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## Examining Experiences and Perspectives of Educators Teaching Employment Skills to Transitioning Students With Disabilities

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# Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

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Denise Frelot

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University

2024

Abstract

Examining Experiences and Perspectives of Educators Teaching Employment Skills to  
Transitioning Students With Disabilities

by

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MA, Pacific Oaks College, 1991

BA, California State University, Los Angeles, 1998

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Education

Walden University

April 2024

## Abstract

In an urban school district in a western state, the problem addressed through this study was that, despite available professional development (PD) training and resources, educators at a high school were not effectively implementing the strategies of the Campus 2 Community (C2C) initiative, which is designed to assist students with disabilities (SWDs). The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of educators using the C2C program; identify the challenges they encounter; and identify ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs, particularly students on the autism spectrum. Knowles's theory of adult learning informed this study. Research questions focused on how high school educators, who use the C2C program, describe their experiences implementing the strategies promoted in the program and ways to improve the C2C PD and resources to better help SWDs. Data were collected via semistructured interviews with 11 educators who included special education teachers, C2C job coaches, instructional aides, administrators, and campus- and district-based leadership staff. Content analysis was used to analyze data collected using open coding. Eight themes emerged. Results showed the C2C program has positive outcomes and educators use best practices; however, educators described insufficient training to meet the varied challenges of the program. A specific need was uniform PD and materials available throughout the year. A PD project emerged as the project genre and may contribute to positive social change by informing education stakeholders of the PD needs to support C2C staff who serve SWDs in the study district.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this work to the colleges, school districts, and vocational programs that have allowed me to collaborate with them in efforts to inform and educate our community on how to support young people who have been diagnosed with abilities of all types and who seek to be recognized and gainfully employed.

## Acknowledgments

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **The Local Problem**

In an urban school district in a western state, the problem addressed through this study is that, despite available professional development (PD) training and resources, educators at a high school have not been effectively implementing the strategies of the Campus 2 Community (C2C) initiative, which was designed to assist students with disabilities (SWDs). This study focused on serving a subset of SWDs: adult students aged 18–22 who are classified as moderate to severe on the autism spectrum. According to the 2018 C2C handbook, which was still in use as of January 2023, the C2C program is designed to focus on employability skills, socialization, and independent living skills for adult students ages 18–22 diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In addition to specialized programming, the district special education officials provided training sessions for the C2C support personnel beginning in 2017 and ongoing through this study; these efforts are included in PD records for the study district, 2017–2021. The district special education support personnel have engaged in PD and received curriculum materials and strategies to use in the C2C program for SWDs; this is noted in Special Education Department meeting minutes at the study campus from 2017–2021. Educators in the study include special education teachers, C2C job coaches, program specialists, instructional aides, and administrators who provide instructional services for students with ASD in the C2C program at the high school study site.

## **Rationale**

The transitioning SWDs receiving C2C services have demonstrated gaps in learning outcomes, despite the initiation of district initiatives, PD sessions, new curriculum, and additional personnel (Special Education Department meeting minutes, August 3, 2021). To strengthen personal growth performance and academic outcomes for SWDs, district special education officials designed alternative special programming to support the unique learning needs of SWDs, as described in the district C2C program handbook for 2018. The special education district officials also designed the C2C program to address administrators' concerns regarding the SWDs' poor progress and transition outcomes, as described in the same handbook. The C2C program is designed to provide trained staff to teach SWD the skills needed for the transition from the classroom to the community setting. In the C2C program, job coaches and other special education teachers implement community-based instruction to support the development of communication, employability, and social skills for SWDs (Special Education Department meeting minutes, August 3, 2021). Job coaches must have specific training to support social interactions and communication in community training sites (Gilson & Carter, 2016). In one study, job coaches were taught to teach students with ASD how to socially interact, communicate, and remain on task in a community training site, using audio, verbal, modeling, and physical prompts (Gilson & Carter, 2016). Job coaches used evidence-based practice in the community setting and then gradually faded the support. The study findings were that the participants maintained their on-task behaviors and

communication or social interaction after the support and prompting from the job coach were removed.

The district special education support personnel have also engaged in PD and received curriculum materials and strategies to use in the C2C program for SWDs; this is noted in Special Education Department meeting minutes at the study campus from 2017–2021. However, the special education program specialist in the target district attributed the SWDs’ failure to independently perform employability skills such as socialization and communication in the working environment to the C2C personnel’s failure to effectively implement strategies to support SWDs’ development of the skills needed to (a) make career choices, (b) execute personal growth skills and (c) increase self-efficacy (Special Education Department meeting minutes, August 3, 2021). To address the problem with teaching strategies, the program specialist provided monthly PD training for all staff working with SWDs in the C2C program. This training is on the study district PD schedules for 2017–2021. In 2020, support personnel working with SWDs in the C2C program were required to attend PD training, thus making the PD mandatory. The PD meetings have been conducted weekly in either a face-to-face or webinar format. Additional PD has been designed to strengthen the skills of personnel working with adult students with ASD. Despite PD provided in the special education department meetings, support personnel have not implemented the teaching strategies consistently or as modeled in the PD department training sessions. Various members of the C2C community as well as the special education supervisor have not observed these teaching strategies being incorporated. The Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic also affected



employers' willingness to maintain a consistent schedule for the SWDs in the C2C program due to safety concerns, March 2019 through August 2021.

Special education weekly department meeting agendas from 2017–2022 reflected not only PD for the C2C program related to ASD but also shared resources for understanding ASD and teaching strategies. The agendas showed life skills and social skills activities were introduced 2017–2022 to use with SWDs, including visual schedules and vocational activities. In these weekly meetings, the special education program specialist provided on-site work strategies and curriculum tasks related to socialization, employability, and communication for the support personnel serving students in the C2C program. Materials provided to support personnel included links to the ASD resource file with curriculum resources to support materials for the strategies that were described and modeled during weekly department meetings. In addition to the initiation of the C2C program services, additional personnel were hired, and alternative resources were provided for the C2C program to address SWDs' programming needs related to transition (Special Education Department meeting minutes, August 3, 2021).

In addition to the variety of local interventions to address the identified gap in practice, researchers have conducted studies that support the gap in practice related to identifying strategies to strengthen services for SWDs in community-based programs (Gilson & Carter, 2016; Hayward et al., 2019; Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee, 2020). The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of educators using the C2C program; identify the challenges they encounter; and identify ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs,

particularly students with ASD. Findings were used to develop a PD project, presented in Appendix A.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Andragogy*: Knowles (1984) defined andragogy as the “art and science of helping adults learn” (p. 12), and thus andragogy refers to any form of adult learning.

*Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)*: ASD “is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by alteration in social communication and social interaction, along with restricted and repetitive patterns, behaviors, interests, and activities” (Alcover et al., 2022, p. 1).

*Campus 2 Community (C2C) program*: The C2C initiative is designed to support SWDs so that they may learn job preparation skills and transition successfully to the community upon graduation, according to the program 2018 handbook.

*Community-based instruction*: According to the C2C program 2018 handbook, this term refers to employment skills being taught in a community-based setting.

*Free appropriate education (FAPE)*: FAPE is the protected right of every eligible child, including SWDs, in all 50 states and U.S. territories (Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 [IDEA], 2004). The IDEA (2004) defined FAPE as follows:

special education and related services that (a) are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; (b) meet the standards of the [state educational agency], . . . (c) include an appropriate preschool,

elementary school, or secondary school education in the state involved; and (d) are provided in conformity with an individualized education program. (§ 300.17)

*Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA):* IDEA (2004) is the federal law that supports special education and related service programming for children and youth with disabilities.

*Individualized transition plan:* An individualized transition plan is a specific plan developed with specific, meaningful objectives and activities designed to teach the student with ASD the skills needed after graduation, to take part in a sponsored work program (Zirkel, 2019).

*Person-centered planning:* Person-centered planning, an attribute of special education planning, is an evidence-based practice that is reflected in high-quality models to assist SWDs in making the transition to work or education after high school (Zirkel, 2019).

*Transition:* Transition, in the context of this study, involves “completing school, gaining employment, participating in post-secondary education, contributing to a household, participating in the community, and experiencing satisfactory personal and social relationships” (Hendricks & Wehman, 2009, p. 77).

*Transition program:* In the context of this study, a transition program supports transitioning from one stage of life to another for SWDs, including high school students with ASD, transitioning to college or employment as adults (Holzberg et al., 2017; IDEA, 2004).

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in that findings contribute to the knowledge of C2C educators' experiences, perceived challenges, and recommendations for ways to improve the C2C services for SWDs. Findings may be used to strengthen the PD and technical support given the educators using the C2C program. By collecting information on the educators' experiences and thoughts regarding this phenomenon, data could be obtained to inform stakeholders and to help design PD and technical support for educators. Strengthening the C2C program PD and supports may strengthen the services used by educators and also better support SWDs' learning outcomes.

Researchers have found that specific training must be provided for job coaches to address the needs of SWDs related to social interactions and communication in community training sites (Gilson & Carter, 2016). Positive outcomes and program success result from gaining teachers' participation in planning time, training, and multiple service delivery options (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2017). The majority of students with ASD exhibit significant deficiencies in spontaneity, which persist even with treatment (Ali et al., 2019; Sundberg & Partington, 2013). Therefore, understanding the educators' experiences, perceptions, and recommendations for assisting students with ASD is important. The transition experience of SWDs in higher education depends on stakeholders' awareness of SWDs and a personalized, flexible approach to transition support (Nuske et al., 2019). The current study has implications for positive social change for SWDs as the findings could be used to inform decision-making, PD design, and

technical support for educators who use the C2C program, potentially resulting in better outcomes for SWDs.

### **Research Questions**

As described earlier, the problem addressed by this study was that, despite available PD training and resources, educators at a high school have not been effectively implementing the strategies of the C2C initiative, which was designed to assist SWDs. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of educators using the C2C program; identify the challenges they encounter; and identify ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs, particularly students with ASD. Two research questions guided this basic qualitative study:

1. How do high school educators who use the C2C program describe their experiences implementing the strategies promoted in the program (initiative)?
2. How do high school teachers who use the C2C program describe ways to improve the C2C PD and resources to better help SWDs, particularly students with ASD?

### **Review of the Literature**

Although policymakers have strived to strengthen outcomes for individuals with disabilities, a need remains to review the literature regarding the efficacy of academic programs, particularly related to future employment success for individuals with disabilities. The unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities continues to increase and is over twice that of their nondisabled peers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). The unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 64 was

10.1% in 2021, while the unemployment rate for people without disabilities in the same age range was 5.1%. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). This disparity in unemployment rates has existed for many years and is expected to grow as more children are annually diagnosed with learning disabilities ranging from a specific learning disability to ASD. No significant improvement in employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities occurred between 2009 and 2019 (Houtenville & Boege, 2019).

Transition services are designed to help SWDs transition to employment. For example, the C2C initiative is designed to support SWDs so that they may learn job preparation skills and transition successfully to the community upon graduation, according to the C2C program handbook. Yet, examining teacher preparation has revealed that teacher candidates lack comprehension of transition services (Holzberg et al., 2017). Further research provides strong support for special education teachers' PD and additional program preparation (Holzberg et al., 2017).

### **Conceptual Framework**

In this study, Knowles's (1988) theory of adult learning, or andragogy, served as the conceptual framework and lens for examining the research questions and understanding the literature regarding educators' perceptions of the C2C program. Understanding the phenomenon that is the focus of this study requires an understanding of educators' perceptions and experiences of student needs as well as their recommendations for successfully implementing the C2C program. In my project study, I investigated the experiences of high school educators who use the C2C program. I

planned to identify the challenges they encounter and ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs, particularly students with ASD.

Knowles (1984) was an American educator who created the adult learning theory of andragogy in 1980. Knowles (1984) defined andragogy as the “art and science of helping adults learn” (p. 12); hence, every type of adult learning is referred to as andragogy. Knowles’s (1984, 1988) andragogy theory of adult learning is focused on components of adult learning that facilitate learning and engage the adult learner or mentee. Adults have different motivators from children when learning. Knowles (1984) outlined primary attributes of adult learners that can inform an instructor’s approach to building relationships with their students and provide guidance for what students can do to expedite their career success: (a) Adult learning is self-directed, (b) adult learning is autonomous, and (c) adult students should seek out mentors to support their implementation of new learning. Adult learners have certain traits that can guide students in how they interact with their teachers and what they can do to help themselves succeed in the workplace. Adult students should look for teachers to help them put new learning into practice because adult learning is both self-directed and independent. According to Knowles (1984), students should be actively involved in their education and given the freedom to accomplish their learning goals. Interviewing potential instructors, selecting their instructional team, and formalizing the connection should all be proactive steps taken by students (Cheng & Hackworth, 2021).

Other researchers have examined ways to strengthen the support for SWDs to receive training to secure employment. Despite training, educators have not been

implementing expected C2C strategies. A possibility is that training has not reflected andragogy. For example, teachers may not see the direct practical uses of what they are learning in PD to apply strategies in the classroom. Based on andragogy theory, PD should involve the adult learner in creating the environment for learning, planning, and setting the objectives for the PD, as well as designing, implementing, and evaluating the PD (Knowles, 1984; Terehoff, 2002). Program initiatives that depend on adults for implementation should accommodate these fundamental aspects of learning that Knowles (1984) prioritized. Further, initiatives should incorporate Knowles's (1984) five assumptions differentiating adult learning (andragogy) from the learning of children (pedagogy):

1. A person's idea of self-concept develops toward independence as they get older.
2. A person's life experiences accumulate as they get older and become a greater source of knowledge.
3. Adults are motivated to learn skills that are immediately applicable to their everyday lives, and their readiness to learn is tied to the developmental responsibilities of their social roles.
4. Adults are motivated to learn knowledge that is of immediate value to them.
5. For adults, learning shifts from being content driven to problem driven. As an individual develops, the source of motivation that undergirds learning is affected.



In the coding process, I examined the transcripts for evidence of participants' perceptions regarding the use of andragogy related to the design and implementation of the C2C PD. Additionally, andragogy informed the project developed in this study, a PD program. I recruited my participants from the pool of high school educators in the C2C program. I used qualitative data from high school educators who use the C2C program to identify challenges and ways to improve implementation of the C2C program. Transition staff often lack effective training to provide transition services to SWDs, affecting student outcomes (Holzberg et al., 2017). In particular, educators have reported lacking skills with career development, family involvement, and interagency collaboration (Benitez et al., 2009; Holzberg et al., 2017). Therefore, andragogy should inform the development of PD for adult transition staff working with SWDs in the study district.

### **Review of the Broader Problem**

The initial foundation of this study was a literature review of research related to transition readiness for adolescents with ASD. To conduct this literature review, I used Google Scholar, Walden's online library, ERIC, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, SAGE Research, Taylor and Francis Online, Education Source, and Education Research Starters. I focused on peer-reviewed studies published in the last 5 years. My primary search terms used were *transition, community-based instruction, professional development, job coaches and students with autism spectrum disorder, IDEA autism services, employability and autism, best practices for students with ASD, and challenges with postsecondary programming for students with ASD*. I combined these words and also conducted searches by combining the key words and phrases. As a result, the literature I identified was

organized into specific themes. The overarching theme of the literature is the transition from high school to college or career and challenges facing students with ASD and their educators. In this literature review, I examined the following themes: ASD, the transition to independence for those with ASD, the transition plan and process, best practices in transition plans, employability of individuals with ASD, and challenges in transition.

### ***ASD Description and Prevalence***

ASD is a developmental disorder that affects communication and behavior (Alcover et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2019; Hodges et al., 2020; National Institute of Mental Health, 2022). Individuals often display repetitive behaviors, have restricted interests, and lack social communication skills (Ali et al., 2019; Hodges et al., 2020). ASD has been described as one of the most confusing disorders, with no identified causes or cures (Ali et al., 2019). ASD is most often identified in the first 2 years of life, although an ASD diagnosis can be made at any age (Ali et al., 2019). ASD affects various developmental aspects such as difficulty with communicating and socializing with others, thereby affecting all aspects of life (World Health Organization, 2013). Some individuals with ASD experience anxiety, inappropriate behaviors, depression, and victimization from other students (Schreck & Richdale, 2020; Wehman et al., 2014).

Due to the diverse signs and symptoms of autism from one individual to another, students with autism present unique and varying challenges (Zeidan et al., 2022).

Whereas some people with ASD and other SWDs have diverse abilities that could help them live independent and fulfilling lives with the right support, others are severely afflicted and need lifelong care (Zeidan et al., 2022). The word *spectrum* in the disorder

indicates the variance of symptoms and degree of disability those with ASD may experience (Ali et al., 2019).

According to Hodges et al. (2020), the prevalence of ASD is 1.7% in the United States, representing 1 in 59 children. These data reflect that ASD is “one of the most rapidly growing neurological condition worldwide” (Nadeem et al., 2021, para. 1). As this number continues to increase, the need becomes greater to research successful strategies to help individuals with ASD (Frank, 2015). The World Health Organization (2013) noted people with ASD are a vulnerable group often deprived of health services, education, and community participation and employment. The burden on families of individuals with ASD can be tremendous (World Health Organization, 2013). SWDs are less likely to attend postsecondary college or university and live on their own (Kirby et al., 2019).

### ***Transitioning to Adulthood for Students With ASD***

As adolescents with ASD transition into adulthood, they have to consider several life factors. Just as their typically developing peers, transitioning adolescents with ASD must consider their options for secondary education, prospective job placement, separating from their parents and families, and weighing the adult support they need (Chun et al., 2022). Few adults with ASD are reported to live independently. Adults with ASD are reported to experience significant degrees of impairment in their areas of deficits well into their adulthood (Chun et al. 2022). The responsibility for care and behavior modification falls on the families (Schreck & Richdale, 2020).

Transitioning students with ASD from the school setting to the real world has special challenges. Transition involves “completing school, gaining employment, participating in post-secondary education, contributing to a household, participating in the community, and experiencing satisfactory personal and social relationships” (Wehman et al., 2014, p. 77). Teenagers with various disorders and their families have a challenging time making the transition from school to adulthood (Meiring et al., 2016). Transitioning students with ASD into higher education or employment is stressful for parents as they worry about the degree of independence their child can sustain (Meiring et al., 2016). In the United States alone, about 500,000 special needs teenagers turn 18 and need to go from pediatric to adult health care each year (Jensen et al., 2017). Individuals with ASD leaving high school also leave the support of educational structures and resources required by law for students in public education (Meiring et al., 2016). Thus, the challenges of adolescent interactions are particularly difficult for students with ASD (Jamison & Schuttler, 2015; Szidon et al., 2015). A transition process beginning early adolescence can help individuals with ASD develop self-care, decision-making skills, and self-advocacy (Jensen et al., 2017).

### ***Transition Plan and Process***

The federal law that supports special education and related assistance programming for kids and teenagers with disabilities is IDEA (2004). IDEA legal guidelines state that SWDs have a right to a FAPE. IDEA provides educational guidelines for elements of a FAPE, so that personnel working with SWDs incorporate these tenets when designing the students’ educational services. Students with ASD require a

specialized educational approach to learn the necessary skills to prepare for life after high school and are guaranteed to receive individualized education services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992. IDEA includes requirements for school districts to develop specific written transition plans and outlines mandatory educational support services that help students with ASD learn the skills needed to successfully transition from the classroom to adult life.

Transitioning a student with ASD from the classroom to a community setting requires special considerations. Each student diagnosed with ASD qualifies to receive an individualized transition plan, which is necessary for acquiring the skills needed for independence and employment (Zirkel, 2019). Each student recognized as having ASD receives services based on their needs (IDEA, 2004; Zirkel, 2019). Furthermore, combining academic content with transition planning can help students achieve academic standards while also producing real-world learning opportunities connected to transition objectives (L. A. Scott & Puglia, 2018). IDEA (2004) requires a plan to move SWDs from school to life after high school, including independent living, self-determination, and either college or employment. This plan is developed with specific, meaningful objectives and activities designed to teach the student with ASD the skills needed to participate in a supported employment program upon graduation (Zirkel, 2019). The plan is written to identify specific knowledge or skills that the student must acquire after graduation to take part in a sponsored work program. The plan also must identify who will provide the instruction and how often the student with ASD will receive the instruction (Zirkel, 2019). Finally, the individualized transition plan goals must indicate

the time required for the student to acquire the specific skills. Improving the likelihood of successful employment for young adults with ASD also increases their likelihood of independence (Zirkel, 2019).

The educational outcomes for students with ASD reflect that this population of students is not prepared to transition to viable educational outcomes (Hayward et al., 2019). The Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (2020) noted that approximately 50% of students with ASD “leave public school without employment or plans for further education” (p. 65). Thus, an effective transition plan is vital. Yet there is limited research on the complexities involved in the transition process, such as the transition process to work and independent life for students with ASD (Meiring et al., 2016).

### ***Best Practices in Successful Transitions***

Programs that focus on students’ strengths help improve the overall outcomes of adolescents with ASD (Hume et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2020). Transition programs should include active participation by the student. Parent and student expectations should be discussed to align goals and support student self-determination. Additionally, transition programs should include daily living skills and social-vocational skills. Positive social interactions function as an enabler for SWDs in the work setting (Hayward et al., 2019). Specific strategies and skills are most likely to support this population on the job or in a work setting. Hence, interventions at the individual and organizational levels are necessary for vocational support for people with ASD (Hayward et al., 2019). These best practices are discussed in the following sections.

**Student Involvement.** Person-centered planning, an attribute of special education transition planning, is an evidence-based practice that is reflected in high-quality models to support the transition of students with disabilities (Organization for Autism Research, 2021; Zirkel, 2019). The practice reflects andragogy, in that students should be actively involved in their education and given the freedom to accomplish their learning goals (Knowles, 1984). Hume et al. (2018) noted individuals with ASD often have high rates of unemployment and difficulty living independently. Of importance in a transition plan is the involvement of the student; Hume et al. reported a link between direct participation in the planning process by the student and positive outcomes. Student participation in Individualized Educational Program meetings and training in self-advocacy improved transitions. Therefore, Hume et al. developed the Secondary School Success Checklist allowing students to self-assess strengths, deficits, and instructional priorities, combined with the priorities of parents and teachers. In research with the checklist among 539 adolescents with ASD across the United States and their parents and educators, Hume et al. identified differences between student, parent, and teacher ratings of priority in their study using the checklist with 539 adolescents with ASD across the United States, emphasizing the necessity for student engagement in transition plans.

Specifically, Hume et al. (2018) found students self-rated skills much higher than the ratings given by parents and teachers. This was the case for 16 of the 20 skills, including skills in the domains of independence, transition, social skills, and academics. Moreover, students, teachers, and parents showed some differences in perceived importance of certain skills. Adjusting to changes was rated as high priority by 59% of

students, compared to 84% of parents and 77% of teachers (Hume et al., 2018).

Identifying emotions was rated as high priority by 70% of students, compared to 91% of parents and 85% of teachers. Problem-solving in class was rated as high priority by 71% of students, compared to 94% of parents and 86% of teachers. Talking with others about interests was rated as high priority by 79% of students, compared to 92% of parents and 87% of teachers. Listening to others was rated as of high priority by 81% of students, compared to 95% of parents and 90% of teachers. Of particular relevance to the current study, having postsecondary goals was rated as a high priority by 86% of students, 88% of teachers, and 92% of parents. Hume et al. concluded the importance of including students in transition planning to align educational priorities and goals. Other researchers have concurred; students should be directly involved in goal-setting (Organization for Autism Research, 2021). Students should express their self-assessed strengths and preferences (Organization for Autism Research, 2021).

