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Walden University

College of Education

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Dimika Smith

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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2018

Abstract

Teachers' Perceptions of Student Engagement in a Hybrid Learning Environment

by

Dimika N. Smith

MA, University of Detroit Mercy, 2009

BS, University of Detroit Mercy, 2000

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

Walden University
December 2018

Abstract

Today, educators in several U.S. states use a variety of instructional tools in their classrooms to engage students in a hybrid learning environment. The problem for this study was a disconnect in teachers’ perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid high school learning environment. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers’ perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment in 10th-12-grade classes. The conceptual framework was derived from Astin’s theory of student involvement and the idea that student engagement is instrumental in academic performance. The central research and sub-questions addressed how teachers perceive student engagement affects hybrid learning environments, what aspects of engagement affect students’ performance in a hybrid learning environment, and what teachers are doing to engage students. The research design was a qualitative case study with data sources consisting of interviews, observations, and school artifacts. Data were analyzed and coded to identify patterns and themes reflecting differences and commonalities in the experiences and perceptions of the 10 teacher participants. Through coding, categories were established for strategies to engage and re-engage students. The strategies resulting from teachers’ perceptions that engaged and re-engage students the most were using interactive activities and modules, allowing students to assist one another with pairing students and group work as well as more individual instruction. The study may initiate and evoke conversations among stakeholders leading to the implementation of new instructional strategies by educators to engage students across curriculums. By catering to the specific needs of students, educators may be able to spur students to become more involved in their learning, which may result in positive social change.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my children. Keith Jr., Darius, and Kennedy, I love you all so very much, and I strive to become a better person daily because of each of you. You all are smart, beautiful, talented and genuinely good human beings who can do anything you put your mind to. I appreciate all the love, laughter, and encouragement you all have shown without fail. Thank you.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Antoinette Myers, who has been an exceptional teacher, mentor, and motivator; I do not think I could have done this without you. Thank you for pushing me to work harder, challenging my work, and encouraging me not to give up. Thank you, Dr. Susan Adragna, Dr. Sheilia Goodwin, and Walden University. To my colleagues and friends, thanks for being available to assist, proofread, make corrections, suggestions, listen as well as life lessons and experiences. To Dr. Joslyn Letcher (University of Detroit Mercy), thank you for helping me notice and reach my potential by not ever going easy on me but requiring me to think and understand the "big picture."

To my husband, Keith, without your ongoing support, this would not be possible. You are my biggest and best cheerleader. Thank you for your patience throughout this process. You are my rock and best friend. Thanks for your love, support, encouragement, for always believing in me, listening to me, and being the voice of reason.

Last, but most importantly, to my heavenly father, Jehovah God, and your son, Jesus Christ, for courage, strength, endurance, humility, peace, and patience, thank you!

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

Hybrid learning environments (HLEs), which Helms (2014) defined as an integration of face-to-face and online learning experiences, are steadily increasing in popularity in the United States. However, there is a lack of consensus among educational researchers about how U.S. teachers perceive student engagement in HLE (Blitz, 2013). The problem for this study was a disconnect in teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid high school learning environment. The study will be conducted at Hybrid Academy High School (pseudonym), a secondary school located in the Upper Midwest of the United States. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of high school student engagement in the HLE in 10th-12th-grade classes. Results from the 2014 administration of the Michigan Merit Exam showed that a lower percentage of students who participate in an HLE are reaching proficiency in core subjects such English, mathematics, social studies, and science (Michigan Department of Corrections, 2016). Results showed academic achievement diminished when students are disengaged and lack motivation. The Michigan Department of Education (2015) recognized personalized learning, individualized teaching, and educational technology as methods used by teachers to engage students in the learning process. Medlin and Faulk (2011) stated that engaging and motivating students in the learning process encourage students to be cognizant of what and how they learn, which leads to more involvement and better academic performance. Since there is a lack of knowledge of teachers' perception of student engagement in an HLE, the way teachers perceive instructional strategies may influence their instructional choices.

At Hybrid Academy High School, fostering student engagement has become a more arduous task for educators. According to Li and Guo, (2015), students enjoy the flexibility in learning through hybrid education; however, student engagement is dwindling and presents a challenge to educators in secondary education because of the many responsibilities students have. Some of the many responsibilities students may have are: employment, caring for younger siblings or older parents, or being a parent themselves. In addition, students become less engaged when they lack face-to-face interaction, Li and Guo noted. An educator at Hybrid Academy High School mentioned to me that in her HLE classrooms students rarely listened to instruction and that students focused more on completing an assignment with the least possible effort. While some students would complete an assignment it was often not correct and require various revisions due to students not engaging in discussions or asking questions about the assignment.

Efforts such as student-centered approaches to engage students in instructional delivery are changing to meet the diverse needs of today's students (Guvenc, 2015). Technology in schools and at home extends the learning environment beyond the classroom. Today, students use technology to find out more information than ever before, yet this does not necessarily result in understanding and learning, especially in an alternative school setting such as Hybrid Academy High School (Michigan Department of Education, 2015). The Michigan Department of Education (2015) stated that teachers should address the needs of their various populations by creating environments that cater to their specific educational abilities. Students may lack engagement and motivation because of distractions such as cell phones, peer pressure, and other outside factors (Michigan Department of Education, 2015). According to a classroom teacher at Hybrid Academy High School, these distracting factors caused a chain of negative interaction such disagreements and fighting among students resulting in disengagement and loss of productivity.

Educators are using various methods for instruction to fuel student engagement. In Li and Guo’s (2015) study on student guest lecturing to promote student engagement, the authors discussed the difficulties educators have in presenting information in ways that garner student understanding or that hold their interest. Due to swift advances in technology, teaching methods are changing. Therefore, teachers must also evolve in the way they teach students in an HLE, according to Guvenc (2015). Equipping teachers with the knowledge they need to motivate and engage students in an HLE and help them succeed is necessary (Fredericks & McCloskey, 2012). Teachers have a critical role in the educational process, and until their perceptions are accepted and adopted, students will continue to become disengaged in the classroom, an administrator told me in an interview I conducted with her in December 2016. Thus, the problem I explored for this study was a disconnect in teachers’ perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid high school learning environment. Specifically, I sought to explore teachers’ perceptions of high school student engagement in an HLE in 10th-12th-grade classes. To do so, I analyzed responses from educators at Hybrid Academy High School of what they thought about students' engagement at the school.

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The Michigan Department of Education (2015) report card of the Michigan Merit Exam of 2013-2014 indicated that 70% of students at Hybrid Academy High School were not proficient in mathematics and 50% of students were not proficient in English. The problem for this study was a disconnect in teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid high school learning environment. At Hybrid Academy High School, teachers are required to facilitate lessons to students within an HLE. Although leaders expected that the use of an HLE would improve efficiency and performance, they faced low academic performances by students and decreasing test scores and state rankings. Students attending Hybrid Academy High School during the 2012-2013 school year were 37% proficient in English while only 7% were proficient in mathematics (Michigan Department of Education, 2015).

Research conducted by the Michigan Department of Education (2015) suggested that a lack of engagement, motivation, and enthusiasm for schools is directly related to the decrease in school performance and graduation rates among students in the state. The Department is promoting the Michigan Inspiration Project in efforts to help students become more engaged in their academics and motivated to learn. Personal communication from administration, counselors, and educators reflected the need to explore teachers' perceptions of student engagement in an HLE. A teacher who has been at Hybrid Academy High School since 2012 stated that she experienced students not engaged in their learning and added that many students are not focused or prepared for class and do not stay on task. Classroom activities, discussions, and school work were several methods used by teachers at Hybrid Academy High School to engage students to become involved in their education.

Student engagement at Hybrid Academy High School required solutions that most efficiently and effectively improved the learning experience for students. Therefore, I explored teachers' perceptions of student engagement in the school's HLE. Local information and data were necessary to consider where the problem areas existed in the Michigan suburban school district in which Hybrid Academy High School is located. I used the data collected to make inferences regarding student engagement and the implementation of HLEs in similar school districts.

Evidence of the Problem at the Professional Level

In reviewing the literature on hybrid learning and student engagement, I found few studies on teachers' perceptions of student engagement in HLE. Louwrens and Hartnett (2015) found that student engagement had been examined in the compulsory school sector and in face-to-face contexts. An administrator told me there is not enough information recorded on what teachers think about student engagement.

Research conducted by the Michigan Department of Education (2015) suggested that a lack of engagement, motivation, and enthusiasm for school is directly related to the increase in poor school performance and low graduation rates among students in the state. The Department is promoting the Michigan Inspiration Project as part of an effort to help students become more engaged in their academics and more motivated to learn. The

Department's data suggested the need for further exploration of whether motivation, enthusiasm, poor performance, and low graduation outcomes are a result of low student engagement. In my investigation, I explored teachers' perceptions so that appropriate methods can be developed and employed by teachers to enhance student engagement in an HLE.

According to Guvenc (2015), student engagement in the online and distance learning environments has not been thoroughly examined and researched. Guvenc's research on motivational support and engagement versus disaffection provides guidance for teachers on how to design lessons and apply techniques to motivate students. Once students are motivated, student engagement and class participation increase in students, Guvenc found. Furthermore, the use of student-centered approaches in the learning process has increased technology support provided by the school administration (Guvenc, 2015). By exploring teachers' perceptions of student engagement, I wanted to provide stakeholders with insight on what factors teachers perceive as contributing to distracted or disengaged students so that all educators can work together to ensure that students are motivated to learn and succeed in an HLE.

Rationale

In an effort to engage and foster learning, educators must improve methods for motivating students (Appleton & Lawrenz, 2011). Realizing that successful learning cannot be achieved by a single course of delivery; teachers seeking to engage students in active, self-directed, and flexible learning opportunities have turned to hybrid learning (Wichadee, 2013). deNoyelles and Reyes-Foster (2015) noted that hybrid learning has to be effective and has to engage students and encourage them to think critically. According to one administrator from the local site whom I interviewed in May 2016, "educators have to be able to engage students in a way that not only showcases the new technology with the curriculum but also involve the students to want to choose ownership of their learning by actively participating".

The rationale for this qualitative study was that student engagement is associated with students' success or failure within an HLE. Arthur and Hannah (2015) reported that, while educators have some ideas about how to re-engage students, most researchers tend to focus on adolescent learners resulting in a lack of research on older students. Educators in a mid-Michigan school district had different ideas than researchers as to how diminished engagement affected high school students learning in an HLE. I conducted this study about teachers' perceptions to provide insight into student engagement in an HLE and lessen the current gap in research. The problem for this study was a disconnect in teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid high school learning environment. HLEs have not been found to enhance student engagement, which may contribute to lower academic performance (Guvenc, 2015). Arthur and Hannah also cited Bushnik, Barr-Telford, and Bussiere's (2004) study in which the authors found that academic disengagement has less to do with curriculum and more to do with students being disengaged because of alienation and uninteresting and unchallenging educational environments. Exploring teachers' perceptions of high school student engagement in an HLE was a critical aspect of this project study.

Definition of Terms

The research on teachers' perceptions and student engagement includes certain key terms. The following terms and their definitions were used in this study:

Behavioral engagement: Student effort, attendance, participation, and good behavior (Fredericks & McCloskey, 2012).

Cognitive engagement: The mastering of ideas, personal goals, and future endeavors (Fredericks & McCloskey, 2012).

Emotional engagement: Students' interest in school and their assignments, and their relationships with their teachers (Fredericks & McCloskey, 2012).

Hybrid learning: An integration of face-to-face and online learning experiences (Helms, 2014).

Online learning: A computer- and media-based method of incorporating or combining blended and traditional education methods (Korkmaz & Karakus, 2009)

Perception: The observing of others and their actions (Abrams & Weilder, 2015).

Student engagement: The amount of psychological and physical energy a student devotes to the academic experience (Newman, Wehlage, & Lamburn, 1992).

Significance of the Study

This project study was significant because it provided a qualitative case study on teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment. The problem was a disconnect in teacher's perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment at Hybrid Academy High School. Therefore, the project study fulfilled the gap in the literature about a lack of research on student involvement and educators’ perceptions regarding the implementation of instructional tools that create high a quality engagement in a hybrid learning environment. According to Shernoff et al. (2016), a critical factor in academic and learning gains for adolescents is engagement. However, a lack of research has been completed in educational practices that promote active participation (Dykstra, Steinbrenner & Watson, 2015). Teacher perceptions’ of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment benefit not only the student but educators, administrators, parents, and stakeholders as well. Michigan stakeholders can examine this study to make decisions and changes that will enhance student engagement in hybrid learning environments, resulting in student achievement.

As student engagement in a hybrid learning environment was explored, this qualitative case study can contribute to positive social change to determine if hybrid learning is worth continuing in various learning environments. The contribution of this study gave administrators and stakeholders a realistic view of how student engagement affected hybrid learning. Not only did administrators and stakeholders benefit from such a project study, but learning communities could also incorporate different strategies, skills, and teaching methods by implementing a variety of motivational techniques to engage students. Locally this study contributed to changes in current practices for Hybrid Learning Academy High School, which resulted in more engaged learners and higher academic performance.

Research Questions

For this qualitative study, I used a case study design to increase understanding of educators’ perceptions as they pertain to student engagement in HLEs. According to

Merriam (2009), qualitative researchers seek to answer questions about how people understand their experiences, construct their worlds, and ascribe meaning to their experiences. Case-study researchers focus on the in-depth exploration of an actual case (Creswell, 2012). The central research question, which I used to guide the research study, was how does student engagement, as perceived by teachers, affect hybrid learning environments? I also sought to answer two sub-questions:

SQ1: What aspects of student engagement do teachers perceive as affecting students' performance in a hybrid learning environment?

SQ2: How are teachers engaging students in a hybrid learning environment?

Review of the Literature

The literature review provided a framework for this qualitative case study and focused primarily on student engagement and hybrid learning environments. The information for this review collected various relevant peer-reviewed articles, online databases, research books, and articles which will be obtained using *ERIC, Education Research Complete, Sage Premier, ProQuest and Walden Library*. However, ERIC was the primary doctoral source for the proposal and the reviewing of additional articles in the search process such as materials relating to the implementation process of student engagement and hybrid learning. The following selected articles reflected information about student engagement, teachers' perceptions, and hybrid learning. These articles contained definitions, research on the positive and negative impact of student engagement, building a program, online learning, differences between hybrid and traditional learning with student engagement.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that supported the qualitative case study is explained in this section. The conceptual framework for this project study used a conceptual framework derived from Alexander Astin's (1985) theory of student involvement. Astin (1985) corroborated the idea that student engagement is instrumental to academic performance. According to Astin (1985), student involvement refers to the amount of psychological and physical energy a student devotes to the academic experience. While Astin's (1985) theory is unique to higher education, the theory of student engagement has been used to explore teacher perceptions of students' engagement, which persists through high school and college. As a result, student engagement is a complex construct with various definitions (Shernoff et al., 2016). According to Furrer and Skinner (2003), student engagement referred to being active and flexible but goal-directed and focused on interacting with the social and physical environments. According to Newmann et al. (1992), student engagement can be defined as a student's psychological investment and effort toward understanding, learning, or mastering the skills, knowledge, or crafts academic work is intended to promote. However, while there are several definitions of student engagement theories, the definition provided by Fredericks, Blumenfeld, and Paris, (2004) looked at several variables that contribute to successful student engagement and does the better job in providing a meaningful definition to this particular study. According to Fredericks et al. (2004), school engagement is multidimensional and distinctly made up of three integrated dimensions: (a) cognitive, (b) behavioral, and (c) emotional. Based on the definition of student engagement, the three dimensions were used to examine existing literature that attempts to explain the interest or lack of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment as viewed from teachers' perceptive. In accordance with the conceptual framework, additional existing literature was explored to help understand and form the basis for this project study. The literature analyzed for this project study was categorized by literature on student engagement, the literature on perceptions and literature on hybrid learning.

The essential principles of the student involvement theory reflected similar methods used in today's classrooms: cognitive, emotional and physical. Daily, teachers are attempting to engage students cognitively, emotionally, and physically. In an effort that student performance is correlated with engagement, students must put forth an effort of engagement to academically succeed (Astin, 1985). I explored teachers' perspectives of student engagement in a high school HLE by asking the primary research question and subsequent questions. The primary research question was, how does student engagement, as perceived by teachers, affect hybrid learning environments at Hybrid Academy High School in 10th-12th grades? The sub-questions were

SQ1: What aspects of student engagement do teachers perceive as affecting students' performance in a hybrid learning environment?

SQ2: How are teachers engaging students in a hybrid learning environment?

I used Astin's (1985) student involvement theory to answer the questions.

Review of the Broader Problem

The literature on student engagement. Student engagement derives from Astin's (1985) student involvement theory in which he argued that student involvement requires a continuous investment of physical and psychosocial energy. Astin (1985) also stated the amount of development gained from being involved is commensurate with their extent of being involved. Therefore, student engagement correlates with academic success. Although Astin (1985) related the student engagement theory with higher education, based on the author's statements, it is obvious that the student engagement theory is the impetus for this project study.

