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Head Start Teachers' Perspectives on the Implementation of Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.17

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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Leslie Floyd

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

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Head Start Teachers' Perspectives on the Implementation of Head Start Program

Performance Standard 1302.17

by

Leslie Shumate Floyd

MA, Arizona State University, 2018

BS, Radford University, 1999

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

August 2023

Abstract

Federal Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) were revised in 2016 to strengthen and improve the quality of all Head Start (HS) programs. The problem addressed in this basic qualitative study is that teachers in a local urban HS program in the southwestern region of Virginia have decreased levels of job satisfaction and cannot support the social-emotional development of their students due to difficulty implementing the standard HSPPS 1302.17. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the perspectives of HS teachers regarding their job satisfaction while supporting the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. Lacey's theory of social strategies and Mezirow's transformative learning theory formed the conceptual framework, emphasizing education and learning where institutional standards exist and focusing on how teachers can adjust and expand their thinking based on what is required. One research question guided the exploration of the perspectives of HS teachers on job satisfaction and support of their student's social-emotional development since the Standard's implementation. A purposive sample of 12 HS teachers from the local program participated in semistructured interviews. Data were analyzed using open, axial, and selective coding. Six themes emerged from the data regarding feelings for the Standard, parental accountability and involvement, professional development redundancy, additional support, in-depth trainings, and in-person coaching follow up. A professional development plan was designed to help teachers become better equipped to create positive social change by supporting learning environments that foster positive outcomes for young children.

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and many friends. A special gratitude for the words of encouragement and ongoing support will forever remain in my heart.

A special note to my daughters, Ella Caroline, and Charlie Grace. May you see that anything is possible, and the world is your oyster. Never settle.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

Head Start (HS) programs include both Early HS, which serves children from infancy through toddlerhood and their families, and HS preschool programs, which serve children from age 3 and their families until entry into kindergarten (Heilmann et al., 2021; Lee, 2019; Office of HS, 2022). These programs provide intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income children, pregnant women, and preschool children with disabilities. HS Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) govern all programs (Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center [ECLKC], n.d.-b). HSPPS serves as the foundation for the HS mission to deliver comprehensive, high-quality, and individualized services supporting school readiness of children from low-income families.

The HSPPS were revised in 2016 to strengthen and improve the quality of HS programs (Office of HS, 2022). The updated HSPPS were the first comprehensive revisions since they were initially published in 1975 (Office of HS, 2022). The HSPPS reflects best practices and the latest research on early childhood development and brain science. HSPPS gives program grantees flexibility in achieving positive child and family outcomes. Revised performance standards are written to encourage data collection that tracks the consistent progress of programs toward reaching goals in all program areas. Among the changes were those stated in HSPPS 1302.17, a subpart of program operations covering the full range of operations. This includes requirements for enrolling eligible children, providing program services to children and their families, and managing

programs to ensure staff are qualified and supported to provide quality services effectively. Part 17 of HSPPS 1302.17 addresses removal of the practice of suspending and expelling children as a statutory requirement in alignment with program operations.

The lack of classroom management training has created an environment in which teachers have difficulty best meeting the needs of students socially and emotionally. For example, according to a local HS agency educational coordinator (personal communication, 2022), in a classroom of eight students with two who exhibited challenging behaviors, the teachers were unable to manage them. HS teachers have struggled to fully support the social-emotional development of their students and have experienced decreased job satisfaction due to HSPPS 1302.17. The students exhibiting challenging behaviors and contributing to poor classroom interactions remain enrolled in the program, resulting in teachers feeling overwhelmed and ultimately leading to decreased job satisfaction and increased staff turnover (HS educational coordinator, personal communication, September 8, 2022).

Esteemed, professionally supported and well-qualified teachers have demonstrated the ability to manage their stress levels and maintain level-headed interactions with their students (Bartlett & Smith, 2019). Locally, some HS teachers have received training and thoroughly understand supporting students' social-emotional development and classroom management. This training helps them become well qualified to implement the Standard and support the social-emotional needs of all students in the classroom (HS educational coordinator, personal communication, September 8, 2022).

Definition of the Problem

The problem addressed in this basic qualitative study is that teachers in a local urban HS program in the southwestern region of Virginia have decreased levels of job satisfaction and are not able to support the social-emotional development of their students due to their struggles with implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. The Standard, aimed at supporting the developmental needs of students with challenging behaviors, mandates that suspensions and expulsions of students enrolled in HS programs be minimized as much as possible to avoid delays in learning. The intention of HSPPS 1302.17 is to prohibit the expulsion or unenrollment of students from HS programs because of their behavior. The Standard also prohibits (or severely limits) suspension due to a child's behavior. Implementation of the Standard has been problematic at the local level due to teachers feeling limited in their capacity to meet the social-emotional needs of their students and maintaining job satisfaction while implementing the federally mandated standard (HS educational coordinator, personal communication, September 8, 2022). HS teachers experience stress, which can lead to decreased job satisfaction, often resulting from interactions with students who exhibit challenging behaviors in the classroom (Eadie et al., 2021; Grant et al., 2019). When teachers manage challenging behaviors, they are at risk for stress and decreased job satisfaction (Eadie et al., 2021).

Rationale

Evidence From the Local Setting

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released a policy statement noting that trends concerning suspension and expulsion among young children warranted

immediate attention from the early childhood and education field to prevent, severely limit, and eliminate this pattern in early learning settings (ECLKC, 2016). The policy statement indicated that suspensions and expulsions might be products of insufficient training and support services for staff, especially in managing challenging behavior and promoting social and emotional development (ECLKC, 2016).

Evidence of the problem at the local level was revealed in reports of HS teacher stress and low levels of job satisfaction due to students' challenging behaviors while implementing HSPPS 1302.17. The HS education coordinator (personal communication, September 8, 2022) for a local program stated:

The challenging behaviors of the children in our classrooms have increased, and teachers simply do not know how to handle it with the reality that the children will remain enrolled in the program, no matter what. That stress has been placed on the teachers. They feel unprepared by the current professional development.

The HS educational coordinator and educational and family supervisor (personal communication, September 8, 2022) echoed this sentiment:

Teachers are feeling completely overwhelmed and dissatisfied and are leaving the profession. While the revisions of the Standard support what is considered best practice for children and families, it is becoming a detriment to our teachers. Many of our teachers don't know how to support children with challenging behaviors, fully. In the past, there would be a plan in which if the family and child did not work with the teacher and staff on a documented plan of action. Ultimately, the children, with time, would be suspended or expelled as a last

resort from the program. This allowed the teachers to have greater classroom management. With this current federally mandated standard, teachers have expressed a high level of job dissatisfaction and frustration. Additional professional development opportunities are needed to fully support the successful implementation of the Standard where teachers and children are involved.

The HS educational supervisor also noted the following regarding Standard 1302.17:

With the changes in the Standard that prohibits suspension and expulsion and our more challenging behaviors, our teachers feel that of the weight has been placed on them. The program can no longer suspend or expel the children, but the proper strategies are not known well enough to be implemented in the classroom. This is causing the teachers to become frustrated and unsatisfied with their current role.

They feel they have not been provided enough professional development opportunities to fully support the children, which fully supports the mandated standard.

The Teachstone Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) assessment tool is used in the local HS program, and observations are conducted twice a year.

Observations of local HS teachers from unbiased observers who are trained and reliable to use the CLASS assessment tool further support the proposed problem. CLASS scoring and observation teacher review forms showed incidences of middle to low teacher sensitivity, regard for child perspective, behavior guidance, facilitation of learning, quality of feedback, and language modeling. The scores indicate difficulty in meeting the

social-emotional developmental needs of students due to types of teacher interactions with them. Teachers appear to be overwhelmed by some students' challenging behavior.

Evidence of Problem From the Literature

Services offered to children and families during early childhood are critical for future educational success, particularly for children from low-income families (Bove & Sharmahd, 2020). Children in poverty often lack intellectual and cultural stimulation leading to healthy development (Carlson et al., 2022). Preschool students are expelled 3 times more frequently than school-aged students (ECLKC, 2022c). Students who are suspended or expelled from programs miss opportunities to develop and practice skills, socialize with peers, and interact with positive adult role models. HSPPS 1302.17 was designed to improve every child's potential learning outcome and academic achievement. Schaffhauser (2020) stated that teachers might feel overwhelmed by a student's behavior or lack the education or skills to guide and respond to challenging behavior. The ECLKC (2022e) reported the following indicators of the problem:

- Work conditions may contribute to teachers feeling stressed or depressed, which can affect their behavior management skills or tolerance for problem behaviors.
- Classroom conditions, such as challenging behaviors, may affect a teacher's ability to manage a classroom and deal effectively with children who display challenging behaviors.
- Teachers misunderstand a young child's challenging behavior, which may be interpreted as willful or purposeful instead of a reaction to their experiences.

- There may be limited resources and capacity to support staff who have difficulties with children.

Research on this topic has been mainly focused on HSPPS 1302.17 for students' long-term educational outcomes, such as reducing biased disciplinary decisions and enhancing social-emotional development (Moen et al., 2019). Few researchers have explored teachers' perspectives on how to best support students' social-emotional development and their own well-being under this federally mandated standard. Early childhood educators have reported challenging behaviors, with young children biting, hitting, scratching, throwing things, having tantrums, screaming, running away from adults, and not following directions (Grant et al., 2019).

Ideally, students should only be corrected through suspensions and expulsions when their character or behavior compromises the safety and behavior of others. HS programs' efforts to address school discipline policies have focused on restricting expulsion and suspension, limiting the length of exclusion, and implementing and enhancing reporting mechanisms and strategies to reengage students and families (Eyllon et al., 2022). This has affected how teachers address behavioral issues in the classroom. Teachers are now expected to handle classroom misbehavior while simultaneously trying to effectively teach the rest of their children. Based on past reports, teachers have often felt this task is time-wasting and distracts from their purpose, which is to help children gain new knowledge and skills (Bayat, 2019).

Addressing students' ongoing behavioral issues within the classroom rather than suspending or expelling them can increase teacher stress (Curby, 2020; Grant et al., 2019; Zinsser et al., 2019). Not addressing early childhood behavior problems may lead to ongoing issues and difficulties in school, potentially causing students to negatively view learning, schools, teachers, and the world around them (Imran et al., 2020; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2019). Ongoing behavioral problems have also been shown to minimize teachers' effectiveness, thereby affecting quality of care, which is a concern to parents and teachers (Zinsser et al., 2019).

Teachers who are less satisfied in their job are more likely to leave the profession, with higher turnover rates among teachers of younger children (Bassok et al., 2021). Many factors may shape teacher turnover and retention. Schaack et al. (2022) indicated that teachers who worked in subsidized early childhood education that blended public funding felt there was a misalignment between job demands and resources. For those teachers who remained in their positions, a greater value was placed on professional development opportunities (Schaack et al., 2022).

What is still lacking in the research on this subject is how mandates like HSPPS 1302.17 realistically affect teachers daily who are trying to simultaneously effectively teach new material to all students and correct chronic misbehavior of a subset of students without suspending or expelling them. Also unknown is how teachers can adequately accomplish these tasks in the classroom without becoming overly stressed and experiencing low levels of job satisfaction. Therefore, to address this local gap in practice, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the perspectives of

HS teachers regarding their job satisfaction while supporting the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are used throughout this study:

CLASS: An assessment scoring system that measures the quality of early childhood through 12th grade classrooms (University of Virginia School of Education and Human Development, 2022).

Developmentally appropriate practices: Practices that promote each child's optimal development and learning through a strengths- and play-based approach to joyful and engaged learning (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2020).

Early childhood education: A branch of education that relates to teaching children (formally and informally) from birth up to the age of 8, consisting of activities and experiences intended to effect developmental changes in children before they enter elementary school (Sollars, 2020.) Early childhood education includes programs that educate the whole young child. It was developed for children in the preschool education age range to provide rich learning experiences and ensure overall healthy growth (Sollars, 2020).

Effective practices in early childhood: Methods that provide the best in all aspects of childcare, well-being, learning, and development at every available opportunity (Bredekamp, 2020).

HS: A program that serves infants and toddlers under the age of 3 and pregnant women. HS programs provide intensive, comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income infants and toddlers and their families as well as pregnant women and their families (ECLKC, 2022c).

HSPPS: Guidelines that reflect best practices and the latest research on early childhood development and brain science. These standards provide grantees flexibility in achieving positive child and family outcomes while generating data to track progress and reach goals in all program areas (ECLKC, n.d.-b).

NAEYC: An organization that works toward high-quality early childhood education by providing high-quality programs, teaching staff, and leadership development (NAEYC, 2020).

Quality early childhood education: Education that promotes safe and nurturing environments while promoting the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of young children (Blewitt et al., 2021).

Social-emotional development: A child's ability to create and sustain meaningful relationships with adults and other children. Emotional development is a child's ability to express, recognize, and manage their emotions and respond appropriately to others' emotions. Both social and emotional development are vital for young children's mental health. Early childhood mental health is the same as social and emotional development (ECLKC, 2021).

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are significant in that they address the problem that teachers in a local urban HS program in a southwestern region of Virginia have decreased levels of job satisfaction and are not able to support the social-emotional development of their students due to their struggles with implementation of HSPPS 1302.17 (HS CLASS observer, personal communication, October 2019; HS educational coordinator, personal communication, 2022;). A national survey of U.S. early childhood educators was conducted to examine the associations between teachers' working conditions, well-being, and motivation with professional commitment and turnover intentions to move, leave, or remain. The data indicated that both the motivated and emotionally exhausted teachers intended to leave the field of early childhood education (Grant et al., 2019).

Local urban HS teachers have provided anecdotal evidence that they are experiencing this phenomenon. Schaffer (2022) demonstrated that preschool age children may exhibit challenging behaviors, and therefore if they attend preschool programs with proper support systems and training, it can help them adjust. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) stated that children have individual needs and trajectories which require differentiated instruction and supports. Early childhood educators may need support to use a variety of constructive measures that result in positive behaviors as an alternative to expulsion. This requires teachers to have professional learning opportunities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Further research should be done to determine what is necessary to better understand how to train educators in preventive measures to address challenging behaviors among early childhood students (Schaffer, 2022).

Local HS education coordinators have suggested that factors contributing to the teachers' lack of job satisfaction may include feeling unsupported by agency administrators and the lack of professional development opportunities to best meet the social-emotional development needs of their students. Teachers who feel unsupported and unprepared can directly affect their students in the classroom (Eadie et al., 2021; Herman et al., 2021). Herman et al. (2021) demonstrated that teachers who exhibited these feelings often have students with increased disruptive behaviors and low academic achievement.

Identifying teachers' perspectives on implementing the mandatory HSPPS 1302.17 contributes to positive social change by informing administrators about how to create supportive work environments for teachers to best meet their students' social-emotional developmental needs, especially for those with challenging behaviors. Further, administrators could provide additional professional development opportunities to support these teachers in their implementation efforts when working with students who exhibit challenging behaviors. Ensuring continuity of care with teachers who provide caring, stable relationships is essential for children's long-term success in all domains of learning: cognitive, physical, social, and emotional (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; NAEYC, 2022).

Research Question

By exploring this phenomenon in-depth, I filled the current gap in practice at the local level regarding how HSPPS 1302.17 is realistically implemented daily by teachers trying to simultaneously teach children and address chronic misbehavior without

suspending or expelling them while maintaining job satisfaction. The following research question was created and guided the study's data collection and analysis phases:

Research question: What are HS teachers' perspectives on how to successfully support the social-emotional development of the students and maintain job satisfaction while implementing the federally mandated Performance Standard 1302.17?

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the perspectives of HS teachers regarding their job satisfaction while supporting the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. A focused and detailed literature review is necessary to understand the reasons for ineffective programs and practices and the adequate and practical approaches to address this issue. The literature includes information about where current complications exist, potential areas of disagreement, and biases. In this study, gaps in practice are identified and integrated to create a research agenda for early childhood professional development and mandated standards. Identifying and investigating what structures need to be in place allows those in the early childhood education field to determine how learning and skill acquisition can be accomplished in the early childhood professional context (Virginia Department of Education, n.d.).

The literature review begins with a discussion of the conceptual framework used to guide this study. Second, I address the broader problem and list key words and phrases used to search for relevant literature to support my research goals throughout this study. Third, I detail what previous researchers have found about the phenomenon being studied. Specific content areas discussed include (a) CLASS and social-emotional

development of children, (b) HS teachers and current professional development, (c) factors that may contribute to staff turnover in early childhood education, and (d) factors that contribute to the current early childhood education teacher shortage. A summary of this literature review will follow before a transition to Section 2, which includes information about the methodology used to collect and analyze the data in this study.

Conceptual Framework

For this study, Lacey's (1976) theory of social strategies and Mezirow's (2003) transformative learning theory form the conceptual framework to emphasize education and learning where institutional standards exist, focusing on how teachers can adjust and expand their thinking based on what is required. I used Lacey's social strategies theory and Mezirow's transformative learning theory to investigate the perspectives of HS teachers regarding their job satisfaction while supporting the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. The research and interview questions were influenced by both Lacey's and Mezirow's theories as they assisted in examining the degree to which teachers conform to institutional norms (mandated standards) and the extent to which they either abandon or maintain teaching perspectives.

Lacey (1976) challenged Becker's (1964) concept of situational adjustment, which involves an individual making themselves into the kind of person the situation demands as the only possible outcome of occupational socialization. Lacey proposed the construct of social strategy as a heuristic device for understanding how and to what degree beginning teachers are socialized into their roles. Lacey's theory is based on the critical distinction between socialization in value commitment and behavioral conformity. Lacey defined a

social strategy as a purposeful selection of ideas and actions by teachers connected to their specific situations. Lacey identified the degree to which teachers felt they had the option to use independent judgment in their work and the extent to which they must conform to institutional pressures, such as a mandated standard regarding classroom management. Burger (2021) stated that internalized adjustment refers to the act in which individuals comply with the authority figure's definition of a situation and believe these constraints are for the best. Individuals may employ this strategy through situations where they willingly develop into the type of person the situation demands, and socialization requires both behavioral conformity and value commitment.

On the other hand, strategic compliance occurs when individuals comply with the constraints posed by a situation but retain private reservations about doing so (Lacey, 1976). Individuals do not act in ways that are consistent with their underlying beliefs. They conform to standard expectations as an adaptive response without considering the reasons for why the behavior is expected. Finally, the strategy of strategic redefinition refers to situations where successful attempts to change are made by individuals who do not possess the formal power to do so. These individuals attempt to widen the range of acceptable behaviors in a particular situation and introduce new and creative elements into social settings.

Lacey's social strategies theory is based on the assumption that professionalism and job satisfaction are not a plateau but an ongoing reflection and growth learning process where teachers continually enhance their understanding (Kramarski & Heaysman, 2021). This assumption further influenced the research and interview

questions for this study. A current understanding of the mandated standard is presented through the teachers' perspectives on the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. Lacey's (1976) theory has been extensively used in researching teachers' perspectives. The results of this current basic qualitative study provide guidance on ways to better support HS teachers by examining their perspectives regarding supporting children's social-emotional development and the implementation of the federally mandated HSPPS 1302.17.

Relationships, themes, and trends are created to explore how they relate to the study influencing the data analysis process (Adom et al., 2018). Through this framework, data indicating the relationships and themes of the teachers' perspectives provided information regarding what is needed to better support the teachers in implementing the mandated Standard while supporting the students' social-emotional development. It also provided an interactive model of teachers' processes that contribute to developing professional perspectives.

Mezirow's transformative learning theory emphasizes the importance of critical reflection and perspective transformation in adult learning (Namaganda, 2020). When examining teachers' perspectives regarding implementing HSPPS 1302.17, application of this theory indicated that teachers may need to critically reflect on their existing beliefs, assumptions, and practices to fully embrace the new Standard and transform their teaching practices. Transformative learning may also require teachers to challenge and revise their beliefs and practices to align with the new Standard.

Critical reflection and transformation may be challenging for the teachers and require support from colleagues, administrators, or professional development opportunities. Mezirow (2003) indicated that transformative learning is a perspective transformation or a paradigm shift where prior interpretations and assumptions are examined, leading to forming new ones. Overall, Mezirow's transformative learning theory provides a useful framework for understanding the challenges and opportunities involved in teachers' perspectives on implementing a new standard (Namaganda, 2020).

Mezirow's (2003) theory suggests that transformative learning involves a process of disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection, exploration of new perspectives and possibilities, and taking action to implement changes in one's thinking and behavior (DeAngelis, 2021). In professional development, this could involve engaging in reflective practices such as journaling, feedback sessions, or peer coaching and seeking out opportunities for learning and growth. Mezirow's transformative learning theory highlights the importance of ongoing learning and development in professional contexts and provides a framework for individuals to critically examine their assumptions and perspectives and adapt to new challenges, requirements, and opportunities.

Review of the Broader Problem

I extensively searched peer-reviewed articles for this literature review using ProQuest, ERIC, Academic Search, Education Research, SAGE full-text articles and journals, and Walden Library databases. The key words and phrases used in the search were *CLASS*, *social-emotional development*, *developmentally appropriate practices*, *Head Start*, *effective practices in early childhood education*, *suspension and expulsion*,

teacher preparation and professional development, government reports on Head Start early childhood education, and the state of Virginia's current early childhood education policies. Over 200 potential articles were found through this extensive search. However, after assessing each article for information related to the specific goals of the study, 45 were chosen and used in subsequent sections of this literature review.

In the sections that follow, I address the literature on social-emotional development, HS teachers and professional development, factors that contribute to staff turnover, the current early childhood education teacher shortage, possible reasons for early childhood educators leaving the profession, and the effects of early childhood educators leaving the profession.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System and Social-Emotional Development

Social-emotional learning is now considered part of whole-child education. It is unclear, however, what standardized programs and certified teachers can do to adequately develop children's social-emotional abilities (Melnick & Martinez, 2019). Early childhood teachers' knowledge, skills, and practices concerning social-emotional development are crucial factors affecting children's learning and development during the first years of life and beyond (Moazami-Goodarzi et al., 2021).

Previously, researchers have addressed teachers' perspectives on classroom-based social-emotional programs for young, urban-dwelling children, including what teachers believed were the critical components and challenges of such programs (Humphries et al., 2018). In a study by Humphries et al. (2018), content analysis revealed five main themes: responsibility, curricula/program design, contextual relevance, support, and barriers. The

focus of previous research, such as the Humphries et al. study, was on developing young children's social and emotional competence and supporting teachers' perspectives on classroom programs and curricula.

Research on teacher accountability has also grown substantially because of increased educational policy efforts to hold them responsible for reaching specific educational standards (Teachstone, 2022). For example, Teachstone's (2022) CLASS system, an evaluative instrument, was utilized in a national study on early childhood development. Teachstone's CLASS instrument is used to measure teacher-student interactions in the classroom and offers resources for strengthening those interactions, providing support and ongoing professional development across any subject area or age group (University of Virginia School of Education and Human Development, 2022). CLASS is the only observational teacher-assessment tool that captures teacher behaviors linked to students' gains and has been proven to work in thousands of classrooms, from preschool to high school and beyond.

Early childhood teachers' perceptions of job-related stress and its effect on children's social-emotional and behavioral functioning were also explored by Grant et al. (2019). The researchers collected data for this quantitative study using questionnaires distributed to teachers and parents. Teachers were also observed using the CLASS tool, and students' functioning was assessed using a social competence and behavior evaluation scale. Results indicated that the higher a teacher's stress level, the more negatively the teacher viewed a student's behavior. The data suggested the need for ongoing support and professional development for teachers.

Without teachers understanding various strategies that support HSPPS 1302.17, it may be challenging for them to adequately support their students' social, emotional, academic, and developmental needs. The CLASS tool could help address this dilemma because it measures teachers' emotional, organizational, and instructional support that contributes to children's social, developmental, and academic achievement (Pianta et al., 2020). For example, previous CLASS observation scores may have indicated difficulty meeting children's academic and developmental needs due to the teachers' lack of appropriate implementation and interactions (Pianta et al., 2020). By gaining additional data on this tool and its usefulness, teachers may be able to develop different strategies that will better support meeting the mandated standard. I provide information on HS and current professional development procedures in the following subsection.

Head Start Teachers and Professional Development

HS teachers are the cornerstone of these programs by assisting in their students' social-emotional development. This includes students initiating intentional and reciprocal interactions with their teachers (ECLKC, 2022a; Hanno et al., 2021). Successfully implementing the federally mandated HSPPS requires sufficient professional development. Local agencies within HS have the flexibility in determining and justifying how their teachers meet these mandated standards (ECLKC, n.d.-c). Rosati and Lynch (2022) found that early childhood educators often value professional development that provides coaching, classroom-embedded training, and practical hands-on instruction that matches their unique adult learning preferences. Consistency is vital in ensuring that all

teachers receive the necessary professional development and training opportunities to comply with and meet their students' developmental needs (Rosati & Lynch, 2022).

Harding, Connors, et al. (2019) used data from a nationally representative study of HS teachers to explore whether their job satisfaction, depression, developmentally appropriate attitudes, and frequency of engagement were associated with the following factors: (a) professional development supports available to teachers, (b) curriculum supports received by teachers, and (c) mentoring supports received by teachers. Many associations between teacher outcomes and professional development supports, curriculum supports, and mentoring supports were statistically significant, which may have been because the professional development variables measured the number of supports rather than the quality or content of the professional development provided. Harding, Connors, et al. addressed how professional development supports teachers through fundamental HS policy changes. This is relevant to the current study in that it provides a better understanding of how to prepare and support teachers who work with some of the nation's most vulnerable children.

Engaging teachers in effective professional development is a critical component of establishing high quality early childhood education and implementing best practices (Schachter et al., 2019). Many administrators support teachers by developing ongoing professional development systems (Patfield et al., 2021; Schachter et al., 2019). These systems are designed to improve various professional development strategies, as there are strong indications that one-time workshops are ineffective (Patfield et al., 2021). These one-time workshops build knowledge that often results in only short-term, limited

change. The context in which teachers implement best practices with students is removed from this type of professional development, making it challenging for them (Schachter et al., 2019). With government agencies such as HS investing heavily in professional development programs, their aim is not only to enhance teacher knowledge and practice but, ultimately, to improve student outcomes, including successfully implementing mandated standards (Patfield et al., 2021).

