a chance to practice the strategies we learned today” (Teacher BBB); and “Perhaps I could be a model after more time to process the information learned from today” (Teacher CCC). Teacher B noted, “No, I am not a model yet. I would like more training to become more confident in my own implementation of guided instruction before sharing it with other adults.” Additionally, Teacher GGG commented, “I feel I need more practice in my classroom first. I absolutely believe in the importance of the framework.” Teacher WWW also expressed, “I have areas that still need tweaking and strengthening. I need to work on releasing control to students.” Even though not all participants noted a high enough level of self-efficacy to be a model for other teachers as noted above in the comments, many wanted to practice and improve. Wong and Wong (2015) advocated professional development is a tool used to develop and strengthen skills, knowledge, and expertise for educators. Additionally, Smith (2010) reported the core features of effective professional development to improve teacher quality were content focus, active learning, duration, and collective participation.

Focused Instruction

A search in the literature revealed, during focused instruction, the use of learning targets increases the likelihood that students are set up for success by helping teachers and students see a task more clearly (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Marzano, 2013). Furthermore, Marzano (2013) stated, “Any system that organizes statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do enhances student learning because it provides clarity

to students and teachers alike” (p. 83). As Teacher G noted,

I think I could be a model for this framework because I really use Learning Targets in my classroom. I reference those targets as I teach them because I want to make certain students are learning what I need for them to learn. I am analyzing my teaching during the Better Learning Cohort and I am fine tuning my instruction so it provides a greater impact on student learning.

Teacher I also commented, “I learned the importance of discussing and explaining the Learning Target so students know the learning outcomes.” Further comments which supported the positive impacts of the use of learning targets during focused instruction included, “I plan to follow the model from Focused Instruction today and break down my Learning Targets to better help my students understand them” (Teacher QQ); “I learned different ways to break down the Learning Targets. I want to do this with my students’ (Teacher WW); “I am going to be more intentional in using specific Learning Targets and I am also going to start with the end in mind when planning” (Teacher RR); and “I am going to make my Learning Targets more student friendly. I want to begin using pictures and simplified vocabulary” (Teacher SS).

In other related information concerning focused instruction components from the literature, Fisher and Frey (2010), stated, “Students learn more when they have the opportunity to listen to how the teacher thinks and solves problems” (p. 58). Teachers expose their thinking to demonstrate how they use their own background knowledge, consolidate knowledge, and notice the phenomenon of learning. The teacher’s use of a think-aloud procedure is an example of how expertise is shared in the classroom. Students deserve to experience the curriculum from an expert’s perspective. This

provides students with an opportunity to imitate the expert thinking similar to an apprentice when learning a new skill. It was noted teachers having an increase in self-efficacy using the framework because of 181 evaluation responses, 117 of the teachers stated they felt they could be a model teacher for focused instruction. Comments which supported positive impacts on the use of think-aloud and modeling were, “I am going to use ‘I’ more when modeling and doing think-aloud to show students how sometimes I struggle and have to think through problems using various strategies” (Teacher XX); “I learned how important modeling and using think-aloud strategies are during Focused Instruction” (Teacher YY); “I am going to use ‘I’ more intentionally when completing the think-aloud part of Focused Instruction” (Teacher ZZ); “I am not going to underestimate the power of using modeling and think-aloud for my students. I am going to begin to discuss my thought process while I demonstrate a task” (Teacher BBB). The professional development opportunity validated some teachers and supplied confidence for others as indicated in the evaluation responses. Teacher PP noted, “I feel confident in implementing the focused instruction phase in my classroom.” Similarly, Teacher F confirmed, “I feel that I have a good grasp on the Focused Instruction portion of the framework after today’s professional learning session.” Nevertheless, 35% of the teachers noted on the evaluation responses that they did not feel they could be a model for focused instruction. Maynes et al. (2010) concluded, “There appears to be a significant gap between teachers’ conceptual understanding of the role of modeling their understanding and the role of structured, scaffolded practice, that is followed by a gradual release of responsibility after modeling” (pp. 73-74).

Guided Instruction

A search in the literature revealed the importance of the use of quality of teacher questioning during guided instruction to scaffold support, probe for deeper understanding, and be used in the metacognitive process as students check in and monitor their understanding of a text or concept (Flippone, 1998; Frey & Fisher, 2010b; Jones, 2012; Miller, 2002). Moreover, guided instruction requires necessary moves by the expert teacher based on student responses of the questions that are asked. It is the teacher expertise that matters, as the teacher has to know when to use questions, prompts, or cues or go back to direct explanation to get the learner to learn. A teacher's instructional decision-making is pivotal in providing the appropriate scaffold of support at just the right instructional time. There is great importance on the quality of the question that is posed (Frey & Fisher, 2010b). Comments which supported positive impacts on teacher self-efficacy were, "I feel comfortable because I feel we have developed some good questions, prompts, and cues today" (Teacher R); "I learned the differences between questions, prompts, and cues" (Teacher MMM); "I love the types of questions and the decision-making chart" (Teacher S); "I will remember to use the question decision-making chart to help with all levels of students in my classroom. It will help me guide them further when struggling students need more help" (Teacher GGG); and "I better understand the difference between prompts and cues. I understand that Guided Instruction phase offers questions, prompts, and cues to provide a scaffold for students" (Teacher T). Teacher Q shared thoughts about guided instruction by stating,

I enjoyed the questioning activities we completed today. I have learned how to ask questions effectively and how to shift the cognitive load to students. I feel

confident that after this session I can go back into my classroom and implement guided instruction in an effective way.

Teacher HHH voiced, “I know I need to learn more about guided instruction but I feel more confident than I did when I walked into the session.”

Collaborative Learning

According to research, during the collaborative instruction phase of the GRR, students are expected to apply the skills and knowledge they have been taught and work with their peers for support and enrichment. The interaction between peers moves the learning forward, and students begin to develop and use personal skills to strengthen communication and leadership skills (Fisher & Frey, 2014). The research statement was evidenced by the following comment from Teacher FF,

Collaborative learning supports deeper learning and transfer knowledge which is essential in math instruction. Students are more engaged and take ownership of their learning. Collaborative learning helps develop “soft skills.” The additional benefits are the development of higher-level thinking, oral communication, and leadership skills. Collaborative learning helps support positive relationships between peers and students to teachers. This prepares them for real life.

Likewise, Teacher Z stated, “I feel that the collaborative learning phase in the framework is very important. Students need to learn to negotiate and communicate effectively so they are career and college ready.” The interaction between peers is a fundamental part of the learning process (Cain, 2012; Frey et al., 2009; Vygotsky, 1978). Slavin (1980) stated, “Cooperative learning refers to classroom techniques in which students work on learning activities in small groups and receive recognition based on their group’s

performance” (p. 315). One of the participants noted,

Collaborative learning is vital because it is a constant movement in and out of guided instruction to help the students collaborate and for the teacher to notice and see how students are learning and if they are mastering the skill.

Furthermore, Teacher P asserted, “I learned that it’s important to implement a variety of collaborative learning strategies that can be used to shift the cognitive load to the students.” Of the 159 responses to the evaluation question for collaborative learning, 131 commented on using a specific collaborative learning strategy in their classroom.

Independent Learning

The research on independent learning indicates this phase as the critical part in the GRR where the student focuses on the application of the skill taught. The cognitive load now shifts to the student. Fisher and Frey (2014) stated, “A common misconception about independent learning is that the ultimate goal is for the student to replicate what has been taught” (p. 97). Key features of independent learning include metacognition and self-regulation. Duke and Pearson (2002) suggested that teachers have to move from assuming “all the responsibility for performing a task ... to a situation in which the students assume all of the responsibility” (p. 211). Teacher MM felt an increase in self-efficacy with the framework by stating,

I feel comfortable using the framework and modeling to my peers because I have had an opportunity to engage with the framework from this cohort experience. I am more comfortable with planning lessons that include all components of the framework with putting an emphasis on shifting the cognitive load.

Teacher MM further commented about independent learning:

I have seen the effectiveness of incorporating the instructional framework in my classroom this year because students are able to be more aware of my expectations. I have also seen the advantages of this framework positively impact my students through the use of more collaborative learning structures that lead to independent practice.

This is further supported by Teacher II's comment: "I think implementing all the components of the framework students are more engaged and more knowledgeable about the content."

Analysis of Research Question 2: What are Teacher Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the GRR to Enhance Student Learning?

The second research question focused on teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of the GRR to enhance student learning. Ultimately, the common goal of professional development is to produce more effective teachers (Tournaki et al., 2011), which in turn results in improved student achievement and school improvement. Of the possible 179 professional development participants, 37 volunteered to participate in focus group interviews. Interview participants supported the positive impact on an increase of student engagement in their classroom and believed there was an increase in student achievement by implementing the framework in their classroom.

Student Engagement

Study participants in the focus group interviews claimed there was an increase in student engagement in their classrooms while implementing the GRR. Participant 3 articulated, "I think student engagement increases with the framework because there is so much more than they're expected to do either independently, with the teacher or with peers." According to research, Robinson's (2012) study found participants perceived the

use of cooperative learning structures in the classroom as a positive experience. Furthermore, the teachers felt the use of cooperative learning in their classrooms had positive effects on their students. It was noted that student engagement increased, students took greater ownership of their learning, and students increased in their communication skills (Robinson, 2012).

In their study, Peterson and Miller (2004) found that the overall quality of experience was greater during cooperative learning; benefits occurred specifically for thinking on the task, student engagement, perception of task importance, and optimal levels of challenge and skill. The researchers discovered that students were more engaged during cooperative learning and perceived that their learning task during cooperative learning was more important than during large group instruction. The implication for teachers is that carefully designed and monitored cooperative learning tasks that help students achieve future goals help students engage more actively in their learning experiences (Peterson & Miller, 2004). Further comments which supported the positive impacts on student engagement include, “I love that everybody’s engaged all at once” (Participant 16); “I like to hear the excitement in the collaborative groups” (Participant 14); “There was a buzz in the room” (Participant 19); “The student engagement has increased because we as teachers are facilitators of learning rather than just being an instructor and delivering information” (Participant 22); and “The students are involved in discussions and engagement has increased as well as their responsibility to own their thinking” (Participant 22). However, school administrators contradicted teacher participants: “I am seeing a lot of situations where teachers are doing some of the focused instruction but then jumping right into independent practice” (School

Administrator 3). School Administrator 4 confirmed the same thought: “I just don’t see any cooperative learning. I don’t see students working together. There is lack of engagement in some classrooms.”

Student Achievement

A search in the literature revealed a connection between student learning and effective teaching. The executive summary from Learning Forward’s (2017) State of Teacher Professional Learning report stated, “Effective teacher learning is vital to student success. Teachers who continually improve their practice by using data to inform instructional decisions see improved results for their students” (p. 3). Additionally, Learning Forward’s State of Teacher Professional Learning report stated, “Effective teacher learning is vital to student success. Teachers who continually improve their practice by using data to inform instructional decisions see improved results for their students” (p. 3). As identified in research, a specific area to focus on in school improvement is instruction. The GRR framework improves instruction and ultimately student learning (Hervey, 2018; Schmoker, 2016). Additionally, a host of researchers agree on the basic features of a good lesson and how positive it can be on student learning (Hattie, 2009; Marzano, 2017; Popham, 2008; William, 2007). Interview participants noted the positive impacts on student achievement, as Participant 22 articulated, “The framework is making a difference in my classroom.” Likewise, “I think that the framework has really helped students be more accountable. I think it has enhanced their learning because they are more accountable” (Participant 21). Further comments which supported an increase in student learning were, “No longer are students just memorizing information, they are applying what they have learned” (Participant 22);

“Students take responsibility because they know their why” (Participant 7); “One of the things I have noticed about the GRR is how much better prepared my children feel when getting to apply their learning to a task” (Participant 11); “It enhanced learning in my classroom” (Participant 2); and “There are lots of little successes with them (the students) being able to take on leadership roles when we follow the gradual release” (Participant 15).

Participant 16 stated, “I can compare my data. My kids are reading better, the numbers are better, they (the students) are reading at higher levels.” Participant 17 also noted an increase in student achievement scores: “My growth last year in reading was particularly amazing. My data for reading at the end of the year was very, very good for me and I was excited about that.” However, again, school administrators contradicted what teachers noted by articulating, “My reading data went down last year. I have had to go back and tell my staff everything we do has to be very intentional and very purposeful.” School Administrator 2 noted,

I worry that teachers are not noticing enough and some students are getting misconceptions within collaborative groups because the teacher is not as focused during that block of the framework and students are not improving in their learning. It’s not purposeful.

Limitations

As expected with a qualitative study, this study included some limitations. The first limitation identified was the interviews were conducted by the researcher rather than a proxy. This was done intentionally as the researcher had worked with all the teachers who participated in the professional development and wanted to collect the data to ensure

validity in the transcriptions.

Another limitation which occurred was the researcher's personal involvement with the GRR professional development as the Director of Elementary Education in the central office curriculum and instruction team. The researcher was responsible for researching the framework as well as creating and delivering the professional development sessions. The design of the study was intended for data collection that was structured for uniformity and objectivity; all participants were aware of the researcher's role in securing the studied professional learning.