In concurrence, Fredericks and McCloskey (2012) conducted research measuring student engagement. In this study, Fredericks and McCloskey (2012) found regardless of the method used to measure student engagement and achievement; the more engaged the students were, the better the outcome in academic achievement, resulting in a positive correlation between student engagement and student achievement. The authors also focused on the assessments used, such as self-reporting, interviews, observations, and teacher surveys to measure student engagement. As well, a research study provided by Gecer and Dag (2012) stated some of the positive impacts of using online learning and increasing student engagement such as the use of time, flexibility, ability to ask questions without fear of ridicule and accessibility. Wichadee (2013) also agreed hybrid learning environments can be used to improve students learning, as it gives them more control of their learning and promotes cognitive engagement. Equally important, Guvenc (2015) discussed the significance of educators motivating and using various techniques to engage students. Similarly, different factors contributed to promoting student engagement in an online learning environment: the comfort of the student, course organization, and course delivery. According to Carr (2014), understanding learning characteristics, authentic and meaningful activity is critical to student engagement.

Comparatively, Medlin and Faulk (2011) conducted a study on employee engagement and employee performance echoing Astin's (1985) student involvement theory in that researching employees' engagement resulted in better performance, which correlates to students' engagement and better academic performance. Medlin and Faulk (2011) equated optimism and engagement studies of increased employee productively were compared to the school setting of positivity in student engagement produced a higher academic performance. Dykstra et al. (2015) completed a study on engagement as an effective intervention for students with autism spectrum disorder. Their study examined engagement with classroom factors and student characteristics. Medlin and Faulk (2011) concluded in their discussion engagement efforts are worth investing in for a more engaged student body, lower retention rates, and better academic performance. Christenson, Reschuly, and Wylie (2012) indicated student engagement encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral mechanisms that exemplify and cultivate enthusiasm for learning. Similarly, the goals of student engagement have evolved from dropout prevention to improved outcomes for lifelong learning.

In addition, Weiss, Carolan, and Baker-Smith (2010) stated there was a relationship between student engagement and smaller learning environments, which can be juxtaposed to a hybrid learning environment and student engagement. In order to engage students, Appleton and Lawrenz (2011) stated teachers must be able to determine, monitor as well as assess the students' level of engagement. Students perceived the cognitive engagement as knowledge of learning strategies, relevance to topic, influence, efficacy, the challenge of coursework, and self-control. Additionally, deNoyelles and Reyes-Foster (2015) contributed the idea educational institutions need to seriously evaluate their online programs regarding the efficiency of online teaching and learning due to the ongoing challenge it presents in students to be fully engaged and demonstrate critical thinking skills.

The literature on educators' perceptions. A point of reference in defining perception was in harmony with what Abrams and Weilder (2015) stated how someone's perception is influenced by observing others in their attempt at action. Analyzing the various perceptions of educators, administrators, students, and employers Appleton and Lawrenz (2011) researched the importance of engaging contexts in math and science from the student and teacher perception of the middle and high school level. The purpose of this study conducted by Appleton and Lawrenz (2011) was to analyze conceptualizations of the student engagement construct by investigating data on perceptions of student engagement in science and mathematics classrooms from three perspectives: (a) student, (b) teacher, and (c) outside observer.

A study completed by Arthur and Hannah (2015), involved the perspectives of older adolescents on intellectual engagement and their re-connecting with school. Arthur and Hannah (2015) suggested five themes that were imperative to student engagement: (a) classroom climate, (b) the role of psychosocial factors, (c) the value of alternative education programming, (d) class size, and (e) the need for intellectual engagement. In conclusion, Appleton and Lawrenz (2011) stated aligning student and teacher perceptions as important when endeavoring to facilitate student engagement.

In an effort to relay how students perceived the differences in learning styles Lagana-Riordan et al. (2011) explored a study about student's perceptions of traditional and alternative education in a qualitative format. Taking into consideration how students thought about the various learning environments is imperative in implementing differentiated instruction, constructing lesson plans, and across curricula. According to Garthwait (2014), another crucial aspect of online learning is the students' motivation, independence, and cognitive stage. Similarly, researchers Waldrip et al. (2014) examined students' perceptions of their readiness to learn, engage, and process assessments.

The literature on hybrid learning. By examining Moore's (1991) theory of transactional distance and its relevance in a virtual classroom, Fallon (2011) added to defining hybrid learning and what it encompasses. Fallon (2011) described a virtual or online classroom as one providing learning materials to students in an electronic, technological but interactively provides opportunities for contextual dialogue. Additionally, Chigeza and Halbert (2014) defined blended learning (interchangeable with hybrid learning), as a combination of online and classroom (face-to-face) instruction. Conversely, Sun (2013) addressed learning perspectives in an entirely online learning environment, which helps to describe the differences in hybrid and traditional learning environments. Similarly, Ferrer-Casascales, Walker, Reig-Ferrer, and Fernandez-Pascual (2011) conducted a study that evaluated distance learning and hybrid learning program as perceived by students in higher education, which also helped to define the differences and added insight about those learning communities. Showing a need for completing research on hybrid learning environments, Ashby, Sedera, and McNary (2011) reported learning environments affect student achievement. Comparing student success in math classes offered online, blended or face-to-face results varied due to which environment the course will take. Ciampa (2012) completed a pilot study which explored the reading comprehension and listening motivation in first grade. These projects presented affirmation to pursue research on student engagement in hybrid learning environments.

Watson and Watson (2011) discussed technology and computer use in school settings and as hybrid learning have steadily increased. Fallon (2011) stated higher education institutions had been admonished to offer courses and qualification in the format of online classes. In harmony with McLester (2011), higher education institutes denote an upward trajectory in hybrid learning environments. According to Berridge, Penny, and Wells (2012), "Online degrees and programs continue to increase in number and popularity around the world" (p. 119). de la Varre, Keane and Irvin (2010) also stated the hybrid learning environment is necessary, as it presents a learner-focused educational experience and a variety of collaborating skills necessary for lifelong learners and workers. Having the potential to be transformative, de la Varre et al. (2010) stated hybrid learning attracts a large and diverse range of students, which is complementary to any educational institution. It should also be noted, de la Varre et al. (2010) recognized some of the negative impacts hybrid learning could have on a learner such as isolation, lack of support, and frustration which contributes to a higher dropout rate in some online institutions. Additionally, de la Varre et al. (2010) concluded communication was an issue: teachers believed students asked fewer questions online opposed to being face-to-face; the lack of immediate feedback, and the absence of nonverbal cues.

A study by Capdeferro and Romero (2012) provided an in-depth look at students' attitudes toward blended learning models and how they affect academic achievement. Capdeferro and Romero (2012) designed a questionnaire to a sample of online students in a Master of Education Program at University Oberta de Catalunya (UOC). In this study, Capdeferro and Romero (2012) concluded online students were frustrated with the lack of shared goals among schoolmates; lack of communication, and performance imbalances and the hope was to improve online courses by this feedback. Baggaley (2013) contributed to this thought with his research that involved the negative impact and consequences online learning poses to education and the frustration with collaborative learning experiences.

In addition, Heridsfield, Walker, Tampbyah, and Beutel (2011) agreed that incorporating technology such as an HLE, can possibly change the way teachers teach and learners learn. Also, HLEs tend to focus more on the delivery than on improving the teaching with "innovative pedagogic approaches to teaching" (Heridsfield et al, 2011, p. 1-2). While hybrid learning environments increase the appeal to students' due to the flexibility of courses and time management, it often lacks satisfaction with it comes to a student inquiry, clarification and can stifle the learning process (Heirdsfield et al. 2011). According to Joo, Lim, and Kim (2012), the growth of e-learning (hybrid) environment does not require an equal improvement in the quality of learning. Examining these studies helped to establish an unbiased view of hybrid learning by carefully analyzing both the negative and positive aspects of hybrid learning environments.

Another area considered was professional learning communities (PLCs); Blitz (2013) promoted with high praise, as it is given to hybrid learning environments stating it is good for both the teacher and student. Blitz (2013) suggested hybrid learning environments can add value to the teachers' classroom as it is beneficial for the self-directed learner who helps the student to become more learning orientated and result focused. Conversely, Evenbeck and Johnson (2012) examined another area for consideration of how schools needed to focus less on completion agendas and focus more on student learning concerning hybrid learning environments.

Implications

This study was conducted with the assumption that all participants acted honestly and revealed their true feelings regarding student engagement in a hybrid learning environment. Exploring teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment through the lens of the student involvement theory provided stakeholders, faculty, educators, and students with a broader understanding of engagement to promote student academic achievement and success. By exploring teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment, generalizations of what motivated, encouraged and drove students dispelled preconceived notations. Progress was made to provide educators with the tools they need to engage students, and as a result, students became more involved in their academic success when utilizing a hybrid learning environment.

Summary

Section I described the problem, the local problem for this study was a disconnect in teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid high school learning environment. The U. S. Department found students learn better in a hybrid learning model than the traditional "brick and mortar" (McLester, 2011). However, The State of Michigan (2015) recognized students are often unmotivated and disengaged when it came to learning and promoted an Inspiration Program in efforts to get students more engaged and motivated to learn. The rationale explained the existence of a strong connection between engagement in a student's learning environment and student achievement (Weiss et al., 2010). By exploring teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid teaching environment stakeholders, educators, and students have success in higher student academic achievement. This qualitative study utilized a case study design to understand further the perceptions of educators as it pertained to student engagement in hybrid learning environments (Creswell, 2012). According to Merriam (2009), the qualitative research seeks to answer questions about how people understand their experiences, construct their worlds, and ascribe to their experiences. Case study research focuses on the in-depth exploration of an actual case (Creswell, 2012). The primary research question for the research study was, how does student engagement, as perceived by teachers, affect hybrid learning environments? The sub-questions were, as follows:

SQ1: What aspects of student engagement do teachers perceive as affecting students' performance in a hybrid learning environment?

SQ2: How are teachers engaging students in a hybrid learning environment?

The conceptual framework for the study derived from Astin’s (1985) theory of student involvement stated: student involvement refers to the amount of psychological and physical energy a student devotes to the academic experience. The background literature gave insight on the definition of terms, theories, hybrid learning, and student engagement from peer-reviewed articles from online databases, research books, and the Walden Library. The assumption was that this study would promote social change by equipping stakeholders and educators with the needed tools to engage students and acquire academic success. Conversely, the limitations included such a study generalized larger school populations and engagement strategies varied for different students and school environments. The value of the study provided a qualitative case study exploring teachers’ perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment not widely investigated.

Section 2 addressed the methodology by the research design and a qualitative case study approach. According to Merriam (2009), qualitative research focuses on how people make sense of their experiences. Therefore, such an approach justified exploring teachers’ perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment. The qualitative case study included a purposeful sample of 10 participants. Data collection for this study included interviews, observations, journals, documents, and field notes.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

Creswell (2012) described research design as the plans and procedures that researchers use to bridge broad philosophical assumptions, guide their inquiries, and provide detailed methods for data collection and analysis. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of high school student engagement in an HLE in 10th-12th-grade classes. The problem for this study was a disconnect in teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid high school learning environment. Therefore, it was necessary to employ a methodology in a project study that was meaningful and amenable to a systematic theoretical analysis. The central research question addressed how student engagement, as perceived by teachers, affects HLEs; the contributing factors, as perceived by teachers, that affect students' performance in an HLE; and how teachers are engaging students in an HLE. The research design was a qualitative case study. I gathered data through interviews and observations using coding to create themes of differences and commonalities in the experiences and perceptions of the 10 participants who were selected through purposeful sampling. This section includes an overview of the research design and approach; a restatement of the research questions; a discussion of the characteristics of a qualitative study; and information on the selection of participants, sampling method, size and setting, data collection and analysis procedures, and interview protocols. Measures for maintaining ethics, confidentiality, accuracy, and credibility, and the limitations of the project study, are also discussed.

Description of Qualitative Research Design

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of high school student engagement in an HLE in 10th-12th-grade classes. A qualitative case study at Hybrid Academy High School provided a means of increasing understanding of teachers' perceptions of student engagement in an HLE. I used Astin's (1985) student involvement model as my conceptual framework. The case study research design for this project study helps to explore teachers' perceptions of student engagement in an HLE. In a case study, the researcher focuses on the exploration of the activity, event, process, or individuals (Creswell, 2012; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). An advantage of completing a case study is to explore, gain insight, and understand teachers' perspectives on student engagement in an HLE, and investigate processes of an in-depth bounded system (Lodico et al., 2010). Using several data sources of evidence provided more convincing results than those of studies in which only one source of information is used (Yin, 2009). By exploring teachers' perspectives of high school student engagement in an HLE, I was able to gain the teachers' perspectives of the various reasons why students are disengaged and how that affects their academic performance. Another reason for using a qualitative approach was that it allowed me to develop themes and capture different characteristics at each stage of the process (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, employing a qualitative approach was necessary to accurately and articulately display teachers' perceptions of student engagement in an HLE.

Justification of Research Design

A variety of designs can be used when employing a qualitative approach. Ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenological study, narrative study, and case study design are five possible methods researchers consider when conducting qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). Most educational researchers focus on the aforementioned methods to include important characteristics found in qualitative research (Lodico et al, 2010). Due to their practicality and beneficial components, I considered each design before making my decision to undertake a case study.

Ethnography study. Researchers use ethnography when they want to immerse themselves richly into the culture and environment over time to gather data. Lodico et al. (2010) stated that ethnographers focus on "the interactions of individuals or small groups in specific settings … [and] tend to investigate how a larger society influences interactions in a cultural group" (p. 15). Ethnography is a useful design, and, when studying larger groups, can be more efficient than other designs. The use of ethnography also allows the researchers to obtain rich observations from participants' points of view (Creswell, 2012). Ethnography as a qualitative research design was not considered because the purpose of this project study was to explore teachers' perceptions of student engagement in an HLE not to study an entire cultural or social group over an extended period.

Grounded theory. I opted against using grounded theory because my focus was not on developing an abstract theory of a process involving multiple stages of data collection. According to Creswell (2012), grounded theory is an inquiry strategy in which the researcher develops a general, concrete theory of an action, interaction or process rooted in the views of participants. A primary component of grounded research is the use of data from the narrative to build a theory (Lodico et al., 2010). To explore teachers' perceptions of student engagement in an HLE it was not necessary to build a theory from the narrative nor was it necessary to develop various stages of data collection. Therefore, a grounded theory was not acceptable for this project study.

Phenomenological study. According to Creswell (2012), phenomenological studies describe the commonalities of several individuals' lived experiences with an identified phenomenon. A phenomenological research design develops general conclusions about the researched phenomenon based on the individuals' lived experiences. The phenomenological research design uses extended intervals within a small number of participants to develop various relationships and patterns (Lodico et al, 2010). I did not consider a phenomenological research design for this project study because I did not observe participants over a prolonged length of time or seek to examine the lived experiences of the individuals being studied.

Narrative study. Narrative research designs are used to portray the life experiences of individuals, gather and communicate stories about the participants' lives, and compose narratives about their experiences (Creswell, 2012). The narrative research design uses storytelling to portray the lives of people in a particular setting or context (Lodico et al., 2010). Illustrating people's experience by gathering and communicating their stories and how they understand those encounters is a major characteristic of narrative research (Creswell, 2012). The narrative research design was not appropriate for this study because I was not seeking to investigate the participants' lives and retell their experiences in a chronological narrative. Therefore, the best choice to explore teachers' perceptions of student engagement in an HLE was a case study in the qualitative research paradigm (Creswell, 2012).

When using a mixed-method approach, both qualitative and quantitative data is collected and analyzed primarily by professional researchers and program evaluators (Lodico et al., 2010). A mixed-method study is a possibility, but due to the number of teachers employed in the local setting, this was not appropriate. A quantitative design would be appropriate for measurement of an intervention. Because there was a need for more information prior to considering interventions, a quantitative design. Therefore, the use of a qualitative design case study was the best choice for this project study.

Case Study design. The case study design urges the researcher to gather numerous forms of data and to strive for a deeper understanding of the case (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). According to Creswell (2012), in a case study, the researcher focuses on the exploration of activity, event, process, or individuals. An advantage of completing a case study is its endeavor to discover, gain insight, understanding, and investigate processes of an in-depth bounded system (Lodico et al., 2010). The focus of the case study is often small groups or individuals about their experiences in a specific setting (Lodico et al., 2010). Specifically, I explored teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment. A case study design was the best method to collect data and gain insight as well as an understanding of a small group of teachers in a bounded system and their perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment. In collecting data, a variety of tools was used to gather data, which includes interviews, observations, artifacts, and documents. According to Yin (2009), case studies use empirical inquiry to examine a recent phenomenon within its real-life context. Using a case study methodology helped to generate answers to the central research question: which examine student engagement, as perceived by teachers, affect hybrid learning environments.

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is largely concerned with the practice and process of the research subject. In fact, qualitative researchers study a phenomenon in their native settings while attempting to interpret how it affects people's lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Moreover, participants' familiarity with the researcher while interacting in a natural setting enabled the researcher to consider utilizing qualitative research approaches. The following qualitative characteristics helped determine why the qualitative approach was appropriate for this study: Researchers collect data in a natural setting (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009).

