Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Kendra L. A. Vicars

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Secondary School English Teachers' Perceptions of Personalized Learning

by

Kendra L. A. Vicars

MA, University of the Virgin Islands, 2012

BA, University of the Virgin Islands, 2009

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

November 2023

Abstract

The research problem for this study was that secondary English teachers are often inconsistent in their use of personalized learning during instruction. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore research questions on secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning and challenges to its consistent use as an instructional model. The conceptual framework, self-regulated learning theory, aligns to the premise that teachers are the facilitators in a personalized learning classroom and students are engaged in self-regulating. The research questions considered the perceptions of teachers on personalized learning and the challenges they may face when implementing it with fidelity. Data collection involved semistructured interviews with nine secondary English teachers with at least 2 years of experience using one or more personalized learning models while teaching Grades 6 to 12. Transcribed data were coded and categorized to draw out themes. Three themes were used to convey the study's findings: (a) Although teachers face some challenges, teachers believe that personalized learning models and the self-regulating strategies involved support academic achievement; (b) teachers believe that personalized learning fosters creative and collaborative opportunities for teachers; and (c) although personalized learning is perceived by teachers to support academic achievement, teachers experience technical and practical challenges that affect the implementation of personalized learning. The findings of this study contribute to positive social change because they could be used to improve instruction in the classroom, increase students' academic achievement, inform educational leaders on how to best improve teacher performance, and provide clarity around teacher roles and responsibilities in a personalized learning environment.

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Dedication

This is a dedication to my son, Kamron Kaleb Douglas, my sister, Delma L. Francis (affectionately known as Lavy), and my beloved parents, Arthur, and Leonora Vicars. Kamron, I aspire to always make choices that will not only inspire you, but ones that will reaffirm to you that there is nothing in this world that you cannot achieve. It is because of you I am constantly reflecting on the decisions that I make in this life. Everything I do, I do for you. You are a mirror of me—and through that mirror, I am able to see where I can grow and where I am flourishing. You keep me on my toes but grounded at the same time. May this accomplishment inspire you to dare to have big dreams and act on every one of those dreams. I love you, Son.

Lavy, you have been the glue that has kept our entire family together. When Mommy passed, you immediately took over the role of mother—as if you had been prepping for it your entire life. You display so many of the characteristics of our beloved mother, and I am forever grateful to have you so close to me. I know that Mommy is proud of you. I speak for our siblings and myself when I say that we are all proud of you. Your support and unwavering love for Kamron have afforded me the opportunity to achieve this great accomplishment. Thank you for filling in with Kamron when I just could not. Thank you for being his second mom and a great big sister. It is because of you—I Am. For that reason, this is your doctorate as well. I love you, sis.

To my beloved parents, Leonora and Arthur Vicars, it is because of the foundation you provided I am able to excel in all ways. You both have been on my mind and in my heart every step of the way. Even now, your labor, efforts, and love carry me. I only wish I could see your faces as I accept this degree.

Acknowledgments

I would like to first thank Dr. Richard Penny for his continuous encouragement and support. There were days when I wanted to give up. Your attention to detail, feedback, and words of encouragement kept me going. I appreciate your efforts and dedication to this work.

I would also like to thank my insular superintendent, deputy superintendents and mentor, Dr. Stefan Jürgen, Dr. Desha S. Powell, Dr. Symra D. Brown-Gumbs, and Primrose Chambers-Phillip for their leadership. The four of you have inspired me and believed in me every step of the way. On my lowest days, you continued to cheer for me and encourage me. You all saw the potential that I couldn't see at times. You gave me a place and space to grow. I am forever indebted to you. Thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Personalized learning is widely understood to be a student-centered approach to learning with varied models that require teachers to have a deep understanding of students' interests, preferences, and capabilities to facilitate learning that aligns with each student's interests (Bishop et al., 2020). Presently, personalized learning models may include the integration of technology, in-person, and an online learning component. Although personalized learning is a widely used instructional model for thriving schools across the nation, there are still limited data on teachers' perceptions of personalized learning as a concept.

There are also limited data on the challenges to the consistent use of personalized learning in the classroom as an instructional model. According to Bishop et al. (2020), personalized learning can be applied to a variety of teaching practices and teaching approaches. The common thread among these approaches is that each model must aim to meet the needs and unique characteristics of each learner. Some of the approaches that are applied include but are not limited to integrating technology in instruction, creatively customizing content specific material to meet the needs and specific interest of students, sequencing information so that students can easily follow expectations and create their own learning pictures, and pacing learning opportunities to ensure that students' individual needs are being met (Bishop et al., 2020). Additionally, Lee et al. (2021) posited that there are five components of personalized learning. Those five components include "(1) assessment for learning, (2) effective teaching and learning, (3) curriculum entitlement and choice, (4) school organization, and (5) beyond the classroom—by

utilizing a survey method and case studies" (Lee et al., 2021, p. 14). Further, the

international association for kindergarten through 12th grade online learning supports my

understanding of personalized learning to be an instructional mode that uses students'

strengths, interests, and needs to tailor learning that will motivate students to make

choices and to use their voice and gain mastery of standards when provided with the

flexibility to do so (see Ashok et al., 2022). However, this common perspective on

personalized learning may create complexities when describing implementation practices

and teacher roles. Additionally, the variations in students' preferences and choice may

influence the development of many personalized instructional models being implemented

in schools and districts. District leaders and schools can make varying choices but alter

the personalized learning models in ways to meet the unique requirements and needs of

individual schools and districts.

The freedom to alter models of personalized learning to fit the needs of students

may be the cause of difficulties in identifying a common blueprint and implementation

plan for teachers while using a personalized learning model. Considering the definition of

personalized learning, the variations in personalized models and the inconsistencies in the

implementation of personalized learning model may also present variations in the

understanding of teacher roles. Because personalized learning guidance provides

extensive flexibility as it pertains to education, schools can adopt one or more models or

methods that may meet the criteria required in some states to receive incentives such as

federal funding (Bernacki et al., 2021). This means that teacher roles can vary from

school to school depending on the personalized learning model that has been adopted in a

particular school or district. Although there is variability in the definition and implementation practices of personalized learning, the common thread indicates that personalized learning speaks to a shift from what is being taught to who is being taught and how it is being taught. This presents a possible gap in practice, specifically as it relates to teachers' roles and the inconsistencies in their use of personalized learning during instruction.

Further, teacher expectations and teacher roles may vary depending on the model of personalized learning that is being implemented. Bishop et al. (2020) conducted a pragmatic research study of middle school teachers, inclusive of English teachers from 11 schools. The study showed that teachers were uncertain about how to meet personalized learning expectations when following through with the concept of transferring more control of learning from themselves to students. Additionally, a study of 11 teachers revealed they did not believe that they had enough time or preparation to implement one personalized learning model (Amro & Borup, 2019). To be able to adequately provide students with the kind of customized instruction required of personalized learning, teachers are expected to employ multiple strategies at once. Teachers are expected to learn students' interests and needs, learn how to use the selected software, and provide students with the training needed to use the software appropriately while still motivating students and monitoring students learning in the systems (Amro & Borup, 2019). This presents a learning curve for both teachers and students in many instances.

Given the variations in personalized learning models, the required technological tools and software, and the limitations in data on teachers' perspectives on personalized

learning models, it remains unclear how teachers can effectively implement and use personalized learning models to deliver instruction. For this reason, it is important to conduct a study to gain a better understanding of teachers' perceptions of personalized learning and the challenges to its' consistent use. In this study, I explored secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning as an instructional model. The gap in practice being addressed through this study is the inconsistency in teachers' implementation of personalized learning. This study is important because it provides current and clear data on teachers' perceptions of personalized learning, which may inform leaders in education of ways to best improve teacher practices using personalized learning and effective differentiated instruction for students with various learning needs.

This study may help to improve understanding of the gap in practice as it relates to the consistent use of personalized learning. This study may also influence positive social change as it informs leaders and curriculum planners of teachers' opinions of their beliefs in and ideas about personalized learning. Moreover, this study may offer insight on secondary teachers' perceptions of personalized learning models. The knowledge of teachers' perceptions of personalized learning models may then influence work that can lead to the use of or nonuse of personalized learning instructional models.

The next section provides background on personalized learning and teachers' use of the instructional modality. The section provides an understanding of the components of personalized learning and how teachers are using various models in the classroom. This section also reveals that there are some inconsistencies and perhaps some challenges to the use and effective implementation of personalized learning.

Background

Personalized learning dictates both a shift in traditional instruction and a shift in the configuration of students' tasks and pedagogical approaches. Traditionally, the teacher's role includes providing instruction and creating student tasks with their peers (Bernacki et al., 2021). However, to achieve the goals of personalized learning, teachers are expected to provide instruction and assignments based on students' needs and preferences as opposed to creating a learning experience for students in isolation or among a group of their peers. To create a personalized learning environment, there must be a determination of teachers' roles or expectations and how those roles and expectations impact or influence the implementation of personalized learning models. Teachers are required to learn students' interests, identify students' strengths and weaknesses, and create multiple learning opportunities and pathways for students to meet success. This may look different for teachers and students across various districts and schools. This is why there is a need to identify if there are any barriers to the consistent implementation of personalized learning.

Teachers have shown inconsistencies in the use of personalized learning models as an instructional tool. Bishop et al.'s (2020) pragmatic research study of middle school teachers, inclusive of English teachers from 11 schools, further confirmed these inconsistencies in the way personalized learning is executed. The lack of a clear and concise theoretical definition and map for personalized learning may have led to inconsistencies in its structure and implementation across schools that have implemented it. According to DeMink-Carthew and Netcoh (2019), there are multiple definitions of

personalized learning and multiple ways personalized learning differs from the traditional individualization and differentiation. Thus, the inconsistencies among secondary English teachers' use of personalized learning presents a problem that must be addressed. The existing inconsistencies may vary from school to school and district to district, depending on the personalized learning model that is being implemented.

Perhaps the concept of personalized learning is confusing to educators as some of the characteristics are like other instructional strategies, such as individualized and differentiated instruction. Because there are many variations in the definition of personalized learning and misunderstanding of the concept while describing personalized leaning, teachers are left at the forefront to create a personalized learning environment without clear guidelines (Basye, 2018). Some misuse the term, thinking it refers to a student's choice of how, what, and where they learn according to their preferences. Others confuse it with individualization, taking it as a reference to lessons that are paced at different rates to accommodate different students (Basye, 2018).

Moreover, personalized learning models are not exclusive to just focusing on teachers' delivery of instruction but also inclusive of students' preference, student choice, and an overall collaborative effort between both student and teachers. As posited by Schmid et al. (2022) many understand personalized learning to be either student choice, the way in which instruction is delivered, or interchangeably with individualized instruction. In fact, it is believed that personalized learning is a complex and multilayered concept that refers to all parts combined—to include student preference and delivery of instruction based on students' unique needs and academic goals (Schmid et al, 2022).

Moreover, the thoughts of McHugh et al. (2020) align with Schmid et al. (2022) in that

they both stated that personalized learning is a combination of learning that is self-

regulated and inclusive of metacognitive, social, motivational, and emotional aspects of

learning. According to both McHugh et al. and Schmid et al., this combination also

includes curriculum-based software, self-guided learning, and a variety of learning styles

that students can identify with. Further, DeMink-Carthew and Netcoh (2019) asserted

that personalized learning with all its combined parts reduces teacher-controlled learning,

affords students with opportunities to make decisions for their learning, and increases

their responsibility and competence. Personalized learning means that education is not

coincidental—it is dictated by the student, the students' choices, and how students learn.

To fully adapt and engage in personalized learning, there must be some alterations

to the theory used within a school district. In most cases, personalized learning is adopted

in school districts to achieve certain targeted outcomes for learners (Bernacki et al.,

2021). Some school districts are interested in increasing student achievement, motivating

students to learn, and having students take ownership of their learning. Therefore, for

policy makers to make the right decisions about which personalized learning model best

suits their district, they too have to engage in some level of research to understand the

needs, interests, and cultural differences of the students in which they service (Bernacki

et al., 2021). Additionally, there must be an identifiable framework that examines and

explains teachers' roles in personalized learning. Bishop et al. (2020) posited that the

characteristics of teachers who practice or implement personalized learning instruction

includes features of the Charlotte Danielson framework for teaching and the blended

learning teacher competency framework provided by the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNacol). Though these frameworks are used in traditional teacher roles, the personalized learning instruction looks very different.

Although a multitude of educational reforms have changed the delivery of instruction within classrooms, most of the teaching norms to include instructional models, behaviors, and teacher expectations have remained the same (Bishop et al., 2020). Bishop et al. (2020) further stated that teaching for the most part has been characterized as a teacher lead activity where the teacher is in control of the instruction, class assignments, and class activities. The teacher historically maintains this control by setting learning objectives, monitoring, and measuring student performance and creating or providing evidence of learning.

In contrast, the teacher's role in personalized learning adjusts some of the norms seen in the traditional classroom. Learning objectives in a personalized learning classroom are only constructed based on students' interests and aspirations (Bishop et al., 2020). Considering this, teachers become facilitators as they release control to students. Supplemental modes for the delivery of personalized learning instruction include but are not limited to the digital classroom, technology integration of learning, and an increase in more problem-solving tasks (Bernacki et al., 2021).

In addition to clearly defining teacher roles in the personalized learning classrooms, there are other accountability expectations that affect the implementation of personalized learning and the clear expectations of teacher roles in a personalized learning classroom. More specifically, teachers are challenged with the requirements and

expectations aligned with high stakes testing, which creates a dilemma as teachers attempt to administer personalized instruction while still ensuring that students can perform well and meet the standards addressed in standardized testing (Lee et al., 2021). Lee et al. (2021) asserted that teachers in such cases are forced to disregard learner-centered approaches and teach to the test. Some reports have indicated that teachers are challenged in the day-to-day practices of personalized learning while test scores are involved in the expectations of these teachers. The challenges as indicated by teachers presents a gap in practice that creates ambiguity in teachers' expectations and clearly defined teacher roles as they relate to personalized learning implementation and the delivery of personalized learning instruction.

This study is important because it may help to improve understanding of the gap in practice as it relates to the consistent use of personalized learning. This study may also influence positive social change as it can inform leaders and curriculum planners of teachers' opinions of their beliefs in and ideas about personalized learning. This study may also offer insight on secondary teachers' perceptions of personalized learning models. The knowledge of teachers' perceptions of personalized learning models may then influence work that can lead to the use of or nonuse of personalized learning instructional models.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed through this study was that secondary English teachers are often inconsistent in their use of personalized learning during instruction. Some possible contributing factors that may help to explain this include the clear and consistent

definition of personalized learning, a clearly outlined learning model, and strategies that could be implemented across districts (Bishop et al., 2020). Such inconsistencies in definition and varied models may contribute to inconsistencies with implementation.

Perhaps the lack of a single definition of personalized learning with an associating model or models may add to the difficulties experienced with teachers' implementation. Bishop et al. (2020) conducted a pragmatic research study and revealed that middle school English teachers were uncertain about how to meet what they perceived as social expectations when using personalized learning models. This concept included but was not limited to transferring more control of learning from teachers to students. Student choice, an integral part of personalized learning, is also a struggle for teachers. Further, in a qualitative case study, LeGeros et al. (2022) explored how middle school teachers perceived choice in a personalized learning classroom. They found that secondary school English teachers struggled to balance student choice and academic rigor. The study also revealed that teachers struggled to give students control over their learning goals.

What is known is that teacher collaboration, instructional practices, and efficacy are linked in various ways in the literature. For example, in schools where teachers reported greater use of personalized learning or differentiated instruction, there are higher levels of team collaboration and improved instruction and student achievement (Goddard & Kim, 2018). Additionally, Arrowsmith et al. (2021) suggested that teachers' implementation and operation of a personalized learning model in 111 schools presented extreme challenges in the innovation process among teachers from various content areas to include English. If this problem is not addressed, there is a risk that low

implementation of personalized learning may persist. This study may provide an

understanding and reasons for low implementation among secondary English teachers.

Whitley et al. (2019) recommended that future research should be conducted on teachers'

practices to determine normative beliefs, efficacy, and the gap in practice as they relate to

personalized learning.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore secondary school

English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning and challenges to its consistent use

as an instructional model. Although the vision of personalized learning is built on

teachers partnering with students to design responsive learning opportunities, little

empirical research exists to demonstrate how these applications of personalized learning

play out in practice (Bishop et al., 2020). In this study, I focused on the gap in practice

that may also be attributed to the gap in literature.

In addition to the lack of information on the application of personalized learning,

there is little literature that describes the specific roles of teachers when implementing

personalized learning (Arrowsmith et al., 2021). There is also a lack of information that

speaks to consistent personalized learning models. Researchers have referenced multiple

models of personalized learning models that can be implemented in core courses

(Whitley et al., 2019). Thus, in this study, teachers were able to share their perceptions of

or the use of various personalized learning models and describe important aspects to

include any challenges to the consistent use of a particular model. These perspectives

may inform the implementation practices of personalized learning and inform if the

application of personalized learning models is consistent or lacks consistency.

The qualitative research paradigm was used for this study. I focused on cases to understand any discrepancies around the proper implementation of personalized learning models. In this study, I used a nonnumerical collection method—specifically interviews. This paradigm allowed participants to provide responses based on their personal experiences in their natural setting. This qualitative research was inductive and was built on the experiences, concepts, and theories of participants.

Research Questions

The research questions (RQs) addressed in this qualitative study were framed within the context of secondary English teachers covering Grade 6 through Grade 12. In this study, teachers' perception was a direct focus. I examined teachers' perceptions of personalized learning, their perceptions of the challenges, and their perceptions on whether personalized learning is being used consistently in secondary English classrooms. The study was guided by the following RQs:

RQ1: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning?

RQ2: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of the challenges of using personalized learning consistently in their classrooms?

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning, and challenges to its consistent use as an instructional model. The conceptual framework that served to better understand

this phenomenon was the self-regulated theory. The self-regulated learning theory

focuses on three main components. Those components are metacognition, motivation,

and strategic action (Brenner, 2022). These three types of competencies force students to

challenge themselves, self-motivate, or adapt to various conditions. The self-regulated

learner uses metacognition to map out their learning path and determine how they will

achieve their learning goal. They later evaluate themselves (Brenner, 2022). Personalized

learning is hinged on this theory because it places more emphasis on student controlling

their learning than teacher.

Self-regulated learning theory is an implicit theory that speaks to the influences

on students' approach to academic challenges and situations that may influence the way

they perceive their own knowledge and interpret their own experiences (Hertel & Karlen,

2021). This theory connects to the chosen participants of this study because it aligns to

the premise that teachers are the facilitators in a personalized learning classroom. This

means that teachers must have a clear understanding of how students perceive academic

challenges such as self-assessing, self-regulating, and self-motivating when it comes to

their own learning (Brenner, 2022). To truly understand the phenomena being explored in

this study, I also analyzed how teachers perceive their roles as influencers and facilitators

of students' unique and individualized approaches to learning based on the implications

of the self-regulated theory.