Many early childhood education programs have been identified as an ideal setting for enhancing and further developing children's social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes because a substantial amount of their time is spent there (Goldberg et al., 2018). Specific training, however, may improve teachers' knowledge, skills, and implementation of the strategies in the classroom. Examples include theory and discussion, training demonstration, practice and feedback during training, and follow-up coaching in the classroom (Patfield et al., 2021).

The data have indicated the need for further research when considering the previously discussed CLASS observations, social-emotional development, professional development of HS teachers, factors that contribute to staff turnover, the current early childhood education teacher shortage, effects of early childhood educators leaving the profession and its implications, and cumulatively implementing a mandated standard. Although each of these influences early childhood education teachers differently and independently, there is an effect on career support, continuous professional development, and implementation of the strategies gained through professional development that may decrease staff turnover and increase professional satisfaction (García & Weiss, 2019).

Lack of professional development or specific performance of mandated standards training may therefore affect staff turnover and teacher stress (Thorpe et al., 2020).

Factors That Contribute to Staff Turnover

Excessive stress can lead to emotional exhaustion (an element of burnout), and past research has demonstrated that high levels of stress and fatigue contribute to a teacher's intent to leave the profession (Grant et al., 2019; Gui, 2019). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2020) noted that teachers are susceptible to experiencing increased burnout. Burnout results from decreased job satisfaction and increased depression, which ultimately is responsible for the decision to leave the profession.

In conjunction with the lack of ongoing social-emotional professional development and mental health support, the decreasing number of suspensions and expulsions has left early childhood educators with increased job dissatisfaction. To combat this, the Office of HS has identified free resources to support states, programs, and teachers in reaching the goals outlined in the mandated standard (ECKLC, n.d.-a). These resources address children's social, emotional, and behavioral health and provide strategies to strengthen the family-program relationships, increase developmental and behavioral screening and follow-up, and eliminate racial/national, origin/ethnic, sex, or disability biases and discrimination in early learning settings (ECLKC, 2021). Recommendations have also been provided on proper goal-setting techniques and ways of using data to monitor progress and highlight early childhood education workforce competency (NAEYC, n.d.). Even with these strategies in place, there remains a crucial need for additional professional development to strengthen staff's understanding of these

policies and prevent turnover, as currently, the level of local support is lacking while task demands remain high.

Using role socialization theory and a sequential explanatory design, Grant et al. (2019) conducted in-depth interviews with 103 teachers who reported high and low levels of burnout. These interviews focused on participants' perceptions of stress and burnout and their resilience in coping with stress. The data indicated that the teachers' stress was significantly associated with their evaluations of students' anger-aggression. Further, job-related emotional exhaustion was significantly associated with teachers' evaluations of students' anxiety-withdrawal and social competence. Grant et al. found that teachers with low burnout symptoms perceived their work environment as both nurturing and supportive. In contrast, teachers with high burnout symptoms felt that their workplaces were combative and constraining. It appears that the work environment plays a substantial role in burnout and thus should not be overlooked.

Researchers have focused on implementing mandated early childhood education policies and professional processes (Bassok et al., 2021). According to Bassok et al. (2021), national HS data showed that 75% of classrooms rate low on instructional quality, and only 13% rate high on emotional warmth and sensitivity. Early childhood teachers play a significant role in creating safe, engaging, and quality classrooms. These teachers need support (Grant et al., 2019); however, they often experience job-related stress without the perception of aid. Further research is needed to understand early childhood teachers' perspectives on job-related stress, as they directly affect the children in their care (Herman et al., 2021).

Current Early Childhood Education Teacher Shortage

The U.S. Department of Education (n.d.-b) reported that the country has and will continue to have an early childhood education teacher shortage. Madigan and Kim (2021) found that most teachers who leave the profession do so because they are dissatisfied; therefore, addressing the attrition problem is critical to alleviating the teacher shortage crisis. According to a national survey of early childhood education center directors, 13% of teachers from public early childhood education programs left their sites over a 12-month period (Bassok et al., 2021; Phillips et al., 2019). Further, at the national annual conference of the National HS Association (2022), participants were polled with the following results: (a) 85% shared that staff turnover was higher than in a typical year; (b) 90% noted that their programs had been forced to close classrooms permanently or temporarily due to lack of staff; and (c) an average of 30% of staff positions were vacant. Understanding why early childhood teachers leave their program and remain in the field or leave it altogether is critical, especially for understanding children's needs and teachers' professional development (Bassok et al., 2021).

Possible Reasons Early Childhood Educators Leave the Profession

Despite the importance of early childhood education, preschool teachers are struggling (Scharper, 2019). Approximately one quarter of early childhood education teachers leave their jobs each year, which is 4 times higher than elementary education teachers (Bassok et al., 2021). Teachers have reported that they experienced stress on the job, regularly felt overwhelmed, and were unsure they would have the stamina or patience to continue teaching and adequately respond to their students' needs (Scharper,

2019). Scharper (2019) found a direct correlation between perceived working conditions and an increased likelihood of teachers quitting or leaving the profession altogether. The social-emotional climate of the early childhood education program has a significant effect on teachers as well. Teachers who did not feel supported by administrators were more likely to feel stressed or depressed, ultimately decreasing their overall job satisfaction (Scharper, 2019).

Since the enactment of HSPPS 1302.17, teachers have been expected to best meet children's social-emotional and behavioral needs without being fully trained, instructed, or educated on how to do so. Teacher vacancies affect the quality of services for children and families. Therefore, research on their experiences is critical to understanding how to prevent them from leaving their jobs for other work opportunities.

Teaching is among the most stressful professions. According to Hurley (2021), over 90% of educators have reported experiencing job-related stress. An estimated 46% of teachers have reported “high daily stress” (Bottiani et al., 2019, p. 36). Teacher burnout is a condition that can result in psychological lassitude, emotional exhaustion, and physical fatigue (Caruso, 2019). These chronic stressors have negatively affected the teaching profession, causing a decrease in overall job satisfaction (Caruso, 2019). Teacher burnout has become one of the biggest problems in the educational field because it negatively affects the ability of teachers to perform their roles effectively by harming their mental health, emotional wellness, and physical welfare (Hoff, 2020).

McKenna (2022) reported that higher teacher stress levels were associated with lower observed classroom quality in early childhood programs. Data have indicated that

ensuring equal access to professional development and other job-embedded supports for early childhood educators through comprehensive federal policies can help states ensure that the early childhood workforce has adequate support for their professional growth (McKenna, 2022). These teacher supports can help all children benefit developmentally and academically.

Effects of Early Childhood Educators Leaving the Profession

Social-emotional and behavioral problems can frequently occur during early childhood, as young children are just beginning to develop their language skills and capacities to regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Grant et al., 2019). Changes in the structure of classrooms, including the teacher leaving the profession, place children at greater risk of developing social and emotional problems (Grant et al., 2019). Teachers who regularly care for young children can positively affect child development by forming continuous, strong, and positive attachments. A secure attachment creates a foundation for healthy growth in early childhood and beyond when a child's needs are met. Researchers have found that young children with specific attachment relationships with their teachers are more likely to play, explore, and interact with others (Rolfe, 2020). This relationship facilitates early social-emotional and academic development. The constant change of classroom staff due to early childhood educators leaving the profession prevents this foundation from forming.

Lack of continuity of care in early childhood classrooms creates inconsistencies in students' daily routines, expectations, and a lack of fidelity in implementing curriculum (Kwon et al., 2020). These inconsistencies and disruptions negatively affect children's

social-emotional development and trust in the education system (Kwon et al., 2020). The NAEYC (2020) supports positive relationships as the core of quality early childhood education. Further investing in early childhood educators is, therefore, paramount in improving early childhood education and experiences.

Implications

This current study may improve educational practices by increasing the responsiveness of administrators, staff, and the local HS community to the need for focused professional development of HS teachers in the areas of social and emotional support. By considering the implications, this study can focus on exploring teachers' perspectives and challenges related to the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. The anticipated findings may inform the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data, ultimately shaping the project deliverable. Possible project directions that ensure the best inspirational and instructional support strategies, an increase in CLASS scores, positive teacher-child interactions, and teachers benefiting from solutions that could apply to emotional and instructional support areas of concern were explored. Once all data were collected and analyzed, the final decision to use a 3 day professional development plan (see Appendix A) was made.

HS administrators and policy makers may use the results of this study to reexamine the local HS program's current performance and instructional strategies that support meeting the mandated standard. Policy makers may use the study's findings to determine how to decrease work-related stressors for teachers, such as not feeling supported or lacking professional development opportunities. The results provided insight

to the HS community regarding how the current procedures of meeting mandatory standards may create job-related stress, harm teachers' well-being, and affect their intention to remain in the profession.

As previously discussed, teachers' beliefs that they do not have sufficient support and their general unpreparedness to carry out the demands of the mandated Standard 1302.17 can negatively affect students in the classroom. Teachers who exhibit these feelings have classrooms where their students have increased disruptive behaviors and lower academic achievement (Herman et al., 2021). Thus, by identifying teachers' perspectives regarding implementing HSPPS 1302.17, additional educational resources and professional development opportunities can be created to contribute to positive social change. This positive social change may include reduction of teachers' job-related stress and burnout, professional retention, enhancement of their overall job satisfaction, and improvement of educational, social, and behavioral outcomes for the children they teach. Examining teachers' perspectives on this matter could also inform administrators regarding ways to support future teachers in meeting the mandate without adverse effects. This may include targeted professional development training, additional classroom learning tools, and more consistent family-teacher-administrator communication efforts.

Young children need caring, stable relationships with teachers who are invested in their ongoing development. The teacher-child bonded relationship can be important in ensuring the child's overall development (Sansanwal, 2019). Ensuring continuity of care with teachers is essential for young children's long-term academic and social success (Sansanwal, 2019). According to the Office of HS, programs and teachers receive free

resources to support the implementation of mandated standards (ECKLC, n.d.-a). However, despite these available resources, there is an increased need for additional professional development opportunities to strengthen staff understanding and prevent staff turnover.

Summary

Data from the Office of Early Childhood Development (2020) indicated that expulsions and suspensions have regularly occurred in preschool settings. The data further demonstrated that expulsions and suspensions in early childhood had deterred child development and that this issue warrants immediate attention by those in the early childhood and education fields. The Office of Early Childhood Development issued a policy statement and recommendations to assist states and public and private early childhood programs in partnering to prevent and severely limit expulsions and suspensions in early learning settings. States and early childhood programs should use free, publicly available resources to help prevent, limit, and eliminate expulsion and suspension practices in early learning settings while supporting teachers. The gap in practice involves current policies and procedures and teachers' ability to implement them properly without becoming overwhelmed and experiencing job dissatisfaction.

Early childhood education involves developing children's social-emotional competence (ECLKC, 2021). The Office of Head Start has acknowledged that schools have become the setting of choice for prevention and intervention programs to address various emotional and behavioral issues among young children (ECLKC, 2021). Teachers are leaders in implementing and sustaining early childhood programs in the

classroom. However, Krischler and Pit-ten Cate (2019) demonstrated that most teachers have little to no training prior to entering the profession or throughout their employment. Teachers' attitudes about classroom programs and curricula can affect the implementation and effectiveness of institutional policies (Krischler & Pit-ten Cate, 2019). It is critical that teachers receive adequate training in these domains; otherwise, students and teachers alike will be negatively affected.

In the past, teachers in early childhood programs have used suspension and expulsion as management tactics (Gilliam & Reyes, 2022; Office of Early Childhood Development, 2020). Risks for exclusionary discipline are linked to (a) teachers' perceptions that children's behaviors are disruptive to the learning environment, (b) fear of being held accountable for student behaviors that may harm themselves or others, and (c) stress caused by these behaviors (Gilliam & Reyes, 2022). To address the gap in practice at the study site, in this basic qualitative study, I investigated the perspectives of HS teachers regarding their job satisfaction while supporting the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17.

By investigating teachers' perspectives on supporting children's social-emotional development and the implementation of the mandatory Standard 1302.17, this study contributes to positive social change by informing administrators of ways to create supportive work environments for teachers while best meeting the social-emotional needs of their students. Further, administrators may use the findings to effectively and efficiently create professional development opportunities that support teachers' success in carrying out the mandated standard.

In Section 2, I discuss the study's methodology, including its research design and approach and a description of the participants, including criteria for participation, selection procedures, research-participant relationship, and ethical protection. I also outline how the data from the study were collected and analyzed and present the results of my analysis with quotes from the participants' semistructured interviews. In Section 3, I provide an overview of the project, a review of the literature, project description, project evaluation, and project implications. Section 4 includes my reflections and conclusions; project strengths and limitations; recommendations for alternative approaches; scholarship, project development, and leadership and change; and reflections on the importance of the work.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

In this study, I used a basic qualitative design to investigate the perspectives of HS teachers regarding their job satisfaction while supporting the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. I sampled teachers from an HS program in a city in southwestern Virginia. Fifteen HS centers are located across the region where participants were recruited. A basic qualitative research design was chosen to guide this study's data collection and analysis processes. Qualitative research involves examining the unique perspectives and experiences of participants included in a study's sample (Tenny et al., 2022). Qualitative research also involves understanding surface-level as well as deeper meanings (e.g., themes) behind what people describe regarding their experiences about the phenomenon being studied (Tenny et al., 2022). The qualitative research method allows researchers to hear the participants' voices (Silverio et al., 2022). Using qualitative research methodology with a basic qualitative approach enabled the participants to genuinely express their perspectives on the topic or experience. Furthermore, qualitative research is an iterative process in which a study improves the overall understanding of the phenomenon within the scientific community (Aspers & Corte, 2021).

Empirical materials, personal experiences, life stories, interviews, observations, and historical, interactional, and visual texts are used in qualitative research studies (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). A basic qualitative research design was chosen for this study because it was more limited in scope than other types of qualitative research methods (e.g., phenomenological, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative inquiry), and this

allowed me to precisely describe the phenomenon being studied from the perspectives of those who lived it (see Tomaszewski et al., 2020). A basic qualitative design helps researchers cultivate a comprehensive view of a particular experience or event in the daily terms of that experience or event (Tomaszewski et al., 2020).

Other qualitative research designs were also considered for this study, such as ethnography, narrative inquiry, and grounded theory. However, due to the nature of this study, a basic qualitative design was considered the best approach. Ethnography was not selected because cultural views are not the primary focus of this research (see Simanjuntak et al., 2022). Collecting data with a focus on cultural factors would not have helped address the purpose of this study or answer the research question. Similarly, a narrative inquiry was not chosen because this method emphasizes that researchers create dynamic and ongoing relationships with participants by sharing human experiences to arrive at a shared understanding of a phenomenon over a prolonged period (see Ford, 2020). This study emphasized understanding the participants' everyday experiences involving the phenomenon of interest; therefore, a narrative approach did not match the aim or scope of this research. Lastly, grounded theory was not selected because my intent in this research was not to generate a new theory from the collected data (see Chun Tie et al., 2019).

The purpose of qualitative studies is to produce a holistic view of a phenomenon in context (Erickson, 1985). Part of this process entails discovering the meanings people take from their various experiences and synthesizing them effectively to address the phenomenon of interest, further interpreting views and approaches (Ravitch & Carl,

2020). These meanings are subjective and vary from person to person, even if the individuals had similar experiences in similar locations (Rahman, 2020). In the present study, the phenomenon of interest was teachers' perceptions of supporting children's social-emotional development while implementing the mandated HS standard. The specific context was current HS teachers who work at the local HS program in an urban area of southwestern Virginia. Therefore, a basic qualitative research design was appropriate to achieve this goal.

I did not select a quantitative research approach for this study as this involves experimental research methods and collection of numerical data to measure causal relationships between two or more variables (see King et al., 2021). Quantitative research typically involves statistical analyses and numerical data to draw generalizable conclusions about the attitudes and behaviors of individuals sampled from the larger population (King et al., 2021). Therefore, a quantitative design was not appropriate for this study, as the focus was on investigating the perspectives of HS teachers regarding their job satisfaction while supporting the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. Data on the perspectives of HS teachers regarding the phenomenon were collected through interviews rather than numerical measures.

A mixed methods approach was also considered for the study. Qualitative and quantitative data are often simultaneously collected and examined to provide a combined analysis of a particular problem (Palinkas et al., 2019). The goal of mixed methods research is to expand and strengthen the conclusions of previous research and fill gaps in current published literature by maximizing strengths and minimizing weaknesses

associated with quantitative and qualitative approaches. Mixed methods research is about increased knowledge and validity (Palinkas et al., 2019). As I sought to explore the perspectives of HS teachers regarding their job satisfaction while supporting the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17, numerical data were not collected; therefore, a mixed methods design was not suitable for this study.

Participants

Criteria for Selecting Participants

The population for this study was 200 local HS teachers in southwestern Virginia; however, my sample included only HS teachers from one local urban HS program. All participants were staff who worked for over 3 years in the HS program and were willing to participate in this research through purposive sampling. The goal of using purposive sampling is to recruit participants who are relevant to the study's purpose (Andrade, 2020). Teachers recruited to participate in individual interviews were current employees of a local HS program in southwestern Virginia.

Justification for the Number of Participants

Twelve teachers were purposively selected and contacted regarding participating in this research, which was sufficient for data saturation. Hennink et al. (2019) suggested that small sample sizes are sufficient for saturation for studies involving interviews and human-subject focus groups. Saturation is achieved when no new information is obtained from the participants, with responses becoming redundant (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). I conducted extensive interviews with all 12 participants. Using a small number of participants ensured I had the time needed to examine and analyze data to achieve

saturation. Keeping the study's sample size small also saved time and resources while increasing the opportunity to gather rich, in-depth data. If data saturation had not been reached after interviews with 12 participants, I would have continued purposively selecting and recruiting teachers to participate until saturation was achieved.

Recruitment and Gaining Accesses to Participants

Prior to beginning the participant recruitment process, I familiarized myself with the ethical guidelines and requirements for conducting research involving human participants set by Walden University. I submitted all required documents regarding the study and was approved by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB approval number is 01-30-23-1007231. After receiving approval, I sent the appropriate HS center supervisor an email explaining the study's rationale and requested permission to conduct it with potential teacher participants from the HS program in southwestern Virginia. Following that initial communication with the center supervisor, I asked them to post the recruitment flyer (see Appendix B) explaining the study, participant criteria, and my contact information at the local centers. The same recruitment flyer, which included my email address, was also shared on the local HS's Facebook page. I gained access to potential participants and their contact information from their initial email responses to the recruitment materials.

To participate in this study, teachers were required to meet specific participation criteria, including working in an HS classroom within the program and having done so for at least 3 years. Those HS teachers who were interested in participating in the study emailed me at the address provided on the recruitment flyer. I responded to that initial

email and included a consent form for those who qualified. Participants were asked to read the consent form and respond via email with “I consent.” The email also provided general information and an overview of the rationale for the study. I explained that teachers could withdraw from the study with no penalty at any time. I also informed them they could choose not to answer any interview questions without penalty. If a teacher withdrew from the study, another would have been selected from the same HS program in southwestern Virginia using purposive sampling. Likewise, if a teacher was unavailable or unwilling to participate, the same process would have been repeated; however, no participants dropped out of the study, so I reached my goal of interviewing 12 teachers. Once consent was received, individual participant interviews were scheduled and conducted.

Research-Participant Relationship

Before beginning each interview, I again reviewed the information in the informed consent form with each teacher participant, which they signed before agreeing to participate in this research. This review included a verbal explanation of the study’s purpose and procedures, an outline of the potential risks and benefits of participating in this research, and a clear explanation of how I would ensure their information remained confidential (see Davies, 2021). Additionally, I informed participants that their interviews would be audio recorded to ensure accuracy and authenticity during the transcription process. I also obtained their verbal consent at that time to proceed with the audio recording. I reiterated that participation in the study was voluntary; therefore, the participants could withdraw their consent at any time without penalty. After providing

participants with an opportunity to ask any questions, I started the audio recording and proceeded to ask the interview questions. This helped ensure the participants were continuously aware of their rights and the scope of their involvement in the study.

Protection of Participants' Rights

The procedures to ensure ethical practices for this basic qualitative study included considering human participants and the treatment of the collected data. Protecting the participants' rights was my responsibility as the researcher; this included meeting Walden University's IRB requirements (see Burkholder et al., 2016). I adhered to IRB's protocol and Walden University's Office of Research Ethics and Compliance. Sklar and Crescioni (2019) maintained that protecting participants' rights should include lawfulness, fairness, and transparency. I did not anticipate the participants' involvement in this study and interview process would harm them psychologically or emotionally or result in limitations to the study. However, there was a small possibility that they could have experienced negative emotions by discussing potentially sensitive topics regarding the mandated standard and its effect on their well-being and teaching experiences. If any participants had experienced distress while participating in this research, I would have provided them with contact information for local and national mental health resources. No participants expressed any negative emotions throughout the research process.

I provided identical information to all participants regarding their rights as participants, the purpose of this research, and how the data would be collected and analyzed. All participating teachers followed the same procedures, and research-related information was collected using the same methods for all participants. I did not provide

any incentives for participating in this research study; therefore, participation was voluntary. Each teacher participant was assigned an alphanumeric code (e.g., HST1, HST2, etc.) to help maintain their confidentiality. I will keep data from this study for 5 years from the end of the data collection phase. The written and recorded data are stored in a locked file cabinet. The transcribed data and electronic files are kept on a password-protected personal computer. I will destroy the data at the end of the 5 years, including interview transcripts, recordings, and Word files.

Finally, although this research involved a local HS program in southwestern Virginia where young children are present, they were not directly involved in this basic qualitative study. I did not interfere with classroom interactions and activities. Only teachers participated in this study. Throughout the study, I continued to monitor data collection for any ethical considerations and concerns.

Data Collection

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the perspectives of HS teachers regarding their job satisfaction while supporting the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. In this section, I present how the data were collected and analyzed, including coding. I conducted this study using semistructured interviews to obtain the necessary data for analysis. By utilizing individual semistructured interviews as the form of data collection for this study, a deep understanding of teachers' perspectives on the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17 was achievable. The personalized nature of the individual interviews facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the teachers' experiences, challenges, and recommendations, contributing to a thorough analysis and

meaningful insights. The basic qualitative study's design and my plan for data collection allowed for the development of themes to address the research question and the gap in practice. The data from the individual interviews answered the research question and provided insight into teachers' perspectives on the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17 and supporting children's social-emotional development.

Instrumentation

The data collection instruments that were used for this study were researcher produced. These instruments were field notes, an interview protocol, and audio recorded participant interviews. No historical or legal documents were utilized as a source of data collection for this study.

The researcher is the primary instrument in a qualitative study (Wa-Mbaleka, 2020). All decisions, including the subject of the study, methodology, research approach, sampling, as well as data collection, categorization, and interpretation, are made by the researcher (Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Therefore, I was the primary instrument of this study. As the researcher, I was responsible for conducting individual interviews with each of the 12 current HS teachers. The data collection instruments used in this study were a researcher produced interview protocol and the use of audio recording during the participant interviews. An approved interview protocol with open-ended questions helped create objectivity throughout data collection. The use of audio recording during the interviews and a program available online (Rev) were utilized for transcription of the interviews. This ensured accuracy and further limited bias.

The data collection protocol included ensuring the interview questions aligned with the research question, conducting an inquiry-based conversation, and receiving feedback. To ensure validity, outside experts were sought. Local HS personnel reviewed the content and usability of the interview questions. Further, a Walden University professor (outside of my committee) and a faculty member at a research university, both holding terminal degrees and extensive experience in qualitative research, ensured that the protocol was clear and aligned with the research question and conceptual framework of the study.

For this study, a researcher produced interview protocol was developed consisting of 12 open-ended questions (Appendix C). Each question was developed to assist the participant in discussing their perspectives on the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. The validity of the interview protocol was established by ensuring that the questions effectively addressed the topic of study and that they aligned with the conceptual framework and research literature. In addition to the interview questions, a number of casual questions were asked prior to beginning the interview to assist in making the participant more comfortable and building rapport.

Description and Justification of Data

The process for how and when the data was generated, gathered, and recorded is as follows. Once IRB approval for this basic qualitative project study was granted, the data collection process began. To generate, gather, and record data effectively for this study, it was crucial to maintain ethical considerations throughout the data collection and analysis process. The process required the following steps: (a) determine the research

questions, (b) identify and create the appropriate data collection instruments, (c) develop a plan and schedule for conducting the individual interviews, (d) obtain participant consent, (e) conduct the participant interviews using the data collection instruments, (f) organize and manage the data, (g) maintain data security and confidentiality through locked storage and password protected passwords, and (h) keep detailed records of the research process for transparency and trustworthiness of the study (see Busetto et al., 2020).

The systems for keeping track of data and emerging understandings that occurred for this study consisted of a planning phase identifying the specific data collection method, which was a researcher produced interview protocol for semistructured participant interviews. All data collected was organized and stored on a password protected, personal computer to ensure confidentiality and privacy.

The semistructured interviews included an identical set of core questions; because of this format, consistency among the separate participant interviews could be established and maintained (see Ruslin et al., 2022). However, semistructured interviews also allow the researcher flexibility to probe for additional details based on how the participants answer each interview question, thus enhancing the type, amount, and quality of data gathered to answer a study's guiding research questions (Ruslin et al., 2022)

I began the interview with warm-up questions to help establish comfort between the participant and myself. Next, I narrowed the focus to the teachers' perspectives of the mandated standard and its implementation. These questions included:

1. Describe the influence that HSPPS has on your position as an HS teacher.

2. What do you know about the federally mandated HSPPS 1302.17 regarding suspension and expulsion of young children?
 - a. In addition, please share your thoughts about the Standard.
3. Please describe if and how you use independent judgment while implementing the Standard.