- An emphasis on participants' perspective helps the researcher understand the researched problem. Therefore, most researchers use a key informant to help them establish closer relationships with the group (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009).
- Qualitative researchers encompass multiple theoretical paradigms when seeking an understanding of the researched problem (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009).

- The sample is always purposeful i.e. the participants have knowledge about the study’s purpose (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009).
- An emergent design uses multiple methods of collecting data for implementation (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009). For example, qualitative studies incorporate observations during the data collection process. These are useful in creating in-depth descriptions of inaccessible information.

Participants

This subsection highlighted Hybrid Academy High School as the local setting of the research study. The subsection also provided a detailed explanation of the selection and justification of participants, the plan used to access participants, and the process of developing a researcher-participant relationship with the teachers in the target school district. The subsection concluded with a description of steps taken to provide ethical protection for research participants.

Criteria for Selecting Participants

Participants for this study were selected educators at Hybrid Academy and were familiar with teaching a content area in a high school hybrid learning environment. The unit of analysis or cases for this study was each of the individual participants (Yin, 2009). This qualitative case study examined a purposeful sample of educators at a public Midwestern high school hybrid learning school. The location for the qualitative case study was a high school in a suburban school district. Hybrid Academy High School is relatively small with roughly 220 students and nearly 50 employees who include approximately 35 teachers, administrators, and assistants. Hybrid Academy High School was the research site because teaching staff perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment are essential to improving student engagement and academic success. Based on the State of Michigan's data scorecard that student engagement has deteriorated in recent years following the implementation of more hybrid learning environments (Michigan Department of Education, 2015).

Nearly 24 teachers serve 220 students at Hybrid Academy High School in grades 9-12. Teachers at Hybrid Academy High School meet every Friday to discuss student progress, problems, professional development ideas, instructional activities, and lessons. Lodico et al. (2010) stated using purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select information-rich participants. Research participants included minimally 10 educators with a work history at Hybrid Academy for at least 5 years. Attempts were made to include various grade levels, teaching experience, and subject areas of the teachers' perceptions to create the sample. Qualifications included teachers certified by the State of Michigan in the subject course and had a minimum of a bachelor's degree, as well as having taught at Hybrid Academy High School for at least 5 years. Having a variety of classes, teaching experience, and subject area, such as Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts, allowed for the collection of data from different perspectives, helped validate the study. By using the setting and participant criteria, I was able to gather and examine data on the teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment.

Justification of Number of Participants

For the purpose of a qualitative case study, having 10 participants or less was justifiable. With a small sample of participants, the researcher can provide more in-depth inquiry and understanding (Creswell, 2012). For this particular case study, examining 10 participants is also practical as there are only 220 students in the school and a total of 12 primary educators and over 24 tutors/teacher assistance. Therefore, examining more than 10 participants was not necessary and the researcher would not have received as much in-depth information within a larger group.

Access to Participants

Submitting an IRB application for approval of the research proposal was imperative. I submitted a written request to the dean asking for approval to use Hybrid Academy High School as the research site (see Appendix B). Written request discussed the number of anticipated study participants and the level of participation by the research participants of Hybrid Academy High School educators. To conduct research at Hybrid Academy High School, only a written request to carry out research at the study site was required. After receiving approval from both Hybrid Academy High School and Walden’s Institutional Review Board, a meeting was held at an available time with the school administrators to address the particulars of the study and possible participants. Next, a generated list was made of teachers and teacher assistants who fit the study criteria of being a teacher or teacher assistance at Hybrid Academy High School for the last five years. Once the research sample was received, a meeting was held for the selected participants, and informed consent forms were distributed and collected in privacy envelopes for the potential participants. Lastly, collecting of consent documents and arrangements for individual semi-structured interviews occurred (see Appendix D).

Researcher/Participant Relationship

Respecting the confidentiality and privacy of participants aids in establishing a rapport and working relationship with all participants, which is of primary importance (Lodico et al., 2010). Creswell (2012) stated the relationship between researcher and participants must trust and understand one another. As the researcher, I made a conscious effort to be open-minded and unbiased which provided an atmosphere that allowed the participants to be comfortable and candid in their expressions and conversations. I confirmed that all participants understood the nature of the study and their role in the study as well as reassured the participants they could withdraw from the study without penalty. Detailed information on the context of the study was given to participants. Creswell (2012) discussed the relationship between the researcher and the participants are close. However, data collections were not coercive. I ensured participants' confidentiality was maintained before, during, and after the study concluded as participants may disclose sensitive information. Merriam (2009) stated the importance of assuming a neutral stance as the interviewer of the respondent's knowledge and values.

As a tutor/teacher assistant of Hybrid Academy High School, I have established a rapport with many of the potential participants, which allowed them to speak freely about their perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment. I have a genuine interest in teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment to generate student success. According to Merriam (2009), caution is taken when collecting and analyzing data, so bias opinions are not present during the process my biases are bracketed and noted in a reflective journal. Utilizing member checking for accuracy of the data allowed participants to review the interview transcripts and summaries of the findings.

Target Population

Creswell (2012) and Bullock (2013) stated a population is a group of individuals with a commonality or similar characteristics, which attributed to the 10 participants for this project. The population for this case study was educators at a Midwestern hybrid high school who currently teach in a hybrid learning environment. Each educator at Hybrid Academy High School teaches a core subject such as Mathematics, Science, English or Social Studies. I received the name listing of educators from the school's directory and proceeded to contact the teachers via email for participation (see Appendix C).

Sample Method

According to Creswell (2012), purposeful sampling caters to select sites and individuals to understand or learn the central phenomenon because they are informationally rich. In choosing this sampling method, the participants provided insight with useful information that gives a voice to the silenced people who best understood teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment (Creswell, 2012). The participants for the case study at Hybrid Academy High School were selected through purposeful sampling. Purposeful random sampling "is a tool that produces a mini-version of the initial population" (Lodico et al., 2010, p. 143). The participants were selected based on their willingness to participate when they replied to the initial email requesting participation. Participants were selected based on being a teacher at the project site and have taught at Hybrid Academy High School for approximately 5 years.

Sample Size

The sample size consisted of 10 participants at Hybrid Academy High School. According to Creswell (2012), it is common, so few individuals or a few cases are studied. Likewise, it is also common to examine a single person or single site. In qualitative research, purposeful sampling is often used (Lodico et. al, 2010). The educators at Hybrid Academy have taught at Hybrid Academy High School for approximately 5 or more years. Due to the commonality of the educators, purposeful sampling was utilized and selected because the participants have experience in the central phenomenon of teaching in a hybrid learning environment.

Setting

The setting is a Midwestern high school in a suburban town of approximately 13,700 (U.S. Census, 2015). The community is a predominantly middle-class, suburban environment with a mix of rural and newly built homes and apartments that encompass both a traditional and modern appeal that is constantly growing. The demographics of the area are 76% White, 14 % African-American, 7% Asian, 4% Hispanic and less than 1% Native American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Hybrid Academy High School has a student population of 220 students of which 73% male and 27% female with a 34% minority enrollment (Oakland Schools, 2016). Hybrid Academy High School provides career-focused educational classes during the day and offers alternative hybrid learning classes in the afternoon and evening. The students enrolled at Hybrid Academy High School attend full- time as part of credit recovery in seven local school districts for all core subjects and electives. Upon completion of recovery credits, students are allowed to either re-enroll in their respective “home” school in the following semester at grade level or continue at Hybrid Academy High School and graduate with their home school.

Ethical Issues and Confidentiality Agreement

Before any research can begin, it is important to note permission must be received from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the participating school (Triola, 2012). For the protection of human subjects, all of the data were coded to remove any identifying information providing confidentiality of participants. Adult participants are the sample and a consent form was issued. Because students will not be interviewed, it is not necessary to receive student or parental consent. There is no ethical concern for students about whom the teachers have perceptions as this is a phenomenon already happening in the school and was just be observed or noted (see Appendix E). The confidentiality of participants’ information will be ensured by the removal of any identifying markers such as the names of teachers and the name of the school (Triola, 2012).

Data Collection

Data collection set the boundary for the study to enhance confidentiality. According to Creswell (2012), a collection of the data will include interviews, surveys, documents, observations, and providing a protocol for recording the information. When conducting qualitative research, a case study, endeavors to discern meaning, to investigate procedures, to heighten perception, gain awareness, and comprehensive understanding of an individual, group, or situation (Lodico et al., 2010). Research logs were generated, data collected and recorded in journals, and conclusions made from cataloging systems.

To gain access to participants, I communicated via email (see Appendix C), to schedule dates and times during school hours for actual observation as well as non-school hours for interviewing and discussions (see Appendices F& G). To ensure no forming of biases with participants, I excluded participants I worked with directly as a teacher assistant or tutor. As a contracted employee, I was respectful, professional, nonjudgmental, and sensitive to the participants in this study.

Data Collection Instruments and Sources Interview and Observation Protocol

For the accuracy of this qualitative study triangulation among various data sources from interviews and observations was used. Merriam (2009) described triangulation as the process of substantiating evidence from the participants. The data collection instruments and source contain protocols for using interviews and observations. In applying such methods, the data collected was authentic and rich from first-hand feedback via interviews and experiences gathered by observing what teachers' perceived in their natural environment. Utilizing both interviews and observations were advantageous as it allowed for detailed and specific information collected from the participants (Creswell, 2012). Another advantage of using interviews and observations allowed the researcher to be unambiguous on the questions that were answered.

Interview protocol. The interview protocol contained open-ended questions (see

Appendices D and F). According to Lodico et al. (2010) semi-structured interviews are used to provide opportunities to acquire specific data that affords the researcher opportunities to probe beyond the protocol. Creswell (2012) suggested one-on-one interviews allow educators to share their perceptions without fear of judgment by their peers. During the interview protocol, it was helpful to have an opening statement (instructions for the researcher), key research questions, transition and probing questions (Creswell, 2012). All interview questions were recorded in a journal or voice recorded, transcribed into a secure laptop that was password protected.

Observation protocol. Observations were gathered by taking field notes and recording notes in a journal, which included observations made spending time with participants and reporting on conversations and activities at the research site (see Appendix E). According to Creswell (2012), observation protocol entails using descriptive notes which show: physical setting, accounts of particular events, reconstruction of dialogue, demographic information as well as the researcher’s thoughts, feelings, ideas, prejudices, problems, and impressions. Observations were conducted during regular school hours in the participants’ respective classrooms. Observational notes were gathered and recorded in the researcher’s journal and were later analyzed and categorized.

Sufficiency of Data Collection Sources

Interviews and observations were sufficient for data collection as both gave vibrant and vital information from the participants in their environment. Utilizing interviews and observations provided insight, enlightenment and rich descriptions of teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment. These methods of data collection were sufficient enough in providing the needed information for a qualitative project study. Therefore, focus groups, surveys, and questionnaires were unnecessary.

Processes of Data Collection

Information for data collection was generated with the research questions and sub-questions during interviews and observations. The information gathered from the interviews and observations was gathered by the researcher immediately in real time and recorded. The researcher later analyzed the record data. Information for data collection followed a data collection tracking system.

Data Collection Tracking System

To track effectively the data, a calendar journal was used for interviews and observational data. The researcher was then able to keep track on what specific day a participant was interviewed or observed and had accompanying notes for that participant including what the day entailed, which also attributed to student engagement depending on the events of the day. Categories also tracked data and coded accordingly. All of the data were kept confidential and secured in a locked filing cabinet. All participants' data were coded, transcribed, and triangulated.

Role of the Researcher

I have been a tutor/teacher assistant for the past 4 years in the district for the research site. I have been teaching for over 16 years, and I am truly vested in the field of education, which lead me to do research, particularly student engagement and hybrid learning. The role of the researcher was an attempt to explore teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment. In this study, I was taking the role of a participating observer. The various degrees of participation as a researcher described by Lodico et al. (2010) are: (a) being a complete observer, (b) participant as an observer, (c) observer as participant, and (d) full observer. I was responsible for collecting all data and documentation, identifying interview participants, making schedules, conducting interviews, recording, and transcribing the interviews. I was also responsible for ensuring the study meets all ethical and academic expectations.

I interviewed participants and analyzed data on teachers' perceptions of student engagement in an attempt to identify patterns, themes or relationships that occurred in a hybrid learning environment. I was also searching for new ideas, suggestions, and criteria from the educators to add to combating disengagement in a hybrid learning environment. Creswell (2012) stated in a typical case study, the data analysis component is primarily narrative. Narrative discussions include teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment, which lead to improved student engagement and resulting in higher achievement.

Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2012), data analysis is collecting open-ended data from general questions and developing an analysis of the information received by the participants. There are six important steps to analyzing data: (a) preparation and organization, (b) exploration and coding, (c) finding and the formation of themes, (d) representing findings, (e) interpreting the findings, and (f) validating the accuracy of findings (Creswell, 2012). Although each step is not necessarily sequential, they are interrelated, and each step was vital for interpreting and analyzing data accurately. The data analysis process and accuracy, credibility and findings provided more in-depth descriptions of the six steps needed to analyze the data properly.

Data Analysis Process

Data were analyzed using coding and categorization. From the coded and categorized data; relationships, patterns, and themes were explored. To triangulate the data, themes emerging from the interviews which addressed the purpose and research questions will be evident (Creswell, 2012). As an inductive process in a qualitative study, data were collected gradually and then categorized by themes or patterns into generalizations and conclusions (Lodico et al., 2010). Once saturation was reached, no new knowledge was generated; analysis of the data ended. Data were interpreted from the identified themes to develop the findings to explore teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment.

Accuracy, Credibility, and Findings

The quality, accuracy, and credibility of the evidence of data collection were of utmost importance. To ensure validity, it was important to use multiple sources of information (Yin, 2009). Member checking, triangulation, and auditing are used to ensure information was correct and unbiased. Creswell (2012) stated the researcher who uses strategies, such as member checking and triangulation validates findings for accuracy and credibility. Triangulation was used to analyze the information gathered from observations and transcribed interviews. Triangulation is the process of authenticating evidence from various individuals, data, or methods of collection (Creswell, 2012). Member checking was conducted to check the study findings with participants for accuracy. Creswell (2012) described member checking as a process in which the researcher retakes the findings to the participants to check accuracy. Conducting an external audit also helped guide credibility and validation by having an outside person review the study and give an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the project (Creswell, 2012).

Discrepant Cases

For over 10 years, I have worked in the school district where the study was taking place. In addition, I have taught social studies, political science, government, economics, and psychology in grades 9th-12th within the district. As a result, the recruitment of prospective participants occurred within the school district with which I affiliate and the current school of which I am a tutor/teacher assistant. Efforts to assure the study to be reliable and credible were procured. Additionally, measures were taken to collect accurate documentation, a detailed description of data collection procedures completed as well as member checking.

Limitations

According to Creswell (2012), potential weaknesses or problems occurred during the study. Due to human imperfection and personal views, limitations were possible. I am an educator at the research site acting in the capacity as a tutor/teacher assistant as a contracted employee with the district. During the study, I have continued to perform the normal duties as a tutor/teacher assistant. I am not a full-time teacher or an administrator at the Hybrid Academy High School. Therefore, the role of a researcher did not cause any conflict of interest, nor affect or influence the data collection, observations, or interviews in any way. Although employed (as a contractor) at the study site it was critical to maintaining all participant data confidentially as explained in the guidelines of the informed consent form.

Data Analysis Results

The data collection and analysis for this study were completed in a manner that provided confidentiality to all participants. The data analysis initiated comprehensive data, for example, transcribed interviews and observation notes, to the widespread codes and themes (Creswell, 2012). A goal of the research for this case study was to explore teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment. To achieve this goal, the data were collected and translated in a manner to generate developing themes centering on teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment (Merriam, 2009). During the data collection process, I made sure to adhere to all IRB-approved procedures and protocols while upholding the integrity of the findings as well as the confidentiality of the participants and data collected.

Data Analysis Process

The qualitative data were obtained from observations of teacher classroom instruction and one-on-one interviews with the participants involved. Through the recommendation of the dean, contact was established with educators who taught in a hybrid learning environment. Scheduled times and dates allowed for the arrangement of the observations. The participants were 10 teachers from four classrooms across curricula (English, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science). These educators matched the criterion for participant selections. The teachers experience range from 5 years to over 20 years teaching, and all had been teaching within a hybrid learning environment for the minimum of 5 years. The participants included:

- Participant 1: 5 years of teaching, 5 years teaching in a hybrid learning environment; bachelor’s degree.
- Participant 2: 10 years of teaching experience, 6 years teaching in a hybrid learning environment; master’s degree.
- Participant 3: 10 years of teaching experience, 5 years teaching in a hybrid learning environment; master’s degree.
- Participant 4: 15 years of teaching experience; 5 years teaching in a hybrid learning environment; bachelor’s degree.
- Participant 5: 20+ years of teaching experience; 6 years teaching in a hybrid learning environment, 5 years administration experience; doctoral degree
- Participant 6: 20+ years of teaching experience; 7 years teaching in a hybrid learning environment; bachelor’s degree.
- Participant 7: 8 years of teaching experience; 8 years teaching in a hybrid learning environment; master’s degree.
- Participant 8: 10 years of teaching experience; 5 years teaching in a hybrid learning environment; master’s degree.
- Participant 9: 15 years of teaching experience; 7 years teaching in a hybrid learning environment; bachelor’s degree.