An additional limitation was the limited amount of time to complete the training. The participants received 37 hours of training. Crow (2017) indicated it can take 50 or more hours of sustained professional learning to realize results for students. Loveless (2013) indicated, "ample time (more than 40 hours per program) with a year or more of follow-up clear linkages to teachers' existing knowledge and skills, training that actively engages teachers, and training teams of teachers from the same school" (p. 60) was necessary for noticeable impacts on instruction and teacher learning.

The next limitation to the study involves the input and training of the school administrators. School administrators have not completed the full five half-day sessions and instructional rounds in which teachers participated. They have participated in the seven 1-hour sessions. This is a limitation because their level of training on the GRR has not been as in-depth as teacher participants.

The search during this process was to determine if the GRR professional development had a positive impact on teacher self-efficacy and an impact on improved student achievement. An intentional focus was employed to objectively search the data

to find themes that emerged to gain meaning from them. The researcher needed to know if the professional development was something that warranted future use to help improve instruction in classrooms and thus improve student achievement.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings from this study indicate possible topics for recommended future research. Additional studies on the impact of the GRR on teacher self-efficacy conducted at school sites where all teachers and school administrators had participated in the professional learning could support this qualitative study. Additionally, a future study relating to the administrator's role in the training, implementation, and sustainability of the GRR professional learning and the impact on student achievement could be warranted. The school administrator training study should focus on their level of self-efficacy of implementing the framework and what it looks like in the classroom. School administrators should be trained on how to notice evidences of implementation and practices in the classroom setting. Further research on the implementation of the GRR to student achievement data as indicated on state EOG assessments would also be beneficial.

Another future topic would include measuring the level of student engagement in elementary schools as compared to secondary schools with the implementation of collaborative learning structures.

Finally, many participants noted that with the use of collaborative learning structures, students were taking on more leadership roles in the classroom. A future study is warranted on the implementation of a student leadership framework and its effect on student achievement.

Recommendations for Further Practice

1. Stay focused on the professional learning about GRR and continue to train and retrain school administrators and teachers. The research on professional development noted 50 hours or more of sustained professional learning is required to realize results for students (Crow, 2017). Studies over the last several years have given observational proof that the best advancement for professional development programs whose goal is to increase teacher knowledge and skills are ongoing and sustained over time (Tournaki et al., 2011). Loveless (2013) reported,

 ample time (more than 40 hours per program) with a year or more of follow-up, clear linkages to teachers' existing knowledge and skills and training that actively engages teachers are necessary in making change in teacher implementation of the program. (p. 60)

Moreover, Schmoker (2016) wrote, "We need to train and retrain in the most vital practices until teachers demonstrate mastery and then periodically retrain again to ensure against forgetfulness and drift" (p. 22).
2. Implement the use of framework focused instructional rounds. This will provide the opportunity for teachers to see the framework in action in a classroom. Ingersoll (2004) determined, "The training force is inadequately trained and prepared" (p. 2). Feiman-Nemser (2001) asserted, "What students learn is directly related to what and how teachers teach" (p. 1013). There were many comments made in the professional development evaluations about the opportunity to complete instructional rounds as a part of the learning

sessions. Teacher N affirmed, “I have seen other model teachers implement the framework. I will use that experience, the tools you have given me, and the ideas from these sessions to plan for using the framework in my lesson planning.” Teacher DD asserted, “I would have liked to be able to visit more schools and do more class visits. I didn’t feel like the instructional rounds were long enough.”

3. Implement further training for school administrators. The school administrators need more time and sustained training on the implementation of the GRR and how to give feedback to teachers to improve their classroom practice. This training should include the use of a curriculum walk through instrument aligned with the GRR. This will assist administrators as they look for evidences of the framework in order to provide feedback and hold teachers accountable for implementation. School Administrator 3 noted, “I am seeing a lot of situations where teachers are doing some of the focused instruction and then jumping right into the independent practice. We are skilling the guided and collaborative parts.” School Administrator 3 confirmed, “I think some of the missing parts of the framework, we can build and strengthen through PLCs.” School Administrator 4 noted, “I just don’t see any cooperative learning. I know the framework has been introduced and discussed.” Furthermore, this will strengthen alignment with the district and school instructional practice goals. As noted in research, high-quality professional development is strengthened when alignment occurs between state, district, and school goals and is “embedded with follow-up and

continuous feedback” (Archibald et al., 2001 p. 3). Gibbs (2011) noted, “High-quality professional development programs should be developed with extensive participation of teachers and school administrators” (p. 41).

4. Implement differentiated training for elementary and secondary teachers to strengthen their practices on the collaborative learning phase of the GRR. It was noted by Teacher GGGG, “I don’t know the best way to use this (collaborative learning) in a high school math classroom and keep students on task and everyone doing something.” Teacher HHHH noted, “I feel like I don’t have time for collaborative learning and accomplish all of my curriculum in a half of a year.” Also noted in research, professional development takes many forms, types, and various methods to produce more effective teachers (Tournaki et al., 2001).

Summary

Data from this qualitative study substantiated that the GRR professional development met many components of high-quality professional development. The data also indicated that the professional learning had an impact on teacher self-efficacy. The professional development opportunity validated some teachers, encouraged some, and supplied confidence for others as indicated in open-ended responses such as, “I have gained a better understanding of the framework and why it is important to implement it in the classroom and why it is important for students” (Teacher P). Similarly, Teacher X stated, “I feel that I have a much deeper understanding of the framework and what is expected in the classroom.” The study also investigated the perception of the GRR on student learning. Interview Participant 22 noted, “The framework is making a difference

in my classroom. Students are excited.” Interview Participant 3 commented, “The framework makes them (the students) more independent.” Collins (2001) stated, “We don’t have great schools, principally because we have good schools (p. 1). In order to improve the quality of education provided to students, we must invest in and grow great educators. This occurs best through quality professional development and strong administrative support.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval

Ms. Danley,

Your IRB Application for the Expedited research project titled "The Impact of the Gradual Release of Responsibility Professional Development on Teacher Self-Efficacy" has been approved, effective August 29, 2018. It has been assigned an expiration date of August 28, 2019, and an IRB file number of 18082901X.

Please be aware that if you need to continue your study beyond the Expiration Date, you must submit a Request for Continuance (<http://www.gardner-webb.edu/Assets/gardnerwebb/academics/review-board/irb-request-research-continuance1.pdf>) prior to that date.

Best wishes for a productive investigation!

Kathi Simpson

Office Manager

Secretary to the IRB

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Appendix B

Written Permission to Conduct Research

Re: Request from DeAnne Danley > Inbox x



to me

DeAnne, your research request has been approved. I look forward to reading about your results when you conclude your research.

Please let me know if I can assist you.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

August 20, 2018

Dear

As you are aware, I am currently enrolled in the doctoral graduate program at Gardner-Webb University. My dissertation topic is "The Impact of the Gradual Release of Responsibility Professional Development on Teacher Self-Efficacy." The purpose of this correspondence is to request your permission to conduct my research in the district, In accordance with School Board Policy 5230 listed below is a summary of the dissertation proposal, including the purpose and methodology. The two research questions are:

1. What is the impact of the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) Instructional Framework professional development on teacher self-efficacy?
2. What are teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of the GRR to enhance student learning?

This is a qualitative research study. I would like permission to use the open-ended evaluation responses from the participants in the Better Learning Cohorts 1-6 to answer Research Question 1. In order to answer Research Question 2, I will email all of the Better Learning Cohort participants and seek volunteers to participate in small focus-group interviews. These interviews will be held outside teacher work hours and will be held at a central location within our district. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the confidentiality of the participants. The information gathered from this study will be shared with the school system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
DeAnne H. Danley

Appendix C

Focus Group Interview Questions

1. Describe the professional development you received on the Gradual Release of Responsibility Instructional Framework.
2. Please give an example of a success story where the instructional framework made a difference in how you felt about your instructional practices.
3. Please give an example of how you feel the instructional framework has enhanced student learning.
4. What would you like to tell me about the professional development sessions and the impact on student learning that I did not ask?

Appendix D

Focus Group Interview Transcriptions

Interview Focus Group 1

- Interviewer: This is a test to see how far away I need to be from the microphone in order to record.
- Interviewer: This is a test to see how to save a recording.
- Interviewer: So, to answer research question two, we are going to find out today, what are the teacher perceptions on the effectiveness of the framework of gradual release of responsibility the book based on better learning. How is that framework enhancing student learning? So it's what do you think? It is all your opinion, okay? This is a safe space. I'll respect. I'll use a coding system and give everybody a number. So you'll be Interview Person One. So, how many years have you been teaching?
- Interviewee 1: This is my twentieth.
- Interviewer: Okay. And, how many years have you been teaching?
- Interviewee 2: Thirteen.
- Interviewer: Okay, and how many years have you been teaching?
- Interview 3: Well, this is my fourteenth.
- Interviewer: Fourteenth.
- Interview 3: [crosstalk 00:01:06] thirteen.
- Interviewer: Okay. Alright, so it's just a discussion. I may ask some probing questions or ask you to expand upon things like that. So the first, and there's no order, so you can just tag team.
- Interviewer: Describe the professional development that you received on the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework.
- Interview 3: Well, so, I attended the better learning cohort. The year prior to that, the part-time AP at our school had done some information with the book, and so we had kind of been introduced to it before I actually attended the cohort training. And some of the teachers at my school that had gone before me, had come back and kind of talked about it a little bit as well. So, I kind of knew going into it, a little bit about what it was going to be about before I started. But, I attended just three or four sessions, I think, and then did the classroom visits on the last session.
- Interviewee 2: I participated in a better learning cohort as well. Prior to that we had received prior to a better learning cohort and also received just a visual

aid, a cardstock came out and it talked about the steps. And I was familiar with what we were gonna talk about, but of course the cohort diving into the better learning book and doing the activities. And then we were also able to visit classrooms, and then we came together for an interview process and actually had some of the cohort to come and watch me. And then they reflected upon the lesson that they observed me doing using the strategies from the [inaudible 00:02:54]

Interviewee 1: I too attended the learning cohort class, and I had a little bit prior knowledge going in to it. As I attended the classes, and got to go visit an actual classroom, seeing it, I started realizing that it were somethings I could do differently in my room. And I too had someone come and observe me, and tell me what I needed to change to meet all the requirements.

Interviewer: Either of you have anything to add?

Interview 3: As they were talking, I was thinking about years ago in my initial training in education, when you have the six point lesson plan, it does essentially follow that. It was good for me to have been teaching awhile, and then see it from a fresh perspective and be able to tweak somethings in my teaching. Things that I had always done, it just kinda brought to my attention certain areas like the collaborative piece. So, when they were speaking, it just kinda reminded me of that.

Interviewee 4: I guess as being a new teacher in year two, I have a little bit of a different perspective on it. So, I got to come in really using it from the get go, so it helped me with my planning. Being able to PLC better and actually form what I was going to do the next day and so on, and I also go observed and it was great for me to have teachers that have been teaching multiple years to come in and say "You are doing this right, and here is some more ideas as well to make it even better. And here's some ways to fix your plans." So, it really helped me with planning in question.

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:04:39] Thank you. So, I want you to think right now of an example of a success story where the framework made a difference in how you felt about your instructional practice. So, I'm gonna say the question again. What's in a success story of where the instructional framework you felt like it made a difference in your instructional practice?

Interviewee 1: I think mine would be a math lesson I was doing [inaudible 00:05:11] I was introducing the new skill to them, and then we worked some together. And then I paired them up with a partner, and they continued to work problems out, and once I felt they were getting the hang of it, I put them independently. I found out when the test came around, doing

this, that one skill they did way better than some of the previous skills that I did not use this way.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee 4: Mine would be with extended reading projects or book studies. I was able to hold students accountable and figure out what their roles would be, and they were able to figure that out themselves since we had been working with this framework. And they were able to be able to do each portion of the framework, and I got to see especially the collaborative part, how were they not only accountable, but how was it valuable to their learning set in a purpose.

Interview 3: I think for me, it might have been the collaborative piece as well because often times, I would have them, what I believe was effective group work, but thinking about it within the framework, it made me set kind of some parameters for their group work. Give them a purpose, but then also, I focused on was I including like a [inaudible 00:06:35] in with that. I had more purpose to planning my group work activities than just talk at the table about this topic. I structured it more.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee 2: I see success too and what I like is when it's not linear, it's not in a step process. [inaudible 00:06:56] You don't have to star here, that's been great in my room to see my students take on a role.

Interviewer: I'm going to ask you to expand in the role for research, what you mean by the framework not being linear. So, that readers will understand what you're talking about.

Interviewee 2: Okay. So, I'm able to introduce a topic or an idea that we may start [inaudible 00:07:18] or on their own independent just to go ahead and focus my lessons or my unit. What do they already know, it will progress my lesson planning to be more effective to my student needs. And I think [inaudible 00:07:30] everybody's got to be at the top, watch me, and then let's take it on, so, letting them take a role and even using it to further your lessons or ideas.

Interviewer: Have you found out, I know you were in one of the earlier cohorts. Have you found out that you feel more comfortable with it not being linear as you've used it more?