**Parent Expectations and Student Self-Determination.** Self-determination is part of this expression of student-centered goals; students need to be able to participate in the transition process and self-advocate (Organization for Autism Research, 2021). Kirby et al. (2019) stated parent expectations are significant predictors of positive postsecondary outcomes among SWDs. Specific to students with ASD, parent expectations significantly affected students' positive or negative postsecondary outcomes, including independent living, postsecondary education, and employment. Kirby et al. also emphasized the importance of self-determination in postsecondary success for SWDs. Self-determination includes creating and following goals, self-



regulation, and autonomy (Kirby et al., 2019). Student expectations for themselves and their future are vital during the transition planning process.

Similar to Hume et al. (2018), described earlier, Kirby et al. (2019) found differences between parent expectations and the expectations of SWDs. Through analysis of the National Longitudinal Transition Study–2 dataset, researchers found that expectations from parents and youth are connected yet noticeably different, with parents regularly expressing lower expectations. Overall, Kirby et al. found student expectations were related to independent living and college, whereas parent expectations related to employment and receiving government benefits. Hume et al. found students with ASD and their parents had differing assessments of the students' social skills, indicating the importance of gathering multiple perspectives during the transition planning process. As a result, a team approach is recommended for the transition plan (Frank, 2015; Hume et al., 2018). Teachers, counselors, psychologists, and family members may help provide history and context of the individual's strengths, deficits, and expectations (Frank, 2015). Educators can learn more about home life and how to help the student with ASD transition to independent living (Frank, 2015).

**Daily Living Skills.** Chan et al. (2018) established in a longitudinal study that only 14.3% of adult SWDs with an intellectual disability demonstrated sustained employment over an 18-month time period. Factors that influenced sustained employment were independence in daily living skills, and hygiene in particular was identified as significant in predicting sustained employment. SWDs who had experience in inclusive settings were also identified as significant predictors of sustained

employment. Independence in daily living skills was found to be a primary factor in sustained employment. Self-help skills including meal preparation and house cleaning skills were also related to sustained employment. Chan et al. noted that the behaviors associated with self-help skills involve motivation for independence and self-direction, involving many planning skills. The researchers recommended training programs incorporating housekeeping, meal preparation, and personal care into the training programs to improve employment outcomes for SWDs (Chan et al., 2018). Similarly, the Organization for Autism Research (2021) advocated for a transition curriculum including independent living skills.

**Social Skills.** As students with ASD approach the final 2 years of high school, increased efforts should be made to increase not only their independent-living skills but also social skills (Frank, 2015). Such students may have suffered stigma-related mistreatment during schooling, which further delayed social interactions. However, Moody and Laugeson (2020) found individuals with ASD in social skills training programs improved their social competence.

Self-concept helps a person transition from having a reliant personality to becoming a more self-directed human being as they get older (Knowles, 1984). A person's self-concept is a mosaic of their ideas and experiences about themselves in various aspects of life. Self-concept is multidimensional, including the individual's experiences as well as the understanding of others' perceptions of the individual (Huang et al., 2017). According to Huang et al. (2017), self-concept affects how a person functions in social groups, such as school, family, work, and peer groups. Self-concept

also affects psychological behaviors such as impulse control and adjustment to new situations (Huang et al., 2017). Due to the inclusion of others' perceptions into self-concept, it is a complicated area for individuals with ASD (Huang et al., 2017).

Individuals with ASD have difficulty understanding contextual impacts, the difference between their own and others' preferences or emotions, what they do not know, and how environments shape behavior and emotions (Elmose, 2016; Huang et al., 2017).

To build healthy connections and make successful adjustments, interpersonal skills are a crucial behavior. Impairments raise the likelihood of developing both internal and exterior issues such as disruptive behaviors, anxiety, and depression (Jamison & Schuttler, 2015). Many people with ASD report having trouble making friends and navigating social norms, and they assess their own social competence as being lower than that of their classmates who are typically developing. For people with ASD, improved social skills are frequently a goal of interventions, which may take the form of social skills training or social skills groups. According to Bauminger et al. (2004), friendship was positively connected with cognitive capacity and emotions of self-worth, while friendship was adversely correlated with loneliness. Self-esteem and self-worth appear to be key contributors to social-emotional health throughout adolescence and are negatively associated with symptoms of despair and anxiety.

According to Alcover et al. (2022), more social skills interventions are needed for people with ASD. Impaired social learning is common in students with ASD, and social skills training remedies this gap by providing knowledge and critical skills of the social world to students with ASD. Alcover et al. examined studies that included five

randomized controlled trials that tested social skills training groups in ASD populations, across all ages. The five studies provided preliminary support showing that social skills among 360 training groups reduced loneliness and positively influenced social competence and social functioning. However, teachers did not report increases in social skills behavior; rather, students self-reported improvement, likely due to an increased understanding of social skills, rather than behavioral changes (Moody & Laugeson, 2020). This finding suggests that students might have been only saying what they thought the researchers wanted to hear. However, the meta-analysis by Moody and Laugeson (2020) suggested social skills training is an evidence-based practice for those with ASD and can increase social skills.

Frank (2015) recommended the use of peer-mediated interventions to allow students with ASD to practice social interactions in natural settings with peers. Video modeling can be used in addition to in-person practice sessions to increase student social skills (Johnson, 2021). Students with ASD who participated in social skills training increased their social competence, according to Moody and Laugeson (2020), making social skills training an evidence-based practice during transition. Social skills that can be modeled and practice include integrity, honesty, following instructions, showing respect for others, and communicating (Frank, 2015).

**Vocational Rehabilitation.** Transition plans can include coordination with postsecondary services such as vocational rehabilitation. Federal laws are designed to provide vocational rehabilitation as support for young adults with ASD in procuring employment (Organization for Autism Research, 2021). Rast et al. (2020) looked at

vocational rehabilitation as a system that could assist transitioning young adults with ASD in securing jobs. Rast et al. posited postsecondary education is vital to develop vocational skills for this population of students, thereby increasing wages and employment satisfaction. Vocational rehabilitation services are provided through a vast network of regional vocational rehabilitation offices and community rehabilitation organizations and are managed by states utilizing a combination of federal and state money (Organization for Autism Research, 2021; Rast et al., 2020). Further, according to Rast et al., the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act clarified the role of vocational rehabilitation as including funding for higher education in certain circumstances. Rast et al. found fewer youth with ASD received postsecondary vocational education (18%), compared to youth with other disabilities (32%) and were less likely to obtain a job. Yet, among young adults with ASD who received vocational rehabilitation services, 50%–60% found employment (Rast et al., 2020).

Researchers have focused on methods of improving community-based instructional programs for SWDs. Gilson and Carter (2016) examined the effects of an experimental design with job coaches and SWDs. Job coaches minimized proximity and quietly offered reminders using earphone-style devices, and young individuals with ASD displayed improved interactions and task engagement. Young adults with ASD showed increased social engagements on task behavior when job coaches reduced proximity and delivered prompts discreetly through the earphone-type devices. Gilson and Carter contended that promoting social interactions and job independence for SWDs should be a primary focus for service providers. As job coaches minimized proximity and quietly

offered reminders using earphone-style devices, young individuals with ASD displayed improved interactions and task engagement. An individual with a major handicap who is employed in a competitive or integrated workplace receives direct, individualized help through supported employment.

Typically, supported employment is temporary and geared toward fully independent, competitive employment. Customized employment is based on an individual assessment of requirements, interests, and strengths and is created to fulfill both the demands of the employer and the needs of the person with a major impairment (Baker-Ericzén et al., 2022). Transition planners can work with the community to find services helping students with ASD find and keep employment. Baker-Ericzén et al. (2022) reported that only 4%–11% of young adults (aged 21–25) with ASD are competitively employed, and only 58% have any sort of employment. Unemployment persists into middle age. Individuals with ASD not only find employment difficult but also have difficulty maintaining employment and adjusting to changes in the workplace (Farkas et al., 2021). Baker-Ericzén et al. noted the importance of vocational support and programming to provide long-term or comprehensive services to adults with ASD. They emphasized the need for evidence-based programming and initiatives, manuals to accompany—and replicate—successful vocational programs, and more models for PD related to vocational programming for adults with ASD.

Baker-Ericzén et al. (2022) described two forms of employment for individuals with ASD: supported and customized. An individual with a major handicap who is employed in a competitive or integrated workplace receives direct, individualized help

through supported employment. Typically, supported employment is temporary and geared toward fully independent, competitive employment. Customized employment is based on an individual assessment of requirements, interests, and strengths and is created to fulfill both the demands of the employer and the needs of the person with a major impairment (Baker-Ericzén et al., 2022). Much like an Individualized Educational Program during high school, the customized employment plan is carried out through flexible strategies to support both employee with disabilities and the employer. Brooke et al. (2018) stated employees with ASD benefit from ongoing services for supported and customized employment.

However, most employment services do not tend to provide continued on-the-job support (M. Scott et al., 2018). Additionally, employee attitudes toward support programs for employees with ASD can influence the success of such programs (Spoor et al., 2021). Spoor et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study, interviewing 32 employees who worked alongside individuals with ASD regarding their perceptions and attitudes on how and if an ASD employment support program benefited their organization. Spoor et al. also examined how employees within the organization viewed diversity and the effectiveness of programs designed to increase the inclusion of people with ASD within their organization. Thematic analysis of the responses revealed three themes: program benefits, program challenges, and concerns about workforce integration. The autism employment program was viewed positively overall. However, participants reported negative perceptions of special treatment that the workers with ASD received, such as reduced workload and additional direction from coaches (Spoor et al., 2021).

### ***Employability of Individuals With ASD***

Those with ASD often have strengths useful in certain workplaces, leading to high levels of productivity (Farkas et al., 2021; Hayward et al., 2019; M. Scott et al., 2018). Strengths include an aptitude for precision, repetition, and accuracy (M. Scott et al., 2018). Lee et al. (2020) concurred, reporting work-related strengths of individuals with ASD to include attention to detail, technical ability, preference for repetitive tasks, creativity, memory, trustworthiness, and loyalty. Individuals with ASD see the world and problems in different ways, potentially offering a unique problem-solving perspective (Lee et al., 2020). Further, individuals with ASD tend to have limited absenteeism and high productivity (M. Scott et al., 2018). Farkas et al. (2021) described employees with ASD as loyal and productive; further, employment prevents adults with ASD from declining mental health and poor quality of life.

Nonetheless, individuals with ASD are unemployed or underemployed around the globe (Meiring et al., 2016). Furthermore, only a small minority of students with ASD transition from high school to higher education (Frank, 2015). Black et al. (2019) emphasized the need to understand factors leading to successful continued employment of adults with ASD. Black et al. used focus groups, forums, and interviews with individuals with ASD, family members, employers, service providers, and others in Sweden, Australia, and the United States. Workplace environment was a contributing factor, including support, attitudes, services and relationships (Black et al., 2019). Organizational fit and positive social interactions were important for individuals with ASD in Hayward et al.'s (2019) study.



### ***Challenges in the Transition Process***

The proportion of SWDs enrolled in higher education has increased (Sefotho & Onyishi, 2020). The development of education and disability policy has improved this inclusion and is a significant step towards creating more chances for people with disabilities who enroll in higher education. For instance, the United Nations enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, attesting to the significance of improving educational opportunities for people with disabilities (Sefotho & Onyishi, 2020). However, students with ASD may face some difficulties navigating higher education and society as well as the inability or unwillingness to self-advocate for services after high school (Sefotho & Onyishi, 2020). Challenges in the transition process include a lack of student self-advocacy, a need for more educator training, and ineffective transition programs.

**Lack of Self-Advocacy.** Adults with ASD need to be able to find appropriate supports and assistance to enter higher education and maintain employment (Frank, 2015). Students with ASD require effort to support and timely planning for higher education transition (Newman et al., 2011). The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (1991) mandated accommodations for SWDs in public institutions of higher education, but the student has the responsibility to get those accommodations. In the National Longitudinal Transition Study–2, nearly 37% of students with ASD did not disclose their disability to their educational institution and did not receive accommodations (Newman et al., 2011). According to Newman et al. (2011), 72% of students identified by their secondary school as having a disability either did not believe they had a disability once

they transitioned to a postsecondary school (63%) or chose not to disclose their disability to the school (9%). Nuske et al. (2019) conducted a systematic review of the experiences of individuals with ASD transitioning to higher education. Findings confirmed that individuals with ASD were challenged with self-disclosure (Nuske et al., 2019).

Students with ASD need to understand the importance of self-advocacy. For example, receiving public benefits such as Supplemental Security Income increased vocational rehabilitation outcomes for students with ASD (Rast et al., 2020). Ohl et al. (2017) conducted cross-sectional research using an online survey and the Short Effort Reward Imbalance Scale to determine predictors of employment. Ohl et al. examined employment characteristics of 254 adults with ASD, of whom 61% were employed. Most of the individuals did not receive any job assistance. However, those participants who disclosed their ASD disability to their employer were 3 times as likely to remain employed (Ohl et al., 2017).

Students, parents, and even educators may not be aware of legal rights of young adults with ASD after high school (Frank, 2015). Thus, the transition plan should help students prepare to self-advocate for employment and other services. Such services include vocational rehabilitation, as described earlier (Frank, 2015).

**Need for More Educator Training.** Evidence of challenges for the SWDs in developing skills in community training settings has been related to the perceptions and knowledge of individuals implementing the program (Hayward et al., 2019). Researchers in the field of SWDs and transition have focused on strengthening the instruction and expertise of those providing support for this population due to the poor outcomes for

SWDs (Gilson & Carter, 2016). Researchers reported that special education teachers who lack specific transition competencies were less likely to implement effective transition services (Morningstar & Benitez, 2013). Educators lacking appropriate training may be delivering ineffective transition planning, resulting in poor outcomes for SWDs (Morningstar & Benitez, 2013).

Nuske et al. (2019) stressed increased awareness and understanding of ASD among school staff are needed to provide an individual and flexible approach to transition support. For independence to increase, students with ASD must have structured opportunities to explore options and practice valuable workplace skills. Hay (2021) reported only two thirds of students with ASD may receive courses related to Individualized Education Program transition goals. Szidon et al. (2015) stated a common error in transition planning is a lack of understanding how to assess and support skills students with ASD need to improve upon, such as social and adaptive skills. As a result, students with ASD may not be receiving courses specific to their goals (Hay, 2021; Szidon et al., 2015). Postsecondary goals should be measurable and related to education, training, employment, and (if necessary) independent living (Szidon et al., 2015).

**Ineffective Transition Programs.** Not all transition programs are effective. Johnson (2021) reported on a pilot curriculum to transition students with ASD to college and employment. The goals of the Tarrant County College First Choice Autism Program were to improve students' social skills, provide college preparation, and improve communication and vocational skills. The curriculum was developed by K&K Services, an internationally certified business providing rehabilitative and consultive services for

two decades. The curriculum was supposed to increase social success among students with ASD to help with personal communication, stress management, and transition to college. The program was deemed ineffective. Johnson elaborated that the ASD transition curriculum was not effective due to multiple factors. The program was only two semesters, not long enough to adequately prepare students with ASD for college and career. Social skills were not adequately incorporated into the curriculum, either, in spite of being part of the goals. Johnson reviewed the literature and concluded the program curriculum lacked technology, video modeling, and community partnerships, all elements that could have enriched the program. Video modeling can be used in addition to practice sessions to increase student social skills (Johnson, 2021).

In a qualitative study of focus groups of stakeholders in a transition planning program, Snell-Rood et al. (2020) found additional problems compared to those in Johnson's (2021) study. As with Johnson's study, participants stated schools emphasized academics over social and employment-related skills. Further barriers reported in the Snell-Rood et al. study included poor communication among stakeholders and ineffective goal-setting that did not adequately include student skills and interests—showing a lack of the person-centered planning espoused by researchers (Organization for Autism Research, 2021).

### **Implications**

The problem addressed in this study is that, despite available PD training and resources, educators at a high school have not been effectively implementing the strategies of the C2C initiative, which was designed to assist SWDs. To determine how to

address the problem, I conducted a qualitative study to investigate the experiences of educators using the C2C program; identify the challenges they encounter; and identify ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs, particularly students with ASD. Results of the data would yield challenges educators experience that can be addressed through PD. A policy project study was unlikely to develop, as IDEA (2004) already mandated transition planning. Therefore, a PD project was anticipated to emerge from the data.

### **Summary**

The problem addressed by the study was that, despite available PD training and resources, educators at a high school have not been effectively implementing the strategies of the C2C initiative, which was designed to assist SWDs. Therefore, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of educators using the C2C program; identify the challenges they encounter; and identify ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs, particularly students with ASD. The conceptual framework of the study was andragogy (Knowles, 1984, 1988). The literature review included the following themes: ASD description and prevalence, the transition to independence for those with ASD, the transition plan and process, best practices in transition plans, employability of individuals with ASD, and challenges in transition. Findings of the basic qualitative study contribute to the knowledge of C2C educators' experiences, perceived challenges, and recommendations for ways to improve the C2C services for SWDs. Findings may be used to strengthen the PD and technical

support given the educators using the C2C program. The next section describes the methodology used.

## Section 2: The Methodology

In an urban school district in a western state, the problem addressed through this study is that, despite available PD training and resources, educators at a high school have not been effectively implementing the strategies of the C2C initiative, which was designed to assist SWDs. Therefore, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of educators using the C2C program; identify the challenges they encounter; and identify ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs, particularly students with ASD. I used a basic qualitative design with a self-designed interview protocol to collect information from the participants. Two research questions guided this basic qualitative study:

1. How do high school educators who use the C2C program describe their experiences implementing the strategies promoted in the program (initiative)?
2. How do high school educators who use the C2C program describe ways to improve the C2C PD and resources to better serve SWDs, particularly students with ASD?

### **Qualitative Research Design and Approach**

Qualitative research starts with assumptions and the use of an interpretive or conceptual framework that helps researchers explore what individuals or a group of people think about a social issue or phenomenon. The basic qualitative design is used by researchers to explore real-life experiences and may include a single individual or multiple individuals (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative researchers utilize an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The collection of

data takes place in a natural setting that is sensitive to the people and places that are being studied. The final findings of a qualitative study include (a) the voice of the participants, (b) the interpretation of the researcher, (c) a complex description and understanding of the issue, and (d) a description of how the study findings contribute to the literature or a call for change (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In this study, I investigated the experiences of educators using the C2C program; identified the challenges they encounter; and identified ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs, particularly students with ASD. The study findings contain information to inform stakeholders regarding recommendations for improvements for the C2C program or related PD. As a result, instructional services for SWDs may improve. Strengthening the C2C program PD may better support the learning outcomes for SWDs.

### **Description of Qualitative Tradition Used**

A qualitative study focuses on everyday issues (Yin, 2018). Qualitative researchers investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth in a real-life setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). With a basic qualitative research approach, a researcher explores a phenomenon by gathering participants' explanations, descriptions, and perceptions. In a basic qualitative study, the researcher gathers authentic data by examining a phenomenon in its natural setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative studies provide researchers with in-depth understanding of social patterns and behaviors in organizations, for example (Gerring, 2017).



Qualitative research tools include observations, interviews, and document review relevant to the phenomenon (Atkinson et al., 2003). In basic qualitative research, typically the researcher uses one data collection instrument with the sample (Percy-Smith & Burns, 2013). In this case, I used interviews.

A basic qualitative approach is appropriate because it is an effective way to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of educators' descriptions and experiences on implementing the strategies promoted in the program and ways to improve the C2C PD and resources to better serve SWDs. Merriam (2009) noted that basic or generic qualitative research is focused on understanding people's understanding of their experiences to describe the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009; Taylor et al., 2022). Accordingly, a basic qualitative approach for this study allowed for a focused examination of the educators' experiences using the C2C program; challenges they encounter; and ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs, particularly students with ASD.

### **Justification of Research Design**

The basic qualitative study was selected from the several types of qualitative research designs (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To determine which design is the most suited for a study, the researcher first must determine the problem and then choose the research design based on the purpose of the study (Yazan, 2015). I reviewed different types of qualitative approaches to ensure that the basic qualitative study would be most appropriate. I used one data collection tool, interviews, to obtain participants' perceptions

of a phenomenon. The basic qualitative study is used to gather and interpret participants' experiences and perceptions (Percy et al., 2015; Taguchi, 2018).

Other qualitative research designs I considered were phenomenology, ethnography, narrative research, and grounded theory. The phenomenological research design is used to gain an understanding of the human experience, usually specific to a population group (Lodico et al., 2010). Phenomenology is used to describe a situation instead of explaining causes of events or behaviors. An explanation was essential in this study so I could understand educators' perceptions and experiences of implementing the C2C program. Ethnographic research is based on a cultural group and takes time to produce viable results. Narrative research tells stories from participants' experiences (Lodico et al., 2010). I did not seek to analyze stories about the participants' experiences; rather, I explored their perceptions about a phenomenon. Finally, grounded theory focuses on building a theory (Lodico et al., 2010), which was not the focus of this study.

Consequently, the basic qualitative design approach was the most appropriate because I collected data in the natural setting regarding educators' experiences and perceptions of using the C2C program. Qualitative researchers explore complex phenomena and discern additional information to describe a problem (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The study findings may inform stakeholders' decision-making by providing information regarding how to better implement the instructional strategies used in C2C, as well as what PD and resources may be needed to support teachers providing instruction to SWDs in the C2C program. Gaining additional information regarding the identified problem may provide insights for educational leaders into the problem of

educators not effectively implementing the strategies of the C2C initiative, despite available PD training and resources.

### **Participants**

The potential participants in this study included all professional educators who participated in the C2C program. Educators are defined as teachers, job coaches, program specialists, and instructional aides who provide instructional services for students with ASD in the C2C program at the high school study site. All participants were employees of the high school study site or supported SWDs in the C2C program; all have participated in district or campus PD related to the C2C program.

### **Criteria for Participant Selection**

The criteria for selecting only participants who had knowledge of the C2C program allowed me to gain insight into the educators' experiences and perceptions of the program. The participants for this study were essential to share their experiences with the program. The study included educators who had used the C2C program and had participated in related PD. Therefore, the participants had knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation and would be able to share their experiences and perceptions to fulfill the purpose of the study. The specific criteria for inclusion as participants were that participants (a) provide instruction or have provided instruction to SWDs in the C2C program or (b) provide management support to SWDs in the C2C program and (c) have participated in PD to support C2C program implementation.

Therefore, participants could include special education teachers, the school principal, assistant principals, C2C job coaches, program specialists, instructional aides,

and district special education staff who provide management or instructional support for the C2C program. The recruitment pool included 30 potential participants (see Table 1). Based on the study site's internet posting of educators for the 2022-23 academic school year, Table 1 reflects a summary of the recruitment pool of potential participants at the study site and district site who could meet the participant inclusion criteria. I included all special education teachers who have or previously had students served in the C2C program.

**Table 1**

*Recruitment Pool at Target High School Site*

Educator role	Number
Special education teacher	5
Campus 2 Community (C2C) job coach	4
Instructional aide	15
School principal	1
School vice principal	1
Campus-based special education instructional leadership staff	2
District-based special education instructional leadership staff	2

*Note.* Data based on school and district online staff directories 2022-23.

**Sample Size**

As of Fall 2022, the potential educator participant recruitment pool was 30 participants (see Table 1). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), if a sample size is inadequate, the study's results will not be credible. However, a small sample size in qualitative research yields more in-depth data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Creswell suggested a sample size of three to 10 for phenomenological qualitative research, for example. Therefore, the sample for this study

was planned to be 10–12 educators, which has been deemed to be an adequate sample for qualitative studies (see Lodico et al., 2010). The final sample was 11. This sample size allowed me to obtain an in-depth analysis of the problem that was the focus of this study and also to reach saturation (see Creswell & Poth, 2018; Fusch & Ness, 2015).

