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2024

ENGLISH NEW-LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS AND ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER EFFICACY

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ENGLISH NEW-LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ONLINE
ASYNCHRONOUS AND ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER EFFICACY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

to the faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

of

THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

at

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

New York

by

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Date Submitted March 27, 2024   Date Approved May 17, 2024

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ABSTRACT

ENGLISH NEW-LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF

ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS AND ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER EFFICACY

Seneha N. Sinanaj

The purpose of this study is to examine English new-language teachers'

perceptions of online asynchronous and online synchronous professional development

and teacher efficacy. English new-language students score significantly lower than others

on standardized tests. This study analyzes online professional development for English

new-language teachers to enhance teacher efficacy and thus bridge the achievement gap.

This multiple-case study included four participants between the ages of 25 and 40. All

participants are teachers certified to teach English to speakers of other languages, have a

year or more of teaching experience, and are bilingual. The research methodologies used

to inform this study include interviews, observations, professional development, and

artifacts as main data sources. The participants went through two rounds of interviews

and were observed in the classroom. The teachers were observed during professional

development and the researcher collected artifacts from professional development for

analysis. The researcher triangulated the data from these main data sources to identify

codes, which were then developed into themes. The codes and themes were used to

answer the research questions. The results of this study can make online professional

development for English new-language teachers more efficient and help increase teacher

efficacy.

DEDICATION

To my grandparents (Kelmend), from Hoti (Hoti i Kujit) and Vuthaj, Montenegro, their children and families, my parents, my sons Rehat and Shaqa, and to all Sinanaj. I would not have come this far if it was not for all of you. Thank you for instilling in us the value of education and respect. I'll never know smarter, more hardworking people than you. I'm grateful. I love you more than you know.

Respectfully,

Seneha N. Sinanaj

Për gjyshërit e mi (Kelmend), nga Hoti (Hoti i Kujit) dhe Vuthaj, Mali i Zi, femijet dhe familjet e tyre, prindërit e mi, djemtë e mi Rehat dhe Shaqa, per krejt Sinanajt. Nuk do të kisha arritur kaq larg nëse nuk do të ishit për të gjithë ju. Faleminderit që më keni futur vlerën e edukimit dhe respektit. Unë kurrë nuk do të njoh njerëz më të zgjuar dhe më punëtorë se ju. Unë jam mirënjosje, të dua më shumë se sa di.

Me respekt,

Seneha N. Sinanaj

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Overview

Historically, educational leaders and higher education institutions have investigated why English-language learners underperform on standardized tests compared to other subgroups (New York State Education Department, n.d.). To help bridge the gap, leaders examined teachers' level of effectiveness through self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's beliefs about their ability to effectively perform tasks necessary to attain a valued goal (Bandura, 1994). In the context of social learning and social cognitive theory, teacher self-efficacy, or teacher efficacy, refers to teachers' belief in their own capability to prompt student engagement and learning even when students are difficult or unmotivated (Bandura, 1994). Teacher efficacy plays a significant role in this study because of its relation to teachers' perceptions of their own performance. In this study, English New Language, or ENL, refers to the study of the English language by non-native speakers, and English Language Learner, or ELL, refers to a person who studies English.

Professional development (PD) for ENL teachers has always been crucial. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, PD programs or events were in person. Following the COVID-19 outbreak, teachers embarked on online learning and teaching, with computers their only means of communication with their students and colleagues. Most past research on perceptions of online PD and teacher efficacy was done before the COVID outbreak; limited research on this topic in the wake of the pandemic exists.

Online synchronous learning is when students learn at the same time as their classmates and with a teacher. Asynchronous learning refers to learning independently.

Asynchronous learning is any type of learning that individuals undertake on their own

schedule, and it does not require consistent real-time interactions with an instructor

(Fadhilah et al., 2021).

This study is valuable because it addresses teachers' perceptions of online

asynchronous and online synchronous PD and teacher efficacy, an already marginalized

subgroup. The study's findings can shed light on what factors increase teacher efficacy

and bridge the achievement gap for ELLs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine English new-language teachers'

perceptions of online asynchronous and synchronous PD and teacher efficacy. According

to the 2022 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), in grades 4 and 8, ELLs

scored significantly lower in both reading and math than other groups. Research suggests

the teacher quality gap for ELLs is worse than the gap for economically disadvantaged

students of color (New York State Education Department, n.d.). According to Gándara

and Santibañez (2016), PD services through teacher preparation programs are not

effectively preparing ENL teachers. Researchers predicted that recruiting bilingual

teachers to teach ELLs may be difficult; however, schools should provide enough PD

opportunities and coaching support teacher to develop skills such as language knowledge

forms, mechanics, and the feeling of efficacy toward ELLs in higher learning. These

opportunities may include implementing cultural responsiveness into instruction

(Gándara & Santibañez, 2016).

The key study by Gándara and Santibañez (2016) guided the current study

because it lends an interesting perspective on PD for educators and ways to increase

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teacher efficacy. The authors focused on the teacher shortage to cate for the learning

needs of ELLs adequately and on the PD opportunities meant to support ENL teachers,

with the aim of increasing ELLs' performance on standardized exams (Gándara &

Santibañez, 2016). In this study, the researcher examined the data collected through the

lens of research by Malcolm Knowles and Albert Bandura on cognitive behavior therapy

(CBT). My research focused on ENL teacher efficacy since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The researcher analyzed ENL teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous and online

synchronous PD and teacher efficacy. Research studies on online PD post-pandemic are

few. This study addresses new developments in the area.

Theoretical Framework

This research study was examined through the works of Malcolm Knowles's adult

learning theory (1977) and the popular concept of andragogy as the theoretical

framework for this study. German Alexander Kapp first used the idea of andragogy in

1833. Knowles created a new theoretical model in the 1960s called andragogy, which

means the science of helping adults learn. The theorists developed this definition to

distinguish it from the word *pedagogy*, which means the art and science of teaching

children (Kamışlı & Özonur, 2017).

Knowles (1977) set out to explain that children and adults learn differently and

created six basic assumptions to differentiate between them. The first assumption is the

need to know, meaning adults seek to know why they need to learn something. The

second assumption is self-concept learners, which means adults are independent and want

to choose what to learn and how to learn it. The third assumption explains the role of the

learner's experiences, meaning adults bring their own experiences to learning, which can create bias toward learning new concepts.

Assumption four is readiness to learn, which is that adults are ready to learn information useful to them. The other aspect is orientation to learning, which addresses how adults use specific knowledge to solve specific real-world issues in the present time. Assumption five is problem orientation, which explains that adults learn more when there is a problem to solve. The last assumption, assumption six, is motivation, which means adults need to be motivated to learn. The motivation may be intrinsic or external (Kamışlı & Özonur, 2017).

The researcher chose the adult learning framework because PD involves adult learning. The framework helped in understanding the dynamics of adult learning as it pertains to teachers taking a PD program. Knowles (1977) explained that motivation has two factors: internal and external. One of the internal factors for adult learning is self-esteem. Educators pursue PD opportunities to increase their self-esteem, a theme examined throughout the data and the review of the literature.

This study also examined the Cognitive Behavior Theory (Herbert & Forman, 2011) through the perspectives obtained during interviews on teachers' perceptions of asynchronous professional and synchronous development and teacher efficacy. CBT refers to "the ideas that thoughts and beliefs lead directly to feelings and behavior, and that to change one's maladaptive behavior and subjective sense of well-being one must first change one's cognitions" (Herbert & Forman, 2011). CBT suggests thoughts, emotions, body sensations, and behavior are all connected, and what people think and do affects the way they feel. CBT addresses the idea of self-concept, which refers to "a

person's perceptions of him/herself, formed through interaction with the environment, interactions with significant others and attributions of behaviors" (Muijs & Reynolds, 2015). Educators participate in PD because the "need to know" feeling stems from lack of esteem, and in turn, the educator chooses to participate in PD to increase self-esteem, knowledge, and skills (Knowles, 1977).

The researcher also explored this topic through the lens of self-efficacy theory by Albert Bandura to help understand the data collected from observations and interviews (Bandura, 1994). In contrast with self-concept, the term *self-efficacy* refers to "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (Bandura, 1994). Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave. Such beliefs lead to these diverse effects through four major processes: cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection. This framework laid the ground for the concept of self-efficacy and how it stimulates behavior. Self-efficacy stems from internal beliefs about one's aptitude for a certain behavior, and self-concept usually derives from external factors that come from interactions with others.

Research Questions

This study addressed ENL teachers' perceptions of asynchronous and synchronous PD and teacher efficacy. The following research questions guided the study:

- RQ1: What are ENL teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous professional development in relation to teacher efficacy?

- RQ2: What are ENL teachers' perceptions of online synchronous professional development in relation to teacher efficacy?

- RQ3: What type of professional development did teachers believe contributed most to increasing teacher efficacy: online asynchronous or online synchronous?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it expands knowledge about the research topic of online asynchronous and synchronous PD and teacher efficacy. It contributes to PD as it pertains to synchronous and asynchronous learning using various methodological and theoretical lenses. Notably, this dissertation highlights new-wave forms of adult learning. In this study, the researcher addressed the transitioning from in-person PD to online PD in two ways: online synchronous and online asynchronous. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, PD was in person, and much of the research on PD was conducted pre-COVID. Since the end of the pandemic, PD has remained online, making this study important because the results stem from post-pandemic conditions. The perceptions of online learning and teacher efficacy can help teachers, school leaders, and higher education leaders understand how to effectively support positive efficacy using new-wave learning platforms.

This study is also pertinent to online professional development because the findings to the research questions may reduce the achievement gap for a marginalized subgroup of ELLs. In teacher preparation programs that emphasize preparing ENL instructors to address the requirements of ELLs in post-pandemic learning conditions, this attempt to close the gap can offer vital information.

Terms/Definitions

Andragogy: the art and science of leading or helping adults learn (Kamışlı & Özonur, 2017)

Pedagogy: the art and science of teaching children (Kamışlı & Özonur, 2017)

Cognitive behavior theory: the idea that thoughts and beliefs lead directly to feelings and behavior, and that to change one's maladaptive behavior and subjective sense of well-being, one must first change one's cognitions (Herbert & Forman, 2011)

Self-efficacy: people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave (Bandura, 1994).

Self-concept: a person's perceptions of themselves, formed through interaction with the environment, interactions with significant others, and attributions of behaviors (Muijs & Reynolds, 2015)

Synchronous learning (SL): a learning-oriented interaction facilitated by direct, real-time instructions with instructors, classmates, and usual scheduling. Synchronous online learning is commonly facilitated by media such as video conferencing, telecom, live chat, and livestreaming (Fadhilah et al., 2021)

Asynchronous learning (AL): a learning activity not done directly between teachers and learners. Teachers prepare the materials to be accessible to the students. Asynchronous online learning methods involve independent curriculum, streaming video, virtual libraries, and college posts (Fadhilah et al., 2021).