Interviewee 1: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

- Interview 3: So I will kind of springboard on what she just said. So, I think mine was reassurance because I couldn't see how I did in my [inaudible 00:08:01] could go along with that. So, my different pieces might be different days, and so not being linear helped me because I could start here and work my way through. It didn't have to flow in a certain order, it could flow in the order I needed it to, if that makes since. And so, then you had given us the lesson plan, like a templates, at our meeting that we had, and you had given examples on the sides. And I was able to go through those examples and go "I knew that, I knew that," and it was very reassuring to see that there were somethings that I didn't consider fitting in that piece that actually you had given as an example. And I knew "Hey, this is considered, this goes with this piece here so," I think it was very reassuring.
- Interviewer: So, this research question is about enhancing student learning. So, I would like, if you can think of to give an example of how you feel the framework has enhanced student learning. Focusing from us as a teacher, how we feel in our own instructional practices, but now looking how has the framework enhanced student learning.
- Interview 3: Makes them more independent. I mean we have to focus on, if we're looking at the different pieces, we're having to focus on are we giving them more responsibility. Are we becoming more of a facilitator and less of making a speech? Are we facilitating and letting them have more of responsibility, so the more responsibility I have given mine, they have, when I raise the bar, they meet it. Just trusting that they're able to do that.
- Interviewee 1: Mine's became more excited about learning now, they wanna to come to school because they know it's gonna be more of them working, and less of having to listen to me do all the teaching. They'll look at and say, "Ooh, do we get to work in our groups again? Do we get to do this?" They like it better.
- Interviewee 4: I think it helps with confidence. She was saying with it not being linear, you're able to fit into their perspective, what works best with them. Maybe they need that more directed time, and as a teacher, we're able to pull them and do a small group while the others are working independent. When in the past, it was I've got to try and deliver to all twenty-five, and then hope that they get it and if I have time, I'll pull these students. Now, you have that time because you which students can go off and do their own thing without you being on top of them, and which ones you can say I need to bring you back to the directed points. So, I think it builds confidence.
- Interview 3: And to go along with that, I think student engagement increases with this because there is so much more that they're expected to do either

independently or with the teacher or with each other that the engagement level in the classroom has increased.

Interviewee 2: Enhanced learning in my classroom, too, felt like it wasn't another thing. I think people get frightened that this is another thing we have to do, and it wasn't, it just goes hand in hand with good teaching and effective teaching. And it still is [inaudible 00:11:21] it still is our activities that we're doing, it just shows you were they fit. And I think that's what you were saying, I'm doing those things but it just helps us to get it organized and meet our kids' needs in the classroom.

Interviewer: Okay, so the last question is really an open-ended question about anything about the framework, from the professional development sessions to you using it in your classroom to specific student stories. Is there anything you want to tell me about the going through the whole process? From reading the book, attending the sessions, doing instructional rounds, and the impact on student learning that I did not ask. Is there anything else you would like to add.

Interviewee 4: Well, we've talked about it a little bit about the observations or the hands-on things that we've done either with the cohort or in faculty meetings or with [inaudible 00:12:20] meetings. Being able to see it, not just hear you present it or hear someone say this is what we're doing, this is how it looks. Being able to see the videos of the teachers doing the question, prompt, and [inaudible 00:12:33]. Cause anybody can tell you, "Good questions, good questions," but do we really know how do I ask the student this question. And I know we watch videos of, thanks Pedro and Phillip, but we watch those videos and was able to see how they were getting down to the students' level, questioning them and making it meaningful. Instead of just what's the answer and why, so I like being able to see it practiced rather than just hearing it practiced.

Interviewee 1: I liked the hands-on we got to do in the classes, also.

Interviewer: Imma ask you for research purposes, can you expand upon maybe one specific thing that you're talking about that comes to mind?

Interviewee 1: We replaced a table with all kinds of supplies and given a certain amount of time, we had to see what we could make out of it that went along with this class. And then we had to explain it, and do a video online and share it with everyone.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interview 3: I would say for me the instructional rounds, I guess as a follow up to that, kind of what like he said, getting to go in someone's classroom and seeing their perspective on how they use the framework. The classes I

went in, I didn't go in a classroom necessarily that was the same content that I teach, but just seeing how other people use that, I went in three classroom and could use something from all three of those teachers as how they use instructional framework that I could apply to my class.

Interviewee 2: I was apart of the summer cohort, so we have not had a chance to do instructional rounds, so this is promising cause I could see how it fits in my classroom. But as you were saying, when I'm able to go see old teachers, I'm sure that I'm going to get many ideas seeing it put into practice.

Interviewer: Okay, alright. Thank you all.

Interview Focus Group 2

Speaker 1: Today it is about answering research question two, which are, "What are your perceptions on the effectiveness of the framework to enhance student learning?" So what do you think, it's all your opinion. There's no right or wrong answers in any of this. There's no format; I'll ask the question, we'll ping pong around and you can answer it. So the first question, is, "In your own words, describe the professional development that you received on the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework."

Speaker 1: So what did you do? What was the professional development sessions like? How would you describe it?

Speaker 9: I enjoyed that we were in a group with not just our own grade level and not just our subjects because usually that's how we get put with the exact same teachers that... In the same subject matter and grades so I love that I had elementary and middle, I had all different subjects, and I love that we came together and would work together several different days but with the same people so you built that relationship with them.

Speaker 7: I'm gonna ping pong off of her and say that I was able to gain a lot of different ideas from bein' there with other age group teachers, and be able to tweak it to my own ideas and my own classroom. But it was nice to be able to use what we were learning and be able to discuss and collaborate about it, and then be able to take those ideas back to our classrooms.

Speaker 6: I like that we used strategies that were already incorporating in order to put all this stuff together. When we used CRISS strategies, when we used Kagan strategies, and we did several different activities, and we did things in different ways to show us how to meet learners who have different needs, different... with the tactile and all of the other strategies.

Speaker 8: I also like too the fact that it wasn't something completely new. Like it was already stuff that we were already using, but then it took it a step further on

how you could use this in this part of the framework and then how you could [crosstalk 00:02:24] it out different ways.

- speaker 10: I didn't have some of the background that ya'll are talking about, so I really appreciate how you structured each of those. Not just the way the groups were but mixing the different types of activities together from using the screen to small group conversation to activities as a group and things like that. The same kind of things that I try to do to keep variety in the classroom.
- Speaker 13: I enjoyed ... I thought it was refreshing to sit with ... Any time you go to a big professional development your eyes go right to, "Who do I know?" And you just go sit with them and you kinda just clique up in your space. And then you realize, "Oh, my name's on a table. Okay, I have to get to know these other people." And it just put you in a different perspective that ... I don't know it was just nice to have something different. You weren't with your people, so you got to hear different perspectives and take something from that.
- Speaker 6: Also it felt ... I thought that really tied in to the whole noticing part of the framework 'cause that put you on another edge. That made you pull in that noticing 'cause you're with all these people that you're not normally with. So it's not things that you would expect your friend to do this or your friend to say this or to do something in a certain way. But when you're with people that you're not normally with, you pull on that noticing yourself. You have to use that skillset with what you're doin'.
- Speaker 7: I felt like it really got me out of my comfort zone and out of my box in order to talk to people that I didn't know. But also we were challenged with the different Kagan strategies and CRISS strategies, which got us up and got us engaged. It wasn't just a lecture of havin' to sit there and do it. Whereas normally I would just sit in the back and do what I had to be able to learn and take it with me. But you were actively engaged throughout each session, and then you always have somethin' to take back to your classroom.
- Speaker 13: And I don't mean to say this as just a big pat on the back. I said this when you weren't right there. It's been one of my very few experiences with professional development where I wasn't looking at my phone or looking at the clock like, "When are we goin'? When's lunch? When's the break? What's ... " You know, like everyone said here, you were in it. It was meaningful, and it was just building on things you already knew ,and helping you just add to your tool belt.
- Speaker 1: Do you think ... I'm gonna ask a pro a researcher ... asking a probing question. The professional development was organized to model what we see in class. Do you think that the way it was delivered would give teachers an example of how a students feel in the classroom or how to model what we expect to see in the classroom?

- Speaker 9: Yes, definitely. Definitely with the modeling because sometimes you didn't even realize that it was bein' modeled, and then you'd get to be a part and be like, "Oh yeah, that's what we just did and that's what this is!" But then also just that whole fact that comparing it to students ... if you had given everybody a worksheet and sat up there behind your computer, I can guarantee you I would have scribbled on that through that fast minute and then I would have been on my phone the whole time. But that's not what was happenin'. It was ... You were modeling exactly how we can keep them engaged. 'Cause I'm very much attention deficit. If I stayed engaged then ...
- Speaker 1: The next question is for you, and it ties right to this discussion. If you can think of an example, please give an example of a success story where the framework made a difference in how you felt about your instructional practice.
- Speaker 1: I'll repeat the question. Please give an example of a success story where the instructional framework made a difference in how you felt about your instructional practices.
- Speaker 6: One of the first things that I thought. Not completely, 'cause I had thought a little bit before with like CRISS and Kagan ... A lot of times when I would hear other people across the hall teachin' and it would be very, "Take the lid off the marker. Put the lid on your desk. Take the ... " You know, and one of them was in fourth grade, and I'm over here like, "You do it." Sometimes I would feel insecure about that, like I wasn't doing the right thing because I wasn't being so directive and making sure that everything was done this way and that way.
- Speaker 6: And that made me feel a whole lot better about, "Okay, it's okay to say 'you do it.'" That's what ... That's what's gonna get them where they need to be. They need to learn that independence and take their own responsibility, set their own goals. Learn how to get where they want to get on their own. So that definitely put me a little bit at ease.
- Speaker 7: It helped me a lot with my teacher directed reading time because I always felt, "Well, teacher directed is teacher directed." The kids should sit and they listen and I teach it. And then when ... helped me to do my part, we do it together and then I let them do it, even during that time. So even with teaching Kindergarten, I would do [crosstalk 00:08:13] I was always teachin' the ... readin' the story they were following along with me. And to also do the writing parts to it. And I saw a lot of growth for my kids from being able to do that and a lot of growth with myself to just be aware that they need to be involved in every step of our lessons.
- Speaker 8: I noticed from bein' in the cohort, not just starting like a new skill or a lesson with the direct ... tell them, "Hey, this is what I want you to do. You try it." You can learn a lot from your students just by letting them try it rather than you tellin' them the way to do it. So I think I've become a better teacher, and I had a hard time letting go at first, but I tried it and ... I mean it has made a world of difference, and I think it's made me a better teacher.

- speaker 10: I had the opportunity afterward, after being a part of the group, to host some visitors from one of the next groups. And that was a collaborative type of set up group option.
- speaker 10: I don't know if I should tell you what one of the kids did; I've never seen this before. He actually ... We were doing a product themed comparison between the United States and a couple of other selected countries, and he actually got on his phone and called Puerto Rico. I said, "Are you sure you wanna do that? What's your mom gonna say about this call?" You know, that's definitely out of the box!
- speaker 10: But afterwards one of the things we had pushed for our group was, "Can we be brief after we do these observations?" And I got the opportunity to do that with that group, and it was really satisfying to have that chance to interact with the people and talk about what happened and why and how it went and things like that.
- Speaker 9: Before the cohort ... I will say I always felt very [inaudible 00:10:11] and so I felt like, "I did not take a class on lesson planning," is always in my head. And so I would look at somebody's lesson plan and they've got one, two, three, four ... and I'm thinkin', "Oh my gosh, mine is all over the place!" But then that made me feel so much better that it doesn't have to be boom, boom, boom. If we get to here and my class period is over, then tomorrow is totally fine to start with the "You do ... " or to start with the ... It doesn't have to be that exact step-by-step. That made me feel so much better that that's not the way it's got to be.
- Speaker 13: One success I've had ... and I took it this summer. But I got some sticky notes for that put in my lesson plan notebook, and one of the speakers in the video that we watched ... and I felt really dumb after I heard him say it ... like "Of course!" ... but it was ... you learn a language by producing language. I teach fifth grade. Yes, we've got vocabulary words, and I feel like I'm doing everything I can with them. We act 'em out. We dance 'em. We just do a lot of wild stuff with it, and I feel like the kids know it. But then when he said that his example was, "Well how come you're not fluent in Spanish. I hear it all the time?"
- Speaker 13: So it just ... I've revamped and I feel better about my vocabulary teaching this year than I have in any year before because now we go into the classroom and we have a little block at the end of the day where we use that word in the sentence. Then they mix around the room with the Kagan, and they just share it so they're saying it and they're hearing it and writing it instead of just knowing what it means.
- Speaker 1: So I think that piggy backs to the next question. So if you can think for a moment and if you can give an example of how you feel the instructional framework has enhanced student learning. How has it enhanced ... how has implementing the framework in your classroom enhanced student learning?