### **Sampling Procedure**

For this study, I used purposeful sampling to choose participants who could supply data to answer the research questions (see Lodico et al., 2010). This study's sample consisted of 11 educators who met the inclusion criteria specified. When a researcher employs purposeful sampling, targeting a participant pool meeting specific criteria, often the interview responses represent rich descriptions of the problem or phenomenon being explored because the participants were selected according to their knowledge or experiences. Furthermore, the interview protocol is used to elicit responses from targeted participants regarding the phenomenon under investigation and to answer the research questions that guide the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data collection achieves saturation when additional interviews provide no new information, simply confirming information already gathered (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

### **Procedure for Gaining Access to Participants**

A sequence of steps was followed to gain access to the participants. The first step was approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB No. 04-24-23-0123094). When approved to conduct my research, I followed the Walden University IRB-approved data collection steps:

1. I obtained participant contact info from the school and district.

2. I invited individual interviewees via email.
3. I shared the consent form with each interviewee prior to the interview.
4. I conducted interviews followed by member checking.

Upon receiving a formal approval letter from the study district's superintendent, I obtained approval from the high school principal at the target school. I obtained the names and email addresses of prospective educators from the district's and school's websites using open public record data. After obtaining the names and email addresses of the potential educators as reflected in Table 1, I emailed them the IRB-approved formatted invitation. The invitation included the following information: (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the voluntary nature of the study, (c) the time required of the participants in a single interview, and (d) methods for protecting the confidentiality of participants. I requested that the participants provide their personal email address and phone number, rather than their work email and phone, to ensure confidentiality and to facilitate communication during the study. The participant email invite explained that participation in this study was entirely voluntary and would have no impact on their employment at the study site. Supervisors would not know the identity of participants, and results would be reported in aggregate so individuals could not be identified. Supervisors were not permitted to require their subordinates to be interviewed. I confirmed that potential participants met the inclusion criteria for the study at the time of invitation to the study.

Interviews were audio recorded for transcription. As soon as I received each participant's desired interview date and time, I emailed them the interview confirmation

letter. After recruiting 11 participants who met the inclusion criteria at the study site and in the study district, I began scheduling the interviews.

### **Researcher–Participant Relationship**

In a qualitative study, the researcher has close contact with each participant (Lodico et al., 2010). Consequently, the researcher must prioritize their relationship with the participant. I established a researcher–participant relationship, as this is a fundamental aspect of qualitative research. It was essential that I establish a comfortable, professional rapport with each participant for them to share valuable information. To adhere to Walden’s ethics and research ethics, I conducted semistructured interviews with participants using the platform chosen by the participant. In addition, when conducting interviews, I remained impartial by recording only what each interviewee said and by adhering to the protocol as designed. I neither expressed my opinions nor provided responses that would contaminate or bias the interview session. I used electronic audio recordings with each participant’s permission. I documented each interview in a field journal to increase validity in data collection (Lodico et al., 2010). I ensured that the participants comprehended their role in the study as described in the invitation and informed consent form. I focused on communicating clearly and describing the participants’ rights, protections, and how their confidentiality would be maintained. I described to them how their names and any identifiable information would be removed from the transcriptions and the final report.

Before each interview, I reviewed the informed consent information, including member checking of findings, my contact information, and confidentiality. A researcher

not only must establish trust at the outset of each interview but also must maintain it throughout each interview and study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I sent a clear initial invitation to participate in the study, obtained consent, sent follow-up emails, conducted the interview, conducted member checking, and made myself available for questions to establish trust. I also reminded participants that they could take a break, skip a question if desired, and withdraw at any time.

### **Protection of Participants' Rights**

A researcher must be conscious of their ethical research obligations not only to each participant but also to the profession (Lodico et al., 2010). Researchers must adhere to professional ethics and ensure the confidentiality and safety of all participants and research sites (Lodico et al., 2010). To participate in a study, the Walden University IRB requires that all participants provide informed consent. I did not conduct any interviews until I received a signed informed consent form from the participant. The level of risk involved in this study was low for participants. Participants were free to withdraw at any time without repercussions, and participation was entirely voluntary. To create interview environments that encouraged candor and lack of tension, I established a positive rapport with each participant and assured them that their information would remain confidential. I protected the privacy of the informed consent form. I assigned each participant a numeric pseudonym and omitted their names from all transcriptions and documents. I alone was privy to the identities of the participants. All obtained information was stored on a flash drive and kept safe at my residence. According to Walden University IRB policy, I will store the files for 5 years before shredding all documents. In addition to



protecting the rights of the participants, accurate data collection was essential for this study.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection process is crucial to the collected data's accuracy. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the data collection tool must align with the research questions as well as the problem and purpose of the study. In this section, I justify the use of semistructured interviews to answer the research questions in this basic qualitative study. I then describe the interview protocol, followed by a review of the data collection procedures.

#### **Justification of Data for Collection**

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative data collection most commonly involves interviews. According to Lodico et al. (2010), face-to-face interviews are the primary method of data collection in qualitative research. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) distinguished structured, semistructured, and unstructured interviews. Merriam and Tisdell defined unstructured interviews as those that begin with a broad question but then proceed to ask follow-up questions based on the participant's initial response. Semistructured interviews are conducted when the researcher uses a predetermined list of open-ended questions. However, allowing for flexibility during investigation is essential. Using this method, the researcher is able to ask open-ended questions that provide greater insight into the experience being studied by the participant (see Lodico et al., 2010). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), semistructured interviews reduce researcher

confusion during data analysis. In addition, the semistructured interviews allow participants to describe their experiences in detail.

This study used either in-person interviews or audio interviews conducted via Zoom to collect data. By using a semistructured protocol, I was able to delve deeper into each participant's responses to answer the study's research questions. Structured interviews are conducted with a predetermined list of questions, without the researcher probing further (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, semistructured interviews were used in lieu of structured because structured interviews limit the depth of data collected from participants. When emotions or behaviors cannot be observed, Lodico et al. (2010) asserted that semistructured interviews are the most effective way to collect data. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), semistructured interviews permit the researcher to collect data to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. In this study, I investigated educators' perceptions of implementing the C2C program. Since I was not observing the participants, I employed semistructured interviews to collect in-depth data and provide a detailed description of the educators' experiences. I interviewed each participant once for up to 60 minutes. In the next section, I describe the interview protocol development.

### **Data Collection Instrument**

I conducted interviews with 11 C2C educator participants, including special education teachers, job coaches, program specialists, and instructional aides who provide instructional services for SWDs in the C2C program at the high school study site. I collected data through semistructured interviews using open-ended questions. A self-

designed interview protocol was developed related to the phenomenon being studied to answer the research questions. Interviews were conducted in person or via videoconferencing, were anticipated to last no more than 60 minutes, and did not occur during instructional time. Interviews were audio recorded for transcription.

I drafted interview questions to gather responses I believed would answer Research Question 1: How do high school educators who use the C2C program describe their experiences implementing the strategies promoted in the program (initiative)? Questions related to implementation and use of the program and related strategies. I drafted separate interview questions to gather responses to answer Research Question 2: How do high school educators who use the C2C program describe ways to improve the C2C PD and resources to better serve SWDs, particularly students with ASD? Questions related to challenges and ways to improve resources and PD relative to the C2C program. I used an expert panel to review the interview protocol for clarity, appropriateness to answer the research questions, and avoidance of bias (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). The expert panel was composed of two professors from my doctorate committee and one outside professional methodologist who is knowledgeable about my study format.

### **Sufficiency of Data Collection Instrument**

I created two research questions to address the problem and purpose of this basic qualitative study. I designed Interview Questions 1–12 to answer Research Question 1. Furthermore, I designed Interview Questions 13–19 to address Research Question 2. Table 2 provides alignment of the research questions and interview questions.

**Table 2***Research Questions and Interview Protocol Questions*

Research question	Interview questions
1. How do high school educators who use the Campus 2 Community (C2C) program describe their experiences implementing the strategies promoted in the program (initiative)?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In your own words, please describe the purpose of the C2C program.</li> <li>2. What do you perceive as strengths of the C2C program?</li> <li>3. Please describe the training you have participated in related to the C2C program.</li> <li>4. Overall, about how many training sessions for C2C have you participated in?</li> <li>5. Please describe how the training was structured and delivered.</li> <li>6. Please describe how you have used the training with the students serviced in the C2C program.</li> <li>7. What skills do you perceive students in the C2C program develop?</li> <li>8. What challenges do you perceive students in the C2C program have related to achieving the program objectives?</li> <li>9. What do you perceive may influence C2C student' support on the job site?</li> <li>10. What do you perceive may influence C2C students' success on the job site?</li> <li>11. What do you perceive may influence C2C students' understanding duties on the job site?</li> <li>12. What do you perceive may influence C2C students' behaviors on the job site?</li> </ol>
2. How do high school educators who use the C2C program describe ways to improve the C2C professional development (PD) and resources to better serve students with disabilities, particularly students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Please describe your perception about the effectiveness of the training you received for the C2C program. Please comment on the content, format, frequency, and delivery.</li> <li>14. How were the training sessions for C2C structured for learning?</li> <li>15. What training have you had that you think has been effective in supporting the students in the C2C program?</li> <li>16. Please describe your perception of implementing the skills learned from the C2C training.</li> <li>17. How would you describe your level of confidence in using the skills taught in the C2C training sessions?</li> <li>18. What recommendations do you have to improve the training for the C2C program?</li> <li>19. Are there any other supports that might be helpful in supporting staff to help students served through C2C? (Supports could be materials, training, administrative, people, resources, time)</li> </ol>

**Data Collection Process**

I conducted individual, semistructured interviews with selected participants. I followed the same preinterview script at the beginning of each interview (see Appendix

B). I verified that each participant received and signed an Informed Consent Form. I reminded each participant that the interview was voluntary and they could discontinue at any time. I assured each participant that I would be the only individual able to identify the respondents and their responses. The participant's numeric pseudonym would be substituted for their names in all documents and reports associated with this study. To protect the privacy of the high school and district website, any identifying information pertaining to the sample website was removed. Each participant was required to consent to the audio recording of the interview. Each participant interview followed the identical preinterview, interview, and postinterview procedure (see Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lodico et al., 2010).

I used a self-designed interview protocol containing the questions and probes in a single document. I allowed room between each question to make notes. I read the questions as they appear on the interview protocol. I used the probes to obtain additional data from the participant if necessary to answer the research questions. Interviews were recorded, and I transcribed each interview within 48 hours of its completion.

### ***Systems for Keeping Track of Data***

Data will be kept secure by password protection. The interview transcripts, data logs, and reflective journal will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by my university. I collected information via face-to-face or virtual interviews, which were audio recorded. I assigned each participant a numeric pseudonym to promote confidentiality. I sanitized the transcripts of any identifiable information. I stored the audiotape files on a password-protected jump drive in my home office; only I have access to the data. I stored all

printed copies of the transcripts in a filing cabinet in my home office that only I have access to; transcripts were labeled with the pseudonym rather than participant name. The collected information will not be used for any purpose outside of this study.

### ***Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants***

Upon receiving a formal approval letter from the study district's superintendent, the high school principal at the target school, and the Walden IRB, I obtained the names and email addresses of prospective educators from the district's and school's websites using open public record data. I emailed them the IRB-approved formatted invitation. I confirmed that potential participants met the inclusion criteria for the study at the time of invitation to the study.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As the researcher, my role was external. I do not collaborate or work with any sample site participants. I am employed in a different prevocational program and have no authority over the study participants or instructors. Since 1980, I have worked in the field of education. I have held the positions of educational leadership, prekindergarten through adult education specialists, curriculum development, and mentor teacher. I hold no administrative, leadership, supervisory, or management positions at the site serving as an example in my project study. As a special education teacher at the study site, I might bring perceptions that could influence my data collection and analysis. I used bracketing, journaling, member checking, and my field notes to help neutralize my preconceived notions of working with students with ASD in community settings (see Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lodico et al., 2010; Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). I strived to make my role as

researcher separate from the role of teacher and maintained my researcher role while interacting with educators at the study site who self-selected into this study.

During each interview, I took notes in a field journal to protect the information and avoid being biased and unethical. Qualitative research has a limitation of potential researcher bias affecting data collection and analysis. I first recognized my preconceptions and beliefs about the issue, including personal perceptions and experiences I have had with SWDs, and how I would teach skills to students with ASD based on my unique experiences. I used the field journal to document any self-perceived biases and reflective thoughts (see Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). Using a field journal assisted me in recognizing my pre- and postinterview thoughts and opinions on the topic (see Lodico et al., 2010). Following each interview, I used the same postinterview language asking if the participant had anything else to add, reminding the participant about member checking, and thanking them for participation. I adhered to the procedures outlined on the IRB interview template, which contributed to the precision of the data collection procedure and, consequently, the data analysis.

### **Data Analysis Methods**

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), data analysis occurs when the researcher comprehends their findings. I used content analysis to examine the transcripts of the interviews. Content analysis is a technique that enables researchers to draw inferences from audio, video, or written data (Bengtsson, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The objective of content analysis is to determine the significance and interrelationships of words, concepts, and themes (Bengtsson, 2016). Yin (2018) stated that the steps of data

analysis are (a) compilation, (b) disassembly, (c) reassembly, (d) interpretation, and (d) conclusion. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), qualitative data analysis includes collecting data, reading the data, identifying themes, assigning codes, organizing the data for interpretation, and reporting the findings in a final report.

I organized and prepared the data for analysis before beginning the process of data analysis. First, I transcribed the interviews. I confirmed that the audio and transcription matched, and I made certain no identifiable information was in the transcripts that would violate confidentiality. I read and reread the transcripts of the participants to familiarize myself with each participant's response to each interview question (see Bengtsson, 2016). By repeatedly reading the transcripts, I immersed myself in the data. Based on the research questions and purpose of the study, I identified codes, by reviewing the transcripts for commonalities and patterns, while reviewing the data.

### **Coding**

I conducted open coding by examining the data and looking at text excerpts of participants in relation to the research questions. According to Bengtsson (2016) and Creswell and Poth (2018), coding is used (a) to organize data into text chunks, (b) to organize texts into categories, and (c) to label each category with a specific term. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the content analysis procedure consists of the following steps:

1. Transcribe each interview in its entirety. Connect the unprocessed data to the research questions by identifying and codifying the unprocessed data.



2. Read and examine the data multiple times to identify similar patterns. Create codes that will assist in identifying themes from the raw data.
3. Designate codes and investigate similarities and differences between codes or categories derived from finished interviews.
4. Using excerpts from participant responses, develop the themes that represent the study's objective.

After reading and rereading the transcripts, I organized the text excerpts I coded by copying them and pasting them into Word tables. I used open coding for my second round of coding and categorizing raw interview data. Open coding is an inductive coding technique that enabled me to break down the data into smaller chunks by examining the words, phrases, and paragraphs and determining the content or meaning of the participant's responses following each interview question. I engaged in multiple rounds of coding, collapsing the codes that appeared similar or redundant. In one document I listed codes by participant to gain an idea of the frequency with which certain concepts were mentioned.

### ***Coding for Research Question 1***

I coded responses to Interview Questions 1–12 to answer Research Question 1. Then, I analyzed the grouped codes and text excerpts and created broader categories for the codes and descriptive words and phrases that I grouped together (see Yin, 2018). My broad a priori codes of student-centered planning, parent expectations, student outcomes of student self-determination, student outcomes of functional skills, and student outcomes of vocational rehabilitation were turned into categories rather than codes (see Table 3).

Research Question 1 was broad, and I developed 90 codes after multiple rounds of coding. Then, I combined codes into 16 categories, as shown in Tables 3–5. I then developed themes based on the categories and relevant to the research question (see Yin, 2018). Seven categories were related to planning and student outcomes (see Table 3), which became formalized as Theme 1: The C2C program has positive outcomes. Four categories were related to best practices (see Table 4), which became formalized as Theme 2, educators use best practices of communication, instruction, attitude, and teamwork. Four categories were related to challenges and difficulties with current training (see Table 5). This group was formalized as Theme 3, educators describe varied challenges in the program, and Theme 4, training is insufficient. Themes are discussed in the Data Analysis Results section.

**Table 3***Codes and Categories for Research Question 1: Planning and Student Outcomes*

Category	Code	Participants
No hands-on experience with C2C [outlier]		P5
Student-centered planning (best practices: a priori code)	Determine student strengths/deficits	P2, P11
	Listening	P4
	Students unique/differentiation	P6, P9, P10, P11
	Some need visual support	P9
	Love their job, work is a privilege	P1, P7, P11
	Rapport with student	P2
	Conversely: Align plan with district guidelines	P2, P4, P6
Parent expectations (best practices: a priori code)	Parents excited	P2
	Challenge: lack of support/participation of families afraid they'll lose SS funds	P9
Strengths of the program	Community/workforce access	P4, P5, P6, P7
	Great program, important, helpful	P4, P5, P6, P9
	Collaborate with other programs for resources, training	P2, P6, P7
Student outcomes: student self-determination (best practices: a priori code)	Confidence	P1, P2, P3, P4, P8, P9
	Independence	P1, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9
	Self-advocacy/Learn to ask for help	P4, P5, P7, P10, P11
	Conversely: students should learn to do job so don't have to ask for help	P8
	Self-determination	P9
	Self-worth	P1
	Self-fulfillment	P7
	Self-awareness	P8
	Self-esteem	P8
	Filling a purpose	P1
	Student outcomes: Functional, daily living skills (best practices: a priori code)	Functional skills
Punctuality, time management		P4, P6, P7, P10, P11
Money management		P1, P3, P5, P7, P9, P10
Hygiene, dress appropriately		P3, P6, P7, P10, P11
Transportation		P1, P4
Student outcomes: Social skills (best practices: a priori code)	Be personable, polite, respectful	P1, P7, P11
	Improved communication skills	P4, P7, P9
	Emotional self-regulation	P6
Student outcomes: Vocational rehabilitation (best practices: a priori code)	Practice skills in safe environment	P2, P7, P9
	Comfortable	P2, P3
	Responsibility	P5, P7, P11
	Earn money	P1, P3
	Learn to follow directions	P11
	Work skills	P10
	Stay focused	P11
	Organizational skills	P4

**Table 4***Codes and Categories for Research Question 1: Best Practices for Educators*

Category	Code	Participants
Best practices: Communication	Communication	P3, P4, P6, P8, P10, P11
	Communication/feedback with/from managers	P3, P4, P10
	Clear communication of expectations	P4, P5, P7, P8
	Tone, delivery, eye contact	P9, P11
	Educator is calm	P2, P3
Best practices: Instruction	Motivate student without adding stress	P10
	Clear directives	P3, P8, P10
	Simple	P2, P10
	Steps 1, 2, 3	P2, P4, P10
	Script	P1
	Task cards/task analysis	P2, P3, P6, P10
	Repetition	P1, P2, P3, P4, P9
	Modeling	P1, P2, P4, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11
	Positive reinforcement	P1, P2, P3, P8, P11
	Consistency	P3, P5, P6, P7
	Patience	P3, P4, P9
	Students try new things	P2, P3
	conversely: being hands-on and present	P6, P8
Need continuous check-in process	P4, P7	
Best practices: Attitude	Attitude	P2, P3, P6, P8, P9, P10
	Attitude of coach (positive, energy)	P3, P8
	Temperament of coworkers, managers	P4
Best practices: staff quality	Coach quality	P2, P3, P6, P9, P10
	Teamwork	P2, P4, P6, P7
	Support from staff	P1
	Support from manager	P4

**Table 5***Codes and Categories for Research Question 1: Challenges and Existing Training*

Category	Code	Participants
Challenges: diverse	Learn slowly	P2, P3, P10, P11
	Lack of emotional self-regulation/outbursts	P2, P3, P4
	Remaining confident despite attitudes of others	P1, P7, P10
	Lack of self-advocacy/asking for help	P3, P10
	Focus	P3, P10
	Learning routines	P3, P10
	Confusion at work site	P2
	Lack time to practice	P2
	Students inflexible	P2
	Job stressors: crowded, messy, noisy work environment	P3
	Need more volunteers	P4
	No case manager	P7
	Some cannot read	P11
	Work slowly	P8
	Poor attendance	P9
	Lack of support of families afraid they'll lose SS funds	P9
	No training on C2C	No C2C training
Inadequate one-shot training at beginning of the year	One beginning-of-year training seminar; sit-and-get presentation-style seminar	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P9
	Mandatory training	P6
	Mission statement	P2
	Handbook	P2, P6
	One training not a Q&A; one-shot sit and listen for an hour	P2
	Training on guidelines/procedures	P6
On-the-job training	On-the-job training, including job site	P2, P3, P4, P9, P10, P11
	Shadow experienced staff	P3, P4, P7, P8, P9
	Mentor teachers	P3

***Coding for Research Question 2***

I coded responses to Interview Questions 13–19 to answer Research Question 2. I conducted the same process for discerning codes for Research Question 2. I coded the text excerpts after immersing myself into the data. I read and reread the transcripts. The

final round of coding yielded 55 specific codes. I grouped the codes into eight categories, as shown in Tables 6–8. Finally, I grouped the categories to develop three initial groupings or themes related to the research question. Three categories were grouped under educator recommendations for training (see Table 6). Two categories were grouped into the formalized Theme 5, educators need more frequent training throughout the year. One category became Theme 6: Training materials should be uniform and offered to all. Three categories were grouped under educator confidence and skills from training (see Table 7). This finding was formalized as Theme 7: Educators used skills from other training. Educator recommendations for resources (see Table 8) included two categories, which were formalized as Theme 8: More resources are needed. Themes are discussed in the Data Analysis Results section.