Before the start of each interview, I verbally reiterated to the participants the information in the informed consent form they previously agreed to in the introductory emails. I also reminded them that I would take notes and that their interview would be audio recorded for transcription purposes. Alphanumeric codes were used to identify the participants and ensure their information's confidentiality. When the interview was complete, I provided each teacher with information that concluded the session and shared my appreciation for their participation.

While collecting data for this research, I ensured the interviews did not interfere with the teachers' daily classroom schedules. This was done by asking participants what days and times worked best with their schedules. I compared their responses to my weekly availability and determined the optimal date and time to schedule each interview. I anticipated interviewing each participant once, and that the single interview should last no longer than 1 hour, although the average time was 40 minutes. All interviews were either conducted in person at a local public library or using the Zoom audio computer software.

Access to Participants

Having access to participants is crucial to the success of the research. I gained access to participants by emailing a detailed description and rationale of the study to the local HS program's center supervisor. I requested permission to recruit participants for the study at the local HS program. With their consent, I then asked for the recruitment flyer to be displayed at the local HS program. Recruitment materials were also posted on the local HS's Facebook page.

Potential participants interested in the study responded to the recruitment materials by emailing me at the address provided on the flyer. I received a total of 21 initial emails from teachers expressing interest in participating in the study. However, nine of the 21 did not meet the criteria as they had not been employed by the local program for a minimum of 3 years. In a return email, I sent a consent form to the 12 who met the criteria of the study. I also sent an email to those who did not meet the requirements, thanking them for their interest in the study. The invitation email to the approved participants contained a section regarding consent to participate and a guarantee of confidentiality. If they agreed to consent to participate, the potential participant responded via email, "I consent." Once this was done, I contacted the participant to arrange a date, time, and location convenient for them for their individual interview.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in qualitative research is to access the thoughts and feelings of the study's participants (Zhang & Liu, 2018). As the researcher, I assumed the role of observer. I assured honesty, transparency, and confidentiality to all potential

participants and created an environment where they felt comfortable. I built and maintained trust and a rapport with my participants by being transparent regarding my study's purpose, data collection methods, and information about how I would share and use the study findings. It is the researcher's responsibility to behave honestly and ethically during the research process to encourage values that are indispensable to collaborative work (Resnik, 2020).

Although I was previously employed by the program, I do not have any personal or professional relationships that could potentially have influenced the data collected for this research, nor am I a current employee of the participating local HS program. Based on these factors, the possibility of research bias and ethical issues were minimal, and, in fact, none existed. I am, however, familiar with the local area in southwestern Virginia and the selected HS program. By audio-recording the interviews, I was able to reduce and prevent any bias, as this assisted in accurately transcribing them, reducing errors in interpretation, and allowing for verification. If any problems had arisen during the data collection phase, I would have professionally addressed them.

Data Analysis

The focus of data analysis is to bring out meanings that people attach to their actions and responses related to their experiences (Lester et al., 2020). In this basic qualitative study, data were collected through semistructured interviews and field notes to identify teachers' perspectives. In this section, the procedures for data analysis, including coding and software applications, are presented.

Procedures for Analysis and Coding

In this basic qualitative study, I conducted semistructured interviews and maintained field notes to collect HS teachers' perspectives on how to successfully support students' social-emotional development and maintain job satisfaction while implementing the federally mandated HSPPS 1302.17. Throughout the data analysis process, I created a clear audit trail for data collection and step-by-step thematic analysis procedures.

The procedures for analysis included open, axial, and selective coding. There are three main types of analytical coding, which often occur in conjunction with one another during qualitative analysis (Williams & Moser, 2019). For example, open coding is usually done at the outset of the analytical process, whereby the data is reviewed multiple times, initial labels are generated for specific coded segments of the data, and these data sets are compared to one another both within and across different interview transcripts (Williams & Moser, 2019). Next, axial coding occurs where chunks of similar data types are grouped into categories and subcategories (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019). Additionally, I sent a summary of the study's findings for each participant to review, providing them with the opportunity to make comments or adjustments as a form of member checking. Though there were no reported mistakes, this allowed participants to correct any mistakes I made during the transcription process before I continued to thematic analysis.

Finally, selective coding typically follows this by integrating the categories and subcategories to coherently present the main themes identified from the interview data

(M. Williams & Moser, 2019). These coding processes provided me with a structured approach to reviewing and synthesizing the interview data I collected. The advantage of incorporating thematic analysis when researching teachers' perspectives was that it was not tied to a particular epistemological or theoretical perspective (see Xu & Zammit, 2020).

Thematic analysis allows for correlations between themes, and several different types exist (Xu & Zammit, 2020). More specifically, Kiger and Varpio's (2020) six-step thematic analysis was used for this research. In the first step, the researcher builds a strong familiarity with the collected data. By reviewing the data multiple times, I accurately grounded the analysis within the scope of my research question and framework. After familiarizing myself with the data, I proceeded to the second step, where I began coding the interview data for similar units of meaning related to each other on a surface level or in a deeper interpretive way. Coding the data allowed me to identify and connect key ideas within the data. Third, based on the initial connections, I identified potential themes representing more significant ideas that helped answer my research question.

Once initial themes were identified, I validated them in the fourth step of the thematic analysis process by comparing the themes back to the data to ensure accurate interpretation (see Kiger & Varpio). In the fifth step, I compiled the themes into a list and recontextualized them within the data set, past literature, and the scope of the current research study. In the final sixth step, I wrote the final analysis and description of the data.

When beginning the data analysis process, I reviewed the steps in thematic analysis by Braun et al. (2022). Open coding was the first step in the analysis of this qualitative research. I began data collection with the audio transcripts from the participant interviews. Using open-ended coding, I broke the data into codes. I was looking for words and phrases shared by the participants that matched the framework of the study, emphasizing education and learning where institutional standards exist and focusing on how teachers can adjust and expand their thinking based on what is required. Doing so allowed me to compare and contrast commonalities in the data. Quotes that were labeled with a particular code were collated. During the initial coding pass, 33 codes were identified. Secondly, axial coding occurred. This process included organizing the codes that were initially developed. I reviewed the codes and underlying data to group them into categories. During the second coding pass, four axial categories (Appendix E) were identified and 16 subcategories. Finally, I began searching for themes in the codes across the entire data set, reviewing and refining the themes. From the axial categories, six themes were identified (Appendix F).

Evidence of Quality

Qualitative research is unique in that it provides researchers with process-based, narrated, storied data that are closely related to the human experience (Stahl & King, 2020). Trustworthiness and credibility, transferability, and conformability are integral to and evidence of quality in qualitative studies (Hayashi et al., 2019). In this section, I present the importance of these variables in the current study.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

In qualitative studies, trustworthiness is achieved through credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Nassaji, 2020). I provided identical information to all participants regarding their rights, the purpose of this research, and how the data would be collected and analyzed. All participating teachers followed the same procedures, and research-related information was collected using the same methods for all participants. Trustworthiness and credibility were enhanced by using detailed field notes. The use of field notes evaluated objectivity through reflexivity and limited any bias within my views and interpretations (see Ravitch & Carl, 2020). Further ensuring trustworthiness and credibility, all audio recordings were transcribed by a program available online (Rev) before coding occurred. Once the study's initial findings were identified, member checking was utilized to further ensure trustworthiness, which is an integral part of creating trustworthiness in qualitative research (see Candela, 2019). Using member checking as a strategy to ensure credibility is a sound approach (Creswell, 2013). I sent a summary of the study's initial findings to each participant to review, providing them with the opportunity to make comments or adjustments as a form of member checking. Allowing participants to do this verified the accuracy of their interview and was an effective way to ensure the findings truly represented their perceptions.

Field Notes

Phillippi and Lauderdale (2018) stated that field notes are recommended for qualitative research to document contextual information. Many qualitative research methods encourage researchers to take field notes to enhance data and provide context for

analysis (Creswell, 2013; Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). During each interview, I kept field notes specific to each participant. These notes consisted of my private, personal thoughts, ideas, and queries regarding my observations and interviews as the researcher. The use of field notes also helped provide additional information on verbal and nonverbal communication cues that were not sufficiently captured through audio recording (see Knott et al., 2022). All field notes are stored in a locked file cabinet and will be destroyed after 5 years.

Transferability

Transferability enables others to assess whether the study is transferable to their setting (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). As the researcher, I promoted transferability by thoroughly describing the research context, processes, and assumptions central to the research. Transferability of the findings of this current study may be more plausible for teachers or early childhood education programs in similar school contexts (see Dyson et al., 2019).

Confirmability

Confirmability occurs when the data can be confirmed or corroborated by others (D. D. Williams & Kimmons, 2022). To ensure the confirmability of the study, I continued to reflect on my own biases that may have influenced the data. I used multiple sources of data, including field notes, individual semi-structured interviews, and audio recordings. I strived to achieve data saturation and analyzed the reviewed the data to determine that it had been reached. I engaged in member checking and maintained a clear and detailed audit trail.

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant data is defined as any data that does not support the pattern of the collective data (Gomez, 2022). Discrepant data occurs when there is a gap between the findings that may challenge the study's validity. Miles et al. (2020) stated that this discrepancy might indicate that integrative data analysis is necessary to resolve inconsistencies. There were three areas of discrepant data: two participants disagreed with the Standard, while one agreed and supported it. The other nine participants expressed mixed feelings toward the Standard. I extensively reviewed this discrepant data to ensure accuracy of the study's findings to maintain the integrity of the data.

Data Analysis Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the perspectives of HS teachers regarding their job satisfaction while supporting the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. The problem addressed in this basic qualitative study is that teachers in a local urban HS program in the southwestern region of Virginia have decreased levels of job satisfaction and are not able to support the social-emotional development of their students due to their struggles with implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. The research question was: What are HS teachers' perspectives on how to successfully support the social-emotional development of the students and maintain job satisfaction while implementing the federally mandated Performance Standard 1302.17? In this section, I present the results of this basic qualitative study, including the themes that emerged from the analysis of the interviews I conducted with the teachers from the local HS program. First, I describe the study's setting and provide an overview of the data collection and

analysis procedures. The results of the study and evidence of trustworthiness follow. The chapter concludes with a summary of key points of the data analysis.

The data were generated, gathered, and recorded through one-on-one semistructured, audio-recorded interviews with 12 HS teachers currently employed by the local HS program for a minimum of 3 years. In Table 1, I present an overview of the 12 participants, their assigned identification code, education, and experience as an HS teacher. Each teacher participant was assigned an alphanumeric code (e.g., HST1, HST2, etc.) to ensure confidentiality.

Table 1

Overview of Participants

Participant identification code	Education	Years HS teaching experience
HST1	Associate's degree	12
HST2	Associate's degree	15
HST3	Bachelor's degree	3
HST4	Bachelor's degree	5
HST5	Bachelor's degree	21
HST6	Master's degree	15
HST7	Master's degree	10
HST8	Bachelor's degree	12
HST9	Associate's degree	7
HST10	Bachelor's degree	3
HST11	Associate's degree	5
HST12	Master's degree	8

Participants were asked 12 questions regarding their perspectives on how to successfully support the social-emotional development of the students and maintain job satisfaction while implementing the federally mandated HSPPS 1302.17. During data analysis, I identified codes and patterns from which themes emerged that aligned with the

framework of the study, Lacey's (1976) theory of social strategies and Mezirow's (2003) transformative learning theory, and the research question. During the initial coding of the qualitative data, 33 codes were identified (see Appendix D)

To further examine these codes, as a second step in data analysis, I performed axial coding. This allowed me to draw connections between codes throughout the creation of categories. There were four categories identified through axial coding. These were suggested needed professional development opportunities, teacher support, teacher frustrations, and HSPPS 1302.17 (see Appendix E).

The final step of the coding process was selective coding. Six themes emerged from the 33 codes (see Appendix F). First, the participants stated mixed feelings about the Standard. Second, the participants expressed frustration surrounding parental accountability and involvement. Third, the participants felt that the current PD is redundant. Fourth, it was believed that additional administrative support was needed. Fifth, going forward, it was felt that PD/trainings should be in-depth and specific to certain behaviors or diagnoses. Sixth, the participants felt that in-person, practice-based coaching should follow PD, providing additional support to the teachers.

Data Correlating to the Research Question

One research question guided this basic qualitative study. The question was designed to explore HS teachers' perspectives on how to successfully support the social-emotional development of the students and maintain job satisfaction while implementing the federally mandated HSPPS 1302.17. Throughout the interview process, I identified responses from the 12 participants that indicated how to support students' social-

emotional development and maintain job satisfaction while implementing the mandated standard. Themes 1 through 6 aligned with the study's framework and provided answers to the research question. These themes emerged and focused on the teachers' perspectives on how to best meet the social-emotional needs of the children and maintain job satisfaction while implementing the federally mandated HSPPS standard. Multiple quotations from participant interviews are included, presenting patterns that support the themes and supported by the data that align with the research question.

Theme 1: Teachers Had Mixed Feelings About Head Start Program Performance

Standard 1302.17

HSPPS 1302.17 is a standard that outlines the requirements for the suspension and expulsion of young children in HS programs. The Standard was designed to promote positive behavior and prevent challenging behavior in young children. It is also intended to provide guidance on how to address this behavior if it occurs.

The teachers had mixed feelings about the Standard based on the interview data. The teachers believed that suspension and expulsion should not be used as disciplinary tools for young children as these actions were too severe and could negatively affect the child's development and education. On the other hand, 42% of the participants supported the Standard, but they also believed that in certain cases, suspension or expulsion might be necessary to ensure the safety of other children in the program or to help the child in question receive the support and services they need to address their challenging behavior. HS2 had mixed feelings about the Standard:

I have mixed feelings because I play a dual role. I work here, but I am also a parent. From the perspective of the child, I agree with the Standard. The children need the experiences and receive better secondary care here. As a parent, it can be concerning if it's a child that's in my daughter's class who is throwing chairs and tables.

HS4 noted both sides of the discussion on the new policies:

I like the Standard because I do think that we get kids that have been kicked out of other programs, and they may just need the support, but I've also worked with the kids that are very difficult and violent. So, I see the benefits of it, but I also

Theme 1 relates to the research question as the data indicated how to successfully support the social-emotional development of the students and maintain job satisfaction while implementing the federally mandated Standard 1302.17. Although there were mixed feelings regarding the Standard, the responses demonstrated that the effects of suspension and expulsion on children's social-emotional development is an area of concern. The teachers offered suggestions as to how the Standard could be implemented to best support the social-emotional development of children and maintain teachers' job satisfaction.

The quotes from HS2 and HS4, who expressed support for the Standard, provide context for Theme 1. They indicated that it is in the best interest of the students, especially those who have been suspended or expelled from other programs. HS2 and HS4 recognized the importance of providing continual support and learning opportunities for the students. There were also concerns regarding disruptive behaviors in the

classroom. HS2 highlighted the potential effect on their own child's learning and environment if a classmate exhibits extreme behaviors. This perspective raises the question of finding a balance between having children remain in the program and maintaining a safe and conducive learning environment.

The quotes and perspectives of the participants indicate the challenges and complexities that HS teachers experience when implementing HSPPS. They each reflect different perspectives and experiences from the HS teachers and present options that offer support through the implementation of the Standard.

Theme 2: Teachers Expressed a Lack of Parental Accountability and Involvement

With the 2016 revision of HSPPS, HS programs ensured prioritized parental involvement and accountability in all aspects of their operations, including when it comes to suspension and expulsion under HSPPS 1302.17 (ECLK, 2016). The 2007 HS Act requires that programs engage parents and guardians in meaningful ways and involve them in decision making related to their child's education and well-being (ECLKC, n.d.-a). HS programs also encourage parents and guardians to be involved in their child's education and well-being on an ongoing basis.

Under HSPPS 1302.17, HS programs must have policies and procedures in place that outline the process for suspension and expulsion of young children (ECLKC, 2016). These policies should include opportunities for parents and guardians to provide input and participate in the decision-making process. Parental involvement can take many forms, such as participating in parent-teacher conferences, volunteering in the classroom, or attending parent education workshops (Yi & Siththada, 2022). The data in this study

indicate that parents are not always involved and do not want to participate in ensuring the social-emotional development of their children. HS2 recounted a situation with an extended family:

We had meetings with the grandmother. Somehow my communication style was the most received by the parent. I was able to get the child to respond and regroup and be able to go back into the classroom. The parents, though, in this situation, didn't want to accept that the home behavior was affecting the child. In the end, she pulled him from the school because she didn't want to face the reality of things going on in the home.

HS3 discussed a challenge with a parent of a special needs child:

We have a boy who is 3; he's not potty trained, [and] he has limited language. When he wants something because he is a little bigger than a typical 3-year-old, he uses his body and usually hits, kicks, [and] screams to get whatever he wants. Because that baby doesn't have the language needed to communicate to even express what he wants—where there's no language, we see it in behavior. Also, with that, mom [she] wasn't supportive at all to get him evaluated for speech or anything because she said she understood him.

HS6 expressed their frustration with redirecting behavior:

Some of the parents, they come once we call them to the center. They have to come up and redirect the child. Sometimes parents choose to just take the child and take them home, and then we see a difference in the behavior after that. But sometimes, with the situation that we have going on currently, we call the mom.

The mom comes up, she tries to redirect the child, and the redirection for this child is not working because once the parent leaves, the child is right back. The behavior is right back the same. And the parent is kind of getting tired of us calling. She feels like we're calling her constantly all the time. And at one point, she got upset, and then we had to have a meeting with her just to kind of explain and go over the plan again with her, and then kind of implement some different things into the plan and to possibly shorten the child's day.

Theme 2 relates to the research question as parental involvement is an integral component of HSPPS. Parents are encouraged and expected to participate decision making related to their child's education and well-being (ECLKC, n.d.-a). The data that supported this theme showed how parental involvement and accountability might affect the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17, students' social-emotional development, and the teachers' job satisfaction. Further, the quotes provide HS teachers' perspectives regarding a lack of parental accountability and involvement in their program.

Related content and perspectives from the quotes presented for Theme 2 indicate the importance of parental involvement in the HS programs. HS2 recounts an experience where a student's home behavior was negatively impacting their social experiences despite efforts to communicate with the grandmother and involve the parent. The parent not wanting to accept the impact of home behavior and chose to withdraw the child from the program. This example illustrates a challenge where parental accountability and involvement were lacking and hindering the child's social-emotional development.

HS6 expressed frustration in redirecting challenging behaviors without consistent parental support. The inconsistencies in addressing and redirecting the behaviors create a barrier causing the strategies to be ineffective and leading to ongoing challenges. The lack of consistent parental involvement and accountability can also strain the teacher-parent relationship. The data provides context and insight into the difficulties faced by the HS teachers when parental accountability and involvement are lacking. The importance of engaging parents in the HS program as well as the challenges that may arise when parents do not actively participate in supporting their child's development and addressing behavioral issues, are highlighted.

Theme 3: Teachers Felt That the Current Professional Development Is Redundant

Professional development, especially when dealing with challenging behaviors and addressing social-emotional care, is an essential component of teacher training in HS programs (Lawson et al., 2019). Training provides teachers with the knowledge and skills to support children's healthy development, build positive relationships with families, and create supportive and inclusive learning environments (Su & Wang, 2022). Many of the participants in this study indicated they felt this type of training was redundant. It is important to recognize that because children's social-emotional development and challenging behaviors are complex and multifaceted, teacher training requires ongoing attention and support (Beaton et al., 2021).

HS3 discussed the repetitive nature of the training:

A lot of trainings are repetitive information. So, stuff that the teachers already know or we've heard someone talk about before. So, we've done some stuff on

trauma and things like that and bringing awareness to trauma, but not really deep diving. I think we should do a better job with training the staff on that because some staff don't understand why we have this performance standard. Like, why do we need this performance standard? Why was it implemented? What are the causes for it all? They told us, "We added this performance standard, and you guys got to follow it," But why are we doing it?

HS8 agreed: "It's the same information. Nothing new."

Theme 3 relates to the research question as the data indicated the current professional development and training offered are perceived as redundant. Providing teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to support children's healthy development, including their social-emotional development, can be ensured through effective professional development (Su & Wang, 2022). The data demonstrated what is needed to best support the implementation of the Standard, the social-emotional development of students, and the teachers' job satisfaction.

The quotes from HS3 and HS8 reflect the frustration and dissatisfaction experienced when PD repeats information and strategies that have been previously presented. The data indicates that this redundancy can undermine the value and effectiveness of PD. The teachers felt they were not gaining new insights or strategies to enhance their teaching practices.

HS3 shared the importance of going beyond surface-level training and having a deeper understanding of the reasons behind the HSSPS. This reflects a desire for more comprehensive and in-depth PD that provides a better understanding of the concepts

being addressed. To best support the implementation of the Standard and the social-emotional development of the students, PD must align with the specific needs and challenges faced by the teachers, tailoring it to address their concerns and providing practical strategies.

Theme 4: Teachers Felt That Additional Instructional Support in Social-Emotional Development Was Needed

The teacher participants shared that additional instructional support in social-emotional development is needed from administrators. They further explained that additional support might help HS teachers effectively promote social-emotional development in their classrooms while implementing the mandated standard, which may lead to better outcomes for children. Participants felt it was important to remember that social-emotional development is a critical component of early childhood education and the HSPPS and requires ongoing attention and support. HS3 voiced their thoughts about the lack of support:

There's no support for this standard, as far as we don't have enough special needs assistance to help with the children that have the challenge and behavior; that then falls on the future. And so, sometimes you don't know that child has the behavior, so they get to your classroom, and then it's a surprise.

HS2 discussed the stress that HS teachers encounter:

I think that self-care for teachers is so important. Being able to assess their own body's responses. When you are dealing with a child facing suspension, it can be very stressful. It is important to not become triggered by the child. Ensuring

passion for the child while maintaining their personal space where they are getting hit. Once the why is identified, it gives the teachers a different perspective of the child itself [*sic*].

HS3 expressed the need for more training for teachers to be able to work with children with behavioral difficulties:

I don't care how good that teacher is with behaviors—that's stressful. And then a child with a disability takes precedence over a child with a behavior. So, then, who's helping those teachers help those kids get that one-on-one that they need? There needs to be more training.

Theme 4 relates to the research question as the data demonstrated how administrators can best support the HS teachers. Through additional support for the teachers' well-being, administrators may better assist the social-emotional development of students. Evidence supports that teachers need social-emotional competencies to manage stressors (Katz et al., 2020).

The data provides various perspectives related to the support, challenges, and training needs of HS teachers. HS3 expressed concern over insufficient support, particularly in terms of special needs assistance and helping children with challenging behaviors. Adequate support and resources are crucial to address the individual needs of the students with these behaviors to create an inclusive learning environment.

HS2 emphasized the importance of self-care for teachers, particularly when dealing with the stress of addressing behavioral issues that would have, in the past, led to suspension or expulsion. The data indicate that the teachers felt that they needed to be

aware of their emotional and physical responses to avoid being triggered by challenging behaviors. Self-care practices may help teachers maintain quality teaching practices while setting appropriate boundaries and classroom expectations.

The data further indicates that additional PD is needed for working with students with behavioral difficulties. HS3 shared a need for more training that effectively addresses the needs of students and provides the necessary one-on-one support. Based on the study's findings, enhancing teachers' social-emotional competencies, and providing strategies to manage stressors may contribute to their well-being and effectiveness in the classroom. The quotes provided support this theme and demonstrate insight into the challenges faced by the HS teachers. They are also indicative of the support required to effectively address behavioral difficulties while promoting the students' social-emotional development.

Theme 5: Teachers Felt That the Professional Development/Trainings Should Be In-Depth and Specific to Certain Behaviors and Diagnoses

The participants felt that the trainings they received on behavior management and working with children with challenging behaviors and specific diagnoses were not in-depth enough. The data from this study indicate the participants felt that with more in-depth, specific trainings, quality of care could improve and overall job satisfaction increase, which may result in better outcomes for the children's social-emotional development. HS4 stated, "I wish we could have trainings that are a little bit newer because, especially since the pandemic, I think a lot of us have seen an increase in behaviors." HS6 added what they would like to receive regarding training: "Just specific

trainings to different situations and different behaviors. More in-depth training with more details.”

Theme 5 relates to the research question as the data indicated that to best support the social-emotional development of students and increase job satisfaction, the teachers need training in specific diagnoses of the challenging behaviors of students in their classes. Theme 3 indicates that the teachers felt the current trainings are redundant. This data specifically indicated that more in-depth, specialized training is needed.

The data supports that PD/trainings received on behavioral management and working with challenging behaviors were not in-depth enough. It was indicated that the current training lacks specificity and did not adequately prepare the teachers to address the diverse needs and specific diagnoses of children in their classrooms. This suggests a need for more comprehensive and specialized PD.

Theme 5 reflects that the participants believed that with more in-depth and specific PD/trainings, the quality of care could improve, leading to better outcomes for the students’ social-emotional development. The participants expressed the belief that targeted training would enhance their ability to effectively manage challenging behaviors and support the needs of students with specific diagnoses. This, in turn, may contribute to an increase in job satisfaction among teachers.

Theme 6: Teachers Felt That In-Person, Practice-Based Coaching Is Needed to Follow Up on Professional Development/Trainings

The participants felt that after receiving professional development on challenging behaviors and social-emotional development, in-person training could further support

them in implementing the strategies they learned in training. The participants shared ways in-person training may be helpful, including receiving feedback, support trainers, and peer-to-peer interaction. The participants' responses may assist in identifying areas where additional support is needed and provide guidance on addressing challenging behaviors and supporting social-emotional development more effectively. By providing in-person training, the participants indicated they would feel supported in effectively addressing challenging behaviors in their classrooms. In-person training may provide teachers with opportunities to practice the strategies they learned, collaborate with their peers, and receive feedback and support. HS5 stated, "I think if they come into the classroom and actually model some different things, I think the teachers would be more—I think it would help the teachers more." HS9 indicated the need for personal support:

I feel like what I need is I need someone to come in, and I can say, "These are my behavior issues. How do I deal with this?" I feel like me spending a week in the classroom with this kid; I feel like that is more valuable to me and how I'm going to deal with it than going to a training where they tell me to put up a visual schedule. Right. And some kids do benefit from the visual schedule, but [for] most of the kids that we're having trouble with, a visual schedule doesn't seem to fix anything.