Teacher self-efficacy: a teacher's belief in his or her own capability to prompt student engagement and learning, even when students are difficult or unmotivated, in the context of social learning and social cognitive theory developed by Albert Bandura (Bandura, 1994).

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In Chapter 1, the researcher discussed the topic of this research study, which is ENL teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous and synchronous PD and teacher efficacy. The chapter included discussions on the theoretical frameworks by Knowles and Bandura and the CBT that guided this study. The chapter addressed the significance of this study by highlighting implications that may arise in this research that can help school leaders and educators become more effective in the classroom. Chapter 2 focuses on the literature review, which builds context for this study and draws connections between themes from the reviews and the theoretical frameworks. The researcher then connected these commonalities to the research questions. Peer-reviewed articles and educational journals were utilized for this literature review.

Theoretical Framework

Malcolm Knowles

Malcolm Knowles created a new theoretical model in the 1960s called andragogy, which means the science of helping adults learn. The aim of this definition was to distinguish it from the word *pedagogy*, which means the art and science of teaching children (Kamışlı & Özonur, 2017). The researcher relied on Knowles's research to understand the impact of online asynchronous and synchronous PD on teacher efficacy. Knowles's adult learning theory addressed the six assumptions of how adults learn best. In more recent research ingrained in Knowles's adult learning theory is the idea of the humanist theory of adult learning. According to this theory, human motivation is based

on a range of human needs, with physiological needs at the lowest level and self-esteem and the need for self-actualization at the highest level (Bélanger, 2011; Maslow, 1970).

The therapeutic perspective explains how to establish a positive rapport between a therapist and an individual. As it pertains to education, this aspect focuses on how to foster positive bonds, which learners can use for their personal growth to actualize themselves (Bélanger, 2011; Rogers, 1969). As they relate to Knowles's adult learning theory, these human approaches offer insight by reflecting on the teacher's and facilitator's role and the human experience in adult learning. In this case, teachers must self-actualize as learners to learn and develop professionally. No single theory constitutes how adults learn most effectively; however, based on the three theories in this study, adults learn through lived experiences all throughout their lives and their formal education.

Cognitive Behavior Theory

CBT underscores the emphasis on thoughts and feelings and their direct relationship with behavior. In this study, the researcher used CBT to understand the relationship between teachers' beliefs and thoughts and their direct impact on behavior. CBT guided my analyses of the data collected to investigate whether online synchronous or asynchronous PD impacts teacher efficacy. According to Kendall (2006), "The greatest emphasis is on the learning process and the influence of the models in the social environment, while underscoring the centrality of the individual's mediating/information processing style and emotional experiencing" (p. 7). This definition includes several key components, including (a) learning from direct experience, (b) social learning, and (c) cognitive and emotional mediation. Both Kendall (2006) and Dobson and Dozois (2001)

emphasized the mediational perspective. In addition to environmental influences, a person's thoughts and feelings are believed to make a unique contribution to behavioral health (Hupp et al., 2008).

Mediational theory or perspective is a human's cognitive perception of a certain event that took place, which helps describe the way people perceive and process information. Humans analyze information based on a reservoir of experiences they acquire over their lifespan. CBT asserts that based on their varied life experiences, humans process information and experiences differently from one another. These scholarly perspectives on CBT foreground themes such as outside factors found in the environment that impact human thoughts, beliefs, and actions. The online learning platforms in this study underscore these outside factors (such as environment). CBT can help in understanding the online learning platforms and in best describing how these environmental changes impact teacher efficacy.

Albert Bandura

Albert Bandura, a renowned social cognitive psychologist best known for his theory on self-efficacy, explained self-efficacy is different in every person (Bandura, 1994). Self-efficacy refers to people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes: cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection.

In this study, the researcher used Bandura's perspective to comprehend data as it relates to teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous and synchronous PD and teacher

efficacy. Bandura explained that humans shape their environment just as much as the environment is shaped by humans (Lightsey, 1999), an important theme related to this study. A teacher's level of efficacy has significant implications on the results of PD.

Akil and Jafar (2019) explained the effect of teachers' self-efficacy on rates of teacher retention and attrition. Gibson and Dembo (1984) proved that teachers' self-efficacy is a significant contributor to individual differences in teaching effectiveness. According to Bandura (1994), a correlation exists between the environment and efficacy, a theme this study analyzes.

Review of the Literature

In a quantitative study by Lambert and Yanson (2017), "E-Learning for Professional Development: Preferences in Learning Method and Recency Effect," the researchers explored preferences in PD learning forms, using media richness theory as the theoretical framework. Media richness theory describes a communication platform's capacity to reproduce the information sent over it. Daft and Lengel (1986) introduced the theory as an extension of information processing theory and analyzed it through four aspects: feedback, multiple cues, language variety, and personal focus. I noted that the purpose of the study by Lambert and Yanson (2017) was to investigate which e-learning methods working professionals find most beneficial to increase teacher efficacy and how recent e-learning experiences impact perceived learning effectiveness. The researchers used questionnaires to collect data for the study between 2009 and 2010 and obtained their data from the Society of Association Executives Foundation, with which the participants who completed the questionnaire were affiliated. The researchers used four

measures to complete the research: demographics, traditional learning preferences, e-learning preferences, and experience with learning format.

Lambert and Yanson (2017) found the working professionals most frequently preferred traditional learning, followed by asynchronous, synchronous, and blended learning methods. They noted,

> The study drew from a large sample of educated individuals seeking professional development opportunities. The results suggest that working professionals overwhelmingly preferred learning in a face-to-face environment. An ANOVA test, like that used by Dennis and Kinney (1998), was conducted to evaluate whether recent exposure impacts e-learning preferences. The analysis of variance showed that the effect of recent exposure was significant for all three e-learning methods: asynchronous, synchronous, and blended. Because the results of the ANOVA tests were significant, a Scheffe test was conducted to investigate the impact of recency within each of the three e-learning methods. The results of the Scheffe test indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between participants' preference for an e-learning method and how recently they experienced a particular method. (Lambert & Yanson, 2017)

One limitation of the study is that the researchers measured all the variables using self-reported data, and the secondary data is subject to accuracy. The researchers used a large sample size of participants, hindering the study's reliability, and the study relied only on self-reported data. Another limitation is the recency and timespan. The questionnaire asked participants to compare their most recent experience of traditional or e-learning for professional development purposes. Participants may have forgotten their

last experience or may not have remembered the experience vividly enough to accurately complete the questionnaire.

The purpose of a qualitative study by Nan Li and Angela Peters (2016) titled "Preparing K-12 Teachers for ELLs: Improving Teachers' L2 Knowledge and Strategies Through Innovative Professional Development'' was to examine a teacher preparation program created to effectively work with ELLs. I noted the study had three main goals. The first objective was to support K–12 teachers in low-performing schools in targeted districts to enhance English language proficiency by analyzing teacher efficacy and content knowledge of ELLs. Another objective was to enhance the English-language proficiency level and content knowledge of Hispanic students. The last goal was to collect data to ensure the decision-making process was inclusive of actual data. This new program sets out to incorporate traditional professional development with research and identify positive methods of preparing K–12 teachers to work more efficiently with ELLs.

The Li and Peters study spanned 10 months. The sample included four school districts in Orangeburg Consolidated School District 5, Orangeburg Consolidated School District 3, Calhoun County School District, and Bamberg County School District. These four school districts experienced a large growth in the number of ELLs who struggled academically. The ELL coordinators and principals in each district helped select the study's teacher participants. The researchers did not state the theoretical framework and conceptual framework they used. They cited a previous study by Gándara and Santibañez (2016), which pointed to a lack of PD training necessary to solve the immediate needs of students. The study's findings can be used to assess

teacher knowledge of ENL theory, basic interpersonal communication, and cognitive academic language proficiency.

Li and Peters gave a needs assessment to teachers to gather data on the new program. Teachers had to write a reflection on students' progress using the program and any negative factors that arose. Teachers needed to submit student writing samples and their instructional activities. The researchers conducted field observations at the beginning and toward the end of the study to monitor the teachers' instructional activities, and they performed a pre- and post-assessment of teachers' knowledge growth. To test the success of the professional development for teachers, the researchers collected a survey at the end of each program. The researchers' data analysis methods included collections of all research and assessment data, which they disaggregated and synthesized by collection date and types.

The finding of the Li and Peters study was that professional development combined with targeted strategies helped increase teacher efficacy and effectively supported ELLs. Teacher reflections over time proved an increase of teacher knowledge of ELL strategies and theory. In addition, teacher knowledge of how to use assessments improved due to the study's requirement to incorporate pre- and post-assessments to assess student growth and teacher effectiveness. The findings also revealed that based on ELL students' writing samples and data collection and analysis, ELLs demonstrated growth in learning in all four school districts. In summary, the study's findings were consistent with the researchers' objectives.

Li and Peters' article underscores the growing population of ELLs in urban areas and the value of training K–12 teachers on methodologies and strategies to support

language acquisition in ELL education. The researchers noted that few teacher education programs combine research and services with traditional teacher training, which is crucial to support ELLs. In critique, the article yielded findings that supported the study's objectives but did not include components like interviews and transcripts. The researchers focused more on the pre- and post-assessments of teacher knowledge and on the reflections the teachers wrote. The researchers did not state a theoretical or conceptual framework. Also, no school-building leaders were part of the sample, which yielded a one-sided view of why ELL teachers' supervisors did not offer them targeted professional development to be successful or more effective in the classroom.

In a 2020 article titled "Educator Perceptions of English Language Learners," Antonia Szymanski and Michelle Lynch explored teachers' perception of gifted and talented (GT) ELLs and teacher efficacy. The researchers used a qualitative case study design. They argued that teachers are unaware of culturally diverse students who are gifted because their first language is not English, which is not the typical characteristic of a gifted student. As a result, an untrained professional would overlook a gifted student who is also an ELL based on lack of training. This study set out to encourage more teacher PD on gifted ELLs to make significant strides toward inclusion and educational equity. The researchers did not provide a theoretical framework; however, another study by Szymanski (T. Szymanski & Shaff, 2013) on teachers' perceptions of diverse gifted students served as the conceptual framework.

The aim of the Szymanski and Lynch (2020) study was to analyze teachers' perceptions of ELLs who are gifted and talented, necessitating the use of qualitative case-study methodologies. The researchers used purposive sampling (Campbell et al., 2020).

The sample was a group of individuals from two schools in the same district in the south-central United States who worked with diverse student populations. Participants included the district's gifted and talented coordinators, two teachers of ELL students, two elementary curriculum coordinators, and four general-education teachers. The school building leader and gifted and talented coordinator at the district level chose the participants because they had the most experience working with gifted ELLs. Nine participants were considered non-Hispanic White. Data collection methods included interviews based on the study's research questions, which involved perceived obstacles, identification, and professional development. The researchers provided a table of participants' demographics, including their name, role, gender, certifications, and years of experience.