**Table 6***Codes and Categories for Research Question 2: Educator Recommendations for Training*

Category	Code	Participants
Need more training	More training	P2, P3, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11
	Educators want training, enjoy training when get it	P2, P3, P4, P11
Training must be throughout the year, frequent, and specific to needs	Need more training frequency throughout year	P2, P4, P6, P8, P11
	Need more training on specific concerns	P2, P4, P8
	Need more little videos	P2, P4, P7
	Training on chunked topics	P8
	Need more training on how to support students w/o doing too much	P8
	Need in-person, hands-on training with student	P1, P11
	Should have training at faculty meeting	P1
	Need classroom presentations	P9
Training must be uniform, accessible, and offered to all	Build on what we know	P4
	Everyone in the system needs training	P1, P7, P9
	Need consistent, uniform training	P7, P8
	Need central location for info, training for all	P7
	Need a handbook for all stakeholders	P7
	Everyone needs training on responses/attitudes to SWD	P1
	Conferences should be offered to all parents/teachers	P9

**Table 7***Codes and Categories for Research Question 2: Educator Confidence and Skills Used**From Training*

Category	Code	Participants
Educator confidence	Confident	P3, P5, P6, P10, P9, P11
	Educator confident in learning how to provide coaching/support, but not sure it will work	P2, P4
Skills from C2C training used with students	Confidence would increase with training	P8, P11
	One-time training covered alignment with guidelines as well as best practices/strategies	P2, P6
	One-time training covered contracts, budgets, curriculum	P6
	One-time training covered best practices/strategies	P2, P6
Skills from other training/experience used with students	Mission statement	P2, P6
	Task analysis cards	P2, P4, P7, P10
	Students unique, differentiate instruction	P6, P9, P11
	Adapting training to unique student situation (a challenge)	P2, P6
	Crisis prevention, de-escalation, training in handling outbursts	P3, P4
	Brain/child development	P2, P11
	Communication of expectations	P7, P8
	Coaching	P2, P8
	Teamwork	P2, P6
	Modeling	P4
	Patience	P3
	Being calm	P3
	Universal design for learning	P2
	Mindset	P2
	Respect	P8
	Repetition	P4
Consistency	P3	
Social Security training helped with explaining to parents	P9	
Conferences, multiple trainings were adequate, networked about new practices	P9	



**Table 8**

*Codes and Categories for Research Question 2: Educator Recommendations for Resources*

Category	Code	Participants	
Need resources	More resources	P1, P2, P3, P10	
	Need time	P1, P2, P3, P6, P9	
	Planning time is good	P4	
	Need more practice	P4	
	More resources: materials	P4, P11	
	More resources: voice monitors	P2	
	Need more trained staff	P2, P3, P5, P10	
	Need more community/business participation	P5, P10	
	Recommendations (other than more training)	More collaboration with job site	P4
		Collaboration	P8, P9
Need more collaboration/teamwork		P6, P10	
Leaders should evaluate, collaborate with educators		P9	
Need monthly reports		P9	

### **Evidence of Quality, Accuracy, and Credibility**

I ensured quality in this study through methods such as member checks, peer debriefing, and clarifying researcher bias, as described by Creswell and Poth (2018). After I completed the data analysis, I sent a draft copy of the analysis section to each participant. Each interviewee had 10 days to review the findings and send any corrections or thoughts relevant to my interpretation of the findings. Member checking helped prevent researcher bias from affecting analysis and ensure accuracy of the findings. None of the participants recommended any changes be made to the analysis. Additionally, I used a peer debriefer to help confirm my data analysis is not affected by bias. Finally, the interview protocol was developed with the assistance of an expert panel. Use of the panel

ensured the questions were aligned to the research questions, were not leading, and were clear.

### **Discrepant Cases**

Whereas the coding process would determine common codes across transcripts, to create broader analysis, I also would include data from discrepant cases. For example, if one interviewee had a dramatically different experience or perception of the C2C program, I would note the discrepant case. Discrepant cases are interview data that do not align with the consensus of the responses collected from the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I reported discrepant cases and provide examples of any discrepant cases in the data analysis and reporting of themes. For example, as shown in Table 3, a discrepant case was a respondent who had administrative experience but no hands-on experience with C2C. Also shown in Table 3, only two participants referred to parent expectations, a best practice from the literature; this is discussed in the findings. Additionally, an outlier for Research Question 2 was one participant who had attended multiple conferences and received extensive training.

## **Data Analysis Results**

### **Review of Data Collection**

I conducted interviews with 11 C2C educator participants, including special education teachers, job coaches, program specialists, and instructional aides who provide instructional services for SWDs in the C2C program at the high school study site. A self-designed interview protocol was developed related to the phenomenon being studied to answer the research questions. Each participant interview followed the identical

preinterview, interview, and postinterview procedure (see Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lodico et al., 2010). Interviews were conducted in person or via videoconferencing and did not occur during instructional time. Interviews were audio recorded for transcription. I assigned each participant a numeric pseudonym to promote confidentiality.

### **Findings**

In an urban school district in a western state, the problem addressed through this study was that, despite available PD training and resources, educators at a high school have not been effectively implementing the strategies of the C2C initiative, which was designed to assist SWDs. Therefore, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of educators using the C2C program; identify the challenges they encounter; and identify ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs, particularly students with ASD. Data analysis through qualitative coding led to the development of grouped categories and final themes. Categories and codes developed were presented in Tables 3–8. Final themes are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9***Research Questions and Themes*

Research question	Theme
1. How do high school educators who use the C2C program describe their experiences implementing the strategies promoted in the program (initiative)?	Theme 1: The C2C program has positive outcomes. Theme 2: Educators use best practices of communication, instruction, attitude, and teamwork. Theme 3: Educators describe varied challenges in the program. Theme 4: Training is insufficient.
2. How do high school educators who use the C2C program describe ways to improve the C2C PD and resources to better serve SWDs, particularly students with ASD?	Theme 5: Educators need more frequent training throughout the year Theme 6: Training materials should be uniform and offered to all. Theme 7: Educators used skills from other training. Theme 8: More resources are needed.

*Findings for Research Question 1*

Research Question 1 was the following: How do high school educators who use the C2C program describe their experiences implementing the strategies promoted in the program (initiative)? Four themes emerged related to positive outcomes of the program, educator best practices, challenges, and insufficient existing training. Results are presented by theme.

**Theme 1: The C2C Program Has Positive Outcomes.** Participants agreed on the purpose of the C2C program as a transition program teaching SWDs skills to prepare them for work. Two participants stated that the purpose of the program is to give students independence, confidence, and self-worth. Participants outlined the strengths of the program, describing student-centered planning and differentiated instruction. As shown in Table 10, seven participants described student-centered planning in the program, a best practice from the literature (conversely, two participants described the need to align the

student plan with district guidelines). P11 noted “taking the time to actually see what they can do on their own, and then we can guide them.” Three participants noted that student participants in the C2C program love the job and the opportunity. Six participants described how every student is unique, requiring determination of student strengths and deficits to differentiate instruction and help.

However, participants did not describe including parents in the planning process, cited in the literature as a best practice (Frank, 2015; Kirby et al., 2019). One participant simply said parents were excited. Another cited parent concerns about losing Social Security funds due to the child working.

**Table 10**

*Themes and Categories for Research Question 1: Planning and Student Outcomes*

Theme	Category	Participants
Theme 1: The C2C program has positive outcomes.	Student-centered planning (best practices: a priori code)	P1, P2, P4, P6, P9, P10, P11
	Parent expectations (best practices: a priori code)	P2; P9 cited challenge
	Strengths of the program	P2, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9
	Student outcomes: student self-determination (best practices: a priori code)	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11
	Student outcomes: Functional skills (best practices: a priori code)	P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P11
	Student outcomes: Social skills (best practices: a priori code)	P1, P4, P6, P7, P9, P11
	Student outcomes: Vocational rehabilitation (best practices: a priori code)	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P9, P10, P11
	No hands-on experience with C2C [outlier]	P5

Other strengths of the program were access to the community and workforce and collaboration with other programs for resources and training. P6 described “the local

businesses” as the strength of the program. P6 said, “It really is a beautiful program for our communities.”

Positive student outcomes included student self-determination, functional skills, social skills, and vocational rehabilitation. P4 said,

The skills that I see the students develop in the C2C program are better communication skills, self-advocacy and independence, organizational skills, time management skills, and the skills that they learn on the job itself. You know, social skills, transportation. . . . It’s just been really exciting and encouraging stuff. They really do learn a lot, I believe, through the C2C program.

The term “self-determination” was only used by the participant who had attended multiple conferences; however, other participants described self-worth, self-fulfillment, and self-esteem. P1 noted having a job allows students to be independent, confident, and “to fill a purpose” and “know their self-worth.” Seven participants noted students developed independence, including from their parents. Six heavily emphasized student confidence.

Five stated students learned self-advocacy and the importance of asking for help when needed. P7 said, “Self-advocacy skills . . . [students learn] ‘I can ask for help. Matter of fact, people want me to ask for help.’” P10 said,

It’s not a bad thing to ask for help. It doesn’t mean that there’s something wrong.

It just means that you know that you didn’t do it in a certain way, and you need to ask for some supports.

Conversely, Participant 8 said students should learn to do the job so they do not have to ask for help. Participant 8 described receiving no training other than asking more experienced staff, so additional training could increase this participant's understanding of student self-advocacy.

The program taught students functional, daily living skills. Participants noted students developed time management and punctuality, money management, hygiene, and dressing appropriately. Students learned how to use transportation to get to the job site. Additionally, students learned social skills, including how to be "personable," a word used by multiple interviewees. Students learned to be polite and respectful and increased communication skills.

Vocational rehabilitation was another positive outcome. Students were able to earn money, learn responsibility, and develop work skills of focusing on tasks and following directions. As P2 put it, students could "first practice the skills on campus in a safe environment." Several participants used the word "comfortable." For example, P2 said,

We try to get them to feel as comfortable as possible with being in public and dealing with the customers, dealing with crowds, and at the same time, staying focused on their job appointment. . . . They're confident, and they're comfortable, and they're feeling supported.

**Theme 2: Educators Use Best Practices of Communication, Instruction, Attitude, and Teamwork.** Categories used to develop Theme 2 are shown in Table 11. Educators described implementing effective strategies related to communication with

students, including clear communication of expectations; educator being calm; educator regulating tone, delivery, and eye contact; and motivating students without adding stress.

**Table 11**

*Themes and Categories for Research Question 1: Best Practices Used by Educators and Challenges*

Theme	Category	Participants
Theme 2: Educators use best practices of communication, instruction, attitude, and teamwork.	Best practices: Communication	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11
	Best practices: Instruction	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11
	Best practices: Attitude	P2, P3, P6, P8, P9, P10
	Best practices: Staff quality	P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P9, P10
Theme 3: Educators describe varied challenges in the program.	Challenges: diverse	P1, P2, P3, P4, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11

P11 said,

I influence the students' understanding their duties on the job site by how I communicate with them. My tone and my eye contact, that kind of thing. But each of the students are very unique on how they process information, and I have to be respectful of that uniqueness. Some of them learn fast, and then others need more like a hand-over-hand guiding and prompting.

P8 said,

Making sure the communication is clear, concise, and direct. And I think what influences the student's behavior on the job site is definitely my attitude. It's probably what makes the students work the best. When I come positive, with energy, ready to work, I think those students know that.



P9 said,

Correction can influence negativity or positivity. Embarrassing a student publicly will yield more negative behaviors over just reexplaining and showing the student how something should be done. I think it's having a lot to do with tone and delivery of how you help. So basically, your attitude really affects the student's behavior on the site.

Instructional strategies involved clear, simple directives and steps. Task cards were used to ensure repetition and proper following of steps. P2 explained the job coach used task cards and task analysis to break down the job into simple steps and then model those steps. P2 said, "Keep it simple and one step, two step, three step. We didn't get that right, let's try again." Five interviewees noted the importance of positive reinforcement.

Eight of the interviewees stressed modeling as a strategy. P1 explained, "[Saying] 'Paint the door blue' isn't the same as actually showing them this is the blue paint, this is the brush, and this is the area that we would like to have painted."

Communication also included managers and other staff; P3 said, "Communication is key. So, the better the site managers communicate with us, the better that we can create a successful work environment for the students." Participants stressed educator consistency and patience. P9 said a major influence on student success is

patient job coaches and teachers. These individuals really need to understand that our students have an intellectual disability and may need duties and instructions repeated often, modeled, and may even need visual support as well.

P10 explained,

[Students] don't necessarily respond that well when you're rushing them. So, some of the students like to read the checklist on their own, but then they can't, and they'd rather be shown what to do, and then you have to be conscious of what's a gentle reminder, or what's been annoying to the student.

Six participants referred to attitude as an important strategy. P2 described the importance of staff attitude, being positive but "not setting them off," being aware of the student's "lack of emotional regulation" and being "the calm one." P3 said, "I try my best to be as outgoing and happy as possible because if I'm radiating that, I feel like it also radiates through them too." P3 continued, "Job coaches have a really important influence on students. Attitude, how you approach the job and the day." P6 also described "modeling a positive attitude."

Coach quality and knowledge combined with a supportive team helped students succeed on the job. P6 said,

The students often only do as well as the quality and skills of their coach. On the job, the coach's attitude and confidence really helps the students. So having a well-trained, passionate job coach is a big influence for them.

**Theme 3: Educators Describe Varied Challenges in the Program.** Educators described various challenges, with little consensus. Four educators noted students learn slowly; three observed a challenge was student lack of emotional self-regulation, resulting in outbursts.

Three said a challenge for students was remaining confident despite noticing others' attitudes towards them. P10 said,

Students pick up on and the attitude of the on-site managers and customers, how people are looking at them like they're strange or don't belong. These kind of things affect the students' behaviors the most."

Other challenges included students lacking self-advocacy, focus, and time to practice and learn routines. Job stressors at the work site are challenges, including a crowded, messy, or noisy work environment or confusion. Students may be inflexible, may work slowly, and some cannot read. One participant, P9, noted a challenge was lack of attendance in the program as families fear they will lose Social Security funds if the student earns money. P6 noted, "Staff consistency and training is the biggest influencer and so of course those would be the biggest challenges."

**Theme 4: Training Is Insufficient.** As shown in Table 12, six educators described receiving no training on the C2C program. P3 said, "I've never been offered the chance to go to training for C2C, so I've never been trained. . . If it were offered, I would try it." P8 described having no training and just asking coworkers what to do.

**Table 12**

*Theme and Categories for Research Question 1: Existing Training*

Theme	Category	Participants
Theme 4: Training is insufficient	No training on C2C	P1, P3, P7, P8, P10, P11
	Inadequate one-shot training at beginning of the year	P2, P4, P5, P6, P9
	On-the-job training	P2, P3, P4, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11

Five educators described the existence of a single seminar presentation at the beginning of the year but noted that staff joining the program midyear received no training. Those five had attended one session a year for a total of 1–14 times, depending on participant experience. Only two participants mentioned the program handbook; another participant later suggested a handbook would be a good addition to the program. P6 explained the single seminar focused on guidelines and procedures and was mandatory. P2 explained,

A group session happens within the special education back-to-school conference. They have a program coordinator in front of the auditorium. They show a video; then she does like an oral presentation on the guideline changes and procedures and stuff like that for the upcoming school year. Basically, you sit and you listen for about an hour. So, it's not a Q&A.

P4 said,

The training is a seminar where we go in and meet with somebody who's experienced. They describe to us what the procedures are and their policies as far as confidentiality and how to treat the people who are applying for the jobs, like our clients and the people who are on the job, like the managers and things like that, and if things go wrong and what to do in case of an emergency, all of those things. Another training is on-the-job training, so going in with somebody who's more experienced than me and watching them and observing them and how they support the students on the job.

Most of the participants learned on the job by shadowing experienced staff. One participant mentioned a “mentor” teacher. Additionally, participants mentioned job-site instructions related to the student’s job and tasks.

**Discrepant Cases.** Two discrepant cases emerged. One participant, P5, had attended the beginning-of-the-year training but had no hands-on experience with the program and thus was an outlier. Another participant, P9, had attended multiple seminars and trainings not available to other participants.

### ***Findings for Research Question 2***

Research Question 2 was the following: How do high school educators who use the C2C program describe ways to improve the C2C PD and resources to better serve SWDs, particularly students with ASD? Four themes developed related to the need for more frequent training throughout the year, training materials that are uniform and available to all, skills educators used from other training, and need for more resources.

**Theme 5: Educators Need More Frequent Training Throughout the Year.** As shown in Table 13, 10 of the 11 interviewees noted a need for more training. Eight noted training must be more frequent throughout the year. P8 noted that anyone joining the program in the middle of the year were “jumping in a moving train.” P7 said, “It needs to be like any other training—something we do often, something that’s tangible, having people we can reach out to.”

Participants who had attended the beginning-of-the-year seminar noted the training outlined the mission statement, guidelines, budgets, procedures and contracts. Additional training should be specific to educator concerns and needs. P4 said,

On-the-job training is really helpful, but I would like more time to talk about it and to process it and maybe see how it's worked for other situations. . . . building on what we learned and what new need to do better at.

**Table 13**

*Themes and Categories for Research Question 2: Educator Recommendations for Training*

Theme	Category	Participants
Theme 5: Educators need more frequent training throughout the year.	Need more training	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11
	Training must be throughout the year, frequent, and specific to needs	P1, P2, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9, P11
Theme 6: Training materials should be uniform and offered to all.	Training must be uniform, accessible, and offered to all	P1, P7, P8, P9

P8 said training should be offered throughout the year in “shorter chunks, so that it's easier to remember and we can apply it.” Similarly, P2 said,

I think if we really compartmentalize it [training], that it'll go further in helping all of us learn and teach us what areas need to be perfected. Because when you meet in one big room and you try to go over six different areas, like task analysis, attitude, temper, tantrums, job skills, it's just too much to absorb in just one setting. So, I think we need to have additional training where we can sit and address very, very specific areas and really dive into specific concerns. That would be helpful.

**Theme 6. Training Materials Should Be Uniform and Offered to All.** Another finding was that training needed to be uniform and available to all stakeholders. P7

recommended more training for all teachers, observing that “only a handful of people know about it.” Further, training “should be uniform across the district, all school sites, and every classroom,” according to P7. P1 said everyone should be trained on tolerance and understanding of SWDs. P1 said the training should “be for everyone that works with the program . . . the receptionist, the parking lot person, security, maintenance, whoever comes in contact with a participant who would need encourage to be successful.”

P6 said the program handbook is “handed out at the beginning of the program year. And ideally, yes, everybody that is a C2C staff would receive the handbook.” However, only two participants (including P6) mentioned the existence of the handbook. Further, P7 was unaware of the handbook, recommending staff have

something we can tangibly read from, like a handbook, so teachers and participants, parents, the community can know what to expect. And then there’s one central location for us to get information to help the students and guide the students, as well as the parents.

P8 explained,

I haven’t received any trainings from the C2C program. . . . The training that I could have had I think could have been more effective in supporting me and in turn me supporting students. You know I haven't received any, so I don’t know really what I’m missing. I think I should get some. I think that that would really help me. I’m flying blind really otherwise. I’m going by the guidance of other people, and everybody has their own perception of how things should be. I want

to make sure I'm doing things the right way. . . . I think consistency is important.

And then we have something to refer to.

P7 recommended little videos for uniform training. Participants expressed a clear need for more training that is uniform and provided in small chunks on specific issues.

**Theme 7: Educators Used Skills From Other Training.** Theme 7 represented the skills educators used in the program that they learned from other training. For example, P11 said, "I've been using my life skills that I as an adult learner, you know, have encountered to coach me through the C2C program, but nothing that the program has done in terms of training." Only two participants described using skills from C2C training (see Table 14). Educators described being confident based on skills they developed in earlier training or through experience. P3 said, "I haven't had any training specifically in the C2C program, but I feel confident in my role." Two educators said they were confident in their abilities as an educator but were never certain the program would work with the individual student. These data can be used to expand and strengthen C2C training.

**Table 14**

*Themes and Categories for Research Question 2: Educator Confidence and Skills Used From Training*

Theme	Category	Participants
Theme 7: Educators used skills from other training.	Educator confidence	P2, P3, P4, P5, P9, P10, P11
	Skills from C2C training used with students	P2, P6
	Skills from other training/experience used with students	P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9, P11



Specific training necessary might be understanding modeling guidelines. A few participants described being unsure of the degree of modeling allowed, or at what point the coach was doing too much of the student's work. P3 cited "remembering that the goal is for the students to be as independent as possible and to stay within the guidelines as far as how much support to offer to the students."

P2 described the importance—and challenge—of adapting training information to the individual student. P2 said, "You have to implement the training, but you have to adapt it to the students in your classroom. . . . It's a day-to-day planning and day-to-day observation of evaluating, did it work?" Similarly, P6 said,

The students in the C2C program have a variety of personalities and skills. In order to be effective, I have to modify and adapt the skills learned at the trainings for each of the students to meet the goals on their job sites. So, I have to use modification and making sure that my approach is personalized, individualized for each student.

P7 said, "One new thing I'll be implementing this school year is like a little check-in system as we go throughout our quarters" so students would feel supported and be able to indicate any problems.

**Theme 8: More Resources Are Needed.** As shown in Table 15, educators declared the need for more resources. Resources included staff, volunteers, businesses involved in the program, time, and materials. P3 said, "We definitely need more staff that are trained to work with the students in the program." P4 said, "More people should be

participating and helping the students with special needs to integrate into the workforce and be a resource for them.”

Time was a major resource mentioned. P2 stressed needing the time “to work and practice skills as a team” of paraeducators, students, coaches, and staff. P6 requested “more time to work together as a team” and noted the need for PD. P10 also requested more time for team training. Participants recommended more collaboration with staff and job sites. P2 recommended monthly reports, classroom presentations, and leader collaboration with and evaluations of C2C staff.

### **Table 15**

*Themes and Categories for Research Question 2: Educator Recommendations for Resources*

Theme	Category	Participants
Theme 8: More resources are needed.	Need resources	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P9, P10, P11
	Recommendations (other than training)	P6, P8, P9, P10

**Discrepant Cases.** The outlier for Research Question 2 was one participant who had attended multiple conferences and received extensive training. However, that participant also noted the need for more training and recommended that all educators be able to attend such conferences. Perhaps midyear trainings or classroom presentations could incorporate knowledge sharing from the participant with extensive training.

### ***Evidence of Quality***

I ensured quality in this study through methods such as member checks, peer debriefing, and clarifying researcher bias, as described by Creswell and Poth (2018).

After I completed the data analysis, I sent a draft copy of the analysis section to each participant. Each interviewee had 10 days to review the findings and send any corrections or thoughts relevant to my interpretation of the findings. None of the interviewees had suggestions for changes; they approved the analysis.

### ***Outcomes Summarized Related to the Literature and Conceptual Framework***

Research Question 1 asked how high school educators who use the C2C program describe their experiences implementing the strategies promoted in the program (initiative). Interviewees indicated the program has positive outcomes (Theme 1), which match the literature on outcomes related to best practices: student-centered planning, student self-determination, functional skills, social skills, vocational rehabilitation. Regarding student-centered planning, some participants mentioned determining student strengths and deficits to provide appropriate support. However, a best practice from the literature is parent involvement, which participants did not discuss. Parent and student expectations should be discussed to align goals and support student self-determination (Hume et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2020). Specific to students with ASD, parent expectations significantly affected students' positive or negative postsecondary outcomes, including independent living, postsecondary education, and employment (Hume et al., 2018). The practice reflects the conceptual framework of this study, andragogy, in that students should be actively involved in their education and given the freedom to accomplish their learning goals (Knowles, 1984). A best practice in the literature is an Individualized Transition Plan (Zirkel, 2019). None of the participants mentioned such a plan for their SWDs. It is not clear whether educators referenced student Individualized Transition

Plans. Students need to be able to participate in the transition process and self-advocate (Organization for Autism Research, 2021).

Also related to outcomes (Theme 1), participants described SWDs learning self-advocacy and how to ask for help through the program. Self-advocacy is a vital skill for individuals with ASD, who need to be able to find appropriate supports and assistance to enter higher education and maintain employment (Frank, 2015). Participants in the program stated students developed confidence and social skills as well as self-awareness. Self-concept helps develop self-direction (Knowles, 1984). According to Huang et al. (2017), self-concept affects how a person functions in social groups, such as school, family, work, and peer groups. Interpersonal skills are a challenge and yet crucial for individuals with ASD (Alcover et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2017). SWDs in the program improved communication skills.

Participants stated students in the C2C program developed functional, daily living skills. Functional skills such as hygiene predict sustained employment for SWDs (Chan et al., 2018). In terms of effective vocational rehabilitation, Black et al. (2019) found workplace environment was a contributing factor, including support, attitudes, services and relationships (Black et al., 2019). Employee attitudes toward support programs for employees with ASD can influence the success of such programs (Spoor et al., 2021). This finding was supported by participant statements in the current study.