Theme 6 relates to the research question as the data indicated that in-person training following professional development opportunities would be beneficial to better support the social-emotional development of students, overall job satisfaction of the

teachers, and implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) noted that professional development is more effective when it is collaborative, subject specific, and practice-based through in-person follow through. Theme 6 also reflects the need for individualized support and in-person practice-based coaching that supports the PD and effectively addresses behavioral issues in the classroom. The data indicates that personal support, observation, and collaborative guidance would be more valuable to teachers experiencing challenging behaviors than generic PD/training. By providing personalized support through practice-based coaching, administrators may better assist teachers in implementing the strategies that support social-emotional development of the students, enhance job satisfaction, and align with the implementation of the Standard.

Discrepant Cases

There were three discrepant cases in this study. All occurred regarding Theme 1. Most participants (nine) had mixed feelings about HSPPS 1302.17; however, two completely disagreed with the Standard. Those participants felt that the children should be suspended or expelled from the HS program if all efforts and strategies have been exhausted, especially if parents do not participate in improving the behavior. The participants indicated that once children are enrolled in elementary school, they are held accountable and ultimately suspended or expelled. One participant agreed with the Standard and indicated that challenging behavior was not something that is in the child's control but more environmentally driven.

Evidence of Quality of Data

Data were gathered for this study using one-on-one semistructured interviews governed by the conceptual framework, which helped me to systematically develop and refine the data collection instrument (Appendix C). Quality data were collected through audio recordings, field notes, transcripts, and member checking. Utilizing these procedures, including an extensive review of the literature, helped establish the quality and rigor of the study and ensure the findings were accurate and credible.

Summary

In this basic qualitative study, I collected and analyzed data from 12 HS teachers via one-on-one semistructured interviews. Participants were selected from an urban southwestern Virginia HS program and were required to be employed in HS classrooms of the local program for at least 3 years. Open, axial, and selective coding were used to identify 33 codes and four axial categories. Thematic analysis was employed in the data analysis process to identify six themes.

Coding was used to identify and synthesize information to discover themes and answer the research question. Through thematic analysis, connections and themes were identified, which provided additional information to answer the research question. The processes of participant selection, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations all support the trustworthiness of this study. The findings presented in this basic qualitative study are significant as the participants' interview responses helped generate and guide the development of the 3-day professional development plan. The professional development plan is presented in Section 3.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

In Section 3, the project (see Appendix A) is presented as a detailed 3-day professional development plan. My goal in creating this project was to provide HS teachers with professional development on how to successfully support the social-emotional development of their students and maintain job satisfaction while implementing the federally mandated HSPPS 1302.17. In this section, I discuss the rationale for the project's design and provide a review of the literature that guided its development. The description of the 3-day professional development plan is based on the study's findings and includes a discussion of the execution of the plan and an analysis of barriers that could impede the implementation of the project.

Rationale

After reflecting on the data collected and analyzed in this basic qualitative research study, I created a 3-day professional development plan as my project to encourage HS administrators to provide additional professional development for HS teachers. The project focuses on the problem at a local HS program, which is that teachers in this program in the southwestern region of Virginia have decreased levels of job satisfaction and are not able to support the social-emotional development of their students due to their struggles with implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. I will present this professional development plan to administrators of the local HS program so it can then be presented to and implemented with the HS teachers.

Review of the Literature Related to the Project

This 3-day professional development plan may offer HS teachers extensive resources and additional knowledge to support the social-emotional development of their students while implementing HSPPS 1302.17. The conceptual framework presented in Section 1 and the major findings of the study determined the content of the professional development plan. The review of the literature involved an extensive search related to creating a professional development plan. There were approximately 100 peer-reviewed sources researched for this review; however, 25 are included and provided saturation for research on the topic. The literature was generated from ProQuest, ERIC, Academic Search, Education Research, SAGE full-text articles and journals, and Walden Library databases. The key words and phrases used in the search were *professional development*, *adult learning*, *specialized trainings*, and *coaching and support*.

Professional Development

A professional development plan may play a vital role in supporting HS teachers in providing high-quality early childhood education. According to Housel (2020), “Providing more effective, relevant, and individualized instruction to all adults is critical to enhancing their academic achievement and success” (p. 6). Professional development curricula can aid in eliminating the negative association between professional stress and administrative support (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Sandilos et al., 2018). Alfaidi and Elhassan (2020) noted that professional development plans are often not diverse and offer short-term courses that focus on a single component of teachers’ development. In addition, these programs do not consistently address the educational and personal needs

of teachers for their development (Alfaidi & Elhassan, 2020). Data from this study support the assertion that professional development needs to be thorough, in-depth, and meet the needs of both teachers and students, justifying the 3 days of training.

A professional development plan that supports HS teachers should be comprehensive, evidence-based, and focused on providing the skills and knowledge necessary to create high-quality learning environments for young children (Egert et al., 2019). The plan should also be tailored to the specific needs of HS teachers. Results of this study indicated it should include an understanding of the reasoning and objectives for the HSPPS and HSPPS 1302.17, identifying reasons for specific behaviors or areas of concern in each classroom, ways to support the social-emotional development of all children while addressing challenging behaviors, and mindfulness to ensure self-care and regulation for the teacher and children. Consistent with data regarding the importance of professional development, HSPPS lays out specific requirements for HS teachers regarding coaching, training, and curricular support (Harding, Moiduddin, et al., 2019).

Collectively, this 3-day professional development plan may further support the teachers' perspectives on the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17 while supporting the social-emotional development of children and increasing overall job satisfaction. A professional development plan should ensure that teachers have access to the latest research and best practices in early childhood education (ECLKC, n.d.-c).

Adult Learning

The conceptual framework for this study was based on Lacey's (1976) theory of social strategies and Mezirow's (2003) transformative learning theory, emphasizing

education and learning where institutional standards exist and focusing on how teachers can adjust and expand their thinking based on what is required. Mezirow's transformational learning theory posits that quality of learning occurs when an idea, theory, or evidence is presented, creating a change in perspective (Zehnder et al., 2021). Adults learn and grow through critical reflection and analysis of their beliefs, assumptions, and values (Namaganda, 2020). Learning occurs when adults undergo a deep and meaningful change in their perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors. This is particularly relevant to adult learning because adults bring a wealth of experience, knowledge, and skills to the learning process (Ajani, 2019).

Adult learning occurs when an experience or event challenges existing beliefs and assumptions about the world or themselves (Eschenbacher & Fleming, 2020). These challenges may require critical reflection regarding assumptions and beliefs, examination of experiences, and exploration of new perspectives and ideas (Noonan, 2019). Through professional development, teachers may consider alternative ways of thinking, acting, and responding and therefore experiment with new behaviors and approaches (Ajani, 2019; Eschenbacher & Fleming, 2020). Further, teachers can then apply their learning in the classroom and evaluate the effectiveness of their new perspectives, strategies, and behaviors.

Adult learning through professional development is focused on critical reflection, dialogue, and experimentation, which may help professionals develop new insights and approaches to their work, leading to improved performance and outcomes (Loeng, 2020). By participating in a professional development plan based on the conceptual framework

of this study, adult learners can develop the skills and knowledge they need to adapt to changing circumstances and have successful professional lives, therefore, increasing their overall job satisfaction.

Specialized Training

HS teachers play a critical role in the education and development of their students (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2023). Specialized trainings can improve teaching skills and knowledge. Based on the findings of this study and the individualized needs and interests of the participants, topics for training should be related to child development milestones, including specialization, to examine extensively HSPPS, specifically Standard 1302.17. These should also include family engagement, how the HS teachers can support their students' social-emotional development, cultural competency and implicit biases, trauma-informed care, special early childhood education, mindfulness, and how to create inviting and engaging learning experiences.

Specialized training for teachers is essential for several reasons—it improves teaching skills, including their knowledge and ability to better their teaching effectiveness (Duraku et al., 2022). It can help teachers develop innovative teaching strategies and techniques specific to the needs of their students or student populations. Specialized training can help teachers better understand the unique needs of their students, including those with disabilities or those with different cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds and learning styles. This understanding can lead to more effective and inclusive teaching practices (Cornelius et al., 2020). Education constantly evolves, and specialized training can help teachers stay current with new research, technologies, and teaching methods

(Sterrett & Richardson, 2020). When teachers have access to specialized training, they can improve their teaching effectiveness, resulting in better student outcomes. Students who have teachers with specialized training are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and successful in their academic pursuits (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2020). Finally, specialized training is an essential part of professional development for teachers as it helps them to stay engaged and motivated in their work and can lead to an increase in overall job satisfaction (Lipscomb et al., 2021).

Professional development through specialized training for teachers is critical for improving the quality of education that students receive. The U.S. Department of Education (n.d.-a) reported that by investing in teacher training, programs could improve student outcomes and create a more positive and effective learning environment for everyone involved. These outcomes further support the findings of this study and research question. With improvement in the specific training areas and ensuring an understanding of HSPPS 1302.17, teachers will have a better understanding of the Standard and its implementation, students' social-emotional development will be supported, and overall job satisfaction will increase.

Practice-Based Coaching and Support

The Office of HS (2022) indicated that practice-based coaching and support play a critical role in the professional development of HS teachers. Practice-based coaching is an approach to instructional coaching that can be applied across diverse settings (ECKLC, 2022b). This type of coaching occurs through a collaborative partnership between teacher and coach. Coaching cycles include components that are teacher-

directed as they develop their individualized goals, engage in focused observations, and reflect on feedback (von der Embse et al., n.d.). The teacher's ability to execute practice-based coaching is indicative of the effectiveness of learning (Aksela & Haatainen, 2019).

Professional development is a continuous process that includes continuous coaching. Teachers require constant coaching and support to improve their skills and knowledge. Based on this study's findings, ways in which practice-based coaching and support can be beneficial include:

- Individualized learning: Coaching and support provide teachers with individualized learning opportunities. A coach can work with a teacher to identify their strengths and areas for improvement and provide targeted feedback and support.
- Goal setting and planning: Coaches can work with teachers to set goals for their professional development and create a plan to achieve those goals. This can help teachers to stay motivated and focused on their professional growth.
- Modeling best practices: Coaches can model best practices for teachers, demonstrating effective instructional strategies and classroom management techniques. This can help teachers to observe the strategies in action and apply them in their classrooms.
- Collaboration and reflection: Coaching and support can provide opportunities for collaboration and reflection. Teachers can work with a coach or a group of colleagues to share ideas and experiences and reflect on their teaching practices.

- Building confidence and resilience: Coaching and support can help teachers to build confidence and resilience in their practice. A coach can provide encouragement and support and help teachers to overcome challenges and setbacks.

As indicated, coaching and support are essential components of effective professional development for teachers (Aksela & Haatainen, 2019). Data has shown that issues surrounding the success of specialized training for children with special needs or challenging behaviors lie not only at the classroom teacher level but also in the program's climate and culture and through systemic support from the administration (Woodcock & Woolfson, 2019). Implementing coaching and support provides individualized learning opportunities, goal setting and planning, modeling best practices, collaboration and reflection, and building confidence and resilience (Taylor et al., 2019). With coaching and support, teachers can continue to grow and develop their skills and knowledge, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes. The data from this study indicate a need for support from administrators and parents.

Receiving support from the HS administration may increase teachers' job satisfaction. Creating a positive work environment is critical for recruiting and retaining staff. To promote teachers' mental health and well-being, HS administrators should include providing staff with regularly scheduled breaks, brief unscheduled wellness breaks, reflective supervision, and access to employee assistance programs (ECKLC, 2022b). The Office for Head Start (2022) suggested that HS administration could foster a desirable and engaging work environment through effective communication with staff,

clear policies and procedures, regularly occurring professional development, coaching, and mentoring (ECKLC, 2022d).

The outcomes of the study—professional development, adult learning, specialized training, practice-based coaching, and continuous HS administrative backing—support the findings of the study as they reflect the perspectives of the HS teachers. Further, the outcomes can be connected to the findings through the development of and teacher participation in the 3-day professional development plan (see Appendix A).

Administrators may present a professional development plan that is specific to the teachers' needs as well as those of the students. As indicated by the data, the current offerings are not doing so.

Project Description

A 3-day professional development plan was developed as my project using the results of this basic qualitative study. To address the gap in practice, this 3-day professional development plan focusing on supporting students' social-emotional development and increasing overall job satisfaction while implementing HSPPS 1302.17 will be presented to HS teachers. The project is titled *Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.17: Supporting Students' Social-Emotional Development While Ensuring Overall Job Satisfaction* (see Appendix A). Implementation should occur in the summer before an upcoming school year over 3 teacher workdays in August when the program is closed to students. This professional development plan can be repeated or offered as a refresher any time thereafter as needed. The administrators would be responsible for mandating teacher participation, although it is recommended, as the study participants

indicated a need for such training. My goal was to develop a professional development plan for HS administrators to present to HS teachers to further support their students' social-emotional development while maintaining job satisfaction through implementing the federally mandated HSPPS 1302.17.

The professional development plan will be presented over 3 consecutive days from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The participants will be allowed two 15-minute breaks for snacks, restroom use, and reflection. There will be an hour lunch break as well. The administration will provide all snacks and lunch, which may increase teacher participation and indicate support and appreciation. The day will begin with a warmer experience that welcomes participants to the day. I prefer the term “warmer,” as it has a more welcoming feel than the more commonly used “ice breaker.” To create a level of comfort and familiarity and for deeper involvement, there will be multiple team building and small group activities throughout the 3 days (see Toropova et al., 2021).

The following discussion includes the schedule for the 3-day professional development plan. A more detailed description is provided in Appendix A. Day 1 will begin with a warmer experience, allowing the participants to prepare themselves for the day's training and feel welcomed and comfortable. A preassessment will also be distributed to assess the knowledge base of the participants prior to completing the 3-day professional development plan. Preassessment is a tool that provides insight for the facilitator into the learners' readiness to receive new concepts (Bukhari, 2019). The initial day will also include two small group activities, which will give the participants an opportunity to discuss the information shared and communicate their perspectives.

Following each small group activity, the teachers will return as a large group to discuss and share perceptions. There will be three PowerPoint presentations and lectures from me, the facilitator. On Day 1, the topics of these presentations will be an HSPPS overview and the importance and meaning of HSPPS 1302.17, and how teachers can support students' social-emotional development. Each day of the 3-day professional development plan will allow for personal reflection when the participant can quietly and thoughtfully process the material presented and mentally prepare for the next day. To take a reflective approach, the participants should think of their practices in-depth, questioning their approaches and assumptions to gain better self-awareness (see Bassot, 2023).

Day 2 will follow a similar format. It will begin with a warmer and team building experience to welcome the participants. There will be two small group activities and discussions. These include presentation of the day's topics and the opportunity for participants to discuss the information shared and communicate their perspectives. Again, after each small group activity, teachers will reform as a large group to discuss perceptions. The three topics presented on Day 2 are creating inviting and engaging learning experiences, cultural competency and implicit bias, and a trauma-informed care overview.

Day 3 of the 3-day professional development plan will have the same format as Days 1 and 2. The PowerPoint presentations and lectures to be facilitated are special early childhood education, family engagement, and mindfulness. The participants will again break into small groups to discuss the information shared in the presentations.

Following each small group activity, teachers will reform as a large group to discuss perceptions. At closing on Day 3, participants will be presented with a postassessment. This assessment will consist of the same questions asked in the preassessment. The postassessment will be used to assess the information learned by the teachers during the professional development; the data can also be used to demonstrate successful outcomes of this project to further support future positive social change (see Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019).

Resources and Potential Barriers

The following materials will be needed in the conference room prior to and throughout the 3-day professional development plan:

- Laptop computer
- Projector
- Projector screen
- Internet access
- 3-day professional development PowerPoint created by the facilitator
- Markers
- Large display flip chart board paper
- Pens/pencils
- Notepads
- Social-emotional emotion posters

The conference room where the professional development will be presented should be arranged using round tables large enough to seat six people. The number of

tables needed will depend on the number of teachers attending. The projector screen should be in the front of the room so it can be viewed from the tables.

A potential barrier to this professional development is that there could be an increase or unexpected rise in diagnoses of COVID-19. Should that occur, the administration and I will meet to discuss facilitating options, including rescheduling the in-person presentation or presenting the 3 days of professional development over the Zoom digital software application.

Project Implementation

As the researcher and creator of this project, I will serve as the initial facilitator for delivery of the project. As previously indicated, my primary goal in creating this 3-day professional development plan was to provide knowledge and support to HS teachers through supporting the social-emotional development of their students and the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17 while increasing overall job satisfaction. As the facilitator, I will be able to ensure that this goal is achieved. For planning and implementation purposes, in June, I will email the HS administration requesting a meeting to review the 3-day professional development plan, which will allow ample time to ensure presentation in August. During the meeting, I will request scheduling to present the professional development plan over 3 days during the teacher workdays in August prior to the start of school.

Roles and Responsibilities of Participants

During the 3 days of professional development, as the facilitator, I expect the participants will arrive on time and present themselves in a professional manner.

Participants will be expected to be respectful and open to the opinions and perceptions of others. Participants should be willing to contribute to small and large group activities and discussions. Notepads, pens, pencils, and other supplies will be provided throughout the 3 days. Participants will be expected to complete the pre- and postassessments.

Project Evaluation Plan

The evaluation of this 3-day professional development plan is goal-based and formative. The justification for utilizing these types of evaluations is derived from the use of pre- and postassessments. These assessments will indicate if the goals of the professional development plan were achieved. The data will show if there was an increase in knowledge from the first day to the third. Formative evaluations will be done as I walk around the conference room during small group activities. I will listen to the discussions based on the content of the information I presented. This knowledge will allow me, as the facilitator, to assess and understand if I am educating the participants and expressing the content of the professional development plan clearly.

The Centers for Disease Control (2019) indicated that to effectively evaluate professional development, the facilitator must provide information, resources, and examples to the participants; identify and engage participants and describe the professional development activities and goals; define the evaluation objectives and questions; identify indicators that will be measured; and analyze and interpret the results to share and use findings effectively. This will be done to further support implementation of the evaluation. The data for this professional development plan will be collected through the implementation of pre- and postassessment tests. The pre- and

postassessments will consist of the same questions. This format will allow for a clear analysis of learning and knowledge gained. Ample time will be given on the first and third days of the professional development for the participants to complete the assessments.

Overall Goals of the Project

In addition to the purpose of this project—increasing knowledge and understanding for HS teachers in supporting social-emotional development through the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17 and increasing job satisfaction—and based on the findings of this study, the overall goals of the 3-day professional development plan are:

- Enhance knowledge and understanding of HSPPS, specifically HSPPS 1302.17.
- Promote the development of social-emotional development.
- Improve the quality of early childhood education by creating engaging and inviting learning experiences.
- Develop an understanding of cultural competencies and implicit bias.
- Address special early childhood education, including supporting the development and learning of children from diverse backgrounds, those with disabilities, dual-language learners, and those from different cultures.
- Improving trauma-informed care.
- Promote mindfulness in teachers and students.
- Promote family engagement and parental participation.
- Support ongoing professional development and practice-based coaching.

Overall Evaluation Goals

Evaluation goals of the 3-day professional development plan are valuable because they provide results that can be used to demonstrate successful outcomes to stakeholders, identify specific ways to improve implementation, and allow for strategic decisions regarding future opportunities for social change. The evaluations should also present documentation measuring the effectiveness of the professional development plan. This includes assessing whether the professional development achieved its intended outcomes and if it positively affected the knowledge, skills, and practices of the teachers.

The evaluations should identify areas for improvement in the professional development plan. Gathering feedback from participants regarding what worked well, what could be improved, and what they would like to see included in future professional development opportunities should all be considered. Finally, the evaluations should ensure accountability for the professional development program, including demonstrating to stakeholders that it met its goals and objectives and that it is a worthwhile investment in the professional development of HS teachers.

This project has various stakeholders, including the HS teachers, HS administrators, students, and families. In the context of this 3-day professional development plan, each stakeholder has a specific role. The teachers are responsible for delivering high-quality instruction, supporting children's social-emotional development, and implementing HSPPS. Therefore, they need to have the knowledge and skills to effectively implement evidence-based practices. Professional development opportunities,

such as this project, can help HS teachers acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the needs of their students.

HS administrators are responsible for managing the HS program and ensuring it meets its goals and objectives. They need to have a clear understanding of the professional development needs of their staff and how to provide opportunities aligned with the program's goals. Through presenting this project to the HS teachers, the administrators ensure their teachers are provided the learning opportunities to meet HSPPS' goals and objectives for the program.

Students and families are the primary beneficiaries of the HS program. They benefit from high-quality instruction and support that promotes their social-emotional development. This professional development plan will provide opportunities for teachers that can lead to improved student outcomes. Families are important partners in the HS program and need to be informed of their child's progress and how they can support their learning and development at home. Professional development opportunities for teachers can include strategies for engaging families and supporting their involvement in their child's education.

When developing this project, it was essential to consider the needs of all stakeholders. Learning opportunities through the project are aligned with the HSPPS program's goals and objectives. By providing and facilitating this professional development plan, the HS administration can effectively support the growth and development of young children and ensure the increased job satisfaction of HS teachers.

Project Implications

HSPPS 1302.17 requires that programs provide support for children's social-emotional development, including addressing challenging behaviors and promoting positive behavior. The Standard has been a challenge for some HS teachers.

Implementation of this project may have several implications for HS teachers and their perspectives. Teachers may begin to view and better understand social-emotional development as an important part of children's overall development rather than just academic achievement. This may lead to a shift in teaching practices and a greater focus on creating a supportive classroom environment that promotes positive social and emotional development.

Teachers may become more aware of the effect that challenging behaviors can have on a child's development and seek out new strategies for addressing these behaviors in a positive and effective way. Through this project, teachers may experience an increased collaboration with families as they seek to involve them in supporting children's social-emotional development and addressing the causes of the challenging behaviors. This may include providing resources and information to families as well as seeking input and feedback from families on strategies that have been effective at home.

Exposure to this project may also ignite interest in future professional development opportunities for HS teachers. Teachers may seek new strategies and approaches for supporting children's social-emotional development and HSPPS. Overall, this project is designed to lead to a greater emphasis on social-emotional development in

early childhood education, implementation of HSPPS 1302.17, and increased overall job satisfaction.

This project has the potential to create significant social change. When HS teachers have access to high-quality professional development opportunities focused on social-emotional development, they are better equipped to create supportive learning environments that foster positive outcomes for children. By supporting children's social-emotional development, teachers can help prevent or mitigate a range of negative outcomes, such as poor academic performance, mental health problems, and social difficulties.

HSPPS 1302.17 requires programs to promote positive social-emotional development in children, moving away from suspension and expulsion practices. This project focuses on this standard and can help ensure its successful implementation. By providing teachers with the knowledge and skills to effectively implement HSPPS 1302.17, the quality of HS programs can be improved, and children can receive their full benefit.

Through presentation and participation in this project, job satisfaction for HS teachers may increase. Teachers will be provided with the knowledge and skills that will allow them to feel competent and confident in their ability to support children's social-emotional development and be effective in their roles. HS teachers who participate in this professional development may also be more likely to feel fulfilled and satisfied in their work, which can lead to decreased turnover rates, improved program stability, and better outcomes for children.

Although developed to address a local problem, this project could also be introduced and extended to HS programs across the state and country. By investing in this project that supports HS teachers in the social-emotional development of their students, there can be a positive cycle of change that benefits children, teachers, families, the HS program, and society.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

By reflecting on the local problem, the data from the study, and the project itself, I decided that presenting the information in the form of a 3-day professional development plan was the best fit to guarantee the most effectiveness and potential for social change. Section 3 consisted of a description of the project. In this section, I reflect on the project's strengths and limitations, consider recommendations for alternative approaches for the project, as well as discuss scholarship, project development, leadership, and change.

Project Strengths and Limitations

This 3-day professional development plan has several strengths that make it effective for supporting the professional growth and development of HS teachers. This project is aligned with HSPPS and focuses specifically on HSPPS 1302.17. HSPPS ensures teachers receive training that is relevant to their daily work with children and families. This alignment also helps programs meet federal requirements for quality and accountability.

This 3-day professional development plan is a comprehensive and effective tool for supporting the professional growth and development of HS teachers. This project is based on the study's findings and evidence-based practices shown to be effective in supporting children's social-emotional development and learning. Focusing on research-based practices helps ensure teachers receive training grounded in best practices.

The 3-day professional development plan was designed using a conceptual framework that focuses on adult learning principles, recognizing that adult learners have unique needs and preferences. By using techniques such as active learning, collaborative

learning, and practice-based coaching, this project will engage HS teachers in the learning process and helps them apply new knowledge and skills in their work with children, all while increasing their overall job satisfaction.

A strength of the project is that it was designed to be flexible and customizable to meet the unique needs of a local HS program and the HS teachers and therefore presents the opportunity for a variety of implementation schedules and formats. It allows the HS program to tailor training to its specific goals and priorities. The project is also adaptable as training as their needs may change over time.

Integrating social-emotional development into the project is important in meeting its goals and objectives. By doing so, the project helps HS teachers better understand the importance of this area of development and how to effectively support it in their work with children. The project was also designed to improve classroom management and increase overall job satisfaction.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

This 3-day professional development plan was designed to support HS teachers in the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17, support the social-emotional development of students, and increase job satisfaction. Although it is a program that extends over 3 days, there were several alternative approaches to this project. The other approaches would still have met the goals and objectives of the project.

Instead of a 3-day in-person training, the HS program can offer the same information using online modules. Teachers can complete these modules at their own

pace. This allows teachers to fit the training into their busy schedules and reduces costs associated with conference room reservations, refreshments, and materials.