In semi-structured interviews that lasted about 45 minutes, Szymanski and Lynch sought to gain the perspectives of teachers and gifted coordinators on the research questions. The researcher transcribed and coded the interviews as provided by Saldaña (2016). The researcher reviewed the codes and revised them to more concise codes for accuracy. These codes lend to existing themes. The next step was tying the literature and research questions.

The results and findings of Szymanski and Lynch's study aligned with the researchers' goals and yielded three main themes: the mindset of an educator influences opportunity, teachers' perceptions have an impact or influence on the referrals and identification processes, and no PD experience will affect awareness and teacher efficacy. In summary, this article showed the need for ELLs in gifted and talented programs. The article also indicated that providing PD for teachers who are involved in

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the identification process of gifted programs can improve equity in gifted programs. This will support marginalized ELLs in reaching higher levels of learning opportunities. In critique of the article, the researchers used only nine participants in the study. All the participants were teachers and coordinators; the study did not include any school building leaders at the district or local level. In addition, all the participants were considered non-Hispanic White, which affects the validity and reliability of the study.

Another quantitative study by Hui Shi (2021), titled "Research on the Professional Development Attitude of Minority English Teachers," aimed to understand attitudes among minority English teachers of different ages. Using a sample of 180 middle school teachers in Hunan and Guzhou, China, the author administered a questionnaire to study the teachers' perceptions of PD and teacher efficacy. The author delivered a comprehensive questionnaire on the professional development attitude of middle school English teachers, $\alpha = 0.865$, which consisted of 32 items and three sub-questionnaires. The coefficients of internal consistency of these sub-questionnaires were $a = 0.786$ and $a = 0.806$. The author did not analyze the last questionnaire.

Shi used SPSS to analyze the data. The results of the study showed the minority English teachers had a high professional development attitude. Among the eight dimensions, the lowest average score was 3.514, which indicates English culture has an influence on the thinking of minority English teachers. The highest dimension of rigid-task goal awareness was 4.266. The researcher used the statistical method of one-way ANOVA to further analyze the differences in PD attitude among different ages. The results showed the analysis results of descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA of minority English teachers' PD attitudes in different age groups. Of the nine dimensions,

only three had statistical significance. The results indicated the minority middle-school

English teachers had a strong positive attitude toward their PD, and the teachers' ages

had an impact on professional teaching knowledge, flexible-task goals consciousness,

and rigid-task target consciousness. The author did not discuss the theoretical or

conceptual framework of the study. In critique of this study, there were coefficients for

two of the three sub-questionnaires and no coefficients for the last questionnaire. The

questionnaire itself served as a data collection source, and the lack of a coefficient

indicates the research was not conducted thoroughly in that aspect. The researcher could

have incorporated a wider range of questions on the questionnaire to elicit more data on

the perceptions of teachers.

     Kose and Lim (2010) conducted a quantitative study titled "Transformative

Professional Learning Within Schools: Relationship to Teachers' Beliefs, Expertise, and

Teaching." The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between

professional learning and teachers' beliefs about diversity, teacher efficacy,

transformative expertise, and transformative teaching by comparing two models of

professional learning in 25 small, urban elementary schools. The instrument the

researchers used was a teacher survey designed for general education teachers that

incorporated three years of research and fieldwork. The researchers created the survey in

an electronic platform called SurveyMonkey, and teachers reviewed it. Questions in the

study focused on demographics, teaching practices, beliefs, and professional

development.

     Kose and Lim analyzed the survey's reliability and validity through standard

item analysis for a database of all schools and 330 teacher surveys. Results indicated

that factors in both the process and transformative content models predicted differences in teachers' reported beliefs, expertise, or teaching. The following three research questions guided the inquiry:

- What is the relationship between professional learning (for each model) and teachers' thinking and beliefs about diversity?

- What is the relationship between professional learning and teachers' perceived transformative expertise?

- What is the relationship between professional learning and teachers' reported practices in transformative teaching?

The sample of the study was a quantitative database of survey data on transformative professional learning. The researchers collected the data in May 2008, using schools in which at least 20% of the population was students of color or 20% was students who qualified for free or reduced lunch. The populations of all but two schools included more than 30% low-income and 30% racial-minority students (here defined as Black, Hispanic, or Native American students). The aggregated mean averages of these student groups for all schools were 63% and 55%, respectively. The researchers obtained data from K–5 general education teachers in 25 elementary schools in small urban cities in Midwestern state.

Kose and Lim conducted a pilot study, which had a 90% response rate, in April 2008 to identify technical and minor conceptual issues. A 70% response rate was reasonable for drawing general conclusions about survey results, using Cronbach's, which assesses internal consistency. For Cronbach's, the researchers excluded missing values. The researchers used the CFA for transformative professional development, SAS

9.1, with Proc Calis. The design of the study was a comparison of two models: transformative professional learning and professional learning process. Research question 1 focused on the relationship between professional learning and teachers' thinking and beliefs about diversity.

The results indicated no transformative factors were statistically significant predictors of diversity importance for students of color. In critique, Kose and Lim must develop clearer concepts of measures of transformative professional learning. They did not explicitly state the theoretical framework in the article. Also, the researchers did not describe the connection between school leadership and transformative professional learning. They could have used qualitative methods of design and interviews and observations to support their study.

Kibler and Roman (2013) conducted research titled "Insights Into Professional Development for Teachers of English Language Learners: A Focus on Using Students' Native Languages in the Classroom.'' The purpose of the qualitative study was to analyze teacher efficacy and teacher learning during and after hybrid professional development geared toward teaching ELLs, and to determine how teachers feel about the advantages and disadvantages of using students' home language in their instruction. Participating teachers Carmen and Janice were both native English speakers who worked in multilingual classrooms. Out of a pool of 46 teachers who completed the Stanford University online CLAD certificate program, eight teachers agreed to participate. From those, the researchers chose Janice and Carmen, who worked within 45 miles of the researchers. One was less experienced than the other. One taught at an elementary school and the other at a secondary school.

The researchers investigated the following study topics using a multiple-case data methodology (Stake, 1995):

- RQ1: What changes in attitudes do educators have regarding the use of native language in the classroom during and after an online professional development experience?

- RQ2: How do the teachers' viewpoints on the use of native language in the classroom connect to their personal, classroom, and school contexts?

Data gathering techniques the researchers employed in the qualitative study design included instructor interviews, classroom observations, and online course assignments and conversations. The researchers searched the material to identify recurring themes pertaining to the background and context of the teachers to interpret the data. They transcribed every interview and reviewed several themes.

Based on that transcription, the researchers formed conceptual categories and developed open codes. The researchers reread the data chronologically (Creswell, 2003). The results of research question 1 indicated Carmen's ideas were resolidified during and after the hybrid professional development. Carmen was a stark advocate for using native language in the classroom, and her opinion remained consistent throughout the study. Janice's perspective changed during the program because she had the opportunity to engage in activities specific to home language use in the classroom. The researchers noted that Janice allowed assistants to work with students in their home language. However, Janice's opinion on using bilingualism did not change. She preferred not to use home language in the classroom, unlike Carmen, who was more willing. The researchers described Carmen's attitude toward using home language in the classroom as more

enthusiastic, whereas Janice considered it a classroom management issue. Carmen went on to host a multilingual parent night with families. Janice's results showed she was slowly becoming more accepting of using home language in the classroom.

The results of research question 2 showed both teachers' institutional settings impacted the way they utilized home language in the classroom. These two teachers were at different points of their careers, and their years of experience changed their perspective. Carmen was the newer, more enthusiastic teacher who worked with young elementary students (kindergarten), and Janice was the more experienced teacher who worked with high school students doing high-stakes testing. In critique, the researchers did not discuss the theoretical framework that guided the study. The sample size was also limited to only two teachers. The teachers' experiences were significantly different from each other, which led to drastic differences of opinion regarding using home language in the classroom. The participants did not provide enough context for targeted answers to the research questions. The researchers could have used more participants to support validity and reliability.

Connections to Prospective Dissertation Study

The purpose of this study was to examine English new-language teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous and synchronous professional development and teacher efficacy. For this study, teacher self-efficacy refers to a teacher's belief in his or her own capability to prompt student engagement and learning, even when students are difficult or unmotivated, in the context of social learning and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1994). The theoretical frameworks chosen were andragogy, self-efficacy, and CBT. I carefully selected sources for review and theoretical frameworks to make a case

for the value of it. In the NAEP (2022) results for grades four and eight, ELLs scored much lower in reading and math than other groups did.

Gándara and Santibañez (2016) studied the fast-growing rate of ELLs in urban areas and the lack of enough ENL teachers prepared to teach them. The NAEP (2022) results help explain what Gándara and Santibañez investigated in their study. Using data as the lens to comprehend the study, the researchers concluded that teacher preparation, teacher self-efficacy, and professional development were the main factors in the ELL achievement gap. The authors conducted the study before COVID, indicating that despite traditional in-person PD at the time, the ELL achievement gap was still large. For purposes of this study, the researcher attempted to build on Gándara and Santibañez's findings by analyzing whether online synchronous and online asynchronous PD helped increase teacher efficacy. The researcher wanted to determine whether a difference exists and what leaders and higher education lawmakers can do to increase teacher efficacy.

Lambert and Yanson's (2017) quantitative study focused on the most appropriate platform of PD young professionals preferred. The results indicated traditional in-person PD increased teacher efficacy the most, and thus it came first in personal choice, followed by asynchronous, synchronous, and blended learning. Research shows this personal connection or sense of community is a motivating factor for class attendance (Whipp & Chiarelli, 2004). These results and research reveal that nothing can replace the human experience when it comes to learning. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy is woven through this study because the results were an extension of young professionals' beliefs about which platform would work best for them, i.e., which platform they believed would support their personal efficacy. Lambert and Yanson's research was pertinent to my study

because the goal of their research was to understand people's perspectives on and preferences of PD using online platforms, blended learning, and traditional in-person learning.

Using the lens of andragogy by Knowles (1977), who outlined the six assumptions needed to engage adults in learning, Nan Li and Angela Peters (2016) examined a teacher preparation program created to effectively support ELLs. The study is relevant to my current research because of the themes that stemmed from it: teacher efficacy, perceptions, and interpretation. The themes guided this study into CBT, which is an essential theory that helped inform this study. Regarding question two, which focused on the impact of online synchronous PD and self-efficacy, Li and Peters's study was of interest in synthesis because the authors argued that how PD is delivered can change how educators perceive that information.

A. Szymanski and Lynch's (2020) article related to this study because one of the four participants in their study provided services to ELLs in a gifted and talented middle school. The researchers argued that the lack of PD in particular areas like the gifted and talented decreased teacher efficacy and impacted GT selection among ELLs and how teacher biases can play out in the selection processes. Their study helped explain cognitive behavior theory, which focuses on how people's perceptions can play out in their actions. As Bandura (1994) stated, people guide their lives and make decisions based on their beliefs of personal efficacy. Shi's (2021) research can be analyzed through Bandura's theory of self-efficacy because it focused on how years of teaching experience can impact teacher efficacy, a theme I also explored in this study. The theory of adults

learning can help cross-examine Shi's findings and argue that age can be a factor in teachers' preferences for effective PD.