As described in Theme 2, educators used best practices, although not necessarily practices learned from the single beginning-of-the-year training. These practices included communication, modeling, and repetition of simple steps. The practices are supported by

the literature; in one study, job coaches were taught to teach students with ASD how to socially interact, communicate, and remain on task in a community training site, using audio, verbal, modeling, and physical prompts (Gilson & Carter, 2016). SWDs maintained their on-task behaviors and communication or social interaction after the support and prompting from the job coach were removed (Gilson & Carter, 2016). Strengths of individuals with ASD include an aptitude for precision, repetition, and accuracy (M. Scott et al., 2018). Participants described differentiating instruction and using flexibility in adapting training to the individual student. The transition experience of SWDs in higher education depends on stakeholders' awareness of SWDs and a personalized, flexible approach to transition support (Nuske et al., 2019).

A common challenge mentioned in the literature is lack of training (Hayward et al., 2019; Nuske et al., 2019), a finding supported by the educators in this study (Themes 3 and 4). The theory of andragogy, the conceptual framework of this study, includes that adults want training that is practical and directly useful to them (Knowles, 1988). In this study, educators wanted training specific to concerns and issues in the program.

Research Question 2 asked how high school educators who use the C2C program describe ways to improve the C2C PD and resources to better serve SWDs, particularly students with ASD. The dominant response was better, more frequent training (Themes 5 and 6). I conducted this study because the evidence suggested that, in spite of training, educators had not been implementing expected C2C strategies. I suspected training did not reflect andragogy; for example, teachers might not see the direct practical uses of what they were learning in PD to apply strategies in the classroom. However, the

interviewees described receiving inadequate training, based on a one-shot seminar at the beginning of the year, which those hired later in the school year could not attend. Based on andragogy theory, PD should involve the adult learner in creating the environment for learning, planning, and setting the objectives for the PD, as well as designing, implementing, and evaluating the PD (Knowles, 1984; Terehoff, 2002). Baker-Ericzén et al. (2022) noted the need for evidence-based programming and initiatives, manuals to accompany—and replicate—successful vocational programs, and more models for PD related to vocational programming for adults with ASD. Educators in this study indicated a need for frequent training throughout the year and consistent materials, such as an online handbook continually available.

### ***Project Deliverable***

Study findings revealed the need for additional, uniform, sustained PD for all C2C participants. The special education district officials designed the C2C program to address administrators' concerns regarding the SWDs' poor progress and transition outcomes. However, the existing beginning-of-the-year PD is inadequate. Further, staff joining midyear do not receive the training. Special education weekly department meeting agendas from 2017–2022 reflected not only PD for the C2C program related to ASD, but also shared resources for understanding ASD and teaching strategies. However, staff interviewed did not mention these training sessions. The 2018 C2C handbook, which was still in use as of January 2023, was only familiar to two of the 11 participants. Therefore, a PD project was developed to provide uniform, sustained PD to C2C staff. The materials

could be placed online as well to support the overall C2C program goals and expectations.

### Section 3: The Project

In an urban school district in a western state, the problem addressed through this study was that, despite available PD training and resources, educators at a high school were not effectively implementing the strategies of the C2C initiative, which was designed to assist SWDs. This gap in practice arises from the unknown strategies needed to effectively implement professional development for C2C educators to address the behavioral needs of SWDs transitioning from high school to the workforce. To examine this problem, I conducted semistructured interviews with 11 participants who included special education teachers, job coaches, program specialists, and instructional aides who provide instructional services for SWDs in the C2C program at the high school study site. Eight themes emerged from the interview data:

1. The C2C program has positive outcomes.
2. Educators use best practices of communication, instruction, attitude, and teamwork.
3. Educators describe varied challenges in the program.
4. Training is insufficient.
5. Educators need more frequent training throughout the year.
6. Training materials should be uniform and offered to all.
7. Educators used skills from other training.
8. More resources are needed.

Based on the findings from Section 2, a 3-day (24 hours total) PD project was developed, titled C2C 123. The project is presented in Appendix A. Overall, the findings



support the development of a 3-day PD project to address the needs of educators at the study site, as well as support the needs of SWDs at their job sites. I used Guskey's (2002) five levels of PD evaluation model and Knowles's (1984) adult learning theory as the conceptual framework for this study and a lens to conduct the data analysis of the information obtained from participants. The purpose of the 3-day PD project is to address the study findings and meet identified PD needs of the C2C staff in the study district.

The project, C2C 123, has been designed to address the study findings and meet the C2C staff needs. The overarching goal of this project is to develop, design, and deliver ongoing, sustained PD related to positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), task analysis, and prompting sequences to facilitate instruction and support of C2C SWDs in community settings and on job sites. The PD will initially involve 2 days of face-to-face PD involving PBIS, task analysis, and prompting. Eight additional hours of ongoing PD will provide case study role-play practice. The eight 1-hour sessions will be scheduled monthly with the C2C staff to support the need for sustained, ongoing PD aimed at meeting C2C personnel needs. The eight 1-hour sessions will support the just-in-time training and technical support needs of staff as they provide instructional and job coaching support to SWDs in the community in the C2C program. The PD has the following goals:

1. C2C staff will develop knowledge and skills related to the use of PBIS to instruct and support SWDs in community settings.

2. C2C staff will develop knowledge and skills related to the use of task analysis to facilitate instruction and support of SWDs in community settings and on job sites.
3. C2C staff will develop knowledge and skills related to the use of the prompting sequences to facilitate instruction and support of SWDs in community settings and on job sites.

By following this 3-day PD schedule, C2C educators will gain a solid understanding of the principles of applied behavioral analysis using positive behavioral supports, task analysis, prompting, and practical application for SWDs in community settings. The ongoing monitoring and support over the 8-month period will help reinforce the skills and strategies learned, ensuring C2C educators can effectively plan activities and use task analysis to support SWDs in community settings.

In the next section, I describe the scholarly rationale for the project, based on the study findings. Additionally, I explain how the project will address the identified study findings through the professional development genre. Effectively structured PD has been established to improve educators' knowledge and skills, leading to improved outcomes for students (Schwab et al., 2021).

### **Rationale**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of educators using the C2C program; identify the challenges they encounter; and identify ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs, particularly students with ASD. Based on the results presented in Section 2 of this research, participants would benefit from PD

and materials related to teaching job skills, social emotional skills, self-regulation, and PBIS. Additionally, participants needed PD uniformity and training frequency. The project study participants concurred with previous researchers' findings that PD plays a vital role in increasing the knowledge base of educators (Hughey, 2020).

Educators described challenges such as students learning slowly, lack of emotional self-regulation, and difficulties maintaining confidence. Other challenges included students lacking self-advocacy, focus, and time to practice and learn routines. Job stressors and attendance issues were also mentioned. Participants expressed a need for more training, stating that existing training was limited. Some educators received no training, while others attended a single seminar. Participants recommended frequent training throughout the year and uniform training materials available to all.

PD plays a crucial role in addressing the findings of this study and improving instructional services for students with ASD. The identified challenges and the need for more training and resources highlight the importance of ongoing learning and skill development for educators working with students with ASD. Research has shown that targeted PD can enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in supporting students with ASD (Baker-Ericzén et al., 2022).

By providing educators with frequent and specific training throughout the year, districts can ensure that teachers are equipped with the necessary strategies and resources to meet the unique needs of their students (Hume et al., 2018). Additionally, uniform training materials and handbooks can serve as valuable resources for educators, providing them with consistent guidelines and information, as requested by P6 and P7, participants

in this study. These materials can enhance the quality and effectiveness of PD by providing educators with tangible resources to refer to and implement in their practice, as noted by P8. By investing in comprehensive PD programs that address the challenges and best practices identified in this study, school districts can support educators in their efforts to promote positive outcomes for students with ASD. Through ongoing learning opportunities, educators can develop the necessary skills to facilitate student independence, self-determination, functional skills, social skills, and vocational rehabilitation (Black et al., 2019; Frank, 2015; Hume et al., 2018; Kirby et al., 2019).

The project genre I decided on for my project study is the PD project genre. The overarching goal of my project was to develop, design, and deliver ongoing, sustained PD related to PBIS, task analysis, and prompting sequences. The aim of this PD is to facilitate instruction and support for SWDs in community settings and on job sites. The purpose of PD is to improve participants' knowledge and skills in order to bring about school-wide change and enhance educator and student performance (Schwab et al., 2021). Based on my research findings and themes, I selected a 3-day PD project (with the final "day" broken into eight 1-hour monthly trainings). This project has been designed to initiate the implementation of the overarching goal.

### **Review of the Literature**

In my literature review, I focus on the project genre of PD and explore the benefits of various PD models. I also examine the principles of adult learning and discuss strategies for planning and implementing effective PD programs. Additionally, I delve into the concept of using PD as a catalyst for implementing change and highlight the

characteristics of practical PD formats. Furthermore, my review encompasses the methods of teaching PBIS to educators who work with SWDs.

One key framework explored is PBIS, consisting of data, practices, and systems (Clemens et al., 2021). By comprehending the rationale and components of PBIS, educators from the C2C program could enhance their confidence and skills. This, in turn, may reduce negative behaviors among SWDs and increase their skill levels on the job sites (Myers et al., 2020). I begin the literature review with the conceptual framework, followed with literature on the project genre of PD and then content related to the project. The overarching goal of my project was to develop, design, and deliver ongoing, sustained PD related to PBIS, task analysis, and prompting sequences. The aim of this PD is to facilitate instruction and support for SWDs in community settings and on job sites.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

A literature review of the PD genre serves as the foundation for the PD project developed. To conduct my research, I utilized several databases including Google Scholar, Walden University Library, Teacher Reference Center, and ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis Global. The articles I used to support my study were scholarly and no more than 5 years old, with a few seminal exceptions.

### **Conceptual Framework of the PD Project**

#### ***Andragogy***

Andragogy, defined by Knowles (1984), is adult learning theory. Andragogy serves as the foundational framework that underpins the learning principles for adults such as the C2C educators. When the needs of adult learners, in this case C2C educators,

are addressed, they feel valued and perceive the PD as beneficial and necessary (Figland et al., 2019). Knowles (1984, 1988) identified several key components for an effective adult learning program, including self-directed learning, transformational learning, experiential learning, mentorship, orientation of learning, motivation, and readiness to learn.

The andragogical process model has been valuable in systematically designing, delivering, and evaluating workplace training that the learners received well (Tessier et al., 2021). Elements such as assessing learning needs, creating a conducive learning environment, and selecting appropriate training methods contributed to the successful implementation of the model. Nonprofessional or external trainers in a workplace could consider using the model while taking organizational constraints into account. Overall, the research contributed to understanding how adult learning models, specifically the andragogical process model, can support the development and delivery of effective workplace communication partner training (Tessier et al., 2021).

### ***Five Critical Levels of PD***

In Guskey's (2002, 2014) five critical levels of professional development, PD evaluation typically takes place at the end of the PD. However, it is recommended to incorporate formative assessments throughout the PD to gain a deeper understanding of its effectiveness and assess participants' understanding of the content, skills, or processes being presented (Guskey, 2002, 2014). Additional detail is presented in the section on the PD evaluation plan.

## **Defining PD**

PD is an ongoing process aimed at enhancing educators' knowledge, skills, and expertise (Gardner-Neblett et al., 2020). Researchers have identified five clusters of interventions involved in professional development (Gardner-Deblett et al., 2020):

1. **Shared school vision on learning:** This cluster focuses on establishing a shared understanding among educators about the school's vision for learning.
2. **Professional learning opportunities for all staff:** Providing continuous learning opportunities for all staff members is crucial in PD.
3. **Collaborative work and learning:** Collaboration and learning initiatives are essential components of effective PD.
4. **Change of school organization:** Implementing changes in the school organization can contribute to professional growth and development.
5. **Learning leadership:** Developing leadership skills and capabilities among educators is a significant aspect of PD.

PD encompasses various activities such as workshops, conferences, online courses, and collaborative experiences. These activities are designed to enhance teaching practices and support student success. Importantly, PD plays a vital role in teachers' career growth by keeping them updated on teaching methodologies, research, and technology. Ultimately, PD is essential for long-term success and effectiveness in the classroom (Gardner-Neblett et al., 2020).

## **Effective PD**

Effective PD requires leadership during the implementation of new concepts and training on research-based management techniques (Brion, 2020). Teachers have a crucial role in creating a positive behavioral climate and determining student achievement on their campus. Effective PD includes engagement, varied learning styles, collaboration time, and evaluations (Auerbach et al., 2018; Bates & Morgan, 2018; Cothorn, 2020; Guskey, 2014). Bates and Morgan (2018) identified seven elements that contribute to effective PD:

- Action learning
- Time for collaboration
- Effective modeling
- Coaching support
- Opportunities for reflection and feedback
- Ongoing PD
- Targeted PD, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach

Guskey (2014) also emphasized the importance of starting with the end goal in mind to promote positive outcomes. Effective PD involves providing time for collaboration and dialogue around the problem. Therefore, the C2C program educators should identify student outcomes in order to provide effective job coaching.

### ***Effective PD Format***

The effectiveness of how information transfer impacts an educator's ability to learn and demonstrate the material (Mackey, 2020). A presentation or lecture is the least



effective method of training. Presenter modeling is more effective but unlikely to enable learners to incorporate the learning into daily practice. With participant practice and feedback, 60% of learners may know how to do the practice, but only 5% will use it consistently and daily (Mackey, 2020). The most effective method is ongoing coaching and administrative support, in which 95% of learners will learn how to do the practice, will be able to do it, and will use it consistently in daily practice (Mackey, 2020).

### ***Tailored and Aligned With Program Needs***

PDs must be tailored to meet individual or program needs in order to be effective (Figland et al., 2019; Rodriguez et al., 2021). Participants in a PD should leave with a clear understanding of what is expected of them when applying new skills (Vincent et al., 2021). Participants must have access to ongoing research-based information that can support their program implementation (Sprott, 2019; Svendsen, 2020). Additionally, the PD materials should resonate with participants and elicit an emotional response for the participant to effectively implement the strategies (Vincent et al., 2021).

### ***Engaging Participants in PD***

Engaging participants in PD is essential for effective learning and bringing about meaningful changes (Auerbach et al., 2018). Traditional PD sessions that rely on passive lectures and material distribution often lead to boredom and a sense of wasted time among participants (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021). However, participants may actively seek engagement in PD (Hughey, 2020). Didion et al. (2018) suggested that presenters can promote participant engagement through active learning techniques. These techniques include providing opportunities for participants to receive and interact with

materials, engaging in hands-on activities, and assuming different roles during cooperative learning activities (Germuth, 2018). Effective PD should incorporate these active learning techniques and accommodate diverse learning styles (Didion et al., 2018; Hughey, 2020).

In Themes 6, 7, and 8, educators in this study described using skills and materials from other trainings to engage participants in PD. Valued PD requires presenters to employ active learning techniques that promote engagement and cater to varied learning styles. By doing so, participants can have a more meaningful and productive learning experience and effectively apply what they learn (Auerbach et al., 2018; Didion et al., 2018; Germuth, 2018; Hughey, 2020; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021). Additionally, collaboration time should be included in PD to promote effective learning (Admiraal et al., 2019).

### ***Collaboration in PD***

Collaboration is an essential aspect of effective PD (Postholm, 2018). To ensure fruitful collaboration, presenters should establish a safe environment where participants feel supported and can work cooperatively with their colleagues (Henderson, 2018). Collaborative opportunities in PD should incorporate engaging real-life applications and provide a space for reflection, allowing participants to share their experiences (Cothorn, 2020).

Collaboration time during PD yields several positive outcomes. Whether conducted face-to-face or virtually, participants come together to share ideas, strategize, and solve issues collectively (Datnow, 2018). Furthermore, during collaboration time,

participants actively listen to and respect each other's opinions, ideas, and solutions, fostering a sense of teamwork (Henley, 2022). This collaboration enhances educators' understanding of the skills or strategies emphasized in the PD, boosting their self-confidence (Datnow, 2018). As a result, they are more likely to implement the acquired skills or strategies. Additionally, collaboration time helps build trust among colleagues and cultivates a greater sense of job satisfaction (Datnow, 2018; Tichenor & Tichenor, 2019). In addition to collaboration, evaluations play a crucial role in PD, serving as an essential component of the overall professional growth process.

### **Evaluating PD**

Researchers have emphasized the importance of evaluating PD. According to Guskey (2014), PD evaluations are often overlooked due to the time commitment required from presenters. However, Alzahrani and Althaqafi (2020) agreed that evaluating PD is essential for gaining insight into its effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement. Evaluation provides presenters with information about participants' mastery and areas needing improvement, thus ensuring the effectiveness of PD (Nordengren & Guskey, 2020).

To determine the effectiveness of PD, researchers recommend using both formative and summative evaluations (Hanover Research, 2017). Formative evaluations help presenters understand the effectiveness of PD implementation and make necessary modifications. These evaluations occur throughout the PD. Summative evaluations take place at the end of the PD and assess the overall effectiveness of the PD (Hanover Research, 2017).

Formative evaluations answer questions such as whether the activities are implemented as planned, whether resources are adequate, whether PD goals need to change, and whether the PD needs to adjust to address challenges and revised goals (Hanover Research, 2017). Formative evaluation also determines whether the PD is achieving the desired results and improving educator and student outcomes (Hanover Research, 2017). Both formative and summative evaluation methods provide educational leaders with essential information to determine the effectiveness of PD and drive improvement efforts.

According to Breslow and Bock (2020), the U.S. Department of Education evaluation model for PD presenters in primary and secondary level education aligns with the concept of continuous improvement. This model has five steps:

1. Determine the purpose of the evaluation.
2. Design the questions that the evaluation seeks to answer.
3. Decide the types of data to be used in the evaluation.
4. Determine how the findings will be used.
5. Make informed decisions about the PD based on the obtained data (Breslow & Bock, 2020).

### **Online PD**

C2C educators presently receive a one-shot training opportunity at the beginning of the school year. Ongoing online PD may address the need for more training. Online PD is beneficial for teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Online platforms provide accessible and flexible options for continuous learning and facilitate collaboration among

educators from diverse backgrounds. Investing in online PD shapes teachers' knowledge, ultimately benefiting student outcomes. Research has indicated that effective PD positively impacts student outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone & Garet, 2015). Aligning PD with student learning goals enhances instructional practices and contributes to improved achievement. Online PD supports personalized and collaborative learning experiences, including integrating technology into teaching practices (Archambault & Crippen, 2009; Koehler & Mishra, 2009).

Virtual teams is another concept that may be an alternative to address the need for more training. In a conceptual article by Charteris et al. (2021), the focus was on virtual teams and their role in PD in schools. The researchers drew from online and blended PD literature to identify the key characteristics of virtual teams that support PD. The study found that virtual teams, which utilize technology to collaborate and achieve shared goals, can enhance the PD of teachers and educational leaders. The strategic characteristics of relevance, collaboration, and a future focus were highlighted as crucial in leveraging virtual teams for PD. Despite the limited research on virtual teams in education, the use of technology in professional learning is becoming increasingly essential. This article provided a technology-enriched planning model for implementing virtual team approaches to PD and supported the value gained from presenting an online approach to enhance PD.

### **Instructional Coaching**

Instructional coaching was highlighted by Booker and Russell (2022) as a valuable tool for improving teaching practices. Their research indicated that smaller

coaching programs, with fewer than 100 teachers, have a stronger impact and are more effectively implemented compared to larger programs. The authors also found that combining individual coaching with group training, curricular resources, and instructional materials produces greater effects on instruction and student achievement compared to coaching alone. This suggests that educators of the C2C program may benefit from developing foundational skills before or while working with a coach.

A longitudinal case study conducted in an urban elementary school revealed that coaches play a crucial role in aligning new initiatives with teachers' day-to-day teaching strategies, contributing to instructional reform (Booker & Russell, 2022). The effectiveness of coaching programs is enhanced when they are intentionally integrated into teachers' instructional contexts and aligned with curricula and student learning expectations. However, coaches vary in how they allocate their time within the same coaching program. Continuous data collection and research can assist coaches in employing the most effective coaching practices. Additionally, involving coaches in continuous improvement cycles can help overcome challenges such as time allocation and teacher resistance. Educators can improve their teaching practice and support student learning by incorporating these design principles into coaching programs (Booker & Russell, 2022).

The coaching cycle plays a significant role in the successful implementation of new innovations (Lofthouse, 2018). To establish a professional relationship and facilitate effective communication, coaches and educators need to work collaboratively (Lofthouse, 2018). The coaching cycle consists of four stages: needs assessment,

coaching plan implementation, evaluation of the plan, and adjustment for improved practices and student success (Mackey, 2020).

### **Ongoing and Sustained PD**

C2C educators expressed the need for continuous training throughout the year. To ensure continuous positive effects, ongoing and sustained PD is essential (Wynants & Dennis, 2018). The duration of PD should allow participants to effectively implement new skills in their classrooms and enhance student achievement (Wynants & Dennis, 2018). PD should occur for at least one semester with follow-up sessions (Richardson et al., 2019). Participation in PD for a duration of 6 months to a year improves educator practices (Pasquini & Eaton, 2019). Additionally, systematic scheduling of PD increases participants' willingness to continue attending (Pasquini & Eaton, 2019).

### **PBIS**

#### ***Components and Implementation of PBIS***

In the C2C program, educators lack a consistent behavior system to support job coaches working with SWDs. To address this issue, the PBIS framework will be included in the PD project. PBIS has been implemented in schools across the United States to enhance student learning outcomes (McDaniel et al., 2017). The goal of PBIS is to modify challenging or negative behaviors in students and promote positive behaviors, ultimately enhancing student learning. A successful approach to reducing student misbehavior is the use of a uniform system of rewards and consequences. By closely examining the system of rewards and consequences and using student discipline reports, educators can effectively manage student behavior (Noltemeyer et al., 2019; Weissberg,

2019). Support teams, including administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, and parents, play a crucial role in establishing daily routines, implementing rewards, and providing interventions to foster desired positive behaviors (Jolstead et al., 2017).

PBIS is a comprehensive framework that includes several components aimed at promoting desired student behaviors. These components support SWDs by defining desired behaviors and expectations, modeling them, establishing systems to handle undesirable behaviors, and regularly monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of these systems (Lewis et al., 2017). Additionally, PBIS utilizes off-site interventions and collected data to evaluate implementation, effectiveness, and inform the development of individualized behavior plans with the use of rewards and consequences (Curran, 2017; Saint et al., 2018).

### ***Benefits of PBIS in Schools***

The implementation of PBIS has shown positive effects on students, teachers, administrators, and overall school culture. Students benefit from receiving high-quality instruction with fewer interruptions, clear procedures, and expectations in the classroom (Henley, 2022). Educators also have noticed improved student behaviors in various areas of the school campus, such as the cafeteria, lockers, restrooms, and transportation areas (Carr & Boat, 2019). The positive school climate created by PBIS promotes a conducive learning environment and supports the well-being of all students and staff.

Effective classroom management is crucial for promoting positive student behaviors and optimizing instructional time for SWDs. PBIS frameworks provide teachers with the knowledge and skills to create well-managed environments that meet



the basic needs of students and foster their academic success (Petrasek et al., 2022). By establishing structured environments with clearly defined expectations, modeling appropriate behaviors, and providing reinforcement for desired behaviors, educators using PBIS can effectively manage behaviors and support student learning (Grasley-Boy et al., 2021; Wills et al., 2019).

The systematic review conducted by Lee et al. (2020) on the effects of school-wide PBIS highlighted the significant benefits in schools. The findings indicated that this multitiered support framework not only helped in preventing problem behaviors but also promoted prosocial behaviors among students. The inclusion of both published and unpublished studies, as well as the meta-analysis using robust variance estimation, further enhanced the credibility and reliability of the results in Lee et al.'s review. By reducing discipline issues and improving academic achievement, school-wide PBIS can positively impact the overall school environment. The study's discussion of limitations and implications for future research served as a great reminder of the importance of implementing evidence-based practices like PBIS to foster a positive and supportive school climate. These results may also serve as a guide for C2C educators teaching prosocial skills to SWDs entering the workforce. PD plays a vital role in equipping teachers with the necessary tools and strategies to effectively implement PBIS and manage classroom behaviors. Research has shown that PD significantly impacts student and teacher success, and when implemented properly, PBIS can lead to improved student achievement (Coenders & Verhoef, 2019; Vereb et al., 2015).