- Speaker 7: One thing that I took away from it is the learning target and being able to break down the learning target because there again I would come up we would talk about it we would read it and I felt like, "Okay, they learned." But they didn't learn. So after learning about this, I can draw the pictures or we write it out and discuss about it and doin' the power three throughout the lesson. And I feel like they know the purpose, so now they're more willing to do the work and to do their part in their learning and take that responsibility because they know their why.
- Speaker 6: I feel like especially with the power three it puts the responsibility back on them. I intentionally put that learnin' target in my slides three times. And every time it comes up, they already know. They stand up. We say it. We act it out, whatever. I let them come up with the moves. They do the motions. They're totally responsible for that learnin' target. So it's like they know the ball's in their court. It's up to them.
- Speaker 8: I think just the shift of the workload from the teacher to the student ... I think they feel more like there's no wrong or right way to do this. This is my way. How am I gonna show that I have mastered it? So I'm thinking I'm just shiftn' the workload to them. I don't feel like, "Oh, it's gonna be wrong; it's not gonna be right."
- speaker 10: To piggy back on that. The idea of giving up is something that I had more [crosstalk 00:13:53] very much in the past, and it gives more student time to how we're gonna show [crosstalk 00:14:03]. And I like that.
- Speaker 13: Like Ukahasan said, it puts it more on the students and the students own it and it goes back kinda to the ... learn language by producing it. Students, if you put it on their plate and they have to attack it, then they're gonna own it instead of ... and I don't feel as tired at the end of the day. You put it on them to do the work, and then ... Yeah, you're doin' a lot but you're doing more of a balancing instead of the working.
- Speaker 1: Can you talk about ... Can ... I'm gonna ask a probing question. When you talk about balancing. Can you tell me more what you mean by that?
- Speaker 13: As far as balancing ... what each student is doing. I'm not sure exactly who said it a moment ago, but you've got one student doing it this way, another student doing it that way. They're able to ... as long as they get to the finish line they're doing it their way. So you're balancing that and behaviors and expectations and the differentiation. Some students' finish line is gonna be in a different spot for each lesson than others. So just balancing where everybody is and needs to be.
- Speaker 8: Even you may have the students as you're noticin', "Oh, they're gonna get done early; I need to have somethin' for them to do, maybe an extension to what they're doin'" or if there is the students who are just completely lost or way off

task. I think with them doin' it all that gives you time to walk around and notice who's got it, who don't, who needs and extension.

- Speaker 1: If there's no other additions to that ... What would you like to tell me about the professional development sessions and the impact on student learning that I did not ask? Anything that you could add, anything you want.
- Speaker 13: I just wanted to piggy back on what 8 said. The noticing was stressed so much throughout the professional development, and that's the biggest part. Once in my classroom, that's when I really felt like, "Oh, this is how it's done!" It's goin' around and noticing what every kid is doing and either going around with the notepad or making the mental not of it to say, "Okay, little Johnny's struggling here but little Joe's got it. How ... What do I do next?" But you can't just say, "I'm gonna do this today, this tomorrow, and something else the day after," because you're leavin' somebody behind if you don't have that noticing piece. Or you're dragging your whole class back 'cause they're ready, but no, the plan says this.
- Speaker 1: So from ... the researcher would like to clarify, goin' to a quote that's in the book that says, "Noticing is the high ... is the biggest difference between novice and expert teacher." Do you feel like, with the professional development and the impact of you being able to notice more, that it will affect student achievement? To interviewee 13.
- Speaker 13: Absolutely. And I think ... That's the biggest thing that I hear in the workroom at schools or when I'm talking to other teachers or in the hallway. "I taught it. I did it. I don't know what happened." Well if you taught it and you did it and you don't know what happened then that noticing piece wasn't there. It's not on the students anymore. It's on you. Yes, they're doing the work; you're trying to shift that cognitive load. But if you're not paying attention or you don't realize what they're doing, you're lost. And that was the biggest thing, the professional development showed how to notice, not just, "You need to pay attention."
- speaker 10: How do you know they know?
- Speaker 13: Yes.
- speaker 10: I don't know ... I think I picked that up [inaudible 00:18:02]. How do you know they know.
- Speaker 9: Even though I've been teachin' ... I mean I'm halfway through my career, the ... I can't really probably even count the number of times that I've got to go in other teachers' classrooms, especially at other schools, or have someone who is above me teaching me but modeling the whole thing. Like me actually gettin' to see somebody teach that is a great teacher and show me how to model or go in and see somebody else. I mean I think that changed how I did some things in my classroom just because I got to see other teachers, and I think that's something

that we don't do enough. And it ... I mean even other schools, other grade levels, I mean I get ideas from a family member that's an elementary teacher all the time. There's so many different ... there's different things and there's so many similarities, and I think that if we could go in each others' classrooms more that would change a lot.

Speaker 6: I feel like a lot of this touched the whole child, like every aspect. It wasn't all just one area and things left out. It just felt like it was a complete ... the whole kid fit in the triangle.

Speaker 9: On that exact ... because noticing is not just noticing if they got it, noticing if they have worn the same shoes and shirt and pants every single day. I mean, that's all over the place there. [crosstalk 00:19:26]

Speaker 6: They're always askin' you what time lunch is. And then you start noticin' the [crosstalk 00:19:31] everything.

Speaker 9: When you're really noticing ...

Speaker 7: I feel like it also helps me be able to reflect upon my teaching and upon how I teach and what I do for my students. But I feel like you take that back and you look and you say, "Well, if they didn't get that, what did I do wrong or what do I need to improve upon?" Especially like the modeling piece. "Well, I did it, I showed it, so why are they asking me a thousand times. What do I do next?" Well, I didn't go in depth enough, and I needed to make sure that those who ... that noticin' piece, it goes in with the modelin' piece. And [inaudible 00:20:20] them, havin' them remember what you're talking about and repeating back to you. So I think it hit every area of how we should be teachin' and bein' able to look at the end of every day or every lesson and reflect upon it as to, "Did I hit every aspect of it? Did I hit every child like I needed to?" So it was an eye opener for me.

Speaker 8: I realize the different levels of learning according to students. They may need to spend more time in the framework with you, maybe directly explaining it. And the ones that do get it, you can give them whatever it is you want them to do and they can just do it. So I realized different levels of learners, they may need to stay in an area of the framework longer than other students.

Speaker 13: Bouncin' off number 9, I've learned the most by goin' into other teachers' classrooms. And I don't mean this in a mean way, but whether it was someone who was absolutely fantastic and you just wanted to bottle everything and take it back to your classroom, or you walked in and you saw somethin' and you said, "Ugh, I don't ... I want to make sure I don't do that ever!" It's nice to go in and see both sides of it and be able to take things back to your classroom, and there have been times I walked into a room and I said, "Wow, I didn't like that at all!" And then, when I'm reflecting I realize that, "I've done that before, and oh my goodness! No wonder that lesson failed!"

Speaker 1: Does anybody have anything else they'd like to add? Okay.

Interview Focus Group 3

- Researcher: This is a researcher. This is inner focus group #3. Background on the study: this is a qualitative study completed by coding the open response evaluation questions and small focus group interviews. Small focus group interviews will be used to answer research question two. What are teacher perceptions on the effectiveness of the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework to enhance student learning? Focus group question one: describe the professional development you have received on the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework.
- Number 11: This is number 11. [inaudible 00:00:50] We worked closely together for two entire days. We got to work with people who were not from our school or from our grade level, so we saw things more over-arching than our particular focus, and we learned so much more that way. And I carried away more than I normally do from professional development, more than I personally could use.
- Number 12: I'm 12 and I liked how the presenters modeled some of the ideas and strategies during the professional development, and I also liked how it was ended by going in and visiting teachers and seeing it actually being used in the classroom. So that helps more being able to visualize it than just being told.
- Number 15: I'm 15 and I felt like even for veteran teachers, it was a very great PD session because even as a veteran teacher of 15 years, I carried away things that I thought, "Wow, I could do different ... I could do that differently than I did before."
- Number 17: And this is 17 and I totally agree with 15 being a veteran teacher. I was able to take away more ideas for questioning and prompting and cueing things that I definitely as an educator needed to work on in my classroom and because of that, I was able to find different ideas I could use like carrying a notepad around, and writing down things that kids need so that I am more aware of what their needs are.
- Number 16: I'm number 16 and I agree with everything that everybody has said so far. I was able to take the class this summer in a two-day session and I look forward to the instructional rounds. I have not had the opportunity to do those yet because those are still coming for our cohort, our group, but I enjoyed talking with other people across other grade levels, just like number 11. And I really do look forward to go in and visiting other grade levels to see it in action because I'm a visual person and I like that. And so, I've already been doing some of these things in my classroom because I've been teaching for 22 years, but it's sort of validated what I believe and what I've seen to be ... To work in the classroom.

- Number 16: And then I felt some things that maybe I was not doing correct, like the noticing I feel like I do pretty good, but that takes experience and that's hard to explain to someone else. But the questioning, and the prompts, and the cues, that was real helpful for me. I know you mentioned that, number 17, but that one was ... That part was helpful for me too.
- Number 14: I agree. I'm number 14 and I agree with everything. I really enjoyed the prompts and the cueing and it's helped me. I caught myself even in the second week of school. We're already doing prompts. We're already using things within the classroom to use to help them remember things. I really enjoyed it.
- Number 11: This is number 11. I absolutely agree. It's already helping in this new school term.
- Researcher: Anyone else have anything they'd like to add to that? If you think of something as we go through, we can come back and add to that.
- Researcher: Researcher stating question two: Please give an example of a success story where the instructional framework made a difference in how you felt about your instructional practices. I repeat the question: please give an example of a success story where the instructional framework made a difference in how you felt about your instructional practices.
- Number 16: This is number 16. During the collaborative part of the framework where the students are working together, I love that everybody's engaged all at once and when I started teaching, it was always ping-pong. I would ask the questions, student would answer, I went for someone else to raise their hand. I liked that everybody's working at once. I can hear, it's part of that noticing again. I can hear if someone's had a success. I can hear the cheer or the, "Oh yeah!" But I can immediately ... It freeze me up to go to my students and need my help, and I know that those are already. So I love that I'm able to go directly to those students who need me most, and I can spend a little extra time with them while they're working together in groups. And I can give them additional prompts, questions, cues, whatever they need so that they're successful.
- Number 14: I'm number 14 and I agree. I like to hear the excitement because in some of those groups, they're already taking those leadership roles, and normally ... You know, that's a big deal, especially for first grade. And they're encouraging each other and to me, that's more telling than me coming over there when they have their friends saying, "You can do it. What's this question? Because we've already talked." It's not, "Don't give in. Talk 'em through it." And they're getting that, and it's funny to me because I haven't said, "You need to question." But that's in their mindset already at a young age as far as questioning.
- Number 11: This is number 11. I like that they are willing to question. One of the things that I have noticed about the gradual release is how much better prepared my children feel that they are because we model, model, model the test-taking for

a [inaudible 00:06:46] and go through it with them together. They're not as nervous about being handed something they're unfamiliar with because we've already gone through, and talked through, and worked together with how they're going to approach it, and they know what to do. And they're not nearly as nervous about it, and I feel better prepared for them, and I know they're better prepared.

- Number 12: I don't know about some of you are ... This is number 12. What you said: modeling, modeling, modeling. And one success this past year is a second grade teacher. Lots of modeling with four star writing, and gradually releasing step-by-step until they took over, and then they were working together to assess each other's with their four star writing. They knew what to look for, they knew what the colors stood for, and they would get excited. They would want to know, "Are we doing four star writing today?" And "Can we do each other? Can we use our color codes?" And it was like you said, number 14, it's excitement because they were in charge of the learning and that's what we want our kids to do. It's becoming in charge of their own learning, being more responsible for themselves.
- Number 16: It holds them accountable for their learning and I like it.
- Number 12: Exactly. It's the excitement. [crosstalk 00:08:04]
- Number 15: This is 15 and I'm gonna piggy back on yours. I think it made me more deliberate about planning instruction by the framework, and I intentionally planned the "I do" the "we do" the "you do". I mean, I made sure all the pieces were covered and it kept me from just being the only worker in the room.
- Number 16: I'm not nearly as tired when I go home [crosstalk 00:08:30]--
- Number 15: And to be able to speak, even with--
- Number 16: Number 16, by the way.
- Number 12: Number 12!
- Number 15: But to see that! But to see those kids and you think, "Oh, they can't take on that leadership role." But when you intentionally plan the lesson that way, they surprised me. So there were lots of little successes with them being able to take on that leadership role after we followed the gradual release.
- Number 14: And number 14 again, I thought that the second week of school, and what you said number 12, they're already ... And I haven't said, "I see later on we're going to be 'This is what we're looking for' in our writing." And they're already circling with that red crayon, the capital, and the [inaudible 00:09:12], and it's day eight. To me that's a success.