Kose and Lim (2010) aimed to explore the relationship between professional learning and teachers' beliefs about diversity, transformative expertise, and transformative teaching by comparing two models of professional learning. The authors examined teacher efficacy and beliefs on topics like diversity and bias, using two different models of professional learning. Kose and Lim's study correlates to my research because the authors drew parallels between CBT and the effects of a lack of professional development to support teacher CBT awareness, which can lead to biased decision making and the suppression of efficacy among educators.

Kibler and Roman (2013) aimed to analyze the aspects that affect teacher learning during and after a hybrid PD geared toward teaching ELLs and how teachers felt about the advantages and disadvantages of using students' home language in their instruction. Kibler and Roman's study is applicable to my research because it addressed the effectiveness of hybrid professional development by analyzing Carmen and Janice's implementation of the skills they harnessed from hybrid professional development. In synthesis, this study revealed the effectiveness of online and in-person professional development as it pertained to these educators. The outcomes can support my study in the aspect of teacher preference versus no choice, and the results can play out in the classroom.

Drawing on different avenues on how this can be examined will help others understand that the COVID-19 pandemic forced teachers into online learning, and PD has remained there since. Online adult learning is not a one-size-fits-all model, as the

literature reviews indicate. As Gándara and Santibañez (2016) stated, PD prior to the

pandemic yielded enough discrepancies in supporting teachers of ELLs, yet little

attention was given to teachers forced into new-wave online learning models. The

implications of this study can open discussion about how ENL teachers already have

difficulty getting the targeted support they need from in-person PD, and in this new wave

of adult online learning, they need more support than ever.

Conclusion

In Chapter 2, the researcher emphasized how the literature reviews are associated

with this study. The reviews formed a background about the struggle ELLs faced prior to

the pandemic, despite the traditional forms of PD that were utilized. The literature

reviews also suggested the need to transition from traditional professional development to

online learning platforms. This study adds to the research by addressing ENL teachers'

perceptions of online synchronous and online asynchronous professional development

and teacher efficacy and ways to increase teacher efficacy using online learning

platforms.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

In Chapter 1, the researcher reviewed the purpose of this study: ENL teachers'

perceptions of online asynchronous and synchronous professional development and

teacher efficacy and described the significance of this research and listed the research

questions that guided the research. Chapter 2 entailed the literature review, which

provided context surrounding the topic. Through the prisms of the theoretical frameworks

of adult learning, self-efficacy, and CBT, Chapter 2 served as a platform for making

connections with this study.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of the methods the researcher used to complete the

research. The main data sources used to conduct the research were interviews,

observations, artifacts, and professional development. The researcher completed one-to-

one interviews with each of the four participants. Observations took place in the

classroom; the researcher observed the participants while teaching. Additionally, the

teachers were observed while engaged in professional development. The researcher

collected artifacts from professional development for analysis.

This qualitative study addressed ENL teachers' perceptions of online

asynchronous and synchronous professional development and teacher efficacy, in a K–8

charter school with a diverse student population. A multiple-case study approach was

used to complete the investigation that incorporated two rounds of in-depth interviews

with certified ENL teachers. Conducting these interviews on site helped provide a real-

world environment to the interviewees and their responses (Yin, 2014). The researcher

observed teachers engaged in PD and collected and examined the artifacts they received

during PD. The researcher triangulated the data from interviews, observations, artifacts, and professional development field notes to identify necessary themes to inform this study's research questions (Creswell, 2003).

Research indicates ELLs score significantly lower than other subgroups do on standardized tests (New York State Education Department, n.d.). Prior to the COVID–19 pandemic, school leaders looked for ways to support ELLs during in-person PD communities. Due to the pandemic, all adult learning was halted to transition to an online setting. This posed a concern for the adult learning development necessary to support ELLs' performance. This study aimed to help understand ENL teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous and synchronous PD and teacher efficacy to inform policymakers on how to support teachers through new-wave learning environments and determine avenues to increase teacher efficacy through online learning platforms.

Research Questions

This study focused on ENL teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous and synchronous PD and teacher efficacy. The following research questions guided this study:

- RQ1: What are ENL teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous professional development in relation to teacher efficacy?

- RQ2: What are ENL teachers' perceptions of online synchronous professional development in relation to teacher efficacy?

- RQ3: What type of professional development did teachers believe contributed most to increasing teacher efficacy: online asynchronous or online synchronous?

Setting

      The researcher conducted the study in a charter school in one of the largest urban school districts located in the northeastern part of the United States. The school district had a high percentage of ELLs. The school was grades K–8, and 12% of the school's population was ELLs. All participants in the study worked in the same school district. The 2022 school snapshot revealed student achievement varied among different groups. In 2022, 33% of ELLs met standards on the ELA state exam, and 21% met standards on the math state exam.

      According to the teacher survey, 79% of teachers said their PD experiences this year included opportunities to engage in inquiry-based, professional collaboration with peers and/or mentors from their school. The teacher survey responses indicated: teachers: 60% (44 surveys submitted). The student demographics included Asian: 26%, Black: 8%, Hispanic or Latinx: 51%, Native American: <1%, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 0%, and White: 13%. Further demographics included ELLs: 12%, students with IEPs: 12%, female: 50%, male: 50%, and neither female nor male: 0%. The staff members were of diverse backgrounds: Asian, African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian. This criterion was necessary to investigate the problem and the research questions (Creswell, 2003).

Participants

      The participants selected for this study were certified in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). The participants were skilled and experienced in lesson planning, scaffolding, and differentiating instruction for ELLs. The researcher chose these criteria because they aided in investigating the topic (Stake, 1995). The researcher emailed all the participants an informed consent and handed them a hard copy

before the research process began. To recruit the participants, the researcher contacted the school building leader to seek permission. An informed consent letter stated that the research was on a volunteer basis, and it was not mandatory. The informed consent also addressed the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of participants' information. The participants went through two rounds of interviews using the same set of questions. This sampling procedure was purposeful sampling, using participants from diverse teaching mediums and settings for more authentic research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This multiple-case study approach involved four participants who had at least a year of teaching experience with ELLs.

The first participant, a school instructor with three years of experience, was bilingual and held a TESOL certification. She started off as a kindergarten teacher, but at the time of the interviews, she was a pull-out teacher for grades one, two, and three. The language competence levels of students in these grades were expanding, commanding, and transitioning.

Participant number two held a TESOL certification, had three years of teaching experience, and was multilingual. For two years, she taught Spanish to kindergarten through fifth graders in a cluster setting. At the time of data collection, she offered pull-out ENL services to all kindergarten through fifth-grade students.

The third participant was TESOL-certified and had 14 years of teaching experience. She worked as a classroom teacher for eight years and as a multilingual ENL pull-out service provider for six years. She offered ENL services for pupils in grades one and two whose language competence level was expanding, transitioning, and emerging.

Participant number four taught outside the classroom for nearly two years of her teaching career. She was bilingual and held a TESOL certification. She exclusively worked with grades four and five. She offered ENL services to students with limited command of the language and developing skills.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to gather data. This method was appropriate because it allowed an opportunity to build trust with the participants (Kvale, 1996). Research suggests interviews are the best method when gathering information on a specific event (Creswell, 2003). Each teacher participated in two rounds of interviews, making a total of eight interviews. The interviews lasted for 60 minutes on average. The time between each interview was about a week (Seidman, 2013). Each participant received the same open-ended questions to ensure they felt comfortable expressing their authentic opinions and perspectives and sharing all their information (McNamara, 1999; Turner, 2010). The researcher created an interview environment that was conducive to establishing positive rapport and mutual responsiveness with participants (Molden, 2011). Interview questions included the following:

- Do you feel asynchronous professional development provides you with the support needed to do your job effectively?

- Do you feel synchronous professional development provides you with the support needed to do your job effectively?

- Which platform do you feel provides you with the support needed to do your job effectively: online synchronous or asynchronous professional? Why or why not?

The researcher audio-recorded all the interviews upon obtaining permission from the participants. The researcher kept in mind body language, pacing of the questions during the interview to ensure the interviewees did not feel rushed through the process. The researcher did not ask questions beyond the set provided to each participant (McNamara, 1999). Each participant was allocated a pseudonym for confidentiality, and any data collected that tied a name to the pseudonym was deleted or removed for confidentiality purposes as guaranteed in the informed consent (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Research indicates that a good interviewer should be a good listener (Creswell, 2003). The researcher collected copies of artifacts provided to teachers during PDs to draw connections between theoretical frameworks, literature reviews, and research questions. Lastly the researcher observed teachers during PD in real time to capture additional data.

Trustworthiness of the Design

In this qualitative study, the term *trustworthiness* relates to the validity of a study (Roberts & Hyatt, 2010). The four tenets of trustworthiness in a study are credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, which help maintain accuracy of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher utilized member checking to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the results (Carlson, 2010). Another step was triangulation, which occurred after retrieving all the data. Triangulation occurs when multiple sources of evidence or data develop a common theme or support a claim (Creswell, 2003). The researcher obtained themes from the triangulated sources, which included interviews, observations of teachers in professional developments, and professional development artifacts.

To ensure trustworthiness of the design, the researcher compared data from the first round of interviews to data from the second round of interviews to develop codes and then into themes; see Table 2. According to Patton (2002), the credibility of researchers is also important because they are the "instrument" to collect and analyze data. Transferability is another component of trustworthiness. Geertz (1973) explained that transferability reveals itself in research when thick, rich description is used. Due to the thorough analysis of the design, researchers can decide if the data is applicable to other studies or contexts (Creswell, 2003). Shenton (2004) noted that any process in a research study should be detailed to allow dependability for others to repeat it in other contexts. The researcher remained objective throughout analysis of this research study to ensure conformability and the study's quality.

Research Ethics

Research ethics and guidelines were embedded in each step of this study. The researcher ensured ethical research approaches that considered the regulation of the research processes. According to Creswell and Poth (2017), qualitative studies yield data that stems from a specific or small pool of participants, leading to a low rate of generalizability. I kept the identity of all participants confidential and used pseudonyms for ethical and confidentiality purposes. The researcher gave the participants a chance to review the interview recordings and transcripts to confirm the recordings reflected their perceptions. All the data collected was saved on a password-protected drive to ensure safety and integrity.

Data Analysis Approach

The researcher held in person interviews and audio-recorded them, with an automatic saving of the transcript to my drive. The researcher then uploaded the transcriptions to NVivo qualitative software to aid in analysis. This software database is a back source that helped analyze all eight interviews and cross-check each word to identify themes and patterns I might not have come across.