The HS program could also establish peer learning communities where teachers share experiences, discuss best practices, and solve problems together. This approach promotes collaboration. It can also foster a sense of community among the HS teachers. In addition, the project could be offered in workshop and seminar formats. These shorter, individual training sessions can be easier to fit into teachers' schedules. They could also provide targeted support involving specific areas where HS teachers may need the most training.

By using these alternative approaches, the HS program can provide high-quality professional development opportunities that consist of the same content as the 3-day professional development plan that supports the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17, promotes social-emotional development, and increases job satisfaction for HS teachers. By exploring and implementing alternative approaches, teachers may continuously feel supported by the HS administration while enhancing their professional development.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

The doctoral process of conducting research and developing this basic qualitative study with Walden University has been one of my most challenging but rewarding experiences. It has provided immeasurable and valuable learning and growth opportunities, including an enhanced understanding of my research topic, development of research skills, and increased confidence in my educational and professional abilities.

Scholarship

The process of completing Walden University's doctoral program and conducting the research that led to the creation of this project has facilitated significant personal growth and development for me as a scholar. Conducting research and completing a doctoral program requires a high level of critical thinking. As I engaged with the literature and analyzed the data, I developed a greater ability to evaluate evidence, make informed judgments, and draw conclusions based on the findings of my study.

Through the process of conducting participant interviews and other areas of research, I developed a range of research skills, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation, that I did not previously have. These skills will serve me well in academic and professional contexts as they can be applied to future research projects. I found that completing this doctoral program required a deep understanding of HSPPS, the implementation of the mandated standards, the HS teachers' perspectives, and the development of the project. As I composed the literature reviews and researched the topic, I gained an understanding and expertise in this area. I will be able to apply that expertise to my broader knowledge of early childhood education.

With my growth as a doctoral student, researcher, and scholar, I look forward to opportunities to share my research findings with others. This may involve presenting at conferences, publishing articles, or teaching higher education courses. Through these experiences and by conducting research on HS teachers' perspectives and professional development on the implementation of performance Standard 1302.17, I will contribute to the field of early childhood education and HS programming. My research has the

potential to improve the quality of HS programs, support HS teachers, and assist in the positive development of young children.

Practitioner

Through this doctoral process, I learned many skills that will further enhance my role as an early childhood educator, professor, and practitioner. Specific to this study, as a practitioner, I tasked myself with developing a 3-day professional development plan based on HS teachers' perspectives on the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. One of my goals was to create a project that was both informative and engaging. The professional development plan is intended, by design, to support the social-emotional development of students and increase overall job satisfaction for the HS teachers through the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17.

I will be an educator and a practitioner for the remainder of my professional life. This doctoral experience and process have added context that I can apply to my current role as a higher education department chair. It will also provide a larger opportunity for me to give more to my community as an educator and practitioner, leading to positive social change.

Project Developer

Professionally, I have developed multiple 1-hour professional development trainings. However, the process of developing this project provided a more intensive, engaging, and satisfying experience. When beginning the development process, I conducted extensive research on the problem and topic of the study. This included reviewing existing literature and gathering data on teachers' perspectives regarding

implementing HSPPS 1302.17. This research provided the content and structure of the 3-day professional development plan.

As a project developer, I worked to create a project that was interactive, engaging, and tailored to the needs of the HS teachers. The professional development plan includes a mix of activities, including lectures, group discussions, and individual reflection. I also incorporated multimedia resources to enhance the learning experience. As the developer of this project, one of my primary goals was to help the HS teachers understand the importance of social-emotional development for young children and how they can effectively incorporate this into their teaching practices. This includes topics such as creating a positive classroom environment, building relationships with students and families, and using evidence-based strategies to support social-emotional learning.

Another of my roles as project developer was to address the challenges and barriers that HS teachers may face when implementing HSPPS 1302.17. This includes problems such as a lack of resources or support, resistance from colleagues and administrators, or difficulty in engaging families in the process. By acknowledging these challenges and providing strategies for addressing them, the project may help teachers feel more confident and effective in their roles. I also emphasized the importance of self-care and mindfulness for HS teachers. This includes mindfulness activities such as exercises, self-reflection, and discussing ways to maintain work-life balance. By addressing these issues, the project could help increase overall job satisfaction and reduce burnout among HS teachers.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

I have worked in early childhood education for many years, with much of that time devoted to working with HS programs, teachers, and families. When reflecting on the importance of this work, I believe it has the potential to connect with and support the HS teachers in this study as it was derived from their perspectives and input, allowing their voices to be heard. I am convinced that HSPPS 1302.17 is in the best interest of students; however, I understand that many of the logistics concerning implementation of the Standard have fallen on the teachers, creating stress and frustration. Through this study's data and professional development plan, I intend to ensure students' social-emotional development and increase the teachers' job satisfaction.

This basic qualitative study is valuable for several reasons. First, it provides insight into the experiences and perspectives of HS teachers who are responsible for implementing HSPPS 1302.17 in their classrooms. It helps identify areas of strength and potential areas for improvement in the implementation of the Standard, as it is crucial for the social-emotional development of young children. Second, this study provided an in-depth exploration of students' social-emotional development, including challenging behaviors and their effect on overall teacher job satisfaction. This is particularly important in the context of HS programs where the focus is on serving children from low-income families. This population of children may face additional challenges related to social-emotional development.

Third, by collecting rich and detailed data through interviews and field notes, this study provides a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in

implementing HSPPS 1302.17 and how it affects teachers' experiences and job satisfaction. This information could then be used for future professional development plans, policies, and practices that better support HS teachers' work. Finally, this study highlights the importance of HS teacher well-being and self-care in the context of implementing the Standard. This is an often-overlooked aspect of HS teacher professional development; however, it is critical for ensuring that teachers can provide high-quality care and education to their students over the long term. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the experiences and challenges faced by HS teachers, as well as the effect of HSPPS 1302.17 on student social-emotional development and overall teacher job satisfaction. This information could inform the development of effective policies and practices that better support HS teachers and ultimately benefit the children and families they serve.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Work

This project has the potential to affect local HS teachers, their students, and the families they serve. With the successful implementation of the project locally, it could be extended to other HS programs throughout the state and country. By incorporating the conceptual framework upon which this study is structured, strategies for adult learners could be applied to meet the needs of other HS teachers and locations.

Implications

This project could lead to improved teacher performance by providing HS teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement HSPPS 1302.17 effectively. Teachers who are better equipped to support social-emotional development

are likely to have a positive influence on student outcomes. The 3-day professional development plan may also improve job satisfaction among HS teachers, which is important for reducing teacher turnover and ensuring high-quality care for children.

Applications

This project could be implemented in HS programs across the country with modifications to meet the specific needs of each program. The knowledge and skills gained from this 3-day professional development could be incorporated into teacher education programs to better prepare future teachers for their work in HS programs. Assessments of this project could also inform the development of future policies and practices that better support HS teachers in their work.

Directions for Future Research

Future research as a result of this project's implementation could include exploring the long-term effect of the 3-day professional development plan on HS teacher performance and CLASS scores, student outcomes, and job satisfaction. Examination of the influence of the project on families, including their perceptions of teacher performance and the social-emotional development of their children, could also be a direction for future research. Further, future research could explore the implementation of the 3-day professional development plan for HS programs to identify best practices and potential barriers to implementation of the mandated standard.

Conclusion

I began this study after having worked in infant and toddler mental health for several years. I found that many teachers understand that suspension and expulsion of

young children are not in the child's best interest or best practices in early childhood education. However, many teachers have difficulties managing the behaviors of these children. Teachers want to support children socially and emotionally but also experience professional burnout. Upon further examination of a local HS program, a gap in practice was identified with their implementation of HSPPS 1302.17. Through this federally mandated standard, these teachers were required to find the resources to best support children who would no longer be suspended or expelled from the program.

Teachers in this research study shared stories of being passionate about being early childhood educators. However, they also stated that being spit on, hit, or having a chair thrown at them was more than they could endure. As a result, this resulted in an overall decrease in job satisfaction, ultimately leading to higher teacher turnover. With teachers leaving the HS program, children's social-emotional development continues to suffer.

Developing a 3-day professional development plan based on the study's findings may provide the teachers who participated in this study with the support and education they need. Through this project, they can gain knowledge in the areas that will best support them in the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17, supporting the social-emotional development of their students and increasing their overall job satisfaction. Having the HS teachers implement strategies from the knowledge gained from the project as well as added support from practice-based coaching from the administration, it is my hope as the researcher and author of this project that they will excel in their profession and be more

equipped to support the social-emotional and overall development of the students in their program.

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Appendix A: The Project

Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.17: Supporting Students’**Social Emotional Development While Ensuring Overall Teacher Job Satisfaction**

Purpose	To increase the knowledge and understanding of HS teachers in supporting social-emotional development through the implementation of HSSPS 1302.17 and increasing job satisfaction based on the findings of this study.
Target audience	Head Start teachers and Head Start administrators
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance knowledge and understanding of HSPPS, specifically HSSPS 1302.17. • Promote the development of social-emotional development. • Improve quality of early childhood education through creating engaging and inviting learning experiences. • Developing an understanding of cultural competencies and implicit bias. • Address special early childhood education, including supporting the development and learning of children from diverse backgrounds, those with disabilities, dual-language learners, and those from different cultures. • Improving trauma-informed care. • Promoting mindfulness in teachers and students. • Promoting family engagement and parental participation. • Supporting ongoing professional development and PBC.
Objectives	<p>At completion of the 3-day professional development plan, participants will successfully be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express a general knowledge and understanding of HSPPS, specifically HSSPS 1302.17. • Promote the development of social-emotional development. • Create engaging and inviting learning experiences, increasing the quality of care. • Display an understanding of cultural competencies and implicit bias. • Support the development and learning of children from diverse backgrounds, those with disabilities, dual-language learners, special early childhood education, and those from different cultures. • Improve the implementation of trauma-informed care. • Promote mindfulness in teachers and students. • Invite more family engagement and parental participation.

Evaluation	Formative assessments, pre- and postassessments
Resources/materials	PowerPoint presentation, laptop, projector or screencast, whiteboard, flipchart paper, large meeting room, daily schedule handout, refreshments, tables, name tags, pens, pretests, posttests, and social-emotional emotion posters.

Day 1

9:00 a.m.	Welcome, coffee, juice, refreshments. Preassessment
9:15 a.m.	Warmer experience
9:45 a.m.	Come together as a large group: Share thoughts on warmer experience.
10:00 a.m.	Small group activity/discussion: How do you define the HSPPS? What are your thoughts on HSPPS 1302.17?
10:30 a.m.	Break: coffee, refreshments, restroom, reflections with peers.
10:45 a.m.	Return as large group: Share perspectives from small group activity.
11:00 a.m.	PowerPoint overview & Lecture I: Overview of HSPPS and the “Why” Behind HSPPS 1302.17.
11:30 a.m.	Small group activity: Discuss key points & takeaways from PowerPoint Overview I.
11:45 a.m.	Return as large group: Small groups share perspectives. Are they different from previous discussion?
12:00 p.m.	Lunch: provided by administration.
1:00 p.m.	PowerPoint overview & Lecture II: How to Support Students’ Social-Emotional Development.
1:45 p.m.	Break: refreshments, bathroom, reflections with peers.
2:00 p.m.	PowerPoint overview & Lecture II: How to Support Students’ Social-Emotional Development, continued.
2:50 p.m.	Closing, reflections, and present tomorrow’s agenda.
3:00 p.m.	Dismissal

Day 2

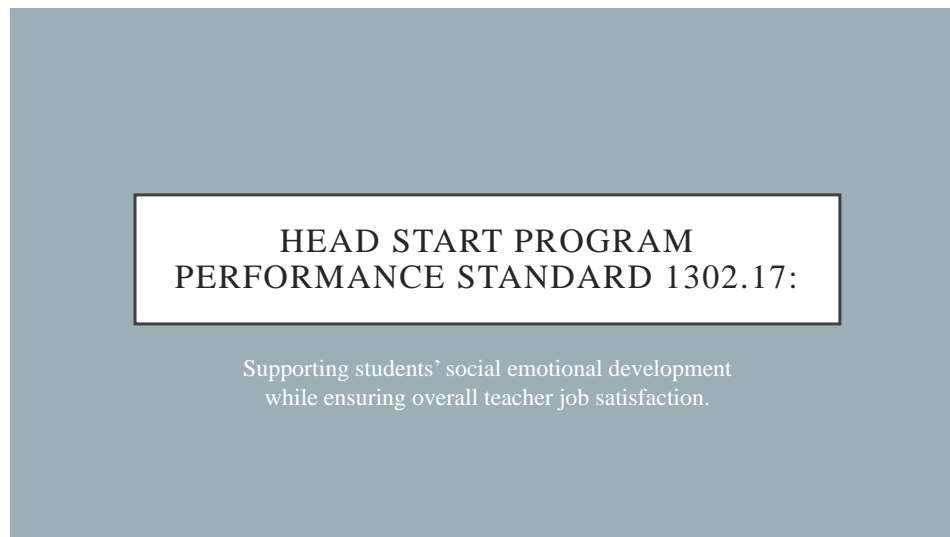
9:00 a.m.	Welcome, coffee, juice, refreshments.
9:15 a.m.	Warmer experience
9:45 a.m.	PowerPoint overview & Lecture III: Creating Engaging and Inviting Learning Experiences for Young Children.
10:00 a.m.	Small group activity: Using the flipchart paper, design and draw an engaging and inviting learning environment to discuss the experiences that will occur.
10:30 a.m.	Return as a large group: Share perspectives from small group activities.
10:45 a.m.	Break: refreshments, coffee, restrooms, reflections with peers.
11:00 a.m.	PowerPoint overview & Lecture IV: Cultural Competence and Implicit Bias.
11:30 a.m.	Small group activity: Discuss cultural competence and implicit bias in your everyday classroom routines. Indicate any changes that you might make.
11:45 p.m.	Return as a large group: Share perspectives from small group activities.
12:00 p.m.	Lunch: Provided by administration.
1:00 p.m.	PowerPoint overview & Lecture V: Trauma-Informed Care.
1:30 p.m.	Group activity: Around the Room: Please walk around the room and comment/respond to each trauma-informed prompt written on each piece of flipchart paper.
1:45 p.m.	Return as large group: Share perspectives from walk-around activity.
2:00 p.m.	Break: refreshments, restroom, reflective discussions with peers.
2:15 p.m.	PowerPoint overview & Lecture VI: Connecting Today's Topics to HSPPS 1302.17.
2:50 p.m.	Closing, reflections, and present tomorrow's agenda.
3:00 p.m.	Dismissal

Day 3

9:00 a.m.	Welcome, coffee, juice, refreshments
9:15 a.m.	Warmer experience
9:45 a.m.	Come together as a large group: Share thoughts on warmer experience.
10:00 a.m.	PowerPoint overview & Lecture VII: Special Early Childhood Education.
10:30 a.m.	Break: refreshments, coffee, restrooms, reflections with peers.
10:45 a.m.	Small group activity: Discuss how the previous PowerPoint applies to your classroom. What changes, if any, will you make with this new information?
11:00 a.m.	Return as large group: Small groups share perspectives.
11:30 a.m.	PowerPoint overview & Lecture VIII: Family Engagement
12:00 p.m.	Lunch: Provided by administration.
1:00 p.m.	PowerPoint overview & Lecture IX: Mindfulness for Teachers and Students
1:45 p.m.	Break: refreshments, bathroom, reflections with peers.
2:00 p.m.	PowerPoint overview & Lecture X: Review: Tying It All Together
2:50 p.m.	Closing, reflections, postassessment.
3:00 p.m.	Dismissal

PowerPoint Slides of 3-Day Professional Development Plan

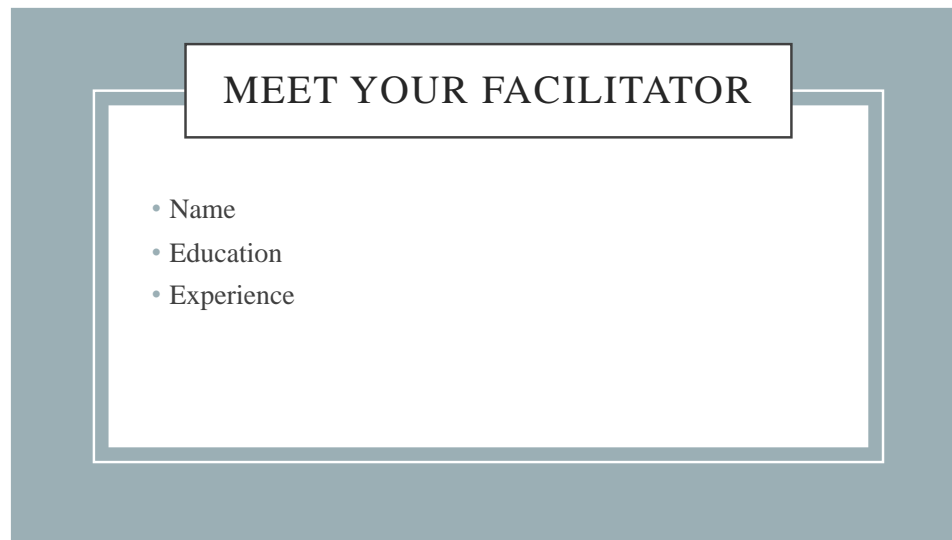
Day 1



Title page: Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.17: Supporting Students' Social-Emotional Development While Ensuring Overall Teacher Job Satisfaction



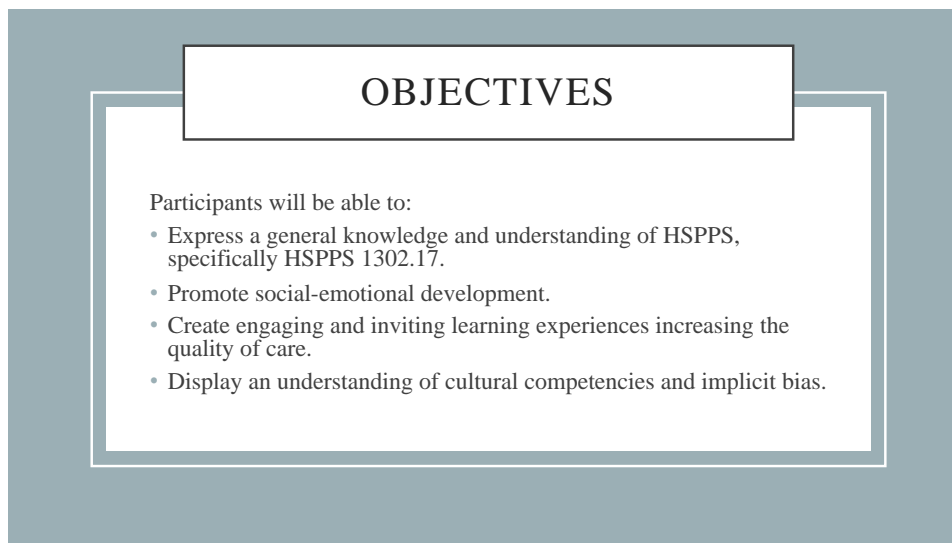
Facilitator will welcome participants to Day 1 of the 3-day professional development. Participants will be given a preassessment as they enter the room. Facilitator will instruct participants that she will come around and collect preassessments once everyone has completed them. Facilitator should indicate where the coffee, juice, and refreshments are located.



MEET YOUR FACILITATOR

- Name
- Education
- Experience

Facilitator will introduce themselves.



OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Express a general knowledge and understanding of HSPPS, specifically HSPPS 1302.17.
- Promote social-emotional development.
- Create engaging and inviting learning experiences increasing the quality of care.
- Display an understanding of cultural competencies and implicit bias.

Facilitator will review the objectives with participants.

OBJECTIVES CONTINUED

- Support the development and learning of children from diverse backgrounds, those with disabilities, dual language learners, special early childhood education, and those from different cultures.
- Improve the understanding and implementation of trauma-informed care.
- Promote mindfulness in teachers and students.
- Increase family engagement and parental participation in the HS classroom.

Facilitator will review the objectives with the participants.

WARMER EXPERIENCE

- How are you feeling?
- From the photos on your table, choose one that best represents how you are feeling coming into Day 1.
- Discuss with those at your table.

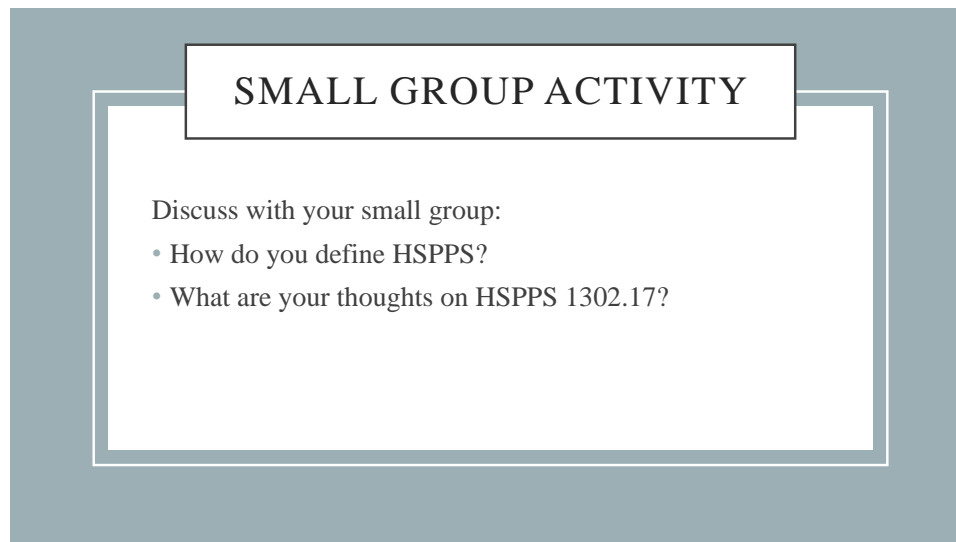
Facilitator will introduce the warming experience: How are you feeling? Choose a photo from your table that best represents how you are feeling coming into Day 1 of this professional development experience. Discuss with those at your table. Facilitator should offer a 5-minute warning. Participants will return together as a large group to share in 15 minutes.



LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Reflect on warmer experience

The facilitator will call participants back as a large group. Facilitator walks around the room, encouraging participants to share their thoughts and assess their feelings from the warmer experience and the professional development plan.



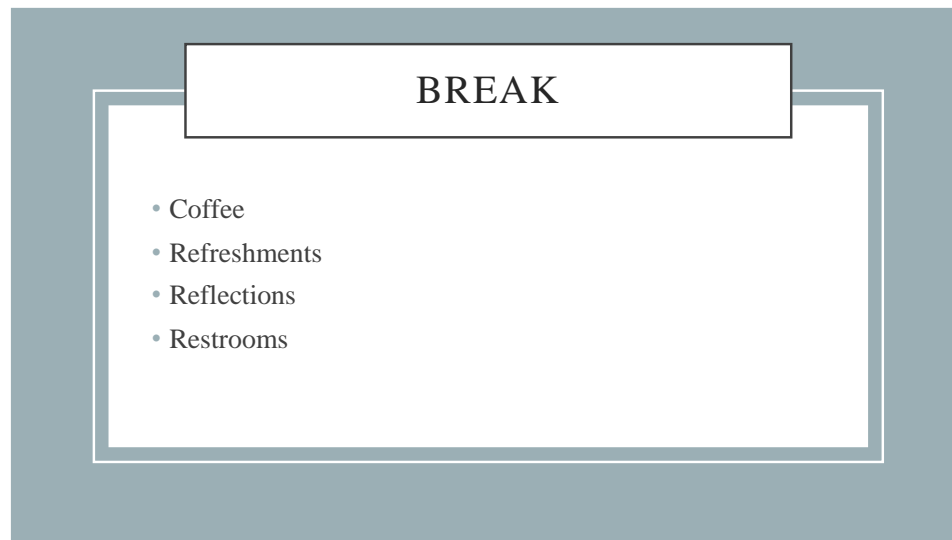
SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Discuss with your small group:

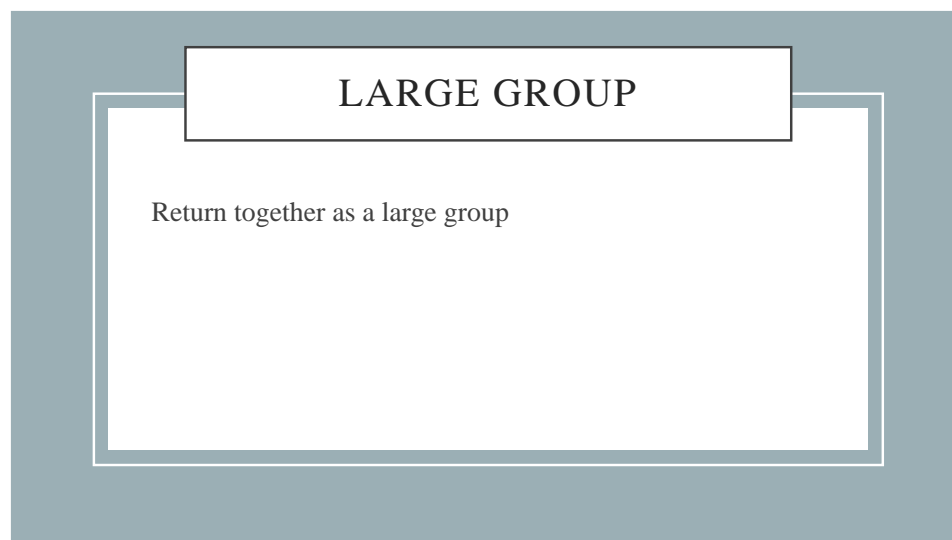
- How do you define HSPPS?
- What are your thoughts on HSPPS 1302.17?