**Job Coaches and SWDs**

Furthermore, researchers have conducted various studies that support the identification of strategies to strengthen services for SWDs in community-based programs (Gilson & Carter, 2016; Hayward et al., 2019; Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee, 2020). These studies contribute to addressing the existing gap in practice and provide valuable insights for improving the support and services offered to SWDs in community settings.

Job coaches working with SWDs require specific training to effectively facilitate social interactions and communication in community training sites (Gilson & Carter, 2016). Gilson and Carter (2016) taught job coaches strategies to teach students with ASD how to engage in social interactions, communicate effectively, and remain focused while in a community training site. These strategies included the use of audio, verbal, modeling, and physical prompts. The job coaches employed evidence-based practices in the community setting and gradually reduced their support over time. The results of the study showed that the participants were able to maintain their on-task behaviors and communication or social interactions even after the support and prompting from the job coach were no longer present.

**Data Collection and Monitoring**

Data strategies are crucial for effective implementation of monitoring behaviors and sustaining change (Morris et al., 2022). PD should include specific guidance on how educators can collect, track, and analyze student behavioral data in their classrooms. The availability of detailed student behavioral data is essential for successful self-monitoring

to support skill acquisition and implementation. The C2C educators must work as a team to conduct data collection in the classroom and community. The team members collaborate and support SWDs by tracking behaviors through self-monitoring. They track both desired and undesired student behaviors and keep track of the frequency of behaviors. Educational leaders should review the data to assess the effectiveness of self-monitoring in reducing negative student behaviors. For communication, students can self-rate (and educators can rate students) on whether the student expresses themselves clearly, listens to others, and responds appropriately to others. Students may self-rate on participating fully in classroom and community activities. For preparedness, students can self-monitor being on time for school and other activities. Finally, students can self-monitor on greeting others, being supportive, and acting in a respectful manner (Salter & Croce, 2022).

### **Project Description**

This project originated from the findings of interviews with educators in the C2C program. The resulting project is a 3-day PD program titled C2C 123 (see Appendix A). This PD aims to provide guidance and support specifically for educators who are working in the C2C program. The PD will span 2 full days of in-person training and eight 1-hour meetings spread over 8 months. The purpose of the 3-day PD project is to address the study findings and meet identified PD needs of the C2C staff in the study district.

This project study is designed to meet the goal of improving educators' knowledge and skills related to the use of PBIS, task analysis, and prompting sequences to instruct and support SWDs in community settings and on job sites. During the PD, the

educators will receive direct instruction in task analysis data and PBIS systems, engage in collaboration time and activities with colleagues, and receive feedback from C2C program coordinators and mentors. The presenters will be the PBIS task force. Therefore, all educators at the study site will attend and participate in the initial 2-day PD that will begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 5:00 p.m. All participants will have a 1-hour lunch break each day.

The PD aims to provide staff with training on the principles and strategies of PBIS, equip them with the necessary tools for effective implementation, and foster an understanding of how these strategies can support SWDs in community settings. Task analysis, effective prompting techniques, and adjustment of prompting strategies based on individual SWDs' needs are key areas of focus. Guskey (2014) emphasizes the importance of starting with the end goal in mind to promote positive outcomes. Therefore, C2C program educators will collaborate to identify and address student outcomes in order to provide effective job coaching.

### **Resources**

The resources needed for the C2C 123 PD include support from the district superintendent and program specialist. Although their attendance is not mandatory, their participation will strengthen the implementation of the PD. The PD will be delivered in the library at the study site. The library was selected to facilitate various activities and collaboration among educators. The resources provided by the library include Internet access, LCD projector, computer, and Wi-Fi access. Additional materials needed for the in-person PD include large Post-It posters, markers, handouts, extension cords, power

strips, and a copier. The following materials will be placed in containers on each table: highlighters, paper, Post-It notes, ink pens, pencils, markers, and candy. Educators can use provided school computers or laptops.

### **Potential Barriers**

Implementing innovations for more PD for the C2C educators project study requires district and stakeholder cooperation. Potential barriers include staff turnover and budget restrictions, which may impact personnel and spending. If the district is unable to support the PD financially, local businesses could be approached for sponsorship. District-level approval is necessary for the PD to occur. Another potential barrier may be the reluctance of some educators to attend the 2-day in-person PD and ongoing additional sections. However, incorporating Knowles's (1984) core adult learning principles in the PD is expected to increase attendance.

### **Timeline**

The PD is scheduled to take place at the beginning of the 2024–2025 school year for several reasons. First, the C2C educators will become aware of the SWDs' 5-year profiles. Second, the educators will receive their assignments to the program, their classroom assignments, and receive their PD on PBIS systems and their effective implementation in the C2C classrooms. Third, the educators will work collaboratively to create a C2C handbook to be used program-wide systems that will be implemented on the first day of school.

During the first week of July, I will email the educators at the study site a welcome back letter. The welcome back letter will include not only their teaching

assignments for the 2024–2025 school year and the regular preparation items, but also the plan for C2C 123 PD implementation. One week prior to the first staff development day, I will email the educators a reminder, which will include the welcome back letter and the 3-day PD layout on C2C 123.

The 1st day of PD will meet in the library, and the purpose for Day 1 PD is to provide the rationale for PBIS and to introduce PBIS at the study site. I will display the PowerPoint presentation in addition to providing the participants with a printed copy of the PowerPoint. I will discuss the C2C program goals and best practices for working with adult SWDs with ASD. Participants will learn detailed strategies related to PBIS. Participants will practice using task cards related to behavior management. The educators will work together by tables to create task cards, job site expectations, consequences, and rewards. The participants will complete an exit ticket, which is the formative evaluation, at the end of the PD.

Day 2 of PD will meet in the library again at 9:00 a.m. After a recap of the purpose of the PD, participants will continue learning about PBIS, including shaping behavior. Educators will learn about prompting techniques and corrective feedback. Then, they will engage in role-play for job coaching practice. At the end of the PD session, the participants will complete an exit ticket that will serve as an evaluation of the day's PD.

The remainder of the PD will be divided into eight 1-hour sessions presented monthly. The purpose of this ongoing PD is to allow educators to role-play scenarios to enhance understanding. At the beginning of each session, the participants will have a

chance to ask questions or share concerns from the previous month. At the end of each session, educators will fill out an exit ticket assessing the day's learning. Session 1 is Applying Different Behavior Management Strategies. Session 2 is Designing Behavior Intervention Plans; educators will collaborate to create behavior intervention plans for students facing challenges. Session 3 is Analyzing Behavior Management Techniques, in which educators will deliver group presentations on effective techniques. Session 4 is Implementing Behavior Management Strategies. Session 5 is Classroom and Behavioral Progress Review. Session 6 is Student Progress Assessment. Session 7 is Technology Integration Check-In. Session 8 is Reflection and Implementation Review.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

My role and responsibilities in the C2C 123 PD include facilitating the 2-day in-person PD and eight ongoing sessions and providing assistance during collaboration times. The educators' role is to attend and actively participate in the PD, provide input and feedback, and implement PBIS and other learned techniques. The successful implementation of PBIS will directly impact SWDs' behaviors and achievement.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

#### **Evaluation Type and Justification**

I will use formative and summative evaluations to ensure that the program is meeting its goals. In evaluating this PD program, I utilized Guskey's (2002) five levels of PD evaluation. After reviewing Guskey's (2002) evaluation method, I determined that Level 1, which focuses on participants' reactions, and Level 2, which assesses participants' learning, would be the most effective for this project. According to Guskey

(2002), evaluations typically take place at the end of each day's PD. I will conduct a formative evaluation by having participants complete an exit ticket. An exit ticket, as described by Akhtar and Saeed (2002), is given at the conclusion of a lesson or learning experience. The purpose of the exit ticket is to gather feedback on participants' mastery of the lesson's concepts and any areas of concern or need. Alongside the formative evaluation, I will also administer a summative evaluation. The summative evaluation will occur at the end of Day 2 as well as at the end of the eight 1-hour ongoing sessions and aims to assess participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the PD program and areas of remaining need.

### **Evaluation Goals**

The primary goal of an evaluation is to gain insights into the effectiveness of a course or PD program and identify areas for improvement (Phillips, 2018). The goals of the evaluation are to determine the following:

1. Did the PD improve educators' knowledge and skills related to the use of PBIS to instruct and support SWDs in community settings and on job sites?
2. Did the PD improve educators' knowledge and skills related to the use of task analysis to instruct and support SWDs in community settings and on job sites?
3. Did the PD improve educators' knowledge and skills related to the use of prompting sequences to instruct and support SWDs in community settings and on job sites?
4. What topics should be covered in continuing, ongoing future PD sessions?



### **Description of Key Stakeholders**

The main stakeholders for the C2C 123 PD program are the educators at the study site, as well as school and district leaders. These stakeholders play a crucial role in supporting the implementation of the PD, setting expectations and goals for meetings and PD sessions, implementing the PBIS systems, and participating in additional C2C PD. Consistency and dedication to the C2C program are essential qualities for these key stakeholders. Additionally, the PBIS task force and principal will facilitate the implementation of PBIS at the sample site.

All participants in the PD will be asked to complete both the formative and summative evaluations of the PD. The data obtained from the formative evaluations will help the presenters adjust the PD program and provide assistance where needed. The data collected from the summative evaluation will be used to adjust future ongoing PD sessions. In the following section, I will discuss the implications of this research for social change and its importance to the stakeholders involved.

### **Project Implications**

#### **Social Change Implications**

This project study was developed based on the findings from Section 2, which investigated the perspectives of educators regarding the challenges they encounter and ways to improve the learning outcomes for SWDs in the C2C program. In terms of social change, the overarching goal of the PD project is to enhance educators' knowledge and skills to improve student outcomes. The specific goals of the project are to improve

educators' knowledge and skills related to the use of PBIS, task analysis, and prompting sequences to instruct and support SWDs in community settings and on job sites.

The definition of educators for this project includes teachers, job coaches, and C2C staff. PD has the potential to build capacity in educators and educator leaders, leading to the effective implementation of PBIS and instructional strategies to help SWDs on job sites. Social change will result through improved outcomes and job preparation of SWDs, including students with ASD.

### **Local Stakeholders and Larger Context**

In an urban high school in a western state, the local problem investigated by this study was the lack of preparedness of educators in implementing behavior interventions and PBIS to support the transition skills of SWDs. The 3-day PD at the study site aims to address this problem by creating a PBIS task force, designing system change initiatives, have educators collaborate with fellow teachers, developing feedback systems, and providing ongoing PD informed by evaluative feedback. The middle school in the district and district leaders can benefit from the implementation of PBIS as well as educator training in other areas through this project study.

In Section 4, the strengths of the PD project are discussed, along with a discussion of potential alternative approaches based on the study findings. A reflection on scholarship, project development, leadership, personal change, and the importance of the doctoral study is provided. Finally, I offer recommendations for future research.

#### Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In an urban school district in a western state, the problem addressed through this study was that, despite available PD training and resources, educators at a high school were not effectively implementing the strategies of the C2C initiative, which was designed to assist SWDs. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of educators using the C2C program; identify the challenges they encounter; and identify ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs, particularly students with ASD. I interviewed 11 educators. These educators provided recommendations for improving the C2C program. They suggested more frequent and ongoing training be provided throughout the year, tailored to their specific needs. They also recommended that training materials be standardized and easily accessible to all educators. Furthermore, they identified the need for additional resources, including staff, time, and materials. and used the data to develop a PD project to meet the goal of improving educators' knowledge and skills related to the use of PBIS, task analysis, and prompting sequences to instruct and support SWDs in community settings and on job sites.

#### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

This project study has several strengths, particularly in the data collection methods used. First, the data collection tool was an interview protocol consisting of open-ended questions that specifically aligned with the research questions. The same protocol was used with each participant (see Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lodico et al., 2010). Another strength was the purposeful sampling to choose participants who could supply data to

answer the research questions (see Lodico et al., 2010). The educators interviewed offered rich data and meaningful data about their needs. Their honesty in offering suggestions related to the C2C program and needed training was a strength of the study. The qualitative coding of the data is also presented in detail in this study. This form of transparency increases study trustworthiness (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Readers can follow the analysis process in depth. The emerging findings from this analysis are a strength as they offer information to benefit C2C staff who serve in the program. Staff clearly indicated areas needing development, resulting in eight emergent themes:

1. The C2C program has positive outcomes.
2. Educators use best practices of communication, instruction, attitude, and teamwork.
3. Educators describe varied challenges in the program.
4. Training is insufficient.
5. Educators need more frequent training throughout the year.
6. Training materials should be uniform and offered to all.
7. Educators used skills from other training.
8. More resources are needed.

Finally, the project itself and the application of meaningful activities that will increase C2C educators' knowledge and skills is a project strength. The training will help them develop SWDs' workplace skills, affecting these students' successful transition after high school.

However, the project has limitations to consider. One potential limitation is the need for approval from the superintendent and program specialist. The program specialist is responsible for implementing new initiatives and may not approve the PD. A related limitation is the availability of financial support. The PD budget is determined based on the district's approved budget, which may limit the monetary allocations for fully funding the project. Economic constraints can impact the district leaders' ability to provide sufficient financial support for the project. Finances are a potential barrier to full implementation of a program (McDaniel et al., 2017). In such cases, partial implementation may be preferable rather than not implementing the training (Noltemeyer et al., 2019). These limitations related to administrator support and funding can impact the project's effectiveness in improving outcomes for educators and SWDs.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

An alternative approach to the problem could have been a policy recommendation. Educators only receive a single lecture-style presentation at the beginning of the year about the C2C program. A position paper to district leaders could have outlined how this one-shot method of PD is ineffective, backed by published research as well as the findings from this study.

Additionally, participants wanted a handbook they could access online. Another method to meet their needs would be to develop a detailed and updated C2C handbook, complete with worksheets, instructions, and strategies. The handbook could be posted online for access at any time. This handbook could eventually be developed as a result of implementation of this PD project.

### **Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change**

As I celebrate the completion of my doctoral journey at Walden University, I am reminded of the importance of effective educational organization and the critical thinking skills required for implementing systematic change. Engaging with peer-reviewed journals from online databases has provided me with a deep understanding of how various phenomena influence daily educational practices. This doctoral journey has also instilled in me the value of constantly striving towards personal and professional growth and supporting others in their pursuit of knowledge and action. Upon completing my doctoral study, my purpose is to guide and support emerging leaders in finding their voice and challenging the status quo by asking thought-provoking questions that encourage further research and discovery.

Through this doctoral project in special education, I have had the opportunity to reflect and develop my professional voice. Throughout the process, I have worked on improving my research and writing skills, which has given me more confidence in expressing my professional views and explaining them in a scholarly format. While I faced challenges and stumbled along the way, I now view every error I made as a strength that can help me further my goals and support marginalized SWDs in the future. The journey to earning the title of Dr. has been life changing. I am grateful for the methodologists who supported me, and I humbly acknowledge their dedication. They have not only taught me a new language, but also opened up a whole new world to me. I have gained a deep respect for the process of conducting research, learning the importance of analyzing information and providing support for a point of view. I eagerly

look forward to joining the community of educators who are committed to driving social change and have the knowledge to make it a reality.

### **Reflection on Importance of the Work**

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of educators using the C2C program; identify the challenges they encounter; and identify ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs, particularly students with ASD. Then, I created a PD program to try to meet the needs of C2C staff so they may better serve SWDs. The work was important first because it highlighted the inadequacy of existing PD. Administrators felt adequate PD was being provided, but educators had different perspectives.

Second, the work was important because it may benefit a vulnerable population. The C2C program is designed to focus on employability skills, socialization, and independent living skills for adult students ages 18–22 diagnosed with ASD. The unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities continues to increase and is over twice that of their nondisabled peers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). Programs like C2C are important to help SWDs transition successfully into the workforce. The transition experience of SWDs in higher education depends on stakeholders' awareness of SWDs and a personalized, flexible approach to transition support (Nuske et al., 2019). Effective PD could increase the competence of C2C staff and thereby improve outcomes for students with ASD.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

The social change implications of this project are profound and far-reaching. By equipping educators with the necessary skills to meet the basic needs of their students and enhance their instructional practices, this study has the potential to create a transformative impact. Offering proper training on the C2C program has the potential to empower educators to better support SWDs during their transition from school to the workforce, thereby promoting inclusivity and equal opportunity in society. Moreover, by improving the prospects of long-term employment opportunities for these students, the project contributes to breaking down barriers and fostering a more inclusive and diverse workforce. Implications for social change include improvements in teaching practice at the local school site as well as improved behavioral, functional, and employability outcomes for SWDs in the C2C program. If the PD is expanded, improved, and ongoing, such positive social change may expand throughout the district. Ultimately, this research has the power to bring about positive social change by ensuring that SWDs are provided with the necessary support and resources to thrive in their future endeavors.

Another implication is the need for schools and districts to gather teacher input about their self-efficacy in various areas. The participants in this study offered detailed, honest information about their perceived lack of training and gaps in their skills. Such input is valuable to ensure effective instruction and PD. Programs should include an evaluative element with confidential teacher input.

This study was limited to a single school and a single program. Future research studies should continue to gather teacher input relative to specific programs to ensure



educators are receiving adequate training and information. Additional research could continue to develop effective PD for job coached and educators helping SWDs learn functional and job skills.

### **Conclusion**

The problem addressed through this study was that, despite available PD training and resources, educators at a high school were not effectively implementing the strategies of the C2C initiative, which was designed to assist SWDs. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of educators using the C2C program; identify the challenges they encounter; and identify ways to improve the C2C program instructional services for SWDs, particularly students with ASD. The study findings were that the PD provided to educators needed to be more specific and more ongoing to prepare them to help SWDs in the classroom and at job sites. As a result, I developed a PD project to help train educators on strategies to help SWDs transitioning from high school to the workforce in the C2C program.

The C2C 123 PD was created as a 3-day PD to provide educators with the knowledge and skills of PBIS, task analysis, and prompting. Although this project study marks the end of my doctoral educational journey, it also marks the beginning of my professional journey as a scholarly systemic change agent. Through this experience, I have grown personally and professionally, becoming a more effective agent of change for systemic improvement.

By providing better preparation to educators in the C2C PD program, SWDs will receive better training and instruction for the workplace. Investing in PD is crucial to

improve teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. SWDs can receive better instruction on behavioral self-management, task analysis on the job, and workplace skills. As a result, SWDs will have a better chance at employability and a brighter future.

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## Appendix A: The Project

# Effective Strategies For

## PBIS & TASK ANALYSIS

### PD Day 1

Presented for C2C Educators  
by  
Denise Frelot



The slide features a large yellow hexagonal graphic on the right containing the C2C Classroom 2Community logo. Below the logo is a smaller blue hexagonal graphic showing a group of people sitting around a table, looking at documents and a tablet. The background is a light gray with abstract blue and yellow geometric shapes.

# Today's PD Components and Purpose

### PD Components

Today we will cover work preparation skills like punctuality, task management, following directions, and community interactions

Activities: Emphasize positive behavior, attendance, vocational skills and case studies

### Our Mission

**Trainer notes:** Criteria for participation, including maintaining behavior standards and vocational skills

**Module formats:** Details on developing vocational skills in various areas

**TIMELINE:** 2 days of PD TRAINING, eight 1-hour follow-up PD meetings.



The slide features a large blue hexagonal graphic on the right containing a photo of several hands high-fiving. Below this is a larger photo of a diverse group of people sitting around a table, looking at a laptop and documents. The background is a light gray with abstract blue and yellow geometric shapes.



## Framework: What is the C2C Program and PBIS?

- 1 The C2C curriculum focuses on work exploration and community-based preparation. Students need to meet specific criteria for enrollment, such as behavior standards and vocational skills.
- 2 PBIS stands for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. These strategies focus on teaching and promoting positive behavior in individuals.




## C2C PD Program Agenda

Day 1

- Intro to the C2C program
- PBIS principles
- Behavior Management
- Data Collection & Monitoring


Day 2

- Recap
- PBIS & Shaping Behavior
- Prompting Techniques
- Corrective Feedback
- Job Coaching
- Behavior Management
- Data Collection & Monitoring

Continuing Monthly PD


Eight 1-hour collaborative sessions over 8 months

1. Applying Different Behavior Management Strategies
2. Designing Behavior Intervention Plans
3. Analyzing Behavior Management Techniques
4. Implementing Behavior Management Strategies
5. Classroom and Behavioral Progress Review
6. Student Progress Assessment
7. Technology Integration Check-In
8. Reflection and Implementation Review




## Day 1: Objectives


# Intro to the program and PBIS principles



Positive reinforcement techniques and intermittent reinforcement strategies



Addressing severe behaviors and involving parents in behavior plans



Tracking progress with data collection, behavioral logs, checklist surveys, analysis meetings, and rewards systems

# Welcome Educators!

- ### Introduction

Welcome, Educators! Today, we will embark on a journey with Belle as she guides Beast in learning proper manners and managing his temper. Let's dive into the world of PBIS strategies and task card worksheets to help Beast become the best version of himself.
- ### Understanding PBIS Strategies

PBIS strategies focus on teaching and promoting positive behavior in individuals. By using PBIS strategies, Belle can effectively teach Beast how to behave appropriately in various situations. Let's explore some common PBIS techniques together.





## Day 1 Agenda & Goals



### Agenda for the Day

- 9:00 am - 10:30 am: Introduction and Understanding PBIS Strategies
- 10:30 am - 10:45 am: Break
- 10:45 am - 12:00 pm: Task Card Analysis
- 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm: Lunch Break
- 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm: Reinforcement: Belle's Lessons on Manners (Positive vs. Negative)
- 2:30 pm - 2:45 pm: Break
- 2:45 pm - 4:00 pm: Controlling Temper: Strategies for Beast (Ignoring Behavior vs. Defusing Behavior)
- 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm: Think, Pair and Share, Prosocial Skills



## Day 1 Agenda & Goals



### Goals for Presentaion

- Understand** the core concepts of PBIS strategies.
- Analyze** task cards related to manners and anger management.
- Learn** the importance of good manners in various settings.
- Explore** strategies for managing emotions and controlling temper.
- Reflect** on applying PBIS strategies in everyday interactions.
- Collaborate** in group evaluation activities through slide presentations.



## Meet Our PBIS Team

PBIS Day 1 Trainers

**Denise Frelot**  
Employee Trainer

**Belle**

**Beast**

**Job Coach 1**

**Job Coach 2**

# Task Card Analysis

## What is a Task Card?

Task cards are a valuable educational tool that allows students to practice specific skills in an engaging way. In this section, we will analyze task cards related to manners and anger management. Each task card presents a scenario for Beast to navigate, helping him learn the importance of good behavior and self-control. **\*Follow along using Task Card Worksheet**

## Let's Go!

Belle teaches Beast the importance of manners in different settings, such as the dining table, the library, and while interacting with others. Through interactive activities and real-life examples, students will understand why good manners are essential for creating positive relationships with others.

# Task Card Analysis

## How to create and use a Task Card?

### How Belle uses the Task Analysis Cards for Teaching Manners and Anger Management to Beast

Belle uses the PBIS strategies and task card data collection worksheets to teach Beast manners and anger management principles through engaging activities.