Nature of the Study

For this study, I used the basic qualitative research design. The basic qualitative

study was most appropriate for several reasons. First, as the researcher, I explored and

interpreted the collected data in the basic qualitative research study to explain and interpret the participants' lived experiences. Second, the basic qualitative research study was a simple interpretative study interested in understanding the meaning of an individual's experiences (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Third, in this basic qualitative research, I constructed meaning from the social world (see Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Even though the basic qualitative research design is not tied to more advanced structures as in other qualitative studies, it is still best applied to research studies in education, administration, health, social work, counseling, and business (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

In this study, I explored secondary English teachers' perceptions relative to personalized learning and any challenges to its consistent use. The participants for this study included a total of nine secondary English teachers, Grade 6 through Grade 12, in the United States. I employed purposive sampling to choose the best-fit participants for the investigation. The teacher participants must (a) have served as a teacher for 2 or more consecutive school years, (b) have used one or more forms of personalized learning, (c) not have been a teacher in my local area—the U.S. Virgin Islands, and (d) have had no affiliation with me or know me.

In this study, I used semistructured interviews as the data collection method. Interviewing is the most accepted and widely used form of data collection in qualitative research (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Using interviews, I collected information about each participant's lived experiences related to personalized learning and the challenges to its implementation. I collected data through interviews with nine English teachers. From the individual interviews, I analyzed the data collected, created codes, identified patterns, and

then used the patterns to illustrate the study's findings.

Definitions

Throughout this study, the following terms are used:

Implementation: The act of making something active or effective (Bernacki et al., 2021).

Personalized learning: A student-centered approach to learning with varied models that require teachers to have a deep understanding of students' interests, preferences, and capabilities in order to facilitate learning that aligns with each student's interests (Ashok et al., 2022).

Personalized learning models: Presently, personalized learning models may include the integration of technology, in-person, and an online learning component (Ashok et al., 2022).

Secondary teachers: Teachers of any subject matter in middle or high school levels—inclusive of Grades 6 to 12 (Modeste & Kelley, 2020).

Assumptions

The study relied on several assumptions. The first assumption was that all participants were truthful in their responses. The second assumption was that using experienced teachers meant that the teachers understood what personalized learning was and had some experience in implementing one or more personalized learning models. Finally, the third assumption was that an experienced teachers' pool suggests that the teachers understood the components of personalized learning. These assumptions were essential because participants' honest and informed responses were crucial to reporting

accurate and credible findings.

Scope and Delimitations

A basic qualitative study examines lived experiences by the participants of a study where the researcher interprets those experiences and draws conclusions (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning, barriers, and challenges to its consistent use as an instructional model. To achieve the purpose of this study, I applied this study to one specific group, the secondary English teachers. More specifically, I drew from a national sample of English teachers who taught Grade 6 through Grade 12. Only secondary English teachers who had used personalized learning were invited to participate in this study. Secondary English teachers who had not used personalized learning were excluded from the target sample. This study gave insight into secondary English teachers' perceptions on personalized learning and allowed me to explore if there were any barriers or challenges to its consistent use.

For this study, I investigated secondary English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning to examine the phenomenon more closely. I also examined the potential framework—the self-regulated learning theory—which was the only theory considered for this study. Delimitations for this study were present through the sample size and available resources. My location in the Virgin Islands of the United States posed some issues in gathering adequate sampling. My location forced me to gather participants from other locations in the continental United States.

This study also has a narrow focus of secondary English teachers, which might

limit transferability (see Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Despite delimitations, the audiences of

this study were able to observe and analyze the information that was relevant and applied

based on their needs, experiences, and/or any future study. To assist with the use of any

part of this study, I included the study's purpose, conceptual framework, background

information, description of population from which the sample was drawn, potential

limitations, personal biases, the study's findings and how this study can aid or lead to

future studies.

Limitations

There were some influences that limited findings. Because of my location, access

to participants was limited. There were also many states still recovering from a national

pandemic that posed some limitations to the findings of this study. Because I was forced

to conduct much of my resources online, there were limitations in this regard as well.

Additionally, I elected to use one data collection method. The data collection

method was interviews. This single collection method posed limitations because I was

restricted to just the participants' responses without any hard evidence. If participants

were not honest in their responses, this presented further limitations. A small sample size

was a limitation as well. As mentioned earlier, the issue of transferability remained a

limitation when conducting a study with small sample sizes. This reduced the ability for

my study to be transferred to a larger population.

As a researcher, I selected a topic that was based on my personal experiences and

preferences. I was aware that there would be some level of personal bias. However,

through this paper, I was able to expound on such biases and assess and minimize my

personal biases by keeping journals, engaging in constant self-reflection, and checking

any possible assumptions of truth. I also made predictions of possible biases in my study

through the journaling process and tried to avoid those biases as much as possible.

Significance

The problem that was addressed through this study was that secondary English

teachers are often inconsistent in their use of personalized learning during instruction.

This study provided much needed clarity on the gap in practice and may also serve to add

teachers' voice and perceptions to the existing but limited data on personalized learning.

One of the more common themes during this study is the limited empirical data and

research around the definition of personalized learning, teachers' perceptions of

personalized learning, and its implementation. Model schools across the United States are

implementing various models of personalized learning. As such, more questions are

arising around this phenomenon. This study added to the conversation and presents data

and information that can potentially improve teacher quality and potentially raise student

achievement.

This study is significant because it added valuable data to already-discussed

education instructional learning models. Personalized learning models are a vital part of

the discussion as educational policymakers continue to address ways to improve

classroom instruction and personalize learning to student's needs, abilities, and interests

(Whitley et al., 2019). Researchers have attributed many successes to the implementation

of personalized learning models in schools and districts across the United States. To this

end, this study is significant in that it may shed light on whether English teachers

experience challenges with the implementation of personalized learning and the expectations outlined in the definitions of personalized learning and personalized learning models.

Summary

In summary, Chapter 1 introduced the study and presented the problem based on current literature and past studies. I began this chapter by first describing my research topic and referencing the supporting literature to solidify the existence of the gap in practice. I supported this gap in practice with literature that outlined the issues surrounding a clear and concise definition of personalized learning and how this can cause variations in its implementation. The gap in practice was explicitly presented through the problem statement. The problem addressed through this study is that secondary English teachers are often inconsistent in their use of personalized learning during instruction. To address this problem, I explained that secondary English teachers were the targeted sample population, and the phenomena was explored through their lived experiences.

Secondly, I assessed the implications for possible positive social change through this study. I briefly explained how student choice is an integral part of personalized learning and understanding how teacher expectations could impact students and learning. The background section of this chapter explained the components of personalized learning and briefly described how each of those components can be implemented through various personalized learning models.

Thirdly, I presented a summary of the literature and aligned the literature review

with the problem statement. I connected the literature to the problem that I investigated and the purpose of the study. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning, barriers, and challenges to its consistent use as an instructional model. I stated the problem that I investigated and used the literature to support research of the problem. I presented how the problem was aligned to the purpose and the conceptual framework of this study. Additionally, the RQs for the study were outlined. The study was guided by the following RQs:

RQ1*:* What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning?

RQ2**:** What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of the challenges of using personalized learning consistently in their classrooms?

Next, I summarized the conceptual framework that aligned with this study. The conceptual framework that supported and provided understanding of this phenomenon was the self-regulated theory, which focuses on metacognition, motivation, and strategic action. I described the conceptual framework and explained how it aligned with the experiences of teachers. I also explained my reasoning for selecting the basic qualitative research design and described the data collection method being used to collect the data on teachers' experiences with personalized learning.

Finally, I defined the key concepts in my study, identified boundaries and limitations of the study, outlined potential contributions to the study, and stated any assumptions that could be drawn from this study. In sum, the purpose of Chapter 1 was to

introduce the foundation of this research study and explicitly explain how it would be

carried out. In the next chapter, Chapter 2, I present an in-depth literature review that

supports the instructional practices and responses of the teachers identified.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 1 provided a brief synthesis of the literature to support the gap in practice addressed in this study. The problem that was addressed through this study is that secondary English teachers are often inconsistent in their use of personalized learning during instruction. It is therefore significant to identify teachers' perceptions of the barriers to the consistent use of personalized learning. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning, barriers, and challenges to its consistent use as an instructional model. Although the vision of personalized learning is built on teachers partnering with students to design responsive learning opportunities, little empirical research exists to demonstrate how these applications of personalized learning play out in practice (Bishop et al., 2020). In addition to the lack of data on teachers' perceptions of the application of personalized learning, there is a lack of data that describes the specific roles of teachers when implementing personalized learning (Arrowsmith et al., 2021), thus signaling the need for further investigation on this gap in practice.

Furthermore, studies have shown that there are limited data on personalized learning and on teachers' perception of personalized learning models. Additionally, schools that have been identified as model schools are accrediting much of their success to personalized learning, which leads to the further need to determine how teachers perceive personalized instruction. Therefore, I dissected the literature to identify, examine, explore, and explain key concepts and variables related to the phenomenon.

In this chapter, I rely on a significant number of scholarly articles to synthesize

the conceptual framework that guided the study's argument. Additionally, in this chapter, I exhaustively review the literature to explain the key concepts and variables related to the central phenomenon—secondary English teacher's inconsistencies in the use of personalized learning. The self-regulated learning theory supported the conceptual framework for this basic qualitative study. Furthermore, in later portions of this chapter, I rely on the literature to describe other aspects that played an integral part in understanding the conceptual framework and the phenomena to be investigated. To conclude this chapter, I summarize the main literature points, what was known and not known in the study, and how the present study fills literature gaps and extends the knowledge of practice in the discipline.

Literature Search Strategy

I conducted searches in the EBSCO, ERIC, and SAGE databases from the Walden University Library, and OCLC WorldShare ILL at the University of the Virgin Islands for this literature review. I also conducted online searches in Google Scholar, Academia, and the Research Gate website in addition to those searches mentioned earlier. In my searches, I used the following keywords: *personalized learning, personalized instruction, teaching strategies, teaching methods, teaching approaches, classroom technique, personalized learning, personalized instruction, teacher (perceptions, attitudes, opinions, beliefs),* and *individualized instruction.*

I looked for specific literature around a set subject—therefore, I limited my searches. First, I limited my search to full text, peer-reviewed journals, and articles. I initially found about 19 articles that matched the scope of my topic. Then, I filtered the

results to capture current research publications with years ranging from 2018 to 2022. In my second round of searches, I maintained my first search limitation—full text, peer-reviewed journals, and articles, but I did not filter the years. I did this because capturing outdated material was essential to familiarizing myself with authors who explored the central phenomenon's context—principals' content-specific feedback. Lastly, I used the snowball strategy to examine full text, peer-reviewed journals, and article reference sections to find additional literature to synthesize in this literature review. From the steps mentioned, I used 56 scholarly articles in this literature review. In the upcoming section, I describe the organization of the literature review.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework, which includes the self-regulated learning theory, helped me to better understand, describe, and create a link to examine the relationships between the phenomena investigated in this study and the key concepts and variables. Notably, in qualitative research, the conceptual framework creates a link between the study's context and structure (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). The conceptual framework, as a tentative theory, is a process that researchers use to support the study's argument, and this usually happens in a nonlinear fashion (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Because the conceptual framework uses a tentative theory, the choice of which conceptual idea links the study depends on how the researcher develops the RQs and conveys the outcomes, making several conceptual theories easily applicable to a single research study (Burkholder et al., 2016). By the same token, before selecting a conceptual framework to link the central phenomena and the literature, researchers consider their positionality, personal

experiences, beliefs, and the literature; hence, I elected the self-regulated theory as this study's conceptual framework (see Burkholder et al., 2016).

Framework Relates to Phenomena

Self-regulated learning theory is an implicit theory that speaks to the influences on students' approach to academic challenges and situations that may influence the way they perceive their own knowledge and interpret their own experiences (Hertel & Karlen, 2021). This theory connects to the chosen participants of my study because it aligns to the premise that teachers are the facilitators in a personalized learning classroom, and students are engaged in self-regulating, self-assessing, and self-evaluating (Brenner, 2022). The self-regulated learning theory focuses on three main components. Those components are metacognition, motivation, and strategic action (Brenner, 2022). Within these three components, teachers are expected to facilitate students learning. This means that teachers must have a clear understanding of how students perceive academic challenges such as self-assessing, self-regulating, and self-motivating when it comes to their own learning. Teachers must also have a clear curriculum to guide the facilitation of students' learning and provide benchmarks that will ensure that students are able to self-assess (Brenner, 2022).

As previously noted, the self-regulation learning theory focuses on the role individuals play in directing the course of their development (Newman & Newman, 2020). Under circumstances of the self-regulated theory, an individual's role includes selecting and pursuing goals, modifying their pursuit of those goals, and identifying constraints. Self-regulation shifts as the person experiences changing physical, cognitive,

emotional, and social capacities and encounters expanding educational, social, and societal demands and opportunities. Self-regulation takes on new adaptive significance in adolescence as it addresses the capacity to select and pursue personally meaningful and societally valued goals and the ability to resist or redirect impulses that might pose risks to health, growth, and life satisfaction. According to Reimann (2021), learners self-regulate by applying learning tactics they predict will be successful. They monitor how well their tactics help them to achieve goals and when differences exceed a threshold, they adjust.

Adjustments can be made to learning processes and strategies and to conditions like motivation or factors in the learning environment that affect learning activities or learning outcomes and products. According to Hertel and Karlen (2021), self-regulation involves three processes: self-observations, self-judgments, and self-reactions. Self-observations refer to tracking specific aspects of one's functioning, such as the use of mathematical strategies. These processes must be a part of teachers planning phases when implementing personalized learning. Peng and Tullis (2020) described self-judgments as comparisons of one's performance with a standard, such as studying mathematics for at least an hour per day. The third self-regulatory process, self-reactions, refers to motivational and behavioral inferences that learners draw from their performance outcomes, such as beliefs about one's efficacy (Peng & Tullis, 2020).

Self-regulated learning theory suggests that teachers are trained to observe and modify classroom environments to make it more conducive for students to self-regulate their learning. These instructional efforts include teachers' use of scaffolding to help

learners acquire self-regulated learning strategies. As noted, scaffolding involves the provision of external modeling and instrumental feedback during shared problem-solving activities. This scaffolding is withdrawn when the students can self-regulate in an independent, academically effective way.

The self-regulated learning theory has been used to conduct studies to offer insight on how students can meet academic success through various learning pathways. In a study of 62 students by Alharbi et al. (2014), data were collected before and after on a controlled group using the online learning objective system with an experimental group. The results of the study revealed that there should be a partnership of the conceptual framework self-regulated theory and students' preferences. Personalized learning as defined by Bernacki et al. (2021) encourages teachers to identify students' varied strengths and weaknesses and create multiple pathways to meet academic achievements.

Personalized learning is highly dependent on students' ability to self-motivate and their ability to take ownership of their learning—similarly, the self-regulated learning theory underscores this practice by encouraging students to take control of their learning through the identification of personal strengths and weaknesses. The data presented in a study by Wang et al. (2021) also indicated that an experimental group with a personalized learning mobile-assisted system with a self-regulated learning mechanism obtained significantly higher scores in English grammar tests than the controlled group. A more rigorous experiment examined the relationships between learners, their study, and restudy choices, and one conclusion drawn was that student-regulated instruction guiding one's study effectively and efficiently is crucial for successful learning (Peng & Tullis, 2020).

Further, a study of a personalized learning system incorporated in a physical education course showed that this leaning strategy in combination with a self-regulated online platform led to an increase in academic learning time during secondary school physical education lessons (Akkaya et al., 2022).

Self-regulated learning theory addresses three learning processes: metacognition, motivation, and strategic action (Sweller & Paas, 2017). However, there is variability that may affect the effectiveness of self-regulated learning for students while using technology. Although self-regulated learning theory may be beneficial academically for students, there is some debate that the development of self-regulated practices is challenging for teachers as they attempt to meet those learning processes for each individual student (Brenner, 2022). To quell this debate, a proposal to combine the use of a personalized instructional system, together with the self-regulated learning mechanism, would provide learners with individualized learning experiences that facilitate their autonomy and independence and examine its effectiveness with learners in grammar teaching (Wang et al., 2021). In essence, the self-regulated learning theory pairs well with current educational initiatives and innovations to include personalized learning and inquiry learning (Brenner, 2022).

Current Research Using the Theory

There are several recent studies that have examined the relationships between personalized learning and student achievement. One study that examined the relationship between self-regulated learning theory and students' personality traits and metacognitive knowledge indicated that self-regulated learning theory contributes substantially to

students' achievement goals (Hertel & Karlen, 2021). In the study, statistically significant positive relationships appeared with metacognitive learning strategies and metacognitive knowledge about self-related learning in Model 1. In Model 2, statistically significant positive relationships appeared for mastery of student goals as well as cognitive learning strategies and performance approach goals. Similarly, a quasi-experimental study using a quantitative approach to evaluate the effectiveness of a personalized learning environment in secondary schools showed students' academic gains when cognizant of their self-regulators in a personalized learning environment (Thanyaluck et al., 2022). The experimental group of students participated in self-regulated online learning with a personalized learning approach, while the control group participated in conventional self-regulated online learning. The results showed that the experimental group's posttest and the learning-gain score of the experimental group were significantly higher than those of the controlled group. Additionally, other researchers found that machine learning technology regulated by its users has better performance in personalized learning resource delivery and effective adaptation elements for to meet students' needs and academic levels (Wang et al., 2021). Such current studies revealed a clear positive relationship when self-regulated learning theory is combined with a personalized learning environment.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variable

The upcoming section explores the literature related to key concepts and variables associated with the conceptual framework and the phenomena studied in this basic qualitative research. I divide the literature related to key concepts and variables

associated with the conceptual framework into seven subsections. To explain the

literature related to key concepts and variables associated with the conceptual framework,

first I synthesize studies related to the RQs and explain why the approach selected is

meaningful. Then I provide an exhaustive review of the concepts and variables related to

the phenomena supported by current and relevant literature. Lastly, before concluding

this chapter, I describe strengths and weaknesses of how the researchers approach the

problem.

Defining Personalized Learning and Teacher Roles

Much of the literature has pointed out that personalized learning has been defined

in multiple ways and is often conflated with individualization and differentiation;

however, there are commonalities that ultimately lead to a basic understanding of

personalized learning. Although personalized learning and individualization both involve

tailoring curriculum, instruction, and assessment to the needs and preferences of

individual students, these pedagogies differ in the degree to which students are involved

in the design, direction, and evaluation of their learning (LeGeros et al., 2022). The ideas

of LeGeros et al. (2022) were in alignment with Dewey's advocacy of putting learners at

the center of education (Zhang et al., 2022). Whereas the teacher customizes learning for

students in individualization, learners themselves take an active role in determining the

goals, design, methods, and assessment of their own learning in personalized learning.