Participants will break into small groups to discuss the two following prompts:

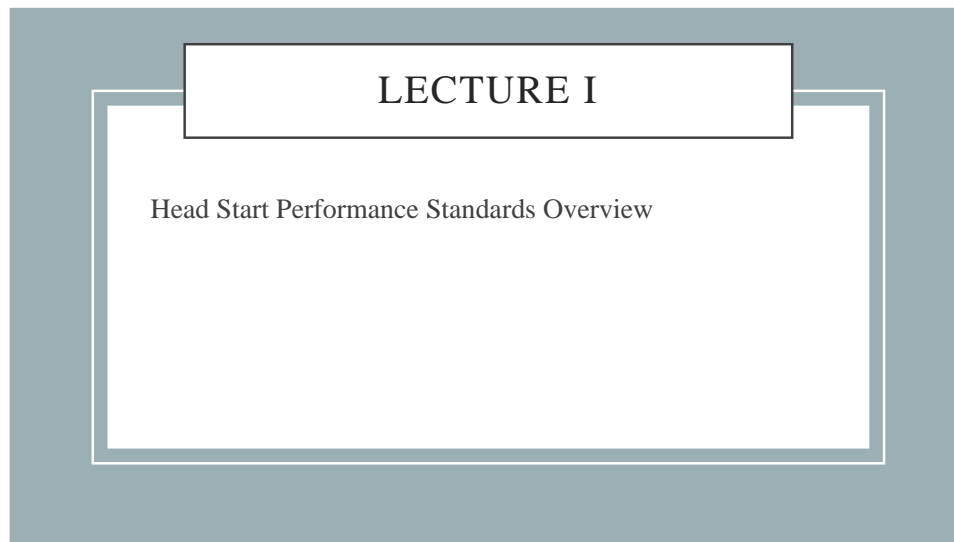
1. How do you define HSPPS?
2. What are your thoughts on HSPPS 1302.17?



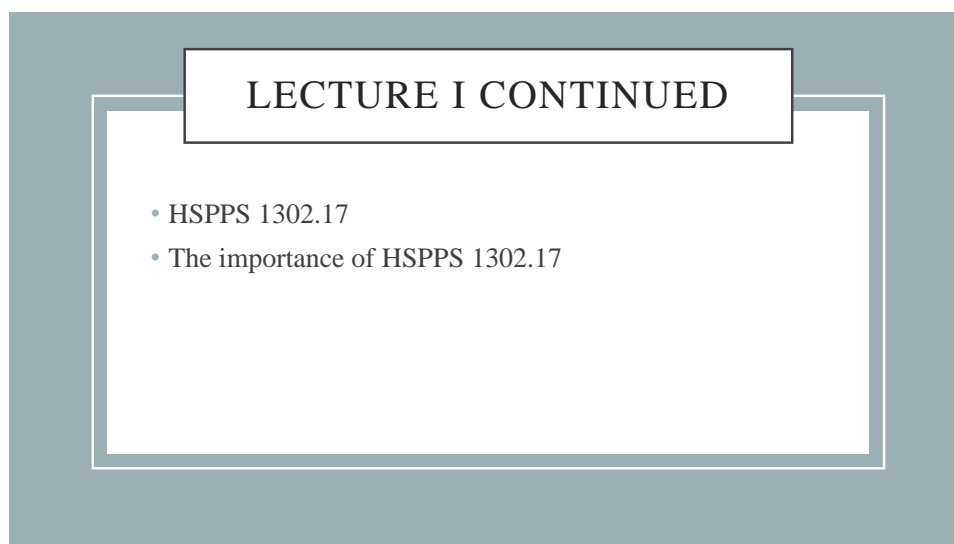
Break for 15 minutes. Facilitator should indicate where the coffee, juice, and refreshments are located.



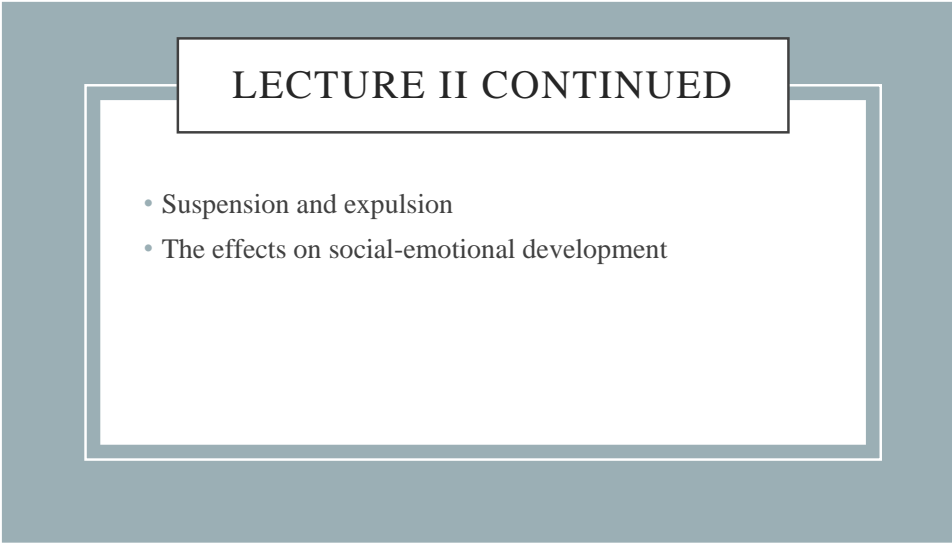
Facilitator will have participants return as a large group to discuss and share the outcomes of the small group activity. Each group should be asked to designate a representative who will present and share their thoughts as indicated on their flip chart paper. The facilitator will walk around the room as each group shares their thoughts.



PowerPoint and Lecture I: Head Start Program Performance Standards Overview. Facilitator will present information on a definition and overview of HSPPS.



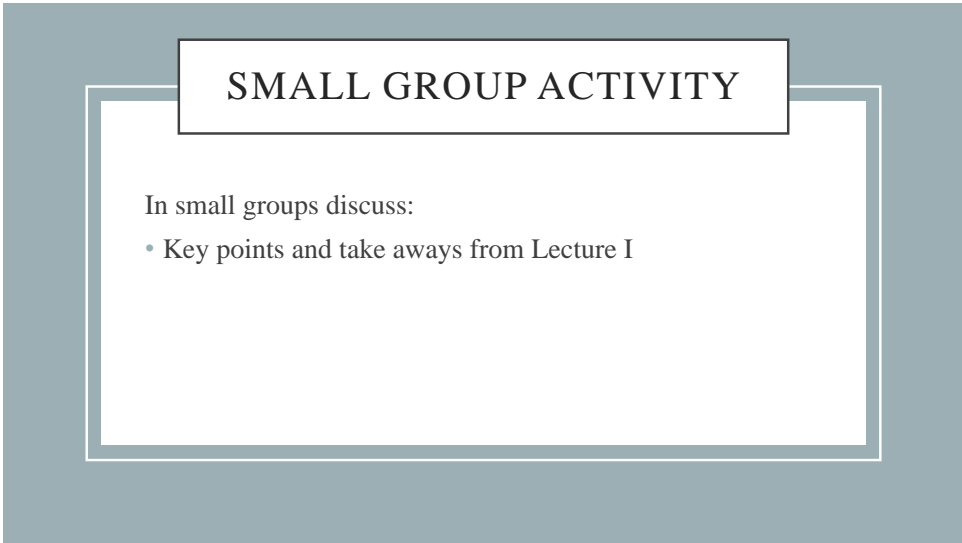
PowerPoint and Lecture I: HSPPS Overview continued. Facilitator will expand on the overview of HSPPS to specifically define and discuss HSPPS 1302.17 and its importance of it.



LECTURE II CONTINUED

- Suspension and expulsion
- The effects on social-emotional development

PowerPoint and Lecture I: HSPPS Overview continued. Facilitator will present data on suspension and expulsion and their effects on the social-emotional development of young children and specifically HS students.



SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

In small groups discuss:

- Key points and take aways from Lecture I

Participants will break up into small groups for 15 minutes to discuss the key points and their takeaways from Lecture I. Facilitator will walk around the room during these small group discussions. Facilitator should also offer a 5-minute warning prior to rejoining as a large group.

RETURN AS LARGE GROUP

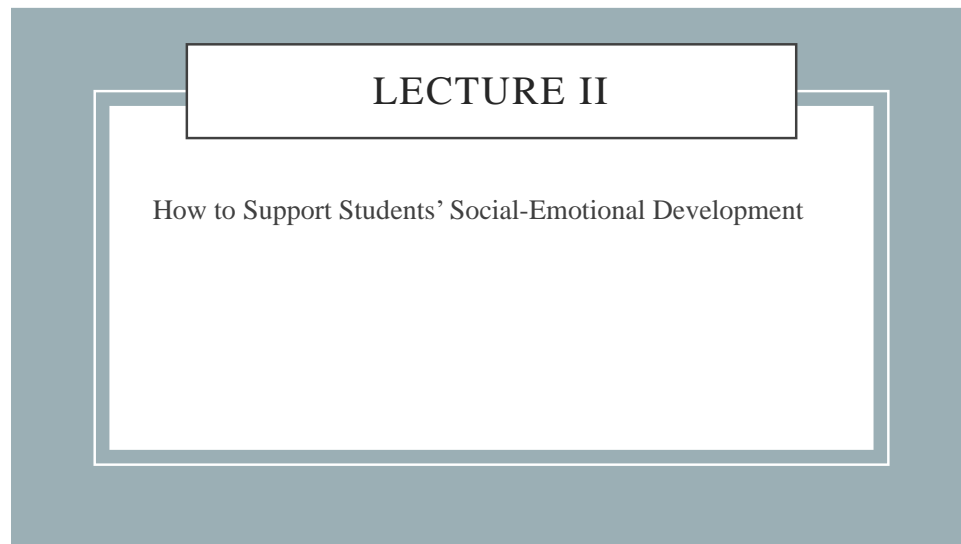
- Overview and definition of HSPPS and HSPPS 1302.17
- Suspension and expulsion of young children impacts children's social emotional development significantly and negatively

Participants will be asked to share their thoughts and discussions regarding the key points and takeaways from Lecture I. Did they change, develop, or stay the same as the first small group discussion? If so, how and why?

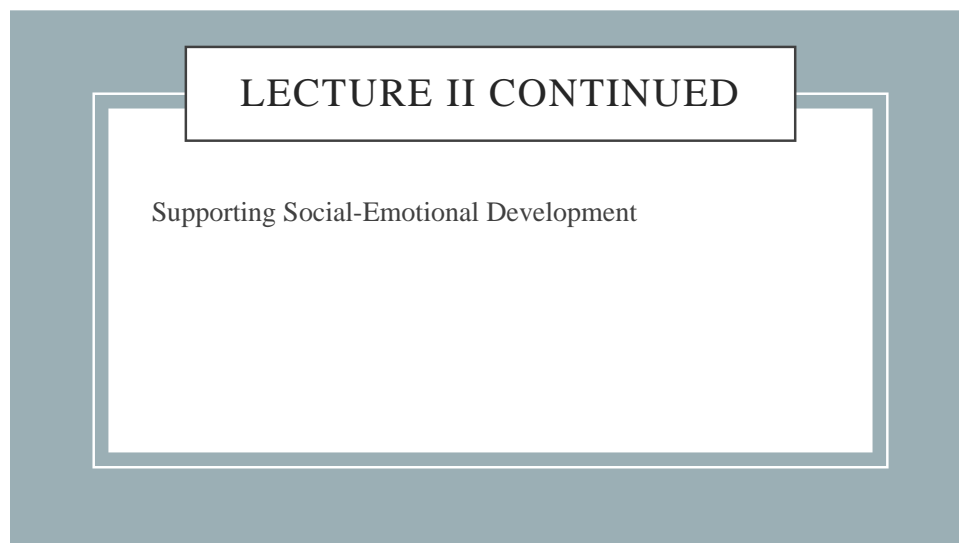
LUNCH

- Enjoy lunch provided by the administration
- Return as a group in 1 hour

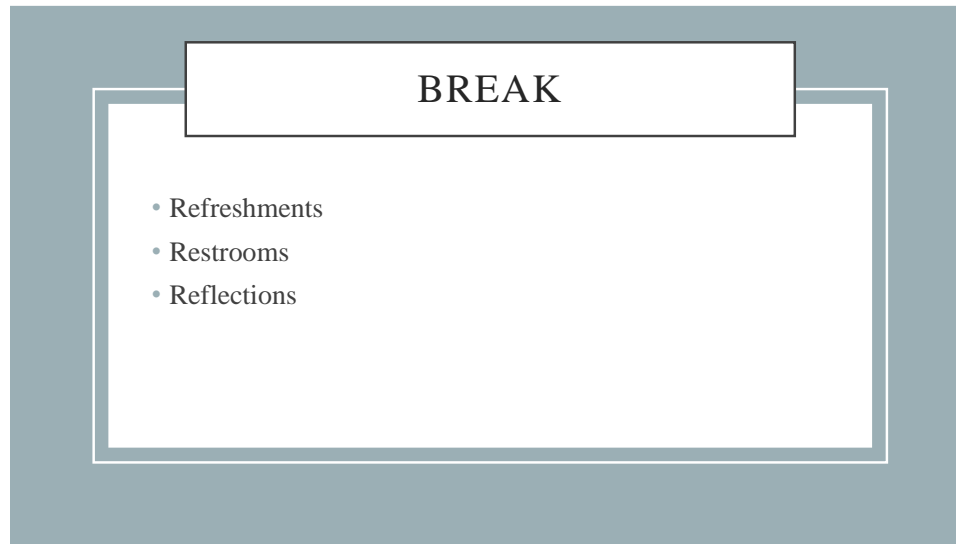
Participants will enjoy lunch that is provided by the administration. Facilitator should remind participants that they are to return together as a large group in 1 hour.



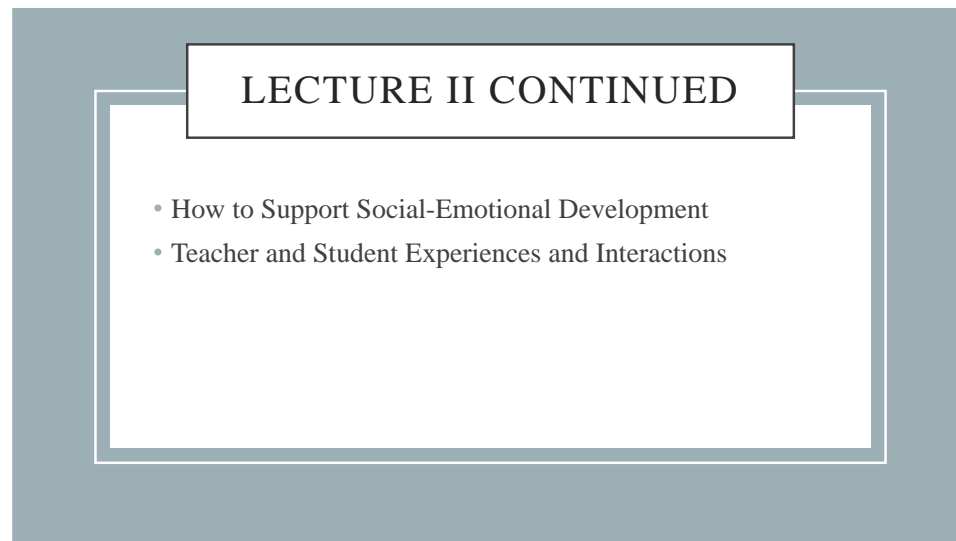
PowerPoint and Lecture II: How to Support Students' Social-Emotional Development to Include Strategies and Effective Implementation.



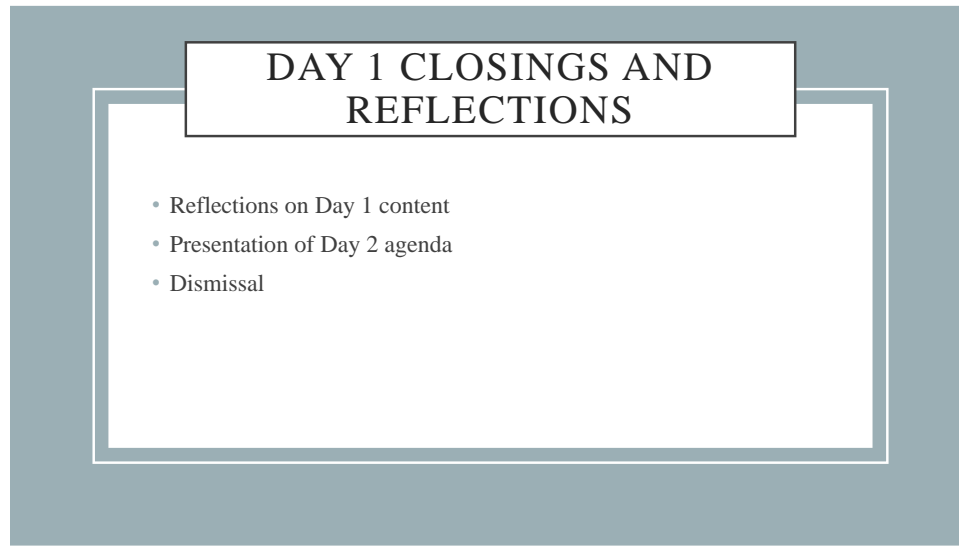
PowerPoint and Lecture II Continued: Supporting Social-Emotional Development.



Break for 15 minutes. Facilitator should indicate where the refreshments are located.



PowerPoint and Lecture II continued: How to Support Social-Emotional Development and the Importance of Positive Teacher/Student and Peer-to-Peer Interactions.



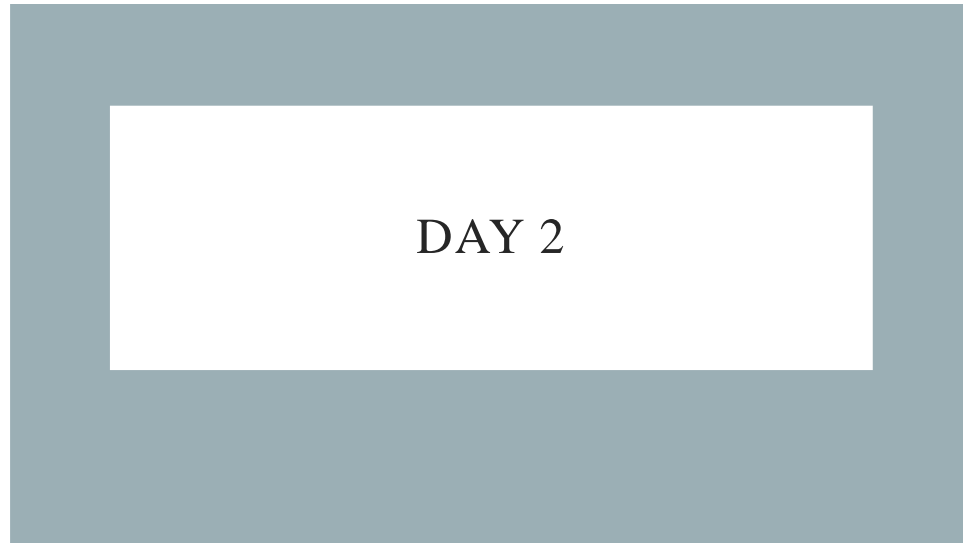
The slide features a dark teal background with a white rectangular area in the center. At the top of this white area is a smaller white box containing the title 'DAY 1 CLOSINGS AND REFLECTIONS'. Below the title is a bulleted list of three items.

DAY 1 CLOSINGS AND REFLECTIONS

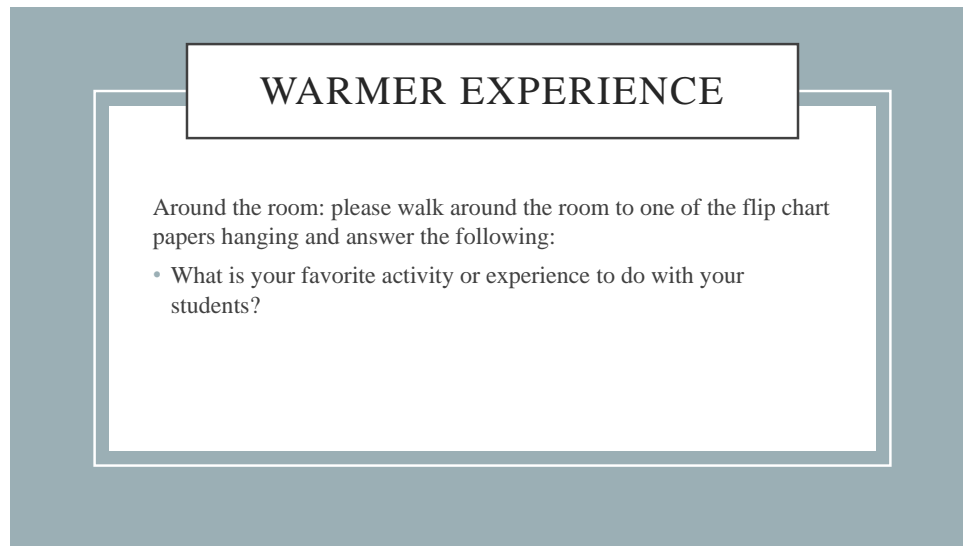
- Reflections on Day 1 content
- Presentation of Day 2 agenda
- Dismissal

The facilitator will encourage participants to reflect on the content of Day 1. Participants are encouraged to share their reflections, thoughts, and/ or ask any questions. Facilitator will present Day 2's agenda, including start time. Thank participants for attending and being actively involved in Day 1.

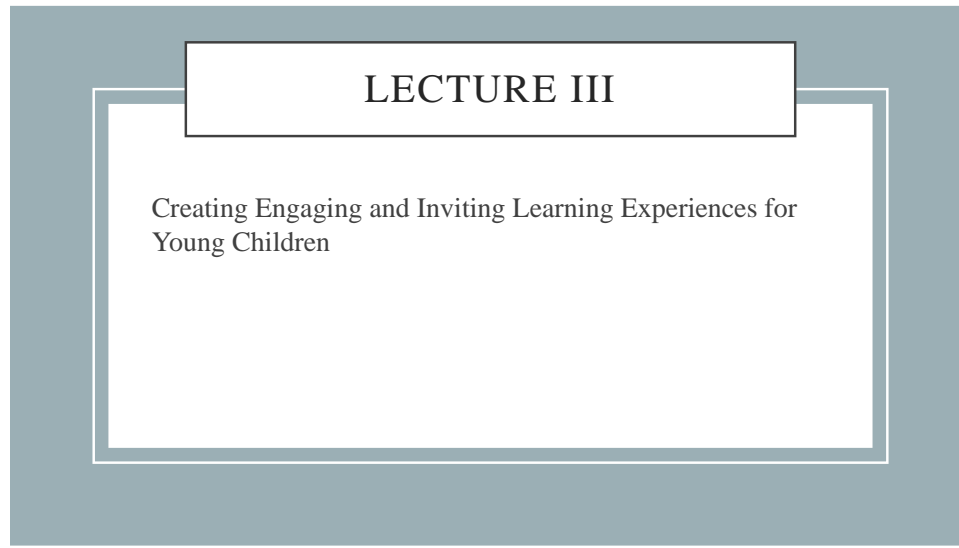
Day 2



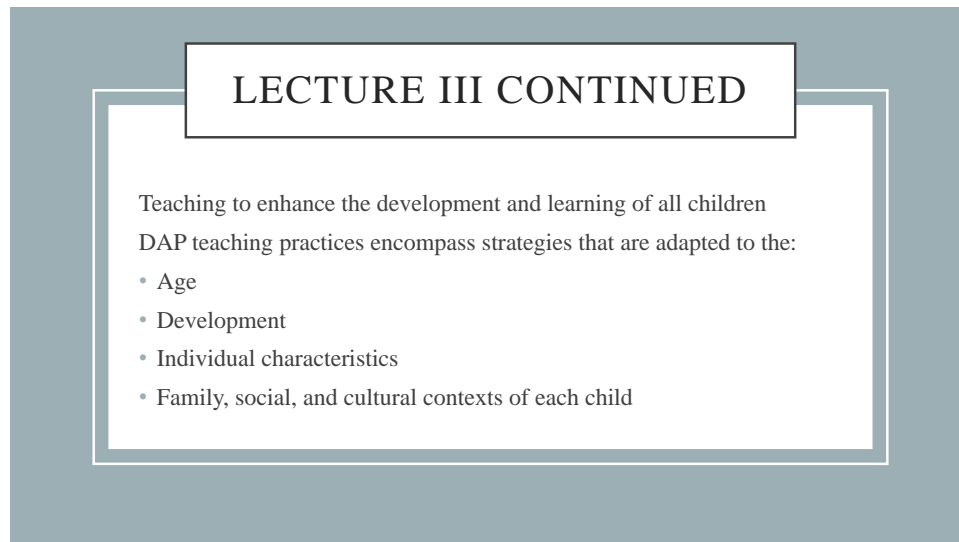
Facilitator will welcome participants to Day 2 of the 3-day professional development plan. Facilitator should indicate where the coffee, juice, and refreshments are located.



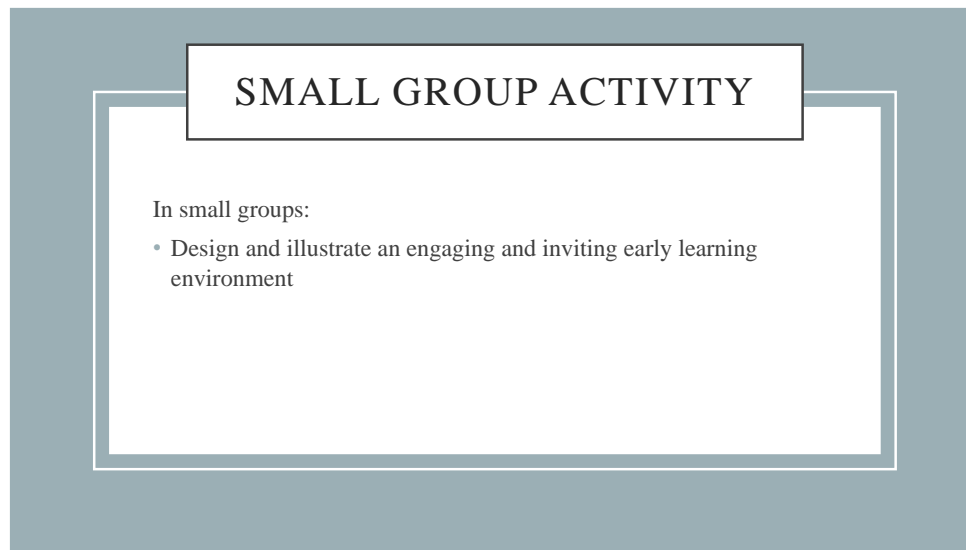
As Day 2's warmer experience, participants will be asked to participate in an "around the room" activity. They will be asked to visit one of the pieces of flip chart paper hanging on the wall and respond to the following question: what is your favorite activity or experience to do with your students?