In addition to analyzing the data, the researcher used pattern coding, pattern weaving, and descriptive coding to develop themes throughout (Saldaña, 2013). This involved conducting multiple rounds of data coding in small increments to ensure validity. The researcher kept an analytical memo and notes as I skimmed through the data to identify patterns of congruence, needed to relate to the research questions (Saldaña, 2016). According to Miles et al. (2014), data may be unreliable when researchers are not objective. To ensure objectivity, the researcher utilized a secondary-source database to compare with codes and themes found in the data so there was no chance of misinterpretation of the codes and themes. The researcher drew connections from the codes and themes that resulted from the analysis, such as efficacy, adult learning, and behavior, to the research questions and the theoretical framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The Role of the Researcher

During the data collection process for this qualitative study, my role was to avoid subjectivity and bias. This is because subjectivity would compromise the integrity, reliability, and validity of the research (Mills & Gay, 2016). The researcher kept an open mind while comparing codes to generate themes and posed open-ended interview

questions to eliminate bias (Creswell, 2003). The researcher created an environment conducive for participants to openly convey their perspectives. For this study, the researcher employed research methods that yielded objective results.

Limitations of the Study

Although this study was restricted to a single school district, all participants were seasoned educators. Additionally, the professional development occurred once a month and lasted three hours, which occasionally interfered with teachers' ability to focus on and participate in the program. The study's findings are generalizable because this data is applicable to other contexts, such as teachers of students with disabilities. Moreover, every participant was a woman. Among the four teachers, two had more than three years of experience in the classroom, but overall, they were fairly new to teaching. Furthermore, acknowledging the extent of learning loss resulting from the pandemic is imperative. Some of the teachers still feel the implications of learning loss and the lack of professional development opportunities and technology training.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore ENL teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous and synchronous PD and teacher efficacy. The implications of the study can help bridge the achievement gap for ELLs, who are already a marginalized subgroup. The researcher used a multiple-case study approach to examine research questions rooted in the theoretical framework and literature review. Understanding the perspectives of the participants in this study can help broaden the lens through which educators view online PD post-pandemic.

In many cases, traditional in-person PD has become a thing of the past. Analyzing ENL teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous and synchronous professional development and teacher efficacy can help identify ways to increase teacher efficacy while using online professional development platforms.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS/FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this multiple-case study was to examine ENL teachers'

perceptions of online asynchronous and synchronous professional development and

teacher efficacy. In this multiple-case study approach, the researcher analyzed each

participant in depth to gain more understanding of teachers' perceptions. This chapter

includes the findings from the data collected in Chapter 3. The following are the research

questions that guided this study:

- RQ1: What are ENL teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous professional

  development in relation to teacher efficacy?

- RQ2: What are ENL teachers' perceptions of online synchronous professional

  development in relation to teacher efficacy?

- RQ3: What type of professional development did teachers believe contributed

  most to increasing teacher efficacy: online asynchronous or online synchronous?

Description of the Multiple-Case Study

This multiple-case study examined four participants in a large urban school

district. The main data sources were interviews, professional development, observations,

and artifacts. The researcher gathered data for this study through two rounds of teacher

interviews, which the researcher conducted in person. Each participant was given the

same set of open-ended questions. The interview questions correlated with teachers'

perceptions and efficacy to corroborate data for research questions. The researcher held

in-person observations in the classroom, observed teacher PD, and collected artifacts the

teachers received during professional development. The raw data was used to identify codes, which then became themes to support this research study.

School Description and Participants

The school selected for the study is in one of the largest cities in the northeastern part of the United States. The institution is a charter school and serves kindergarten through grade eight. As Table 1 shows, the student demographics are as follows: Asian: 26%, African American: 8%, Hispanic or Latinx: 51%, Native American: <1%, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 0%, White: 13, ELL: 12%, students with IEPs: 12%, female: 50%, male: 50%, and neither female nor male: 0%. The staff members were of diverse backgrounds: Asian, African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Educational Level	Years of Teaching Experience
Participant 1	25+	F	Masters	3+
Participant 2	25+	F	Masters	3+
Participant 3	30+	F	Masters	10+
Participant 4	25+	F	Masters	1+

Participant 1. Participant 1, a classroom teacher with three years of teaching experience, was TESOL-certified and bilingual. She taught kindergarten initially, but at the time of the interviews, she served as a pull-out teacher for grades one, two, and three whose language proficiency levels were transitioning, expanding, and commanding. During her observation, she was teaching three students in a grade-two classroom. All the

students were girls, and their first language was Spanish. The walls were adorned with vocabulary words accompanied by pictures and sentence frames and starters. The students were working on a literacy lesson focused on informational reading. This lesson was focused on writing. Students were reflecting on what they learned from their textbooks. Participant 1 explained she always wanted to be a teacher and enjoyed her work.

Participant 2. Participant 2 was TESOL-certified, bilingual, and had three years of teaching experience. For two years, she served as a Spanish cluster teacher for kindergarten through grade five. At the time of data collection, she provided pull-out ENL services in English for all students in kindergarten through grade five. The researcher observed this teacher during morning-routine instruction. Her group of first-grade students included four girls and one boy, and their first language was Spanish. This group focused primarily on the speaking part of the lesson in which students were learning how to tell the days of the week and the months and describe the weather of the day. Participant 2 explained she loved teaching and enjoyed working with new students because she wanted to be able to provide them with a positive and welcoming experience in a new school in the United States. She began her career in a charter school and had always worked within the same district.

Participant 3. Participant 3 had 14 years of teaching experience and was bilingual and TESOL-certified. She spent six years providing ENL pull-out services and eight years as a classroom teacher. She provided ENL services for students in grades one and two whose language proficiency levels were emerging, transitioning, and expanding. The researcher observed her while instructing a group of second-grade students on the

words *the*, *an*, and *is*. There were two boys and two girls in the group. The first language of one student was Spanish, and the first language of the others was Arabic. Participant 3 used anchor charts with simple sentences on the wall as references during her lesson.

Participant 4. Participant 4 had almost two years of teaching experience in which she taught outside the classroom. She was TESOL-certified and bilingual, and she taught grades four and five only. She provided ENL services for students whose language proficiency levels were expanding and commanding only. During the observation, she used anchor charts with narrative writing examples and a word wall with pictures. Participant 4 explained her students had a strong grasp of the English language, and she used her data to focus mostly on writing during instructional time to enhance productive skills. Participant 4 had never worked in a public school, and she had always taught in the same school district.

Observations

Observations took place in the classrooms, which were all relatively smaller than a typical classroom. Participant 1's grade-two class consisted of three female pupils, all of whom spoke Spanish as their first language. Sentence starters, sentence frames, and vocabulary terms with accompanying images were all over the walls. The literacy lesson focused on informational writing, with an emphasis on writing stronger sentences. Students were generating sentences by analyzing the difference between subject and predicates. The teacher had differentiated the lesson by having some students focus on pictures of subjects and predicates to generate sentences and telling others to create their own.

40

The researcher observed Participant 2 during a lesson about morning routine. Her first-grade class consisted of four girls and one boy, all of whom spoke Spanish as their first language. They sat at a semicircular table while they concentrated on the speaking portion of the curriculum, in which students learned how to identify the days of the week and months and the current weather. They were matching the proper sentence starter to the correct question. Posted questions included the following: What day of the week is it today? What month are we in? What is the weather like outside?

During Participant 3's instruction to two girls and two boys in second grade, the researcher observed a lesson about the words *the*, *an*, and *is*. Some of the students spoke Arabic as their primary language, and others spoke Spanish. Throughout her session, Participant 3 used the anchor charts with short statements on the wall as references. She had posted word walls with graphics and anchor charts featuring examples of narrative text the current students and previous students had created.

The researcher observed Participant 4 teaching a small group of students in grades four and five. The class consisted of one boy and two girls who spoke Spanish. They were working on writing conjunctions to create longer, more descriptive sentences.

Professional Development and Artifacts

The charter school in this study held PD once a month. The researcher observed teachers while engaged in a professional development session which lasted three hours and focused on literacy and implementation of the school's new program. Figure 1 shows the handouts the teachers received. The program, titled "MyView Literacy" and provided by the SAVVAS Learning Company, was the reading curriculum the teachers used in the classroom. The PD began with an overview of the curriculum through its website. The

teachers learned about the readers' workshop component of the program, which focused

on informational text. The instructor thoroughly reviewed how to scaffold this genre of

texts for ELLs, specifically "how to identify signal words to understand text structure,

and how to incorporate 'cognates' into small groups and how to differentiate content such

as 'natural disasters' for students in emerging and expanding language levels." The

instructor also provided a handout to help teachers differentiate the lesson.

Figure 1

Professional Development Artifacts: Differentiated Activities for ELLs

Activity: Lesson 1 Jigsaw

Directions: In a group of three, use the handout to analyze Lesson 1 from Grade 3, Unit 5, Week 2.

Part 1: Jigsaw
1. Within your group, assign one person to each part of Lesson 1.
   - Interact with Sources
   - Listening Comprehension
   - Spotlight on Genre

2. Use the lesson plan and the chart to unpack your lesson part. Be ready to share your findings with your group.

Part 2: Share Out
1. Share your findings with your small group.

2. Discuss these questions as you share:
   - What is the overall purpose of Lesson 1?
   - Based on Lesson 1, what do you expect the Weekly Text will be about? What do you expect the genre will be?
   - How does Lesson 1 prepare students to read the Weekly Text?

Part 3: Create
1. Work with your group to create a Lesson 1 anchor chart for your classroom.
   - Include all three parts of the lesson.
   - Include visuals that will help your students understand, anticipate, and prepare for the lesson parts.

2. Share your anchor chart with one other group.

Unit Introduction

Purpose: The Unit Introduction sets the unit's purpose for students. Students learn and discuss the theme, goals, and Essential Question so they may readily connect everything they do in the unit to a bigger picture.

Supportive Features

Essential Question	Unit Goals	Reading Log
Unit Video	Academic Vocabulary	Student Discussion
Dual Language Educators' Implementation Guide (DLEIG)		

Teacher Actions	Student Actions
☐ Introduce the Essential Question and share the Unit Video so students begin to understand and connect to the unit theme	☐ *Discuss the Essential Question and the Unit Video, noting what about the unit theme is familiar (what connects to their lives) and what they hope to learn
☐ Introduce the Academic Vocabulary words connected to the unit theme and have students share prior knowledge	☐ *Share prior linguistic, cultural, and experiential knowledge about the unit theme and ask questions that may drive learning throughout the unit
☐ Have students rate themselves on how well they meet the Unit Goals so that they can measure their growth at the end of the unit	☐ Set goals/rate themselves in the Student Interactive (students will return to this in week 6)
☐ Introduce the Reading Log for the unit to encourage students to read independently and read for a purpose	☐ Determine and explain a purpose for reading, and choose books to read independently

Suggested Instructional Practices

- *Use the Dual Language Program Planning Guides in the Dual Language Educators' Implementation Guide to map out the unit plan.
- *Share the Unit Video prior to the minilesson so students can build background knowledge before discussing as a whole group.
- Record yourself introducing the Essential Question, Academic Vocabulary, and Unit Goals. Students can return to this as needed throughout the unit.
- Post the Essential Question, Unit Goals, and Academic Vocabulary on a bulletin board or virtual concept board.
- *Prompt students to collaborate. Utilize collaboration norms, conversation starters, language frames, and routines to encourage students to Turn, Talk, and Share.