#### Task Card Analysis

Task cards allow Beast to practice specific skills in an interactive manner. They help Beast navigate scenarios to learn good behavior and self-control.

#### Belle's Lessons on Manners

Belle teaches Beast manners in different settings like the dining table, library, and social interactions. Students grasp the importance of manners through practical examples.

#### Controlling Temper: Strategies for Beast

Beast learns anger management techniques like deep breathing and taking breaks. Students understand how to manage emotions effectively in challenging situations.

Using the Task cards help educators guide students in applying PBIS techniques in daily life by setting behavior goals and practicing positive actions for a respectful environment. Through task analysis cards and PBIS strategies, Beast learns manners and anger management skills crucial for personal and academic development. Practicing good behavior and self-regulation leads to positive outcomes in various settings.

**Activity: Manners Jeopardy, Prosocial Skills Jeopardy**

## Let's Try It!

Behavior	Description	Example
Patience	Demonstrating calmness and understanding	Waiting calmly for a friend who is running late
Kindness	Showing care and compassion towards others	Helping a classmate who is struggling with homework
Empathy	Understanding and sharing the feelings of others	Comforting a friend who is feeling sad
Communication	Expressing thoughts and feelings effectively	Clearly explaining ideas during a group project
Emotions	Managing and expressing feelings appropriately	Taking deep breaths when feeling angry or frustrated
Consideration	Thinking about the needs and feelings of others	Offering a seat to someone who is standing on a bus

*Context:* In the story of Beauty and the Beast, Belle plays a crucial role in helping the Beast develop pro-social skills such as patience, kindness, empathy, effective communication, emotional control, and consideration towards others. Belle's guidance and support lead the Beast on a journey of personal growth and transformation, emphasizing the importance of empathy and compassion in building strong relationships with others.

# Sample Data Collection Worksheets

### WEEKLY SCATTER PLOT

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Month/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

List of Target Behaviors / Core Needs:

Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
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20							
21							
22							
23							
24							
25							
26							
27							
28							
29							
30							
31							

Mark the behavior if on the line and day you observe the behavior.

### Transition Planning Checklist

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ SSID#: \_\_\_\_\_  
Completed By: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Student: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 2**

Directions: Complete on all students age 15 turning 16 prior to next IEP and older. Bring this completed form to the IEP meeting.

**Year Column:** Record current school year. Use the following code to record what you think this student can do right now. Code N (No), NS (Needs Support) or Y (Yes).  
**IEP Column:** Record an "X" if this transition need should be discussed at the IEP. These boxes could result in writing an Action Plan or Goal in the IEP.

Task Analysis	Year	IEP
1. Current/No-Employment		
2. Find a suitable career goal?		
3. Know requirements of preferred career?		
4. Demonstrate basic understanding of employment options? (job and time, competition, support)?		
5. Monitor employment without support?		
6. Identify and apply for agency support? (if needed)?		
7. Have an updated resume/cover letter in portfolio?		
8. Demonstrate general job skills and work attitudes preferred by employers for sending and/or obtaining a job? (Task focus, time, steps, direction, task completion, tolerance, attendance etc.)		
9. Have appropriate attitudes/behaviors for workplace?		
10. Complete job application independently?		
11. Complete information for job application? (portfolio, work experience, etc.)		
12. Participate appropriately in job interviews?		
13. Monitor skills without supervision?		
14. Have work experience in the community?		

Special School District of St. Louis County  
18-02 Tools for Planning Transition

## Belle's Lesson on Manners:



### Problem-Solving Skills

Encourage students to develop problem-solving skills to address conflicts or issues that may arise in their interactions. Teach them how to brainstorm solutions, consider the perspectives of others, and work towards mutually beneficial outcomes.



### Setting Clear Expectations

By defining positive behaviors and goals, students can proactively work towards meeting those expectations.



### Using Positive Language

Words of encouragement, expressing gratitude, and showing empathy towards others.



### Practicing Self-Regulation

Teach students strategies for managing their emotions effectively. This can include techniques like deep breathing, taking a break when feeling overwhelmed, or using positive self-talk to stay calm in challenging situations.

## Belle's Lesson on Manners:

05

### Building Positive Relationships

Emphasize the importance of building positive relationships with others. Encourage students to show kindness, respect, and understanding towards their peers, family members, and community members.

06

### Reflecting on Behavior

Encourage students to reflect on their behavior and interactions regularly. Have them consider how their actions impact others and how they can make positive changes to improve their relationships and communication with others.

## Ignoring vs. Defusing Behaviors

Ignoring behavior involves intentionally not providing attention or reaction to an undesired behavior. This strategy is effective for behaviors that are seeking attention and may decrease the likelihood of their occurrence.

Defusing behavior involves redirecting attention away from an undesired behavior while acknowledging the individual's feelings. This approach helps to address the underlying emotions contributing to the behavior.





## Positive and Negative Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement involves providing a desirable consequence after a behavior occurs to increase the likelihood of that behavior being repeated. For example, if a student completes their work assignment on time, they may receive praise or a small reward. This positive consequence encourages the student to continue diligently completing their assigned work.

## Positive and Negative Reinforcement

- Reinforcement schedules refer to the timing and consistency of reinforcement.
- Continuous reinforcement provides reinforcement every time the behavior occurs.
- Intermittent reinforcement provides reinforcement only sometimes. Intermittent reinforcement can be further divided into fixed ratio (reinforcing after a set number of responses), fixed interval (reinforcing after a specific amount of time), variable ratio (reinforcing after an unpredictable number of responses), and variable interval (reinforcing after an unpredictable amount of time).

# Intermittent Reinforcement

Session 4: Intermittent Reinforcement Data Table

Type of Reinforcement	Description	Example
Continuous Reinforcement	Reinforcement provided after every occurrence of the desired behavior.	Giving verbal praise to a student every time they raise their hand to answer a question.
Intermittent Reinforcement	Reinforcement provided after some occurrences of the desired behavior.	Giving verbal praise or a high five to a student randomly after they have raised their hand a few times during the week.

**Context:** Understanding the differences between continuous and intermittent reinforcement is crucial when developing behavior support plans. Teachers and educators often use intermittent reinforcement to maintain behaviors over time.

## Controlling Temper Strategies

### Task Card 1: Manners at the Dining Table

Beast is having dinner with Belle and the other enchanted objects. He accidentally knocks over a glass of water. How should Beast react in this situation?

**Objective:** Practice proper table manners and demonstrate grace under pressure.

### Task Card 2: Anger Management Technique

Beast is playing a game with Lumiere and Cogsworth. Lumiere accidentally wins the game, and Beast starts to feel frustrated. What can Beast do to calm himself down?

**Objective:** Implement anger management strategies such as deep breathing or taking a short break to control emotions.

### Task Card 3: Manners in the Library

Beast is in the library reading a book when Chip approaches him to ask a question. How should Beast respond to Chip while being respectful of others in the library?

**Objective:** Demonstrate good manners and appropriate behavior in a quiet setting like the library.

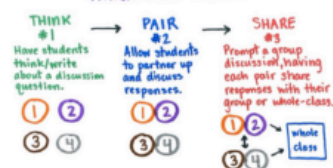
# Think, Pair Share

Educators pair up and practice this Cooperative Learning Strategy

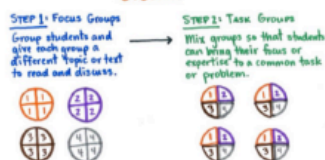


## COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

### THINK-PAIR-SHARE



### JIGSAW



# Prosocial Skills

## Belle Teaches Prosocial Skills

In the enchanting tale of Beauty and the Beast, Belle takes on the important role of helping the Beast learn prosocial skills, which are crucial for developing positive relationships with others. Throughout the story, Belle models patience, kindness, and empathy towards the Beast, showing him the value of treating others with respect and understanding. By teaching him to communicate effectively, control his emotions, and consider the feelings of those around him, Belle guides the Beast on a journey of personal growth and transformation, emphasizing the importance of empathy and compassion in building strong connections with others.

## Essential Social Skills

- Following Directions
- Asking for help
- Listening
- Apologizing
- Staying on task
- Waiting your turn
- Minding your own business
- Asking for what you want/need
- Answering questions
- Asking questions for which you need the answers
- Accepting "no" for an answer
- Working with others
- Asking permission
- Disagreeing appropriately
- Giving constructive criticism
- Asking for help
- Resisting peer pressure
- Completing an undesirable task
- Getting attention appropriately
- Accepting criticism/consequences

# Activity Slide

Let's Play!  
\*Follow along on your  
handout to keep score

## Manners Jeopardy-Activity

Highest Table Score wins!

by setting clear expectations	using positive language	practicing self-regulation	problem-solving	building relationships	reflecting on behavior
100	100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500	500

# Activity Slide Explained

## How to Play!

Questions:

### by setting clear expectations

- 100: What is one way to communicate rules clearly to others?
- 200: Why is it important to set expectations in any situation?
- 300: How can setting clear expectations help in avoiding misunderstandings?
- 400: Give an example of setting clear expectations in a group project.
- 500: How can setting clear expectations improve teamwork?

### using positive language

- 100: Why is using positive language important when giving feedback?
- 200: How can positive language affect someone's mood?
- 300: Give an example of how positive language can resolve a conflict.
- 400: How does using positive language show respect towards others?
- 500: Explain how positive language can improve relationships.

### practicing self-regulation

- 100: What does it mean to practice self-regulation?

## Explained cont...



### Let's Play!

#### building relationships

- 100: Why are good communication skills important in building relationships?
- 200: How can showing empathy strengthen relationships?
- 300: Give an example of how trust is essential in building relationships.
- 400: How can active listening improve relationships?
- 500: Explain the role of compromise in maintaining healthy relationships.

#### reflecting on behavior

- 100: Why is self-reflection important in personal growth?
- 200: How can reflection help in improving future actions?
- 300: Give an example of reflecting on a past behavior to make a positive change.
- 400: Why is it important to receive feedback from others when reflecting on behavior?
- 500: Explain how reflecting on behavior can lead to developing better habits.

Using positive language when giving feedback is important because it helps create a more supportive and constructive environment. Positive language can make the recipient of the feedback feel encouraged, motivated, and valued. It can also increase their receptiveness to the feedback and willingness to make changes or improvements. By focusing on what was done well or what can be improved rather than dwelling on mistakes or shortcomings, positive language promotes a growth mindset and fosters continuous learning and development.

## Activity Slide



### Let's Play! *\*Follow along on your handout to keep score*

#### Teaching Prosocial Skills to Beasts Jeopardy

Patience	Kindness	Empathy	Communication	Emotions	Consideration
100	100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500	500

# Activity Slide Explained

## How to Play!

### Questions:

#### Patience

- 100: What is a skill that helps you wait calmly for your turn?
- 200: Why is it important to be patient when working with others?
- 300: How can taking deep breaths help you develop patience?
- 400: Give an example of a situation where patience is necessary.
- 500: Explain how counting to 10 can help improve your patience.

#### Kindness

- 100: What can you do to show kindness to a friend?
- 200: Why is being kind to others important?
- 300: How would you help someone who is feeling sad?
- 400: Describe a time when someone showed kindness to you.
- 500: How can small acts of kindness make a big difference in the world?

# Explained cont...

## How to Play!

### Empathy

- 100: What does it mean to show empathy towards someone?
- 200: Why is empathy important in building strong relationships?
- 300: How can you tell if someone is feeling happy or sad?
- 400: Give an example of a time when you showed empathy towards a classmate.
- 500: Explain the difference between empathy and sympathy.

### Communication

- 100: Why is good communication important in teamwork?
- 200: How can active listening help improve communication?
- 300: What are some ways to communicate your feelings effectively?
- 400: Describe a situation where clear communication avoided a misunderstanding.
- 500: Why is it important to think before you speak when communicating?

## Explained cont...



### How to Play!

#### Consideration

- 100: Why is it important to consider other people's feelings?
- 200: How can you show consideration towards your classmates?
- 300: What can you do to be more considerate in your daily interactions?
- 400: Give an example of a time when you put someone else's needs before your own.
- 500: Explain why being considerate can create a positive environment for everyone.



## Exit Ticket PD Evaluation



What I learned today? \_\_\_\_\_

What will I use? \_\_\_\_\_

What could have been better? \_\_\_\_\_



# THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

See you tomorrow for Day 2  
9am-5pm

 School library





**Day 1 Lesson Plan 2: Setting Clear Expectations with Belle and the Beast****Objective:**

C2C Educators will be able to identify and communicate clear expectations effectively in a social interaction scenario, as demonstrated by engaging in a role-play activity setting expectations between Belle and the Beast.

**Assessment:**

The C2C Educators will participate in a role-play activity where they will demonstrate setting clear expectations between two characters, utilizing effective communication skills.

**Key Points:**

- Importance of setting clear expectations in communication
- Strategies for expressing expectations clearly
- Active listening skills when establishing expectations
- Mutual understanding and agreement in communication
- Role of body language in emphasizing expectations

**Opening:**

- Engage C2C Educators with the scenario of Belle planning a party with the Beast but needing to set clear expectations first.
- Ask C2C Educators to think about a time when clear expectations helped them in a situation.

**Introduction to New Material:**

- Explain the concept of setting clear expectations using real-life examples.

- Discuss the importance of communication skills in establishing expectations.
- Common Misconception: Assuming others can read our minds instead of clearly articulating expectations.

**Guided Practice:**

- Set the expectation for C2C Educators to actively listen and practice communication skills during role-play activities.
- Provide examples of scenarios for C2C Educators to practice setting clear expectations.
- Scaffold questioning from easy (What are your expectations for this activity?) to harder (How can you ensure the other person understood your expectations?).
- Monitor student performance by observing role-play interactions and providing feedback.

**Independent Practice:**

- C2C Educators will partner up and create a dialogue setting clear expectations for a given scenario.

**Role-Play Activity****Think-Pair-Share****Exit Ticket**

**Day 1 Lesson Plan 3: Practicing Positive interactions with Beast: Belle's Lesson****Objective:**

C2C Educators will be able to demonstrate understanding and application of strategies for practicing positive interactions with others, using Belle and Beast as an example.

**Assessment:**

Role-playing activity where C2C Educators demonstrate positive interaction skills in a scenario with a partner.

**Key Points:**

- Importance of communication in relationships
- Showing appropriate emotions such as empathy and understanding
- Regulating responses
- Practicing active listening

**Opening:**

- Watch a short clip from Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" to introduce the topic
- Discuss with C2C Educators why positive interactions are important and how they can be improved
- Ask C2C Educators to share examples of positive interactions they have had with others

**Introduction to New Material:**

- Discuss key points through class discussion and examples
- Clarify misconceptions that saying what you think means always getting what you

want

**Guided Practice:**

- Practice active listening skills with a partner using role-playing scenarios
- Provide feedback and guidance on demonstrating empathy, understanding and active listening
- Monitor student performance and affect through observation and participation in role plays

**Independent Practice:**

- In pairs, C2C Educators will create a skit demonstrating effective communication and effective listening strategies
- Each pair will present their skit to the group for feedback and discussion

**Closing:**

- Quick group discussion on the key points learned during the lesson
- Reflect on how these skills can be applied in various settings or environments.

**Extension Activity:**

C2C Educators play prosocial skills jeopardy activity

**Independent Practice:**

**Role-Play Activity**

**Think-Pair-Share**

**Exit Ticket**

**Day 1 Lesson Plan 4: Reflecting on Behavior with Beast**

C2C Educators will be able to reflect on their behavior in social interactions and identify ways to improve their communication skills through a role-play scenario with Beast.

C2C Educators will participate in a role-playing activity with a partner where they will reflect on their own behavior and provide constructive feedback to each other based on the scenario presented.

**Key Points:**

- Understand the importance of reflecting on behavior in social interactions
- Practice giving and receiving feedback constructively
- Identify strategies for improving communication skills
- Apply problem-solving skills in real-life scenarios

**Opening:**

- Welcome C2C Educators and introduce the topic of reflecting on behavior with a fun icebreaker activity.
- Ask C2C Educators to reflect on a time when they had a challenging interaction with a friend or family member and how they handled it.

**Introduction to New Material:**

- Discuss the concept of reflecting on behavior and its importance in building positive relationships.
- Introduce the role-play scenario with Beast where C2C Educators will practice reflecting on their behavior and providing feedback.

- Common misconception: C2C Educators may think that reflecting on behavior is only about pointing out mistakes, clarify that it is also about recognizing strengths and areas for improvement.

**Guided Practice:**

- Set clear expectations for behavior during the role-play activity with Beast.
- Provide examples of constructive feedback and guide C2C Educators through practicing giving feedback to their partners.
- Scaffold questioning by starting with simple prompts like "What went well?" and gradually progressing to more complex questions such as "How could you improve your communication in this situation?"
- Monitor student performance by circulating and providing guidance as needed.

**Independent Practice:**

- C2C Educators will work independently on a reflection sheet where they will write about one thing they did well in the role-play and one thing they could improve on.
- The reflection sheet will be used to demonstrate their understanding of reflecting on behavior and identifying ways to enhance their communication skills.

**Closing:**

- Have a quick group discussion where C2C Educators share one thing they learned about reflecting on behavior with their peers.
- Summarize the key points of the lesson and emphasize the importance of self-reflection in social interactions.

- As homework, C2C Educators can practice reflecting on their behavior in a real-life social interaction and write a brief reflection on what they learned from the experience.

**Role-Play Activity****Think-Pair-Share****Exit Ticket**

**Day 1 Lesson Plan 5: Belle Teaches Using Positive Language with Beast****Objective:**

C2C Educators will be able to practice using positive language by engaging in role-playing scenarios with a partner, focusing on the use of encouraging and uplifting words.

**Assessment:**

C2C Educators will participate in a role-playing activity where they will have a conversation with a partner using positive language. They will be assessed based on their ability to use positive and supportive words effectively.

**Key Points:**

- Understanding the impact of positive language on relationships
- Practicing positive affirmations and encouragement
- Differentiating between positive and negative language
- Role-playing scenarios to apply positive language skills effectively

**Opening:**

- Introduction to the concept of positive language through a short story or scenario involving Belle and Beast
- Engage C2C Educators with a reflective question: "How do you think using positive words can make a difference in how people feel?"

**Introduction to New Material:**

- Discuss the importance of positive language in building strong relationships and creating a positive environment



- Provide examples of positive affirmations and encouraging phrases
- Address common misconception: Positive language is only about saying nice things, not providing constructive feedback.

**Guided Practice:**

- Demonstrate role-playing with a student volunteer to model the use of positive language
- Provide opportunities for pairs of C2C Educators to engage in role-playing scenarios using positive language
- Scaffold questioning from simple prompts like "Say something nice to your partner" to more complex prompts like "How did your partner's words make you feel?"
- Monitor student performance by circulating, providing feedback, and guiding student interactions

**Independent Practice****Role-Play Activity****Think-Pair-Share****Exit Ticket**

**Day 1 Lesson Plan 6: Exploring Consideration with Belle and Beast****Objective:**

C2C Educators will be able to reflect on the theme of consideration by analyzing the actions and dialogue of Belle and Beast in a given scenario.

**Assessment:**

C2C Educators will be assessed through a written reflection where they will describe a situation in which they demonstrated consideration, similar to Belle and Beast's actions in the story.

**Key Points:**

- Understanding the concept of consideration
- Analyzing Belle and Beast's behavior
- Reflecting on personal experiences related to consideration

**Opening:**

- Watch a short clip from "Beauty and the Beast" showcasing a moment of consideration
- Discuss as a class: "What does it mean to be considerate of others?"

**Introduction to New Material:**

- Introduce the characters Belle and Beast
- Explain the concept of consideration using real-life examples
- Misconception to anticipate: Some C2C Educators may confuse consideration with kindness only

**Guided Practice:**

- Provide scenarios for group discussion on how Belle and Beast could have shown more consideration
- Monitor student participation during discussions
- Ask questions starting from basic recall to deeper analysis

**Independent Practice:**

- C2C Educators will write a journal entry reflecting on a time they showed consideration or could have been more considerate
- Encourage C2C Educators to include specific details and emotions in their writing

**Independent Practice****Role-Play Activity****Think-Pair-Share****Exit Ticket**

# Day 2: Effective Strategies For PBIS & TASK ANALYSIS

PD PRESENTATION 2024












Presented for C2C  
Educators by  
Denise Frelot



## Day 2 Agenda & Goals



### Agenda for the Day Advanced Behavior Management Strategies

- 
 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM - Introduction and Recap: Review previous lesson goals.
- 
 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM - Activity 1: Understanding Elsa's Emotions
- 
 10:30 AM - 10:45 AM - Break
- 
 10:45 AM - 11:45 AM - Activity 2: Exploring Cause and Effect, Discuss the consequences of Elsa's emotions
- 
 11:45 AM - 1:00 PM - Lunch Break
- 
 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM - Activity 3 Shaping Behavior
- 
 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM - Activity 4 Ferdinand the Bull Dive into analyzing Ferdinand's behavior and emotions.
- 
 Break
- 
 3:15 PM - 4:00 PM - Worksheet Activities: Engage in hands-on tasks. Prompting techniques. Corrective Feedback Implementation
- 
 4:00 PM - 4:30 PM - Role Play, Job Coaching Practice
- 
 4:30 PM - 5:00 pm - Exit ticket feedback on PD. Think Pair & Share group work and summarize learnings.

# Today's PD Components Purpose

## Our Mission

### PD Components

Today we will discuss two case studies, Elsa and Ferdinand.

Activities: Task Analysis, Shaping Behavior, Prompting, Corrective feedback, Role Play, Exit Ticket.

The mission of the training is to establish criteria for job coaching that encompasses the maintenance of behavior standards and enhancement of vocational skills across various areas.

The training program will span 2 days, consisting of structured PD sessions and eight 1-hour follow-up meetings. Participants are expected to adhere to the set criteria, showcasing behavior standards and honing their vocational skills in different domains.



## PBIS Job Coaching, Task Analysis, Behavior Shaping and Prompts for Students



**Task analysis** is an essential process that helps us break down tasks into smaller, more manageable steps. By understanding task analysis, we can effectively teach skills and support student learning. Conducting task analysis involves identifying the specific steps needed to complete a task, sequencing those steps, and teaching each step systematically. In the classroom, task analysis can lead to more independent and successful student outcomes.




### Shaping Behavior


Behavioral shaping is a technique used to encourage and reinforce positive behaviors. It involves breaking down desired behaviors into smaller, achievable steps and providing reinforcement for each step achieved. Techniques for shaping behavior positively include positive reinforcement, modeling, and providing clear expectations. For example, if a student is learning to raise their hand before speaking in class, the teacher can positively reinforce each time the student raises their hand correctly.



### Types of Prompting


Prompting is a method used to assist students in learning new skills or behaviors. There are different types of prompting techniques such as verbal prompts, gestural prompts, and visual prompts. Each type of prompt is used based on the student's needs and the complexity of the task. Prompting should be faded gradually to promote independence and reduce the need for assistance over time.





### Corrective Feedback

Corrective feedback is crucial for helping students understand their mistakes and learn from them. It is important to provide feedback that is specific, actionable, and focuses on the behavior rather than the individual. Constructive feedback helps students see areas for improvement and encourages growth. Implementing corrective feedback effectively can lead to positive behavior changes and academic progress.



### Role Play

Role-playing is a valuable tool for practicing skills in a safe and controlled environment. It allows students to apply learned behaviors in realistic scenarios and receive feedback on their performance. Role-playing can enhance social skills, problem-solving abilities, and decision-making skills. It also promotes creativity and confidence in students..