- Number 12: Absolutely.
- Number 17: I want to speak on what number 15 was saying about the planning because it is definitely helped us as we planned. In fact, we've been very intentional about the guiding questions that we ask, and we have guiding questions for every single piece of teaching that we do, or whatever that is. You know what I'm trying to say? But anyway, we have guiding questions for every part of it, and I think that's part of that guided instruction, so we're hitting all that "I do, we do, they do." I mean, and I definitely see big different in that myself.
- Researcher: Alright. Researcher question three: Give an example of how you feel the framework has enhanced student learning. Some of you got to that in the previous question about how it impacted your instructional. Think now of the student or group of students. Please give an example of how you feel the instructional framework has enhanced student learning.
- Number 16: This is 16. I think they have more opportunity to practice it. I mean, they're not just sitting and listening, and not everybody is an auditory learner. So it's hitting on different learning styles and that whole thing, but I like that it gives them the opportunity to try it out. Give it a shot, and see if they know it or not.
- Researcher: I'm gonna ask a probing question. What happens when that might not be successful? What do you do?
- Number 16: When they're not successful? That's when I get back in with my questions, and my prompts, and my cues, so I'd just ... Because I'm constantly in and out of the framework, moving into different parts of it. I may have to take back over and take over a teacher directed, and do a mini lesson or something like that. I've learned that with practice that it doesn't have to have it in a certain order. It's not linear. I can shift it, and I can take back over control with teacher directed if I need to because someone might not be getting it. Or I can go into guided instruction where I'm given the questions, the prompts, or the cues to get them where they need to be so that then they can practice it with a partner in the collaborative, or they can, hopefully, eventually, get to the independent piece. So if I had to take it back over so that eventually I can shift that onto them, that's the goal. And it's happened, I've seen it happen in class.
- Number 11: This is number 11. I love that over time, my children don't say, "But I can't." They know they can, and they're willing to step out in front, and we don't have them shutting down and getting up before they even start because we've prepared them with that methodical plan that we intentionally put specific things in place. Deliberate planning. And it makes for successful children.
- Number 15: This is number 15 and I had a student last year that compared the gradual release to learning how to swim, and he said, "Oh, let me get this straight. So like now it's when I have my floaties on swimming pool." And--

- Number 12: I love it!
- Number 15: In his mind, I mean, that ... So I kind of used that all year. It was the "I do" the "we do" the "you do" again. But I was like, "Now this is the part where you and the friend are swimming with you." I mean he just, in his mind, that he's like, "Oh, I've got my floaties on." So you're still helping at this part, I'm not completely on my own. And I'm like, "Yes." And it took away the anxiety of, "Here's this daunting task that I've got to accomplish," because it kind of broke it into doable parts with the support that you receive with gradual release.
- Number 14: And this is number 14. I like that it helps me to let me know that it's okay that I can come back in and take over if needed, and I don't have to wait until flex group or any other time. I have that opportunity right then to fix it there, so that it helped me realize that I can do ... That's a wonderful thing.
- Researcher: Researcher asking probing question: Do you feel like you're more aware of looking for misconceptions?
- Number 14: Oh yes, yes. With your [inaudible 00:13:58], just how they respond and you can tell if they're ... You can see it. If they're getting it or not, or if they're too shy to say anything, or if they look at you with that blank stare and you can reassure them that it's okay. And you're not calling anyone back out because you get to say, "Okay, let's go back into this," and no one's being left out. Everyone's not feeling alone, they're all pulling together.
- Number 16: This is number 16. Again, I think I've said this before, but I love that the gradual release really freeze me up so I can manage all that stuff.
- Number 14: Yes, and it's a great thing.
- Number 16: Because before--
- Number 14: Good grief!
- Number 16: I'm in front of everybody and that's a lot of work. Again, I'm going back to being easy on me. But it does help me be a better teacher because I'm able to stand back and watch them work and notice, "Okay, this kid has not ..." I have their body language, I see their--
- Number 15: [inaudible 00:14:57]
- Number 16: Right. I see exactly what's going on.
- Number 15: Yes.
- Number 16: And before, although I'm in front of the students and I'm giving the information, I can't tell if they've got it or not--

- Number 15: 'Cause you can [crosstalk 00:15:09] really well."
- Number 16: Unless I'm given some [crosstalk 00:15:09].
- Number 16: Exactly.
- Number 15: This is 15. I mean, you've got those students that they look like they really have it. And you think, "This is gonna be successful," and then I turn them loose to the next phase and I'm like, "No, they didn't get it."
- Number 16: Right.
- Number 15: So without the gradual release, those things I would not have been aware of.
- Researcher: So number 16, I'm going back with probing question to what you stated. And as far as enhancing student learning, do you think overall when you look at your data, and you look at your kids, do you think they're more successful than, say--
- Number 16: Yes.
- Researcher: Five or six years ago?
- Number 16: I can look at my numbers and see ... Well, back when I taught first grade, we did TRC testing. I can use that because I can compare the two things, I still do that. Yeah. My kids are ... The numbers are better. They're reading better. They're reading higher levels, they're able to answer the questions better, so I actually have some data to back it up. I certainly see a difference.
- Number 17: Number seven--
- Number 16: An improvement.
- Number 17: 17, I'm sorry. 17 as well. My growth last year in reading, in particular, was amazing from just the constant being able to practice, model the four ... For example, the four star writing. I modeled, we modeled about a lot, and then I was able to go and look, "Were you able to do it?" Noticing those things where they were able to work together with partners, they were able to score with each other, they took ownership of that, and my data for reading at the end of the year was very, very good for me. I was very excited about that.
- Number 15: This is 15, and I think being able to see the collaborative work is kind of a window into their thinking. And to teach kids how to communicate with each other, and how to agree to disagree, and how do you do that politely? And for kids to say, "I disagree with you because ..." And to walk a child through, "He won't give me my green star!" And the other one, "But you don't. You didn't answer all parts ..." I mean, just to be able to back themselves up and support why they think what they think, I thought that was ...

- Researcher: [inaudible 00:17:26]
- Number 15: Yes.
- Researcher: So what I hear you saying restructured, it only enhances student learning academically, but socially?
- Number 15: I hope so ... Yes, I do.
- Number 12: And it was a great social skill for them to learn how to communicate with each other, as well as with me. But it was a great communication piece with each other.
- Number 15: [crosstalk 00:17:45] This is number--
- Number 12: I'm sorry. This is number 12 and I can speak to when I first started teaching, it was the six step lesson plan and I went, "I wasn't great with kids," I taught, let's practice, then independent, and we were done. But this, that linear that she talked about, I can jump back in, I can pull those that haven't gotten it while the others are working independently. And I can say, "My children now are more successful than the children I had years ago," and I hate that for those children. But that's just how far we've come. But it also, as you were talking about the collaborative piece, we're getting these children prepared for getting out into the--
- Number 15: Absolutely.
- Number 12: The work place and being able to work in a job, and knowing how to work collaboratively, and to communicate with those people that they're working with, so we're preparing these children for their future.
- Number 11: This is 11 and I wanted to piggy back off both of those because I was sitting here thinking that very thing, that we are getting them to see the real world application of the academics that they're learning. And we're not just rolling to the next grade level, we're growing productive adult citizens of our society, and this is one step of that and we're making that happen by the way they work together, and them taking control of their own learning situation.
- Number 17: This is 17. I particularly like how in the Kagan structures, there are times when you say, "Thank you." There are times when you do a friendly greeting, or you do a professional greeting, things like that, because those are things they're gonna have to know when they get into the real world. They're gonna have to know when it's appropriate to say, "Hey man, how are ya?" Or, "Hello, my name is ..." So I just wanted to speak to that collaborative piece again, especially to those structures because that's part of that collaborative of the better learning process as well.

- Number 16: I love that ... 16. I love that we can take the Kagan cooperative learning which is research based, and it just fits right in--
- Number 17: Right into their learning!
- Number 16: Yes, absolutely.
- Number 17: 17.
- Number 16: [crosstalk 00:20:04]
- Number 15: That's why ... This is 15. That's why I felt like I was doing pieces--
- Number 16: Already.
- Number 15: Already.
- Number 16: Right.
- Number 15: Through different avenues that we had used already, and it just validated what I was already using in the classroom. And it just ... It wasn't another new thing. It's what I was already doing and just a way to make it a little bit better.
- Number 16: Right.
- Researcher: The last question is, to wrap it up, is there anything else you'd like to tell me about the professional development session and the impact on student learning that I have not asked?
- Number 15: This is 15, and I hope this is relevant. One of the best thing ... And you may have already done it, but I took away from better learning is some of the gestures and visual cues that were with that. I had done some research with whole brain learning and those types of things, and now even with my learning target, breaking apart a learning target, instead of just putting it up there and the power three, do you really understand what I will need to learn? And even just taking a learning target to the next level and getting it, breaking apart the unfamiliar vocabulary, and putting gestures to it helped even my low-level learners because kids before that would not know what sequence was. When we broke it apart and I drew pictures and then we put the gesture, I could look at him and do the gesture and he can say, "Oh, that's sequence." And just that, and that was one of the tenses that was at that professional development.
- Researcher: Anybody else?
- Researcher: Thank you very much.

Interview Focus Group 4

- Researcher: This is [inaudible 00:00:02] The research question 2: What are teacher perceptions on the effectiveness of the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework to enhance learning? Again, repeating the question, the purpose of the focus group interview is to determine, what are the teacher perceptions on the effectiveness of the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework to enhance learning?
- Researcher: The researcher will ask question 1: Describe the professional development that you received on the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework. Describe the professional development you received on the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework.
- Number 20: Number 20. I think the professional development I received on instructional framework helped me to make sure that each lesson had the components that it needed, and just a constant reminder for me that modeling and doing it together is always needed.
- Number 18: This is Number 18 responding to Number 20. I agree also. I think it was a great reflection for me as teacher when planning my lessons to understand the importance of the learning target and how to put that ... relate that with the children and making sure that I was putting in everything, like Number 20 said, the components of, "I do this. I'm modeling it for you. Now I want you to do it." So in turn, in the end, this is what our end product is, this is what we want to get. And then end up with that learning target again to make sure that everybody is on the same page.
- Number 21: This is Number 21. I think the professional development I received helped to clarify how to implement the framework in my classroom, and it was helpful for me to see it modeled and participate in activities that aligned with professional development or the instructional framework.
- Number 19: This is Number 19. I really think that it's helped me to be more thoughtful when I'm doing my planning, because I really want to put all of those pieces in there, and I feel like it has helped me as a teacher to think of that while I'm doing my planning and when in my [inaudible 00:02:44]
- Number 22: And this is 22. The professional development was conducted during half days during a school day, which also allowed for us to be able to go back to our classrooms that day and implement exactly what we had learned. And each session was set up so that we only learned one small part of the framework and then could go back to our classroom immediately, implement it in our classroom, use it for a few weeks before we went back to the next session to learn another part.

- Number 22: So it kind of helped build the puzzle for us instead of throwing it all at us at one time, which I think helped a lot with just the implementation of it and taking all the pieces and making sure they all fit, and it wasn't just another professional development that we had sat through and put into our classroom.
- Number 19: And this is 19. Just jumping off of what you said. I had it in a different way, because I did the two-day training, and then I really liked that because I was so pumped ... I know it sounds weird. I was so pumped at the end of those two days and it was the beginning of summer, and I wanted to get back in my classroom. It started [inaudible 00:04:00] with my plans.
- Number 22: I've been taking and chunking it ... I'm sorry. This is 22 responding. I have been chunking it too, did the two days and the half days. It does help. I mean, we get a lot of it from enrichment teachers and we get a lot of professional development during the school year, and sometimes those pieces, you just can't figure out how they're supposed to fit together in your classroom. You're trying to do one part of the professional development from one day and then another part. It doesn't always fit. With Better Learning it seemed to all fit together and be cohesive. It was easy to follow.
- Number 22: It did make a difference in my classroom. I've been using it. I took it from my fifth grade classroom and put it in my first grade classroom. And even though my vocabulary has to change when I'm explaining learning targets, it has to be simpler, you see their faces light up when they figure out what it is they're supposed to be learning that day. And that makes a difference in the classroom.
- Researcher: This is the researcher. You guys have mentioned the difference in how it's making in your practice. So the next statement, the next question is for you to give an example of a success story where the instructional framework made a difference in how you felt about your instructional practices. So please give an example of a success story where the instructional framework made a difference in how you felt about your instructional practices.
- Number 20: This is Number 20. I think there are several times I can think of things that I know I needed to do better the next day, but as far as what went well, a lesson particularly in math, kindergarten last year, and just seeing the children do what I had done, modeling with a partner, and then take that and then do quick assessments and see that they had gotten all three steps, that they hadn't gotten before I particularly took Better Learning.
- Number 20: And just see the process of how it really does work. And I think just to see all of that come together, and then they truly knew the learning target. And I think that in most lessons now they get what they should be able to do at the end, and they truly can do it.
- Number 19: .This is 19. I think of last year in fourth grade when we were reviewing for the EMG. We got everybody together and you know how mundane it can be when

you're just reviewing, but I was under the document came up. My team teacher had a big dry erase board that she could turn around, and we would try to do the problem as many different ways as we could. And the kids had their dry erase boards, and it was just like we all just couldn't wait to see, "How'd you do it? How'd you do it? Oh, you can do it the same way too." And it was just ... it was like a buzz in the room. Everybody was excited.

Researcher: So would you say, as the researcher responding to 19, would you say there was an increase in student engagement? Is that what you're ...

Number 19: Of course, yes. Everybody was excited. They were excited about EMG review, you know?

Number 18: This is Number 18, and I just want to add that I think a lot of times when I first started really ... We incorporated Learning Target in [inaudible 00:07:45] County Schools. It was just, "Okay We know what we're teaching. Why do we have to have this on the board? It's just crazy." And then it was like, I felt like sometimes when an administrator would come in your room, they wanted word for word exactly what that learning target was on that board and your average six, seven, eight, nine, ten year old is like, "What?" And so by us breaking those learning targets down, like they might not can say, "I can identify the plot of a story," but they can now say, "Oh, we're talking about the plot." When an administrator comes in, they're, "Hey, what are y'all doing?"

Number 18: Like the kids are now, they're talking in group words, because we taught them that healthy buzz in the room is good. So they're engaged and they're talking with each other, and they're not afraid to have that student input, and they're able to say, "Oh, we're just talking about the plot. You know, the beginning, middle and end of the story." And so they're able to tell just anybody who walks in the room. They're not afraid to say, "I can ..." It's healthier for them.