Facilitator will call participants together as a large group. The facilitator will walk around the room and read some of the answers to the question asked during the warmer experience. This activity will introduce Lecture III: Creating Engaging and Inviting Learning Experiences for Young Children.



PowerPoint and Lecture III continued: Creating Engaging and Inviting Learning Experiences for Young Children as Well as Teaching Practices That Ensure Quality and Developmentally Appropriate Practices.



SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

In small groups:

- Design and illustrate an engaging and inviting early learning environment

Participants will break into small groups. Using flip chart paper and markers, based on the recent discussion, each group will design and illustrate an engaging and inviting early learning environment. Participants will return together as a large group in 15 minutes to share and discuss. Facilitator should walk around to each group during small groups. Facilitator should also offer a 5-minute warning to return to large group.

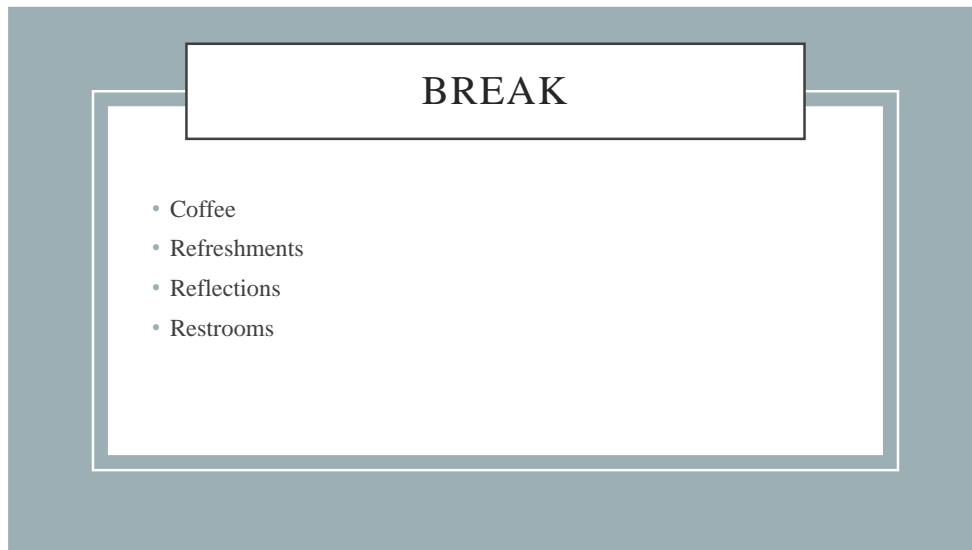


LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

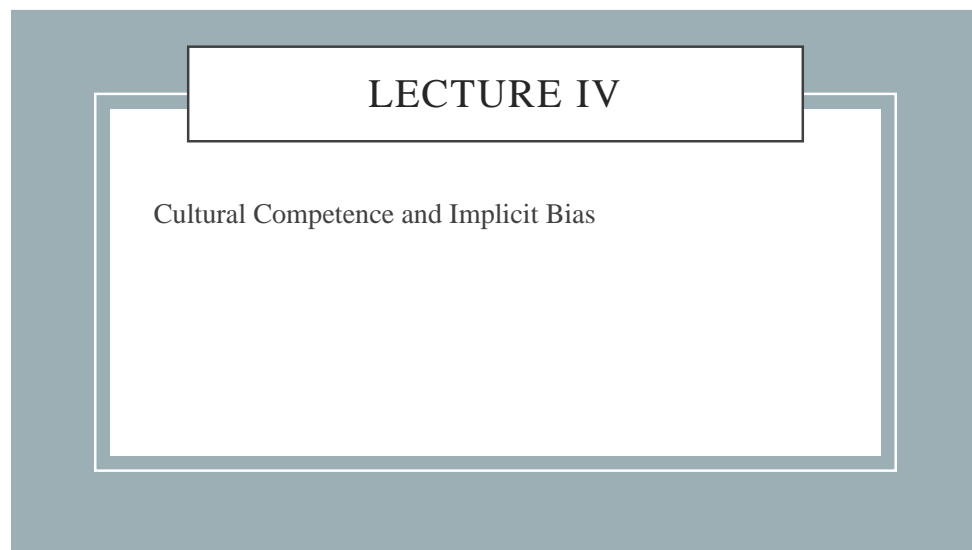
Engaging and Inviting Early Learning Environments

Participants return as a large group. Facilitator will go around the room and have each group share their engaging and inviting early learning environment. Each small group should be asked to select one member who is comfortable presenting. What were your group's key takeaways from the previous material presented? Are these how your current

classrooms are designed? What is the same? What is different? Are the teacher's interactions and planned activities the same or different?

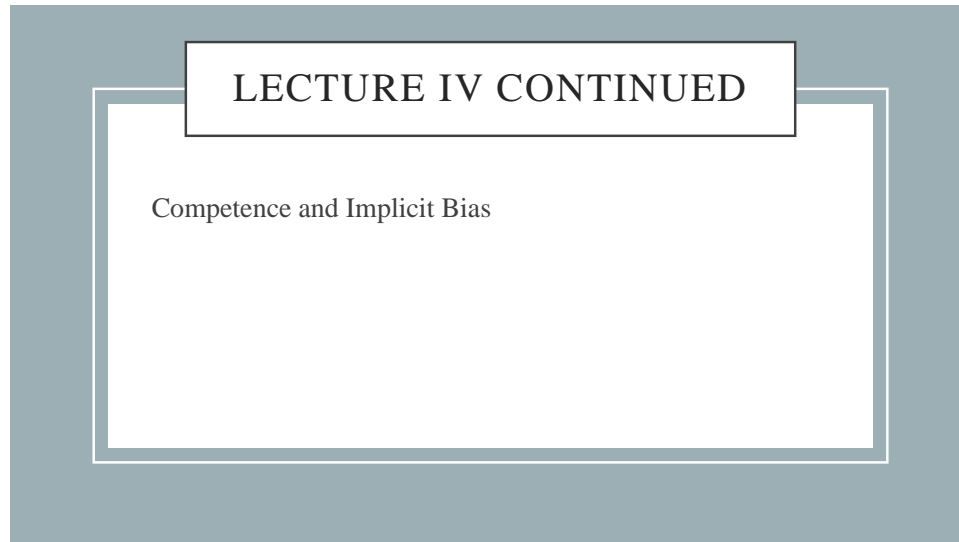


Participants will take a 15-minute break for restroom, refreshments, and reflections with peers.

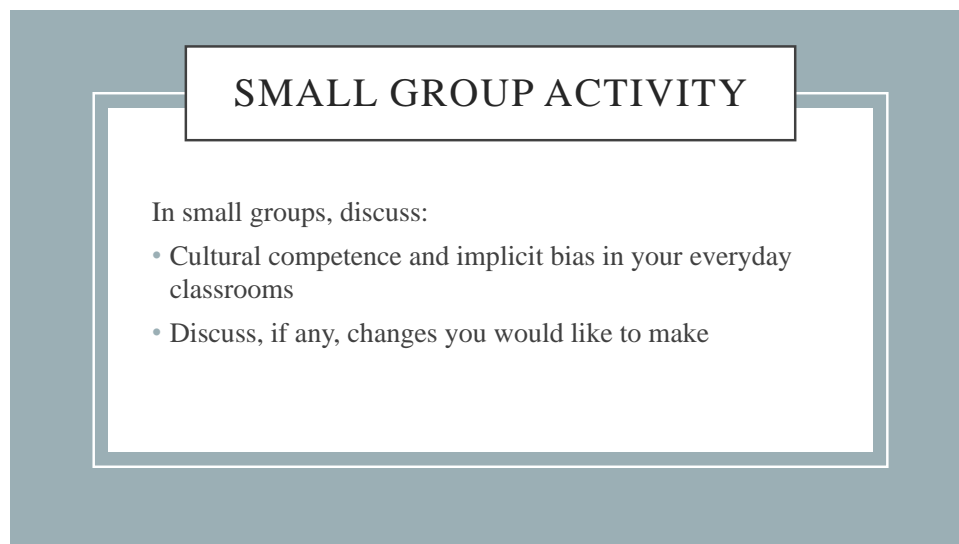


PowerPoint and Lecture IV: Cultural Competence and Implicit Bias.

PowerPoint and Lecture IV continued: Facilitator will present information on cultural competence, including a definition and implications. Facilitator will present an example or scenario of cultural competence.



PowerPoint and Lecture IV continued: Facilitator will present information on implicit bias, including a definition and implications. Facilitator will share an example or scenario of implicit bias.

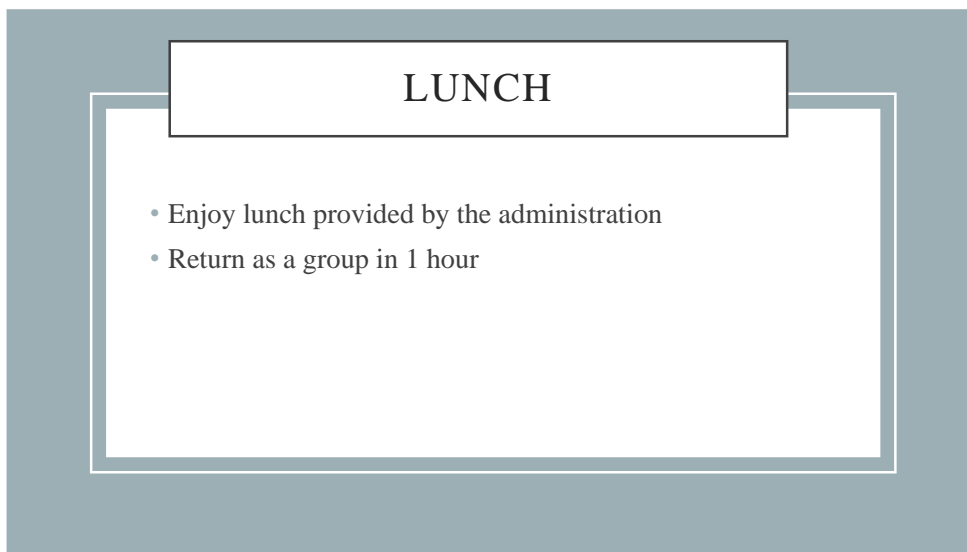


Participants will break into small groups for 15 minutes to discuss cultural competence and implicit bias in their everyday classroom routines. Participants will also indicate and discuss any changes they would like to make in their practices. Facilitator will walk

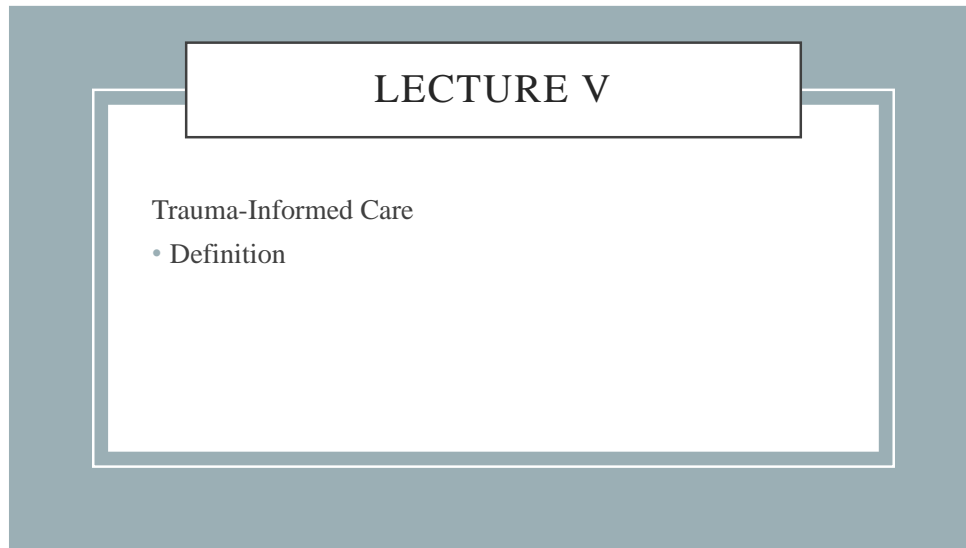
around to each group during these small group discussions. Facilitator should also offer a 5-minute warning before returning together as a large group.



Participants will return as a large group to discuss their thoughts. Facilitator will encourage each group to designate one person who is comfortable sharing.



Participants will enjoy lunch that is provided by the administration. Facilitator should remind participants to return together as a large group in one hour.

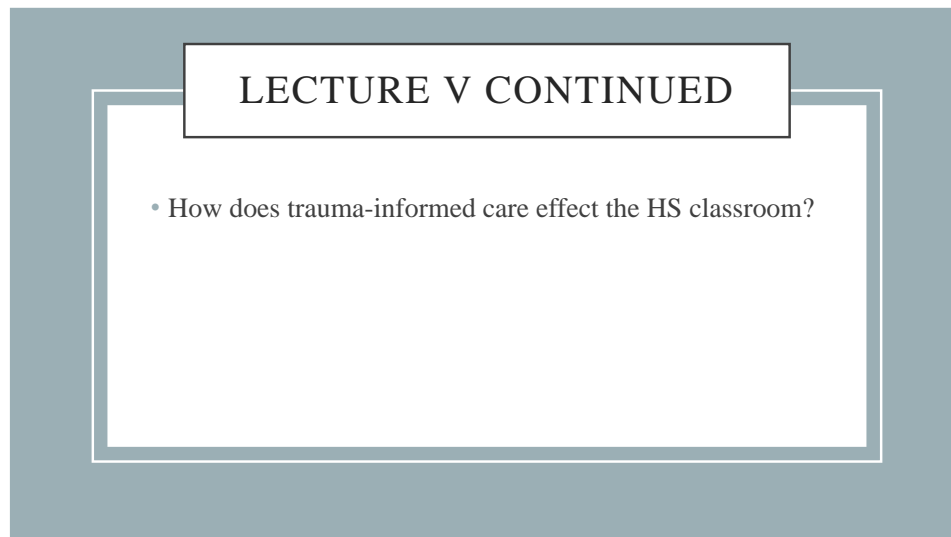


LECTURE V

Trauma-Informed Care

- Definition

PowerPoint and Lecture V: Trauma-Informed Care to include a definition and overview. What does trauma look like in terms of behaviors?



LECTURE V CONTINUED

- How does trauma-informed care effect the HS classroom?

PowerPoint and Lecture V continued. Facilitator will present how trauma-informed care affects the HS classroom.

LECTURE V CONTINUED

Trauma-Informed Care

- Implementing trauma-informed care strategies in the HS classroom

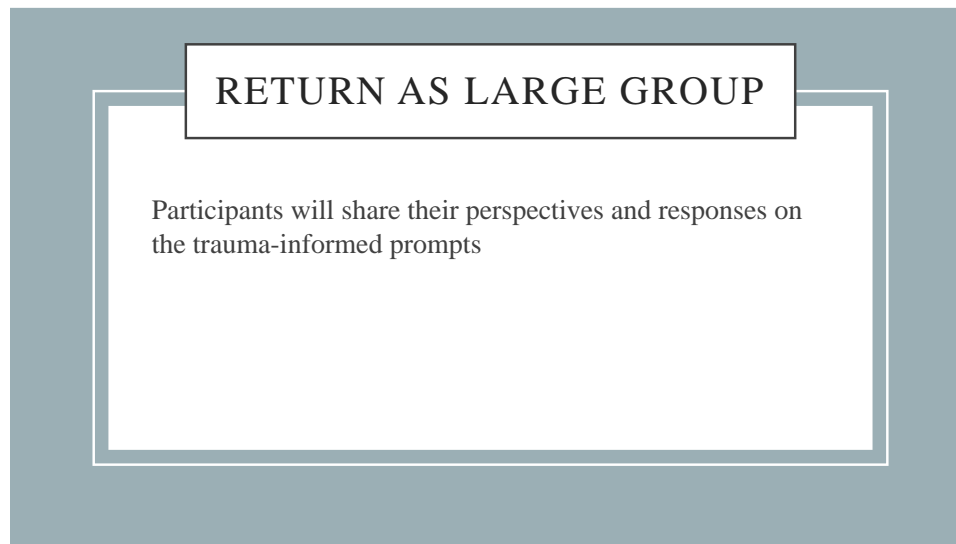
PowerPoint and Lecture V continued. Facilitator will present on implementing trauma information strategies and practices in the HS classroom.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Around the room:

- participants will walk around the room and comment/respond to each trauma-informed prompt written on the pieces of posted flip chart paper

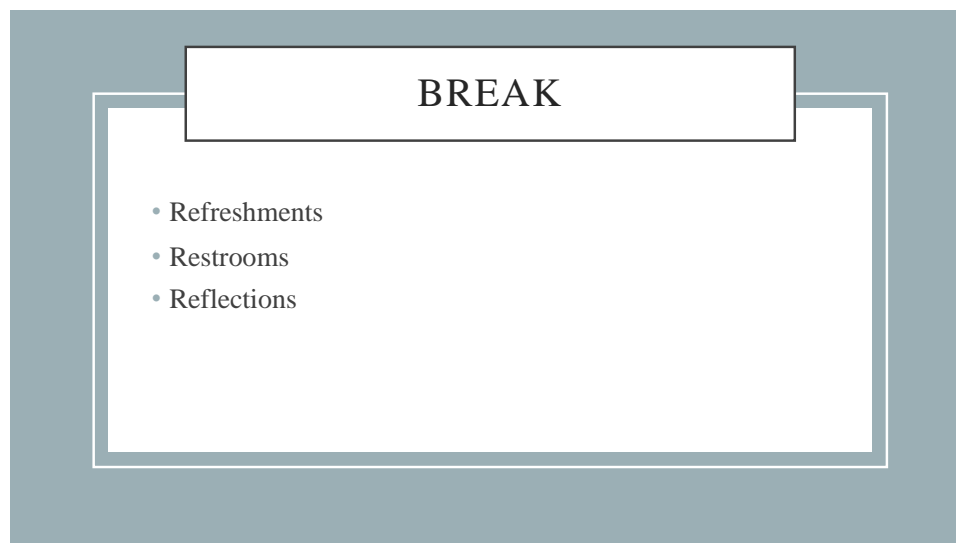
Participants will break into small groups. Facilitator will direct participants to walk around the room and comment on each trauma-informed prompt written on each piece of flip chart paper. Participants will return to a large group after 15 minutes. Facilitator should offer a 5-minute warning prior to returning as a large group.



RETURN AS LARGE GROUP

Participants will share their perspectives and responses on the trauma-informed prompts

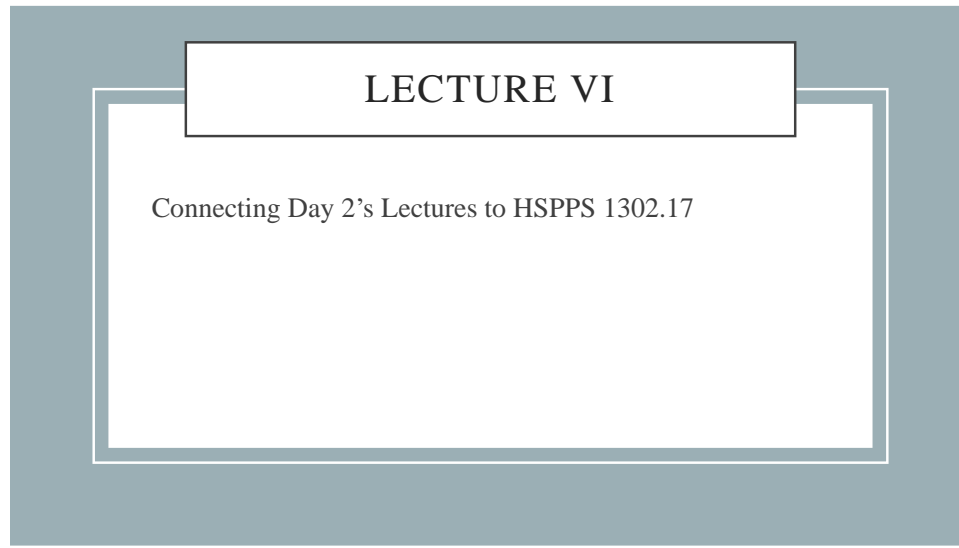
Facilitator will have participants return as a large group to share their perspectives on the trauma-informed prompts.



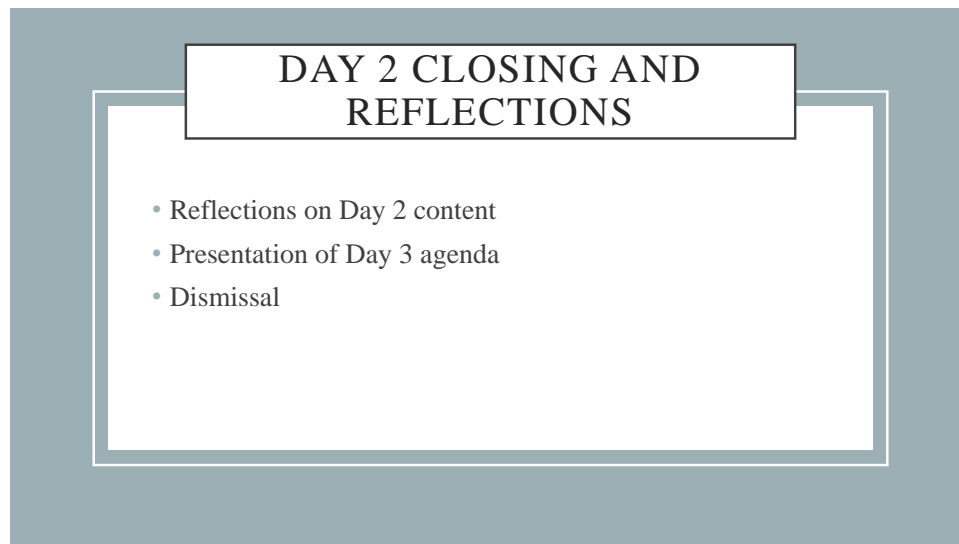
BREAK

- Refreshments
- Restrooms
- Reflections

Participants will take a 15-minute break for restroom, refreshments, and reflections with peers. Facilitator should indicate where refreshments are located.

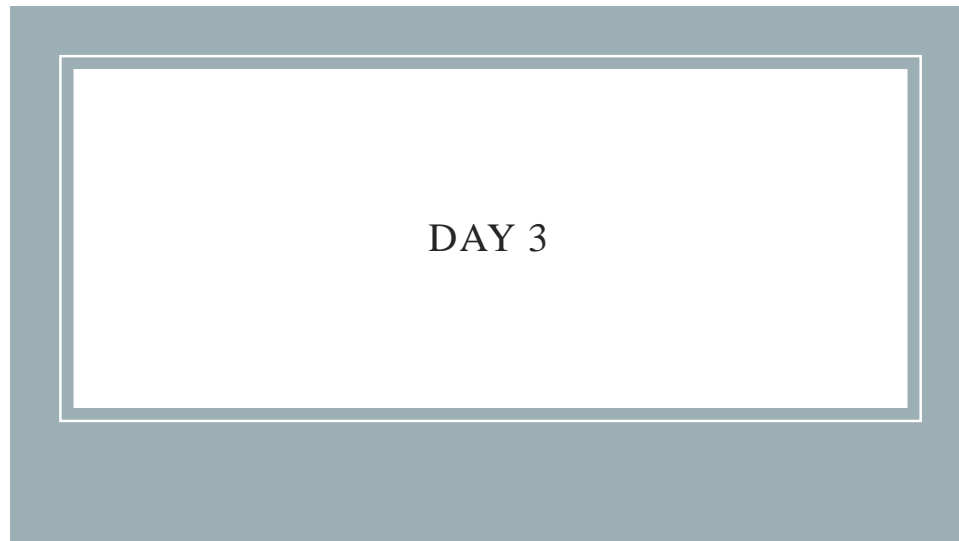


PowerPoint and Lecture VI: Connecting Day 2's Lectures to HSPPS 1302.17. Facilitator will present how each of the lectures from Day 2 connects to HSPPS 1302.17, supporting the students' social-emotional development and teacher job satisfaction.

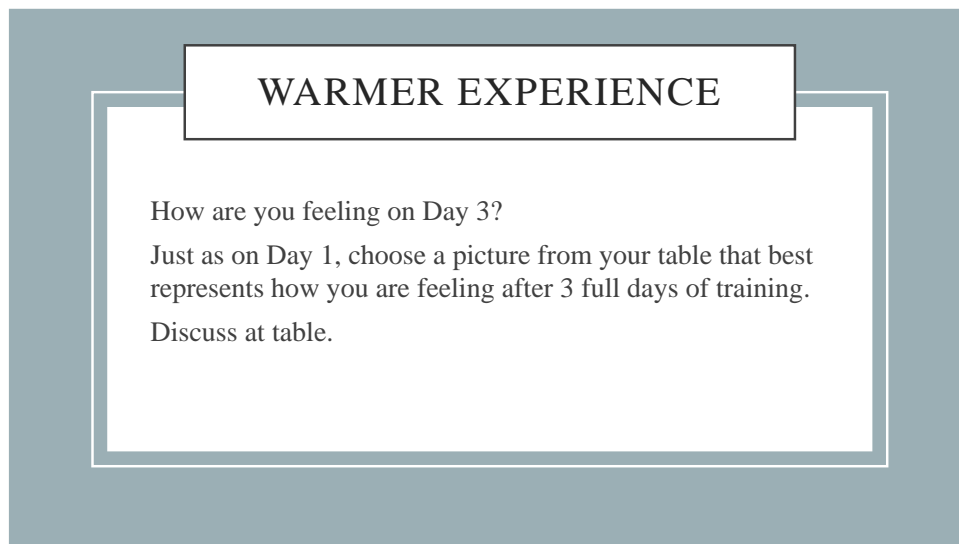


Facilitator will encourage participants to reflect on material presented during Day 2. Facilitator will also present closing that includes Day 3's agenda and start.