The variability in the definition and implementation of personalized learning has caused a

variety of interpretations and has allowed for varied implementation models (Bernacki et

al., 2021). To build this argument, another study by Lee et al. (2021) showed that

personalized learning requires a paradigm shift in most education systems that affects traditional teaching styles to more learner-centered schools that result in better academic outcomes.

Not only are there differences in expectations of teachers' roles but there are also varied implementation models that call for a difference in teacher expectations and responsibilities. The traditional expectations of schools can conflict with personalized learning environments (Qiucheng, 2023). A national survey of English language arts teachers in high and low performing learner centered schools was conducted to determine teachers' use of personalized learning features (Lee et al., 2021). Analysis of the data showed that higher performing schools tended to consider more student interest. Another study by Choi (2019) showed that teachers do not only deliver instruction in a personalized learning environment but also pay attention to students' readiness levels. Personalized learning models encourage grading and assessment practices that would give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery. Conversely, Arrowsmith et al. (2021) postulated that practices such as standardized state testing, traditional scheduling, and grading practices contradict the very practice of personalizing learning environments and create levels of uncertainty around best practices associated with personalized learning. Similarly, Lee et al. (2021) showed that high stakes testing among other teacher responsibilities placed pressure on teachers and administrators to change the instructional culture of schools. Further, Amro and Borup (2019) examined experiences of administrators and high school teachers, including English teachers, which revealed that there was ambiguity in teachers' expectations, their roles, and responsibilities.

Similarly, Bingham et al. (2018) examined leaders and teachers, and some teachers indicated levels of uncertainty while using an instructional model that is heavily student centered. The data indicated that use of the personalized learning instructional model placed pressure on the teachers and added responsibilities while attempting to adhere to the instructional culture of the school. There must be continuous professional development to support teachers' needs in a personalized learning environment.

Teacher Expectations

In addition to teachers being unclear about best practices in a personalized learning environtment, their expectations were shown to be inconsistent. A pragmatic research study showed that middle school teachers with English teachers among the samples from 11 schools were uncertain about how to meet what they perceived as social expectations when following through with the concept of transferring more control of learning from themselves to students (Bishop et al., 2020). Further, a more refined investigation showed that in some cases teachers perceived their roles differently and have in some cases seen personalized learning as possibly replacing teachers with computers and privatizing classroom learning (Bigenho, 2021). The implications of another study revealed that although some schools had practiced personalized learning for years, the features were practiced with different levels of implementation fidelity, or the degree to which teachers implement programs as intended (Dabae et al., 2022). One can reasonably hypothesize that a teacher's ability to teach under these circumstances may be varied and such student-centered approaches may need to be considered by teachers as they attempt to meet the expectations of the personalized learning

instructional models.

The simplest example of personalized learning would be an instructor who provides learning materials with proper content and context in the best way for the learner. Arrowsmith et al.'s (2021) study showed that in personalized learning environments, the teacher does not simply deliver instruction but does so with attention to students' readiness levels. Following in that same vein, another study showed that teachers are expected to transfer more control of learning from themselves to students based on their display of readiness (Bishop et al., 2020). When students have more control over their learning, they can then get the opportunity to demonstrate mastery through multiple opportunities and pathways (Graham et al., 2019). Similarly, Louth (2022) also suggested scaffolding as a strategy that supports student-centered outcomes. This kind of scaffolding included adjusting instruction in response to students and guiding them to deeper understanding and supporting the development of strategic thinking.

The Purpose of Personalized Learning

The purpose of personalized learning is to customize instruction that caters to each student's strengths, needs, skills, and interests. Personalized learning models include everything from software that recommends the personalized curriculum to resources that allow students to self-guide their learning (Lee et al., 2021). Additionally, personalized learning schools offer students different choices in class and assignments (i.e., self-directed, lecture-based, or project-based) (Bernacki et al., 2021). Students set their own learning goals, manage their learning, and communicate with others in the process of

learning (Walkington & Bernacki, 2021). The personalized learning instructional system is designed to help learners take control of and manage their learning.

Benefits of Personalized Learning

A significant number of recent studies revealed that personalization has positive effects on student achievement, as well as student attitudes toward problem solving and skill-based performance (Schmid et al, 2022). Some advantages are that students are more motivated, are more engaged in their learning, and are more responsible for their learning. To verify the positive effects of personalized learning, McCarthy, and Liu (2020) showed that students encountered more flexible learning environments and interacted with digital adaptive learning curricula when exposed to this instructional approach. Similarly, other researchers expressed that students also engaged with more modern technology such as algorithms that are used in personalized learning models to continuously assess student progress and adjust learning activities based on their needs (Walkington & Bernacki, 2020). If a student is struggling with a particular topic, the digital curricula will adjust to provide more instruction and practice for the student. If a student is demonstrating proficiency in a topic, the curricula will adjust to move the student ahead in the learning progression for that subject. Qualitative data concerning the benefits of personalized learning writing tools such as e-journals and e-learning show that schools capture students' development in multiple data types during intervention blocks and instructional periods (Fung et al., 2021). The benefits of personalized learning not only provide varying pathways to achievement but also increase academic achievement.

Finally, personalized learning positively affects teachers' professional

development and has been recommended to improve the quality of professional teacher development (Chaipidech et al., 2022). To achieve this benefit, teachers need to be equipped with the best instructional strategies to deliver instruction that is student-centered. A study of teachers immersed in professional development on technology pedagogical content knowledge revealed that the training improved teachers' professional knowledge of the pedagogical integration of digital technologies into their teaching practices and comprehension of personalized learning digital technologies used in classrooms (Chaipidech et al., 2022). In accordance with these findings, Qiucheng (2023) also showed that personalized learning environments are where students and teachers work together to craft an individual learning plan for each student driven by a common set of standards or objectives. These inquiry-based studies demonstrated that the training teachers experience when implementing a personalized model improves the quality of instruction.

Disadvantages of Personalized Learning

A major disadvantage of personalized learning is that it can be very time-consuming for teachers as they are required to plan for many different students. McHugh et al. (2020) affirmed that teachers expressed challenges with curricular constraints while attempting to implement personalized learning strategies. One such challenge included administrative expectations to cover certain curricula which conflicted with the core elements of personalizing learning for students who may have varied interests, strengths, and weaknesses. Another study presented survey data from 431 respondents from 72 schools which suggested that learner-centered paradigms are more difficult for teachers

to maneuver, and it takes a shift in mindset and multi-year mentoring for teachers to implement some personalized learning models with fidelity (Lee et al., 2021).

Additionally, both education experts and technology industry critics raised questions and sounded alarms about the growing influence of personalized learning and how it may affect traditional teaching and teachers themselves (Lee et al., 2021). A study by Olofson et al. (2018) revealed that the diverse practices of personalized learning may lead to a decrease in traditional teaching practices and can be detrimental to the overall development of students. However, McHugh et al. (2020) found that traditional practices, as they pertain to social and emotional learning and relationships, are key components of personalized learning that are often overlooked in ongoing debates. Although most personalized learning models include some form of independent technology, a critical part of personalized learning instruction includes the teacher guiding and facilitating instruction.

Personalized Learning Instructional Strategies and Adaptive Learning Practices

Instructional strategies that promote personalized learning are self-regulated learning strategies like flipped lectures, adaptive learning, flexible seating and grouping, data collection, and student owned experiences. Adaptive learning is data-driven and therefore collects data on students' progressions and prescribes work that meets the students' needs or deficiencies and increases rigor based on students' abilities and skills (Peng et al., 2019). A study by Han et al. (2021) showed that using learning analytics dashboards facilitates collaborative argumentation learning activities, which has been shown to be beneficial in the learning process. Additionally, a study of preservice

teachers indicated that learning analytics support their engagement by mediating

information between the student and the institution, facilitating effective studying,

increasing awareness of students themselves as learners, providing assistance and support

in a variety of challenging situations and acting as a feedback channel to adapt learning

conditions to their specific needs (Silvola et al., 2021). Likewise, in an introductory

chemistry course, an analytic learning platform informing performance feedback and

grade estimates can help at-risk students earn a final pass grade (Russell & Smith,

2020). A study by House et al. (2022) indicated that personalized learning provides

standards-based and project-based differentiated instruction as well as student agency,

on-demand instructional supports, flexible pacing, individual student profiles, frequent

feedback, opportunities for deeper learning, and flexibility in location. In the information

technology environment created in a personalized learning classroom, dynamic grouping

and intervention have become possible under the umbrella of adaptive learning.

The Need for Research on Teachers' Perception of Personalized Learning

Personalized learning has become a critical learning paradigm in the research

community of educational technologies (Bingham et al., 2018). There are a range of

components being used to personalize learning and this range widens as technology

develops. As more is learned about human learning and what technology can provide

through a personalized learning experience—there is a need to provide further

information on personalized learning (Schmid et al, 2022). Future research can focus on

what privacy concerns one might face and address those concerns and protect learners'

privacy.

Rationale for Concepts and Alignment to RQs, Methodology, and Meaningfulness

Research on personalized learning models points to the need for documenting teachers' perspectives. For example, one current study by Milinga et al. (2023) suggested that the next steps in research should include the collection of data on teachers' perceptions of personalized learning and what may prevent proper implementation. Additionally, Peng et al. (2019), who sought to explore teachers' perceptions of personalization or differentiated instruction for high achievers, indicated that more data on teachers' perception of support for personalized learning models are needed. Data from the same study gave a clearer understanding of the issue of interest from participants' perspectives. To understand those perceptions, in the context where little information on the topic existed, the use of an exploratory approach was more relevant, hence a qualitative research approach was used. Qualitative research assumes that "human experience takes its meaning from and, therefore, is inseparable from social, historical, political, and cultural influences"; and the researchers are more concerned with "how people make sense of or interpret their experience" (Patton, 2015, p. 266). As such, through the use of a qualitative method for my study, I explored RQs that specifically asked what secondary English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning are and what barriers may affect its implementation. Considering this, I adopted the qualitative approach because this study sought to explore the perceptions that teachers had about personalization.

Through this research, I seek to understand if there are any barriers to the implementation of personalized learning by seeking to understand the perceptions of

secondary English language arts teachers who are implementing personalized learning

models. Bernacki et al. (2021) reported that one of the most significant determinants of

personalized learning programs' success is the degree of teacher buy-in and support. The

information collected in my study provided more information that is critical in ensuring

the successful implementation of personalized learning.

Summary and Conclusions

Personalized learning, as a concept, refers to instruction that is structured to

individual students given their involvement in its planning, execution, and assessment.

Students also assume responsibility for learning goals, curriculum designs, and

instructional methods—all of which make this method of instruction student-centered

(DeMink-Carthew & Netcoh, 2019). Studies showed that schools engaged in

personalized learning performed at a higher level. Given this form of approach, however,

teachers are confused as to their roles and functions in such an environment (Lee et al.,

2021).

Personalized learning has its benefits and drawbacks. Traditionally, teachers are

in control of the instructional process and believe that, with personalized learning, they

are being replaced by technology (Olofson et al., 2018). On the contrary, however,

personalized learning positively affects students' achievement, develops positive attitudes

toward learning, and improves problem-solving skills (McCarthy & Liu, 2020).

Personalized learning gives students some semblance of autonomy which, in turn,

engenders responsibility. Because of students' engagement with technology, the

dynamism of the instructional model, and the model's ability to adjust to their level of

proficiency, students are more motivated to participate in the learning process.

The professional development of teachers, especially in the area of digital technologies, is another benefit of this teaching approach. Relatedly, an environment in which both teacher and students collaborate to plan for individual learning can only augur for the good in terms of quality instruction and student achievement (Chaipidech et al., 2022). The demands on a teacher's time for planning for instruction as it relates to student levels of proficiency and interests are among the greatest drawbacks of personalized learning. Challenges also can arise in implementing this model while attempting to cover curriculum content to meet the expectations of the administration.

Notwithstanding the benefits and drawbacks of personalized learning as put forth in the available literature around such a practice, there is still a need for further research on the challenges faced by teachers when implementing personalized learning models in the classroom (House et al., 2022). Hence, through this research I examined teachers' perceptions of personalized learning, their perception of the challenges, and their perceptions of whether personalized learning is being used consistently in secondary English classrooms. The findings of this research also added to the existing information on this gap in practice and the understanding of the concept and its effect on learning.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning, barriers, and challenges to its consistent use as an instructional model. In this chapter, I describe the research methods that I used to conduct this study. I explain the research design and rationale, the RQs, and my role as the researcher. Additionally, I describe the participants, instrumentation, participant recruitment techniques and selections, and my data collection plans. The final key element that I discuss is the steps that I took to ensure that this study maintained trustworthiness and that my participants' privacy and rights were protected. To accomplish this study's purpose, I collected and analyzed data from secondary English teachers. The teachers identified in this group were teachers teaching Grade 6 through Grade 12.

I used a basic qualitative design in this study. This design allowed participants to present their honest thoughts on the implementation of personalized learning through their own personal experiences. The basic qualitative design was best for me to collect honest opinions and ideas of secondary English teachers. I used this research design to ensure that the contributions and experiences of the participants were free from overly constructed interpretations. Through this approach, I used a small sample size to better understand the phenomenon. The basic qualitative approach allowed me to focus heavily on the quality of information gathered through the data collection process.

Research Design and Rationale

I designed the following RQs aligned with the conceptual framework self-

regulation learning theory and the literature review (Chapter 2). The central RQs were as follows:

RQ1**:** What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning?

RQ2: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of the challenges of using personalized learning consistently in their classroom?

There were several reasons for choosing a basic qualitative approach to study this phenomenon. First, the qualitative study best aligned with the structure and style of RQs considering that qualitative research is an in-depth examination of an individual's lived experiences. Second, a qualitative research design was more appropriate than a quantitative research design for this study. In this study, I collected, interpreted, and analyzed teachers' lived experiences and perspectives on the phenomenon. I explained the data non-numerically. Additionally, I used interviews to collect nonnumeric data. Then, I created codes based on my interpretation of the data. Last, I analyzed the data using an inductive approach, which means that I examined the data and discovered meaning based on my interpretations.

According to Burkholder et al. (2016), qualitative design is most used among education, sociology, and science disciplines. A qualitative design was best suited for this study because the purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of personalized learning models and any barriers or challenges to its' consistent use. This research provided groundwork for a better understanding of a phenomenon, creating new ideas surrounding this phenomenon and providing alignment with a current theory (see

Burkholder et al., 2016). The authors further stated that researchers can choose from various forms of qualitative designs based on what the research will communicate to the audience.

There were a few other qualitative designs considered for this research study. I contemplated a case study, a qualitative narrative study, and a descriptive qualitative study. Like the basic qualitative research design, these other methods can also consist of descriptions and interpretations of the phenomena, but each provides a different description level. The first design considered was a case study. Baškarada (2014) described a case study as an elaborate explanation of a phenomenon of a single case or multiple cases. Case studies are complex, richly descriptive, comprehensive analyses. The second research design considered was the qualitative narrative study, but this design was unsuitable for this study because it describes a story's events (see Burkholder et al., 2016). I did not choose this research design because qualitative phenomenology describes participants' lived experiences more richly across a group of individuals with the same experience in the same context (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Lastly, I considered using a descriptive research study. With a similar premise as I had in relation to a phenomenological study, I did not select this research design because descriptive research involves in-depth description of phenomena, as its aim is to describe events in a natural setting (see Ravitch & Carl., 2015). Although both designs can provide lived interpretations of the phenomena, the basic qualitative design was not as complex as the case study. Because the descriptive research study is similar in nature to the basic qualitative design, it involves much more description of the phenomena, and the

goal is to focus more heavily on the events as they happen naturally with the participants (Ravitch & Carl., 2015). In sum, the basic qualitative design was the best fit for my study.

<div align="center">**Role of the Researcher**</div>

Personalized learning was introduced to my school district in 2015. Shortly after a few unsuccessful attempts to implement personalized learning in the St. Thomas St. John school district, I was promoted to my current position of English language arts coordinator. Through this role, I was assigned as the lead district administrator for this initiative. I soon became the lead trainer and coordinator for professional development on personalized learning in my school district. During this time, the focus was on what personalized learning was rather than how to implement personalized learning. By the time I had arrived at the district level position of English language arts coordinator, the district was still focused on what personalized learning was and how it should look in the classroom.

Additionally, there were some areas of concern that lingered as they related to proper implementation and how such implementation would impact other areas in the district to include the grading system and possible curriculum reform. Some challenges were outlined through teacher observations and district observations. Such challenges piqued my interest and made me want to explore this phenomenon further. I realized that it was important to gain a better understanding of this phenomenon that seemingly increased student achievement but somehow presented possible challenges for teachers.

I realize that my experiences with this topic present some levels of possible

biases to the study's findings. Possible biases may cause some omission of data and/or misinterpretations. For this reason, along with others, I chose a qualitative research design. This design forced me to rely on the experiences and opinions of others to provide understanding and to draw unbiased conclusions. Kahlke (2014) offered some ways to reduce such biases by disclosing these experiences that I have had and sharing the strategies that I employed to reduce my influence on the outcome of this study. To follow such recommendations, I shared my professional experiences to ensure that the audience is aware of my background and potential biases. I also followed the traits of the basic qualitative design by avoiding thought leading questions to not unintentionally elicit or allude to any particular response.

To further minimize personal biases, I remained neutral in the interview and discussion process (see Bender et al., 2021). I followed the protocols outlined for guided interviews and refrained from providing any personal experiences that may alter or influence the responses of the participants. Using these strategies minimized the potential of researcher bias and, therefore, prevented any possible negative influence in my journaling.

As noted above, my professional experiences are connected to personalized learning and the implementation of this instructional practice. Because I am aware of my professional experiences and how they may possibly negatively influence my study, I selected participants outside of my school district and outside of the territory. I also used an audit trail and reflectivity to reduce the possibility of researcher bias and to increase the validity of the data collected.

Methodology

Participant Selection

To collect the data for this study, I disseminated an e-announcement (Appendix A) for this study, which advertised my research to recruit interested participants. I recruited participants through online resources such as Walden's Participant Pool and social media. On the e-announcement, I provided contact information for potential participants to use if they were interested in participating. Once prospective participants emailed me to indicate their interest, I responded to the same email that they sent with consent information and asked participants to let me know the best date and time to conduct the interview.