Number 19: This is 19. But it used to be like it was the Army. [inaudible 00:08:57] [crosstalk 00:09:27] I can remember. But now they just talk about what they're doing.

Researcher: The next question is putting the focus on the students. Please give an example of how you feel the instructional framework has enhanced student learning? So now we've looked at our instructional practices. Now let's turn it and let's look at the students. How has the framework enhanced student learning? What do you think, your perception?

Number 22: This is 22. And this is my first year teaching first grade. And so I've used the Better Learning to kind of learn the curriculum and to learn the students, because it's a whole new world. And I'm very thankful, the last couple of days we've been working on a writing piece. And for me, I came from fifth grade, you gave them a writing prompt, you modeled it a couple of times. You gave them the circle map, they did it. Write the piece, did a draft. It was a lot of independent stuff. So I've had to learn that you have to have that gradual

release, especially with lower grades, because they just have not learned that process yet. You have to teach the process as well.

- Number 22: And so over the last few days, we started with our learning target and what we were going to be writing about and what our focus was going to be. We did our circle map. I modeled it for two days. We brought my model back up the next day so they had mine to see before they put it on to their paper. So we had the, "I do, we do together." And then today they did their own circle map and wrote their own sentence. And when I'd see them struggling, we'd go back up to the board and do another, "We do," and we talk about the sentence and the structure and what we need to add, and then go back to the independent.
- Number 22: So, for me with the students, the framework allows so much movement as far as letting them do independent work, but then once they get to that point where they're struggling ... for me it seems to be easier to see in the lower grades, because the older kids learn how to mask that. They don't want you to see them struggling. With the younger kids you can see it more. So for me it's been more eye opening this year, because you can see when they struggle and you know when to back up that frame and that triangle and go back to the teacher directed.
- Number 21: This is 21. I think that the framework has really helped students be more accountable. I think its enhanced their learning because they're more accountable. It's easy, if I'm standing up there doing teacher directed the whole time, for them to be thinking or doing something else and me not to know. But for the noticing piece and with me up in the front for a short time and then walking around to their groups, having them work with each other, they know that they're going to be accountable. Whatever the learning target is, they know they have to know that by the end of the lesson. And in order to be successful or to even be able to do anything, that they're going to have to pay attention and know what they're doing or they're going to be lost and it's going to be obvious to me. And that's just not going to slide. So it's held them more accountable.
- Number 18: And Number 18 also adding to Number 21. I think that a lot of times, like you said, the older students, they try to hide it, but now when they know, "Okay. I've done this. Now I'm noticing this team is talking about this. What can we add with that?" And bouncing back and forth. But also, within the teams, incorporating the Kagen and giving them roles within their team, and so then they know like they have that responsibility, "Okay. I'm responsible for this for my team." And I think just giving them that responsibility.
- Number 22: And this is 22 again responding to 18. I completely agree. After teaching for several years, you see a gradual shift. There's always a shift in the way the education system works. And at one time it was teacher directed. And honestly it's a lot easier for us as teachers now, if we give the students that release and we're letting them do the learning and we're not ... It was harder for me to plan a complete teacher directed lesson than it is for me to plan an activity and then

kind of go from where the students are. And the noticing piece helps me to know where to go and what I need to work on that they haven't gotten. So it makes the planning a little easier and it does allow the kids to retain a lot more because it's not just a memorization piece. It's application and it's discussion and it's engagement.

Researcher: Has anybody else seen a different ... The researcher asking a probing question. Has anybody else seen an increase in students being able to retain information greater?

Number 20: Number 20. To answer that question, I feel like in the younger grades, in kindergarten and even first, this week we're working on, "Main Idea," is using kid friendly terms within the learning targets that ... Like even Main Idea, we've been doing it for four days. Well, today is the fourth day. We had a holiday on Monday. And we broke down Main Idea and what the story is mostly about and we put that different color on the board, and I could hear the kids today when we were doing things, "Well, no, that's what the story is mostly about. But there was that one thing." I just think for me, seeing it in the younger, even younger kids can get it with the learning targets.

Researcher: The last question, and this is the researcher. What would you like to tell me about the professional development sessions and the impact on student learning that I did not ask? Anything else you'd like to add? Opinions or thoughts?

Number 21: This is Number 21. I think this was probably previously covered, but just the student engagement and teacher engagement too. I'm more excited to teach my lessons now. Students are excited. It's not boring to sit there and do teacher directed reading. So I think it's really beneficial for students, and the accountability and engagement.

Number 18: And this is Number 18. I feel like administrators also understand it better and they know that when they come into our classrooms, not everybody's going to be sitting there perfect. Like people are going to be up out of their seats. There's going to be conversations happening. And kids don't look at them like, "What are you doing here? Why are you in here and what have I done wrong?" When they come in and just sit down beside them and say, "Oh, what are you learning about today?"

Number 18: And the kids aren't afraid to do that and administrators no longer just expect this word for word learning target off the board. They just want to know like 20 said, "What are you learning?"

Researcher: So asking an important question, so you're seeing transfer. You're seeing students be able to take that purpose and then transfer it and apply it to learning.

Number 18: Uh-huh.

Researcher: Okay.

Number 19: This is Number 19. And this is just what I've heard my kids talking about this week is, we get to lunchtime, and I mean, we have all morning and we do reading, math, science, social studies, everything. "Gosh, our morning flew by." Where in years past I could think of children just being done at lunch. And then they want to get right back down there after lunch to get started again.

Number 22: This is Number 22. It's the whole active learning piece. It's not just sitting in the classroom. It's the fact that there has been a school-wide shift and a district-wide shift from a quiet classroom to that low buzz because of active learning. And you can see the kids retaining it and learning it and using it and applying it, talking about it. It makes it easier for us, because it puts us into a facilitator position rather than just being the instructor.

Researcher: All right.

Interview Focus Group 5

Researcher: The researcher's starting interview focus group five at White Plains Elementary. The research question two is what are teacher perceptions on the effectiveness of the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework to enhance student learning? Researcher asking question one. Describe the professional development you received on the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework. I'll repeat the question. Describe the professional development you received on the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework.

Number 25: This is number 25. We received a book that we were to read and help us in conjunction with our training. We went through several days of instruction, and then we were able to follow-up and actually see what the gradual release would look like in classrooms.

Number 29: This is number 29 speaking. To follow-up on number 25, each day of our instructions seemed to be an installment that built upon the one that was previous, and thus, our gradual release of understanding of the framework actually became more cohesive so that it flowed more from the beginning to the end.

Number 25: This is number 25. I would like to add that in our instruction, the framework was modeled. We had specific examples that were modeled for us, and we were able to practice that. We were able to use the modeling and then model with our peers.

- Number 26: This is 26. At my school, we also had many sessions on various parts of our Better Learning training.
- Number 24: This is 24. What I like, was as 25 mentioned, we modeled, but we actually modeled the framework within the framework so that while we were actually learning about collaborative, we experienced collaboration with one another. We talked about independent. We did independent activities. The framework was modeled within the framework.
- Researcher: All right. Research question two. Please give an example of a success story where the instructional framework made a difference in how you felt about your instructional practice. So, give an example of a success story where the instructional framework made a difference in how you felt about your instructional practices.
- Number 27: This is 27. This is 27, and I struggled, at first, with the release. I tried to control too much. I felt like I've grown as a teacher the more that I've done it, and I have seen particularly one child that was very very timid and shy, and the more that I released and they did more group work, the more she came out of her shell. Her data has grown and shown that it is actually working.
- Number 30: I want to piggyback on 27. This is 30 speaking. I had a very difficult time giving up control. I didn't like to see my students struggle. After going through the Better Learning instruction, it has shown me how much it helps them show progress, to let them challenge themselves, to let them make mistakes and to step back and watch, and to let the kids interact with each other, it's amazing the difference.
- Number 25: This is 25. One thing that I saw as successful, I felt validation when we were talking about the think-alouds, and actually, as a math teacher, the importance of-
- Speaker 8: [crosstalk 00:04:50].
- Number 25: ... modeling my thinking for my students, and also, in planning ahead of the questions. I never really thought about planning the questions and how important that is before this training.
- Researcher: Researcher last asked a probing question if anyone would like to share upon the topic of planning. Has that impacted anybody else like 25 spoke about?
- Number 28: This is 28. To me, I'm a planner, and so this training has really helped me be able to dive deep into my plans and paths, be able to [inaudible 00:05:35], okay, this is what I'm able to do, this is what the kids ... That gradual release, it has really helped me be able to organize my plans a little bit more as far as what piece goes where so that all pieces are available in that present. That's helped me a lot for planning.

- Number 30: This is 30. It's helped me make, when you talk about think-alouds, make it more purposeful, make it more thoughtful. I know I was doing it before, but now, I have a purpose.
- Number 23: This is 23. Going back to what 28 said, [inaudible 00:06:11] helps me to make sure that I have all the pieces together, that I'm not spending too much time in part of the framework and not enough in the other.
- Researcher: Okay, so I'm going to go back to the original question to see if anyone else would like to comment. This is the researcher asking. Your original question was how has the instructional framework made a difference in how you feel about your instructional practice? Anyone else like to ...
- Number 28: This is 28. I feel more prepared using the gradual framework and being able to take apart the lessons and to make sure each is there. To me, I feel validated because I'm prepared and I can see the kids and their progress naturally more.
- Number 23: This is 23. For me, I feel like there's a huge push on collaborative learning and that piece of the framework, but as a social studies teacher, I used the direct instruction piece, not all the time, but quite a bit because of lecture, 10 to 15 minutes. It was nice to have validation that it's okay to have that direct instruction part with all the emphasis on the collaborative learning and this other piece.
- Researcher: So, I'll ask a probing question. Within your content area, how has collaborative learning ... Did you feel like the training helped you in that piece or how do you feel has the collaborative learning helped students? Could you expand more upon that?
- Number 23: Yes. Part of the learning has helped my students. Before I had them in rows and we had desks. Now that we have the tables, that's helped on collaborative learning, but always in groups with Kagan strategies. But emphasizing that and learning more about collaborative learning versus regular group work, it was really helpful to learn how to do collaborative learning correctly. It's helped me with my instruction but helped the kids as well.
- Number 30: I'm 30. Collaborative learning has created a classroom full of engaged students. They are on the ball, they are watching each other, and they're working together.
- Number 29: This is number 29. To piggyback off of what number 30 said, one of the best things for my practice is to see them collaborate, as the others have said, but to do it without arguing, to begin to respect each other more in their opinions and what value they can bring to the learning process, not just to wait for one child to come up with all the answers, but they have begun to realize that they all have something to contribute and that they are all one big cohesive learning environment.

- Number 26: This is 26. I've noticed with our block teaching, I mainly teach reading and science. I've noticed with my reading block that having them in their Kagan groups and working together, they have different ideas and different responses to different types of questions. As I was walking around the other day, I heard, "Oh, I didn't think about it like that," and they all seem to see everybody's reasoning, and it's not like there is just one answer. They all see different answers.
- Researcher: All right. The next question is give an example, it can be a whole group, it can be a specific student, but how do you feel the framework has enhanced student learning? Give an example of how you feel the instructional framework has enhanced student learning.
- Number 24: This is 24. I think one part of the framework's guided, so I think that teachers are noticing more, they're asking the right questions and when students don't know, they know how to prompt and cue them instead of tell them the answer. I think the point the assessment piece, we're seeing that, I think, be more prevalent in the classroom to guide instruction.
- Number 26: This is 26. I guess I call it a generic aha moment. I see more of those aha moments, especially when I was teaching math and we were doing more math talks and things like that. I would give my instructions on how to solve a particular problem, and then I would let them attempt it, and they would have aha moments where they figured out their own way of figuring out that problem and not necessarily the way that I had taught them to do it, but they would still get their right answer in the end.
- Number 25: This is 25. To piggyback off of 26, I've had a couple of those moments where in math class, I thought I had explained something well enough for everyone to get it, and I hadn't, but students could explain it to other students better, and they got it. Not from me, but from them.
- Researcher: The final question is what would you like to tell me about the professional development sessions, content, or the impact on student learning that I have not asked?
- Number 23: This is 23. I think for me, in my short time, it's been the best professional development I've done. Getting to collaborate with each other and the modeling of what we're supposed to be doing, experiencing that. And then getting to go to other peoples' classrooms, that was my favorite part, by far, was getting to see other teachers who had learned the same thing you had actually using it in their classroom and be validated in some things that I had been doing and learning new things as well.
- Number 26: This is 26 responding to what 23 said. I think that I thought the professional development was one of the better ones that we've had in a long time. I did think that I felt like I need more than half a day each time. I don't know if I felt

like it maybe if it'd been all day and then a couple of half-a-days, I felt like going to other classrooms and seeing how they did things was wonderful 'cause you're a teacher, you're still learning new things. I thought that was great also.