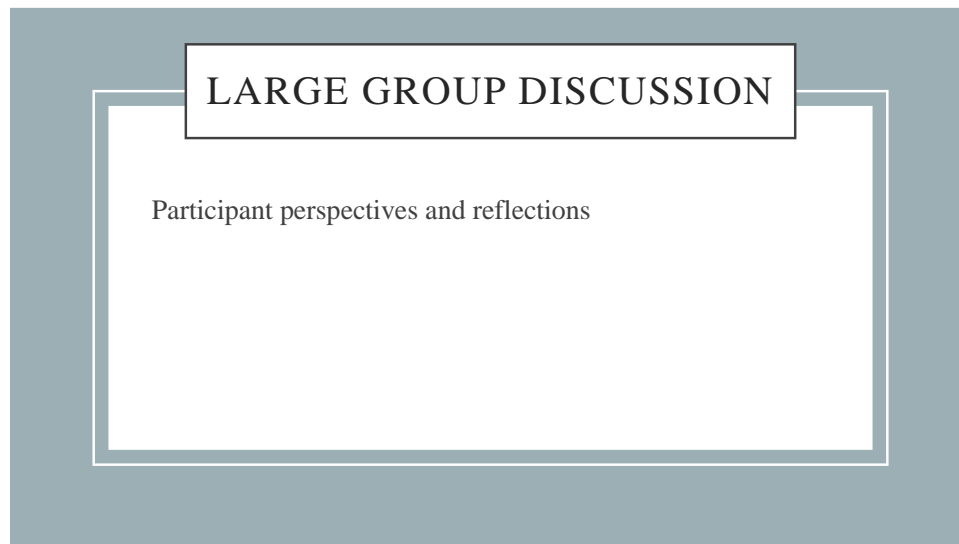
Day 3



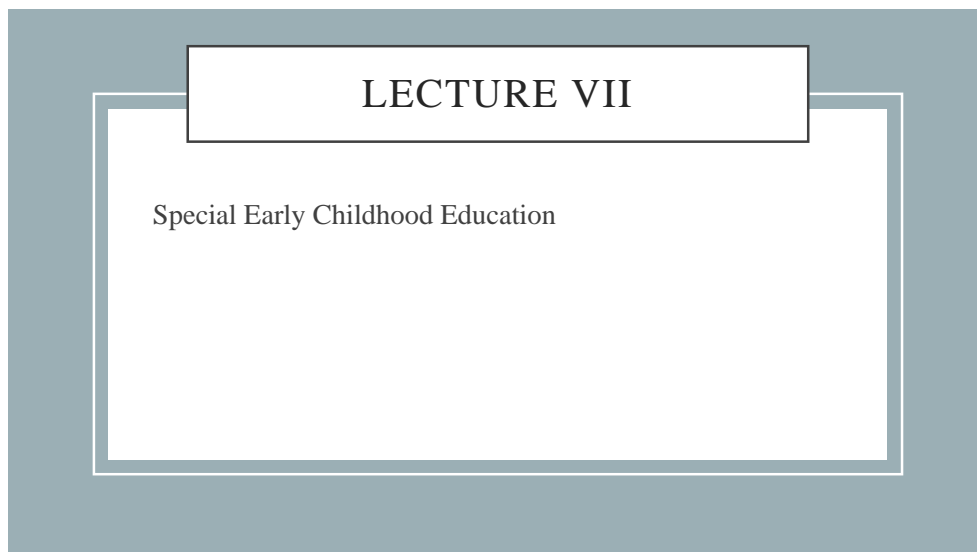
Facilitator will welcome participants to Day 3.



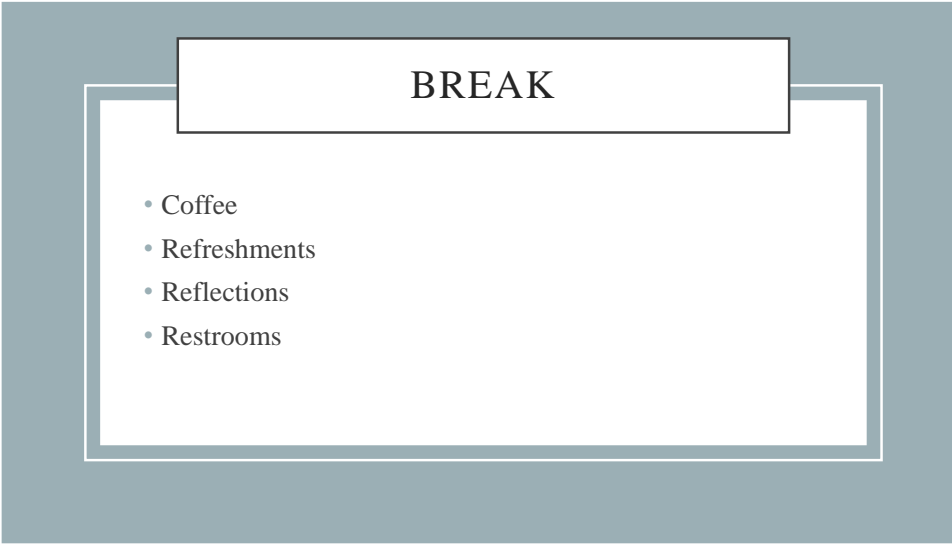
Facilitator will introduce the warmer experience. Just as on Day 1, ask on Day 3. Ask participants how they are feeling at the beginning of Day 3. Participants are to choose a photo from their table that best represents how they are feeling coming into Day 3 of this professional development experience. Participants are encouraged to discuss with those at their table before returning together as a large group to share.



Facilitator will walk around the room, encouraging participants to share their thoughts and assess their feelings from the warmer experience and the professional development plan. Participants will show the picture they chose that best reflects how they are feeling after 3 days of training.



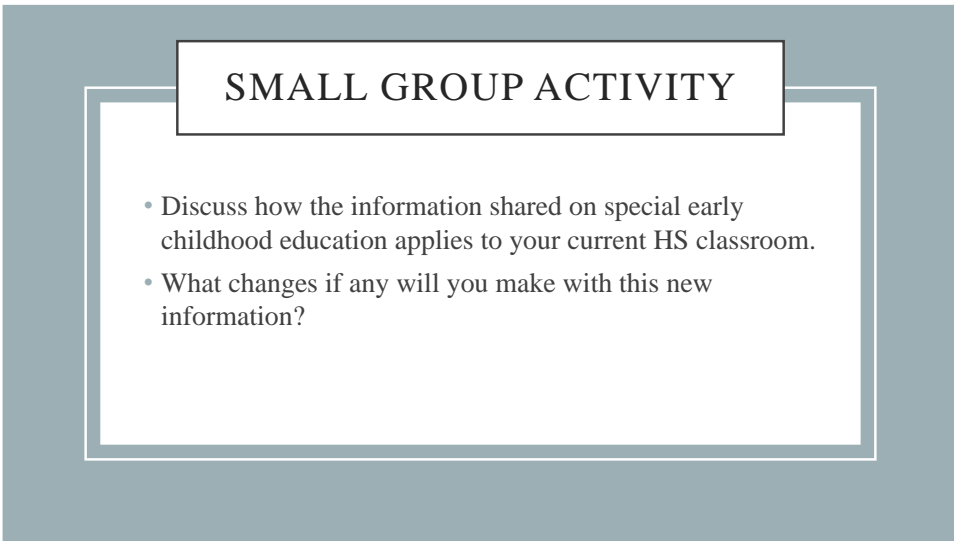
PowerPoint Overview and Lecture VII: Special Early Childhood Education. Facilitator will present data and information on special education in early childhood education that includes strategies, support for teachers and students, and family engagement.



BREAK

- Coffee
- Refreshments
- Reflections
- Restrooms

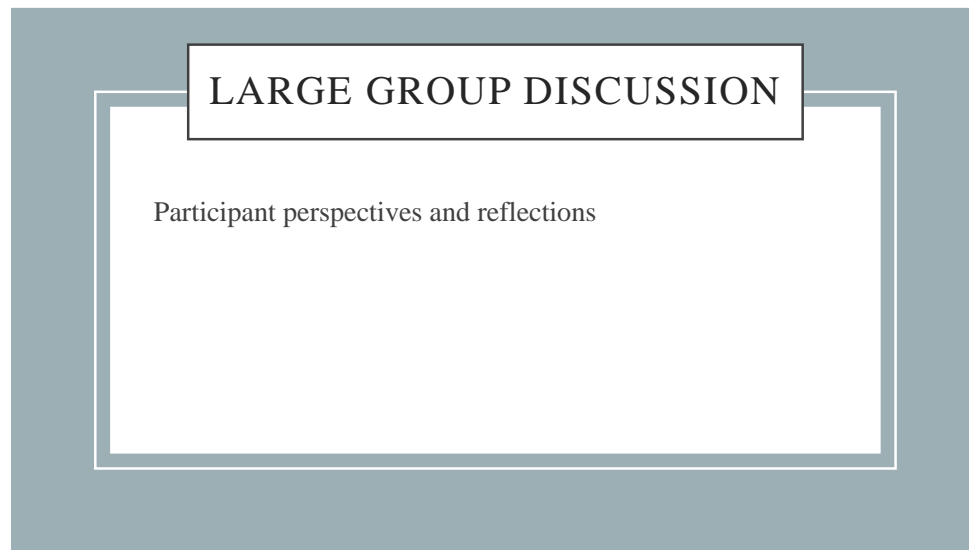
Participants will take a short break to use the restroom, grab some refreshments or a cup of coffee. Group will return together as a group in 15 minutes.



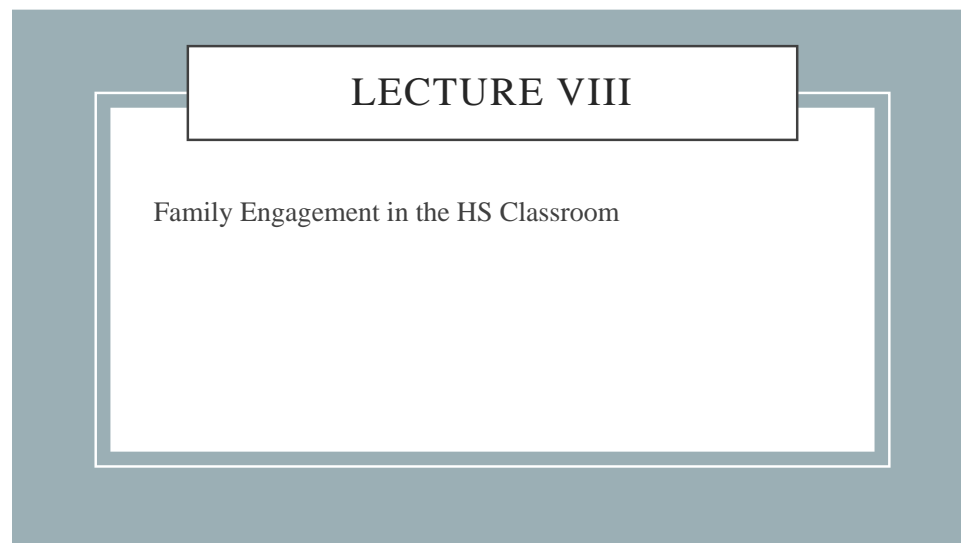
SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

- Discuss how the information shared on special early childhood education applies to your current HS classroom.
- What changes if any will you make with this new information?

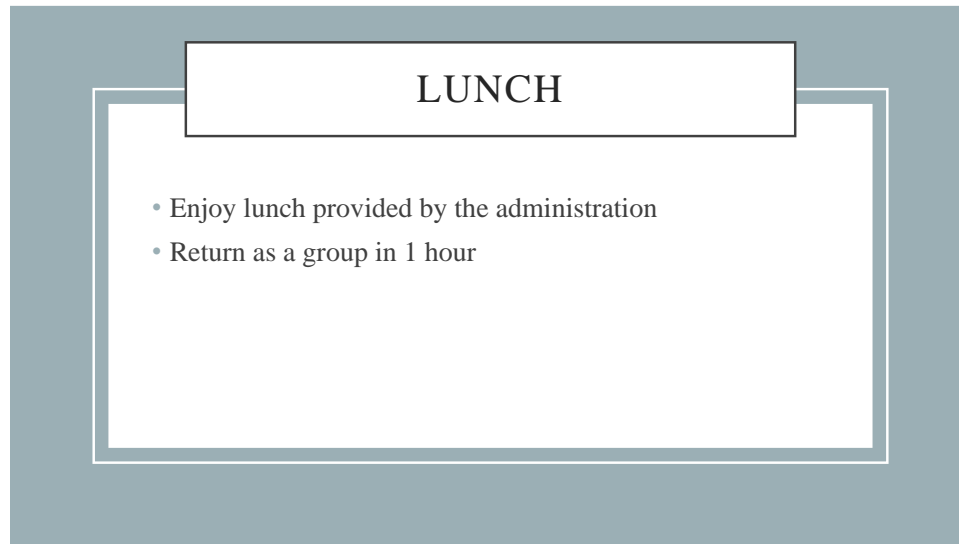
Participants will break into small groups for 15 minutes to discuss special education in their HS classroom. After previous lecture, watch changes would you make? Facilitator will offer a 5-minute warning before returning as a large group.



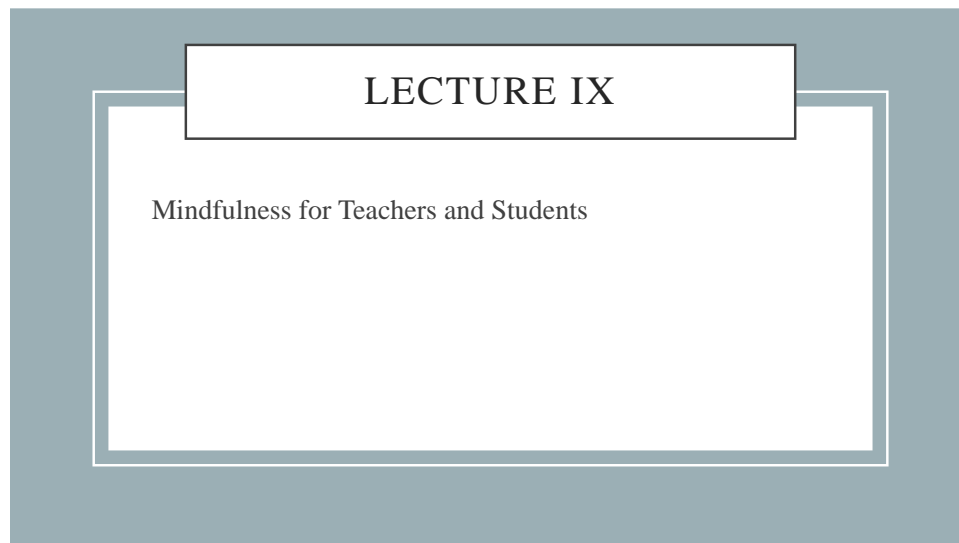
Participants will return as a large group to discuss perspectives from previous small group activity.



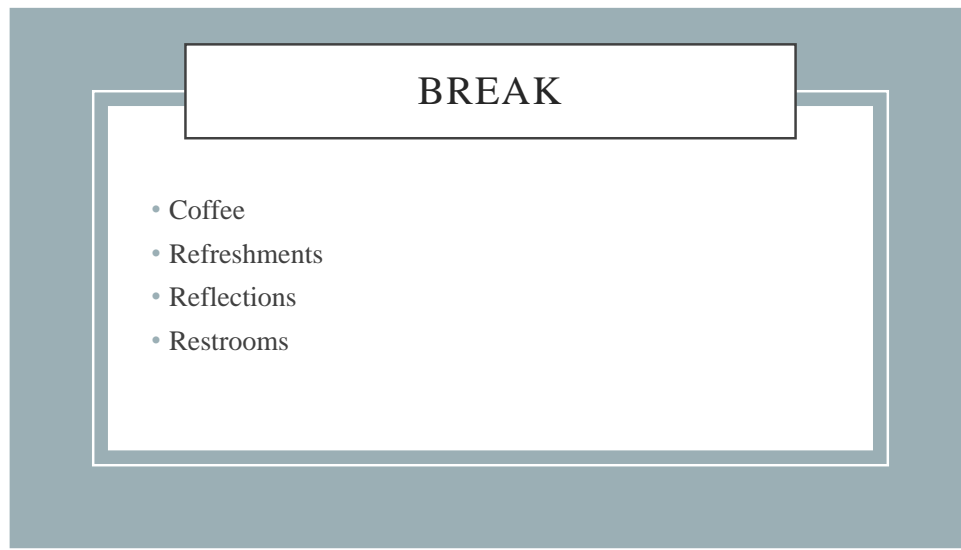
PowerPoint and Lecture VIII: Family Engagement in the HS Classroom. Information on the importance and benefits of family engagement in the HS classroom will be presented.



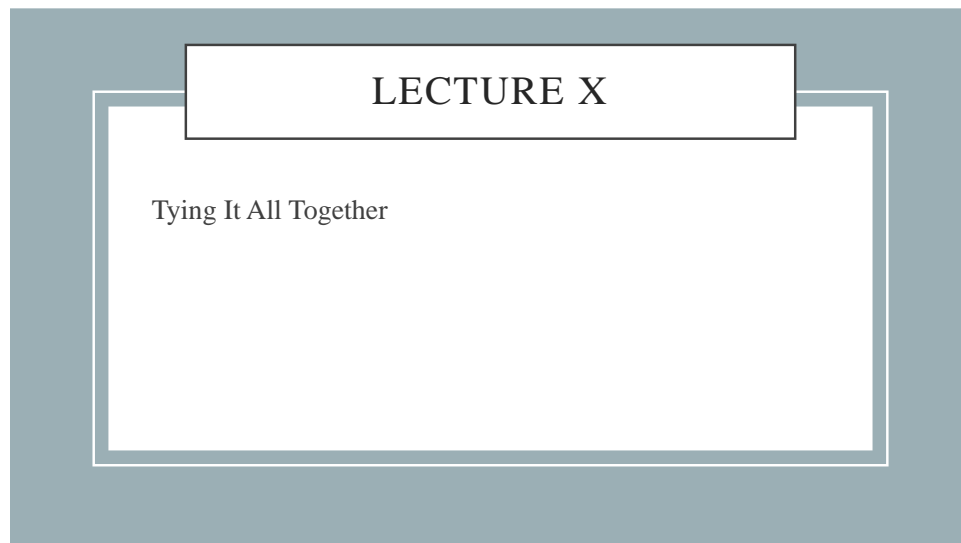
Participants will enjoy lunch that is provided by the administration. Facilitator will remind participants to return together as a large group in 1 hour.



PowerPoint and Lecture IX: Mindfulness for Teachers and Students to include the benefits of including it in the HS classroom.



Participants will take a 15-minute break to use the restroom, enjoy refreshments, and reflect with peers.



PowerPoint and Lecture X: Tying It All Together. Facilitator will highlight how being trained in each of these areas may collectively positively impact the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17, support the social-emotional development of the students, and increase overall teacher job satisfaction.

DAY 3 CLOSING AND REFLECTIONS

- Reflections on Day 3 content
- Questions
- Postassessment
- Dismissal

Facilitator will present closing remarks to include how practice-based coaching can be a useful resource in implementing the strategies gained in professional development. Facilitators will share resources that are available in the area. Participants will be encouraged to reflect on not only Day 3 of training but all days. Facilitator will allow time for questions from participants. Facilitator will hand out postassessment. Facilitator will explain that she will collect the postassessment once completed. Facilitator will thank participants for attending and dismiss them.

Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.17: Supporting Students' Social-Emotional Development While Ensuring Overall Teacher Job Satisfaction.

Preassessment

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have an understanding of HSPPS.					
I have an understanding of HSPPS 1302.17.					
I have an understanding of the social-emotional development of young children.					
I have an understanding of how to create engaging and inviting early learning environments.					
I have an understanding of cultural competencies and implicit bias.					
I have an understanding of how to address and include special education in my HS classroom.					
I have an understanding of trauma-informed care.					
I have an understanding of implementing mindfulness for teachers and students.					
I have an understanding of ways in which to promote family engagement and parental participation in the HS classroom.					
I believe this training will assist with the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17, the support of the students' social emotional-development, and increase my overall job satisfaction.					

Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.17: Supporting Students' Social-

Emotional Development While Ensuring Overall Teacher Job Satisfaction

Postassessment

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have an understanding of HSPPS.					
I have an understanding of HSPPS 1302.17.					
I have an understanding of the social-emotional development of young children.					
I have an understanding of how to create engaging and inviting early learning environments.					
I have an understanding of cultural competencies and implicit bias.					
I have an understanding of how to address and include special education in my HS classroom.					
I have an understanding of trauma-informed care.					
I have an understanding of implementing mindfulness for teachers and students.					
I have an understanding of ways in which to promote family engagement and parental participation in the HS classroom.					
I believe this training will assist with the implementation of HSPPS 1302.17, the support of students' social-emotional development, and increase my overall job satisfaction.					
The session objectives were clearly stated and met throughout the 3-day professional development sessions.					

Head Start Teachers Needed!

Current Head Start teachers are needed to volunteer for a research study. Your perspectives on the decline of job satisfaction due to the implementation of Head Start Performance Standard 1302.17 are needed.

Head Start Performance Standard 1302.17 (2016)

Prohibits programs from expelling or un-enrolling children from Head Start because of a child's behavior. This standard also requires programs to prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension due to a child's behavior.

Participation Involves

- an individual interview with the researcher.
- it is anticipated that the interview will not last longer than 1 hour. Interviews can be done in person or via Zoom

Potential Benefits

- may provide an opportunity to assist in shaping future policies and procedures.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Leslie S. Floyd, M.S. at [540-397-5942](tel:540-397-5942), email leslie.floyd@waldenu.edu

Appendix C: Interview Questions

The interview will begin with greeting the participant and asking casual questions to build a comfortable atmosphere and teacher-interviewer relationship. The following interview questions are influenced by Lacey's (1976) theory of social strategies and Mezirow's (2003) transformative learning theory, which grounded the conceptual framework for this study. Interview questions include follow-up with prompts, such as: "I noticed you talked about . . ." "Can you tell me more . . .?" and/or, "I heard you say . . ."

4. Describe the influence that Head Start Program Performance Standards has had on your position as a Head Start teacher.
5. What do you know about the federally mandated Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.17 regarding suspension and expulsion of young children?
 - a. In addition, please share your thoughts about the Standard.
6. Please discuss how you have seen the Standard implemented.
7. Please discuss your personal experiences with implementing the Standard.
8. Please discuss if you have had any positive or negative experiences with the implementation or enforcement of the Standard.
9. Please describe if and how you use independent judgment while implementing the Standard.
10. Please describe if and how conforming to the requirement of implementing the Standard has affected your teaching perspectives.

11. Please describe how you support social-emotional development while implementing the Standard.
12. Please describe your experiences regarding any change in classroom management or behavior management since the implementation of the Standard.
13. Please describe any professional development and/or training you have received to help you support the social-emotional development of children. Describe any training you have received to help you address the needs of children with challenging behaviors.
14. How do you feel about these trainings presenting new information and strategies? Have they helped toward increasing or decreasing your overall job satisfaction and the implementation of the Standard?
15. Please describe additional supports or professional development/trainings in relation to the Standard you would like.

Appendix D: Initial Codes

Overview of Codes Identified From Participant Interviews

Code number	Code
1	Challenging behaviors
2	HSPPS
3	Job dissatisfaction/ frustration
4	Trainings
5	Parental involvement/accountability
6	Administrators provide teachers support
7	Child social-emotional development
8	Quitting
9	Mindfulness/self-care
10	Interactions with children
11	Interactions with parents
12	Support of children
13	Working with difficult children
14	Downfall of the Standard
15	Assess benefits of the Standard
16	Following procedure
17	Ensure safety /safety protocols
18	Frustration
19	Identify limitations/boundaries
20	Seek alternative approaches
21	Identify needs and challenges
22	Implementation
23	Teacher-to-teacher interactions
24	Trauma-informed care
25	Culturally responsive care/Implicit bias
26	Practice-based coaching
27	Continual professional development/training
28	Overwhelmed
29	Struggling to maintain classroom control due to behaviors
30	Lack of independent judgment in the classroom
31	Agree with the Standard
32	Disagree with the Standard
33	Mixed emotions with the Standard

Appendix E: Overview of Axial Categories From Participant Interviews

Axial code number	Axial category
1	Suggested professional development
2	Teacher support
3	Teacher frustrations
4	HSSPS 1302.17

Appendix F: Six Emergent Themes From Participant Interviews

Theme no.	Theme
1	The teachers had mixed feelings about HSPPS 1302.17. Category no. 4 Code no. 1,2,3,5,8,10,11,13,14,15,16,17,18,22,28,29,30,31,32,33
2	The teachers expressed a lack of parental accountability and involvement. Category no. 3 Code no. 1, 6, 13, 19, 28, 29, 30
3	The teachers felt that the current professional development is redundant. Category no. 1 Code no. 2, 7, 9, 24, 25, 26
4	The teachers felt that additional instructional support in social-emotional development was needed. Category no. 2 Code no. 5, 6, 26, 27
5	The teachers felt that professional development/trainings should be in-depth and specific to certain behaviors or diagnoses. Category no. 1 Code no. 1, 4, 7, 10, 12, 13, 17, 20, 21, 24, 27
6	The teachers felt that in-person, practice-based coaching is needed to follow up on professional development/trainings. Category no. 2 Code no. 3, 4, 6, 15, 20, 22, 26, 27