The participants for this study were nine secondary English teachers, Grade 6 through Grade 12, across the United States. Although this data set is small, the target population met the specific criteria for this study. I employed purposive sampling to choose the best-fit participants for the investigation. Participants for this study needed to have met certain inclusion criteria. The teacher participants must (a) have served as a teacher for 2 or more consecutive school years, (b) have used one or more forms of personalized learning, (c) have not been a teacher in my local area—the U.S. Virgin Islands, and (d) have had no affiliation with me or know me. The inclusion criteria outlined ensured that the responses gathered from the participants led to better insight and precise research results.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation for my study was semistructured interviews using a self-

designed interview protocol. The interview protocol created with 12 questions is in

Appendix B. The interview protocol was designed to flow in a way that would assist me

in gathering information about the education, experience, and background of the

participant related specifically to the implementation of personalized learning instruction.

I designed interview questions using Lambert's (2012) elements for structuring

interviews. The framework and related literature also guided the development of the

interview protocol. The interview was designed to gather information about teachers'

implementation practices and any barriers that may limit or hinder the implementation of

personalized learning models being used in the schools. The questions were open-ended

to allow the participants to elaborate and express their views and beliefs.

I validated my interview protocol using an expert panel and peer reviews. I asked

my committee to serve as the expert panel to review the interview protocol. They

reviewed the interview protocol and made recommendations. I also sent the interview

protocol to two Walden colleagues, and they provided feedback. The feedback and

recommendations made by both my expert panel and Walden colleagues were used to

improve the questions.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Procedures for Recruitment

To ensure that I found adequate participants for this study, I had to recruit using a

multipronged strategy. I began by publishing an e-announcement to recruit participants

from online platforms. I used social media outlets such as Facebook to find participants

who had been teaching English language arts in Grade 6 to Grade 12. I also used

Walden's participant pool, email correspondence to communicate with participants, and the snowball sampling approach. In those announcements, I included a detailed description of my study's purpose, the criteria required of all participants, and how I could be contacted.

When I received correspondence indicating that participants were interested, I responded via email with the necessary information to the confirmed participants. I asked participants to provide me with the best date and time when they were available to conduct an interview. I allowed 3 days for the participants to review the consent information and respond. To ensure that participants understood the nature of the study and were fully aware of any risks they may be taking due to documentation of their responses, I asked prospective participants to consent to participating with audio recording and to respond with "I consent." The participants' written consent statement "I consent" also ensured that all participants were voluntarily participating. I used the snowballing sample strategy by asking the participants who met the criteria of the study to refer this study to other possible participants, as suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2015).

Procedures for Participation

As posited by Ravitch and Carl (2015), the purposeful sampling technique is appropriate to collect data when the sample size is a small portion of the population. I only selected participants who did not live in the Virgin Islands and those who had taught English language arts in Grade 6 to Grade 12 for a period of 2 years or more. English language arts teachers who had used one or more models of personalized learning were

selected.

To exit the study, I considered and used some of the best before, after, and during interviewing practices suggested by Ravitch and Carl (2015). Before each interview, I ensured that I set up an environment free of distractions, tested all equipment before the interview, and reviewed materials ahead of the interview. I greeted the participant and began our discourse on a neutral topic, ensuring the participant was comfortable and understood the purpose of the study. I showed appreciation for participation, maintained an appropriate meeting pace, listened attentively, avoided verbal and nonverbal bias, and conducted the interview in the participant's language (see Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Finally, I used the best practices outlined when I concluded the interview. I thanked the participants and showed appreciation. I added the time and date to the recording and sent a follow-up email to thank the participants. After the interview, I gave participants a nominal $10 gift card incentive.

Procedures for Data Collection

As mentioned earlier, interviews are the most appropriate data collection method for qualitative research design because they reveal depth and meaningful information about the phenomenon being studied (Burkholder et al., 2016). I collected data through one-on-one virtual interviews with volunteering secondary school English teachers in the United States. Each interview was conducted via the Zoom platform privately. Only audio recordings were enabled, and the camera was disabled or not used. I ensured that I was in a private office space, library, or room where the participants were able to feel relaxed and comfortable.

I conducted 45- to 60-minute interviews with each of the participants using the instrument that I created with 12 questions located in Appendix B. The interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participant. I first began with an introduction where I reviewed the interview procedures and requested permission to record the interview. Second, I began with two warm-up questions to ensure the participants' comfortability. I explained the purpose of the warm-up questions and then continued with the interview questions. The questions were asked in a specific order; however, questions were skipped if the participants' response covered multiple questions in one. Probing questions were asked if there was a need to follow up on the participants' responses to draw out richness in the interview. Third, participants could refuse to answer any of the questions, and, if needed, questions were repeated for clarity. Last, I ended by thanking the participant for the interview and time given to me for my study. I continued this procedure for nine interviews. I achieved saturation at nine interviews when there was no new information, new patterns, or new themes emerging. I then concluded the interviewing process.

Data Analysis Plan

The typological approach was used to develop a matrix of the emerging themes and categories from the first interview, and I continued with this same process throughout each following interview (see Rubin & Rubin, 2011). I engaged in deep reflection on the data and continued this process for each interview following. The interview transcripts were organized based on the questions and responses, and then I engaged in coding. Next, I used the codes to categories common themes.

I underscored words or phrases that stood out in the Excel spreadsheet document. Highlighting these words or phrases helped me to familiarize myself with the collective data and then use the NVivo software to store and organize the data to ensure easier analysis of the transcripts. I also looked for patterns, similarities, or differences concerning what the interviewees said and made summative statements to code using a priori codes based on the framework and related literature. I identified about eight a priori codes before analyzing the data. I then analyzed the data and matched the findings to the a priori codes. Following this stem, open codes were created for the data that were not previously identified through a priori codes. I looked at frequency and sequence to think about causation and allow the answers to the questions to tell me what was happening. Using deductive reasoning I determined which questions provided information that helped me to better understand the phenomena. Next, I compared my codes and created the best categorization based on responses using axial coding. If the data were not appropriate for the categories created using axial coding, I considered how they may best align with any previous categories and decided if there were sufficient data to create a new category. I analyzed the data and identified all themes from the coding and categorization. Theming allowed me to capture large ideas from the interviews conducted. According to Saldana (2015), the theme statements that stand out were the focus when outlining the big ideas from the interviews in my narrative. These themes projected the study's findings and helped me to decide how those themes match up with the conceptual framework, RQs, and details outlined in my literature review.

Where discrepant cases emerged, I employed the following approaches. I first

conducted member checking, which included sharing my findings with participants and asking them to verify the accuracy of the data. This helped to clarify any discrepancies and ensured that the data were reflective of the participants' perspective. Another strategy I employed was triangulation. This choice allowed for cross-validation of the findings. I also engaged in reflexivity, which allowed me to reflect on any of my own biases and assumptions throughout the research process. Overall, discrepancies were handled with careful attention to detail and a strong commitment to ensuring the accuracy and validity of the data.

Trustworthiness

As the researcher, it was my responsibility to ensure that this qualitative study was trustworthy. Throughout this study, I used strategies that include credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and member checking to ensure that trustworthiness was increased. Burkholder et al. (2016) postulated that the trustworthiness of qualitative studies is often heavily debated because of the reliance on interpretation. Considering this I ensured that I reported accurate participant responses and lived experiences.

Credibility

To ensure that trustworthiness and credibility were at the forefront of this study I used member checking to validate the findings of the study. According to Burkholder et al. (2016), member checking is an ideal way to gain insight and clarify any details relating to the participants in the study and the validation of those responses. I prepared a summary of my findings and emailed it to all participants for written feedback. In that

email, I asked participants if they would volunteer for a second interview to discuss my

findings. I then interviewed those participants who volunteered.

I followed the procedures from the research design that ensured that the data used

to support the study were relevant and meaningful in addressing the identified gap in

practice. All interviews were transcribed by me and reviewed against the recordings for

accuracy. Through member checking and the participant's review and feedback, I was

able to clarify potentially unclear statements made by participants.

Transferability

Secondly, I increased the study's trustworthiness by establishing levels of

transferability by providing a clear and concise analysis of the data. Data transferability

speaks to the findings of one study being able to be applied in other contexts (Burkholder

et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015; Saldana, 2015). To do this the researcher must include

specific details and clear data that can be applied to or compared to outside research or in

similar contexts. Although it may not be a guarantee that this study can be transferred to a

large extent, I included extensive details so that the audience or readers of the study can

analyze and possibly apply the results garnered to other contexts around the phenomenon.

Dependability

Moreover, I worked to establish dependability and confirmability in this study. To

do so I used other members of my doctoral committee to assess my data collection

methods and verify that they are aligned with the RQs. I used reflexivity and an audit trail

to minimize and reduce researcher's bias. I challenged myself to always remain objective

and remove any researchers' ideas from the findings of this study. To establish

reflexibility I constantly reflected on my role as the researcher and avoided some of the possible biases that I outlined in the "Role of the Researcher" section of this paper. I am aware of my connection with this topic as outlined previously in my reflection as a professional in a district that uses personalized learning on various levels. I maintained an audit trail that described and documented my thought processes and interpretations when analyzing the data.

Confirmability

To increase the study's trustworthiness, I established confirmability. I used reflexivity to limit biases by the researcher. I also created a journal to minimize biases further. When establishing confirmability, the researcher must remain objective and remove all personal ideas from the findings of the study (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Establishing confirmability ensured that the study presented limited researchers' biases. Establishing confirmability also ensured that if someone other than myself conducted this study, there would be similar findings and conclusions drawn. To further ensure confirmability, I reflected on my role as the researcher constantly engaging in reflexivity as mentioned earlier in the role of the researcher section of this paper. I described my biases and dispositions on this topic in detail while reflecting on my personal and professional experiences as I related to personalized learning on various levels. During journaling and data collecting, I kept clear documentation of my decisions made throughout the study to maintain consistent reflection and self-check.

Ethical Procedures

It was my number one priority to protect the participants of this study. In this

vein, I ensured that I have gained Walden University's Institutional Review Board approval. My approval number was 06-30-23-1046116. Each participant received electronic information on how to make an informed consent decision, which also confirmed that each participant was clear about the research and their role as the interviewee. The participant's written informed consent brief indicated that the participant has the right to withdraw from the study at any time. I obtained an email from the participants with the response "I consent," which indicated that the participants a willingly participating and are aware of any risks involved. Participants were advised that I also removed all identifying information from the final documents of this study and securely stored the data on the encrypted password-protected USB drive using alphanumeric codes.

Summary

In sum, this study used a basic qualitative approach to explore secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning, barriers, and challenges to its consistent use as an instructional model. I used purposive sampling to select the participants. The participants were limited to secondary English teachers. Teachers teaching Grades 6 through 12 were a part of the selection. The perceptions of secondary English teachers with the phenomena gave detailed and informed data that would serve to explain the phenomena. I used the semistructured interview protocol to establish and collect data on the phenomena. I transcribed using the NVivo software to generate codes. I then analyzed those code sets to determine themes and communicate the study's findings.

To increase trustworthiness in this study, I addressed the goals of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability through member checking and participant and peer review. Furthermore, I protected participants' rights and welfare by seeking Institutional Review Board approval. I also obtained informed consent from each of the participants. The participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Additional measures to protect participants were put in place. All participants' identifying information was securely stored on the encrypted password-protected USB memory stick.

Although the sample size was small and transferability may be limited, this study added insight to the existing knowledge on the barriers and challenges to the implementation of personalized learning. The next section of this study describes in detail the results of the study. More specifically, the next section focuses onthe setting, participants, data collection, and analysis processes.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore secondary school English

teachers' perceptions of personalized learning and challenges to its consistent use as an

instructional model. Based on the purpose of this study, I selected my participants to be

secondary English teachers Grades 6 to Grades 12. The following RQs aligned the

study's purpose and were related to the conceptual framework:

RQ1: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized

learning?

RQ2: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of the challenges

of using personalized learning consistently in their classrooms?

In this chapter, I describe the research setting and the participants' demographics

relative to this study. I also provide an overview of the data collection methods. I

describe the data analysis procedures that led to the development of my study's findings

and present a description of the evidence of trustworthiness. This chapter also includes

the study's findings in relation to the RQs. I conclude by summarizing the results.

Setting

The setting for this study was a national sample of secondary English teachers in

Grades 6 through 12. In addition to gathering participants from a national selection,

participants had to meet predetermined criteria because experience with the context was

essential to sharing quality information. The teacher participants needed to (a) have

functioned in the capacity of a teacher for 2 or more consecutive school years, (b) have

used one or more personalized learning models or personalized learning strategies, (c) not

have been a teacher in my local area, and (d) not have been known to me.

Participants' Demographics

All nine of the participants were teachers. There were variations in the number of years each teacher had taught. The variation included up to 25 years of teaching experience, with a minimum of 2 years teaching as required by this study. All teachers were either teaching English or had taught English courses Grade 6 through Grade 12. Lastly, all participants indicated that they had served in their respective position for 2 or more consecutive school years and had used one or more models of personalized learning and/or personalized learning strategies in their classrooms for 2 or more consecutive school years.

Data Collection

I conducted participant interviews from July 2023 to September 2023. In total, I conducted nine interviews. All interviews were conducted and recorded using the Zoom platform. After completing each interview, I stored the file in a folder on my computer and in a replica folder on my external hard drive. Furthermore, once the Zoom platform processed the web meeting into an audio transcription, I uploaded the audio file to the NVivo online transcription services. I used NVivo to transcribe the audio into written text and then read through each transcription for accuracy.

I met data saturation before arriving at my 12th interview. As initially outlined in Chapter 3, I planned to have eight to 12 participants or to interview participants until I reached data saturation. I determined that data saturation was achieved after conducting my seventh interview; however, I decided to accept two more interviews from persons

who had previously volunteered. Data saturation was reached, so I concluded the study's

findings using the data of nine participants. I know that data saturation was met because

no new information was revealed as I continued the interviews (see Burkholder et al.,

2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2011; Saldana, 2015).

Data Analysis

The data analysis process began once I completed the interviews. Firstly, the data

analysis began by journaling as a means of an audit trail. I documented what steps I took

in analyzing the data. Then I began the coding process for each interview individually.

Using the transcripts, I read each interview several times to familiarize myself with the

text and responses. Guided by the suggestions of Saldana (2015), for my first coding

cycle, I conducted a line-by-line coding to reduce the likelihood of inputting personal

attributes into respondents' responses. With each read, I applied in vivo coding, which

involves codes that arise in the data. In vivo coding can be further understood as using

codes grounded in the participant's language (Burkholder et al., 2016; Saldana, 2015). As

I completed an interview, I either added to the codes that I already had or created a new

code describing the context. After nine interviews, I ended with about 269 codes for my

first cycle of coding.

In my second cycle of coding, the primary focus was to make sense of the data.

Therefore, reflecting on Saldana's (2015) guidance in this coding cycle, I not only

condensed and collapsed but also reorganized and reevaluated the first cycle of codes. I

also reflected upon the journal notes that I made throughout this process. In reducing this

information, I grouped codes that were duplicates or shared similar meanings. I did

several coding trials and concluded with 49 codes. My next step in analyzing the data was

to make meaning by interpreting and drawing conclusions about my participants'

perceptions. Therefore, I categorized my codes before creating themes.

I created categories based on the similarities and relatedness of my codes. With

the completion of my categories, I conducted several trials to formulate themes about the

data. With each trial, I reflected on my codes and the original data and excerpts from the

interviews to ensure that I conveyed the most accurate interpretation of my data. After

further analysis, I found that I could further divide my themes into subthemes. To

conclude my organization analysis, I ended up with 42 codes, three themes, and seven

subthemes. I illustrate my study's final codes, categories, themes, and subthemes

reflective of my participants' perceptions in six tables.

I designed each table to reflect the data related to the RQs. Table 1 illustrates the

data that support RQ1. RQ1 was as follows: What are secondary school English teachers'

perceptions of personalized learning? The source of the data was the interviews

conducted with English teacher participants. Table 1 depicts 11 codes, two categories,

two themes, and four subthemes. I first grouped Codes 1 through 5 to form the first

category: positive perceptions. Secondly, I grouped Codes 6 to 11 to form Category 2:

teacher opportunities. I grouped codes into categories based on their similarities and

relatedness. The 13 codes and two categories mentioned earlier were combined to form

Theme 1: Although teachers face some challenges, teachers believe that personalized

learning models and the self-regulated strategies involved support academic achievement

and Theme 2: Teachers believe that personalized learning fosters creative and

collaborative opportunities for teachers. Lastly, I divided Theme 1 further into two

subthemes: (1a) self-regulation leads to improved academic performance and (1b)

differentiated learning opportunities. I also divided Theme 2 further into two subthemes:

(2a) teachers can engage in creative and collaborative opportunities and (2b) personalized

instruction and modality shifts during instruction.

Table 1

Codes, Categories, Themes, and Subthemes for Research Question 1

Open Codes	Categories	Theme	Subthemes
Code 1: Student academic growth	Category 1: Positive perceptions	Theme 1: Although teachers face some challenges, teachers believe that personalized learning models and the self-regulating strategies involved support academic achievement.	(1a) Self-regulation leads to Improved academic performance.
Code 2: Improved reading and writing skills.			(1b) Differentiated learning opportunities.
Code 3: Differing age groups			
Code 4: Differing content levels			
Code 5: Standards based instruction			
Code 6: Creative	Category 2: Teacher opportunities	Theme 2: Teachers believe that personalized learning fosters creative and collaborative opportunities for teachers.	(2a) Teachers can engage in creative and collaborative opportunities.
Code 7: Innovative			(2b) Personalized instruction modality shifts during instruction
Code 8: The role of technology			
Code 9: Small group instruction			
Code 10: Utilizing multiple modalities.			
Code 11: Opportunities and collaboration PLC			

In a like manner, Table 2 illustrates the data that support RQ2. RQ2 was as follows: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of the challenges of using personalized learning consistently in their classrooms? Table 2 includes 16 codes (12 to 28), one category, one theme, and three subthemes. I grouped Codes 12 to 28 to form Category 3: teachers' perceptions of the challenges and concerns with the consistent implementation. Table 2 shows how I grouped codes into categories. I grouped codes into categories based on their similarities and relatedness. The 15 codes and two categories, as mentioned earlier, were combined to form Theme 3: Although personalized learning is perceived by teachers to support academic achievement, teachers experience technical and practical challenges that affect the implementation of personalized learning. Lastly, I divided Theme 3 further into three subthemes. These subthemes were (3a) practical difficulties in and out of the classroom, (3b) implementation challenges, and (3c) administrative support and resources.