- Participant 10: 12 years of teaching experience; 7 years teaching in a hybrid learning environment; bachelor's degree.

There were two groups of teachers according to the curriculum: group A-Mathematics and Science and group B- English and Social Studies. These groups shared classrooms as well as cross taught subjects as they correlated or intertwined with one another. I conducted the meetings and scheduled the interviews with the participants. The observation protocol (See Appendix H) was used for the observations for field notes as the format. Notations were made according to engagement strategies used. Notes taken during observations included how teachers engaged and re-engaged students within hybrid lessons. Column I was used for Group A (Mathematics & Science) and Column II was used for Group B (English & Social Studies). After directions were given, some teachers engaged students by giving examples and asking open-ended questions while others went directly into the lesson and after instructions were given allowed for individual questions once students began.

From the observation protocol, it was obvious how different each educator attempted to engage students in a hybrid learning environment. Although different in delivery, some educators had similar tactics that were used to engage and re-engage students. The data were gathered and recorded by the marks in the groups with commonalities. Expectations were to find similar engagement strategies utilized by the teacher and record it accordingly.

After the classroom observations had been completed, an email was sent to each participant requesting a one-on-one interview (see Appendix C). After participants responded, a follow-up email and/or text was sent confirming the time and date for the interviews. The interview questions (see Appendix D) was provided via email to the participants so that the questions could be looked over before the 30-60 minute interview began. Participants were reminded that they could opt out of the interview or study at any time during the process if they chose and that confidentiality was provided. The interview questions were asked, and participants were thanked for their time. Notes were generated on the interview question protocol to ensure all questions were covered. After the interview, notes were summarized and sent to the participants for member checking. Requested changes by the participants, if any, were completed to maintain the accuracy of the data.

The first analysis of the interview data involved considering evidence of student involvement as described in Astin's (1985) theory of student involvement. According to Astin (1985), student involvement denotes the amount of mental and physical energy a student allocates to the academic experience. In applying this theory, to make a change in student engagement in a hybrid learning environment teachers must rearrange the pedagogical process about how they teach. Data were examined for strategies used to engage and re-engage students. There were universal remarks about teaching techniques, but it was important to look at how the comments were related to engaging students in a hybrid learning environment.

Another analysis of interview data was completed through coding into categories. The data were sorted into categories of mutual strategies, common resources retrieved from the course materials, and of the materials which were unique from that specific educator shared among colleagues. Another set of coding was completed with the two categories resulting from the research questions. These were factors affecting student engagement and solutions. This second set of categories provided valuable data to be analyzed in the findings.

Relation of Research Findings to the Problem and Research Questions

The problem for this study was a disconnect in teachers' perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid high school learning environment. I observed teachers determine how they engaged their students in an HLE (see Table 1 for a summary of my observations). The classroom observations revealed what type of strategies were used and which were the most common among educators. I wrote field notes in which I describe methods of engagement, classroom distractions, teachers' perceptions, and answers to interview questions.

The observations showed that teachers used various methods to engage students in a hybrid learning environment. Some teachers explained directions first, asked for questions later while some teachers did the reverse or provided examples, user group settings or other students to engage other students. Field notes were written describing methods among participants. During the classroom observations, the teachers seemed willing to ask questions about how to address particular student needs for the subject being taught. They also looked to their teaching partner for help if needed for re-engagement, redirection or classroom management.

The primary research question was addressed during the one-on-one interviews. The primary research question asked teachers how student engagement affects hybrid learning. Observations showed unique ways and differences educators used to engage students. During observations re-engagement efforts or discipline was issued when students were disruptive or not doing their work.

The focus of Question 1 was on what aspects of student engagement teachers perceive as affecting students' performance in an HLE. The interview question and answer portion gave ample data for the first research question. This data helped to discover some issues facing student engagement in a hybrid learning environment. Data from the first research question also help put in perspective some of the many challenges educators face while trying to engage students in learning. All participants stated that cellular phones were the main component negatively affecting students' learning. Next, student absences played a major role in students' engagement, "if students are not at school they cannot be engaged and when they return they continue to be disengaged" (Participant#3). Another aspect affecting students' engagement was other students and other distractions followed by students' behavior. Table 2 includes an overview of participants' responses to this question.

The second question asked how teachers are engaging students in a hybrid learning environment. Observations and interviews gave significant data for the second research question. The coding of data into categories of strategies organized the information to be analyzed. By coding data into categories were commonalities were observed made analyzing the data well-organized and more efficient. In a hybrid learning environment, interactive modules were the main method used in engaging students. Teachers then used alternative methods if students were not engaged within the interactive model which included: more one on one instruction, magazines articles relevant to the subject matter, other creative methods, then lectures and discussions followed by movies/iPad clips. Table 3 includes a summary of participant responses.

Table 1

Occurrences of Characteristics during Classroom Observations

Student engagement	Group A	Group B
Give directions and start the lesson, then allow for student questions	1	0
Give directions, give examples, allow for discussion	1	1
Gave assignment instructed to get to work, allowed for questions	1	0
Gave assignment, asked if any questions, then get to work	2	2
Have student read assignment out loud ask questions	0	3
Do assignment together	0	5
Assign groups/partners for assignment or projects	4	5
Allow students to help others	4	5
Use of electronics	5	5
Help individual students	5	5
Gives anecdotes, personal experiences	3	5

Table 2

Interview Question 1: What Aspects of Student Engagement Teachers Perceive as Affecting Students' Performance in a Hybrid Learning Environment

Aspects perceived as affecting students' engagement	Percentage of responses
Other students	50%
Cellular phones	100%
Behavior	40%
Attendance	80%
Other distractions	50%

Table 3

Interview Question 2: How Teachers are Engaging Students in a Hybrid Learning Environment

How students are being engaged	Percentages of teachers who used each method
Lecture/discussions	30%
Movies/clips	25%
Upfront/Scholastic News/magazines	30%
Interactive (Moodle, Nearpod/City Island, Khan Academy, Plato, etc.)	85%
One-on-one instruction	60%
Other	40%

Pattern-Themes in Findings

Data from the observations and interviews were examined for evidence to find commonalities among educators' responses. Piaget (1967) stated in the constructivism theory that knowledge is internalized through accommodation and assimilation. Mezirow (1991) reported in his transformative theory that personal experience, conviction, and behavior are part of the learning process. Each participant that was observed and interviewed displayed or described in some way that students' engagement was affected by either one or both of these theories in a hybrid learning environment.

Salient Data and Discrepant Cases

One question, in particular, did not produce data that adequately fit into the categories of factors affecting student engagement or solutions, which can be considered as discrepant case information. Question 10 asked: What can or should the administration do to assist you in student engagement in a hybrid learning environment? Participants indicated that not much could be done by administration outside of what is already in process to engage students in a hybrid learning environment. Only four participants decided to answer question 10, while 5 decided it was best not to say anything regarding help from the administration. Only 1 participant stated that administration could be more helpful in backing up discipline in the classroom as well as consistency among students.

The accuracy of Data Analysis Procedures

The classroom observations were completed using the table which evidenced characteristics of commonalities. The table was beneficial to quickly tally an occurrence of each observation. Field notes described participants' action during classroom observation. The field notes served as the initial set of data for triangulation.

During the interviews, notes were taken as questions were answered. Once participants were engaged in answering questions (whether open-ended or not), they were more inclined continue talking beyond what was asked and sometimes answered several questions prior to me asking it. A summary of the interviews is used as the second basis of data for triangulation. After being sent to each participant for a member check, some participant replied with updates to the summaries while others agreed to the original summary. These summaries along with the changes encompassed the third set of data for triangulation.

The coding process of interview data was done in three stages. The first was to discover evidence of the student involvement theory as to whether the teachers showed any changes in thought processes. The second method of coding was to sort by strategies, materials, and resources for student engagement both shared and private. The final method was an arrangement of interview comments by factors affecting student engagement in a hybrid learning environment and solutions.

Summary of Outcomes

According to Astin's (1985) student involvement theory, educators need to make modify instruction to engage students in a hybrid learning environment. The pedagogical process about how they teach must change to involve students so that they are engaged in the learning process. Through analysis of the data from this project study, I found that there was a reformation taking place in teachers' perceptions about student engagement in a hybrid learning environment that still needs improvement. While teachers had various strategies for engaging students in a hybrid learning environment, no single method was worked best for all students or across curricula without some personalizing and tweaking. It appeared easy to remain at the detached level where the classroom observations and the completion of protocols were separate from what teachers did in their classrooms. The participants in this study have shown how to engage students in one subject to another with different strategies and techniques from one student to a group of students in a hybrid learning environment through observations and one-on-one interviews.

The variation in teachers’ tactics of engaging students in a hybrid learning environment by using strategies, materials, and resources either dependently or through shared collaboration was manifest in the data. Factors affecting student engaging were seen to move the teachers’ thinking processes through the planning and implementation of instruction for classes.

Solutions to engage students in a hybrid learning environment were conveyed by the teachers as concepts to bring deviations to their instruction, however, none of the participants stated that these solutions as a “sure thing” of must-do practices. Most ideas presented were unique in their classroom or to a specific student. Duly noted by the participants was distinctiveness to the course and curriculum in which the student was involved in. Therefore, it was important to consider the solutions and juxtapose it to the individual class or student and recognize that engaging students in a hybrid learning environment is not a “one size fits all” method.

Project Deliverable and Findings

In the findings, I noted that there were themes of both factors affecting student engagement and solutions in a hybrid learning environment. During the interviews, some teachers described the level of student engagement that was taking place for them in making changing their instructional practices. There is no exact policy or procedure to engage students in a hybrid learning environment. However, by using different strategies, materials and resources acquired over time educators have a point of reference to consider what is occurring in their classroom and what is needed to encourage change and growth.

From my analysis of the data, I also found that there was a need to focus on student engagement in a hybrid learning environment. Based on the data, I decided to develop a professional development recommendation paper that created an implementation plan for the school. The professional development incorporated a 3-day question, answer, and discussion segment two times a year to help provide teachers with ideas to better engage students in the learning process in a hybrid learning environment. A more gradual professional development course could help change teacher goals from meeting the expectations of strategies in student engagement that leads to improved student performance.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The research I conducted in this qualitative case study was to explore teachers' perceptions of student engagement in an HLE. This study developed from the need to conduct additional professional development for student engagement in an HLE. The Michigan Department of Education (2015) policy requires education communities to plan and implement professional learning strategies to ensure educator effectiveness and student readiness. Although there are some professional development resources and strategies in place for Michigan schools, it is necessary to update information continuously. Professional development is ongoing for the purpose of continuous school improvement, meeting student content standards and professional certification requirements, and completing educator evaluations. Per the Michigan Department of Education (2015) sections 1526 & 1527 states in part every new teacher must have at least 15 days of intensive professional development in a 3 year period. Professional development is a rigorous approach to raising student performance and achievement through improving educators' effectiveness which provides opportunities for analysis, application, professional discourse, and reflection (Michigan Department of Education, 2015). These components are essential for continuous improvement in professional educational practices and job efficiency. The Michigan Board of Education requires each school and district to establish professional learning opportunities with these criteria.

Selection of Basic Genre Project

Professional development training was best suited for the project genre based on the findings of this study. My investigation exposed that educators are contending with various factors that prevent students from being fully engaged in their education, especially in an HLE. As a result, students are not performing well scholastically, and teachers are frustrated with student performance and the lack of interest presented by the students. Therefore, I surmised that professional development training provides educators with a variety of strategies for implementation in an HLE.

Project Goals

The project that resulted from this study is a professional development paper with a plan for educators to implement. The primary goal of the project was to outline a plan for student engagement with a focus on HLEs. The goal follows the purpose of the case study to explore teachers' perceptions of student engagement in an HLE. The professional development training will equip area teachers with a wide-ranging action plan with various strategies, resources, and teacher communications that can be put to use to engage students in an HLE.

Rationale

In Section 1, I discussed the correlation between student engagement and academic success. Without employing the proper engagement strategies, educators find it challenging to facilitate student achievement within an HLE, researchers have found. According to Drouin, Stewart, and Van Gorder (2015), educators agree that improved student learning and improved retention in an HLE is dependent on teacher-student contact and student engagement. However, few researchers have examined the perspective of the teacher, according to my review of the literature. Therefore, I conducted a qualitative case study to explore teachers' perceptions of student engagement in this type of learning environment.

Based on the teacher participant feedback I analyzed, I recommended professional development training. Professional development training focused on the most efficient and effective strategies to be used to engage students in an HLE. To develop the overall structure of the professional development training, I reflected on input from 10 teacher participants, who, in turn, will advise other educators of what works, what does not, and how to improve or build on those existing strategies. Essentially, educators would be leaders in providing the best practices to ensure that the professional development training would best meet their needs.

Review of the Literature

The literature review offers research to support the development of professional development training for teachers to use in engaging students in an HLE. The research established the need for the project explained in Section 3. The data that were gathered and analyzed from participants were included in this section. The peer-reviewed articles and research books for this literature review using databases such as Education Resource Complete, EBSCO, and Sage, which I accessed through Walden University Library.

Professional Development

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of high school student engagement in an HLE in 10th-12th-grade classes. While developing a project about professional development training, it was necessary to provide research about the development and intricacies of professional development. Professional development is essential for educational improvement (Michigan Department of Education, 2015). Therefore, the staff at many educational facilities have implemented professional development courses to enhance teachers' instruction and learning effectiveness (Cho & Rathbun, 2013). As stated in Section I and shown in Section II, professional development can improve the quality of teacher instruction as well as motivate student engagement.

Professional development for educators is essential. Cho and Rathbun (2013) completed a case study on a teacher-centered online professional development program in higher education. They described the importance of implementing teacher professional development (TPD) derived from a problem based learning approach. Cho and Rathbun explained the commonalities of many professional development courses as lacking active participation, having limited participant interaction, and delivering uncontextualized knowledge (p.144). Cho and Rathbun emphasized the need to create a professional development program which allows teachers to engage in the problem-based learning method because it is used in almost all education subjects and has positive results on student learning. Professional development is imperative to teachers' effectiveness on instructional methods and strategies to increase academic achievement in students.

In a study that described designing and implementing a graduate certificate program for online instruction, Shepherd, Bolliger, Dousay, and Persichitte (2016) reported that with the dramatic increase in online learning in the K-12 and higher education environment, educators are developing more instructional and delivery resources for online courses (Blitz, 2013). Shepherd et al. stated that effective teaching in a traditional classroom does not equate to effective online teaching – thus, the need for online professional development. Some of the requirements to be effective in an online environment are technology skills, online learning activities, design tools, communication approaches, digital etiquette, flexibility and assistance for learners with disabilities (Shepherd et al, 2016).

Several factors must be addressed, and strategies will need to be created due to the uprise in educational technology, specifically online learning. Schroeder, Baker, Terras, Mahar, and Chiasson (2016) stated that students' connectivity with an online program is a major factor for success. According to Czerkawski (2013), there are six pillars of education which must be addressed by educators in order to have successful outcomes: (a) communication, (b) interaction, (c) environment, (d) culture, (e) instruction, and (f) learning. In online environments, educators must be aware of the interdisciplinary nature for preparation and successful delivery. Shepherd et al. (2013) also stated that teachers assume multiple roles and responsibilities in an online environment which must be presented in the professional development design. When educators base their pedagogical choices on addressing learning-centered factors such as students' motivational beliefs, self-regulatory competence, and experience, the results become more positive and successful (Czerkawski, 2013).

Among racial and ethnically diverse students, culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) has been considered promising to increase student engagement and student learning. Timmons-Brown and Warner (2016) used pre- and post-conference survey results and interviews to understand whether or not teachers benefited from a professional development about CRP. The importance of cultural awareness and relationships was stressed for the research of using CRP. The workshop results consisted of engagement to student learners, teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness, relationships with students and classroom practices while instituting CRP.

In a study that focused on the use of ePortfolios, Alanson and Robles (2016 explored essential student learning outcomes in a professional development course. In an effort to promote students' academic achievements, Alanson and Robles (2016), showcased students' learned experiences through assessments, analyzations, efficiency, and forms of learning. Alanson and Robles (2016) found by doing so did not only benefit students but faculty, administration, and potential employers. Alanson and Robles (2016) created a professional development course as an introduction to cooperative education that served as the gateway to cooperative education work experiences for student learning outcomes and desired skill sets.