### PBIS Job Coaching

PBIS job coaching involves task analysis, behavior shaping, and prompts to support student learning and development. By understanding these concepts and implementing them effectively, educators can create a positive and conducive learning environment for all students.

# Welcome to Day 2!

## Elsa and Ferdinand PBIS, Job Coaching, Task Analysis, Behavior Shaping, and Prompts




- Welcome, Educators! Today, we will embark on a journey with Elsa and Ferdinand the Bull. We will tackle Elsa's big emotions and help Ferdinand pick up the pieces in the China shop using PBIS strategies, task analysis data, Behavior shaping and Prompting.


- PBIS stands for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. These strategies focus on teaching and promoting positive behavior in individuals. Using PBIS strategies can effectively teach Elsa how to manage her emotions appropriately in various situations.

## Meet Our PBIS Team


PBIS Day 2 Trainers




**Denise Frelot**  
Employee Trainer



**Elsa**



**Ferdinand the Bull**



**Groupwork with Job coaches**

## Understanding Elsa's Emotions:

### 01

**Elsa's Emotions**

Elsa's emotions are portrayed in the movie Frozen. Identify moments when Elsa feels happy, sad, scared, or angry. Create a character map for Elsa, highlighting her emotions throughout the story. Use words and illustrations to visualize Elsa's emotional journey.

### 02

**Exploring Cause and Effect**

Watch the scene in Frozen where Elsa accidentally freezes Arendelle. Participate in a discussion with educators on the events that led to this incident. Educators will work in small groups and create a cause-and-effect chart detailing how Elsa's emotions triggered the town's freezing. Each group can present its chart to the rest of the educators.

### 03

**Reflections**

Elsa's emotional journey.

- How do you think Elsa feels when she discovers her powers for the first time?
- Describe a time when you felt a strong emotion like Elsa. How did you handle it?
- If you were Elsa, what would you do differently to control your powers?

### 04

**Worksheet Activities:**

1. Educators match different emotions (happy, sad, scared, angry) with corresponding images of Elsa from the movie.
2. Educators use their creativity to design and color code their own ice palace, replacing Elsa's negative emotions with positive ones.

## Writing Prompt Activities

05

### Building Positive Relationships

Emphasize the importance of building positive relationships with others. Encourage students to show kindness, respect, and understanding towards their peers, family members, and community members.

06

### Reflecting on Behavior

Encourage students to reflect on their behavior and interactions regularly. Have them consider how their actions impact others and how they can make positive changes to improve their relationships and communication with others.

## Understanding Cause and Effect

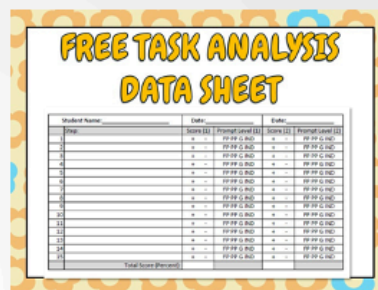
### Task Analysis



In the magical kingdom of Arendelle, Elsa, the Snow Queen, has the power to control ice and snow. However, when she experiences strong emotions, her powers can sometimes get out of control, causing chaos in the town. In this task analysis activity, we will explore Elsa's big emotions and how they can lead to unexpected outcomes.



## Understanding Cause and Effect Activity



Rewatch the scene in Frozen where Elsa accidentally freezes Arendelle. Let's discuss the chain of events that led to this incident. Get into small groups and create a cause-and-effect chart detailing how Elsa's emotions triggered the freezing of the town. **\*Follow along using Task Card Worksheet**

## Strategies for Shaping Behaviors

Behavior shaping strategies can be tailored and expanded upon based on the specific needs and challenges faced by Elsa and Ferdinand.

Combining multiple behavior shaping strategies can be highly effective in addressing the unique challenges faced by Elsa and Ferdinand. By using a combination of strategies, we can create a comprehensive and personalized approach to help them overcome their fears and manage their behaviors more effectively.

For Elsa, a combination of positive reinforcement, modeling, and social support can work synergistically to build her confidence and control over her powers. Positive reinforcement can motivate her to practice self-control, while modeling can show her successful coping strategies used by others. Additionally, social support can provide her with the encouragement and understanding she needs to navigate her challenges.

Similarly, for Ferdinand, a combination of prompting, behavior contracts, and social support can be beneficial. Prompting can help him remember and utilize his coping mechanisms in stressful situations, while a behavior contract can outline clear expectations and consequences for his actions. Social support can create a comforting environment for Ferdinand to feel safe and encouraged to face his fears.





## Corrective Feedback

**Note:** When experiencing strong emotions, it's important to take a moment to breathe and reflect before reacting. Talking to someone and engaging in calming activities can help restore calm and prevent unexpected consequences. To incorporate these tips into interactions with students experiencing strong emotions, you can start by creating a safe and supportive environment where students feel comfortable expressing their feelings. Encourage them to take deep breaths and count to 10 before reacting, just like the corrective feedback provided for Elsa

Emotion	Consequence	Corrective Feedback
Anger	Destroyed parts of the kingdom with ice powers	Take deep breaths and count to 10 before reacting. Find a quiet space to calm down.
Sadness	Created a snowstorm that trapped people	Talk to a friend or family member about how you're feeling. Engage in a calming activity like drawing or listening to music.
Fear	Accidentally froze her sister's heart	Identify what scares you and talk about it with someone you trust. Remember to think positively and focus on solutions.

## Corrective Feedback Tracking form

Verbal Reminder	10
Written Note	5
Time-Out	3
Reflection Sheet	2

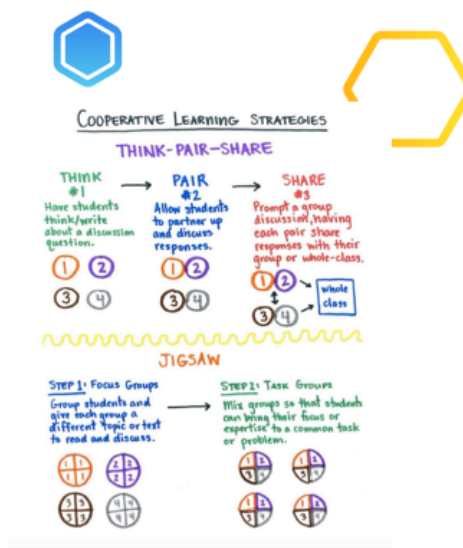
*Context: The data table shows the frequencies of different types of corrective feedback given to Elsa for managing her big emotions.*

Corrective Feedback Type	Frequency
Verbal Reminder	10
Written Note	5
Time-Out	3
Reflection Sheet	2

Based on the data provided, verbal reminders have been the most frequently used corrective feedback type for Elsa in managing her big emotions. To assess the effectiveness of the corrective feedback strategies look at any noticeable changes in Elsa's behavior. Tracking and documenting changes in behavior over time can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the corrective feedback strategies.

# Think, Pair Share

Educators pair up and practice self-perception, self-evaluation and accepting feedback using this cooperative learning strategy



## Instructions: Role Play PBIS Strategies

### Activity-Think, Pair Share Groupings

Participant 1-Micah

Participant 2 -Job Coach

Participant 3-Observer

### Day 2

### Case Study Role Play Practice Day 2

### Case Study : Practicing Riding the Community Bus

#### Scenario:

You are a job coach on a community bus, and you are assisting Micah, an adult student with autism, in learning how to pay to get on the bus. Micah is also practicing navigating the bus route and interacting with other passengers. Micah often finds social interactions challenging and becomes anxious in unfamiliar situations.

#### Scripting:

**Job Coach:** Hello Micah. Today, we will focus on practicing how to pay to get on the bus and mastering your responsibilities. How do you feel about taking on this new learning task?

**Micah:** I'm a bit unsure. What if I get it wrong?

**Job Coach:** It's normal to feel unsure when learning something new, Micah. Remember, it's all part of the learning process. Let's practice together. Let's start by focusing on how to pay to get on the bus smoothly.

# Exit Ticket PD Evaluation



Give your feedback on the Professional Development session and areas where you may need further information. Your support is valuable for continuous improvement. Thank you for your participation.



# Effective Strategies For PBIS & TASK ANALYSIS

**PD PRESENTATION DAY 3**

**2024**

Presented for C2C Educators  
by  
Denise Frelot



## PD Day 3 Sessions Schedule: Collaboration

Each 1-hour session is an extension and application of the skills learned in Day 1 and 2 of the PD. We will share & debrief lessons learned.

### Agenda and Topics for 1-hour Sessions

#### Session 1: Applying Different Behavior Management Strategies (Review)

Activity: Engage in role-playing scenarios to enhance understanding of various behavior management strategies.

Exit Ticket Checkout: Reflect on the day's learning via a brief assessment.

#### Session 2: Designing Behavior Intervention Plans

Activity: Collaborate to create behavior intervention plans for students facing challenges.

Exit Ticket Checkout: Assess understanding of the intervention planning process.

#### Session 3: Analyzing Behavior Management Techniques

Activity: Prepare and deliver group presentations on the effectiveness of behavior management techniques.

Exit Ticket Checkout: Evaluate the presentations and learning outcomes.

#### Session 4: Implementing Behavior Management Strategies

Activity: Engage in review activities to reinforce understanding of behavior management strategies.

Exit Ticket Checkout: Reflect on implementation challenges and successes.

## PD Day 3 Sessions Schedule: Collaboration

### Agenda and Topics

#### Session 5: Classroom and Behavioral Progress Review

Activity: Monitor progress on behavior management techniques and make necessary adjustments.

Exit Ticket Checkout: Gather feedback on progress and adjustments made.

#### Session 6: Student Progress Assessment

Activity: Assess student progress using provided guidelines and offer constructive feedback.

Exit Ticket Checkout: Evaluate student feedback on progress assessment.

#### Session 7: Technology Integration Check-in

Activity: Explore digital tools for tracking behavior and discuss their benefits.

Exit Ticket Checkout: Collect thoughts on using technology for behavior tracking.

#### Session 8: Reflection and Implementation Review

Activity: Reflect on strategies learned and collaborate with peers for improvement.

Exit Ticket Checkout: Gather feedback on the workshop experience and suggested improvements.



## Framework: What is the C2C Program and PBIS?

- 1 The C2C Curriculum focuses on work exploration and community-based preparation. Students need to meet specific criteria for enrollment, such as behavior standards and vocational skills.
- 2 PBIS stands for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. These strategies focus on teaching and promoting positive behavior in individuals.



**Classroom 2Community**

## Day 3: Objectives

### PBIS principles

- Positive reinforcement techniques and intermittent reinforcement strategies**
- Addressing severe behaviors and involving parents in behavior plans**
- Tracking progress with data collection, behavioral logs, checklist surveys, analysis meetings, and rewards systems**

## Understanding PBIS Strategies

Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) can be effectively implemented through a multi-tiered system of support. This involves:

1.	Universal Level (Tier 1): Implementing school-wide expectations and teaching behavioral skills to all students. This includes establishing clear behavior expectations, teaching and modeling desired behaviors, and acknowledging and reinforcing positive behaviors consistently.
2.	Targeted Level (Tier 2): Providing additional support to students who may need more targeted interventions. This can involve small group interventions, individualized behavior plans, and specific strategies to address challenging behaviors.
3.	Intensive Level (Tier 3): Offering individualized support to students with the most significant behavioral challenges. This may include one-on-one interventions, behavior contracts, and collaboration with support services.



## Presentation Goals



### Goals for Presentaion

**Understand** the core concepts of PBIS strategies.  
**Analyze** task cards related to manners and anger management.

**Learn** the importance of good manners in various settings.

**Explore** strategies for managing emotions and controlling temper.

**Reflect** on applying PBIS strategies in everyday interactions.

**Collaborate** in group evaluation activities through slide presentations.

**Exit Ticket-Think Pair Share Activity Reflection**

## Self-Perception & Self-Evaluation

### Ferdinand the Bull Task Analysis

Watch the scene in Ferdinand the Bull accidentally destroys the China shop. Let's discuss the chain of events that led to this incident. Get into small groups and create a cause-and-effect chart detailing how to help Ferdinand with Self Perception and accepting Feedback.

\*Follow along using Task Card Worksheet



## Let's Do It!

1. **Identification of Problem Behaviors:** Clearly define the specific behaviors that are of concern, including their frequency, intensity, and triggers.
2. **Behavioral Goals:** Establish clear and measurable goals for the student to work towards, such as reducing instances of the problem behavior and increasing positive behaviors.
3. **Positive Reinforcement:** Develop a system of positive reinforcement to encourage and reward the student for demonstrating desired behaviors.
4. **Teaching Replacement Behaviors:** Teach the student alternative behaviors to replace the problematic ones, providing strategies and skills to cope with challenging situations.
5. **Support Strategies:** Implement support strategies such as visual aids, sensory tools, or a designated safe space to help the student regulate their emotions and behaviors.
6. **Collaboration and Communication:** Ensure open communication between school staff, parents, and any external support services involved in the student's care to maintain consistency and effectiveness of the BIP.
7. **Data Collection and Progress Monitoring:** Regularly collect data on the student's behavior to track progress towards goals and make necessary adjustments to the BIP as needed.



## Worksheets



### TASK Analysis & Implementation

Implementing PBIS successfully requires a collaborative effort among educators, administrators, and support staff. It is essential to establish a PBIS team within the school that oversees the implementation process, monitors progress, and provides ongoing support to all stakeholders. Regular meetings and trainings should be conducted to ensure consistency in implementing PBIS practices. Additionally, feedback mechanisms should be put in place to gather input from all staff members and make necessary adjustments to improve the effectiveness of PBIS strategies.

By fostering a culture of collaboration, consistency, and positivity, programs can effectively implement PBIS to create a safe and supportive environment that maximizes student success potential.





### Case Study 2: Retail Store

#### Scenario:

You're a job coach at a retail store, and you're assisting Micah an adult student with autism who works at the checkout counter. Micah struggles with interacting with customers, often becoming flustered when faced with unexpected questions or complaints.

#### Scripting:

Job Coach: Hi Micah. How's it going at the checkout counter today?

Micah: It's okay, but sometimes customers ask me questions I don't know how to answer, and I get really nervous.

Job Coach: I understand. Dealing with customers can be challenging, but let's try a strategy together. When a customer asks a question you're unsure about, let's practice saying something like, "I'm not entirely sure, but let me find out for you." Then, you can call for assistance or check with another worker. How does that sound?

Micah: Yeah, that sounds like it could work.

Job Coach: Great! And remember, it's okay to take a moment to gather your thoughts if you feel overwhelmed. I'm here to support you.

### Case Study 3: Restaurant

#### Scenario:

You're a job coach at a restaurant, and you're working with Micah an adult student with autism who is a busser. Micah struggles to prioritize tasks, often becoming fixated on minor details while neglecting more pressing duties like clearing tables promptly.

#### Scripting:

Job Coach: Hello, Micah. How's your shift going so far?

Micah: It's okay, but I keep getting stuck on little things, and then I forget to clear the tables.

Job Coach: I see. Let's try using a checklist to help you prioritize your tasks. We'll list the most important duties at the top, like clearing tables and refilling water glasses, and then move on to smaller tasks afterward. Would you like to give that a try?

Micah: Yeah, having a checklist might help me stay focused.

Job Coach: Excellent! Remember, if you find yourself getting caught up in the details, take a moment to refer back to the checklist. I'm here to support you every step of the way.

#### Case Study 4: Coffee Shop

**Scenario:**

You're a job coach at a coffee shop, and you're working with Micah an adult student with autism who is responsible for taking orders and preparing drinks. Micah struggles with multitasking and becomes overwhelmed during busy periods.

**Scripting:**

**Job Coach:** Hello, Micah. How are you feeling about your tasks at the coffee shop today?

**Micah:** I'm feeling overwhelmed. There are so many orders coming in at once, and I can't keep up.

**Job Coach:** I understand. Let's try a strategy to help you manage during busy times. How about we prioritize tasks by focusing on one thing at a time? For example, we'll start by taking orders accurately, then move on to preparing drinks. We can also create a visual schedule to help you stay organized. Would you like to give that a try?

**Micah:** Yeah, having a clear plan might help me feel less stressed.

**Job Coach:** Excellent! Let's work on creating a visual schedule together, and remember, it's okay to ask for help if you start to feel overwhelmed.

#### Case Study 5: Office Environment

**Scenario:**

You're a job coach in an office environment, and you're assisting Micah an adult student with autism who is responsible for data entry and filing. Micah struggles with maintaining focus and becomes easily distracted by noise or changes in routine.

**Scripting:**

**Job Coach:** Hi Micah How's your day going with the data entry and filing tasks?

**Micah:** It's okay, but I keep getting distracted by the noises in the office.

**Job Coach:** I understand. Let's try creating a quiet workspace for you to minimize distractions. We can also use noise-canceling headphones or play background music to help you stay focused. Additionally, let's establish a routine for your tasks to provide structure throughout the day. Would you like to try that?

**Micah:** Yeah, having a quiet space and a routine might help me concentrate better.

**Job Coach:** Great! Let's set up your workspace and establish a routine together, and remember, I'm here to support you if you need any assistance.

#### Case Study 6: Stock Room

**Scenario:**

You're a job coach overseeing operations in the stock room of a retail store, and you're assisting Micah an adult student with autism who is responsible for receiving and organizing inventory. Micah struggles with managing the amount of incoming products and becomes overwhelmed by the physical demands of the job.

**Scripting:**

**Job Coach:** Micah. How are you finding your tasks in the stock room today?

**Micah:** It's challenging. There are so many boxes coming in, and I'm having trouble keeping everything organized.

**Job Coach:** I understand. Let's break down the tasks into manageable steps. First, let's focus on unloading the boxes and sorting them by category. We'll create clear labels for each section to help you easily locate items when needed. Additionally, we can set up a system for prioritizing products based on demand. Would you like to give that a try?

**Micah:** Yeah, having a clear system might make it easier for me to keep track of everything.

**Job Coach:** Excellent! Let's work together to establish a system that works for you, and remember, I'm here to support you every step of the way.

#### Case Study 7: Library

**Scenario:**

You're a job coach at a library, and you're working with Micah an adult student with autism who is responsible for organizing books and assisting the people asking for help. Micah struggles with multitasking and becomes overwhelmed during busy periods.

**Scripting:**

**Job Coach:** Hello, Micah. How are you feeling about your tasks at the library today?

**Micah:** I'm feeling overwhelmed. There are so many books to organize, and I can't keep up.

**Job Coach:** I understand. Let's try a strategy to help you manage during busy times. How about we prioritize tasks by focusing on one thing at a time? For example, we'll start by organizing books accurately, then move on to assisting people. We can also create a visual schedule to help you stay organized. Would you like to give that a try?

**Micah:** Yeah, having a clear plan might help me feel less stressed.

**Job Coach:** Excellent! Let's work on creating a visual schedule together, and remember, it's okay to ask for help if you start to feel overwhelmed.

## Case Study 8: Cafeteria

## Scenario:

You're a job coach at a school cafeteria, and you're assisting an adult Micah student with autism who is responsible for serving food and cleaning tables. Micah struggles with managing the lunch rush and becomes anxious during busy periods.

## Scripting:

Job Coach: Hi Micah. How's it going in the cafeteria today?

Micah: It's challenging. There are so many students coming in for lunch, and I find it hard to keep up.

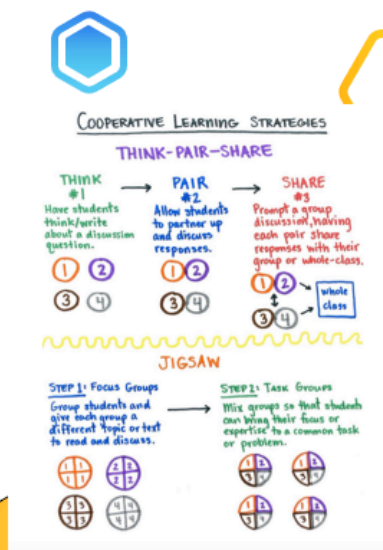
Job Coach: I understand. Let's approach this by breaking down the tasks into smaller steps. Firstly, let's focus on serving food accurately and efficiently, then we can move on to cleaning tables. We can create a checklist to help you prioritize tasks and stay organized. Would you like to give that a try?

Micah: Yes, having a checklist might make it easier for me to manage everything.

Job Coach: Great! Let's work together on creating a checklist, and remember, I'm here to support you every step of the way.

# Think, Pair Share

Educators pair up and practice this Cooperative Learning Strategy



### Exit Ticket Evaluation Tool



What I learned today \_\_\_\_\_

What will I use? \_\_\_\_\_

What could improve? \_\_\_\_\_





## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

### Preinterview

- Introduce myself as an educator and researcher and thank the participant for volunteering to participate in this study.
- Iterate that this interview will be recorded.
- Ask the participant for any questions they may have.
- Rapport Question 1: “Briefly tell me a little about yourself.”
- Rapport Question 2: “Briefly tell me about your role in supporting students’ academic progress in reading.”
- How long have you been in your present position?
- How long have you been at this site?

Time of Interview:

Date of Interview:

Method of Interview:

Interviewer’s Code:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

### Interview

***RQ1. How do high school educators who use the C2C program describe their experiences implementing the strategies promoted in the program (initiative)?***

1. In your own words, please describe the purpose of the C2C program.
2. What do you perceive as strengths of the C2C program?
3. Please describe the training you have participated in related to the C2C program.
4. Overall, about how many training sessions for C2C have you participated in?

5. Please describe how the training was structured and delivered.
6. Please describe how you have used the training with the students served in the C2C program.
7. What skills do you perceive students in the C2C program develop?
8. What challenges do you perceive students in the C2C program have related to achieving the program objectives?
9. What do you perceive may influence C2C student' support on the job site?
10. What do you perceive may influence C2C students' success on the job site?
11. What do you perceive may influence C2C students' understanding duties on the job site?
12. What do you perceive may influence C2C students' behaviors on the job site?

***RQ2. How do high school teachers who use the C2C program describe ways to improve the C2C PD and resources to better help SWDs, particularly students with ASD?***

13. Please describe your perception about the effectiveness of the training you received for the C2C program. ***Please comment on the:***
  - Content
  - Format
  - Frequency
  - Delivery
14. How were the training sessions for C2C structured for learning?
15. What training have you had that you think has been effective in supporting the students in the C2C program?
16. Please describe your perception of implementing the skills learned from the C2C training.
17. How would you describe your level of confidence in using the skills taught in the C2C training sessions?
18. What recommendations do you have to improve the training for the C2C program?
19. Are there any other supports that might be helpful in supporting staff to help students served through C2C? (Supports could be materials, training, administrative, people,

resources, time)

General Probes:

1. Can you explain in more detail?
2. Would you expand on that topic?
3. What do you mean by?
4. Can you be a little more specific?
5. Tell me about that.
6. How do that affect...?

**Postinterview**

Statement to participant: This concludes the interview or this study. Thank you for your time and your thoughtful responses today. Before we end our time together, I want to share two things:

- Remember that I will be contacting you to review a draft of the findings and that process is called member checking. During this time participants are offered the opportunity suggest any changes to the draft to ensure their responses were correctly captured. I will email you the draft findings and follow up by phoning you to gather your input on the draft findings. Participants are requested to review the draft findings and respond within 7 days. Do you have a preferred method of communication either by email or phone?
- In appreciation for your time, I have a \$10 Visa gift card for you. Would you prefer to receive the link to your electronic gift card by email or via text?

- Your gift card transaction has been completed. Thanks again for your time. I greatly appreciate your participation and thoughts shared.
- Enjoy the rest of your day/evening. Goodbye.