Table 2

Codes, Categories, Theme, and Subthemes for Research Question 2

Codes	Categories	Theme	Subthemes
Code 12: Classroom management	Teachers' perceptions of the challenges and concerns within consistent implementation inside and outside the classroom.	Theme 3: Although personalized learning is perceived by teachers to support academic achievement, teachers experience technical and practical challenges that affect the implementation of personalized learning.	(3a) Practical difficulties in and out the classroom (3b) Implementation challenges (3c) Administrative support and resources
Code 13: Preparing differentiated lesson plans (e.g., different grade levels, multiple lessons) Code 14: Time management			
Code 15: Time constraints Code 16: Utilizing multiple modalities Code 17: Teacher workload Code 18: Standards based instruction Code 19: Staff shortages Code 20: Colleagues engaging in dialogue Code 21: Collaborative planning Code 22: Sharing best practices Code 23: Administrative support Code 24: Lacking teacher support Code 25: No clearly defined personalized learning model from schools/districts Code 26: Professional development Code 27: District help Code 28: Standardized testing			

Results

I created interview questions to elicit conversation around the central phenomena,

challenges to the consistent use of personalized learning, to gain insights and understand

this study's RQs. I conducted several coding trials and concluded with 49 codes. I then

organized my codes based on like codes and assigned one code for all those categories

that were similar in nature. A category is a cluster of coded data that is organized by a

particular feature (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Therefore, I grouped codes into categories

based on codes similarities in context and relatedness. From the categories, I combined

and used interpretation to illustrate the big idea of the data, thus developing three themes.

RQ1

The first RQ that guided this study was the following: What are secondary school

English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning? Using a semistructured interview

design, I created eight questions to ask English teacher participants about their perception

of personalized learning to understand if there are challenges to the use of personalized

learning consistently in their classroom. Thus, through the conversation, I collected

information from the teachers to understand, interpret, and conclude my findings for

RQ1. Table 3 illustrates the codes from which broader themes emerged. Additionally, in

Table 3, I include excerpts from the participants' interviews to support the codes and

theme.

Table 3

Summary of Codes, Categories, and Theme for Research Question 1

Open codes	Categories	Theme	Participants	Excerpts
Code 1: Student academic growth	Category 1: Positive perceptions	Theme 1. Although teachers face some challenges, teachers believe that personalized learning models and the self-regulating strategies involved support differentiated learning opportunities and academic achievement.	P.2	"You can be a sixth grade labeled student because that is the grade you are assigned to. However, the content that you work on may be 8 or 9."
				''students have the ability in my middle school to work on earning high school credits"
Code 2: Improved reading and writing skills			P.3	''personalized instruction is basically use as an enrichment"
Code 3: Differing age groups	Category 3: Differentiation		P.9	''because it allows them to access the material better when they're at different places as well as be more flexible with the learning environment."
Code 4: Differing content levels			P.5	''There are curriculums where teachers truly have like that autonomy to say like, okay, this is how I want to do it. I think personalized learning will flourish in those type of situations."
Code 5: Standards based instruction	Category 4: Academic achievement and standardization		P.8	"It is very beneficial to me as a teacher because at the school that I am at, we have a lot of behavior issues and the more buy in that the students have with their learning, the less likely that they would to have behave like engage in behavior issues ..."
			P.1	''Because the kids are at different levels and in different spots and different places and working on different things, I think sometimes. Getting them all together. Because there still are there still certain things..."
			P.4	''So, a lot of choice journal prompts you can write, you can drop your journal prompt, you can come and talk to me about what your journal prompt would say, and we can use like a voice recorder. So, it's a lot of like really trying to remove the barriers that might."
				''Open and honest, transparent feedback."
Code 6: Creative	Category 2: Teacher opportunity	Theme 2: Teachers believe that personalized learning fosters creative	P.2	''You have to be willing to take multiple resources to support a student's learning in multiple modalities by which to be able to do that."

Open codes	Categories	Theme	Participants	Excerpts
		and collaborative opportunities for teachers		''Allowing students to have choice in how they present their skills. And you know, there aren't any specific timelines letting students work on things if they want to work on that.''
Code 7: Innovative			P.3	''So, we do a lot of hands on a lot of manipulatives, a lot of books, a lot of reading, a lot of texts about a different text from fiction and nonfiction. A lot of focus in on like text features, vocabulary from Greek island roots. So, it's just kind of like putting it out there. There's no when it says read it, it could include vocabulary. You can include writing personalized learning, and it could include reading. So, we kind of get a variety of options...''
Code 8: The role of technology			P.1	''We don't do a whole lot of direct instruction. We do more like small group one on small group or one on one instruction.''
Code 9: Small group instruction			P.4	''You must have bodies in the classroom that can work with students in smaller groups or pull them out of the room to work with them in smaller groups and have those kinds of resources available.''
Code 10: Utilizing multiple modalities			P.1	''We even try to figure out ways where we can personalize learning across curriculum.''
			P.9	''We have had summer academies during the summer months where staff would come together for professional development to do a book study on competency-based education.''
Code 11: Opportunities and collaboration (PLC)			P.2	''My colleagues and I could engage in dialogue. My colleagues and I would share a lot of methodology. My colleagues and I would discuss, you know, strategy, interventions, accommodations,
			P.2	''So, on the electronic platform that we uploaded units, I had the ability to adjust them, meaning I could take content out, I could add content, meaning different videos. And when I say videos and I'm not saying I was downloading videos from YouTube. No, it's me myself creating them, me talking, adding material to them...''

Theme 1

The first theme that emerged through analysis was that although teachers face

some challenges, teachers believe that personalized learning models and the self-regulating strategies involved support differentiated learning opportunities and academic achievement. This theme focused on teachers' perception of personalized learning models and personalized learning self-regulating strategies in the classroom. The codes that contributed to this theme were challenges in personalized learning, student academic growth, improved writing and reading skills, and differing content levels. Furthermore, two subthemes composed the broader theme (see Table 4). These subthemes were improved academic performance and differentiated learning opportunities. In the narrative that follows, I illustrate codes, categories, themes, and excerpts as shown in Table 3. Within this narration, I also depict how they are related to RQ1, Theme1, and Subthemes 1a and 1b in Table 3.

Firstly, participants believed that despite some challenges, personalized learning provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in various ways, based on their strengths and weaknesses. Participant 3 asserted that "personalized instruction is basically used as an enrichment." Participant 9 shared a similar belief and added that "personalizing learning for each student allows students to access the material better when they're at different places."

On the other hand, teachers indicated that they would have to provide students with a variety of assignments. Teachers shared that they have the responsibility of finding resources and creating those avenues for students to meet academic success. One participant indicated that the variations associated with personalized learning instruction include an approach that is different from the traditional teaching styles. Participant 5

stated, "Personalized learning looks different, and it may not be what is known as the conventional way of teaching. It would just take more planning for it to get done right." A difference in perspective emerged from other participants. Although the theme of differentiation was persistent, other participants indicated evidence of personalized learning being different for students at different levels. Participant 3 said, "Everybody's at a different level. Everybody's learning differently and we have to provide students with what they need at their level to push them up and I think that will be a challenge." This pattern continued to emerge as Participant 9 stated,

> We know that because kids learn at different levels and at different speeds and also in different ways, competency-based education like personalized learning allows us to split them up into groups and to provide those different opportunities for them. So, students are not all working on the same thing, and they are also maybe teaching themselves or teaching each other or engaging in more collaboration than you might see in a traditional setting.

Similarly, Participant 2 said:

> In a personalized setting, you're basically in an age group but you may be working on standards that are years ahead. But on the same token, you may be working on standards that are years behind your own age group. And so, we look at learning to be more, I guess, not so stifled.

> On the contrary, the data presented areas where personalized learning may present a challenge. Participant 7 added:

> A possible aspect that is a challenge is always finding resources, including people

who can come in and talk about how personalized learning or interest has

extended into their own career. So, building on that community aspect and getting

people to come in and talk to students about how their interests guided them to

their career choices would be beneficial.

The similarities and variations in the data were comprehensively summarized by one

candidate. Participant 4 said, "I think in theory personalized learning is a really great

idea. But I think that in practice it can be very difficult to effectively utilize."

Furthermore, in the transcript similarities continued to emerge as participants

shared that the student-centered approach of personalized learning also aided student

achievement. Participant 6 indicated, "Ensuring that those students also have

personalized choice so that they can challenge themselves even more." In other words,

the participant saw that personalized choice promotes student growth and can lead to

positive outcomes. In response to being asked about the perception of personalized

learning, Participant 1 stated:

I think it provides opportunities for students to gain knowledge and subject matter

and show what they know, and what they know how to do. And some kids are

good at taking tests and writing papers. Some kids do great when doing projects.

Some kids are good at making videos. Personally, personalized learning I think

allows you to focus on the kids' strengths and then they can use those strengths to

demonstrate what they've learned and what they know.

The participants expressed that personalized learning offered differentiation that

can support academic achievement. Participants further suggested that students who are

allowed to assess themselves, be it through data or voice and choice in assignments, can see increased academic achievement. These data align portions of the interpretation reflected and showed some similarities and some variations in Theme 1 and Subtheme 1a, improved academic achievement.

Theme 1 to Subthemes

Although Theme 1 captures the big picture of the perceptions of the participating teachers, it was important to divide the data into the main ideas for better interpretations of the study's findings in Chapter 5. Therefore, I divided Theme 1 into two subthemes. These subthemes were (1a) self-regulation leads to improved academic performance and (1b) differentiated learning opportunities. To maintain data alignment, I narrate the two subthemes in the order in which they are reflected in Theme 1.

Table 4

Research Question 1, Theme 1, and Subthemes

Research Question 1	Theme 1	Subthemes
RQ1: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning?	Theme 1: Although teachers face some challenges, teachers believe that personalized learning models and the self-regulating strategies involved support differentiated learning opportunities and academic achievement.	(1a) Self-regulation leads to improved academic performance. (1b) Differentiated learning opportunities.

Subtheme 1a: Self-Regulation and Improved Academic Performance.
Subtheme 1a reflects teachers' perceptions of personalized learning models being a tool that may or may not affect the academic performance of students who are exposed to a personalized learning environment and self-regulating strategies. Some key codes used for this subtheme were student choice and voice, improved reading and writing skills, flexibility, accelerated learning options, advantages of personalized learning, and cross-

curricular teaching. These codes led to this prominent subtheme that indicated that teachers perceive personalized learning to be a model that includes students having autonomy over their learning. With this self-regulatory conception of personalized learning, some teachers express the belief that students can make decisions about their learning, compare self to self, and determine how they can attain or improve their academic achievement.

Firstly, teachers believed that personalized learning environments increased students' ability to self-regulate and therefore perform better on class assignments and tests that are designed based on student interests, students' data, strengths, and weaknesses. One teacher described flipped learning as one strategy that allows students to perform well on assignments. Participant 5 described flipped learning and said:

I think one of the great things about personalized learning is that students are able to learn in a classroom environment that is truly flipped. So instead of me being up in the front, you know, going from the traditional way of how we would have learned growing up where the teacher was up in the front on the overhead projector, on the whiteboard, the blackboard, whatever the case may be, now it is truly the teacher being more of a facilitator.

Similarities emerged as another participant shared additional strategies that allow students to have more control of their learning. Participant 1 stated, "Kids can just work on their own, but then have our scheduled time to meet. Certain kids will be working on Algebra One or working on English Nine or working on History One or biology or whatever." When asked about how personalized learning is perceived, Teacher

Participant 2 said, "Students have the ability in my middle school to work on earning high school credits." The participant further expounded to say, "You can be a sixth-grade level student because that is the grade you are assigned to. However, the content that you work on may be [Grade] 8 or 9." The participating teachers' experiences were similar and, therefore, aligned with the Subtheme (1a) that personalized learning was perceived to provide students with self-regulatory options that can improve academic achievement.

Subtheme 1b: Differentiated Learning Opportunities. This theme reflects the teachers' perceptions of customizing instruction to meet individual needs. Some teachers expressed that students have greater opportunity to develop mastery and take ownership of their learning. Participant 9 said, "Personalizing learning for students allows them to access the material better when they're at different places as well as be more flexible with the learning environment." To further substantiate this theme, Participant 5 stated, "There are curriculums where teachers truly have like that autonomy to say like, okay, this is how I want to do it." When asked about the perception of personalized learning, teachers expressed the importance of delivering appropriate grade-level instruction for each student. Participant 3 said:

I think personalized learning is something that can be beneficial if it's done correctly. I think a lot of students benefit from the personalized learning options and the variety of materials that teachers can provide for them. But I think it's very important that teachers know how to provide service to students, to know and understand at grade level what's appropriate for them.

Additionally, another teacher revealed similarities when the teacher shared that

personalized learning provides students with the opportunity to what topics and activities interest them and the teacher would then provide the student with the option to do assignments that align with their interests. Participant 9 said:

Additionally, one of the proponents of personalized learning—a competency-based educational model, is student voice and choice, so students are choosing how they are going to demonstrate their learning and what they're going to be working on. So, if the skill is analyzing themes and ideas, a student has their own choice of what maybe they want to create that would show or demonstrate that they can analyze an idea. It might be a storyboard of a movie. It might be like a playbook from a football game that they just watched, showing that they understand the ideas of the game. Students get to demonstrate what their artifacts are going to look like. They get to create those and get to decide for themselves what their demonstration of learning is going to look like, which empowers the student.

Similarly, Participant 5 asserted, "I think personalized learning will flourish in those types of situations." Teachers shared that they are expected to shift their mode of instruction multiple times during classroom lessons. Teacher participants expressed that when shifting modes of instruction, it may include the use of various resources. Participant 2 affirmed and said, "You have to be willing to take multiple resources to support a student's learning in multiple modalities by which to be able to do that." Some participants indicated that when students receive instruction in multiple modalities, student skills are then presented to teachers. Conversely, when student skills are

presented to teachers, they can offer students options and choices in assignments that can further enhance those skills. To this end, Participant 2 explained, "Allowing students to have a choice in how they present their skills" and informing students that "There aren't any specific timelines… letting students work on things as long as they want to work on that" allows for students to have learning opportunities that increase their overall academic achievement.

Several participants believed that personalized learning models and strategies help students to improve academically. When asked about their perceptions of personalized learning, teachers shared that personalized learning is positive and beneficial to students if they are given the freedom to implement it with fidelity. This theme and subthemes present a position that addresses RQ1 of teachers' perception of personalized learning.

It is evident from the responses of participating teachers that personalized learning is seen as a student-centered instructional approach that can empower students to make decisions, use data to determine their progress, and choose their next steps. Moreover, from the data collected participating teachers believed that personalized learning supports academic achievement. These data agree with codes, categories, and Theme 1 and Subtheme 1a and 1b.

Theme 2: Teachers Believe That Personalized Learning Fosters Creative and Collaborative Opportunities for Teachers

The second theme that emerged through analysis was that teachers believed that personalized learning fosters creative and collaborative opportunities for teachers. This theme reflects ways in which personalized learning is perceived by teachers. Teacher

participants' responses indicated that personalized learning allows teachers to work with their colleagues, and in professional learning communities to generate opportunities in the form of innovative assignments and activities that are unique to learners. The codes that contributed to this theme were creative, the role of technology, small group instruction, and utilizing multiple modalities.

Furthermore, two subthemes composed the broader theme (see Table 5). These subthemes were teacher collaboration can facilitate student engagement in unique and creative opportunities, personalized instruction, and modality shifts during instruction. In the upcoming narrative, I illustrated codes, categories, themes, and excerpts; these are shown in Table 3. Within this narration, I depict how they are related to RQ1, Theme2, and Subthemes 2a, and 2b.

Theme 2 showed variation in the data in that it revealed teachers' perceptions of personalized learning from a different category. In Theme 1, the categories and themes that emerged revealed teachers' perceptions of personalized learning with regard to customizing instruction and differentiating learning pathways. Theme 1 also presented a relationship between personalized learning and how it may affect student performance and how it allows for students to self-regulate. Additionally, Theme 1 presented data that showed teachers' perceptions of how personalized learning is used and how teachers prepare, organize, and plan for classrooms with students at varying levels.

Conversely, differences emerged in the categories and subthemes of Theme 2. Theme 2 data expanded on the perceptions of teachers' creativity and collaboration with their peers. Theme 2 also presented varying factors such as the participants' perceptions

of the relationship between personalized learning and elements such as technology and cross-curricular work. One participant mentioned technology use some detail. Participant 5 said:

> On any given day or any given week, there were at least four to five different rotations that students went through. So, we had an independent station. We've had a technology station where we could discuss with other teachers how to use it effectively. You had kind of like a word workstation where students were working on vocabulary. You had your teacher at stations where students would be in a small group with me, probably no more than three to five students in a small group with me working on whatever it was we needed to work on in that particular week. There was a choice board station where students had free choice of kind of like the activities that they wanted to do so that they could show mastery of their lesson. So, there were always different things going on in different pockets of the room at any given time.

Although the technology was mentioned in passing, for the most part, only Participant 5 went into any form of detail about its use as a tool for collaborative work. Collaborative work described collaboration and discussion between teachers. Conversely, other participants described collaborative efforts across the curriculum. Participant 1 said:

> I think that if there's any way that you can collaborate and make cross-curriculum, it would be more beneficial to students. It is also beneficial to collaborate across curriculums with teachers because it becomes less work for all of us and students get a lot more out of it.

Additionally, this kind of collaboration inspires teacher plans that encourage students to collaborate as well. Similarly, Participant 9 said, "We can design opportunities where students get to work in groups or in collaboration with one another. This is helpful and kind of differs from traditional learning models." These data align portions of the interpretation reflected and showed some similarities and some variations in Theme 2 and Subtheme 2a creative and collaborative opportunities.

Theme 2 to Subthemes

As illustrated in Table 5, I analyzed the data to provide insight and understanding for RQ1. Theme 2 was that teachers believe that personalized learning fosters creative and collaborative opportunities for teachers and by extension students. Although Theme 2 captured a part of the big picture of the perceptions of personalized learning of the participating teachers, it was important to divide the data into the main ideas for better interpretations of the study's findings in Chapter 5. Therefore, I broke Theme 2 into two subthemes. These subthemes were (2a) teachers can engage in creative and collaborative opportunities, and (2b) personalized instruction and modality shift during instruction. To maintain data alignment, I narrate the two subthemes in the order in which they are reflected in Theme 2.

Table 5

Research Question 1, Theme 2, and Subthemes

Research Question 1	Theme 2	Subthemes
RQ1: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning?	Theme 1: Teachers believe that personalized learning fosters creative and collaborative opportunities for teachers and by extension students.	(2a) Teachers can engage in creative and collaborative opportunities. (2b) Personalized instruction and modality shift during instruction

Subtheme 2a: Teachers Can Engage in Creative and Collaborative

Opportunities. When asked about how personalized learning is perceived, one subtheme

emerged from teachers' responses that included thoughts and ideas that highlighted the

creative and collaborative opportunities they have while using multiple modalities to

include technology. Participants expressed that personalized learning is perceived as a

model that allows teachers to engage in creative and collaborative opportunities.