Building a Program

It is imperative to complete research on program designs for critical elements and characteristics needed in building an effective professional development course. Taherbhai, Seo, and Bowman (2012) stated the importance of considering the student population and the subject being taught. Most programs only consider the traditional students and do not include those who require differential instruction teaching methods, processes, evaluations or techniques. Aversa and MacCall (2013) completed a case study to design characteristics of a graduate synchronous online program. Blackboard Vista was used to manage and provide materials that would link documents, readings, assignments, and tests. Communication methods employed were: e-mail, announcements, discussion boards as well as social media. Aversa and MacCall (2013) also mentioned technological assistance, technological readiness, support services, faculty preparedness, student expectations, participation, and social integration were also characteristics needed in a program design.

In a quantitative study using an online survey for faculty development programs about the frequency and variety of professional development programs that are available to online instructors, Herman (2012) stated the survey of an established teaching and learning unit (TLDU) offered approximately 15 different programs ranging from: technical services, consultation, websites, printed materials, and instructional design experts. Herman (2012) also reported that training faculty is one of the most challenging aspects of developing programs for online instruction. This study composed of approximately 25 types of professional development programs which included: peer mentoring, self-teaching, collaborative course design, quality assurance and online training, workshops which should be considered when designing a program.

Focusing on social networks of teachers in an elementary school setting, Snow, Martin, and Dismuke (2015) wrote an article that took a look at the development of professional capital in an elementary education liaison group by describing the theoretical framework themes for their research design. The social network theory, professional development in the community and learning through inquiry were the theoretical perspectives that provided the fountain of their inquiry. By examining the social network theory Snow et al. (2016), were able to explore how teachers' social networks have the potential to influence change on education reform. Professional development in the community involves integrating not only how and what teachers teach but teaching holistically and building positive relationships in the community by doing so.

The need for supplementary training and personalized learning for teachers was the focus of an article by Gynther (2016). Considerations for designing a framework for adaptive learning included: (a) differentiation instruction, (b) personalization, and (c) individualization in teaching. Gynther (2016) also considered adaptive learning systems to build her programs, such as learner model, content model, and instructional design. Using the above components, Gynther (2016) created a series of workshops or professional development for adaptive learning environments in education. Several methods that include flexibility, communication, accessibility, teacher-student interactions, and delivery were commonalities upon building a successful program.

Collaboration

To successfully engage students, it is critical to acknowledge what factors will yield the most academic gains for students with and without disabilities. According to Steinbrenner and Watson (2015), educators have to measure and understand engagement to provide high quality and effective services for all students. Peterson et al. (2015) completed a study on the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents of placing blame and responsibility on learning outcomes. According to Peterson et al. (2015) students, teachers and parents are the three main stakeholders responsible when it comes to student academic performance and achievement. The study sought to discover idioms and language these stakeholders used resulting in student success or failure. Using focus groups with the three groups, Peterson et. al. (2015) pursued the participants to identify what they perceived what the most important tools for academic achievement and the degree of accountability each group contributed for learning outcomes.

Witkowski and Cornell (2015) completed a research project investigating student engagement in higher education classrooms using peer coaching and collaboration between reading professors. This study included the effects of classroom activities using collaborative learning activities on student engagement. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of high school student engagement in a hybrid learning environment in 10th-12th-grade classes. Witkowski and Cornell (2015) used a mixed-methods approach over two semesters with peer coaching, classroom observations, surveys and collaboration activities. Using peer coaching as a technique, allowed for user input to collaborate and make needed changes to engage students.

A study completed by Kahraman and Kuzu (2016) discussed using e-monitoring for professional development for teachers. Using the basic concept of mentoring with the integration of technology is a flexible alternative which allows for a "sharing of knowledge and experience independently of time and place and because it provides easy and different interaction methods free of social prejudices" (p. 77). As teacher qualifications change to a more globally and culturally awareness, professional development for educators would include mentoring on a multicultural and international level. By using an e-mentoring approach educators are able to adapt to the profession and have social and academic guidance and support.

Corso, Bundick, Quaglia, and Haywood (2013), composed a model regarding student engagement in the classroom and how the relationships between student, teacher, and content meet. This article included student engagement experiences students encountered in the classroom with three key factors: (a) personality traits, (b) student's interactions with others and (c) the academic content. Corso et al. (2013) correlated expertise (teachers/content), relevance (student/content) and relationships (teacher/student) to an interactive model (Venn diagram) that would be used as a framework to promote student engagement. Goldhaber and Walch (2014) stated that hiring quality educators is the key to student's academic success.

Assessments/Evaluations of Programs

A program to measure the effectiveness of promoting student engagement for an online program at Penn State University's Online Campus was completed by Bigatel and Williams (2016). Focusing on the extent of student engagement and instructors' extent of promoting engagement, surveys were completed to seek the perspectives of students using that included instructional design, attitudes, and behaviors. Bigatel and Williams (2016) also developed courses for faculty to apply various strategies that encouraged active participation of the students and instructors. Results of the study concluded that professional development and trained instructors were key elements to effectively engaged students in learning.

Johnson and Palmer (2015) examined whether or not linguistics is best taught in an online or face-to-face learning environment. This study explored student perceptions and assessment scores to determine the effectiveness of undergraduate courses being taught in both environments. Of particular concern, while assessing the study was the pedagogy of student engagement when comparing an online environment to a traditional environment. According to Ross, Gallagher, and Macleod (2013), it is important to recognize the relationship and stigma that is associated with being a distant learner and how that affects a student. Johnson and Palmer (2015) discovered that student aptitude is an important factor and predictor of student performance regardless of the learning environment. In comparing both courses, it was realized that each course is distinctive and differs according to the student population that is inclined to enroll in the specific course. Johnson and Palmer (2016) concluded that students with higher GPA’s enrolled in the traditional course and students with lower GPA’s enrolled in the online course and fared worse in the course. Also, traditional students appeared more engaged and contributed more to the class discussion and assignments then online students whom often procrastinated and were less likely to engage in online discussions. It is important to note that students do not perceive these courses to be comparable options and because of the different modes of delivery success in a linguistics course cannot be correlated. Conversely, Clark and Whetstone (2013), explored the impact of an online tutoring Mathematics Program. Math-Whizz was created as a supplement to mathematics instructions during the school year for 15 elementary schools. Using this program, Clark and Whetstone (2013) found growth in mathematics age, usage, average quiz, and test scores. Findings related to Math-Whizz also indicated in improvement to mathematics achievement, survey answers, and state assessments.

With the increase in online learning environments, it is no surprise that many colleges and universities agree that it is critical to the longevity of their institution to offer such courses. Carr (2014) stated the growth in online degree programs has exceptionally increased the growth in student enrollees wanting to take courses. However, in offering online courses many schools are at a crossroads between the potential benefits against the potential costs to their students.

Drouin et al. (2015) used methodological triangulation to examine the effectiveness of a mentoring program for online instructors. For a study using methodological triangulation to examine the effectiveness of a mentoring program for online instructors, Drouin et al. (2015) conducted a semester-long faculty mentoring program for online instructors was implemented. Ratings of the program by participants, ratings of the online course and institutional data were three dimensions used to triangulate the effectiveness of the mentoring program. Drouin et al. (2015) found consistently lower retention reports for online courses. Regarding best practices to increase retention rates and student learning, instructor to student contact and student engagement was widely agreed upon. Positive and effective results concluded mentoring for online instructors. When educational leaders are committed to student success not only can educational advantages be sustained but even enhanced under the most difficult circumstances (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2014).

Barriers and Distractions to Learning

Teacher’s greatest challenge is meeting the needs of a wide variety of students. Due to a perceived lack of knowledge and skill about how to adapt curriculum materials and how to adjust learning strategies in efficient and effective ways, teachers are at a disadvantage which can lead to a barrier to students' learning (Tobin & Tippett, 2014). Obviously, educators want to investigate and identify barriers preventing student's to reach their maximum potential, however, it can be difficult. Outside of the many barriers such as learning disabilities, emotional or behavioral issues, there are many social problems that can distract students from learning, affecting students' academic success (Ward, 2016).

Cellular phones are a powerful tool and can be of great benefit to the classroom as a portable computer. However, educators on the fence when it comes to banning cell phone use in the classroom due to it being more of a distraction than a benefit. According to Thomas, O'Bannon, and Bolton (2013), technology can improve student engagement and cell phones can increase instruction as well as texting, making and receiving calls or taking pictures which are a distraction to learning. Although there is an argument for the use of smartphones being able to help students excel in the classroom, much research concurred that students are less engaged and "play" with their phones more than using them for classroom work, causing distractions. Elder (2013) stated that students self-reported distractions from phones resulted in spending more time engaged in internet activities and less time studying. There are many benefits as well as barriers associated with cell phone use in the classroom, bringing many educators to a crossroad. According to Connell, Johnston, Hall, and Stahl (2017) understanding what works for which students under specific circumstances are a fundamental concern of any instructional intervention.

Project Description

This qualitative case study gathered data that offered similar presented themes identifying the shortage of defined protocol teachers should follow when implementing student engagement techniques in a hybrid learning environment. The professional development training provided consisted of instruction in the area of variations of strategies to be used while engaging students in a hybrid learning environment. In addition, professional development will address teacher communication and collaboration of student engagement strategies. A three-day professional development training session will be conducted. The proposed plan will be organized by the district school committee annually according to the needs of the teachers at Hybrid Academy High School. The objective of these professional development training is to create solid and distinguishable strategies teachers can implement in their hybrid learning environment.

Needed Resources

The proposed professional development project would benefit from resources available to teachers. A possible resource would be a reference book containing informative tools and strategies that can be used to engage students. Another possible resource is a website for additional scenarios and training. Also, an e-mentoring program that is available to any educator for support.

Existing Supports

Hybrid Academy High School has several existing supports that educators can employ to improve student engagement. An important resource is a use of co-teaching in the classrooms. Teachers at Hybrid Academy High School are grouped in two’s to teach adjacent subjects which allows for additional support in the classroom and keeping students on track. Another existing support is weekly staff meetings. Included in the weekly staff meetings are conversations and suggestions about students needed the most assistance and what can be done to help that student stay engaged and focused. The use of tutors in the classroom is another existing support that provides direction and order in the classroom to help students stay engaged in their learning.

Potential Barriers

Themes from the gathered data showed a stronger need for support from the administration. The administration has a duty to provide teachers with needed assistance to help students succeed, this could be a potential barrier for teachers who are not comfortable with asking the administration for help. Another potential barrier is time. Implementing such a project will take time: getting the necessary permissions from the stakeholders, scheduling, providing research and resources. In an attempt to complete the professional development workshop prior to and during the school year for incoming and returning teachers may be difficult due to late hires, scheduling conflicts, vacations, illnesses, and other obligations. A possible solution may be to have new teachers only complete as part of the hiring and training process while senior teachers can take the professional development at a later date within the year. A second solution would be to create and offer the professional development workshop in an online format.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

Implementation of this project would begin prior to the 2018-2019 school year. This way, new teachers and returning teachers would be given tools and techniques for a productive school year. Modifications to the schedule will be made accordingly, as the professional development will be made available several times throughout the school year.

June 2018

Coordinators meet to organize professional development to:

- Schedule for dates for the workshop (July-August)
- Create itinerary send necessary emails, gather responses, generate schedules for presenters and attendees

Day 1

- Introductions, objectives, advantages
- PowerPoint and strategies
- Scenarios and group work

Day 2

- Discussion of scenarios
- Suggestions
- Resources
- Reflections

Day 3

- Wrap up
- Personal Goals
- Administration Support

Role and Responsibilities of Student and Others

As the researcher, I am responsible for presenting the proposed professional development workshop to the district for approval. Once the results of this study have been presented to the district, implementation of the professional development will be discussed and directions will be given on when the training can occur. As the researcher, I will also be responsible for all communication between school staff, administration, and school district following any directives set forth by those listed above. Changes will be made accordingly and promptly.

After educators have participated in the professional development workshop, materials received during training will be available and can be modified as needed to for student engagement. School support will be ongoing, with refresher training available as administrators see fit. The training committee will be available via email for additional support. For potential situations that have not been addressed will be handled on an individual basis as deemed necessary.

Project Evaluation Plan

During this research study, findings suggested that educators needed more training and assistance on strategies for student engagement. Therefore, a professional development workshop was presented at the local setting and district. The project evaluation plan is to create constructive feedback for teachers and administrators. Overall, the goal is to provide educators with strategies and tools that can be used to increase student engagement and learning.

The project evaluation plan will utilize a mailbox system at the end of each semester. Data from the summative evaluation would be collected to measure the overall assessment of the project and its success (Spaulding, 2013). The participants that have attended the training will reflect on strategies used throughout the term and send comments to a general mailbox. The mailbox will be "opened" for a specified time and attendees will be later notified of the results in the form of a graph and comments or concerns, complaints, and suggestions. Comments would include what strategies implemented, student responses, amount of time of redirection, and miscellaneous responses.

Students, parents, teachers, and administrators are the stakeholders that would benefit from the project evaluation of this study. Students will be able to give feedback to teachers on their learning and keeping them engaged. Parents will be able to assist at home to keep their students engaged and learning, becoming part of the process. Teachers will be able to use various tools and strategies from one another on what works and continue to increase student engagement and learning. Administrators will be able to guide teachers in the right direction of student engagement and give assistance to teachers as needed for ongoing success. The results will be used to make adjustments as needed to increase student engagement and recognized contributing factors that disengage students. It will also contribute to future professional development workshops for student engagement.

Project Implications

The research collected from this case study and project aimed to provide suggestions and constructive solutions for teachers to help engage the student in life-learning. Changes in a local to a national level in educational communities can affect student's engagement and their overall learning experience. Preparing educators to understand and being able to adjust or redirect students to the variety of dynamics that can happen in a classroom affects student engagement. Providing professional development that is of quality and offers real-life examples will give educators confidence they need to keep students engaged and learning. Using such a model will help to promote and implement future professional development workshops and training for all educational environments resulting in student success.

Conclusion

In an effort to fully engage students in a hybrid learning environment, professional development training can be used for classroom teachers to gain the necessary strategies and techniques needed for student success. Eventually, classroom disturbances will decrease while classroom instructional time will increase. Hybrid learning environments as well as traditional learning environments students will be more engaged in continual learning than before. Tackling such hurdles will lead to more effective and efficient teaching. Overcoming this concern will lead to stronger arrangements for academic achievement and student success.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers’ perceptions of high school student engagement in an HLE in 10th-12th-grade classes. Data gathered from interviews with 10 teachers of these grade levels at Hybrid Academy High School. Information received from the observations and interviewing process provided descriptions for the data used to analyze this study. I drew from the study’s conceptual framework and literature review to develop the research questions for this case study. The primary research question for this study was, how does student engagement, as perceived by teachers, affect HLEs? The sub-questions for this study were

SQ1: What aspects of student engagement do teachers perceive as affecting students’ performance in a hybrid learning environment?

SQ2: How are teachers engaging students in a hybrid learning environment?

The results from this study provided the basis for the project discussed in Section 3. Professional development supports the needs conveyed by the participants in their responses to the interview questions. These needs relate to the following: (a) effective strategies for engaging students, (b) classroom management, (c) communication, (d) administrative support, and (e) reflection. In this section, I will reflect on the study and discuss its strengths and limitations, offer recommendations, and consider the implications and applications of the work completed for this study.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Project Strengths

The objective of this project was to better comprehend student engagement in HLEs and develop strategies to promote higher student engagement. The outcome of the study resulted in professional development training with a concentration on the particular insights and needs of the teacher participants. One of the strengths of the project is that it is teacher-driven. I anticipate that the influence of this the project will extend not only to those who participated in the study but also to current and future educators in search of improved strategies to engage students. The use of collaborative practices among educators may also expand as a result of professional development. Educators would be able to share information and communicate continually providing support and ideas across curriculums of what strategies worked best and offering new or improved ideas. Sharing knowledge and experiences through academic and career development from peers will help educators improve on learning theory as well as obtain practical skills which are necessary for teaching (Kahraman & Kuzu, 2016).

Project Limitations

Limitations of this project are centered on the length of the professional development and the commitment to attending it. Although the professional development training was designed for 3 days, it could easily be expanded to a week or more. Yet, a longer training program has its own limitations. Extending a professional development training such as this could quickly become boring for attendees, who could lose interest. Educators are busy people. It is difficult to arrange a time for educators to volunteer to attend a professional development course. Making it mandatory for new teachers is relatively easy; however, having seasoned educators participate who could benefit from such training seems like a more difficult task.

Another limitation is how this professional development project will benefit every student in every grade and across curriculums. This project and its data resulted from findings from high school teacher participants; whether it might be beneficial for middle or elementary school is unknown. It is also unknown what strategies should be changed so that the professional development is universal for all schools and districts. Another project study would have to be completed to ascertain whether an individualized project would benefit elementary and middle school students.

An additional final limitation is the inclusiveness of students with learning or emotional disabilities. Today, there are a variety of special accommodations for students and learning (Michigan Department of Education, 2015). A question is how will educators incorporate or adjust those strategies they have learned to engage students. Time and classroom management may become factors when attempting to engage a particular student, and other students may become less engaged due to the attention being given to their peers. An HLE educator stated that student engagement is not one size fits all, and teachers will have to determine what will work best for a range of situations that may occur.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Although professional development training was the most practical project to employ following the data collection for this study, there are some alternative approaches that may offer a resolution to the needs identified during the data analysis process. One alternative could be a project development centered on working with parents. A reoccurring theme from the data was the lack of parental involvement. The participants conveyed the frustration of bearing all the responsibility for the lack of engagement of students. They stated that some of that responsibility starts in the home. A parent project development would be a good way to get parents involved in their students' education as well as building a better rapport with their child's teacher(s).