Unit Name & Title	Anticipated Challenges/Difficulties	Accommodations/Materials
Line Drawing/Collage	- Using scissors - Distinguishing lines	• Different modalities: visual supports (posters, pictures for ELL's, expectations with visuals) • half groups/parallel teaching • visual/audio components • Check for understanding (thumbs up/thumbs down) • Checklists • One on one time with teacher Paper, markers, scissors, construction paper, glue stick
Shape Drawing/Collage	- Creating shapes with corners - Size of shapes - Using scissors	• Different modalities: visual supports (posters, vocabulary cards, pictures for ELL's, expectations with visuals) • strategic grouping/pairing • half groups/parallel teaching • visual/audio components • Check for understanding (thumbs up/thumbs down) • Checklists • One on one time with teacher Paper, markers, scissors, construction paper, glue stick
Primary Colors	-tracing over pencil lines -identifying primary colors	• Different modalities: visual supports (posters, vocabulary cards, pictures for ELL's, expectations with visuals) • visual/audio components • Check for understanding (thumbs up/thumbs down) • Checklists Primary colors, crayons, black marker, square templates
Color Wheel-Torn Paper Collage	-tearing paper -placing colors in right order	• Different modalities: visual supports (posters, vocabulary cards, pictures for ELL's, expectations with visuals) • visual/audio components • Check for understanding (thumbs

November 17th, 2023
Professional Development

Time	ClassroomTeachers	Specialists	Support Providers
12:00-1:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:00-4:00	My View AGENDA	Differentiation for Units TEMPLATES + STRATEGIES	Planning Small Group Work PD for December 12th Small Group Planning Template
Location	Classroom: 4-202 for whole group 4-204 Break out groups	Classroom: 205	Learning Lab

The teachers then broke into small groups. Their task was to develop a lesson plan based on one of the lessons the instructor had provided, then create an anchor chart based

on that lesson. The lesson plan needed to reflect the targeted strategies as indicated on the "Unit Introduction" handout that explains teachers' actions and students' actions. The instructor told the teachers to "walk" in the shoes of their diverse student population and anticipate possible outcomes as a result of their lesson. The PD instructor provided measures to help teachers guide ELLs in ways that will allow them to take ownership of their own learning and work by creating goals before implementing the new unit. This way teachers periodically can refer to the goals to assess language growth. The researcher took field notes while observing professional development, one teacher stated, "how will new entrant student understand this, they just came to the U.S?" Another explained, "use the IPAD and teach the new entrant student how to use google translate, it works for me," another teacher stated, "download tracing font with dots, on your computer, and have the new entrant students trace out the words and sentences instead of you writing for them, or highlight the sentences and have the new entrant student trace over it, that will help with writing modalities." The PD instructor provided handouts that provided differentiated strategies for ELLs such as: visual supports, vocabulary cards, exemplars, audio components, and ways to check for understanding for example using "thumbs up or down" strategy for students with little command of English language. In addition, the instructor provided examples of multiple entry points for ELLs on different language proficiency levels, using differentiated sentence frames and starters, and incorporating meaningful prompts during "turn and talk," to enhance language acquisition. The researcher observed and documented one teacher state, "I use open ended sentence starters for my expanding level students, for rigor, and for students with less command of English language I use a closed sentence frame and have the student input the vocabulary

in correct context." The teachers also focused on the implementation of listening comprehension and interacting with sources. The teachers worked collaboratively throughout the professional development and shared their differentiated lesson plans.

Findings

To answer the research questions, the researcher triangulated the data from the interviews, observations, professional development, and artifacts. The interviews were audio-recorded, which all took place in person. After studying the data thoroughly, making transcriptions, and finally coding by hand, the researcher uploaded the transcripts into NVivo. The following three themes emerged from the data: (a) learning specific, targeted topics; (b) collaborating with other experienced teachers; and (c) learning various strategies. The implications of the study were as follows:

- Asynchronous professional development increased teacher efficacy because it offered teachers an opportunity to plan at their own pace.

- Online synchronous professional development allowed for teachers to collaborate and share best practices, but it lacked specific strategies necessary to support ELLs.

- Teachers preferred PD sessions on specific topics related to ENL instruction over sessions on broad topics.

Table 2

Coding Interpretive Themes

Research Questions	themes/codes	data source	trustworthiness
RQ1- What are ENL teacher perceptions of online asynchronous professional development in relation to teacher efficacy?	Theme: specific targeted topics code: -domain specific vocabulary -differentiated activities for students on different language proficiency levels	Interviews/Observations	Participant check in, audio recordings, transcriptions
RQ2: What are ENL teacher perceptions of online synchronous professional development in relation to teacher efficacy?	theme: collaborating with other experienced teachers code: - brainstorming ideas - collaboration	Interviews/Observations	Participant check in, audio recordings, transcriptions
RQ3: What type of professional development did teachers believe contributed most to increasing teacher efficacy, online asynchronous or online synchronous professional development?	theme: learning various strategies code: - using data -communication - pace	Interviews/Artifacts	Participant check in,audio recordings, transcriptions

Theme 1: Learning Specific, Targeted Topics

Participants were unsatisfied with the broad topics of PD. Participant 1 stated,

The PDs we have in our schools, a lot of them are with the faculty, which are

other teachers, and most of the PDs don't really center on my specific needs or my

specific groups, which is ESL students. So, yes, it is, like, informative, but there

are some PDs where it just does not relate to what I'm doing at all, and it just does

not feel like it's a great use of my time. I feel like with synchronous, the

information is too broad, and I feel like it doesn't help the specific needs that you

might want to get, you know.

Similarly, Participant 2 focused on the ability of the PD topic to connect to the

scaffolding she needed for her group of ELLs. She noted,

Yeah, I like the asynchronous form. I feel like it targets more of my interests for

what I need to work on versus synchronous online. I like synchronous depending

on the topic. If I feel it's something that I, like, something that really interests me,

I like that more. I enjoy learning from other staff members or other teachers. But

sometimes, the professional development that we are working on doesn't always

pertain to what I need to work on. So sometimes, I find myself drifting off from

what we're talking about. And it doesn't always interest me.

Research shows the relationship between the facilitator and learner plays a vital

role in understanding and processing information (Rogers, 1969). Participant 2

emphasized the importance of the delivery of the professional development session in

teachers' comprehension of it. She said,

I think when the topic is related to teachers, it is of importance. Well presented,

then, yes. And it's rare that those kinds of PDs come along. So I know it sounds

bad, and I'm not saying all PD is useless, but I'm saying it's very few PD that

have been very effective.

Participant 4 said PD is valuable when all the teachers can relate, but she found it

more beneficial when the PD topic focused on specific skills or methodologies. She

commented,

Yes, in certain ways, it does; in certain ways, it doesn't. A lot of the times, PD is

geared towards everyone, which is a good thing at certain times, but it would also

be beneficial if it is honed in on a specific skill set.

Theme 2: Collaborating With Other Experienced Teachers

During the interviews and observations, the study participants discussed the

ability to interact and collaborate with other experienced teachers. The field notes

included comments like "Thanks for sharing," "I'll let you know how it goes," and "I'm

glad you mentioned that." Participant 1 stated,

I feel like synchronously, there is a limit to how much you can learn, so you can

learn about the students through the classroom teacher, but at the end of the day, I

am an ENL teacher. I want to develop and excel and talk with the classroom

teachers, and being synchronous with them only gets you so far. It's very limited.

But I also like learning from other people.

Participant 2 noted that participating in PD with her co-teachers was useful

because she learned from them. She also had insights on the curriculum and its

implementation. She explained the implementation strategies did not pertain to her

student population:

I do like synchronous because I've learned from other teachers as well. It just is

not always the topic that I need to work on or that I'd be interested in. So, for

example, I am an ENL teacher. The PD we are working on for a new curriculum

or something that the classroom teacher would need more, it does not really help

me because sometimes I just sit there for like an hour or two, and it is something

that I do not need. Unfortunately, it is nice to learn about it because I know what

my students are doing, but like myself and my small group, I do not really have

the opportunity to use that new curriculum, so it does not really benefit me.

Participant 3 shared that being in the chat room with others helped increase her will to learn. Participant 2 found that communicating with other educators, exchanging ideas, and challenging ideas helped her learn more. She asserted,

I'm just the type of person who gets motivated when I'm with people, because I

learn from them, and I get to communicate. So I'm on pace. It's very laid back.

But with other teachers, you know, and hearing new ideas is more effective for

me. You get to give your opinion and be challenged on it or not be challenged on

it. So you get to have a conversation and not just commend yourself for your own

ideas to be like, yeah, I'm right about this. But when you're exchanging ideas with

others, you learn so much more. So I like the synchronous one. I prefer to be with

a team because I get to communicate with people, and we exchange ideas, and

then I'm actually doing it.

Participant 4 explained that collaborating with specialists was helpful to her, and she enjoyed working together as a team. She emphasized how much she enjoyed giving them advice about how to support students when the ENL teacher is not present. She explained,

So, like, when it's synchronous, it's good because you can get an idea from the

classroom teachers and the specialist teachers, and it may be something that you

didn't even think of using in your classroom, but it's also the reverse, kind of like,

it's good for me to give them advice on what could benefit them and their students

when I'm not in the classroom with any of the students. So it's good to work

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together when you have to work together. But I wish it would focus a little bit

more sometimes on what we do rather than just the general stuff.

Theme 3: Learning Various Strategies

A reoccurring theme the teachers raised during the interviews was learning

various strategies. The participants mentioned this theme in different ways. Participant 1

stated, "Asynchronous PD just gives me the option to really explore different strategies

and methods. I can use it to incorporate in my lessons."

Participant 4 discussed new migrant students who had just registered for the first

time in an American school and spoke little to no English. She explained the need for

professional development and resources scaffolded for these students. She said,

> I do feel that asynchronous PDs are good for you as an individual. I myself have
>
> signed up for my own PDs that weren't part of the school, and I think it helped me
>
> a lot, especially last year when I was a first-year teacher. It helped me with
>
> scaffolding lessons for the new entrants' kids. So I do think that there are some
>
> benefits to looking on your own for PDs.