Participant 9 indicated, "We have had summer academies during the summer months

where staff would come together for professional development to do a book study on

competency-based education." Additionally, some teachers shared that they would work

collaboratively to support each other. Participant 2 stated, "My colleagues and I could

engage in dialogue. My colleagues and I would share a lot of methodology. My

colleagues and I would discuss, you know, strategy, interventions, and accommodations."

Similarly, participants expressed that this kind of collaboration led to cross-curricular

planning. Participant 1 said, "We even try to figure out ways where we can personalize

learning across the curriculum." This participant further added:

> We had just had observations from our administration, and we decided as fellow
>
> teachers to figure out ways where we can personalize learning across curriculum.
>
> Right, so if they're doing like a history class, an assignment in history and they
>
> want to do a research paper on something they're talking about in history, like I
>
> can count that for an assignment in my class or whatever. So, we do a lot of cross-
>
> content collaboration amongst teachers and as a district.
>
> The data also suggested that teachers believe that personalized learning provides

opportunities where teachers can be creative and engage in collaborative work. Some teachers shared that it is important to provide support for fellow teachers in implementing personalized learning. Additionally, the data revealed that teachers believed there is a need for collaboration and coaching to enhance teacher competencies in delivering personalized learning effectively even across the district. Participant 9 stated:

Yes. So, when we became a pilot school, we became part of a large unit, district association collaborative across the state where all the other larger school districts similar to ours were part of this learning opportunity group that would share best practices and experiences of how competency-based education was going for their staff. We were able to bounce ideas off each other and talk about what's working and what maybe needs improvement.

Therefore, this similarity in the participants' responses agrees with the findings that teachers can engage in unique, creative, and collaborative opportunities.

Subtheme 2b: Personalized Instruction and Modality Shift During Instruction. The second subtheme for Theme 2 addressed how teachers perceived personalized learning strategies such as modality shifts. Illustrated in earlier codes, participants expressed that personalized learning involves shifting modes of instruction in the classroom. Participants expressed their perceptions and understanding of personalized learning was that it involves tailoring lessons to meet student's abilities, interests, personal data, and pace. For example, Participant 2 expressed:

On the electronic platform, we would upload units. I had the ability to adjust them—meaning I could take content out, I could add content, meaning different

videos, and when I say videos and I'm not saying I was downloading videos from YouTube. No, it's me creating them, me talking, and adding material to them.

The data also were diverse in that they outlined several roles that teachers have in personalized learning—with emphasis on designing personalized curriculum and assignments, facilitating small group or individual instruction, supporting students in goal setting and monitoring progress, and guiding students in project-based learning and research activities. Participant 1 said:

Our entire school district is a personalized learning district, so every teacher in our district is actually required to personalize. We don't do a whole lot of direct instruction. We do more like small group one on small group or one on one instruction. But otherwise, we are kind of expected from the district standpoint to personalize for all our students.

Participant 1 further stated:

We have an online curriculum that we use which more than some has built in lectures and some quizzes and tests like that. So, some students can just plug in and if they want to just plug in and listen and work on that, they can do that. Otherwise, students do the writing part with me. Or I also have what's called projects where students just do interesting projects and research projects throughout the year and then based on what they want to do with it, determine some standards they need. So, they wrote up a project proposal. But sometimes I use that about my project, about them, about what their interests are. Hey, you're stuck on the [a proprietary online program], and your kind of stuck and you're not

making a lot of progress. Why don't we shift the projects, and you can do what

you said you like dirt biking, so let's do a project under biking. And they meet

standards by researching, writing, reading, putting that together, and presenting it

back to me.

The data further supported the alignment of personalized learning with teachers

being able to shift modalities during instruction. Participant 3 added:

We do have quite a few students, like a handful of students who need like below

level or on-level instruction. And so, we kind of use this to really push them, as

we call it, our Go Green initiative, which is like to give them in the green on

statewide testing. So, a lot of the time we used small group instruction. So, we use

quotable tags. We use guides to read them books to help them when they're sitting

at the table. That helps guide them with their thinking. It kind of allows us to kind

of differentiate their lessons. We do a lot of goals that in our schools the students

are very aware of, like the expectation of how many lessons they should be

completing.

The participating teachers appeared to perceive personalized learning to be a

model that requires shifting modes of instruction to accommodate differentiation and

learner preference. Moreover, from the data collected, participating teachers believed that

this kind of personalization promotes collaboration and supports academic achievement.

In sum, the overall idea illustrated through the responses was teachers differentiate their

instruction. These data agree with codes, categories, and a portion of Theme 2 and
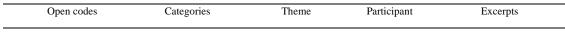
Subtheme 2b.

RQ2

   The second RQ that guided this study was as follows: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of the challenges of using personalized learning consistently in their classrooms? I asked nine questions addressing teachers' participants of the challenges to the consistent use of personalized learning. Table 6 illustrates the codes I interpreted from the data and categories I created from grouping related codes. I also include the theme that developed after combining the codes into categories and excerpts from the participants.

Table 6

Summary of Codes, Categories, and Theme for Research Question 2

Open codes	Categories	Theme	Participant	Excerpts
Code 13: Classroom management	Category 6: Teachers' perceptions of the challenges and concerns within consistent implementation inside and outside the classroom	Theme 3: Although personalized learning is perceived by teachers to support academic achievement, teachers experience technical and practical challenges that affect the implementation of personalized learning.	TP.1	''You don't get the group trying to do a group dynamic and a group discussion when you have kids doing different things and they're all-over different places. So, I think sometimes bringing them together to have a. Like a Socratic seminar or whatever is sometimes kind of hard to do and cannot do plan around because you have kids at different levels doing different things.''
			TP.2	''I think needed some management and that would probably be the classroom management aspect of personalized learning. And those are, you know, those are some of those, if you will, the rough spots that needed to have more support...''
			TP.2	''And it can be extremely challenging to be able to do all of that at one individual to 34 different students, each working on different content, each working at different levels within the content, along with what's typical of any classroom management of students, engagement of students and so forth.''
Code 14: Preparing differentiated lesson plans (e.g. different grade levels, multiple lessons) Code 15: Time management Code 16: Time constraints			TP.3	''Some students might get a test with five questions; some I give it with two because we know what they need to kind of process things.''
				''Because everybody's at a different level. Everybody's learning differently. And we must provide students what they need at their level to push them up.''
			TP.3	''I would say the only really the most challenging part of it is. Is prepping. Prepping for personalized learning is not always the easiest. We have 30 students in a classroom and you're kind of trying to the groups are changing, pulling

Open codes	Categories	Theme	Participant	Excerpts
				materials, making sure you have what you need for everybody."
			TP.4	"I think when you start to incorporate a lot of those personalized learning strategies, there are elements of the curriculum that aren't going to get taught again because there just aren't enough bodies in the room to separate that out."
			TP.8	"In my experience, planning for differentiation is like planning five different lessons in one, and it takes a lot of time and energy."
Code 17: Using multiple modalities. Code 18: Teacher workload Code 19: Standards-based instruction.				
			TP.3	"If I had to think of another challenge when I'm thinking about as far as students go, I would say. Getting them to understand why. Everybody's not doing the same thing and why they understand it. I think sometimes when one group sees a student reading just a paragraph as a text in another, the students see that they just read two pages. They're like, why do we have to do this?"
			TP.8	"Our district is very adamant that we should be using our curriculum with Fidelity 100% fidelity. And I think that over that conflicts with my ability to personalize the learning for my students. Because if they want me to use this curriculum with fidelity, then I can't."
			TP.9	"So, there are conflicting ideals in education that. Prevent us from going all in to personalize learning with our students, right? So, like we think of personalized learning pathways as individualizing education or modifying it for every individual student that's in our classroom."
Code 20: Staff shortages			TP.4	But then we continue to give every kid the same state test or grade every student by the same standards, understanding that their brains work and develop and process in different ways."

Open codes	Categories	Theme	Participant	Excerpts
Code 21: Colleagues engaging in dialogue. Code 22: Collaborative planning				"In order to really and effectively utilize personalized learning, I think that you have to have all of the support staff in place to do that."

Theme 3: The Practical Difficulties That Challenge Personalized Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

The third theme that emerged through this analysis addressed the practical difficulties that challenge personalized learning. This theme reflected the logistical challenges experienced by teachers while implementing personalized learning strategies in the classroom. The codes that contributed to this theme were preparing differentiated lesson plans, time management, time constraints, using multiple modalities, and staff shortages. I also subdivided Theme 3 into three subthemes and these subthemes will be used to interpret the study's findings. These subthemes were (3a) practical difficulties in and out of the classroom, (3b) implementation challenges, and (3c) administrative support and resources. In the upcoming narrative, I illustrated the codes, categories, themes, and excerpts shown in Table 5. With this narration, I depicted how they are in congruence with the RQ2, Theme 3, and Subthemes 3a, 3b, and 3c in Table 3.

The data collected from the participating teachers supplied evidence that teachers need more intentional support inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, some participating teachers expressed that support from administrators and colleagues is crucial

for implementing personalized learning effectively at the school level. Participating teachers also shared that such challenges experienced include implementation practices by districts and schools, prepping for personalized learning while managing materials for a large number of students. The data also showed that teachers have challenges in meeting individual student needs while keeping them on track. Furthermore, they expressed that personalized learning models conflict with traditional graduation and scoring requirements.

Eight of the nine participating teachers believed that there were practical implementation challenges with personalized learning. An example of an implementation challenge came from Participant 1:

> You don't get the group to do a group dynamic and a group discussion when you have kids doing different things and they're all at different places. So, I think sometimes bringing them together to have, like a Socratic seminar or whatever is sometimes kind of hard to do and plan around because you have kids at different levels doing different things.

Conversely, one participating teacher said that classroom management may help in the areas of planning for multiple students working at different paces and levels. Participant 2 said:

> I think teachers need some classroom management training and that would probably be the classroom management aspect of personalized learning that may be lacking for some. And those are, you know, some of the rough spots that teachers need to have more support.

The data presented here are compatible with Codes 13-16 and Category 6.

The data collected from participating teachers also illustrated their beliefs on preparing different lesson plans for students that were at different grade levels. Participant 3 said:

I would really say the most challenging part of it is prepping. Prepping for personalized learning is not always the easiest. We have 30 students in a classroom and you're kind of trying to group them, pulling materials, making sure you have what you need for everybody.

Similarly, Participant 8 asserted, ''In my experience, planning for differentiation is like planning five different lessons in one, and it takes a lot of time and energy."

The big picture reflected in the participating teacher's responses is that teachers experienced implementation issues that extend from the planning and preparation for classes, to the alignment with curriculum requirements, and with the preparation of multiple assignments for a large number of students. Furthermore, participating teachers asserted that these implicit themes suggest that personalized learning is seen as a valuable approach that requires support, resources, and continuous learning for teachers to successfully implement in the classroom, thus aligning portions of the interpretations reflected in Theme 3 and Subtheme (3a) practical difficulties in and out the classroom and (3b) implementation challenges.

Theme 3 to Subthemes

As illustrated in Table 7, I analyzed the data to provide insight and understanding for RQ2. Theme 3 was as follows: Although personalized learning is perceived by teachers

to support academic achievement, teachers experience technical and practical challenges that affect the implementation of personalized learning. Although Theme 3 captured the big picture of the perceptions of the nine participating teachers, it was important to divide the data into the main ideas for better interpretations of the study's findings in Chapter 5. Therefore, I broke Theme 3 into three subthemes. These subthemes were: (3a) practical difficulties in and out of the classroom, (3b) implementation challenges, and (3c) administrative support and resources. To maintain data alignment, I narrate the three subthemes in the order in which they are reflected in Theme 3.

Table 7

Research Question 2, Theme 3, and Subthemes

Research Question 2	Theme 3	Subthemes
RQ1: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of the challenges of using Personalized Learning consistently in their classrooms?	Theme 3: Although personalized learning is perceived by teachers to support academic achievement, teachers experience technical and practical challenges that affect the implementation of personalized learning	3a) Practical difficulties in and out of the classroom (3b) Implementation challenges (3c) Administrative support and resources

Subtheme 3a. Practical Difficulties In and Out the Classroom. Firstly, the data collected from the participating teachers revealed that most experienced practical difficulties in and out of the classroom. For example, Participant 3 said:

Because everybody's at a different level, everybody's learning differently. And we have to provide students with what they need at their level in order to push them up. Some students might get a test with five questions and then there are students that I give it with two because we know what they need in order to kind of process things.

A second example of practical difficulties was reflected in Participant 4's response:

> I think when you start to incorporate a lot of those personalized learning strategies, there are elements of the curriculum that aren't going to get taught again because there just aren't enough bodies in the room to separate that out.

In some instances, the participating teachers expressed that the support needed outside the classroom was also a challenge. For example, Participant 9 asserted:

> So, there are conflicting ideals in education that prevent us from going all in to personalize learning with our students, right? So, like we think of personalized learning pathways as individualizing education or modifying it for every individual student that's in our classroom. But then we continue to give every kid the same state test or grade every student by the same standards, understanding that their brains work and develop and process in different ways.

Similarly, Participant 8 said:

> Our district is very adamant that we should be using our curriculum with Fidelity 100% fidelity. And I think that conflicts with my ability to personalize the learning for my students. Because if they want me to use this curriculum with fidelity, then I can't.

However, there were variations in this data. Some participants expressed the need for school-based support. For example, Participant 4 stated, "In order to really and effectively utilize personalized learning, I think that you have to have all of the support staff in place to do that."

Participating teachers were overwhelmingly suggesting that they experienced practical difficulties in and out of the classroom. These difficulties referred to the problem investigated in this study of the challenges experienced with the implementation of personalized learning. This notion also fits into portions of the idea captured in Theme 3, thus creating Subtheme 3a. Additionally, the data presented in this theme directly addresses RQ2.

Subtheme 3b. Implementation Challenges. In this subtheme the data collected from the participants varied in that some indicated implementation challenges with the number of students a teacher may have; while other participants indicated challenges experienced when all teachers are not implementing personalized learning with fidelity for all students. To start, Participant 1 cited implementation challenges when they said:

> You must know your students. Luckily, we are a small school. I only have 150 students. If you're in a big, big school, it really all depends on knowing your students. You must know your students well enough to be able to adapt to their needs and truly personalize instruction. It's a lot of organization because I have a lot of spreadsheets that say these are the projects these kids are working on. This is the percentage of the class that they're in because I have some projects that are worth 50% in an entire semester because it meets 18 standards. And I have some projects that are worth 15% because they meet. Ten. So. You must be really good at keeping track of what your students are doing.

Similarly, one participant expressed that there is a downside to personalized learning as it pertains to traditional class load. Participant 9 said:

I think that one of the downsides of personalized learning models in a traditional

or in traditional school is that the class sizes are much too large for a teacher to be

100% effective in delivering content to upwards of 30 individual students. And

so, when we think about like a teacher, one teacher, one classroom teacher

supporting 30 kids, doing 30 different projects, or working on 30 different

trajectories for their pathway in English, that can be really overwhelming for a

teacher to plan content for all of that and also to just be available for one hour.

Other participants expressed different ways implementation could be challenging.

The data presented differences in implementation challenges as well. Another participant

introduced another implementation challenge with the conflicting ideals of personalized

learning in an environment that uses standardized testing. Participant 2 said:

In personalized settings, students also have to demonstrate, you know, they still

have to take standardized tests. That's part of it, that they're still, especially in the

state that I teach in. That's still part of part of education. Yes. So, they are in a

personalized setting. Yet, you know, our state hasn't really moved forward a lot in

that regard. So, students are still basically held accountable to a grade level

system. So first, second, third, and fourth grade students still take those exams.

Another variable introduced as a challenge teachers faced was that the lack of full

implementation of personalized learning could pose a challenge for subgroups within

high-performing schools. Participant 6 said:

What I've noticed with other teachers is because it is a predominantly white

school and the families, the demographic of the area is very affluent, I don't see a

lot of personalized learning from my colleagues. This is mostly because there are a lot of students in the district that may not need it because it's a high-performing school, so a lot of the students pass the courses very easily. However, there is a subgroup of students and those happen to be African American and brown students that I don't see personalized learning happening with colleagues very much. I think my school, or my district is beginning to start based on data, a school wide data that's showing a lot of black and brown children continuing to slip through the education gap there. So, it's frustrating to find out that most teachers don't adapt their teaching for students that need it the most. Most of the students, the minority black and brown students that I teach, are behind their peers, their white counterparts. They have identified. There is a group of students in the school that are identified as low performing. And there is a case called a learning Center that attempts to help students with reading. However, in the classroom, there's very little personalized learning that happens. So those students are continuing to slip.

Participating teachers' data showed variation in the implementation challenges faced when using personalized learning models. These variations referred to the problem investigated in this study—the challenges experienced with the implementation of personalized learning. This notion also fits into portions of the idea captured in Theme 3, thus creating Subtheme 3b.

Subtheme 3c. Administrative Support and Resources. In this final subtheme of the third Theme, the participants mentioned the challenges related to administrative

support and resources concerning personalized learning. The data collected from the participants varied in that some teacher participants indicated the need for resources while others indicated the need for administrative support—be it from school level leaders or their district. The need for having an appropriate number of support staff in schools and classrooms emerged in the data. Participant 4 said:

> I think that a lot of school districts right now are struggling to staff just the general education classrooms because they're such a big to portage right now. And because of that, I think that there are a lot of holes sort of within the school system. And so, to really and effectively utilize personalized learning, I think that you have to have all of the support staff in place to do that. You have to have bodies in the classroom that can work with students in smaller groups or pull them out of the room to work with them in smaller groups and have those kinds of resources available. And I think that right now, the educational world that we're currently living in just doesn't have that. It's just not feasible.

Conversely, some teacher participants shared the need for administrative support. One candidate expressed that having a supportive administrator isn't enough. The candidate expressed the need for administrators to be knowledgeable about personalized learning structures. Participant 8 said:

> My principals have been very supportive of us, you know, using scaffolding that we think is appropriate and stepping out of the curriculum a little bit just not a lot, but just enough to personalize the learning for our students. So, they have shown

> some support, but they haven't so much given us like models or structures that we should be using to personalize the learning.

Similarly, another candidate expressed the need for the administration to provide clear expectations. Participant 7 said:

> And then as far as school wise, I would say that it is important for administration to understand what personalized learning is. I think that sometimes it gets thrown into kind of this free-for-all idea that students can do whatever they want. I think that's kind of the deterrent for a lot of teachers that they don't see that there are some boundaries that you have. There are expectations around providing personalized learning instruction and administrators need to provide that support for teachers. Administrators need to share what that looks like for teachers. This kind of support coming from the administration could be very powerful.