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

My reason for pursuing this doctoral degree was initially for advancement in my educational career. I felt that, because I was switching careers, I needed to obtain the highest degree possible to be on par with my colleagues. What I lacked in the classroom experience, I would make it up with academic achievement. I was proven very wrong. Nothing can replace the education received in the actual classroom. The experience I received with student involvement is irreplaceable. Journeying through this program I realized that my motives have changed. The knowledge and growth I have received have encouraged me to stay in the classroom longer to engage students, support teachers and become a teacher leader.

Project Development

The difficulties in creating a doctoral project are like no other. The scholarship needed to recognize a problem in education and convert it into a study with a positive impact on education requires methodical, systemical, and disciplined thinking. I initially had no idea about the direction I wanted to take with this study; however, my Walden committee members helped me to focus and discover what would work best for my interest and the study I wanted to pursue. After several failed attempts, my study became a qualitative case study.

As I went through this process, the amount of knowledge and enlightenment I received exceeded what I imagined was possible. Researching my topic helped me to grasp the information and articulate it in my paper in a scholarly manner. By continuously reading and doing research on my topic, I was able to develop themes and patterns connected with completing a project study. This knowledge provided a focus for the data collection and project study.

Completing the first stages of the project study was the hardest and most intense of any stages. Once that was completed, I was able to complete the data collection process with less difficulty. Next was the analysis process which included coding and creating themes which I found to be stress-free. My second literature review found in Section 3 was based on the data collected from the participants and enabled consistency among my data and project providing uniformity. In conclusion, I addressed concerns from my participants to be in harmony with the data I collected.

Project Development and Evaluation

Project development an evaluation can be handled in various ways. For a project developer, I felt it was important to focus on the pronounced needs of the participants and data that was collected from the study. Observing, listening and responding to participants' needs was crucial in creating a professional development training which resulted from the findings. Constructing a project that delivered educators with useful methods and advice was a must. According to Baker, Gentry, and Larmer (2016), practical strategies and techniques are needed for all educators to succeed in the classroom. A hands-on approach which included group work, collaboration, activities, and dialogue among the participants would help to ensure attention and feedback to help guide future training. The project is a reflection of the findings of the study, therefore, in efforts to have a successful project, the data and findings have to be clear and concise.

Leadership and Change

While completing this project, I experienced a new role as a teacher leader. It was a positive experience. I was given responsibilities for privacy, continuous learning and conducting research which helped me to learn even more about myself as a doctoral student and teacher leader. Professionally, it has helped me to gain confidence in my abilities to lead as well as becoming more involved in my school. Promoting positive change as a teacher leader is an arduous task, that does not happen overnight. I have discovered that it takes great desire and fortitude to facilitate change. It takes courage to make decisions that are not always popular or new. It takes strength and insight to foresee the good the changes will make and to implement them. Leadership also involves, putting in long hours to do research and be resilient in not succeeding initially but continuing to fight despite being feeling lost and exhausted. Being an effective leader then comes from using that obtained knowledge and direction to educate, motivate and inspire others.

Reflection of Importance of the Work

As you reflect on the work, you learn. Throughout this process of reflection, I have learned so much. I have learned to be more patient, some things happen naturally and not always at the pace I think they should, let them. I have learned that the first thought is not always the right thought; slow down, put it away and come back another day with fresh thoughts and fresh eyes. Walden has shown me that things change, regardless if you are on board or not and that is ok, deal with it. However, if there is a problem speak your mind and find out if something can be done. This reflection is like life lessons, I will be able to take everything I have learned with the process and make it applicable to other areas of my life. I have a new and improved work ethic. I have acquired more knowledge in the field of education which will help me personally and professionally. This experience was a journey that cannot be summed up in any one word. From the highs to the lows back to the highs of accomplishing such an educational feat is amazing. In the field of education, I am committed to promoting positive social change.

Analysis of Self as a Scholar

Developing as a scholar began with me wanting a career change and set out to complete a doctoral degree to do it. Observing students and their lack of engagement increased my desire to pursue teachers’ perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment. But I initially did not have a clue on how to go about such a task. Providing professional development training for educators would assist teachers in having a playbook and various strategies to chose from. Completing this journey had its series of ups and downs. From aligning all the work to making sure I was tracking articles pertinent to my literature review was a major obstacle in my project study. I grew as a scholar with each step that was taken. Getting feedback from my Walden University committee proved most effective and provided me with the next steps to take or to revise the steps I had already taken. I learned from each rejection to do better, to learn more, to provide quality and scholarly work. I enhanced my abilities to do conduct research, to analyze and evaluate the data collected. As a scholar I have learned that nothing is perfect and things don't always go the way I want them to go, however, the more you work at it and the more information you take in the better and easier it becomes.

Analysis of Self as a Practitioner

As a doctoral student conducting research, this experience as a practitioner has strengthened me in my roles as a student and as a professional. Being a practitioner gave me a paradigm shift in my work ethic, specifically in the way I had to approach this project, analysis and implement the work and go about each procedure and section. This experience has helped me professionally and personally as well. I have learned to be more thorough, more patient, more objective, and focused. This experience as a practitioner has assisted me in better time management, the ability to develop more intricate ideas, accuracy, and as completing tasks timely. This learning process has resulted in growth in knowledge, confidence, and leadership which has increased my role and responsibilities as a teacher leader.

Analysis of Self as a Project Developer

A project developer must use the information gained as a researcher to produce a project that will address the data collected in the most beneficial way. Understanding the data and the participants' needs are important as a project developer. As research leads the project development, we can conclude that data is one the most crucial components of having a successful project. Just as important in having a successful project is the audience with whom one is trying to reach. Therefore, this experience to personally develop a project and focus it on a specific group helps to eradicate future problems that may occur which demonstrates the knowledge and professionalism learned as a project developer.

An underlying theme I have upheld during the course of my study was the focus on educators in a hybrid learning environment being the leaders for change in education. Historically, student engagement has not gotten the attention it deserves relative to student success. According to Witkowski and Cornell (2015), student engagement and learning have become nationally important in the 21st century. Whereas previous suggestions to encourage and engage students were plentiful, a question remained as to what was the most productive. While teachers asked questions to involve students, many were met with silence. While developing this project, it was important to reflect on change and create with "the aim to transform practice" (Chigeza & Halbert, 2014, p. 133). I was committed to constructing a project centered on student engagement that addresses the needs of the participants, benefiting new and seasoned educators. Having the opportunity to improve educational practices is a positive aspect that promotes social change.

Implications, Application, and Directions for Future Research

The outcome of this project study, as it relates to the potential for social change, will first affect the administration, teachers, staff, students, and parents that are part of the study's school site. Strategic and consistent implementation of the project is a must in order to be successful. Focusing on the specific needs of the participants involved in the project study will their students to become more engaged resulting in more successful school. Teachers would have the prospect to take full advantage of implementation strategies and resources that "actually" work. Time and energy spent on classroom management and failed techniques to re-engage students would be resolved and teachers could center their attention more on student learning. Furthermore, the positive impact on student engagement would be abundant affecting communication, student-teacher relationships, administration-teacher relationships, teacher-parent relationships, motivation, and academics.

The social change impact would not only benefit the school but also the community. By students being more engaged in their learning, their focus becomes different. Students are more intuned with learning and more motivated. According to Arthur and Hannah (2015), there is a correlation between intellectual engagement and motivation. Students are less likely to engage in "at-risk" behavior and more likely to have academic success. At home, parents become more involved in their students' needs and are more likely to communicate with teaching staff to help encourage and engage students.

As districts are becoming more aware of the many distractions that stifle student's learning, there is a need for increased interventions to be created to combat the never-ending problem. The creation of a student engagement professional development for the local school site can be a path to the entire school district. The success of implementing such a project can lead to districts nationwide giving input and growing into something even better. Continued research and projects that promote student engagement techniques and strategies in the 21st century will only improve student success.

Future research projects that will potentially enrich this study and provide a strong foundation for bringing more awareness to student engagement will help to create more techniques and strategies. One area could be to seek a correlation between student engagement and test scores. The data collected from a study like this would have the potential to improve overall academic achievement. Another area could be to seek how student engagement differs in primary education and the impact it has on state-mandated assessments. The goal of conducting research is to provide clear and balanced knowledge of unbiased data. Doing so is critical to future research and promoting positive social change.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of high school student engagement in a hybrid learning environment in 10th-12th-grade classes. After researching teachers' perceptions about student engagement in a hybrid learning environment, I gathered data from the teacher participants. Upon completing data collection, I coded and analyzed the information to produce a project that would address the needs expressed during the study. The results were not as surprising in some aspects as the majority of participants voiced concern about administration support and the frustration with the cell phones distraction with students. Some aspects that were of a surprise though was that with a hybrid learning environment how much critical it is to have students engaged or they don’t progress which differs from a traditional learning environment where a student can be disengaged and still pass. Participants also voiced concern that the administration does not always “share” pertinent information about the student which is helpful to the teacher for engagement purposes.

The project was clearly chosen to reflect the data collected in the study. Due to the case design of this study, the data provided by the participants guided the project. With the creation of this project educator at Hybrid Academy High School will be presented with a resolution designed for them specifically. The potential for enhancement and additional assessments was also integrated into the project for future benefits. Providing an educational study such as this was an important aspect of allowing educators to have a voice to continuously affect change. This position as a teacher leader is important to me as it demonstrates an environment for creativity and growth now and in the future for all educators.

Conducting this study and developing a project was a challenging but well-received learning experience. Due to the assistance of a supportive and direct committee, I was able to stay the course. My desire and hunger also motivated me to maintain focus and determination for gaining knowledge and understanding of completing such a task of writing scholarly and doctoral research. Student engagement is a serious issue that challenges teachers daily. To be able to discover solutions and be a vehicle for change is what drove the work. As I complete this study project, my hope is to encourage educators to be vocal, help to create change and present new ideas for what is working. It is my goals to see educators be more in tune with their students and in return see students more engaged in their learning.

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Appendix A: The Project

The project for this study entails a 3-day Project Development workshop. The PD was created based on the research study findings. Therefore, the purpose of this PD workshop is to provide educators with the essential tools, techniques, and strategies to effectively engage and re-engage students in a hybrid learning environment. The PD goals are to (a) give educators various tools and resources, (b) enhance educators' confidence and comfortability with a variety of techniques and strategies, (c) lower the number of disengaged students and (d) to promote collaboration and communication between educators.

Professional Development: 3-Day Training of Techniques and Strategies

Purpose:

- To provide all educators with techniques and strategies to engage and re-engage students.

Program Goals

- To give educators various tools and resources to engage students
- To boost educators' confidence in using these techniques
- To lower the percentage of disengaged students
- To promote collaboration and communication between educators of what strategies work
- To provide an ongoing dialogue via an email/e-mentor relationship

Program Outcomes

- Educators will understand their role as first responders to student engagement

- Educators will have resources available as tools for reference
- Educators will use a reflective log of techniques used
- Educators can give honest assessments and make suggestions on how the administration can successfully assist collaboratively.

Audience

- All educators at Hybrid Academy High School
- Administration at Hybrid Academy High School

Timeline

- Coordinators meet to organize professional development would begin late May 2018. There will be three training days within the months of June-August 2018, granting approval by the dean. Modifications to the schedule will be made accordingly, as the professional development will be made available several times throughout the school year for those unable to attend in the summer as a make-up session or new hire.

Materials

- Continental Breakfast (coffee/tea, bagels, donuts, fruit, water, juice)
- Sign in Sheet
- Handouts
- Whiteboard/Computer/PowerPoint
- Writing utensils (paper, pens/pencils)
  - Participation gifts (classroom supplies, gift cards/gift baskets)

Agenda for 3-Day Professional Development

Day 1: Techniques and Strategies for Student Engagement

8:00-8:30	(Slide 1 & 2) Introduction to Training**,** Continental Breakfast and Sign in
9:00-9:30	(Slide 3) Welcome, Agenda, Introductions, and Objectives
9:30-10:00	(Slide 4) Break into groups, give packets of scenarios
10:00-11:00	(Slide 5) Group discussion
11:00-12:00	(Slide 6 & 7) Scenarios & strategies
12:00-1:00	(Slide 8) Lunch
1:00-2:00	(Slide 9) Group discussion
2:00-3:00	(Slide 10) Speaker (Engaging Students in the 21st Century)
3:00-4:00	(Slide 11) Questions and conclusion

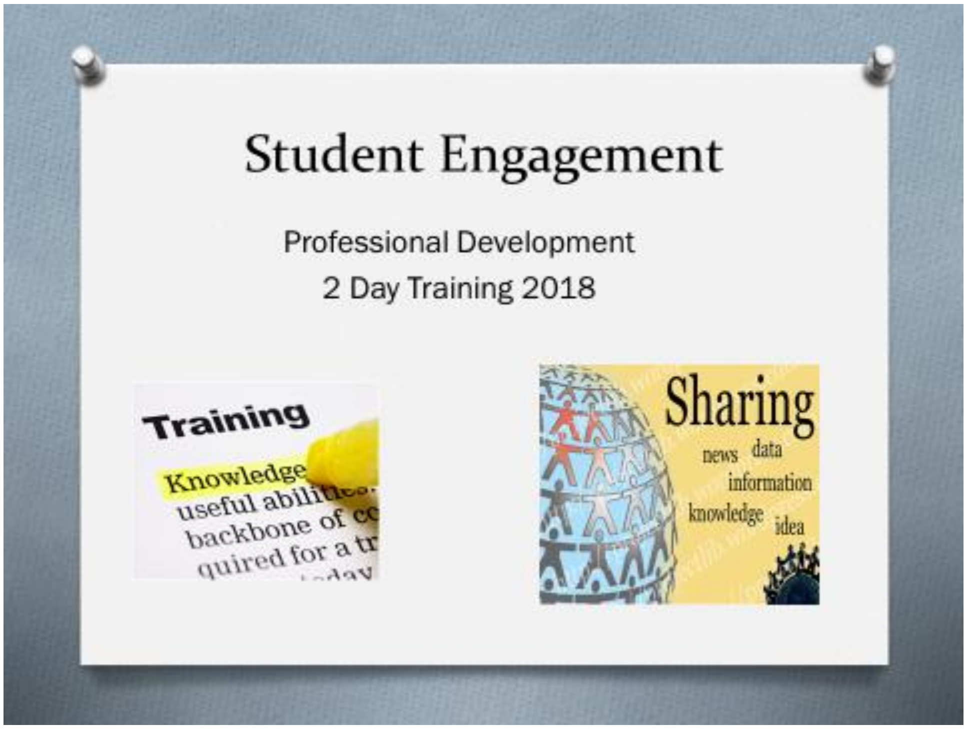
Day 2: Techniques and Strategies for Student Engagement

8:30-9:00	(Slide 12) Continental Breakfast and Sign in
9:00-9:30	(Slide 13) Welcome, Recap, and Agenda
9:30-10:00	(Slide 14) Informational packets and discussion
10:00-11:00	(Slide 15) Speaker (Why Engagement Matters)
11:30-12:00	(Slide 16) Discussion
12:00-1:00	(Slide 17) Lunch
1:00-2:00	(Slide 18) Scenario and strategy games/reflections
2:30-3:00	(Slide 19) Questions, provide email, numbers, websites, resources, etc.