- Number 29: This is number 29. I, too, needed time to process the things that we learned in this professional development. Not because I'm an overachiever, but because I wanted to make sense in my own mind [crosstalk 00:13:19] of what I was trying to learn. I revisited the book not once, but probably two or three times during the entire session trying to remember what we learned last time and where we're going this time. But then I found myself actually pulling it out and rereading it this past summer before school started back for my school year because I wanted to make sure that I was remembering the noticing or remembering that the struggle is okay and the things that I just wanted to validate within myself before I restarted my school year.
- Researcher: We talked about the ... This is researcher asking 29 a probing question. You mentioned that the struggle was okay. Have you found that through students having to struggle, that in the end, they're becoming more independent learners when they apply what you want them to learn?
- Number 29: Well, again, that always depends on the individual child.
- Researcher: True.
- Number 29: So, for me, a lot of the children that come into my classroom, because I'm an elementary teacher, they have been told exactly how to work a problem, as number 26 and number 25 had said, so when they come to me, sometimes they literally think I should give them the exact how, and they have no reasoning on why they're doing something. I do think for many students, giving them a task or a probing kind of question and letting them have those discussions and break it down themselves independently, I do think the struggle makes it a more enhanceable learning experience for them. Again, there are children then that can sit and listen and hear the different thought processes from others. They, in turn, will say, "Oh, why did you do that?" And so they are having more discussions. I think, personally, the struggle has made all the difference for the way my students react in many different situations because then they don't seem so shocked when I don't give them the answer. They go, "Oh, she wants us to try this."
- Number 30: And to piggyback on 29, this is 30. The more that we do this, the more comfortable the students are with it. To watch them struggle and to talk to each other in a respectable way, I think they own it then. When they have struggled and they have gotten that answer, number one, they are so thrilled and so proud of themselves, but it validates them. It makes their ... They did it. And then to be able to see how each person did it differently, you do have kids that go, "Oh, I get it now. I see it."

Number 25: And this is 25. To add to what 30 said, I think it leads toward a growth mindset for students when they realize it's okay to struggle. I've got the result, and they see that they can. I think it helps them change their frame of thinking. I think this is one way to help get a growth mindset.

Interview Focus Group 6

Researcher: They transcribe it, so don't worry about that part. There are no right or ... This is the researcher. The research question trying to answer today is what are teacher perceptions on the effectiveness of the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework to enhance student learning? I'll say each question twice.

Researcher: Question number one. Describe the professional development that you have received on the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework. Describe the professional development you received on the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework.

Number 37: This is number 37. I attended the better teaching and learning cohort session, and in those sessions we actually met multiple times. We had different focuses each time that we met. Some of the things that I remember most about the training were the sessions on questions, prompts, and cues with students. Since then, I've tried to be more mindful of not just giving students the answers, but prompting them, giving cues.

Number 37: One of the strategies that I've used a lot in my classroom that my students enjoy are the collaborative posters, giving everyone a color, making sure everyone was accountable. For me, I think it was a good refresher on some of the training I've had in the past, like Kagan and Chris strategies. It kind of pulled all those things together. It was a good review and I did learn some new things as well.

Number 33: I'm number 33 and I also attended the better learning cohort. I think attending it made me more aware of how to better incorporate some of the protocols that we have learned and how to go back and forth more easily from me and then together and then when it didn't work independently, and then also just going back and forth with some of that if that's all I need as I monitor students. It was very helpful for me.

Number 35: I'm number 35. I'm in a middle school setting and have been most of my teaching career. I appreciate the fact that the workshop was with elementary, high schools so I've seen it from a different perspective and found ways that I use ideas that I normally would've thought I don't know if that would fit but when we actually worked through it and like the several of the Kagan strategies, being able to do that and do it

ourselves as the students would, I implemented those and found those to be very successful and have added that to my toolbox.

- Number 34: This is number 34. I'm an exceptional children's teacher in a middle school setting and one of the cool things that stuck with me is that kind of what 37 was talking about with the different strategies we discussed and reinforced about questions, props and cues and things like that. With the students that I teach and that I'm responsible for, just getting more a refresher on some of those strategies has really held to me, improved my instruction and kind of meeting them at their level and then setting it up for them on their level and then kind of letting them gradually release that back to them and let them gradually have a better purpose for what they're doing.
- Number 34: I also thought it was really cool how we had in the groups that we were in for my session, I had a good mix of, I was with some elementary teachers and some administrators, some high school teachers, and it was just really interesting to hear some of their ideas and some of the things that they do that kind of like what 35 was saying, that you don't think necessarily you can incorporate those but once you learn more about those and hear what they have to say you learn how that you can tweak them and modify them and make them purposeful in your classroom as well. It was a very good experience to be able to talk with others.
- Number 32: This is number 32. I was also in a better learning cohort and it was a pleasure being with different grade levels, different administrators. I had assistant principals and principals at my table, which was an eye opener to see things from where they see things versus what a kindergarten teacher would see things. Most importantly I took away from the better learning cohort that the transitions for me are very difficult and are very difficult for most of my students. The [inaudible 00:05:03] was not so difficult, but just kind of the activities, it just kind of reminded me to be more mindful of the monitoring stage. That way I knew when. It wasn't so much what to do, it was when to do, like pay attention.
- Number 32: The way the cohort was setup it was setup like we were the students and that's how I learned this in a situation. It wasn't we're going to get up and just stand in front of you and give you all this information. We got to practice. We got to use it and I actually took that back to my classroom. I actually used it yesterday in my classroom, so that was really beneficial, something I had on paper. I had resources that I could go to and pull it out and it was not something I had to create. It was there. The ideas were there already.
- Number 36: This is 36, and piggybacking on what you just said, that's what sticks out to me is when we were in the better learning cohort is we were, like you

say, doing what I saw right away what I needed to do when I got back to my own classroom. We were involved in doing the things that we could take back. It wasn't just reading from a book and trying to figure it out. You saw exactly how things worked. I think it was beneficial for me.

- Researcher: The question number is give an example of the success story where the framework made a difference in how you felt about your instructional practices. A success story where the instructional framework made a difference in how you felt about your instructional practices.
- Number 32: This is 32. Just the other day I did a carousel with the posters. My kids absolutely loved it, but instead of different markers I used different sticky notes because it was laminated, which is easier to do it that way. After that was said and done I really felt like I, I don't know, I fit into that teacher image. I really felt like I got the point across. They got it. Maybe it was just successful that day. I know that it doesn't always pan out, but it was successful. It was successful and a great day. I felt like I did the teacher thing that day. I really didn't feel like I left anything to waste. I didn't waste time. I just felt like I filled every checkbox that teachers should ideally fill.
- Number 32: I'm number 32 and I've also used carousel already this year. I think the framework doing that training last year made me more comfortable using some of the strategies earlier on in the year, so the [inaudible 00:07:50] going to get better and better and better the more that we do it. I think it made me more comfortable using them earlier.
- Number 35: I'm 35. One thing I picked up was even one of the technology. We had our technology specialist for the county that showed us what Flipgrid. The very next day I used it. It was a great way to have a formative assessment without having to pass the paper. They were actually, the students were able to talk and discuss. Honestly, I have seen it before, but we used that in our cohort and the workshop that we had and I use it and it was very effective. The students took [inaudible 00:08:36] of that activity.
- Number 37: This is 37. I also have used some of the strategies from the class this week and have seen how it even helps some of my students hold their peers accountable. We were doing story elements in a play drama and each group was to do a bubble map on a character. They all had different colors. There's one student who just moved into our school and he pretty much is a non reader and a non writer, but I heard other students in the group saying there's no orange on our bubble map. You need to write this and he couldn't spell the word but one of the other students wrote it for him on a piece of paper and said, "Now you have to transcribe this in orange so that everybody in our group has participated." Not only did that let me monitor and I could say you haven't done anything. You need to contribute, or I can see that you

have a lot of good ideas. They were even holding each other more accountable.

Number 37: I think that was a result of the training and that strategy that probably wouldn't have happened had it not been for participating in the course.

Number 34: This is 34. One thing that really stuck with me is I would say one of my biggest weaknesses as a teacher is knowing when to back off and let the students show what they can do. I have a tendency to want to be under them all the time and not really give them a chance to struggle and to really grow into it by struggling with the new material.

Number 34: How our system is setup this year, I take a group of students with me back for a little bit of resource block of math. It's usually about 10 to 12 students. These particular students are ones who generally need a little more specialized help. One of the things I tried to remember is just I need to give them more credit than I have been because they can do this. I've been working with them on just things as simple as note taking strategies, giving them a guide for taking notes because our math lesson that we're dealing with we're talking about rational numbers and things like that. learning the different rules for things like adding and subtracting integers, multiply and dividing. I was able to convey that point across by allowing them to give them that format, that specialized format of taking notes in a certain way and using those and applying those to the lesson.

Number 34: It just made me feel a lot better knowing that the students could pickup more than I was giving them credit for. I was able to back off and they really showed me something and that really stuck with me.

Number 31: This is 31. As a high school separate setting teacher, a lot of times it's easier for me to do things versus letting my kids do them. I think by doing the better learning cohort I learn ...

PART 1 OF 3 ENDS [00:12:04]

Number 31: In the Better Learning Cohort, I learned how to do that gradual release, that yes, it's okay for me to show them to a certain point, but really being more aware that yes, they can do it, and letting them, kind of like other people said, take ownership and take responsibility for their learning versus me always doing it for them.

Researcher: So we talked about the successes. What are the challenges? What are the challenges of implementing the framework? There have to be some.

Number 34: Well, this is 34. I think that for all the different strategies that we have, sometimes it's hard to implement those as consistently as you want,

maybe due to time restraints or just other things that happen in the building. And I think you have to really be mindful of how you incorporate those and realize that it's not necessarily a failure if you can't get to everything that you need to get to, you can't incorporate what you want just because ... I like to look at it as it's not a sprint, it's a marathon. So I think for me especially, just learning to kind of take that into consideration and realize that hey, you might not be able to always implement things like you want to. And sometimes it just doesn't work out. Sometimes the students are just not having it that day. And so you kind of have to take a step back and reflect on it and say, "okay, well how can I try this a different way? How can I tweak this to fit the needs of my students?" So that's something that I'm learning to do, to help them.

- Number 37: This is 37, just to kind of piggy back off of what 34 said. I think that sometimes we do feel like that we're sprinting and sometimes maybe we feel like, "Do I have to do all the parts of the framework in this one lesson on this one day?" One thing that I do remember from the course is that the framework is not linear, that it's circular. So I think sometimes I have to wrap my head around, well maybe I am starting with a you do. The students are working and it could be a pre-assessment of what do you know today, and that could be all that I get done in that amount of time that I have, or it could be that it's a you do and then it's an I do because I'm kind of facilitating the discussion.
- 37: And then it could go to another part the next day, and I think that's a challenge for me personally. It's just that sometimes I feel like I have to have all four parts of the framework in one lesson when maybe it could be a carryover to the next day, so I'm kinda curious if other people have struggled with that too, just kind of how you're pacing your lesson or do you feel like you have to have it all, all the time and in every lesson.
- Number 33: Well, I'm number 33 and time has also been a challenge for me. So I have caught myself more so this year using [Olman 00:15:08] Stopwatch for nearly every single thing that we do. So I think it makes me more accountable and aware of the time and then, of course, the kids too. And even today we were doing some collaborative work and in one class I really had to increase the time so that they could get something done, but I'd been monitoring and I could see they really truly needed some more time so I could justify that. But then, a couple class periods later, they were getting it a lot earlier. So because I was closely monitoring because I was just that much more conscious of the time, I was able to pull back and we got actually a little bit ahead in that class because we were all so aware of it.
- Number 32: This is 32 and time is always a challenge and I like to think of my students, I mean, always in a growth mindset, like how do I get you to the next ... So as soon as I get their evals projections I tell them, "We

track everything together." So, on the day to day I feel like I'm sprinting. But I had that growth mindset of like I have to get these kids there, so I'm always struggling internally like, did I do enough today? Did I get all that in? Should I have gotten more in. I don't feel like I've ever done enough throughout the day to make that ...

- Number 32: Maybe it's just my own growth mindset. I have to get you, you have to do it, we have to get you there. And so from a day to day, monitoring and walking around and seeing, this kid's not getting it. Then I feel like I'm in a sprint suddenly. Suddenly I feel like, did I not implement this right? Did I not do that right? Should I have done more I do before we do? So at the end of the day, I would say at least two out of five days a week I feel like I failed at this, and I feel like no matter how much time I get I still feel like, to meet that growth mindset that I'm so determined, like you will grow, I'll cut off my left leg, you will grow. It's going to happen.
- Number 32: I feel like day to day, the sprint takes over. So it's the time challenge and it's the motivation of the students and myself, can we get all this in? And I feel sometimes like I'm a failure if I don't get to that. I think I need to get over that mindset, but I have to keep reminding myself, "This is not linear, it's circular. I can go back, I can do it tomorrow." And I'm just now, even in my fifth year trying to pattern that out to understand it'll be okay. They'll still grow if I move this to tomorrow.
- Number 35: I'm number 35. It can be intimidating because yes, we participate in activities in the better learning cohort but we're all adults and we're all learners and we all were motivated. And that's not always the case with the students that we may be dealing with on that particular day. So sometimes we do maybe model an activity or go through and implement that. It's muddy. It's just muddy, that's all there is to it. And you're thinking, "I need to clean this up somehow." And I guess that is the challenge, what 32 has taken, the responsibility, even though we're trying to push the workload, over sharing that and putting it over with our students, it feels like the responsibility still rests heavily on us, at the end of the day, for a lot of individuals, with a lot of stuff going on.
- Number 31: This is 31, just to kind of piggyback off of that, yes, the time is definitely a huge restraint. And struggling with when can I let go? Again, it is so much easier just to kind of take the control, but I do struggle sometimes with, "Are they ready yet? Have I done enough to let them let go?" That's probably one of the biggest struggles.
- Number 36: I'm 36. One of the things I've noticed in trying to shift the cognitive load over, now that we're maybe more mindful of it after having this is, you know, not only getting over my own, like a lot of people have said, wanting to be the life saver every time there's trouble. It's the students are conditioned to that and so a lot of times a challenge for my

classroom has been they won't allow themselves to struggle before they reach out for help, because they're in that pattern of, "The second I have trouble, my hand goes up and we need help over here." So that's been a challenge, for the students to be able to let themselves struggle a little.