Participating teachers' data showed both similarities and variations in administrative support and resources needed when using personalized learning models. These data refer to the problem investigated in this study of the challenges experienced with the implementation of personalized learning. This notion also fits into portions of the idea captured in Theme 3, thus creating Subtheme 3c.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The researcher must establish trustworthiness by producing valid and reliable content (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Saldana & Omasta, 2017). In this basic qualitative study, I applied strategies to improve the trustworthiness of my study's findings. Such strategies were credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability of the data, and

member checking. In the following sections, I describe how I use these strategies to establish the trustworthiness of this study's findings.

Credibility

The first strategy used to establish the trustworthiness of the study's findings was credibility. The credibility of the research findings refers to the extent to which the researcher convinces readers of the study that the study was well prepared and captured an apparent reality of the participants' perceptions (Saldana & Omasta, 2017). To ensure that trustworthiness and credibility were at the forefront of this study, I used member checking to validate the findings of the study. According to Burkholder et al. (2016), member checking is an ideal way to gain insight and clarify any details relating to the participants in the study and the validation of those responses. I prepared a summary of my findings and emailed it to all participants for written feedback. In that email, I asked participants if they would volunteer for a second interview to discuss my findings. I then interviewed those participants who volunteered and responded to those who decided to provide written feedback instead.

I followed the procedures from the research design that ensured that the data used to support the study were relevant and meaningful in addressing the identified gap in practice. All interviews were transcribed by me and reviewed against the recordings for accuracy. Through member checking and the participants' review and feedback, I was able to clarify any unclear statements made by participants. With the participants' workload as teachers, all participants were not available for interviews, but many were willing to provide feedback via email. My goal was to gather feedback from at least three

out of nine participants to support my findings before concluding Chapter 5. I contacted

and emailed all nine participants. Out of the nine participants, two responded

immediately and then two additional participants responded shortly thereafter. The

responding participants shared favorable responses to my preliminary results and

summary received. One example of the feedback received was as follows. Participant 5, a

participating teacher, stated, "I think you did a nice job depicting the strengths and

challenges of personalized learning for students within the classroom." Participant 1, a

participating English teacher shared, "You have made excellent distinctions here. Much

of what you have outlined I have personally experienced with my own implementation of

personalized learning." Participant 9 commented, "I agree with the findings of this

study." Participant 7 explained, "I believe your summary is an accurate depiction of the

study and specifically my answers."

Transferability

The second strategy used to establish the trustworthiness of the study's findings

was transferability. Transferability of findings is established when the findings can be

applied to other contexts (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2015; Saldana, 2015).

Establishing the transferability of research findings can be achieved by including clear

and rich details about data (Saldana & Omasta, 2017). With these details, the reader can

apply or compare the results to similar relatable contexts. In this case, transferability was

established when the purposive sampling technique was used to conduct interviews with

a national sample of teachers. I provided a narrative about my study's settings, participant

demographics, data analysis procedures, and the results in the previously mentioned

sections. This narration allows readers of this study to determine which areas resonate

with them or are transferable to similar contexts.

Dependability

The third strategy used to establish the trustworthiness of the study's findings was

dependability. Firstly, dependable results are consistent and replicable (Saldana &

Omasta, 2017). Employing an expert panel and an external auditor, I used two strategies

to establish the dependability of this study's conclusions. The expert panel included

members of my committee. The expert panel confirmed that the data collection

instruments agreed with the RQs. Secondly, I used a methodologist from Walden

University after drafting the data collection process, data analysis, and results. The

methodologist holds a Ph.D. and was sanctioned by the university to provide students

with support in the areas of methodology and qualitative data analysis. Therefore, I found

a person suitable to analyze my drafts and provide feedback and guidance. The

methodologist noted areas where my explanations were vague and provided suggestions

on the arrangements of my categories and how to refine my themes.

Confirmability

The fourth strategy used to establish the trustworthiness of the study's findings

was confirmability. Confirmability (also known as objectivity) of qualitative research

establishes how the study's findings were shaped based on participants' responses and

not the research's opinion, thus removing the researcher's bias (Burkholder et al., 2016;

Ravitch & Carl, 2015). I used reflexivity to limit biases by the researcher. I also created a

journal to minimize biases further. Establishing confirmability ensured that the study presented limited researchers' biases. Establishing confirmability also ensured that if someone other than myself conducted this study, there would be similar findings and conclusions drawn. To further ensure confirmability, I reflected on my role as the researcher constantly engaging in reflexivity as mentioned earlier in the role of the researcher section of this paper. I have described my biases and dispositions on this topic in detail while reflecting on my personal and professional experiences as I related to personalized learning on various levels. During journaling and data collecting, I kept clear documentation of my decisions made throughout the study to maintain consistent reflection and self-check.

Summary

In this study, I explored the central phenomena, secondary English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning, and the challenges to its consistent use by collecting data from teachers from a national sample. The RQs for this study addressed the perceptions of personalized learning by secondary school English teachers and their perceptions of the challenges to its consistent use in the classroom. Data were collected for this study through nine interviews with secondary English teachers who have used personalized learning models and strategies in their schools and classrooms. Once data were collected, transcribed, and analyzed, I organized the data into 49 codes. The 49 codes were grouped into six categories, three themes, and seven subthemes. I first grouped Codes 1 through 5 to form the first category: positive perceptions. Secondly, I grouped Codes 6 to 11 to form Category 2: teacher opportunities. I grouped codes into

categories based on their similarities and relatedness. The 19 codes and 4 categories mentioned earlier were combined to form Theme 1: although teachers face some challenges, teachers believe that personalized learning models and the self-regulated strategies involved support academic achievement; and Theme 2: teachers believe that personalized learning fosters creative and collaborative opportunities for teachers. The 30 codes and two categories mentioned previously were combined to form Theme 3: although personalized learning is perceived by teachers to support academic achievement, teachers experience technical and practical challenges that affect the implementation of personalized learning.

Each theme could be divided into subthemes. I divided Theme 1 into two subthemes: (1a) self-regulation leads to improved academic performance and (1b) differentiated learning opportunities. I also divided Theme 2 further into two subthemes: (2a) teachers can engage in creative and collaborative opportunities and (2b) personalized instruction and modality shifts during instruction. Finally, I divided Theme 3 further into three subthemes: (3a) practical difficulties in and out of the classroom, (3b) implementation challenges, and (3c) administrative support and resources. I used Theme 1 and 2 and the correlating subthemes to provide insight and understanding of RQ1 and Theme 3 and its correlating subthemes to provide insight and understanding of RQ2.

Participating teachers expressed that personalized learning is a great instructional model that provides teachers with the opportunity to customize and differentiate learning and instruction for students based on their strengths and personal data. Participating teachers also expressed that personalized learning allows students to self-regulate and

may lead to increased academic achievement. Thus, creating similarities among the interviews on the perceptions of personalized learning.

Conversely, teacher participants indicated that there are challenges to the consistent use of personalized learning. Participating teachers expressed that challenges are experienced with the traditional class load, curriculum requirements, resources, and inadequate administrative support. The data from participants also explained that teachers who use personalized learning combat the challenges of standardization and standardized tests within many school districts.

Before concluding this chapter, I described strategies I used to establish the trustworthiness of my study's findings. The strategies I used to establish trustworthiness were credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and member checking. Chapter 5 provides a detailed discussion of the study's findings, limitations, and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning and challenges to its consistent use as an instructional model. I collected data from a national sample of teachers who met predetermined criteria. The teacher participants needed to (a) have functioned in the capacity of a secondary English teacher for 2 or more consecutive school years, (b) have used one or more personalized learning models or personalized learning strategies, (c) not have been a teacher in my local area, and (d) not have been known to me. By acquiring a better understanding of personalized learning, I was able to gain insight to understand why there are challenges to its consistent use in the classroom.

As a result of data analysis, coding, categorization, and theming, I concluded data analysis with three themes. The first theme, Theme 1, which related to RQ1, was that although teachers face some challenges, teachers believe that personalized learning models and self-regulated strategies involved support academic achievement. The second theme, Theme 2, which also related to RQ1, was that teachers believe that personalized learning fosters creative and collaborative opportunities for teachers. The third theme, Theme 3, which related to RQ2, was that although personalized learning is perceived by teachers to support academic achievement, teachers experience technical and practical challenges that affect the implementation of personalized learning.

The themes were the overarching ideas captured from the participants' perceptions. To better interpret my study's findings, I divided my themes into subthemes. I divided Theme 1 into two subthemes: (a) self-regulation leads to improved academic

performance and (b) differentiated learning opportunities. Likewise, I divided Theme 2 into two subthemes. These subthemes were (a) teachers can engage in creative and collaborative opportunities and (b) personalized instruction and modality shifts during. I divided Theme 3 into three subthemes. These subthemes were (a) practical difficulties in and out of the classroom, (b) implementation challenges, and (c) administrative support and resources.

In the section on interpreting the study's findings, I organize the findings according to RQs, themes, and subthemes. In addition to using subthemes to narrate the findings, I also use the literature review from Chapter 2 to confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge. Further along in this chapter, I explain how the findings relate to the conceptual framework. Additionally, I discuss the limitations to the trustworthiness of this study's findings, my recommendations for future research, the implications of positive social change, and practice recommendations. I complete this chapter with a conclusion that captures the essence of this study.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this section, I describe my interpretation of the key findings. I collected my findings from interviews with nine participants, who were all secondary English teachers. As mentioned earlier, I have organized the section according to RQs, themes, and subthemes. The overarching RQs for this study were the following:

RQ1: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning?

RQ2: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of the challenges

of using personalized leaning consistently in their classrooms?

The three themes were as follows: (a) Although teachers face some challenges, teachers believe that personalized learning models and the self-regulated strategies involved support academic achievement; (b) teachers believe that personalized learning fosters creative and collaborative opportunities for teachers; and (c) although personalized learning is perceived by teachers to support academic achievement, teachers experience technical and practical challenges that affect the implementation of personalized learning. To narrate my findings clearly, I subdivided my themes into seven subthemes for better interpretation. I also used the literature from Chapter 2 to confirm, disconfirm, and extend the knowledge of my study's findings. Furthermore, I described how the results relate to the conceptual framework.

Interpretations for RQ1

The first RQ of this study was the following: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning? In the next section, to narrate my interpretations of my study's findings, I illustrate the two subthemes presented in Theme 1. These two subthemes were (1a) self-regulation leads to improved academic performance and (1b) differentiated learning opportunities. Likewise, I illustrate the two subthemes presented in Theme 2. These two subthemes were (2a) teachers can engage in creative and collaborative opportunities and (2b) personalize instruction and modality shifts during instruction.

Theme 1: Although Teachers Face Some Challenges, Teachers Believe That

Personalized Learning Models and the Self-Regulated Strategies Involved Support

Academic Achievement

Personalized learning dictates both a shift in traditional instruction and a shift in

the configuration of student's tasks and pedagogical approaches. Traditionally, the

teacher's role includes providing instruction and creating student tasks with their peers

(Bernacki et al., 2021). However, to achieve the goals of personalized learning, teachers

are expected to provide instruction and assignments based on students' needs and

preferences as opposed to creating a learning experience for students in isolation or

among a group of their peers. To create a personalized learning environment, there must

be a determination of teachers' roles or expectations and how those roles and

expectations impact or influence the implementation of personalized learning models.

Teachers are required to learn students' interests, identify students' strengths and

weaknesses, and create multiple learning opportunities and pathways for students to meet

success. This may look different for teachers and students across various districts and

schools. This is why there is a need to identify if there are any barriers to the consistent

implementation of personalized learning.

Self-Regulation Leads to Improved Academic Performance. According to

participating teachers, personalized learning allows students to self-regulate. During self-

regulation, students are able to look at their personal data, identify their deficiencies, and

determine which standard they want to work towards mastery on. The participants in this

study believed that when students chose their learning paths and had a voice in their

assignments towards mastery, they were able to improve their academic achievement. Similar results have been found in the literature in a more rigorous experiment that examined the relationships between learners, their study, and restudy choices, and one conclusion drawn was that student-regulated instruction, guiding one's study effectively and efficiently, is crucial for successful learning (Peng & Tullis, 2020).

The participants in this study suggested that the effectiveness of personalized learning comes from the student-centered approaches that can lead to positive outcomes. The conceptual framework, the self-regulation learning theory, connected to the chosen participants of my study and aligned to the premise that teachers are the facilitators in a personalized learning classroom and students are engaged in self-regulating, self-assessing, and self-evaluating (see Brenner, 2022). The self-regulating strategies involved support differentiated learning opportunities and academic achievement (Hertel & Karlen, 2021).

Differentiated Learning Opportunities. Teacher participants emphasized the importance of differentiating instruction and using multiple strategies to meet the needs of individual students. Teacher participants expressed that they play a crucial role in implementing and facilitating personalized learning, and their responsibilities include the use of multiple modalities and adapting instructional approaches with the designing of lessons, activities, and assignments that are unique to the interests of each student.

In contrast, differences appeared between the findings of this study and the findings in other studies. Participants in this study did not focus heavily on technology, whereas previous research emphasized the role of technology in personalized learning.

Walkington and Bernacki (2020) found that personalized learning allows students to engage with more modern technology such as algorithms that are used in personalized learning models to continuously assess student progress and adjust learning activities based on their needs. Further, another qualitative study by Fung et al. (2021) found that personalized learning models benefit students when there are writing tools such as e-journals and e-learning where the school can capture students' development in multiple data types during intervention blocks and instructional periods. These studies showed that personalized learning provides more differentiated learning opportunities when it is heavily driven by technology and electronic modes of instruction.

Theme 2: Teachers Believe That Personalized Learning Fosters Creative and Collaborative Opportunities for Teachers

Teacher participants expressed that personalized learning gives teachers the autonomy to be creative in the assignments that they design for each student. Teacher participants explained that they are able to plan lessons that may include but are not limited to audio recording themselves, student exploration of a topic outside of the classroom, and student contribution and voice in the designing of lesson plans for their course. Some of the approaches that are applied include but are not limited to integrating technology in instruction, creatively customizing content specific material to meet the needs and specific interest of students, sequencing information so that students can easily follow expectations and create their own learning pictures, and pacing learning opportunities to ensure that students individual needs are being met (Bishop et al., 2020).

Teachers Can Engage in Creative and Collaborative Opportunities

Teacher participants expressed that they had opportunities to collaborate with their peers as well as with their district. The participants indicated that these collaborative opportunities enhanced their lessons as they were able to plan with their content specific teachers as well as across the curriculum merging other content areas with English. This kind of collaboration enhances lessons, improves instruction for students, and increases academic achievement. One study of schools where teachers reported greater use of personalized learning or differentiated instruction showed that when there are higher levels of team collaboration, there is improved instruction and student achievement (Goddard & Kim, 2018). The findings drawn from this study aligned with the subtheme. According to teacher participants, these collaborative efforts served as a form of rich professional learning communities. Relatedly, findings drawn from Chaipidech et al. (2022) aligned with Subtheme 2b of this study (teachers can engage in creative and collaborative opportunities).

In contrast, Chaipidech et al. (2022) found that an environment in which both teacher and students collaborate to plan for individual learning can only augur for the good in terms of quality instruction and student achievement. Therefore, although the literature has acknowledged the role of teachers and students collaborating in personalized learning, the perspective differs slightly with the data of the participants of this study. Nevertheless, the variation in collaboration between teachers or teachers and students remains in agreement with the subtheme that teachers can engage in creative and collaborative opportunities in personalized learning environments.

Personalize Instruction and Modality Shifts During Instruction

Teacher participants expressed that personalized learning requires that teachers shift their modes of instruction during lessons. For the teacher participants, this meant that they were required to plan for a variety of modes of instruction to include small group instruction, student lead small group instruction, independent practice, technology integration, and adaptive learning. Similar beliefs to the participants in this study were presented by other researchers. A study of preservice teachers indicated that learning analytics support their engagement by mediating information between the student and the institution, facilitating effective studying, increasing awareness of students themselves as learners, providing assistance and support in a variety of challenging situations, and acting as a feedback channel to adapt learning conditions to their specific needs (Silvola et al., 2021). Because personalized learning entails preparing lessons for students based on their individual strengths and weaknesses, this could mean having several modes of instruction occurring at the same time.

This practice of shifting modalities countered largely with what is known as traditional teaching practices in the literature. In fact, both education experts and technology industry critics have argued and raised questions about the growing influence of personalized learning and how it may affect traditional teaching and teachers themselves. A study by Olofson et al. (2018) revealed that the diverse practices of personalized learning may lead to a decrease in traditional teaching practices and can be detrimental to the overall development of students. In contrast, McHugh et al.'s (2020) study disclosed that traditional practices, as they pertain to social and emotional learning

and relationships, are key components of personalized learning that are often overlooked in ongoing debates. Another study by Lee et al. (2021) showed that personalized learning requires a paradigm shift in most education systems that affects traditional teaching styles to more learner-centered schools that result in better academic outcomes. Not only are there differences in expectations of teachers' roles, but there are also varied implementation models that call for a difference in teacher expectations and responsibilities. A more refined investigation showed that in some cases teachers perceived their roles differently and have seen personalized learning as possibly replacing teachers with computers and privatizing classroom learning (Bigenho, 2021). The traditional expectations of schools can conflict with personalized learning environments (Qiucheng, 2023).

These arguments further emboldened the differences in the participants' perspectives in this study and the literature. Participants in this study suggested that the ideals of personalized learning require that teachers move away from many traditional teaching practices while some researchers believe that there are valuable aspects of instruction lost when teachers move away from some traditional practices.

Summary of Interpretations for RQ1

In summary, I analyzed and reflected upon the data collected from participating teachers to gain insight and understanding for this study's RQ1. From the big picture illustrated in Theme 1 and Theme 2, I created four subthemes. I used the subthemes to interpret the study's findings. I found that teachers believed that personalized learning is a model that requires the adaptation and differentiation of lessons based on students'

needs and abilities. I also found that teachers perceive personalized learning to be an effective instructional model that, if used correctly, can improve students' academic achievement. The literature showed variations in the findings with regards to collaboration and technology inclusion. I found that the data presented teachers' perceptions of collaborative efforts between teacher to teacher, while the literature included that there should be collaboration also with teacher and student. I also found that the data presented personalized learning models that were not heavily driven by technology. However, the literature presented the notion that many personalized models are constructed heavily with technological embedded components. The subthemes outlined in this section were insightful to understanding teachers' perceptions of personalized learning.

Interpretations for RQ2

The second RQ of this study was the following: What are secondary school English teachers' perceptions of the challenges of using personalized learning consistently in their classrooms? In the next section, to narrate my interpretations of my study's findings, I illustrate the three subthemes presented in Theme 3. These three subthemes were (3a) practical challenges in and outside of the classroom, (3b) implementation challenges, and (3c) administrative support and resources.