Day 3: Techniques and Strategies for Student Engagement

9:00-9:30	(Slide 20) Continental Breakfast and Sign in

9:30-10:00	(Slide 21) Welcome, Recap, and Agenda
10:00-12:00	(Slide 22) Wrap up (Golden Rules for Engaging Students)
12:00-1:00	(Slide 23) Lunch
1:00-2:00	(Slide 24) Personal aspirations/thoughts
2:00-3:00	(Slide 25) Administration Suggestion
3:00-4:00	(Slide 26) Questions/evaluation

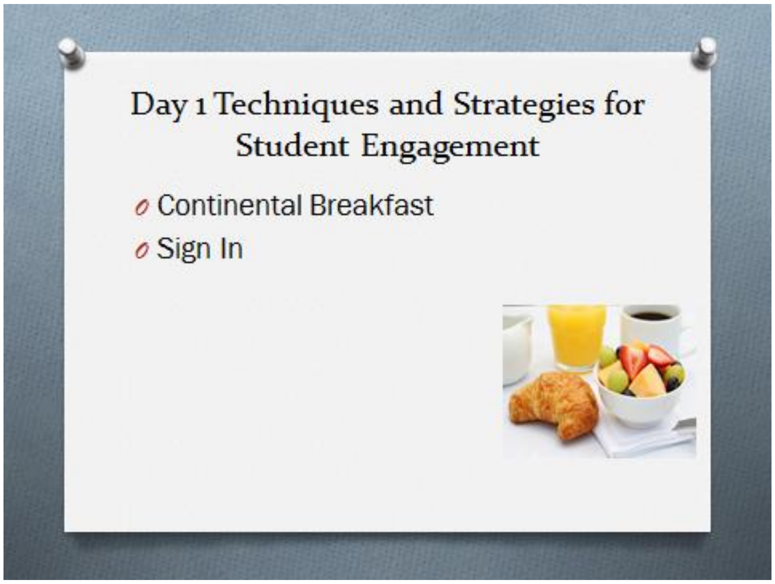


Student Engagement

Professional Development
2 Day Training 2018

Training
Knowledge
useful abilities
backbone of co
quired for a tr
Sharing
news
data
information
knowledge
idea

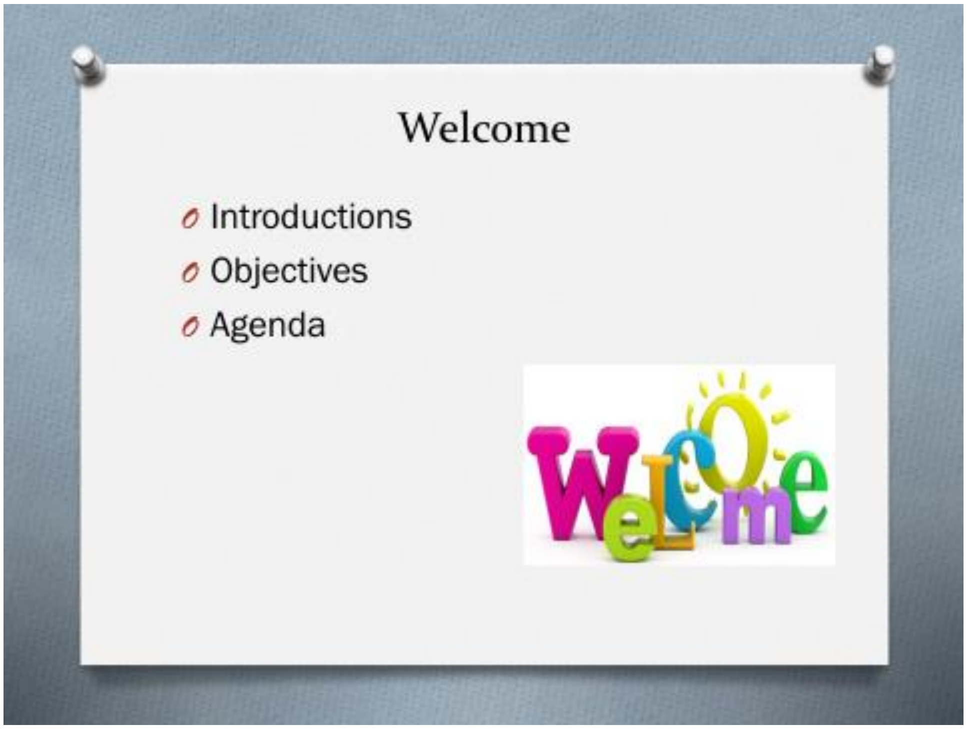
Slide 1



Day 1 Techniques and Strategies for Student Engagement

- Continental Breakfast
- Sign In

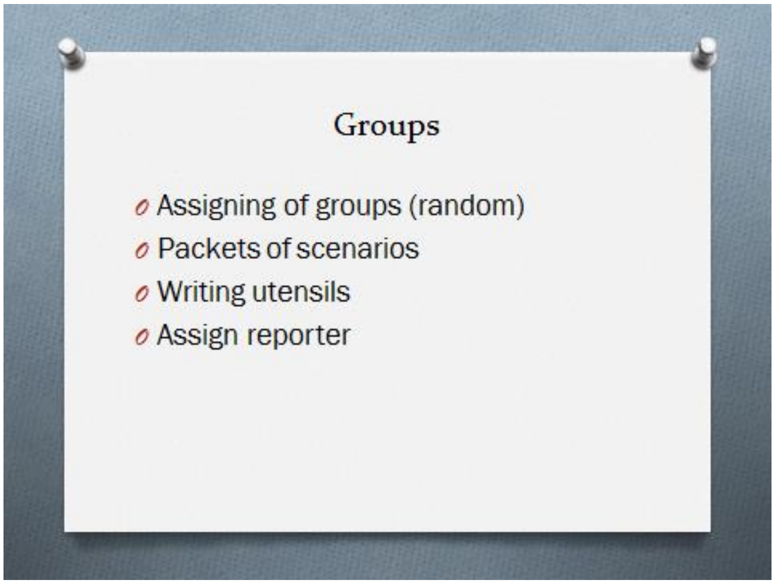
Slide 2



Welcome

- Introductions
- Objectives
- Agenda

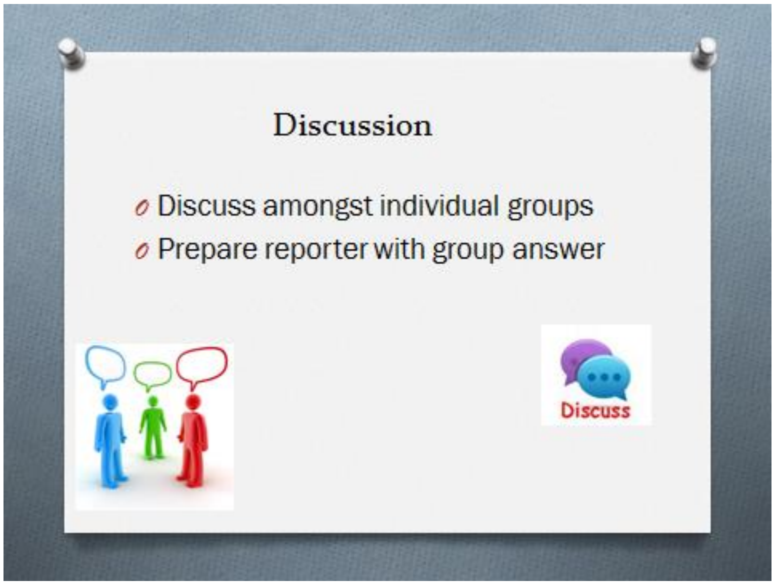
Slide 3



Groups

- Assigning of groups (random)
- Packets of scenarios
- Writing utensils
- Assign reporter

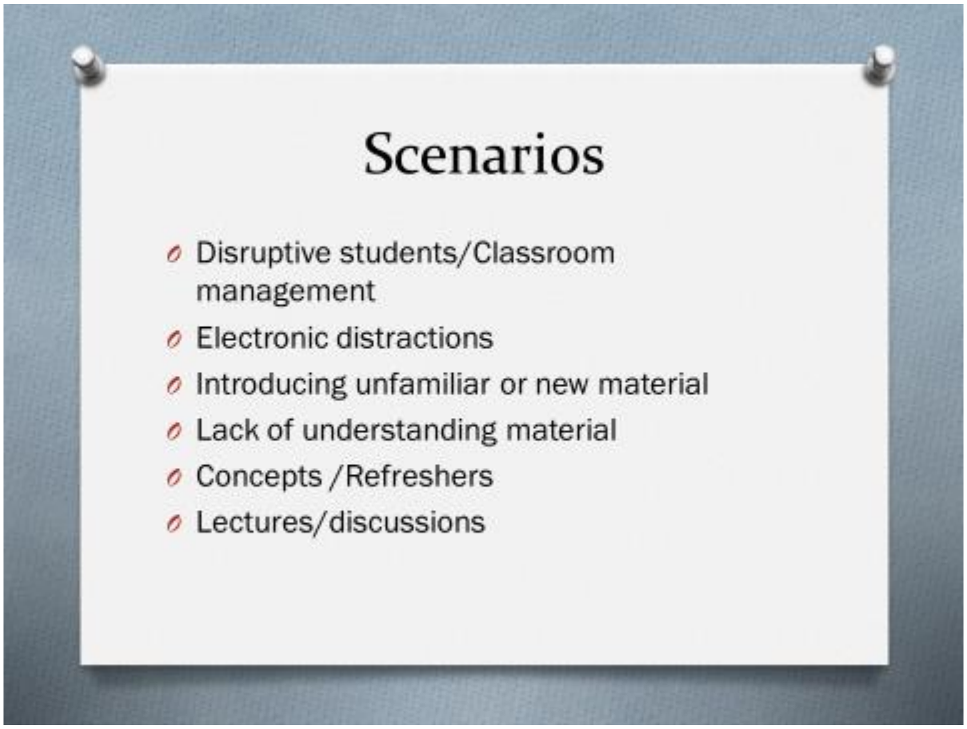
Slide 4



Discussion

- Discuss amongst individual groups
- Prepare reporter with group answer

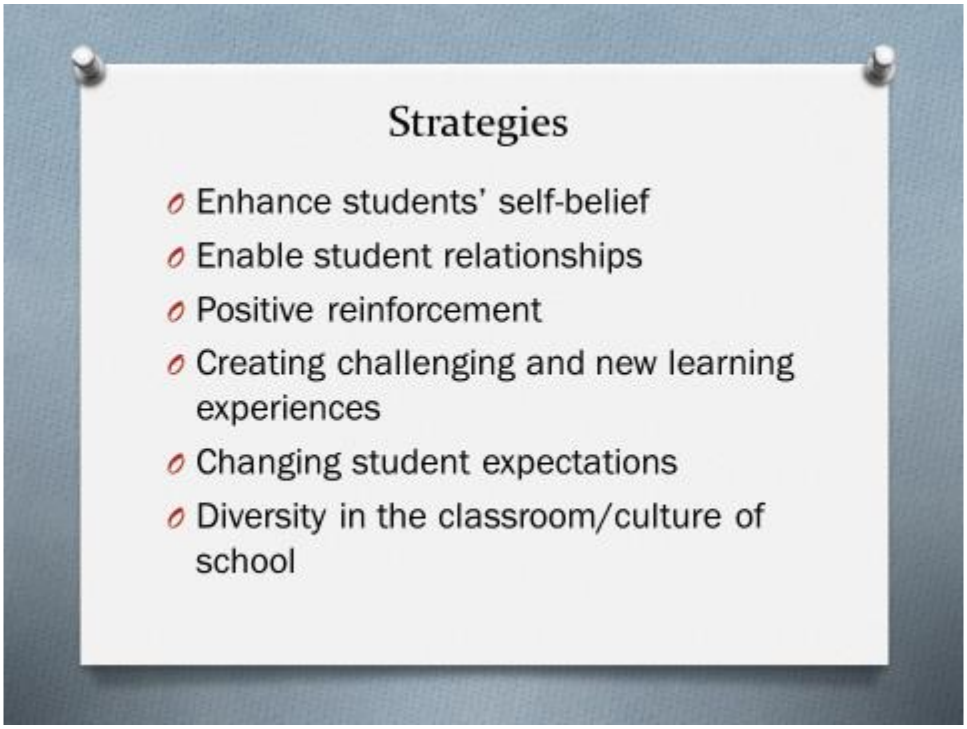
Slide 5



Scenarios

- Disruptive students/Classroom management
- Electronic distractions
- Introducing unfamiliar or new material
- Lack of understanding material
- Concepts /Refreshers
- Lectures/discussions

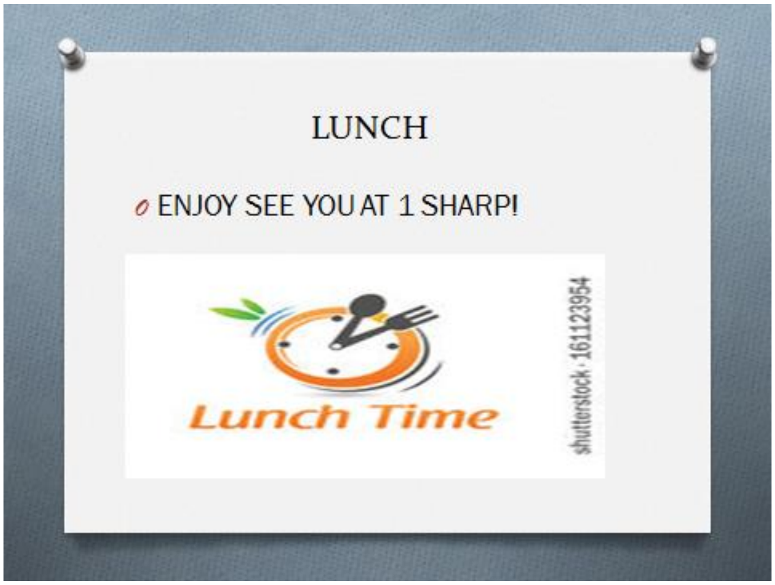
Slide 6



Strategies

- Enhance students' self-belief
- Enable student relationships
- Positive reinforcement
- Creating challenging and new learning experiences
- Changing student expectations
- Diversity in the classroom/culture of school

Slide 7

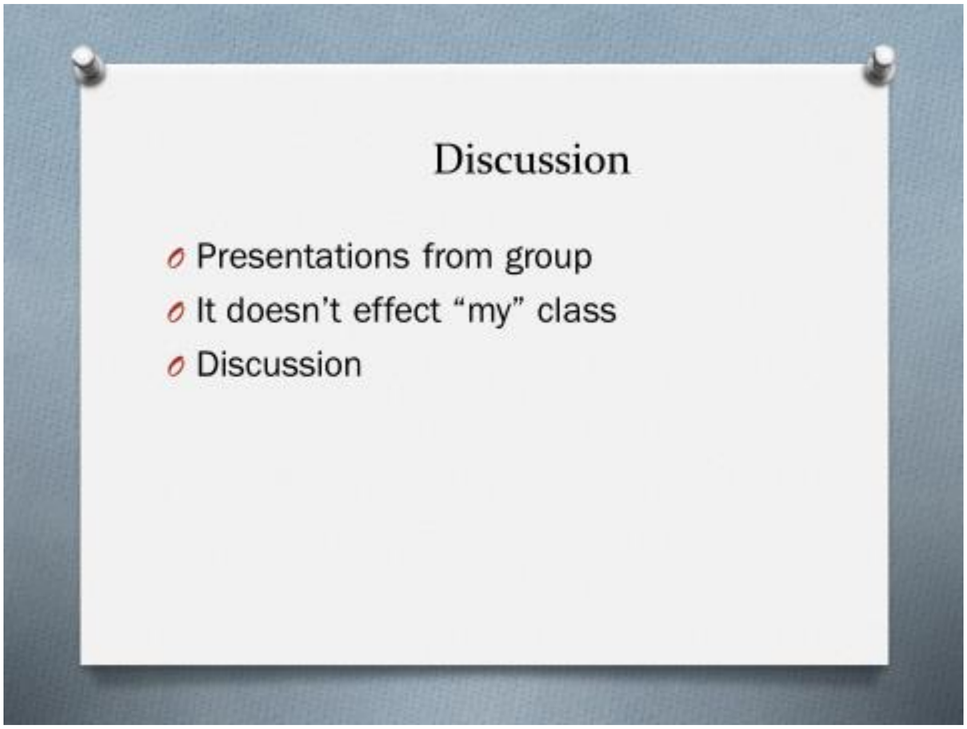


LUNCH

- ENJOY SEE YOU AT 1 SHARP!