RQ 1: What are ENL teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous

professional development in relation to teacher efficacy?. The data from both rounds

of interviews revealed some teachers felt online asynchronous professional development

provided more support and increased teacher efficacy. Some teachers felt the ability to

work at their pace and reread materials was more beneficial. Participant 1 stated,

> Yes, of course. I want to take time out of your day to really develop in yourself,
>
> on my own time, and find different methods or different strategies you can
>
> incorporate in your lessons is great. I feel like developing yourself and including

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things that you normally do not typically do yourself is helpful to me and students.

Doing research and finding information to help improve your own lesson plans is great.

Participant 2 perceived asynchronous professional development to be effective because it targeted her interests and provided the support she needed to do her job effectively. She said,

Yeah, I like the asynchronous form. I feel like it targets more of my interests or more for what I need to work. I do feel like asynchronous professional development helps me in the area that I want to improve in. I feel more confident in my work.

Participant 3 perceived asynchronous professional development to be less desirable because it is done independently. Although she appreciated setting her own working pace, she said the ability to learn and collaborate with others would help her complete the task:

I don't like asynchronous, to be honest, you know, and it has to be a very important topic for me to do on my own. You know, just like with anything else. Yes, it feels great that I can have it on my own time. That is a plus. But will it really be done? Unlikely not, you know. So it really depends on who is giving the presentation. You know, sometimes the PD is just to fill up space and so they can be a mandate. And so if I find something useful within that, of course it is great. I have not found specific people use that were asynchronous to be so effective. What I found was effective was speaking with the teachers, and we shared ideas. You are like, yes, this has been working, this has not been working. So it is

effective in the fact that I get to communicate with other teachers, but I have not

necessarily found any themes presented that have been eye-opening.

Participant 4 shared that asynchronous professional development gave her the

chance to learn specific skills she needed. She said she had difficulty finding

asynchronous PD geared toward ELLs. As a result, she sought outside asynchronous

professional development opportunities because they helped her feel less stressed and

more comfortable teaching. She said,

> I do think I prefer asynchronous PD more than synchronous PD just because I'm
>
> able to actually hone in on the skill that I want to perfect rather than something
>
> that may be something that I need in a synchronous PD meeting. But with the
>
> asynchronous, I can choose what I want. I do feel that asynchronous PDs are good
>
> for you as an individual. I have taken my own duties, like signing up through my
>
> own PDs that was not part of the school, and it helped me a lot. I feel more
>
> comfortable teaching, especially last year when I was a first-year teacher. It
>
> helped me with the new entrants' kids. So I do think that there are some benefits
>
> to looking on your own for PDs rather than not.

RQ 2: What are ENL teachers' perceptions of online synchronous

professional development in relation to teacher efficacy? Participant 1 said the online

synchronous professional development did not pertain to ELL students. She considered

the loss of time a negative aspect, and she said it decreased teacher efficacy. However,

she found it beneficial to learn methods from other teachers that she could use when

planning lessons. She stated,

I feel like it is good, but there's limits to it. Obviously, going to PDs is great

because they tell you information that you might not have. You know, there's

always new research. We learn great teaching methods from great teachers, and I

can use those methods to incorporate in my lessons. However, like with the online

synchronous PDs we have in our schools, a lot of them are with the faculty, which

are other teachers, and most of the PDs do not really center on my specific groups,

which is ESL students. So yes, it is informative, but there are some, like, PDs

where it just does not relate to what I am doing at all, and it just does not feel like

it is a great use of my time.

Participant 2 said synchronous professional development decreased teacher

efficacy because the lack of engagement caused her to become distracted, and some of the

information was not applicable to her classroom. However, she cited collaborating and

holding professional discussions with teachers as positive aspects. She said,

I enjoy learning from other staff members or other teachers. But sometimes, the

professional development that we are working on does not always pertain to what

I need to work on; I can't use it in class. So sometimes, I find myself drifting off

from what we are talking about. And it does not always interest me. But I enjoy

having discussions with my other teammates and learning from them.

Participant 3 indicated online synchronous PD helped support teacher efficacy

because it provided materials and resources for teachers to implement in the classroom.

She added it can provide many opportunities for teacher communication and

participation. She stated,

Yes, because efficient PDs send resources, and they put us in groups to do an activity, and we're communicating with each other and up finishing that activity or that task. And sometimes, they will send us resources afterwards, you know, websites and manipulatives that we can print out and use. In that case, it is effective.

Participant 4 mentioned that as the pull-out teacher, she services many grades and needs to work and plan accordingly to meet the needs of her students. She touched on the importance of knowing what instructional approaches students are working on in their class to support cohesion. She said,

Synchronous is good because we collaborate and see what other people say, and we must work closely with the fourth and fifth grade or whatever grade you're assigned to. It is good to sometimes work with different parties of teachers. So you all are kind of on the same wavelength because you collaborate with each other; you understand everything better. We worked on a whole new curriculum together. At the end of the day, these are our kids. We shared the kids; we must be collaborating.

RQ 3: What type of professional development did teachers believe contributed most to increasing teacher efficacy: online asynchronous or online synchronous?. Many of the teachers preferred asynchronous PD because they could work at their own pace, it was targeted toward their student population, or fewer off-topic discussions distracted them. Participant 1 found online asynchronous PD helped increase teacher efficacy. She stated,

I would prefer asynchronous. I feel like it is important to have your own time to do research and find different methods, you know, like I said, to incorporate in your lessons. It makes planning easier. And I feel like with synchronous, the information is too broad, and I feel like that it does not help the specific needs that you might want to get.

When asked which PD platform she preferred, Participant 2 said asynchronous PD resonated with her needs and helped increase teacher efficacy. She explained,

Well, for me personally, I prefer asynchronous professional development because it targets my area of need. My students are more engaged, and I feel like that helps me more over synchronous professional development. I just feel like synchronous professional development is nice, but sometimes it does not always help me for what I need, versus asynchronous professional development. So if it targets my interests more, then I would prefer that over asynchronous professional development.

Participant 3 said online synchronous PD is a more effective platform because it provides an opportunity to speak and work with other teachers, which helps increase efficacy. She added that sometimes, online synchronous PD allows students to speak about topics or strategies they like or are used to. She said this platform helped her learn best:

I go with online synchronous. Again, you get to hear from other people, from other teachers, educators. You get to hear from the students. You get to give your opinion and be challenged on it or not be challenged on it. So you get to have a conversation and not just commend yourself for your own ideas like, yeah, I'm

right about this. But when you are exchanging ideas with others, you learn so

much more. So I like the synchronous one.

Participant 4 said asynchronous PD helped her learn best because she could work

at her own pace and not feel she was preventing others from moving on to other topics.

She explained she needed more time to understand materials. She said,

I think asynchronous, yes. Because I can also do things on my own time and make

sure I understand fully. Like, I personally do not like to hold people back if, like,

we must work on something and I still have not grasped it. So in this aspect, I am

able to take my time and understand exactly what I am learning.

Figure 2

Results From Main Data Sources: Professional Development, Observations, Interviews,

and Artifacts
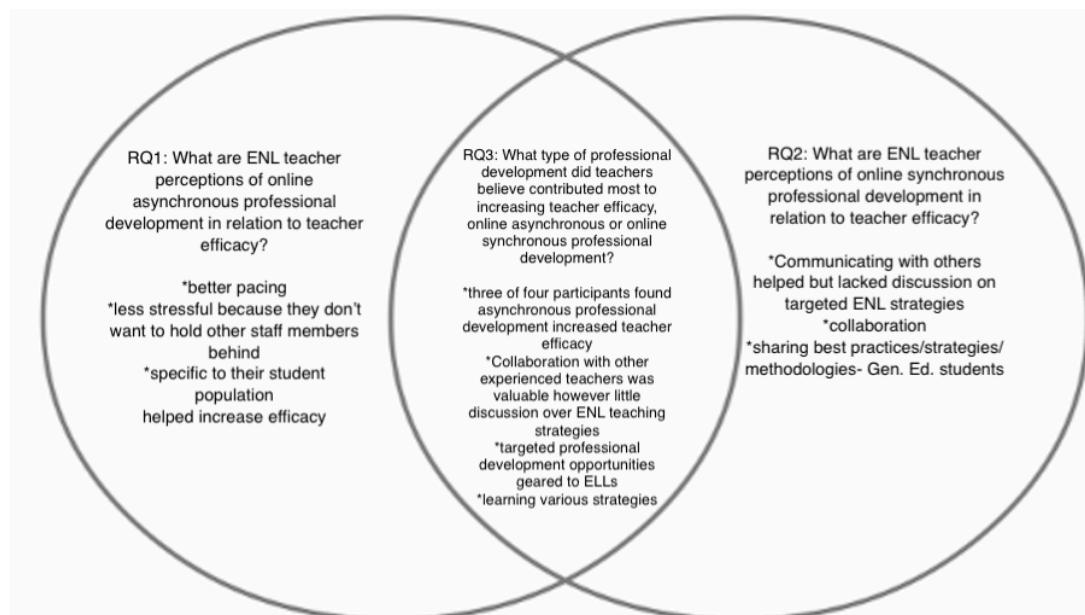
Conclusion

The evidence set forth substantiates the participants' perceptions of online

asynchronous and synchronous PD and teacher efficacy. As these case studies have

shown, some participants appreciated that asynchronous PD gave them the opportunity to

work at their own pace and was less distracting. Others found value in working with

peers, collaborating, and sharing best practices through synchronous PD. The interviews

helped participants take a more in-depth look at the type of professional development that

best suits their needs and will boost their knowledge and skills so they can become more

effective in the classroom.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Introduction

This qualitative study addressed ENL teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous and online synchronous PD and teacher efficacy. In the fall of 2023, after the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher utilized a multiple-case study approach to conduct research in one of the largest urban school districts in the northeastern part of the United States. This last chapter entails my research findings.

The findings indicated the ENL teachers believed online asynchronous PD helped boost teacher efficacy. The themes that emerged from professional development, artifacts, interviews, and observations were learning specific targeted topics, collaborating with other experienced teachers, and learning various strategies. The following research questions guided this study:

- RQ1: What are ENL teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous professional development in relation to teacher efficacy?

- RQ2: What are ENL teachers' perceptions of online synchronous professional development in relation to teacher efficacy?

- RQ3: What type of professional development did teachers believe contributed most to increasing teacher efficacy: online asynchronous or online synchronous?

Implications of Findings

The data from the interviews, observations, and PD have some implications. The major implications that arose during this research study were the following:

1. Online asynchronous professional development increases teacher efficacy because teachers can plan and learn at their own pace. It offered the teachers a wide range of topics, strategies, and methodologies geared toward ELLs.

2. Online synchronous PD provided a platform through which the teachers could speak to and collaborate with one another and share best practices, but it lacked targeted strategies for ENL students.

3. The teachers preferred targeted topics of PD over broad topics that were not relative to their student population.

4. All the participants suggested working with the classroom teacher on ENL-targeted topics could provide them with the extra support they need while working with small groups.

The research implications suggest teacher efficacy increases when teachers can learn at their own pace. This finding is important because it can inform practices and policies for ENL teachers. Educational policy makers can revisit the idea of online professional development to make it more efficient.