Theme 3: Although Personalized Learning is Perceived by Teachers to Support Academic Achievement, Teachers Experience Technical and Practical Challenges That Affect the Implementation of Personalized Learning

Teacher participants in this study experienced challenges that affected the overall

implementation of personalized learning. Participants explained that although personalized learning can lead to academic achievement, it was difficult to implement with fidelity without the necessary support, and resources. The issues faced by participants of this study included planning for large class sizes, conflict with rigid curriculums, lack of implementation support, and lack of administrative support.

Further, the data in this study revealed challenges associated with managing diverse groups of students with different abilities and grade levels, ensuring student motivation and maturity for self-directed learning, balancing standardized testing instruction, providing structure for students who struggle with decision making and progress monitoring, and receiving limited administrative support.

Practical Difficulties In and Out of the Classroom

The challenges and barriers expressed by teacher participants included the struggle to staff general education classrooms. They were also offered limited resources and support within the current education system. Participants also expressed the challenge of time constraints, and the contradiction of teaching in a personalized learning environment while maneuvering through standards-based instruction and the requirements of standardized testing. Participants shared the difficulties experienced when determining what is necessary for students to learn and what can be omitted.

Similarities to the findings of the present study also appeared in the findings of other studies. Arrowsmith et al. (2021) found that practices such as standardized state testing, traditional scheduling, and grading practices contradict the very practice of personalizing learning environments and create levels of uncertainty around best

practices associated with personalized learning. Similarly, Lee et al. (2021) showed that high stakes testing among other teacher responsibilities placed pressure on teachers and administrators to change the instructional culture of schools. These barriers present practical difficulties both in and out of the classroom while implementing personalized learning models.

Implementation Challenges

Just as participating teachers experienced challenges managing a large number of students with different abilities and grade levels; limited administrative support in implementing personalized learning was a challenge as well. The teacher participants said they needed professional development on differentiated instruction, access to instructional resources that accommodate different learning preferences and abilities, and support from their colleagues and administrators in creating differentiated learning environments to properly implement personalized learning models. Additionally, teachers reported the need for school districts and school level leaders to provide teachers with the necessary time, resources, and support to fulfill their roles effectively and ensure that personalized learning practices are implemented with fidelity.

The data in this study aligned with other reports on this same issue. A pragmatic research study showed that middle school teachers with English teachers among the samples from 11 schools were uncertain about how to meet what they perceived as social expectations when following through with the concept of transferring more control of learning from themselves to students (Bishop et al., 2020). Another study revealed that although some schools had practiced personalized learning for years, it was noticeable

that the features were practiced with different levels of implementation fidelity, or "the degree to which teachers implement programs as intended" (Dabae et al., 2022, p.8). One can reasonably hypothesize that a teacher's ability to teach under these circumstances may be varied and such student-centered approaches may need to be considered by teachers as they attempt to meet the expectations of the personalized learning instructional models.

Administrative Support and Resources

The participants expressed the need for more intentional support from administrators and colleagues in implementing personalized learning. This gap highlighted the importance of collaboration and shared responsibility when creating an environment that fosters personalized learning practices. The participants shared the desire for feedback and support from leadership. The participants' perspectives suggested that school leaders play a crucial role in creating a conducive environment for personalized learning. They conveyed the need for administrators to prioritize and allocate resources, provide guidance, and foster a culture that values and supports personalized learning. The participants expressed the need for administrators to provide continuous training and learning opportunities to stay updated on best practices, technology integration, and instructional approaches that support personalized learning.

Participants also communicated that administrators were at times unclear about their roles and responsibilities in a personalized learning environment. This finding appears in previous work; for example, Amro and Borup (2019) examined the experiences of administrators and high school teachers—including English teachers. The

study revealed that there was ambiguity in leaders' expectations for teachers' roles, and responsibilities. Similarly, Bingham et al. (2018) examined leaders and teachers, and some teachers indicated levels of uncertainty while using an instructional model that is heavily student-centered. The data indicated that the use of the personalized learning instructional model placed pressure on the teachers and created added responsibilities. The teachers were stressed while attempting to adhere to the instructional culture of the school and to implement personalized learning at the same time. Teachers indicated that collaboration among teachers to share personalized learning strategies and ideas; professional development and training to enhance skills and knowledge in personalized learning; and access to outside resources and experts could provide additional support.

Summary of Interpretations for RQ2

In summary, I analyzed and reflected upon the data collected from participating teachers to gain insight and understanding for this study's RQ2. I created three subthemes and used those subthemes to interpret and narrate the findings. The three subthemes were: (3a) practical support in and outside of the classroom; (3b) implementation challenges, and (3c) administrative support and resources. I found that teachers experience practical challenges that make the use of personalized learning difficult to implement with fidelity. Additionally, participating teachers expressed that they need ongoing professional development and support from district and school-based leaders who are knowledgeable about the tenants of personalized learning. Participating teachers illustrated that they believed that the challenges that they experience hinder the proper implementation of personalized learning.

Conceptual Framework and the Relationship to the Findings

The conceptual framework that supported and provided the understanding of this phenomenon is the self-regulated theory which focuses on metacognition, motivation, and strategic action. Notably, in qualitative research, the conceptual framework creates a link between the study's context and structure (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). The self-regulated learning theory offered insight into how students can meet academic success through various learning pathways.

Firstly, the findings of this study indicated that all participating teachers understood personalized learning to involve student choice, voice, strengths, and weaknesses in the decision making and planning for instruction. Several ideas with these findings related to the self-regulated learning theory. For one, teachers expressed that students were able to increase academic performance when they were able to self-regulate. In context, examples of self-regulation included but were not limited to students being able to evaluate their personal data and identify what standard they would work on. Teachers also indicated that students were able to identify what tasks would be most meaningful to them based on their interests, strengths, and weaknesses.

Secondly, the findings of this study also described that the participants believed that personalized learning was highly dependent on students' ability to self-motivate and their ability to take ownership of their learning—similarly, the self-regulated learning theory underscored this practice by encouraging students to take control of their learning through the identification of personal strengths and weaknesses. The components of the self-regulated learning theory are metacognition, motivation, and strategic action

(Brenner, 2022). These three types of competencies force students to challenge themselves, self-motivate, or adapt to various conditions. The self-regulated learner uses metacognition to map out their learning path and determine how they will achieve their learning goals. Students would later evaluate themselves (Brenner, 2022). Personalized learning is hinged on this theory because it places more emphasis on students controlling their learning rather than the teacher controlling their learning.

Lastly, the findings of this study indicated that participating teachers believed that teachers' roles in a personalized learning environment included influencing and facilitating students' individualized approaches to their own learning. This means that teachers must have a clear understanding of how students perceive academic challenges such as self-assessing, self-regulating, and self-motivating when it comes to their own learning (Brenner, 2022). Self-regulated learning theory is an implicit theory that speaks to the influences on students' approach to academic challenges and situations that may influence the way they perceive their own knowledge and interpret their own experiences (Hertel & Karlen, 2021). This theory is connected to the chosen participants of this study because it aligned with the premise that teachers are the facilitators in a personalized learning classroom.

In summary, the self-regulation learning theory is compatible with the findings of this study because it makes evident the role of the teacher and the student in the self-regulation process. Personalized learning as defined by Bernacki et al. (2021) encourages teachers to identify students' varied strengths and weaknesses and create multiple pathways to meet academic achievements. The data presented in this study aligned with

this premise and that personalized learning in combination with self-regulated learning led to an increase in academic performance. In essence, the self-regulated learning theory pairs well with current educational initiatives and innovations to include personalized learning and inquiry learning.

Limitations of the Study

The small sample size of this study could be seen as a potential weakness of this basic qualitative study. However, it met the requirements for qualitative research. Burkholder et al. (2016) asserted that the number of participants is unpredictable in qualitative research. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research focuses on the wealth of details in the data collected and the achievement of data saturation. This study included nine participants from a national sample. It was not feasible to interview every teacher across the nation. Furthermore, data collection concluded after the ninth interview, when I determined that I reached data saturation.

Another limitation was the use of a single data collection method. I used interviews as the only method for data collection in this study. According to Burkholder et al. (2016), the data collection used should relate to whether the data collection methods help answer the RQs; the kinds of data intended to be collected; and whether the study is geared toward a targeted population for whom can provide answers to the study's RQs, thus making the choice of a single data collection method for this study appropriate. This study targeted a specific audience, secondary English teachers, who met predetermined criteria. Moreover, the data I intended to collect was about the perceptions of the individual experiences of the participants. Ideally, interviews, one of the most popular

data collection methods, allowed me to collect perceptions based on firsthand experiences.

The final limitation was access to participants. Using methods such as Walden's participant pool, social media, and snowball sampling to recruit participants, I thought I would have collected more responses. I addressed this concern by coding after each interview to determine if data saturation was achieved. After the ninth interview, I decided that the data was saturated and, therefore, there was no need to collect more participants.

Recommendations

As I developed the interpretations of the findings for this study, I realized that two sections needed further exploration, to extend the knowledge within education. One recommendation for future studies is to explore whether standard-based instruction can work in tandem with the tenets of personalized learning. There appears to be a growing need to study both personalized learning and standards-based instruction as they are growing trends in education. It would be beneficial to extend the knowledge on whether or how these two paradigms can coexist in the classroom. This kind of research may be able to provide information on the practice and how to minimize some of the challenges experienced when teachers personalize instruction while using standards driven curriculum.

Recommendation for Further Research

From the findings of this study, and the literature, which drew some differences in conclusions, I believed it would be beneficial to extend the knowledge on this topic to

expand the knowledge of teachers' perceptions of how personalized learning can be integrated with standards-based instruction. Exploring if and how the two methods could coexist in schools may help to reduce the challenges experienced with implementing personalized learning. Further, researchers can also explore how curriculum planners might address students in a particular grade level working at, below, or above grade level. This exploration might directly address whether personalized learning is the best option and how curriculum writers can address the deficiencies among students on the same grade level.

Recommendations for Practice

Some teachers in this study shared that there may be a lack of equity in instruction among students who are receiving personalized learning. Some teachers indicated that by their own experience, some subgroups may be negatively affected because they are not receiving personalized instruction. Therefore, another recommendation is to explore how personalized learning can affect subgroups of students. Conducting research of this nature can provide additional insight and understanding of how effective personalized learning would be if teachers could provide this instruction for minority students consistently.

<div align="center">Implications</div>

Overall, the implications suggest that personalized learning requires a commitment from educational institutions to provide the necessary resources, leadership support, and ongoing professional development to ensure its successful implementation. This commitment would lead to a more student-centered and individualized educational experience that meets the needs of diverse learners. The findings of this study provided

insight and understanding of personalized learning and the challenges to its consistent use in the classroom. In this study, I found that teachers experienced practical challenges while implementing various personalized learning models and strategies.

Through this investigation, I also found that teachers believed that personalized learning is a powerful tool that allows teachers and students to excel in a multitude of areas. Additionally, teachers believed strongly that if they received the necessary support and resources, they could implement personalized learning with fidelity. This study also brought to light the fact that teachers believed that many of the traditional structures of teaching and grading must shift to use personalized learning consistently in the classroom and across schools.

Furthermore, participants believed that there is a need for administrators and district leaders to be knowledgeable about personalized learning. Participants also believed that personalized learning requires ongoing professional development, support staff in classrooms, and appropriate curriculums that align with the tenets of personalized learning. In summary, the findings from this study contribute to positive social change by providing considerations for implications on the teacher, school, and individual levels. These implications potentially contribute to positive social change by improving teachers' instructional practices and thus improving students' educational outcomes and life opportunities.

Social Change at the District and School Level

The implication at the district level is the possible need for improving, reconfiguring, or changing the curriculums to embed personalization. From the district

standpoint, it might be ideal to consider the tenants of personalization to ensure that the curriculum aligns with strategies that can effectuate change in the delivery of instruction. If the curriculum is rigid and does not leave any opportunity for teachers to personalize learning, then students will be provided blanket instruction that does not cater to their individual needs and academic goals.

The findings also have implications at the school level. There is a need for curriculum planners and principals to be more knowledgeable about personalized learning and the appropriate responses to students with various needs. Firstly, it is worth noting that the results documented that teachers need administrative support to properly implement personalized learning. Teachers expressed the need for administrators to understand that personalized learning and some curricula are not aligned. Therefore, in the principal's role as the school leader and administrator, the expectation is that they share this information in curriculum meetings to express the importance of personalized learning and how it connects to student achievement. They should discuss ways in which it can work in tandem with the curriculum in schools. In that way, the principals not only have a clear understanding of how to properly implement personalized learning, but they also can provide feedback that is specific and thus more meaningful to teachers and a positive social change for the educational institution. This positive social could result in improved implementation of personalized learning, which may translate into improved instruction and learning and, therefore, life chances for students and otherwise contribute to community improvement.

Social Change at the Teacher Level

This study's findings imply that there are inconsistent practices when it comes to teachers providing students with personalized learning opportunities. Therefore, at the teacher level, each teacher should consider ways to improve their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student in their classroom. The teacher can avoid creating one-size-fits-all lesson plans and design plans that include student pace, voice, and choice. They can create several assignments that meet standards for mastery but also incorporate students' academic levels, interests, strengths, and weaknesses. With this improved practice by teachers' students may be able to take ownership of their learning.

Social Change at the Individual Level

This study can also contribute to positive social change at the individual level for teachers. Teachers and other educational professionals can use the findings to reflect on current practices, their professional responsibilities, and how they can improve practices. Teachers are one of the stakeholders that are responsible for student engagement and student achievement. Therefore, it is vital to continue to improve practices. Individuals can improve professional practices through professional learning development opportunities, reflecting on practices, and advancing in their educational certifications.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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In this study, I investigated the perceptions of a national sample of teachers on the central phenomena, personalized learning, and the challenges to its consistent use in the classroom. According to Carreiro (2020), providing valuable instructional feedback correlates with improving teachers' instructional practices. In this study, I found that (a)

although teachers face some challenges, teachers believe that personalized learning

models and the self-regulating strategies involved support differentiated learning

opportunities and academic achievement; (b) teachers believe that personalized learning

fosters creative and collaborative opportunities for teachers; and (c) although

personalized learning is perceived by teachers to support academic achievement, teaches

experience technical and practical challenges that affect the implementation of

personalized learning.

I subdivided the three themes into seven subthemes to convey a clear

interpretation of my findings. The two subthemes which were compatible with Theme 1

are: (1a) Self-regulation leads to improved academic performance and (1b) differentiated

learning opportunities. The two subthemes that were compatible with Theme 2 were 2a)

teachers can engage in creative and collaborative opportunities and (2b) personalized

instruction and modality shift during instruction. On the other hand, the subthemes that

correlate to Theme 3 were: 3a) practical difficulties in and out of the classroom, (3b)

implementation challenges, and (3c) administrative support and resources. In addition, to

using subthemes to narrate the findings, I also used the literature from Chapter 2 to

confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge. Moreover, I used the literature to determine

whether any comparisons could be drawn from conclusions in the literature.

After developing my findings, unparalleled conclusions led me to areas that

would be worthy of exploring. Two recommendations for future studies were if

personalized learning and standards-based instruction complement each other and if any

subgroups would benefit largely from personalized learning. Improvement of the

implementation of instructional models such as personalized learning related to

improvement in teacher instructional practices and student achievement.

Therefore, I made recommendations for implications on the district and school,

teacher, and individual levels. In summary, this study added to the existing body of

knowledge which supported the fact that there are challenges to the consistent use of

personalized learning in the classroom. Teachers play a crucial role in implementing and

facilitating personalized learning, and their responsibilities include constant professional

development and adapting instructional approaches to meet the needs of their students.

Adequate support must be in place to ensure that personalized learning can be

implemented with fidelity and to improve the level of instruction and academic

achievements of students. Overall, the study suggested that although personalized

learning has its challenges, including staffing and resource limitations, it can be effective

when supported appropriately.

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Appendix A: E-Announcement

Volunteers needed for study.

There is a new study called ''Secondary School English Teachers' Perceptions of Personalized Learning". For this study, you are invited to describe your experiences and perceptions with the use of personalized learning models during instruction.

This study is part of the doctoral study for Kendra Vicars, Ed.D. student at Walden University.

About the study:

Virtual audio recorded 45-60 min interview on Zoom.

Target audience: Secondary (Grade 6-12) English teachers

Member checking via email to provide feedback on preliminary findings of this study (participants randomly selected)

Volunteers must meet specific criteria below:

Teachers Criteria to Participate

Have functioned in the capacity of a teacher for three or more consecutive school years.

Have used one or more personalized learning models or strategies.

Not be a teacher in my local area, USVI.

Not be known to me

Appendix B: Teacher Interview Protocols and Questions

Opening Script: Good day, my name is Kendra Vicars, and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. Thank you very much for taking the opportunity to participate in my study for my dissertation at Walden University. The title of my study is Secondary School English Teachers' Perceptions of Personalized Learning. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore secondary school English teachers' perceptions of personalized learning, barriers, and challenges to its consistent use as an instructional model. This interview should not last more than 60 minutes. It is within your rights to refuse to answer any questions. If you should choose to stop this interview, you're free to do so at any time. Your responses will be included in the findings of my final study unless you request otherwise. However, no one will be able to identify you in any document, and no one will be able to identify you by any answer that you gave. Also, a friendly reminder that this interview will be audio recorded for later data transcription and analysis.

Warm up Questions:

1. Do you have any questions for me currently?

2. Are you comfortable to begin?

3. What is your current job?

4. The criteria used for teachers to participate in this study are:

- Have taught for three or more consecutive years.

- Have used one or more models of personalized learning strategies?

- Not be a teacher in my local area, United States Virgin Islands

5. Do you meet all these criteria? … Ok great let us begin.

6. Please tell me a little about your educational background, credentials, and professional certifications.

Interview Questions:

1. What specific subject area are you currently teaching?

2. What are your thoughts about using personalized learning models?

3. How do you believe personalized learning is used in your school?

4. Please provide any examples of the type of work you've engaged in while using personalized learning models.

5. Have you ever received instructional feedback after using a personalized learning model or personalized learning strategies? If so, please provide an example.

6. Has it ever been a concern of yours that the use of personalized learning affects your ability to deliver effective instruction? Why?

7. Has your principal or school district provided you any support to implement personalized learning strategies or models?

8. What are the challenges to the consistent use of personalized learning?

Closing: This concludes my interview. Thank you again for taking the time out to take part in this study. Your responses today will be used as part of this study's findings in my dissertation at the end of my tenure at Walden University. I ask that if you know of any teacher who would also be willing to take part, please share my contact information with them. Once I develop my study's preliminary findings, I will share the preliminary findings to gather initial feedback from all members as well as follow up interviews in

member checking. Please check your e-mail for your nominal incentive. I am sending this incentive in about an hour after concluding this meeting. Lastly, I assure you that I will maintain your confidentiality. No one will be able to identify you or your answers. All audio recordings, transcriptions and materials related to this study will be stored on an encrypted USB drive and stored in my locked home office cabinet. Thank you and enjoy the rest of your day.