Lunch Time
shutterstock · 161123954

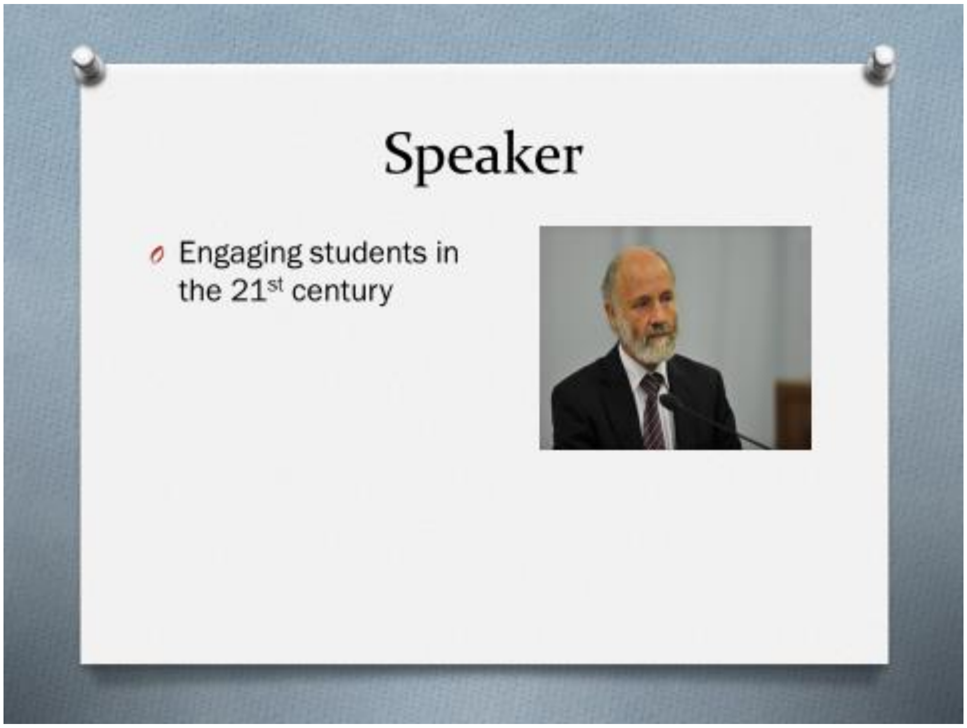
Slide 8



Discussion

- Presentations from group
- It doesn't effect "my" class
- Discussion

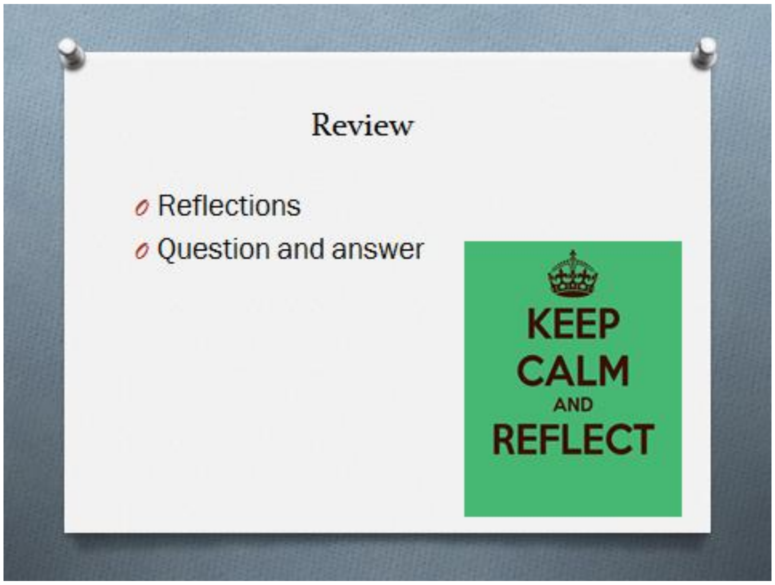
Slide 9



Speaker

- Engaging students in the 21st century

Slide 10

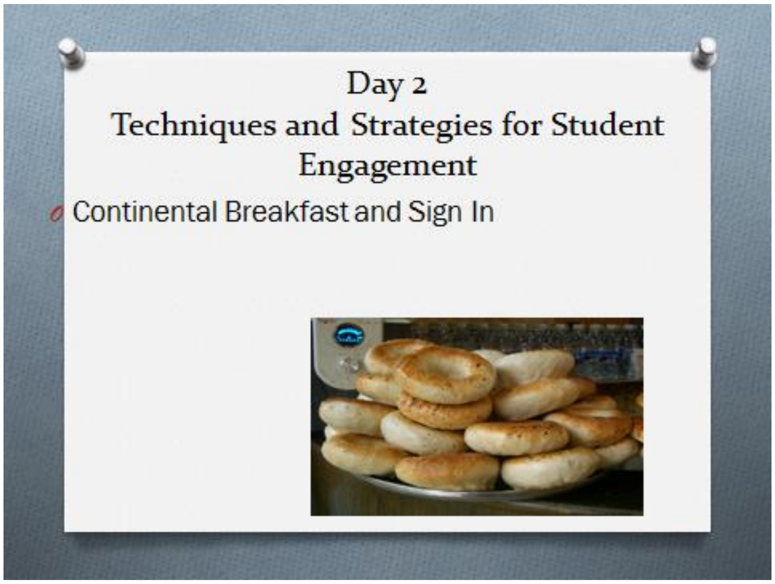


Review

- Reflections
- Question and answer

KEEP
CALM
AND
REFLECT

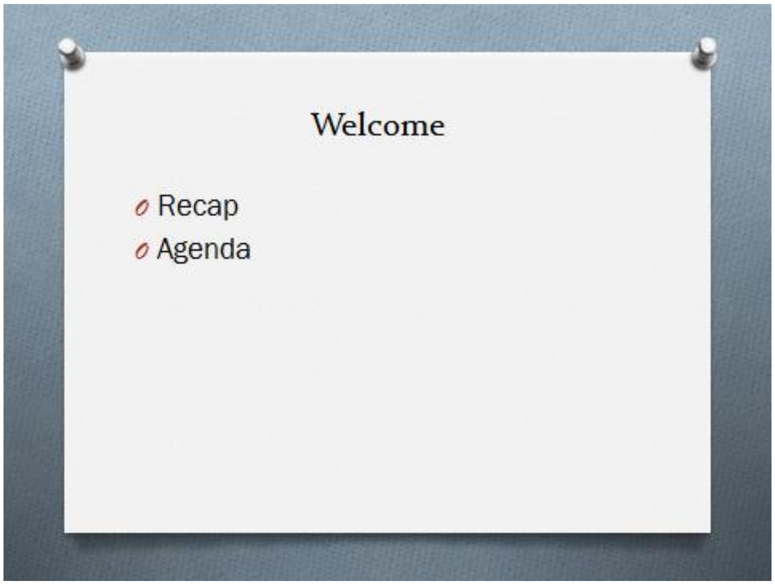
Slide 11



Day 2
Techniques and Strategies for Student Engagement

- Continental Breakfast and Sign In

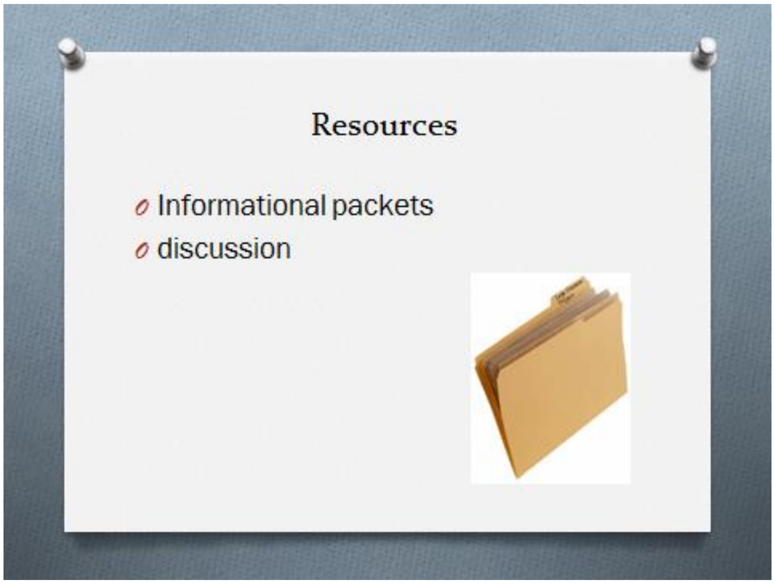
Slide 12



Welcome

- Recap
- Agenda

Slide 13



Resources

- Informational packets
- discussion

Slide 14

Speaker

- Why Engagement Matters

Slide 15

Discussion

- Team building activities
- Question and answer

Slide 16

LUNCH

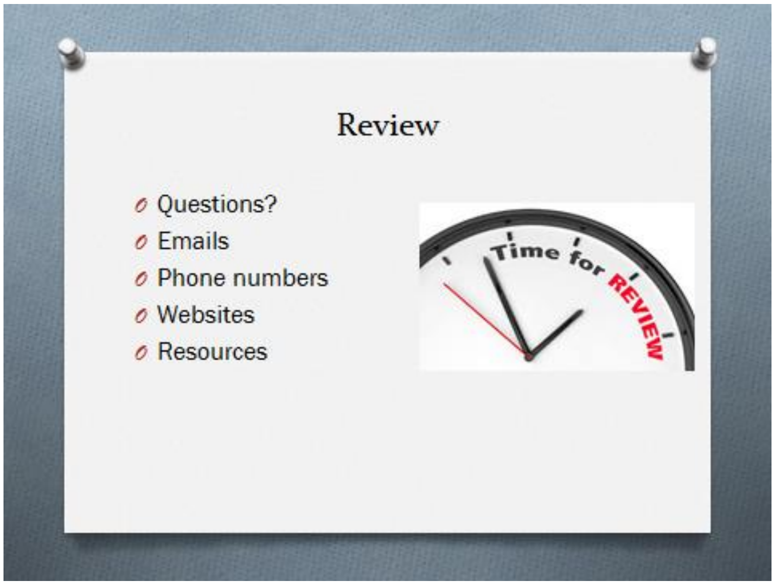
- Enjoy! See you at 1 PM!

Slide 17

Scenarios/Games

- 1-1 scenarios
- 1-20+ scenarios
- Strategies
- Reflections

Slide 18



Review

- Questions?
- Emails
- Phone numbers
- Websites
- Resources

Time for REVIEW

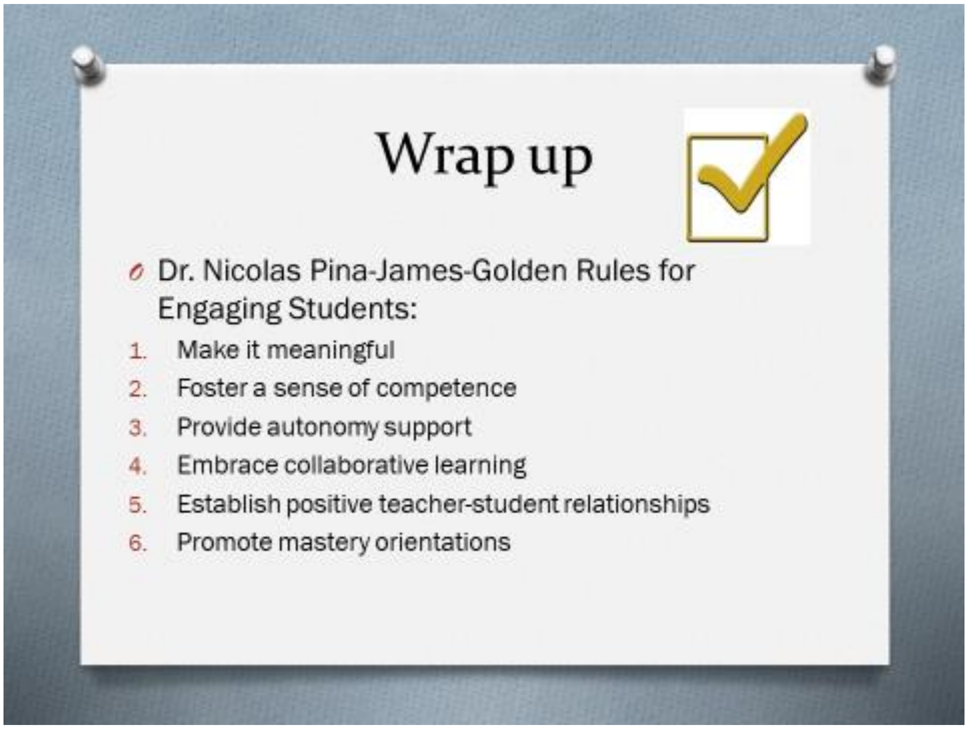
Slide 19

Continental Breakfast and Sign in

Slide 20

Welcome, Recap & Agenda

Slide 21



Wrap up

- Dr. Nicolas Pina-James-Golden Rules for Engaging Students:

1. Make it meaningful
2. Foster a sense of competence
3. Provide autonomy support
4. Embrace collaborative learning
5. Establish positive teacher-student relationships
6. Promote mastery orientations

Slide 22

Lunch

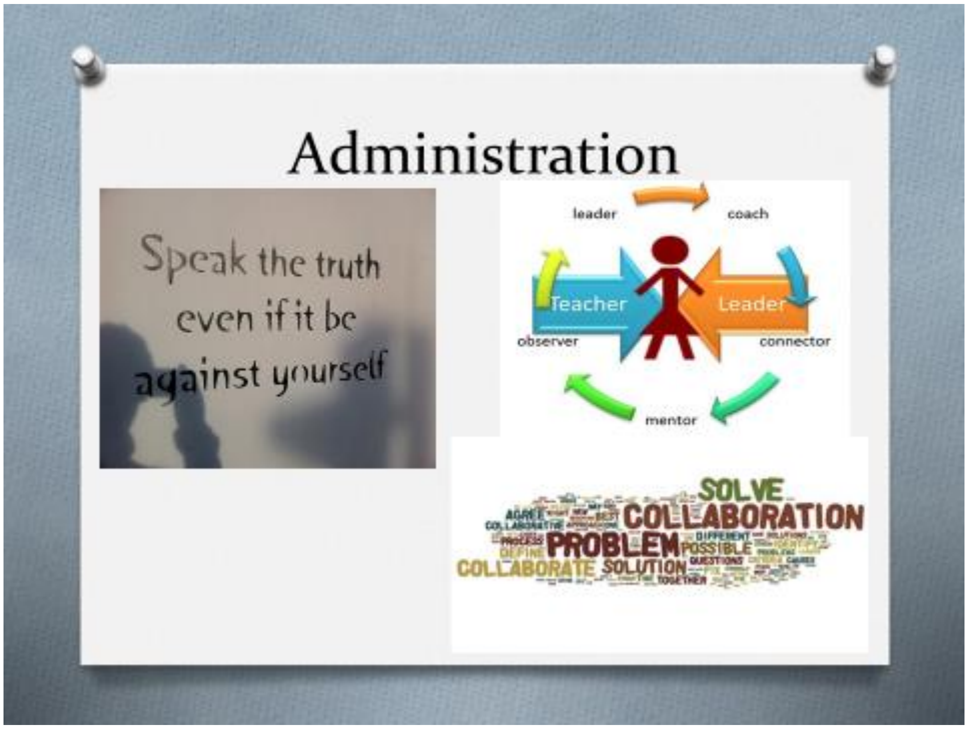
Working
LUNCH

Slide 23

Personal aspirations

GOAL
GROWTH

Slide 24



Administration

Speak the truth
even if it be
against yourself
leader
coach
Teacher
Leader
observer
connector
mentor
SOLVE
COLLABORATION
AGREE
PROBLEM
POSSIBLE
DIFFERENT
PROCESS
DEFINE
COLLABORATE
SOLUTION
QUESTIONS
TOGETHER

Slide 25

Questions

- Reflections
- Evaluation

EVALUATION
☑ Outstanding
☐ Very Good
☐ Satisfactory
☐ Marginal
Unsatis
PAST
FUTURE

Slide 26

Appendix B: Letter to Dean of Hybrid Academy

Dear ________,

I am a doctoral student at Walden University working on a project study as a requirement for graduation. I am conducting research on teacher's perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment. I would like your permission to conduct my project study at Hybrid Academy. The participants will include approximately 10 willing educators from your staff to be interviewed at a time and date convenient not to disrupt any educational classes or activities. No students will be interviewed or included in this study and there is no potential harm to you, your staff or your facility.

Your permission is greatly appreciated.

Thank you,
Dimika N. Smith MA
[e-mail address redacted]

Appendix C: E-mail to Participants

Dear _________,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my project study about teacher's perceptions of student engagement in a hybrid learning environment.

I would like to set up a time and date at your convenience for an interview.

Please email me your availability. Please allow time for approximately 30-60 minutes (maybe less) for the interview. Please respond no later than 11/1/17.

Also note, all communication will be conducted via email or text for time arrangement

Your continued participation and time is appreciated.

Thank you,

Dimika N. Smith MA
[e-mail address redacted]

Appendix D: Interview Questions

1. How does student engagement, as perceived by teachers, affect hybrid learning environments?
2. What aspects of student engagement do teachers perceive to affect students' performance in a hybrid learning environment?
3. How are teachers engaging students in a hybrid learning environment?
4. Are they specific methods/techniques used to get students engaged in a hybrid learning environment?
5. When students are disengaged, does it affect other students? How?
6. Do you find students more or less engaged in their hybrid learning environment depending on what is being taught? If yes, what topics are more or less likely to engage students?
7. Does classroom management have an effect on a student's engagement in a hybrid learning environment? How?
8. What outside factors, if any, affect the student's engagement in a hybrid learning environment?
9. How do you address student engagement with your administrator?
10. What can or should the administration do to assist you in student engagement in a hybrid learning environment?

Appendix E: Observation Protocol

Date: __________________ Location: __________________

Educators Present:

____

____

1. What was the focus of the meeting? __________________________________

2. Was instruction being discussed, taught, distributed or displayed?

   Y______ N______

3. How did teachers respond to distractions?

4. What methods were employed for re-engagement?

5. How did teachers respond to those engaged actively engaged? Were there questions or feedback to all of the discussions being facilitated?

6. Did teachers voice concerns about individual students and or incidents that have occurred?

7. Were staff concerns addressed concerning student engagement?

8. Were suggestions and decisions made for improvements to interventions when students were not engaged?

9. Did teachers meet and/or discuss training and support for student engagement?

Appendix F: Interview Protocol

Interviewee Pseudonym:

Date of Interview: Time of Interview:

Location:

Demographic Questions
1. Participant's Race:
2. Participant's Gender:
3. What college degrees do you hold and in what fields?
4. What are your areas of licensure and or certification?
5. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
6. How many years have you been teaching at Hybrid Academy High School?
7. How many years have you been teaching 10th-12th grade?