Interviewer: Okay, so the next question is, give an example of how you feel the framework has enhanced student learning. So, we've talked about how it made us feel, a success as teacher practice. We've talked about the challenges of our teacher practice. Now, give an example of how do you feel? What do you feel, how do you feel the instructional framework has enhanced student learning?

Number 37: This is 37. I think, going back to what a lot of people said, it has shifted the cognitive load. And like I even have said to my students, the person doing the writing and the person talking is the person learning. And even today, like we were working on theme, which is a very difficult concept for fifth graders, especially when they have to identify the theme and then cite text to support that theme. But I was conscious of, I wanted to swoop in and just kind of tell the answer, like really, you know, just make it easy.

37: But I was just thinking to myself, you know, they have to be responsible for their own learning. I even said, "We learn from our mistakes and we learn from struggle." So I think giving them chances to have a productive struggle, I said that this is what grows your brain. If everything's easy all the time you're not really learning. So I think that has really helped the students, and hopefully, like number 36 said earlier, we'll make them want to struggle and figure things out for themselves instead of just saying, "Help me," and, "I don't get it," or, "I can't do it."

Number 34: This is 34. Just to kind of reiterate what some people have already said, I think it just helps with the focus and really honing in on the purpose. You know, obviously when you plan a lesson and you devote your time to that, obviously you're gonna have a purpose for your learning. But the framework kind of helps you really hone in on that and focus in on, "What is my main goal? What is my main purpose?" And it's taught me to think outside the box in a lot of ways with the students I teach and what I always try to do in my classrooms and when I have students is anything that I can do to relate it back to myself, or back to sometimes that they would know, that they've done before, that they will experience, I do that.

Number 34: And I love to share stories about myself and what I do at home and things like that, that tie back into the lesson. And just having the framework and knowing what the expectations are and knowing how to really focus in on that purpose, I can kind of use that to help guide that

and to help drive that along and not feel like that I'm just out here saying things that aren't necessarily resonating with the students. It just really helps me focus on what's the main purpose here, and always try to remember, you might not get the purpose on the first day or even the second day, but as you keep doing it and as you keep working with it, that purpose becomes more clear and you see some really positive things.

Number 32: This is 32. Before the framework, when I first started teaching in [inaudible 00:23:32] County, before the framework it was a day, it was just a bad day. And at the end of the day we had someone from the county office, and she looked at me and said, "You look really tired." And I said, "I am, I'm exhausted." And she said, "You're working too hard." I was like, "What? I'm supposed to work hard," and she said, "No. They're not working hard enough and you're working too hard." She said, "I haven't been in your classroom but I already can see it. You're working too hard and they're not working hard enough." And so the framework-

PART 2 OF 3 ENDS [00:24:04]

32: You're working too hard, and they're not working hard enough. The framework came along, and I was like, okay, this is a bunch of resources. It was a bunch. It was like, here's this framework. You're going to use it. This is going to be great. But this the Cohort came along, and it was a reminder. Not so much that I didn't know, it was a reminder of yes, again, you're working too hard. I have to let them struggle, and I think that's any adult taking care of children and watching children, you don't want children to struggle. It's our innate response to things. It reminded me, you're going to struggle.

32: I shouldn't be as tired as I am. I'm not going to work as hard. You're going to start picking up the work. The Cohort taught me, again, reminded me, they need to work. You need to work less. They need to work harder. It has really been a success. So far this year I can see a huge change in my mindset of, yes, you're going to grow, but you're going to be responsible for that growth. It's not going to be solely on my shoulders. If you don't meet growth, and that's not going to happen, but if you don't meet growth, it's not solely my responsibility. I don't feel as bad on the day to day as I used to. I'm not as tired physically and mentally, exhausted and worried, that I didn't fulfill those boxes that day once I realized they're supposed to struggle. It's the goal.

35: I'm number 35. One other feature that I probably would not have implemented to the extent that I do now is, the learning targets. I'm in a math classroom. It's an opportunity. I use those opportunities with the "I can" statements. It brings up some discussion. It's an opportunity to be able to go over some vocabulary. That was modeled very, very well

at our Cohort in our workshops. We have a lot of training on that, and I've always had objectives and things to let them know what we're doing, but I felt like I improved on how I handled that, the learning target. It really can make a difference for the students to have an idea. When they're coming in there, they've already been to several classes, often, and have done different things. Their focus may be 100 different places. This is one way that we can get together and determine, this is what we're going to do today, and this is what we're wanting to end up that "I can".

35: I like the statements. I love the approach. I definitely have found benefit that the students know what's expected of them and that end view.

36: 32 and 35. This is 36. 32 and 35 both hit on the points that were what I thought of when the question was asked. Breaking down the vocabulary and the learning targets. I really liked that. It seems to really help with the students. Like 32 said, a teacher said to me years ago, "You shouldn't go home tired. The kids should go home tired". I always thought about that, but never really in depth what that really meant. When I went to the Better Learning Cohort I saw what that really meant for the first time.

Researcher: I want to ask a probing question. The researcher asked a probing question. Is there any difference in the level of engagement in your classrooms? More or less?

33: In looking around at my group today, I'm number 33. In looking around at my collaborative group today, I could see that-

33: Yes, in my groups today, there was a high level of engagement across all of the groups. I think that's really good, especially here for the beginning of the year. I don't know that I can really say that I've noticed that level of high engagement near the beginning. I think I'm speaking to them less and less about that. I know, too, going back to what we were talking about a minute ago about how has it enhanced student learning, I've tried to do the groups in such a way that they know exactly what the purpose is for the group. For example, if we're talking about plot, everything that we're doing is related to plot. It's very, very, very specific. I think it's helped me to also be able to really match, say for example, a hands project better, or protocol better. Then tying all that together, I see a lot more engagement all across, from the beginning of the lesson, to the middle, to the end. When they do their creative, hands on project, there's a lot more engagement.

34: This is 34. I think for me personally, I feel more confident this year. A lot of that has to do with another year of doing it. But still yet, I've been a lot more confident just by going over these strategies again, and taking in and applying them. I think it's made me be able to analyze the

situations a lot better. Everything that I do for the students that I serve, I'm able to think about it from that aspect. I feel like, obviously, when I'm more confident, then my teaching is going to be better. It's going to be a lot more meaningful for the students. Having this course, and learning these different things, and then being able to apply them again, it's helped me just as much as I think as it's helped the students.

- 32: This is 32. The framework is not just a tool. It's not just another tool in your tool belt of the teaching tool belt that we have. It is really a way of teaching. It's a way of life, honestly, in the teaching career. No longer do I worry that little Johnny is struggling. It's okay, little Johnny. You're going to struggle for a minute because I'll be back, and I'll help you in a minute if you really need help. My students are starting to come around to that idea. Like 36 said earlier, today he, they are reluctant. They want to raise their hand immediately, like help me. And I want to help them. We all want to. But now, since the Cohort and the framework in general, it's not just a tool belt. It has really taught me, put your hand down. You'll be okay. You're going to struggle, and we'll get through this. We'll manage to get it all done.
- 32: So it's not a tool belt. It's not a tool in the tool belt. It is a way of teaching. It is a way of learning, for me and the student. It's got every aspect covered. There is nothing that a new teacher versus a 30 year veteran teacher cannot get from this. It doesn't matter.
- 35: This is 35. I did a cooperative activity today. As far as the engagement of the students, I'm still getting to know my students, and the enthusiasm. I was surprised that in this particular structure they were so willing to participate. To them it was almost as if it was just a game. They were doing some higher level questions. These were a little bit harder than what we had done previously. They were very enthusiastic, listening for the others, and again, it being so early in the school year, that is exciting. That's exciting. Makes it worth the time that you do have to put the time in before the class, cutting out or getting some of those things that you need to be able to have the cards. We did a quiz, quiz trade, and different things that you can do with the cards, having those on hand to be able to fill in. I've seen that everybody was participating. They seemed very engaged, very on point. I've seen an improvement.
- 37: This is 37. I think the part of the framework that engages my students the most would probably be the "you do together". They really seem to like working collaboratively and in groups. Sometimes I think, for myself, I have to remind myself, it may sound really loud, and it may seem kind of chaotic, but when I walk around and monitor, and do the noticing, which is something we really talked about a lot in the trainings as well, that they are engaged. Today we were working on the circulatory system. They were doing an inquiry type activity with medicine droppers and straws, testing pumps and how they can speed up the

flow of water, and slow down. We're going to relate that back to the blood and things tomorrow. From someone coming into the room, they may think, this looks like chaos. But every kid had a tool in their hand. They were thinking, they were actually working through that process. I think the more that I can let my students work together, the more engaged they are. They all really seem to love to talk and discuss. It's kind of catering to their strengths, I think.

- 36: This is 36. Going along with 37, I think the biggest thing I've noticed is the collaborative part. Because kids like to talk. When you give everybody a job, I like to as you're walking around noticing, I like how they make each other accountable in the group. They're not going to let somebody sit in their group and not do their job, when everybody has got a job to do. As far as engagement goes, that's been the big thing I've noticed.
- 33: Yes, I had that issue today. I'm 33. I really didn't have to say anything because they were on it. That's your job, that's not my role, kind of thing. I listened, but then I kind of went on my way. They worked it out. That was a good thing.
- Researcher: Does anybody have anything else they'd like to add about the professional development sessions, and the impact on student learning that I didn't ask?

School Administrator Focus Group

- Speaker 1: This is Administrative Focus Group. The research question is: What are teacher perceptions on the effectiveness of the gradual release responsibility on student achievement? The administrators in the room are going to discuss the challenges they have faced in implementing the framework in their classrooms. So what have been the challenges as an administrator?
- Speaker 2: I think the perception ... Teachers believe in the framework, but it's the implementation of the framework that is so difficult. Going through curriculum, walks; I see a lot of the focus directed, the collaborative pieces not there. If it is, it's not structured. Or maybe they see it as a linear thing, and it's not linear. So, we're having to keep focusing back to the framework and showing them to start independent, and you can move to collaborative, and move to focused directive. It's the implementation is what I see.
- Speaker 3: I would agree with that. I would say that we've definitely seen improvement in lesson plans, and I see that framework throughout lesson plans, except there are times where I take that lesson plan and I go into the classroom. I wonder how much of this is compliance in the lesson plan, and are really following through each piece of that framework when I made the lesson plan. I think we are still, at times, stuck in that teacher directed approach.

- Speaker 1: Yeah.
- Lynn: That's the part I see, it's getting out of the routine. It's the same. They're used to being, "This is how it is," and getting out of that routine.
- Speaker 1: Do you mean linear? Clarifying question.
- Lynn: Yes. That they've got to start teacher directed and keep moving from there.
- Speaker 2: Got to practice.
- Lynn: Independent is last.
- Speaker 2: Independent, right. It's the six point listing plan still, and it's just going-
- Lynn: And I think too, I'm seeing a lot of situations where we're doing some of the "I do", but then we're jumping right back to "You do". We're skipping that "We do it together, then you do it with the student ... peer."
- Speaker 2: [crosstalk 00:02:25], right.
- Speaker 3: I also think we had some misconceptions that, "I have to do all of this every day in this one block of time, and helping them understand. It's okay to do teacher directed and collaborative and the independence pace-making tomorrow." I feel like sometimes, they're trying to get in every piece of that framework, and it might not be as quality as it would be if they spread that out for two days.
- Speaker 2: Right.
- Speaker 1: What other challenges have you faced as far as student achievement in looking at your school data? What's your perception versus a teacher's perception of how the framework has implemented your school data as far as student achievement is concerned?
- Speaker 2: Okay. I am going to talk about my reading. My reading data went down last year, and in reflecting, I'm seeing what Lynn said about the modeling, the "We do together" piece is lacking, and then we've also had to look at K2 reading, and maybe it's a little bit too much. They're trying to do collaborative, but it's not purposeful or it's not intentional. So, we've really had to hone back and say: "Everything we do has to be very intentional and very purposeful. Just don't do it to adhere to the framework."
- Speaker 3: And to springboard off of that, I think what happens at times is that we are making sure that we have collaborative learning, a plan for that. We're using those [inaudible 00:04:14] structures, but I think sometimes, it's the accountability of the teacher being in and amongst those children, noticing what those groups are doing, because that can be a piece of formative assessment

just as the independent piece. I worry that we're not noticing enough, and some students are getting misconceptions, even, within that collaborative group, because the teacher is not as focused in that block. I see that in places.

Lynn: I could see PLC; if you pull in discussing, "What I noticed today with my students," and to see if that's what you're noticing with your students. Therefore, we need to go back and reteach a piece of this. I think some of that could be built and strengthened through the PLCs.

Speaker 1: Okay.