Relationship to Prior Research

The adult learning approach Malcom Knowles first described in the 1960s focuses on the science of helping adults learn. This approach is the opposite of the science of helping children learn. Knowles's model, andragogy, sought to engage adults in the learning process in a meaningful way (Knowles, 1977). To understand how adults learn best, researchers have analyzed their perceptions, which are rooted in human experience (Bélanger, 2011; Caffarella & Merriam, 2000). Educators turn to PD to enhance their skills or to develop professionally. The innate sense that compels one to strive to learn

stems mainly from self-esteem and psychological needs (Maslow, 1970). Learning theories suggest also analyzing the perceptions of PD through the relationship between the learner and the facilitator (Rogers, 1969). Perceptions of PD vary among people because of their different cognitive processes. Educators derive perceptions through their experiences, and those perceptions influence self-efficacy or teacher efficacy.

Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave (Bandura, 1994). Cognitive behavioral research reveals educator experiences that influence thoughts or perceptions and emotions can directly impact human behavior. The 2022 National Assessment of Education Progress found ENL students in grades four to eight scored significantly lower in ELA and math compared to other subgroups. Analyzing ENL teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous and synchronous professional development and teacher efficacy can be a solution to increase teacher efficacy and thus close the achievement gap.

Connection to Research Questions

My first research question addressed how teachers perceive asynchronous professional development and teacher efficacy. The research study indicates most of the participants perceived asynchronous PD as boosting teacher efficacy because it allowed them to move at their own pace, provided fewer distractions or off-topic discussions, and featured a topic specific to their targeted student population. Assumption 4 in Malcom Knowles's research implies adults are ready to learn information useful to them (Kamışlı & Özonur, 2017; Knowles, 1977). The data in this study found asynchronous professional development improved teachers' performance in the classroom by supporting them with new strategies to help with lesson planning and new entrant students from other countries

(Bandura, 1994). These findings support prior research that found asynchronous

professional was the second-most preferred platform of professional development aside

from traditional in-person (Lambert & Yanson, 2017).

My second research question focuses on teachers' perceptions of synchronous PD

and teacher efficacy. All the participants said collaborating with other classroom teachers

during professional development was beneficial. They added that many synchronous PDs

did not pertain to their student population. As Participant 1 stated, "I just don't feel it is

not a great use of my time." However, learning about the curriculum classroom teachers

use was beneficial to the participants because it gave them insight into what their students

were doing in the classroom. Participant 4 noted, "We share the kids; we have to be

collaborating . . . on the same wavelength." This research builds on prior research

because it targets ways to support K–12 teachers working with ENL students. It also

sheds light on teachers' perceptions of newly implemented curriculum (Li & Peters,

2016). Research indicates a lack of teacher engagement affects thoughts and behavior, as

CBT suggests. Participant 4 said, "Sometimes I find myself drifting off from what we're

talking about because it doesn't always interest me."

My final research question pertains to what type of professional development the

teachers believed contributed the most to teacher efficacy: online asynchronous or online

synchronous. The findings indicate most participants perceived online asynchronous PD

as increasing teacher efficacy over online synchronous because it targeted their learning

interests, and they could learn at their own pace. Assumption 2 in Knowles's research

addresses self-concept learners, implying adults are independent and want to choose what

to learn and how to learn it (Kamışlı & Özonur, 2017; Knowles, 1977). Participant 1

stated, "Synchronous PD topics are too broad." Participant 4 stated, "I personally don't like to hold people back if, like, if we have to work on something and I still haven't grasped it." Participant 2 stated, "Synchronous professional doesn't always help me."

The findings of this study relate to prior research because the educators reflected on strategies they learned from online synchronous professional development and implemented them in the classroom (Kibler & Roman, 2013). Humanist theory and research maintain the relationship between facilitator and learner can affect the way learners process information (Bélanger, 2011; Rogers, 1969). Participant 3 stated, "It really depends on who is giving the presentation. You know, sometimes the PD is just to fill up space and so they can be a mandate."

My research reveals the teachers believed asynchronous professional development increased teacher efficacy because it gave them the ability to learn at their own pace, it was targeted toward their student population, they felt more engaged and less distracted. Online synchronous PD provided them opportunities for teacher collaboration but not always on topics that pertained to the ENL student population.

Limitations of the Study

All the participants were experienced educators; however, this study was limited to a single school district. Also, the professional development was once a month and three hours long, which at times hindered teachers' attention spans and engagement. The results of this study are generalizable because they can be applied to other areas of study like students with disabilities. In addition, all the participants were female, and three of the four were age 25 or older. One participant was over age 30, which means most of the participants were younger and less experienced. Three of the four teachers had more than

three years of teaching experience. In addition, the amount of learning loss the pandemic caused is important to note. Some of the teachers are still experiencing the effects, and the lack of PD opportunities and technology training is another limitation.

Recommendations for Future Practice

The research found online asynchronous PD increases teacher efficacy. This study can inform practices for teachers, school building leaders, and policy makers to implement online PD more effectively by exploring more opportunities for teachers to choose which online PD they prefer, offering specific professional development targeted toward ENL teachers to meet the needs of their students, and improving teachers' knowledge of technology. This study contributes information necessary to understand the value of teachers' perceptions of online learning and how those perceptions relate to teacher efficacy and performance.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study can be extended to discover ways to increase teacher efficacy in other marginalized subgroups whose standardized test scores fall significantly lower than those of other groups, such as students with special needs or the economically disadvantaged. Researchers can apply this practice to school districts in suburban or rural areas. The results of this research study suggest policy makers should revisit the perception of online asynchronous and synchronous PD as a new form of traditional learning because it, too, has many benefits for teachers since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Also, a need exists to explore the benefits of online learning practices throughout all school districts, because these potential benefits can help future researchers identify ways to increase teacher efficacy. Research studies pertaining to ENL teachers'

perceptions of online asynchronous and synchronous professional development and teacher efficacy since the COVID-19 pandemic are few. This study can help future researchers understand how to support teachers of ELLs through online platforms, which seem to have become the new standard way of learning.

Conclusion

The evidence in this study substantiates that ENL teachers perceive online asynchronous PD as increasing teacher efficacy. The findings indicate how ENL teachers in a large urban school district perceive online PD through data sources such as observations, interviews, artifacts, and professional development. The data went through cycles of transcribing and coding to identify themes to relate to the essential research questions. The themes that emerged were learning specific, targeted topics; collaborating with other experienced teachers; and learning various strategies.

The charter school in this study provided professional development once every month. The participants expressed a need not only for more professional development but also for targeted PD opportunities for their specific student population, which explains why some participants sought outside PD opportunities. This challenge ties directly to Malcom Knowles's assumption 5, problem solving. This also relates to CBT because the participants felt stranded at times, with little opportunity for professional growth, and therefore they sought PD opportunities elsewhere. The participants had an innate motivation to learn more and to expand their capabilities to reach a desired level, which Albert Bandura referred to as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994).

The findings of the study suggest implementing online asynchronous professional development targeted toward the specific needs of ENL teachers increases teacher

efficacy. The COVID-19 pandemic disturbed the learning process for ELLs, an already marginalized subgroup. Moving from in-person traditional to online learning became, and has remained, the new normal. Policy makers, school building leaders, and other large school districts can utilize this research to understand how to help ENL teachers grow and develop professionally in our new-normal environment to increase learning for ELLs.

APPENDIX A IRB APPROVAL

IRB #: IRB-FY2024-2
Title: English New Language Teacher Perceptions of Online Asynchronous and Online Synchronous Professional Development and Teacher Efficacy
Creation Date: 6-1-2023
End Date: 6-21-2024
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Seneha Sinanaj
Review Board: St John's University Institutional Review Board
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Approved

Key Study Contacts

Member	Barbara Cozza	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	cozzab@stjohns.edu
Member	Seneha Sinanaj	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	
Member	Seneha Sinanaj	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	

APPENDIX B INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/INSTRUMENT

1. Can you please state your first and last name?

2. Can you please state which teaching license you possess?

3. What grades do you teach?

4. How old are you? If you're not comfortable stating your age, would you say you're between ages 20–24? Between ages 25–29? Age 30 or more?

5. Are you bilingual? If so, what other language do you speak?

6. What are the language proficiency levels of the students you teach?

7. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

8. Please describe your educational level. Masters? Post-masters?

9. Please explain your past teaching experiences. Grades? Cluster?

10. What is your perception of online asynchronous and synchronous professional development? Explain.

11. Do you feel asynchronous professional development provides you with the support needed to do your job effectively?

12. Do you feel synchronous professional development provides you with the support needed to do your job effectively?

13. Which platform do you feel provides you with the support needed to do your job effectively: online synchronous or asynchronous professional? Why or why not?

APPENDIX C INFORMED CONSENT

St. John's University
School of Education
8000 Utopia Parkway
Queens, New York 11439

INFORMED PARTICIPANT CONSENT FOR NON-MEDICAL RESEARCH

English New-Language Teachers' Perceptions of Online Asynchronous and Online Synchronous Professional Development and Teacher Efficacy

Dear Participant:

You have been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Seneha N. Sinanaj. This research is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for my degree of Doctor of Education through St. John's University. Your participation is not mandatory. Before deciding whether to participate, read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand. Take as much time as you need to read the consent form. If you decide to participate, the researcher will review the consent form and ask you to sign it. You will be given a copy of this form.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The researcher will be conducting a study about English new-language teachers' perceptions of online asynchronous and synchronous professional development and teacher efficacy. This study will try to elicit more information about online adult learning during post-pandemic conditions.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, all participants will remain anonymous. You will be asked to participate in two sessions of interviews, each of 60 minutes. Your interview will be recorded as per the integrity and validity of the interview. All recordings are kept confidential and used only for transcribing.

The second interview will be in a classroom setting. The researcher will come to observe the teacher while engaged in professional development and collect a copy of artifacts given to the participant during professional development as well as cover any additional

questions that may be needed as per the study. Again, all notes and observations will remain anonymous.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no potential risks or discomforts.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Interviewing ENL teachers will shed light on the teacher preparation programs needed to support ENL teachers in the classroom and online. Supporting ENL teachers to integrate technology in the classroom can support already marginalized minority students reach learning standards.

PAYMENT/COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

No compensation will be provided to you for your participation in the study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Only the researcher, his professor and class reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You may choose to be in this study or decline participation. If you volunteer to be in the study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences.

Date of Preparation: 4/1/23

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Seneha N. Sinanaj by phone, text, email, or mail.

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RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT—PROFESSOR CONTACT INFORMATION

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For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Dr. Cozza at cozzab@stjohns.edu.

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR AND PARTICIPANT

I explained the research to the participants and answered all their questions. The participants understand the information described in this document and freely consent to participate.

_____ _____

Name of Participant   Date

_____ _____

Name of Researcher   Date

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